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COMM 2110

**Reflective Essay 2**

Hearing, one of the five senses. One of the most basic parts of our lives. It is one of our primary forms of receiving communication from others and perceiving the world around us. One step further from hearing is listening. There is a lot more to listening than meets the eye. Good habits, bad habits, voluntary, involuntary, a lot of stuff! As I talk about what I have learned, thing about how you use listening in your life.

It is important to know that listening is a choice, which means often you have to go out of your way to do it. With that being said, there are barriers that will come with it. One barrier is called information overload. I find this happening to me when I’m in math class. Information Overload is exactly what it sounds like, an overload of information. When this happens it makes it hard to stay attentive while people are talking to you. I feel like this happens to everyone more often than we we would like it to.

Another barrier is called information complexity. Rather than having a plethora of information thrown at you , what could be a very modest amount of information is. Usually though, it is way over your head to the point that even if you are trying to listen and understand, you cannot. I also find this happening to me in my Computer Science classes. We are only covering one topic a day, but the complexity of these topics results in me falling behind which makes it hard to listen. I feel like there are a lot of normal people that run into this. One example I can think of, that happens to me often, would be when you go to the hardware store with a problem, and the guy helping you appears to start speaking in a foreign language, and you just smile and nod your head as if you know what he is saying.

Other barriers could be external noise. Again this happens to everyone. If you are in a loud place, with a ton of background noise, its going to be hard to listen and participate in a conversation. Another thing that can happen is just a lack of interest, or simply, you just don't care. There isn't much you can do to fix this one, other than try to be courteous to who you are communicating with.

There are a lot of ways that I can work on my listening skills. When faced with information overload, I can work on trying to not only understand what is being said to me, but also remember it. When faced with information complexity I can try to do my best to understand and participate in the conversation.

Next time I go into my CS 2550 Database class, rather than being faced with a combination of both information overload and complexity, like I usually am, I am going to change how I listen. On a typical day I experience both of these pretty early on in the class period, and usually end up sitting on my phone or laptop by the end of the class. Next time I go I will try and stay attentive the entire time, and participate. By doing this I will hopefully be able to retain the information that is given to me.

After going to CS2550, I applied these things to the class period. I went in and made sure I put my phone away so that I could pay attention. When I got lost I made sure to ask questions to fix the problem of the information complexity. I was able to make it through the entire class and I knew what was going on the entire time.

I found that I learned a lot more than I usually did after applying these skills. I found myself knowing what was being taught the entire class period, I understood the questions that were being asked, and I was able to the homework in half of the time I usually do. I think that when applied, these skills can work really well. But its hard to apply these all the time. I think this is why we live in a world where good listening skills can sometimes be hard to come by. But if everyone takes some time to focus on listening, we can improve the overall communication of the entire world, which will benefit all of us.