Critical listening and evaluation

ME 3910

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Preview

• Listening – some myths
• Ways of listening
• Challenges to effective listening
• Listening critically
• Critical questioning
• Feedback responses

Listening

• Listening is an ongoing process
• Most of us think we are better listeners than we really are
• Cost of poor listening is high
• Good listening is one of the most important leader skills

Listening

• Compromises “the steps of hearing and interpreting” (Brilhart, Galanes and Adams, 2001, p. 54)

• Includes “your perception and response to the other” (Stewart and Logan, 1998, p. 166)
Myths about listening

- Listening is connected to intelligence
- Listening cannot be learned
- Listening is the same as hearing
- Listening is automatic
- Listening means agreeing

Listening - different ways

- Appreciatively
  - Easy listening
- Empathically
  - Understand and identify
- Evaluatively
  - Defensive
- Critically
  - Active mental process, engaged

Listening - Challenges

- Attention problems
  - Fast thinking
  - Overload
  - Entertainment factor
  - Pseudolistening
- Inference-making problems
  - Snap judgments and silent arguing
  - Attributional errors and undue attention

How to listen critically

- Be focused
- Listen for concepts and ideas
  - What are the main points
  - What is NOT said
- Organize what you hear
  - Make connections
  - Listen for patterns, transitions
- Evaluate
  - Evaluate evidence carefully
Critical questioning

- Request clarification
- Use analytical questions
- Address ethical issues and values
- Ask for developments and extensions
- Be tactful!

Feedback responses and evaluation

- Be specific and clear
- Support comments with evidence
- Separate the issues from the people
- Soften negative messages

Feedback responses and evaluation cont.

- Sandwich negative messages between positive ones
- Pose situation as mutual problem
- Use good timing
- Use proper manner of delivery

Summary

- Listening is an ongoing and active process
- Listening is challenged by attention and inference-making problems
- Critical listening demands focus, organization and evaluation
- Use critical questions to increase understanding
- Use good timing and proper manners for evaluation and feedback
Exercise:
Critical listening and evaluation
Hand in at the end of class

• Watch and listen critically to the taped presentation
• Use your critical listening skills to evaluate this formal presentation in terms of
  – Organization of material
  – Evidence
  – Use of visual aids
  – Delivery