

Listening skills essay sample



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Introduction

Communication is one of the most important aspects of our social and professional life. Communication is the main channel through which we pass our feelings, contributions, enquiries, and comment to the other party. Communication is a process which involves two parties. There is the source of the information and the audience who is intended to receive the information. As a process, there are important steps that must be fulfilled for it to be effective. First there must be a common understanding between the source and receiver. This means that the receiver must be able to decode the information using the coding method that is used by the source. The medium that is used by the source must be accessible to the receiver. One of the most important components of the communication process is listening. Listening is important in the communication process since it determines how the receiver gets and interprets the information. However, the receiver must develop the appropriate listening skills in order to understand the information and give back correct answer. Effective listening is not an option but a necessity for an effective communication process.

Listening skills

As active participants in the communication process, people need to develop appropriate listening skills. In many instances, the speaker can throw workers in all manners like a dart player plays by tossing the darts to a passive dartboard. This means that as a participant in the communication process, individuals need to take an active role rather than remain passive and inattentive to what is being said. Information is an intangible substance

passed from the speaker to the listener and unless the listener is an active participant in the process, the information will not be well received, interpreted and responded to.

Listening is different from hearing. In our everyday life, we hear a lot of things but there are very few that we listen to. Listening is an active process through which the receiver hears the information and integrates it in their mind considering all its effects and meaning and formulates an appropriate answer to the information. Therefore unlike hearing, listening is involves active synthesis of information. There are important listening skills that one needs to develop to participate effectively in the communication process.

The first important skill to develop is listening using the face. A good listener should act like a listener. Like a satellite dish, a good listener must change the body language from time to time in order to gain attention of the speaker. Therefore a good listener will tilt their face to the direction of the receiver and maintain a good eye contact.

By maintaining a good eye contact with the receiver, we ensure that we get the non verbal signs that the speaker tries to communication. In the communication process, speakers will integrate various verbal and non verbal signs. Research has also found out that speaker are more likely to be motivated when they are talking to active and receptive audience (CASAA, 2009). The eye contact completes the communication circuit which needs to be cemented between the speaker and listener for an active communication process.

After establishing an eye contact, the listener must then send out verbal and non verbal signs to the speaker to acknowledge the recipient of the information. For example by nodding, the speaker is assured that the listener is attentive to the information and will try to give more information. Moving your face in line with the information creates your attention to the communication process. Therefore as a good listener, your face must become an active catcher of the information communicated.

The communication process must ensure a one way flow of information. This means that one of the parties must be communicating while the other party is listening. You cannot listen and the same time as you are talking. A good listener gives time for the speaker to pass his/her information. Instead of talking at the same time with the speaker, a good listener will use receptive language instead like " I see....., oh really..., am sorry.." and many others which complement the information given by the speaker and which shows the speaker that you are an active listener. This will in return encourage the speaker to give out more accurate thoughts to the communication process. It also helps you to react to the ideas that the speaker is communicating rather than the actions of the speaker.

To be well acquainted with the information, a good listener will first ask questions for clarification rather than giving obvious comments (CASAA, 2009). Like in the criminal justice system, a good listener must ensure that they receive the information beyond the reasonable shadow of doubts. This will ensure that the listener is well versed with all the details of the information given and can response appropriately after synthesizing all the information.

Good listeners act as the main target that captures the information given by the speaker. When they do not understand the information, they will send a sign to the speaker to change the content and medium of passing information. They will also send information to the speaker on what they expect next in the communication process. A good listener will also influence the speaker to change the speed of relaying information in a way that it suits them (Student Handbook, 2009).

Therefore there are important skills that a good listener should cultivate. The following are important strategies that can be used to develop good listening skills:

Even when you will need notebooks to write down the notes, a good listener must always maintain an eye contact and keep focused on the message that is being delivered by the speakers. The listener must also ensure that they are focused on the content rather than the delivery process or the one who is delivering the information.

A good listener should avoid emotional involvement. When one is emotionally involved in the communication process, one tends to hear what one wants to hear and not what is being said. This means that one has to remain objective, open minded and avoid all forms of distractions. As we said earlier, your mind should be focused on the listener and the information being delivered and should not wander from one thing to another. A good listener should treat listening as a challenging mental task. The mind should stay active by asking a number of mental questions which will help you to integrate the information to your mind (Student Handbook, 2009). Lastly,

the listener should utilize the gap between their thinking process and the rate at which the speech is given. This will ensure that the mind is focused on the content of the message.

Conclusion

Communication process is important to help us understand one another. One of the most important aspects of the communication process is to have good listening skills. A good listener acts as an active participant in the communication process catching information and synthesizing it in the mind. A good listener should use both the face and the mind to participate in the communication process. The face should face the speaker and respond with the appropriate verbal and non verbal signs while the mind should be actively engaged in the process and try to synthesize the information given and at the same time formulate an appropriate answer.

References

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