Part 1

Listening

“Seek first to understand... then to be understood.”

5th Habit of Highly Effective People
Stephen Covey, 1997

Even after years of “practice,” we still don’t do it very well

Effective listening can make the difference between:
- Knowledge or ignorance
- Being informed or misinformed
- Being involved or apathetic
- Enjoying something or being bored by it

Listen for the following concepts:
- What is listening?
- Listening process
What is listening?

- Consider: The majority of your time spent communicating is spent listening
  - Most of our educational courses are source oriented
  - Listening occurs at both ends of the feedback loop
    - Listening is primarily receiver oriented
- We receive data aurally (verbal, vocal, and other sounds)
- Listening is an active rather than a passive skill
  - Psychological vs. Physiological

Listening is a process, a combination of:

- Hearing (sound waves)
- Selection (sorting through competing sounds)
- Attention (focusing)
- Understanding (auditing)
- Remembering (storage for later retrieval)
- Responding (confirming)

Remembering

- Short-term memory (STM)
- Long-term memory (LTM)

Difference?
  - amount of repetition & rehearsing
  - the ease with which the item fits into already stored information
Questions:
- Why is it important to listen effectively?
- How much time do you spend listening?
- When someone says, “I’m listening,” what does that really mean?

Listen for the following concepts:
- Types of listening situations
- Why we listen ineffectively
- How to improve our listening effectiveness
Types of Listening Situations

- Discriminative listening (focusing on sounds)
- Comprehensive listening (listening to understand)
- Critical listening (listening to evaluate)
- Empathetic listening (listening to feel)
- Appreciative listening (listening to enjoy)

Why do we listen ineffectively?

- Hearing problems (physiological)
- Premature judgment of listening situation
- Listening is Hard! We avoid difficult listening
  - Rapid thought
  - Noise can interfere
    - Externally (critical of speaker, environment)
    - Internally (preoccupation, emotional response)
    - Beware of technology!!!
- Information overload

(continued)

Why do we listen ineffectively? (cont.)

- Inappropriate approaches to listening
  - Pseudo listening (fake attention)
  - Dan Ackroyd (insensitive) listening – listening for facts (unable to look “between the lines”)
  - Ambush listening – listening for information to attack the speaker
  - Defensive listening – taking innocent comments as personal attacks
  - Stage hogging (conversational narcissism)
- Speaking is more fun

(continued)
Ask yourself...

- How often might you misjudge the purpose of the listening situation?
- What are the main barriers you face when you are listening to others?
- How can you tell when others are listening (or not listening) to you?

How do we improve our listening?

- Pay attention
- Adjust to internal and external noise:
  - Speaker & the physical environment
  - Keep emotions in check
- Listen to difficult material
- Give yourself a reason to listen

continued...

How do we improve our listening?

- Listen for ideas and patterns of reasoning
- Try to use your spare time wisely
  - Take written notes
  - Write a mental review after each point
  - Note the adequacy of support for each point
  - Anticipate what the speaker will say
  - Listen for additional meaning
Ask yourself…

- What do you do now to increase your listening effectiveness?
- Do you just “give up” when faced with a difficult listening situation?
- How might you minimize noise when you are listening?
- What one new technique might you try to increase your listening effectiveness?

The Chinese characters that make up the verb “to listen”

tell us something significant about this skill

Part 3

Listening

More on listening...
Listening Styles:
- **People-oriented** – maintaining relationships most important
- **Action-oriented** – most concerned with the task at hand
- **Content-oriented** – quality & details most important
- **Time-oriented** – most concerned with efficiency

Watson, Barker, & Weaver 1995

Situational Listening:
**Comprehensive**
Used when one wants to understand another. Goal: To receive the same thoughts the other person is trying to convey.
- Listen first
- “Don’t kill the messenger”: separate the message from the speaker
- Look for big ideas and main points
- Paraphrase: restate what the speaker is saying in one’s own words
- Take notes

Situational Listening:
**Critical Listening**
Judging the quality of a message and deciding to accept or reject it.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions
  - Listen for information first
  - Remove emotion
  - Evaluate the speaker’s credibility
    - Is the speaker qualified?
    - What sources are being used
  - Evaluation information quality
- Be prepared to accept OR reject the message
Stages of Listening
(Stephen Covey)

- Empathetic*
- Attentive
- Selective
- Pretend
- Ignoring

Situational Listening:
Empathetic Listening

- Goal: To build a relationship or help solve a problem.
  - This style of listening has the most respect for the other's point of view.
  - Empathetic listening is the first step in beginning to understand someone.
- Major premise: Be other-centered
  - What is your partner thinking?
  - What is your partner feeling?

Empathetic Listening

- Prompting: The goal is to help the speaker draw conclusions for him/herself
  - Questioning: helps sort out problems
  - Advising: offering suggestions
  - Analyzing: offers an interpretation of the speaker's message
- Judging: look for constructive judgments
- Paraphrasing: rewording
- Supporting/Confirming: Express helpful social support