

Critical listening and evaluation

ME 3910

Trine Kvidal, Communication Consultant
Trine.Kvidal@utah.edu

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