

Listening barriers essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Everyone has had that moment in the middle of a conversation with someone when they realize that their conversation mate is not listening. You look up and their eyes are slightly out of focus and you realize that they are on another planet. There are seven different barriers to effectively listening. Through the course of your life you will experience or use all seven of those different barriers. Describe a situation from your life where you had trouble listening. In high school I found that I had a really hard time focusing in most classes. I was always ahead of my classmates in terms of school work and areas of study. I was always extraordinarily interested in learning about new and different topics which were not limited to what they were teaching in the classroom. I would often have a general knowledge of subjects being taught to us and while those subjects were new and interesting to my classmates to me they just were not. I had an especial interest in the medical world and all that entailed. I took a class called Medical Professions that covered basic medical knowledge. My mind wandered often in that class and I was often singled out for not listening.

Identify two or more barriers that were present. Explain how each barrier contributed to your inability to listen effectively. The difference in the speech rate and the thought rate is the first barrier I experienced often in Medical Professions class. I would sit there trying to listen but my previous knowledge would distract me like something shiny to Dora. Look it swam over the trench and there I would go and follow the shiny things. I would try to focus on what the teacher was saying but I had a preexisting knowledge of the subject and that knowledge would lead my thought process away from the person talking and into my own mind. The second listening barrier that I

was a victim of was the external noise listening barrier. I have always been an avid movie buff and reader. In high school I was the geek that always carried around her own novel with her. I read every chance I could and that was a huge distraction when trying to focus in class. I eventually got really good at reading and hearing the teacher at the same time but I was not always as successful as I could have been. If I was not actually reading the book I was trying to guess what would happen next or think about when I could read next.

I would listen but not really hear anything other than the noise of my own thought about my book or newest television show. Determine which two strategies would allow you to cope with these barriers. Explain how each strategy may work to eliminate a particular barrier When trying to reduce the amount of noise present both internally and externally eliminating that noise where you have control is important. Steven Beebe states that you have a choice to make. You can attempt to listen through the competing distractions, or you can modify the environment to reduce them. Turning off the music, stepping away from the computer, and establishing eye contact with the speaker can help minimize the noise barrier. Focusing on what is in the present and staying present with the speaker is one way to cope with this barrier. Making eye contact and eliminating the distractions is important to remaining focused.

To deal with the difference in speech and thought rate you can use the time to mentally summarize what is being said. Taking notes will also allow you to focus on what is being said and listening to that more effectively. You can't eliminate the difference in the ability of the mind to process and the

speaker's lack of speed when talking but what you can do is use that time wisely. By using that time difference to continue to focus yourself you are turning a positive into a negative. Notes are a great way of focusing your mind on what is being said and what is being implied when your mind would otherwise wonder away from the speaker and the message they are trying to get across.

Works Cited

Steven A. Beebe, S. J. (2014). *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, Seventh Edition. Pearson Education Inc.

Using Language Effectively Worksheet

Listening Barriers

1. Information Overload

This barrier involves the listener becoming fatigued by too much information in their environment and becoming unable to focus on the speaker. The listener's ability to effectively listen is dulled due to their over exposure during the given time period.

Recognizing when your listening partner is unfocused and unable to effectively listen is important. Checking and or verifying if the person is able to listen at the start of the conversation are a good way to avoid this listening barrier. Asking if now is a good time or can you listen for a couple of minutes are helpful. Looking for clues as to the listener's attentiveness such as eye contact and their fatigue levels are helpful. If they are tired and

yawning starting the conversation is probably not smart (Steven A. Beebe, 2014). 2. External Overload

This listening barrier is when your physical environment or mental landscape are too cluttered and noisy to allow for effective listening

Eliminating the noise is the first step. Turning off your cell phone or the television are good starts. Turning down the radio or putting away other distractions will allow you to focus more on the speaker and what they are saying. If the problem is a mental one rather than an environmental one becoming aware of your lack of focus is important. Noting when your mind is wandering and redirecting it toward the listener is important in fixing this barrier. Making eye contact and summarizing what the person is saying mentally will also help (Steven A. Beebe, 2014). 3. Criticism of the speaker

This listening barrier is when the listener finds the speaker or the topic boring or uninteresting and in turn gives themselves permission to focus on other things in their mind. In this type of situation focusing on the message rather than the messenger can be an effective option. Trying to focus on what the message is can help you to focus. Taking notes and summarizing what has been said or is being said can be effective. Mentally policing your thoughts and redirecting yourself when you are off topic can be effective when coupled with the

suggestions above (Steven A. Beebe, 2014). Word Barriers

1. Not being specific and using allness language

This word barrier happens when people group things or people into groups that are all encompassing.

The key to avoiding this is to preface your generalizing statements with phrases like "To Me". You should also use phrases that will differentiate the various situations or people you are speaking about from one another. When you are the listener you can clarify by questioning the speaker about their intent by asking if they meant to generalize or not within their message (Steven A. Beebe, 2014).

2. Either/or polarization

This is when speakers use the terms either/or terms to speak in black and white terms. The speaker uses either/or to describe or judge a topic to polar opposites. The topic is either good or bad with no room for a middle ground.

Try avoiding the terms either/or and avoid blaming things on a specific causes. When listening try to clarify the speakers intent by questioning their all or nothing type statements and messages (Steven A. Beebe, 2014).

3. Biased Language

This word barrier occurs when the use of language reflects a bias against groups such as different races or ethnicities, genders, classes and the physical abilities of people. Becoming aware of the use of derogatory terms and insensitive comments is important when trying to avoid this pitfall.

Try to be mindful of labels that you are using. Make sure that the labels you are using are not offensive or derogatory. When listening to derogatory language make sure that you keep calm and remind the speaker that such language or comments are offensive in a polite and calm manner (Steven A. Beebe, 2014).

Reflections

How does word choice affect interpersonal communication? Describe a situation where word barriers affected your interpersonal communication. I personally have no qualms with four letter curse words but living in the Bible belt this is problematic for others. I am not a particularly religious person and a good chunk of my friends are so when I would use the lord's name in vein it would be upsetting to others. Having them (friends) explain that the language was offensive to them on a personally level was enough to stop me from using it in their presence. Using certain words can affect how you are seen and how people feel about you. If I had continued offending various friends with language that they had explained was inappropriate to them could have meant the end of our friendship.