

## **What is effective communication?**

Verbal communication is the act of imparting information with people via the spoken word. Primarily this is done by oral interaction, and this can include written communication (Verderber 1999, p. 22). In order to understand how to communicate effectively, there is a process that explains how it accomplished. Gamble, T (2005, pp. 10-13) illustrates the model of communication as a method which has seven elemental steps. The first step is sender. The sender is the information source where the first person starts a verbal conversation. The sender is also known as a transmitter, someone who transmits information to the receiving end of a message. Second step is receiver. The receiver interprets the information generated through talk, which is then picked up by the receiver who then encodes all the data contained in exchanged dialogue. Fourth step is feedback. Feedback is usually the response to the direct message between two or more people. Fifth step is channel. The fifth step is about how all humans' use sensory perception as an awareness tool to either attune or detune into sights and sounds of their surroundings (Gamble, T 2005, p. 11).sixth step is context or setting. The context just relates to where a meeting takes place to communicate. The seventh step is noise. Noise refers to interference or sounds that can distort a conversation, and the way information travels from sender to receiver.

Everyday life in some way always involves conveying communication to others. Its how we communicate that is important. Gamble, T (2005, p. 5) writes that the capacity to communicate is the vital daily constituent which is beneficial to all humanity, as it is universally understood. There are four important factors to remember in conjunction with communication theory. As Mohan et al. (2008, p. 35) discusses the direct emphasis and purpose of verbal communication is to maintain a direct vehicle to self-express words with meanings .The components of the verbal model structure of language are: Who conveyed the message? How is the message encoded within a particular setting? How is the message interpreted? Finally, how does the message receiver decode the message? (Mohan et al. 2008, pp. 9-12).To be effective in verbal communication skills there needs to be certain traits, which account for ways to make the outcome reachable. Gamble, T (2005,

pp. 8-9) explains that good communication practices are crucial in understanding relationships, and people. Effective communication on a whole is essential to the dynamics of a healthy, successful society. Verderber (1999, pp. 67-72) pinpoints that clarity increases actual verbal communication abilities. Its core functions are indispensable in the following characteristics:-

- Use a clear, concise, audible tone of voice.
- Acknowledge cultural background differences.
- Be inclusive in the use of language.
- Do not use jargon that may conflict with others or confuse subject matter.
- Use a tone of opinion which will not offend others in a contextual setting.
- Be concise in the use of everyday plain speaker's linguistics.
- Always acknowledge the speaker/s who has spoken.
- Empathetic
- Socially aware
- Understanding others personal space.

Reflecting back on the seven key elements of the communication process are decisive in determining what may result in breakdown of communication between two or more people in a personal, professional oriented setting. From the beginning to the end of a public conversation meeting where the sender sends the message to the receiver in a noisy three-dimensional setting, it can have an affect on the communication channel, especially how feedback response is relayed back to the sender. A good example of this is a real life situation that I have personally experienced. I will now examine a past conversation I had with a stranger that took place at a busy, noisy intersection road. Here is the transcript of the original message:-

Me (Alecia): Hi, my car has broken down.

Stranger: Where is your car stationed?

Me (Alecia): Can you please help me or not?

Me (Alecia): I need you to offer me some assistance.

Stranger: What? Sorry, I cannot hear you!

Stranger: Did you say intermittence?

Me (Alecia): No.

Stranger: What do you mean then?

Me (Alecia): I need help with my car.

Stranger: If you cannot explain what you need done, then why ask me.

Me (Alecia): Thanks a lot and goodbye.

The cause of breakdown here was because noise existed in the element of communication. The noise muffled my words as I tried to speak to the stranger that I met. Therefore a receiver barrier, misunderstanding of words encoded in my message from me to the receiver (stranger) occurred. Obviously, the stranger could not decode the words I said properly. This point 'sorry, I cannot hear you', is particularly where the barrier started. Feedback barrier was the overall strangers reaction then went on relaying (feedback) to me, questioning what I said was actually right. Replying to me, 'Did you say intermittence?' In the end the response given to was that what I said about needing 'assistance' was distorted by the hustle and bustle of the setting(surroundings), and by noise interference. Nevertheless, the breakdown was also partly due to a psychosocial barrier (communication vehicle), the strangers' inattentive listening ability to attune into what I was saying in the first place. All I was asking of the stranger was some help with my car. The strangers' ability to communicate was masked by aggression (tone of voice). It is exhibited in this example, 'If you cannot explain what you need done, then why ask me'. The communication then abruptly halted.

To overcome this breakdown in communication a different format of communication may be needed to attract a visible 'panacea' (cure). It could have been customary to inform the receiver on the receiving end of that message via written (verbal) or graphic symbols. Voicing 'my car has broken', would have been easier said expressed through pictures/symbols and written communication. This would have mostly likely helped the stranger decipher the message because translated pictures help the viewer to connect visions with the written or graphic message.

## References

Gamble, TK & Gamble, M, 2005, *Communication works*, 8th ed, McGraw-Hill, Boston.

Mohan, T, 2008, *Communicating as professionals*, 2nd ed, Thomson Learning Australia, South Melbourne.

Verderber, RF, 1999, *Communicate!* , 9th ed, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California.