

Effective Listening: What and How

Chandreyee Johnson

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Rachel Anderson

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Comment [1]:
Your formatting is great! I don't have any suggestions except maybe testing out the abstract some more :)

Effective listening is more than just hearing what an individual is saying. It's letting go of all other distractions to focus solely on what is being said verbally and nonverbally. Through using understandable language, detaching one's self from solution-oriented listening, and applying active listening skills, a listener will be better equipped to understand and aid the speaker when the time comes.

Article 1: Extensive Listening Vs. Listening Strategies

Comment [2]:
I love your use of headings

In the article. In the Blyth's 2012 article, he emphasizes a major point that about word count in which listeners are able to comprehend, suggesting that 250 words per minute is comprehensible; however, 127 is optimal. To back this concept, Blyth suggests complex words for which listeners may not understand, therefore pausing to check their understanding resulting in either comprehension of the word or giving up on attempting to understand it. In doing so, listeners miss out on what else is being said during this contemplative process.

Comment [3]:
This was extremely interesting and completely applied to what we are learning! Great article.

Next, Blyth stresses the importance of the audience comprehension of what is being said by the speaker. He states that it is important to be able to fully understand what is being said and reiterates Floyd (2011) who states that listeners will develop their own contextual meaning from the dialogue the listener is subjected to.

Finally, Blyth suggests that several researchers make the assumption that listening skills can be likened to reading skills, for which Blyth himself disagrees. In his article, Blyth mentions that during reading, the individual is able to read and re-read the text he or she is viewing in order to check their comprehension; however, when listening, it's more of a one chance opportunity to understand or not.

My thoughts. My thoughts on the article fall in concurrence with Blyth. Listening skills cannot be likened to reading skills because, as Blyth suggests, when reading, the individual has one opportunity to read and re-read the information. When listening, the listener has one opportunity to hear and understand the entire process.

Application of thought. This article was quite a bit more insightful than I had anticipated. While our text from Floyd does touch on the concept of listening ability and word comprehension, there was not a lot of further expansion on the subject. Through Blyth's comparison, I understand the complexity of listening by his comparison to reading. As someone who struggles to read and understand, having the comparison of reading and listening suggests to me to give my listener(s) the opportunity to follow along by slowing down and using level appropriate wording to ease their comprehension abilities. While Blyth doesn't necessarily give a final strategy for implementing the concepts he presents, he does leave the reader with questions to consider; it is these questions which evoke the sense of importance in allowing a listener the time and ability to understand what is being said which makes me feel that slowing down and using level-appropriate speech will be important to my listener(s).

Article 2: The Gift of Listening: JUST Listening Strategies

Comment [4]:

You have shown that you fully understand what Blyth's article was discussing and how to apply it.

In the article. This article, published by *Nursing Forum*, Browning et. al (2010) discuss the empathetic aspect of listening. The authors suggest that academic training is the least emphasized quality stressed in the helping professions. The emphasis from this article denotes the importance of not only hearing a patient, but also on taking the time to understand and really attend to an individual's stories which they are sharing. While this article is published in a forum designed for nurses, the concept can be applied to all the helping field positions. Preoccupation with one's own agendas, responsibilities, and obligations are emphasized by Browning et.al and these are the very things which hinder the ability to really understand a client. The JUST Listening Project is the focus of the article, encouraging the reader to understand what it means to "just" listen. Through practicing active, reflective, and empathetic listening skills, the helper can truly aid the client by understanding what is being said and asking applicable questions to deepen his or her understanding. Through this deepened understanding, the helper will then be able to properly assess and attend to the client's needs.

Comment [5]:
So true!!! So very true.

My thoughts. Perhaps the most stand-out statement made by this article is in its suggestion of listening without our ego, or listening without having the sub-thought that says, "I know how to fix this issue." When it comes to helping, I believe that many of us have this thought in the back of our minds as we listen to our clients. Through eliminating the urge to try to fix the client's problems and simply JUST hearing them and understanding them, we are likely to do a greater service to them.

Comment [6]:
Well stated. We are not here to 'fix' we are here to help guide them to their own solutions.

Application of thought. Through my education thus far, I have learned the importance of hearing the client. One of the most pressing thoughts that have lingered in the back of my mind is something I feel I continually ask, "If we aren't supposed to offer advice, then how do

we help our client?” Perhaps this is in fact the answer. Simply “just” listening. Instead of thinking about a solution, understanding that the client doesn’t need to be fixed, but rather he or she first needs to be heard. Then the client can decide what he or she wants to do next. Therefore, it is my primary responsibility as the helper to truly hear them and understand their frustration and pain. In application then, when it comes to career and even interpersonal relationships, perhaps my answer is to instead of thinking about solutions, to actually really start listening to the problem at hand.

Comment [7]:
Hopefully our small amount of practicing in class will help this idea of listening rather than giving advice.

Article 3: The Human Side of Teaching: Effective Listening

In the article. This article, written by Boyd in 2001, demonstrates the epitomes of what seems to be countless listeners in today’s fast-paced society: listeners who multi-task in order to get more things done at once. Rather than being the epitome of a fast-paced society, taking the time to actually focus on the speaker should be the objective of the listener. Reiterating on the above learned concepts, listening should be the entire focus of what we are doing when actually doing it. In order to ensure comprehension, summarization of what the person is saying, demonstrate listening in other non-verbal ways, placing yourself in a position of listening, take notes of what is being said (if needed), position yourself for one on one conversations, allowing for pauses, showing empathy, and many more countless ways to demonstrate that you are listening and paying attention.

My thoughts. This article takes what I have learned about listening and reiterated the concepts. Listening takes more than just hearing your client and showing empathy for what they are saying. It takes summarization, engaged body language, and more.

Application of thought. As I have gained a more stable understanding of listening effectively, articles such as this emphasizes the importance of applying these skills. Simply knowing the information isn't always enough; repetition in this case becomes a positive advocate in the process of changing habits. One thing that truly stood out to me in this article was the mention of listening while doing other things. Upon introduction of the article, it discussed listeners who multitask; this brought up a situation with my sister the other day where she had been explaining something to me while I was reading homework instructions. It wasn't until I pulled myself away and sat down in front of her that she felt I could really hear what she was trying to say. This article having pulled that example from my mind stressed the importance of minimizing distractions while listening. This realization makes it clear that in life and career, it is extremely important to the other person that you pull away from potential distractions to really hear what they are saying.

Comment [8]:
Great example!

Conclusion

As demonstrated in the above articles, there are many things that play a large part in an individual's ability to understand a speaker. As a listener, it is important to hear the speaker, understand them, demonstrate empathy, and show that you are being attentive to what he or she is saying. Through demonstrating effective listening, an individual allows them self and their listeners to feel confident that the messages being conveyed are being heard and understood. Because a listener is limited by his or her interpretation; correctly interpreting the message becomes vital in accurately understanding the message, and ultimately, in positively impacting the helping process.

Comment [9]:
This was a fantastic paper. I wish I could give you extra credit!

References

Blyth, A. (2012, February). Extensive Listening Versus Listening Strategies: Response to Siegel. *ELT Journal*, 66(2), 236-239

Boyd, S. (2001, October). The Human Side of Teaching: Effective Listening. *Techniques*, 76(7), 60-61.

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Floyd, K. (2011). *Interpersonal communication* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.