

Learn from Listening

Use theories of effective listening
applied by listening researchers
during studies of how humans listen to other humans
for improving requirements elicitation skills.

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Listening Research: Brief Overview

Listening is a complex activity with multiple dimensions (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996).

- Discriminative Sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal cues
 - Comprehensive Paying close attention to comprehend concepts and connections
 - Therapeutic Focused on empathy, speaker's emotions
 - Critical Deciding to accept or reject a given message
 - Appreciative Enjoying a high-quality speech or speaker
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Listening researchers study how these dimensions interact and how they can be used effectively in specific settings.

Listening Research: Synergy with RE

- Anecdotally, students doing requirements elicitation miss many client requests
 - May be *overruled*, *unheard*, or biased by a *need for affirmation* (Kastman Breuch, 2001)
 - ... despite feeling that they're "on the same page" as the client (Gunning, 2017)
- The *tacit knowledge* problem in RE (Gervasi et al., 2013): caused partly by unheard needs?

My argument:

Requirements elicitation is a specialized form of listening. We can work with listening researchers to help us identify listening skills and techniques that are especially effective for requirements elicitation.