

## Communication Skills I

1º semestre (P1)

### *In-Class Activity*

**Topic:** Non-Verbal Communication

**Week 3** [24-27 September]

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### **In-Class Activity: Illustrative Hand Gestures for Public Speaking**

#### **Objective:**

This exercise aims to help computer science students enhance their communication skills by incorporating hand gestures to support and clarify their verbal explanations. Students will practice using gestures such as "listing," "increase/decrease," "emblems," "leveling," "this & that," and "big & small" to complement technical explanations, making their presentations clearer and more engaging.

#### **By the end of the exercise, students should:**

- Understand how hand gestures can enhance communication, especially for complex technical topics.
- Practice aligning gestures with verbal explanations to improve clarity and engagement.
- Feel more comfortable using non-verbal cues in professional presentations and discussions.

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#### **Instructions:**

##### **Part 1: Quick Briefing (5 minutes)**

1. **Divide the Team:** Since there are 5 team members, assign 1 facilitator who will guide the others through the challenges and provide additional feedback. The remaining 4 members will participate in the hand gesture challenges.
2. **Topic Preparation:** Each team member will prepare a 1-minute explanation of a technical concept or project idea (can be related to their work, studies, or a common tech topic like cybersecurity, cloud computing, etc.).

## Part 2: Gesture Challenges (15 minutes)

### Instructions:

### Step-by-Step Breakdown:

#### Part 1: Search online images of the following hand gestures.

#### Gesture Definitions:

- o **Listing Gesture:** Use one finger for each item in a list. (E.g., counting on fingers.)
- o **Increase/Decrease:** Raising or lowering a hand to represent growth or reduction.
- o **Emblems:** Commonly recognized gestures, such as a thumbs-up or a peace sign, to convey specific meanings.
- o **Leveling:** Hands held horizontally to suggest comparison or balancing between two or more items.
- o **This & That:** Alternating between pointing to two different spots or concepts to indicate comparison or alternatives.
- o **Big & Small:** Using hands to show size differences or scale, making abstract concepts more tangible.

#### Part 2: Group Task: Select a Technical Topic

- o **Choose a computer science topic or a random topic that you find easy to explain.**  
**Example topics:**

- Explain how binary search works.
- Compare object-oriented programming with functional programming.
- Describe the differences between TCP and UDP protocols.
- Explain the concept of recursion.

Example of a script with hand gesture instructions in yellow:

As I work on improving my **communication skills**, I've noticed a few key areas for growth **(gesture: increase by raising my hand to indicate growth)**. One important skill is learning how to **distinguish between different communication techniques** **(gesture: this & that by pointing to two separate areas)** like offering constructive feedback versus just criticizing. For example, when giving feedback, it's essential to focus on improvement, not harsh **contrasts** **(gesture: leveling to show the balance needed in feedback)**, avoiding extreme comparisons

between what's good and bad. Additionally, I've learned that while presenting, it's important to **avoid fidgeting** (gesture: **big & small** to show how even small distracting movements can have a big impact or show **fidgeting** to exemplify what you are saying). Instead, gestures should be deliberate and aligned with what I'm saying, so I can communicate clearly and confidently.

### Part 3: Choose Gesture Types [try to use as much as you can].

#### o Examples:

- Explaining recursion - must incorporate **listing gestures** when breaking down recursive calls.
- Comparing TCP vs UDP - must use **leveling gestures** to visually compare the two protocols.
- Explaining a sorting algorithm - must use **increase/decrease** gestures to illustrate changes in data order.
- **Listing Gesture (Binary Search Explanation):**  
First, we check the middle of the array (finger 1), then decide if the target is greater or smaller (finger 2 or 3), and we repeat the process until we find the target (finger 4).
- **Increase/Decrease Gesture (Bubble Sort Explanation):**  
As we move through the list, larger numbers bubble to the top (raise hand), while smaller numbers sink down (lower hand).
- **Gesture:** Use hands to mimic the upward and downward movement of data during sorting.
- **Emblems Gesture (TCP vs UDP Comparison):**  
TCP is reliable and ensures data is received correctly (thumbs-up), while UDP is faster but less reliable (waving hand for speed).
- **Gesture:** Use common emblems like a thumbs-up to signify reliability and a hand wave for speed.

### 2. Prepare the Explanation:

- o Your team must decide how to integrate the assigned gesture into their explanation naturally and effectively.

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### Part 3: Presentation & Peer Review

#### 1. Present to the Group:

- o Each group presents their topic in front of the class, ensuring they incorporate their assigned gestures.
- o The presentation should last no longer than 3 minutes.

#### 2. Peer Feedback:

- o After each presentation, the team self-reflect based on the following:
  - How effectively were the gestures used to support the explanation?
  - Was the connection between the gestures and the topic clear and logical?
  - Did the gestures make the explanation easier to understand?

### Part 4: Reflection & Discussion (if time permits, otherwise discuss with your colleagues, friends or family members outside the classroom).

#### • Class Reflection:

After all presentations, lead a class discussion on the following points:

- o Which gestures felt most natural to use?
- o Did the gestures help clarify the technical explanation? How?
- o How might these gestures be useful in future professional settings, such as presentations or interviews?
- o Were there any moments where gestures felt awkward or forced?
- o How can you apply what you've learned to future team meetings or presentations?
- o Handling Nervousness: Talk about strategies for overcoming stiffness or nervous energy during presentations, such as focusing on natural gestures or deep breathing.

#### Sources:

- <https://www.trevorambrose.com/how-to-use-your-hands-effectively-when-giving-a-speech/>
- <https://rosemaryravinal.com/hand-gestures-video-conference-zoom/>