

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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AGENDA

○ General Communication Skills

1. Oral Communication Skills (Presentation in class)
2. Writing & Referencing
3. Group Interactions
4. Leadership & Management

1- ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

○ Your voice

- *How you say it, is as important as what you say*

○ Body language

- Your body movements express what your attitudes and thoughts *really are*

○ Appearance

- First impressions influence the audience's attitudes towards you

A. MAKING A PRESENTATION

- Human attention is the scarcest resource
 - Herbert Simon [Nobel 1972, Turing 1975]
- Short-term memory:
 - simple things
- Audience may get 1 or 2 from your talk
 - reinforce the core message, not details
- Build a thread to help understanding

A. MAKING A PRESENTATION

1. Strategy

- Understand your purpose and role
- Tailor your message to the audience
- Develop a logically compelling case for your plan

2. Structure

- Clear introduction
- Use only one idea per slide
- Good conclusions slide

3. Style

- Keep your audience's interest

4. Supplement

- Use Examples, Questions, Visual aids, ...etc

B. DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

○ Greet the audience

- “Tell the audience what you are going to tell them, then tell them, at the end tell them what you have told them” -- Zuchermann W. [1979]

○ Nervousness & Comfort Zone

- Humor is very useful; prepare a couple of puns and jokes beforehand

○ Introduction to the topic & yourself

- Begin with a slow, well-prepared introduction

B. DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

- **Speak clearly.** Don't shout or whisper - judge the acoustics of the room
- **Don't rush, or talk** deliberately **slowly**. Be natural - although not **conversational**.
- Deliberately **pause at key points**
- **Never read** from a script / slide
- **Keep to the time** allowed. If you can, keep it short.
- **It's better to under-run than over-run**

B. DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

- To make the presentation interesting, change your delivery:
 - speed
 - pitch of voice
- Use your hands to emphasize points
- Look at the audience as much as possible
- Don't fix on an individual
- Use Illustrations, Graphs, Numbers to explain complex ideas
 - *“A picture is worth 1000 words”*

B. DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

- Strong Conclusion
- Questions
 - Listen very carefully
 - Repeat the question and make sure you got it right
 - Answer clearly

“Most people answer different questions than asked!”

PRESENTATION: COMM. MISTAKES

- Facing the display screen behind you and talking to it
- Stand in a position where you obscure the screen
- Move about too much
- Slides are not clear, text too small to read
- Too much text on a slide
- Inappropriate colors on the slide
- Annoying animations, sound effects or pictures
- Room Lighting

2- WRITING & REFERENCING

- “Written communication is the ability to communicate effectively in writing with a range of readers” :
 - in a variety of modes
(e.g., persuasion, argument, exposition)
 - using a number of different means
(e.g., graphical, statistical, audio-visual and technological).

2. WRITING & REFERENCING

- Two objectives of Writing to a reader:
 - Must convey a clear and unambiguous message
 - Must produce goodwill
- To achieve these two objectives, the writer must write:
 - Clearly
 - Coherently
 - Concisely
 - Correctly; with
 - Courtesy; and
 - Confidence

2. WRITING BACKGROUND SKILLS

- Written communication requires background skills such as:
 - academic writing
 - revision and editing
 - critical reading
 - presentation of data

A. ACADEMIC WRITING

- Writing in order to
 - analyze a topic closely
 - develop a point of view in relation to that topic through research and thought
 - persuade your reader that the point of view you have developed is well supported by the ideas and information you present
 - Create a clearly structured document that presents what has happened in a practical session or as part of an experiment
 - Example: an essay, poster, paper or thesis and technical report

B. REVISION AND EDITING

- Applying techniques to improve
 - Writing
 - Presentation
- Proofreading for:
 - Spelling
 - Grammar
 - Style.

C. CRITICAL READING

○ An awareness of:

- the **content** of the message
- the **style** and **method** of communication,
- understanding of how the **content** and **method combine** to **create** the **meaning** of the message
- **Example**: results published in a scientific paper may be given more credibility than results presented at a departmental seminar

○ **Actively listening, reading or viewing** information to gain a complete and accurate understanding of the communicated message

○ **Example**: extracting specific detail from an academic paper

D. PRESENTATION OF DATA

- An understanding of the use of:
 - Images
 - Graphs
 - Other methods
- **Example**, using appropriate graphing techniques in a scientific report, or well-chosen graphics to convey a concept.

EXAMPLES OF “BAD WRITING”

- "Teaching is like a disease; those of you who have it are lucky, you are blessed,"(From the New York Times, Jan 18, 1989)
- Dear Fellow Resident: Washington is a city that only cares about one thing: money, power and politics (The Washington Weekly, Oct 3, 2007)
- TODAY'S QUESTION: Efforts to make English the official language is gaining strength throughout the U.S. What is your reaction? (N.Y. Daily News)

3. GROUP INTERACTIONS - INCENTIVES

- “A group is two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person” (Shaw M E 1976)

“Two heads are better than one” .

GROUP INTERACTIONS - BENEFITS

- Student's viewpoint, some of the real positives of tackling a problem in a group include:
 - finding out someone else's viewpoint, approach, idea or perspective
 - spreading the workload amongst the group
 - combining talents and using people's particular strengths to the best advantage
 - helping individuals to discover what they know and what they have yet to discover

GROUP INTERACTIONS - BENEFITS

Educational perspective, working in groups is valued because it:

- gives opportunities for students to develop generic skills such as:
 - Team working
 - Negotiation
 - Cooperation
 - Leadership
- promotes collaborative learning
- allows a topic to be explored in greater breadth and depth
- enables the construction of authentic workplace problems
- encourages deep, higher level thinking

PROBLEMS IN GROUP WORK

- Group members **not contributing**
- Very **quiet** group members
- **Over-talkative** group members
- An individual who **dominates**
- People **missing meetings**
- **Misinterpreting** the task
- **Getting off** task

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Smile
- Be appreciative
- Pay attention to others
- Practice active listening
- Bring people together
- Resolve conflicts
- Communicate clearly
- Humor
- See it from their side
- Don't complain

IDEAL GROUP ROLES

○ **Facilitator**

- Responsible for chairing meetings.

○ **Timekeeper**

- Makes sure the meeting runs to time.

○ **Recorder/note-taker**

- Takes and distributes the minutes of the meeting.

○ **Devil's advocate**

- Someone who argues against the group's position, to help determine the validity of that position.

○ **Team player**

- Gives support to other roles by enthusiastic following.

4. LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

- “Leadership is a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” -- Chemers, M. M. (2002)
- “Management is a kind of leadership in which the achievement of organizational goals is paramount.”-- Zaleznik, A. (1977).
 - Management involves power by position.
 - Leadership involves power by influence.

TELLING & SELLING

- A salesperson can't sell a product to a customer without information.
- The same salesperson won't sell anything by only giving the customer product information.
- The information must accompany a sales pitch explaining the benefits of the product.
- For trainers, the product is knowledge and/or skills.

GUIDING AND DIRECTING

Unlike telling and selling, guiding and directing are polar opposites

Directing	Guiding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ One-way communication▶ Follows the "book"▶ Views side tracks and challenges as a diversion▶ Static▶ Closed-ended▶ Linear▶ Instructor controls entire learning environment and spoon feeds information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Two-way communication▶ Learns from the group▶ Takes advantage of side tracks and challenges as an opportunity for new learning▶ Fluid▶ Open-ended▶ Branched▶ Instructor facilitates learning and allows for self discovery

FEARS IN GROUP MANAGEMENT

- Challenging to move from directing to guiding
- There is a fear of losing control that drives many folks to direct the class
- The **trick** to classroom management is learning to balance the flexibility required to **meet learners' needs** with the ability to **refocus the class**.