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Lecture – 14 Listening Skills: Conclusion

Hello everybody, welcome back to the course on Employment Communication. Today we will be completing the topic on listening skills; this is lecture 14 - Conclusion to Listening Skills.

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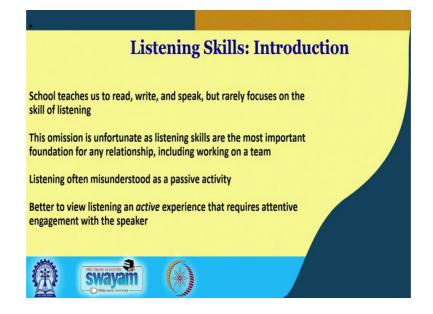
So, since we will be revising whatever we have learnt or gone through in the previous lecture 13, we will begin with a brief introduction, cover the important topic of active listening; what are the components of active listening and other features of active listening and when you should not listen.

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After that there we will be a short movie break, and then we move further to essentials for good listening; deterrents to the listing process; feedback; helping others to listen; helping yourself to listen. What are the active ways of listening; some questions which show how you are summarizing what you have heard; developing your skills as a listener and importance of listening. Before we conclude we will also consider why do we listen and the factors which are important in developing good listening skills.

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So, let us introduce you to the topic of listening skills once again. You see that as you have gone through the pedagogical process in school, we have learnt to read, write and speak. But really has anybody or any teacher in fact, focused on the skill of developing our listening skills. Nobody has taught listening or had us have lessons on improving our listening skills. This is quite unfortunate because listening skills is the most important foundation for any relationship. A good listener is a good speaker, is in turn also a good reader and writer. Apart from one to one relationship, good listening skills also is looked forward to those who would like to have you in the team.

It is often been understood as a misunderstood as a passive activity, but the fact is that it is the active process, it is an active process. And you have to willfully, cognitively, physiological, psychology involve yourself in this process to be a good listener. So, advice is it is better to view listening an active experience, which requires attentive engagement with the speaker, constant engagement with the speaker. We have four components to be an active listener.

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And to show that you are an active listener, you have only four ways of responding. First is attending responses, second open-ended responses, third tracking responses and last is summarizing responses.

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Let us go to these in detail as far as, attending responses are concerned they are of two types first the verbal aspect of it: what are the verbal indicators which show that you are actively responding and a good listener. Utterances, non-fluency such uh-huh, I see, yes, interesting hmmm; these are some of the verbal indicators which shown you to be attentive.

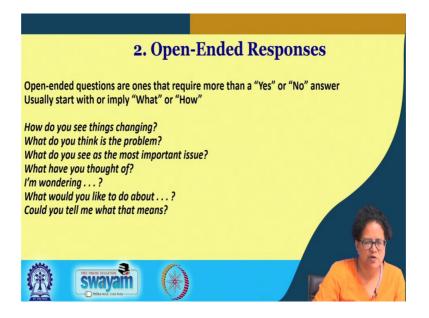
And you have a friendly informal tentative tone of voice for such speakers, you make short statements and ask questions. You use simple language for example, instead of word communicate will you talk instead of correspondence you use right. And a good listener is of course, one who speaks less than 50 percent of the time.

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If we come to the nonverbal indicators, head nods and tilted head this side or maybe that side head nods of course, suitable facial expression and a natural smile open posture rather than this one crossed arms. Open palms rather than clenched fists or keeping on fidgeting or moving in your chair or in your position, regular eye contact, but not staring and gestures gesticulations with your hands which suit the context- appropriate distance. This is usually an arm's length which is one and half feet or let us say 18 inches something like that.

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What are the open-ended responses which you can emit? These are the open-ended questions which you can ask. Open ended questions are those questions which require more than yes no answer. They are not close ended. For example, are you married either yes or no that is a close ended response. Open ended question are otherwise. They usually start or imply what or how for example, the questions which are given on this slide.

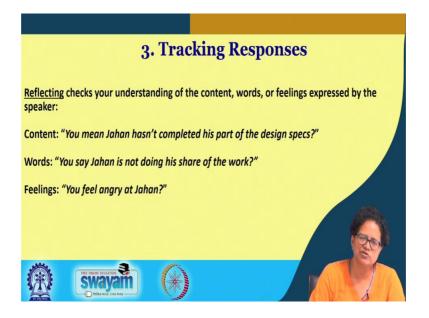
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And thinking about or talking about questions a word of advice here a word of caution; be cautious with the use of your questions. The first is avoid leading questions that suggest that you know the answer to the question, but still you are asking the question. So, if you are going to say something like you do not really want to do that do you? It is not nice.

Avoid why questions that implies judgments about the speaker's actions, motives or may be even intellect or intellectual capacity. For example, why did not you try to solve the problem that way? Number 3 is to avoid too many questions because that may suggest to the speaker that he is in the witness box. The speaker is being interrogated by you.

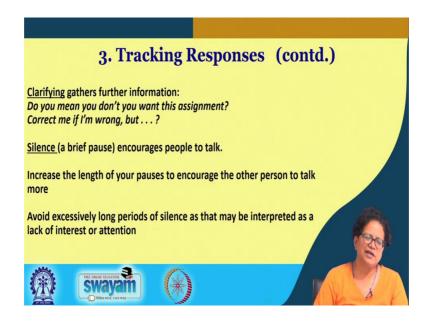
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So, this is an advice - avoid asking too many questions. We come to the third type of responses which are tracking responses and it shows that you are a reflective person. You are reflecting, you are thinking. Because you are checking your understanding from time to time on the content, words and feelings aspect as expressed by the speaker. For example, if you have this question, you mean Jahan has not completed his part of the design specs? It shows you are concerned about content. Content of the message from the speaker.

On the other hand number 2; suppose you say suppose you say you say Jahan is not doing his share of the work and question at the end. And use the word say instead of mean in the first instance. You are talking about the exact words that have been used by the speaker and if you are thinking about the feelings of the speaker, you may ask a question you feel angrier Jahan is it, is it not? Something like that.

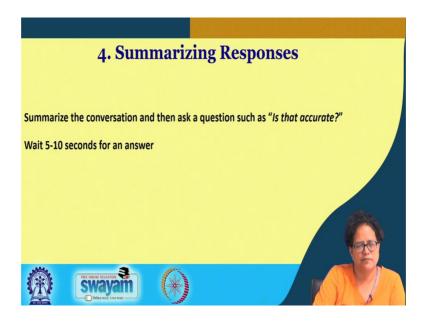
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We continue on tracking responses apart from reflecting, you may also be trying to clarify so that you are in effect you are gathering further information. For example, questions like, do you mean you do not want this assignment or basically you are paraphrasing whatever the speaker had said. And so, you say correct me if I am wrong, but and then you say whatever is in your mind.

Silence is a very positive tracking response in active listening skills. It is a brief pause and it encourages the people, the other to talk. The advice is to increase the length of your pauses so, that the other know that now it is his or her turn to speak. But if you have too long excessive periods of excessively long periods of silence, it may be interested; it may be understood as lack of interest or attention for the topic under discussion.

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The fourth and last one here is summarizing responses and the idea is that you summarize the entire conversation and then ask a question. Is it accurate? And you wait 5 to 10 seconds for an answer.

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Other features of effective listening are on the slide, the first is to minimize distractions. If you are listening or if you intend to be a good listener do not have something which is distracting you for example, in one ear you have a headphone and you are trying to listen to music as well as listen to the conversation. The second is to practice etiquette - listen

with respect. The third is to avoid assumptions on the speaker; because it starts working in your mind and then you stop listening. Avoid superficial reactions; whatever is stated situate those facts in context and remain focused as we say.

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Sometimes it is advised not to listen and these are 3 kind of scenario which are put here. The first is when the speaker is verbally abusive, you have a right to stop listening. The second is when the speaker is monopolizing the conversation and nobody other can speak and the third is when the speaker is in his own fantastical fantastic world and out of touch with reality.

So, in these situations what you can do is, you can be assertive you can make your point I will not listen. Point out also that the person is behaving inappropriately or unethically and third the state that you will not continue the conversation unless you are treated with respect. In extreme circumstances you can end the conversation until the person has calmed down in case the person is too reactive or emotionally charged. Before we come to the second part, I would like to show you this short video from big bang theory on active listening.

First there was play station a k a PS 1 then PS 2 PS 3 and now PS 4 and that make sense you think after X box there would be X box 2, but no next came X box 360 and now after 360 comes X box 1. Why 1?

Maybe that is only seconds of thought they put in the naming it.

Can you get the butter please?

Yeah, however with the X box 1 I can control my entire entertainment system using voice commands. Up until now I had to use Leonard.

Then get the other one pass the butter.

Hang on, I do not feel like you are taking this dilemma seriously.

Fine, Sheldon you have my undivided attention.

Ok, now the PS 4 is more angular and sleek looking.

No way (Refer Time: 12:09).

It is true, but the larger size of the X box 1 may keep it from overheating.

You would not want your gaming system to overheat?

No, see would you absolutely would not and further more the X box 1 now comes with connect included.

Included?

Yes not sold separately. Although the PS 4 uses cool new GDDR 5 RAM. Well, the X box 1 is using the conventional DDR 3 memory.

Why would they still be using DDR 3. Are they nuts?

See that is what I thought, but then they go and throw in an ESRAM buffer.

Whoa wait a second, who is they?

The X box.

You are kidding.

No, I am not. This ESRAM buffer should totally bridge the 100 gigabit per second bandwidth gap between the 2 RAM types.

This is a nightmare. How would you ever make a decision?

See, I do not know. What should I do?

Please pass the butter.

So, I hope you enjoyed the video and we will now move on to the next part of the lecture.

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Listening is a 3 tier process. The first phase is listening that is with your ears and making meaning out of it through a process of critical thinking. The second is sharpening and third is assimilation. What happens in these 3 phases is, the first phase of listening information or messages are poured in the mind of the speaker through the auditory symbol or the stimulus. The mind automatically shifts through the message and chooses the one it would prefer to focus on pertaining to the interest area of the receiver, the unwanted sounds or auditory symbols would be deleted. And last in the process of assimilation only those topics or issues which are relevant will be retained in your memory.

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So, the essentials for good listening is 5 here. First is a positive attitude and second ability to concentrate; third to participate in the question answer sessions at the workplace; fourth is to have eye contact with the speaker and to have a conducive posture at the time of listening.

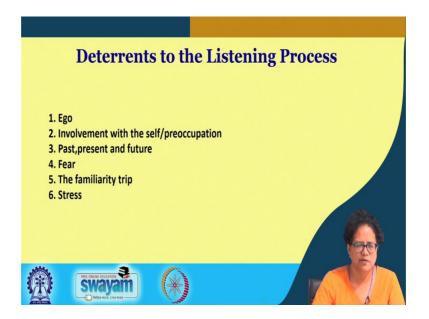
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And what are the features what are the features essential to the attitudes or the actions you might be performing through at the time of listening? A positive attitude shows that you are accepting and you have an you have a open personality. If you are concentrating,

it shows that you are receptive once again. Question answers sequence and participating in the question answer session shows that you have concentrated on the presentation or the speech or the conversation. Direct eye contact shows that you are related, you are directly connected in contact with the speaker. And a conducive or a positive and appropriate body posture shows that you have been attentive throughout.

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There are certain deterrents which create problems in the listening processes. And the first is of course, ego. If your ego is high then you not listen you will stop. You will close your mind mentally. Build mental walls (Refer Time: 15:56) against the speaker. The third is involvement with the self or pre-occupation with other thoughts and third is past present future what we mean is, your mind is simply zipping through various time zones.

Fourth is fear or you are afraid and fifth is called the familiar trip what mean is that you say you think or your attitude is I know more than the speaker because I have been there before, I am familiar with this situation. So, I will not listen. And the last is stress; when a person is in stress mentally the person will stop listening.

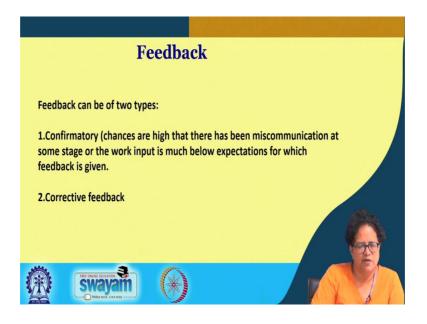
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Now, we come to feedback as we have said in the previous lecture listen skills introduction lecture 13. What we said is that in the communication chart or the communication process, you have the speaker, the listener the message going from speaker to listener and the reverse process is called the feedback. This is the most important part of the communication loop because it completes the communication loop.

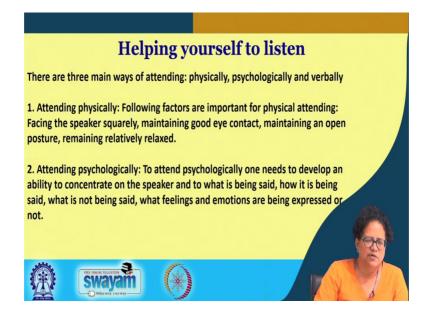
And it is advisable to have a strategy so that you can give good feedback through 3 parts 3 staged process. The first is listen carefully to what the speaker is saying. Second repeat the crux of the message, condense it, distill the message and ensure that your intentions or his intentions or her intentions have been rightly measured and the third is give response to the message.

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Feedback can be of 2 types this is in simple terms. First is confirmatory that is you try to confirm what you have heard is right or wrong, and the second is corrective feedback. You cross the speaker and you try to put him or her in the correct track or in the right mood.

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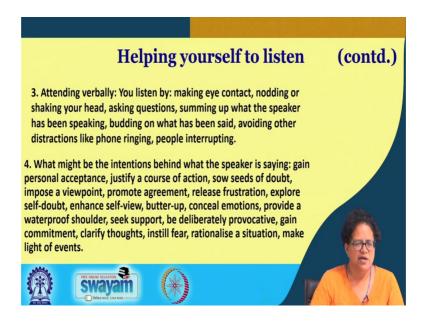


How can you help yourself to listen? And in this slide we have listed 3 main ways of attending or being a good active listener. The first is physically. Physically you have to be in fact, in the same dimension. The following factors are important for physically

attending to a conversation. Face the speaker squarely, maintain good eye contact, open posture and be more or less relaxed.

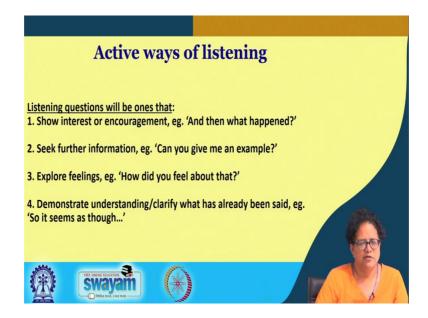
When we come to the psychological aspect of how to be a good listener, the advice is to develop on your ability to concentrate on what the speaker is saying and what is exactly being said. How it is being said, what is not being said, what feelings and emotions are being expressed or what are not being expressed.

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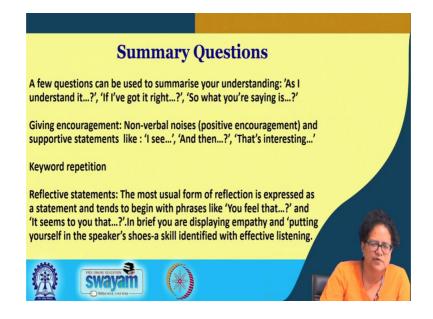
And the last is how do you attend verbally to a listening scenario? You listen by making eye contact, nodding or shaking your head asking questions; summing up from time to time what the speaker has been saying, budding on what has been said, avoiding other distractions like a phone or a mobile which is ringing not on silent mode and people interrupting within the conversation. Think also about what might be the intentions behind what the speaker is saying.

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Some active ways of listening would be some questions you can ask and listening questions are those, which might first of all show interest or encouragement to the speaker and then what happened you know something like this. Seek further information number 2; can you give me an example? And 3 thirdly to explore feelings how did you feel about that? And fourth to demonstrate understanding or clarity of what has been already said? So, it seems as though is not it like that.

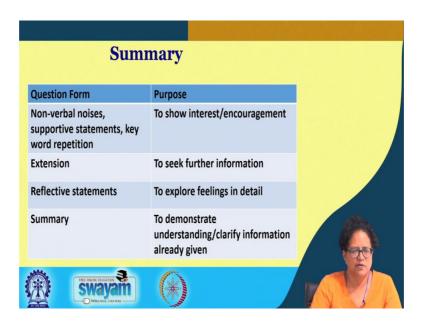
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Summary questions are let us say those kind of questions which summarize your understanding of what you have listened to. So, somebody questions may be something like as I understand it, does it mean and further or it may begin something like if I got it right or so what you are saying is, you can give encouragement to the speaker and show that you have been summarizing by some non-verbal noises of positive encouragement, hmm, uh hmm or supportive statement for example, like I see and then that is interesting.

The third point here is key word reputation; what key word what main words you have picked from the conversation you can repeat it and the third fourth and the last is reflective statements. Reflective statements are the most usual form of reflection expressed in a statement and tends to begin with the phrase something like you feel that you know and it seems or it appears to you that. So, in brief in short what you are doing is you are displaying empathy. And you are putting yourself in the speakers shoes a skill which is very good, it is identified it is equal to effective listening.

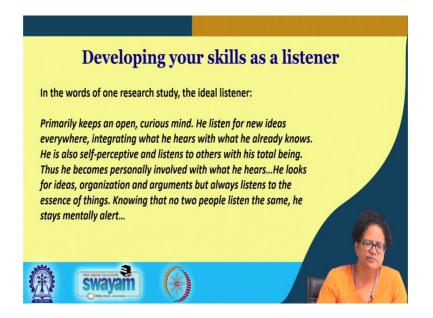
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So, let us put this summary in tabular form. If the question form is nonverbal noises supportive statements and keyword repetition, it shows interest and encouragement to the speaker. If you extend, it shows you seeking further information or details on the topic.

The third is reflective statements; you are exploring the feelings in greater depth and detail. And the fourth summarizing or summary you are demonstrating understanding or your clarifying on information which has already been given you by the speaker.

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Now, we have a long quote, but I would like to read it because I really like this quotation on the ideal listener. One research study puts it in these words. The ideal listener primarily keeps an open curious mind. He listens for new ideas everywhere, integrating what he hears with what he already knows. He is also self perceptive and listens to others with his total being. Thus he becomes personally involved with what he hears, he looks for ideas, organization and arguments. But always listens to the essence of things knowing that no two people listen the same, he stays mentally alert.

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He is introspective, but has capacity and desire to critically examine, understand and attempt to transform some of his values, attitudes and relationships with himself and with others. He focuses his mind on the listening and listens to the speakers ideas, but, but he also listens with feelings and intuition. We have taken this from a definition of listening; the research was conducted by Ohio State University in 1968 by Elizabeth Mae Pflaumer.

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Now to be ending the presentation, why is listening important? Because it is the key to success it opens new horizons.

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And why are we listening as such why cannot we not listen and why should we listen? We listen to gain information, to get feedback. To participate in another story because we are emphatic to hear, to know about their experiences and insights and situations, to learn from them, to be in control as they say information is power, to broaden our horizons that is to learn more and more and more. We listen because listening is the basis of relationship, we listen to create a relationship, to begin a relationship, to sustain a relationship, to deepen a relationship, to maintain a relationship, to be in a relationship and we listen to respect and because we value others.

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In conclusions some of the factors important to developing good listening skills are again re-listed here. Good listening is firstly, most importantly about being sensitive to the other persons voice, choice of words or diction or vocabulary, tone, speed of speech and their body language.

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These are the references I have used and these are the sources I have backed upon for the preparation of this lecture. Thank you for being with me and see you soon, God bless you.