

Soft Skills II

LSRW Skills

Unit 1

Listening Comprehension

Listening, like reading, is a receptive and not a productive skill. Communication is a two way traffic or a two sided process which requires at least two parties- the speaker and the listener. A message can't be communicated unless there is someone to receive it. The speaker or the sender of the message communicates a message through speech symbols. The listener receives these symbols. His mind interprets those symbols and converts these speech symbols into a meaningful message. By and large it depends upon the listener's ability how he comprehends the oral message through listening. But if the listener is not actively involved in oral communication then he fails to comprehend the oral message. Thus, listening comprehension may be defined as an ability to understand the messages, communicated orally.

Listening plays a significant role in the interactive process of business transactions. Oral communication is said to be the life blood of our personal and business lives. According to Johnson, "Listening is the ability to understand and respond effectively to oral communication." listening is important for various reasons. We gather information and acquire knowledge through listening. A student listens to the lectures and classroom discussions attentively and acquires knowledge. Understanding speech through listening and speaking understandably are the two basic language skills which go hand in hand. If we are not able to listen effectively, we will cut a sorry figure. We will likely be in some trouble or in some embarrassing situation. All successful executives and managers are usually good listeners.

We listen for socialisation, for relaxation, for inspiration, for elevation and sometimes even for whiling away leisure time. Unless we listen to the points made or views expressed by the other participants in a speech situation, we would not be able to react rightly and to put forward cogently arguments in support of our views.

Effective listening comprehension plays a vital role in the day today working of the professionals. Effective listening, speaking and writing are the different steps of the ladder of success. Taylor gives some guidelines to follow if a person wants to be an effective listener:

- Prepare to listen
- Avoid pre judgement
- Be open minded
- Establish eye contact
- Watch for signals
- Extract main points
- Give feedback (positive)
- Make notes

Sender-message-receiver

Stages in the development of listening skills-

1. Casual listening- The basic experience in listening, understanding and recognition can be considered the first stage in the development of the listening skill.
2. Attentive listening- At this stage the learner recollects and comprehends the meaning of the message without the help of any visual presentations. This is possible when the learner is able to stay back from memory the recorded message. This is the second stage of the development of listening skill and is called attentive listening.
3. Focused listening- In the next stage, the stage of focused listening, the learner uses the language code. He forms certain images in the mind and name them using language code.
4. Analytical listening- The next stage is called analytical listening, which is very essential for creative thinking and creative writing. At this stage, the learner develops the ability to analyse, evaluate.

Hearing and Listening-

Hearing and listening are two different activities. Hearing is primarily a physical act that depends on the ears. Unless there is a physical disability or problems such as noise or distance it happens automatically. It requires no special efforts as such from the listener.

Listening, on the other hand is a much more conscious activity that demands a lot more than just hearing. It requires that the listener to hear, to analyse, to judge and conclude.

Types of Listening-

1. Passive Listening- Sometimes we hear somebody's speech without comprehending it. In such cases the mind perceives no message and thus no communication takes place. Most of the time such a situation arises due to the inattentiveness of the listener. This type of listening is often known as passive listening. Such type of listening is not desirable in business communication.
2. Active Listening- When the listener listens to one's speech attentively and comprehends its meaning, it is known as active listening. In such sort of listening, the listener is actively involved in the process of communications. Listener's attentiveness provides an impetus to the speaker to present his message more enthusiastically and more sincerely.
3. Selective Listening- It is listening to parts of the conversation while ignoring most of it. This is the kind of listening we practice often while listening to repeated public announcement or even the tv news if we are looking out for some specific information.
4. Attentive Listening- In attentive listening the listener listens to the speaker completely, attentively without ignoring any part of the speech. This kind of listening we find when there is a discussion.
5. Critical Listening- It allows us to form an opinion of the topic being discussed and even design our response appropriately.
6. Empathetic Listening- It is a listening not only with one's ears but one's heart. This is ultimate kind of listening that is done not just to listen but to understand the speaker's world as he sees it.

7. Ignoring- This is a kind of listening where the listener is entirely ignoring the message as well as the message giver. He might be pretending to listen while doing or thinking something else. This can be very damaging as it can result to a total breakdown of communication.

Reading skill

Reading, like listening is a receptive skill. Reading does not mean simply to read the word symbols without grasping their meaning. In reading, the eyes come in contact with certain words which are used to represent certain ideas. Mind perceives the meaning of those words which ultimately convey a message. Thus, the sender sends a message through some written words and the receiver receives it after reading those written word symbols. This process is known as reading comprehension i.e. understanding through words or reading. There is a large demand on this skill in practical life and it can be developed with intelligent effort like any other skill.

Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. When you read the newspaper, you're probably not reading it word by word; instead you're scanning the text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading. People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time.

There are many strategies that can be used when skimming. Some people read the first and last paragraphs using headings, summarizes and other organizes as they move down the pages or screen. You might read the title, subtitles, sub heading and illustrations. Consider reading the first sentence of each paragraph. This technique is useful when you're seeking specific information rather than reading for comprehension. Skimming works well to find dates, names and places. It might be used to review graphs, tables and charts.

It is used to complete a lot of reading in a short period. It can be described as a kind of superficial reading, skipping some parts. In this method the reader does not fix his eye on each and every word. He lets it move from one group of words to some other. It must be remembered that the 'skips' in skimming are not of equal length and the fixations are not regularly paced.

Scanning is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases.

Reading off a computer screen has become a growing concern. Research shows that people have a difficulty reading off a computer screen than off paper. Although they can read and comprehend even on the paper, skimming on the computer is much slower than on paper.

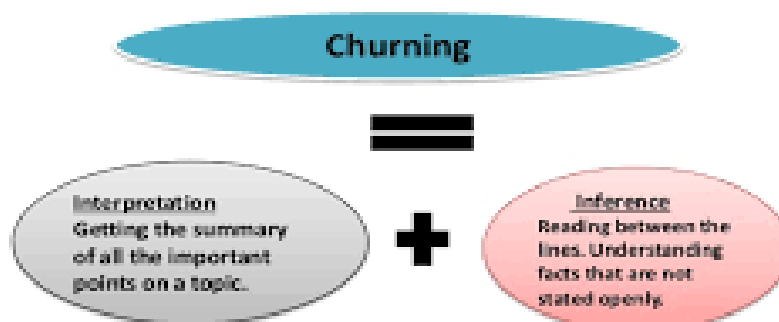
Scanning is a method of reading a particular paragraph, passage or chapter in which an individual is searching for specific facts related to a particular subject. An individual is scanning a particular piece of written material is not actually reading the material very carefully, but is instead just searching for a particular piece of

information very quickly. It is only useful if the individual knows exactly what he or she is looking for in a particular material. This is because scanning is not an effective way of studying all of the information covered in a particular passage as method of finding specific information.

Churning

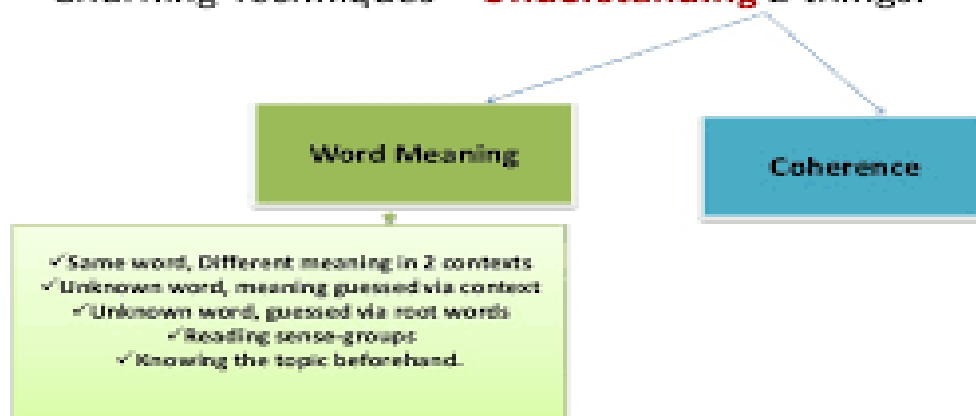
Style 3 : Churning

- Churning means interpretation and inference.



Techniques to do Churning

Churning Techniques = **Understanding** 2 things:



Assimilation

Reading Style 4 : Assimilating

When we attempt to make a mental map of the entire passage that we have read, it is called assimilating.

When we say we have understood a concept after reading a chapter, we have actually done assimilation.

Tongue twisters

Tongue twisters are a great way to practice and improve pronunciation and fluency. They can also help to improve accents by using alliteration, which is the repetition of one sound.

1. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?
2. Betty Botter bought some butter
But she said the butter's bitter
If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter
But a bit of better butter will make my batter better
So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter
3. How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood
As a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood
4. She sells seashells by the seashore
5. How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?
6. I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream

7. I saw Susie sitting in a shoeshine shop
8. Susie works in a shoeshine shop. Where she shines she sits, and where she sits she shines
9. Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair. Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy, was he?
10. Can you can a can as a canner can can a can?

Selection of words and phrases in technical communication-

Word is a basic unit in a sentence, without words no written communication is possible. The basic purpose of technical writing is to convey ideas and observations to others. Below are mentioned some guidelines to be followed while choosing words for technical communication.

- Prefer short and familiar words
- Prefer concrete and specific words to abstract and general words
- Avoid excessive use of jargons
- Avoid phrases and clauses
- Avoid clichés (over used phrases) e.g. as light as a feather, flat as a pancake
- Avoid bombastic (large) words
- Avoid using abbreviations
- Avoid circumlocution (indirect expressions)

Requisites of Sentence Construction

A sentence is a collection of words that makes a complete sense.

Some pre-requisites of a good sentence construction which a technocrat should pay attention while writing a sentence are as follows:

- **Avoid odd sentence structure-** Awkward sentence structure should be avoided. E.g.
A man is standing in black suit. (Original)
A man in black suit is standing. (Revised)
- **Audience-** The construction of a sentence depends not only with words but will also depend on the kind of audience you are writing for. Regarding audience you need to be sensitive to their following aspects: educational background, their expectations, their intelligence level, age group, gender etc.
- **Avoid sentence fragments-** Sentence fragment means incomplete sentence. E.g. John working extra hard on his project lately. (Original)
John has been working extra hard on his project lately. (Revised)
- **Prefer short sentences-** Simplicity is the key of effective and a good sentence. It can be achieved by writing short sentences. Less information should be put into a sentence at a time to make the sentence short and easy to understand. You can write simple and short sentences by breaking too long sentences into two simple sentences. Look at following sentences:
Original- The experiment was over. I completed the report. I shut down the power supply. I submitted the report to the instructor. I left the laboratory.

Revised- I completed the report as soon as the experiment was over. After shutting down the power supply, I submitted the report to my instructor and left the laboratory.

- **Avoid roundabout expressions-** While it is possible to write a sentence in many ways, some ways are more direct than others. Try to be exact and direct. For example,

Original- If there are any points on which you require explanation or further details, we shall be glad to furnish such additional details as may be required by telephone.

Revised- If you have any questions, please contact us over telephone.

Original- Persons other than the primary beneficiary may not receive these dividends.

Revised- Only the primary beneficiary may receive these dividends.

- **Be economical with words-** Economising of words means omit words which do not contribute any information to the meaning. E.g.

I was born in summer, the month of July. (Original)

I was born in July. (Revised)

- **Prefer right ordering and proper emphasis-** In order to convey the exact meaning of what you wish to say, you must put words in the right order. In order to place the important idea either in the beginning or at the end of the sentence. For example,

Original- The report was completed in time. The completion took place in spite of difficulties.

Revised- In spite of difficulties, the report was completed in time.

- **Avoid ambiguous sentences-** Ambiguity is a major hindrance to clarity as it often mars the meaning of sentence. Sometimes, the modifiers in a sentence are misplaced or inappropriate words are used which makes the sentences ambiguous.

Original- The delay in transit nearly drove the manager frantic.

Revised- The delay in transit drove the manager nearly frantic.

Original- He noticed a large stain in the rug that was right in the centre.

Revised- He noticed a large stain in the centre of the rug.

- **Prefer active voice sentences-** Passive voice sentences increases the length of sentences and often result in vagueness. E.g. My first visit to your organization will always be remembered. (Passive)

I will always remember my first visit to your organization. (Active)

Passive- My first visit to your organisation will always be remembered.

Active- I will always remember my first visit to your organisation.

- **Concord (Verb Subject Agreement)-** Rules of concord must be followed strictly. i.e. A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb. E.g. Ram or Shyam is going. Ram and Shyam are going.

- **Avoid pleonasm or redundant expressions-** To write with simplicity and clarity, avoid using excess words which do not contribute any meaning to the sentence. Sometimes you need to reconstruct the sentence while eliminating these extra phrases, while at other times you can just delete them. Some examples are given below:

Original-It has been glaringly noticed from the records of the accounts that the company faced great loss in this fiscal year.

Revised-The records of the account indicate that the company faced great loss in this fiscal year.

Original- The company is not prepared to expand at this point of time.

Revised- The company is not prepared to expand now.

- **Avoid acronyms and abbreviations**
- **Avoid cluttering phrases-** Sentences often become long because of cluttering phrases. You can replace these phrases with shorter wording, without loss of meaning. Let us look at some example:

Original-In the event of procrastination and dilatory action the operations will be shunned.

The phrase 'in the event of' is uneconomical and can be substituted by 'if' without loss of meaning. Similarly 'procrastination' and 'dilatory action' can be replaced by 'delay in action'.

Revised-If there is delay in action, the operations will be cancelled.

Original-I take this opportunity to tell you that you are an excellent leader.

Revised-You are an excellent leader.

Techniques of Writing-

- Globalization
- Organization
- Correct style
- Clarity
- Grammar rules and regulations
- Accuracy of information and expression
- Appropriate words and phrases
- Use technical terms
- Use direct language
- Use specific words

Paragraph Development- Paragraph is a unit of writing longer than a sentence. In other words paragraph is a group of related sentences which express a single idea. A paragraph may express an opinion; provide information through the use of facts and details.

Requisites of a paragraph development-

A good paragraph though is formed by developing an idea but there are some other central components of a paragraph development that helps to make a paragraph good. They are:-

- **Topic sentence-** Topic sentence is a sentence that expresses the **main idea** of a paragraph. This is also known as key sentence or theme sentence. All the other sentences in the paragraph must explain the topic sentence. Topic sentence gives unity to a paragraph. It either develops the idea contained in the paragraph or leads to it. It brings coherency in the paragraph. It binds all the sentences together in a paragraph. It either develops the idea contained in the paragraph or leads to it. It also sums up the paragraph.
- **Coherence-** Coherence refers to the **clear and logical thinking of ideas** in a paragraph in such a way that a thought expressed in a sentence easily leads to the thought in next sentence and so on. The word coherence literary means consistency or harmony, particularly of speech, thoughts, ideas and reasoning. A coherent form of writing has clear and easy expression with logical development of thought. All necessary items of information and ideas should

be presented in a sensible manner. There are four basic mechanical considerations in providing this linking of sentences.

1. By use of pronouns
 2. Repetition of key words
 3. Use of transitional tags or connectives (but, if, Therefore)
 4. Use of parallel grammatical structures e.g. either or, neither nor, both and, not only but also.
- **Unity**- Unity refers to one as a **whole or oneness**. All the parts of a paragraph should contribute to one effect and lead to unified purpose. One idea should be expressed in one sentence and avoid too much lengthy sentences. We have to avoid ambiguity and verbosity in style, unnecessary idioms and phrases and loosely hanging fragments. Unity can be maintained in a paragraph by developing the paragraph in any one order or technique of paragraph development.

Inductive order- In inductive order the writer moves from particular statement to general statement. The writer gives detailed arguments or illustrations which finally lead to the conclusion. The paragraph begins with certain information and concludes with a topic sentence. E.g.

Ram dies.

Mohan dies.

They are human beings.

Hence, we can say that man is mortal.

Socrates is a human and mortal.

Pluto is a human and mortal.

Alexander is a human and mortal.

Hence, we can say that all humans are mortal.

In the above statement, a universal conclusion has been taken out from a premise which is a particular statement.

Deductive order- In deductive order the writer moves from general to particular statement. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in the paragraph. Starting from general statements the writer finally tries to deduce his conclusion logically. E.g.

All animals are mortal.

All humans are animals.

So, all humans are mortal.

This gives the paragraph a direct straight forward style which most report writers prefer.

Man is mortal.

Since Ram and Mohan are men, they are mortal.

Chronological order- In this order time is considered to be the standard for framing and organizing the ideas. It is the **natural order of narration** in which one event leads to another. This method is used to document time or the step in an instruction. It can be called the narration of the events through pointing out the **date, year and time**. It helps the reader to grasp the factual points. E.g. At 1:15

pm, we arrived at the site and assessed the patient's condition, taking vitals (pulse, respiration etc.). At 1:17 pm, we shifted him to the emergency ward. By 1:30 pm he was given the injection and at 1:45 pm the patient felt better.

It is also used to document steps in an instruction. Readers generally focus their attention on the first several points more than on the last few ideas. Therefore, they should be organized by importance. The more important ideas should be placed above the less important ones.

Spatial order- (according to area or space) If technocrat is writing to describe the parts of a machine or a plot of ground, he will like to organize his text spatially. The writer will describe **what he sees as it appears in space**- left to right, top to bottom, inside to outside or clockwise. This method helps the reader to visualize what he sees and, therefore, it is better to understand the physical qualities of the subject matter. The method further helps the reader to envision the layout of the land the writer describes or the placement of each component within the machine. E.g. The different steps in solar cooker making:-

Step 1 Make a wooden box and adjust a glass and mirror in that box

Step 2

Linear order- The literal meaning of the word linear is of or **in lines** or involving one dimension. In a paragraph, one sentence leads to the next one and thus the sentences proceed towards their goal. A **logical sequence** is thus followed by the sentences of a paragraph. The linear method also contributes to the unity of a paragraph. The technical writers often pay attention to this order and try to write on the basis of the linear order.

Interrupted method- It is **not a popular method** with the technical writers. It is only occasionally used. Whenever the writer gives a break to the line of thought and gives a turn to the ideas to produce the desired effect, interrupted method is said to be used by the writer. In such organization, the topic sentence may occur in the middle of the paragraph.

Argumentative and expository order- In this order the writer moves in a discussion manner considering the merits and demerits. Dialogue is an essential component of this sort of writing. It means a talk or conversation between two groups or two people. In today's competitive age conversational skill is a must for success.

- **Emphasis-** Emphasis means stressing the central idea of the paragraph. It helps in bringing one's writing nearer to its goal. It intensifies the effect and brings out the main theme. Emphasis can be done by using italics, repetition or using synonyms of key words. Stressing the gravity with the help of question and finally with the use of topic sentence. The mechanical devices such as underline, quotation marks, bold, capital font, bullets, colour effect can be used to emphasize an idea.
- **Adequate development-** A paragraph is adequately developed when it describes, explains and support the topic sentence. There are five steps involved in developing a paragraph:

- i. Formulation of topic sentence- A topic sentence announces and controls the content of a paragraph. Topic sentence can occur at four major points in a paragraph. In the beginning, in middle, at end or both at beginning and at end.
 - ii. Explanation of topic sentence- Paragraph development continues with the explanation of the information presented in the topic sentence of the paragraph.
 - iii. Example- Example serves as a sign or representation of the relationship established in the main idea and explanation portions of the paragraph.
 - iv. Explanation of example- It means explanation of each example and its relevance to the topic sentence.
 - v. Relationship of example and idea- The relationship between the example and idea should always be expressed.
- **Length-** As a general rule keep the paragraph short but not at the cost of unity and coherence. The length of a paragraph depends on content to achieve unity and type of document.

Techniques/ orders for paragraph development-

1. Chronological order
2. Linear order
3. Inductive order
4. Deductive order
5. Spatial order
6. Interrupted order
7. Argumentative order

Unit 2

Conversational & Social Skills

Features for an Effective Communication- (Business Communication, Lesikar)

1. Specific and technical content
2. Formal in style
3. Objectivity
4. For specific audience
5. Technical vocabulary
6. Precision
7. Brevity
8. Accuracy
9. Directness
10. Simplicity
11. Use of active voice sentences-
12. **Use of familiar and easy words-** Technical writing does not require verbose style or circumlocution. Hence, the writer should not use too many words where few would do. He should use familiar words.
13. **Use of clear sentences-** The writer should place the main idea at the outset. He should follow normal word order (subject-verb-object). In this word

order, the first sentence is the topic sentence in which the main idea is presented.

14. Use of sentences of moderate length- Experts are of the opinion that sentences should be of moderate length. Too much short or too much long sentences make the writings either too simple or too difficult. Generally, sentences of 12 to 25 words should be written.

15. Avoid redundant phrases

16. Avoid inaccurate expressions

17. Logical division of paragraph

18. Avoid noun clusters

19. Avoid acronyms and abbreviations

Role/ Importance of Technical Communication-

1. **Exchanging of information-** In government or semi government, schools, offices and hospitals and different business establishments people have to supply and also receive information through an official document. All the information is circulated in the organisation with the help of communication. The success of any organisation is largely recognised by the quality and quantity of information flowing through its personnel. An organisation becomes an organised whole because of its communication. It is this communication which enables employees to work together. It is the vehicle through which management performs all its functions. It is impossible for an organisation to survive without communication, for all its activities would come to a standstill. Therefore, its importance can never be ignored.
2. **To instruct-** Technical communication is also used in order to instruct. Technocrats give instructions for using equipments or for performing duties. Technical communication plays a pivotal role in an organisation, whether it is a business enterprise, an industry or an academic institution. All managerial or administrative activities involve communication, be it planning, organising, recruiting, coordinating or decision making. When you read reports, give instructions or read brochures and manuals, you are involved in the process of communication.e.g. papers published by research and development organisations bring to light their progress.
3. **Persuasion-** A technocrat uses the technical writing for persuasion also. He may prepare a document to persuade readers to do certain things. Communication helps in persuading or convincing someone for a desired response. Written as well as oral communication is used to influence others.
4. **Counselling-** Seniors counsel the subordinate staff from time to time whenever they face some difficulty at their work place.
5. **Coordination-** Communication is indeed an effective tool in coordinating the working of the employees of different departments or positions. Mutual understanding, joint consultation, seeking suggestions etc are all possible through formal or informal communication. It leads to sharing ideas freely and in building up a tension free atmosphere.
6. **Education-** Business firms frequently use effective methods of communications to educate workers and consumers. They train and direct their employees for greater productivity and educate consumers about the quality and uses of products. Good communication helps in moulding employees' behaviour favourably. It will lead to better industrial relations and go a long way towards achieving greater acceptance of new ideas. Professional communication must be

studied by the students of management so that they are able to do their business correspondence with confidence.

7. Motivation

8. **Extension of one's interpersonal skills-** Technical communication helps in extension of one's interpersonal communication skills. Technical writing conveys your power of thinking logically even to the readers.

9. **Business Correspondence-** Technical writing conducts business. Through technical correspondence instructions are maintained, technical description and specifications are prepared, summaries and resumes are prepared and sites on the worldwide web are prepared which inform the world about one's companies product. Communication and business activity cannot be separated.

Communication system plays the same in an organisation as the nervous system in the human body.

Feedback

Another element in the communication process is feedback. Each party in an interaction continuously sends messages back to the other. This return process is called feedback. Feedback tells the source how the receiver has interpreted each message. For example, if at the airport you ask your departing friend about his itinerary, and he replies that he didn't pack one, you know your message has not been understood. This kind of feedback, which conveys lack of understanding, is known as negative feedback. Positive feedback, on the other hand, indicates that the receiver has understood the source's message.

It does not necessarily mean that he or she agrees with the source, just that the message was interpreted accurately. Feedback can also be ambiguous, not clearly positive or negative. "I see" and "mm-hmm" can be examples of ambiguous feedback. The effective communicator is always sensitive to feedback and constantly modifies his or her messages as a result of the feedback received. After a discreet pause, for example, you might ask your friend not about his "itinerary" but about the cities he plans to visit. Feedback doesn't have to come from others. We can and do get feedback from our own messages. The fact that we can hear the words we speak and see the sentences we write sometimes lets us correct our own mistakes

Meaning of Conversation

According to Merriam Webster conversation means oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions, or ideas.

Speech and Conversation

- Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain the listeners.
- Speeches involve thoughts that are logically organized and structured, whereas conversations may wander around subjects.
- Speeches use formalized language, while conversation may use slang, profanity, or poor grammar.

- Speeches are often delivered in deliberate, intentional settings and contexts, whereas conversations may arise spontaneously
- Conversation is a form of interactive, spontaneous communication between two or more people who are following rules of etiquette.
- Conversation is the expression and exchange of individual ideas through talking with other people; also, an instance of such talking

You may already notice the similarities: both conversation and public speaking involve speakers and audiences, as well as messages exchanged between the two parties. Depending on to whom you're speaking, you'll adjust your message based on both your audience and the context of your speech or conversation. And of course, a good conversation and a good speech both share elements of compelling and engaging storytelling.

Competence Relationships

- relationship is the capacity to develop and maintain a constructive working alliance with clients
- relationship competency is the foundation and the prerequisite for all the other competencies in professional world
- Characteristics of the individual that facilitate the acquisition, development, and maintenance of mutually satisfying relationships

Social Skills

Social skills are the skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance. Human beings are sociable creatures and we have developed many ways to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others.

Here is a list of the top five social skills that employers seek in candidates for employment.

1. Empathy

To interact well with others, you must be able to understand how they are feeling. That's a two-part undertaking. First, you need to understand how people feel — for instance, maybe a customer feels frustrated by a broken widget or a co-worker feels overwhelmed by a project. The second aspect of empathy is relating to others.

Empathy is especially critical when dealing with clients who come to you with questions or problems. You need to express genuine concern for their issues, as well as helping to solve them.

Employees value this skill because it furthers collaboration and leads to strong workplace relationships.

2. Cooperation

Cooperation is especially important when you work in a team, where you will be required to partner with others to reach a common goal. However, even if you do not work in a team, cooperation is still necessary on those occasions when you are asked to work alongside colleagues to help achieve the goals of your organization.

Employers have a preference for candidates who can work well with others, and won't obstruct progress.

3. Verbal and Written Communication

Verbal communication is the ability to express yourself using clear language that others can understand. You'll need solid verbal communication skills whenever you speak to others in person or on the phone. Written communication comes into play whenever you write an email, text, letter, report, or presentation – here, appropriate grammar, spelling, and format are necessary.

No matter what your role is at the company, communication skills are essential. Without them, you won't be able to share details about what you're working on, why it's important, and when you need help from others.

4. Listening

Another important communication skill that helps you interact well with others is listening. You need to be able to listen carefully to what your employer tells you to do, to what your colleagues say in a meeting, and to what your employees ask of you. You must listen to clients' concerns, and express to them that you have understood them.

People respond well to others when they feel they are being heard.

5. Nonverbal Communication

While verbal communication is an important skill, so is nonverbal communication. Through your body language, eye contact, and facial expressions, you can express that you are an empathetic person who carefully listens to others. If you walk around with a smile, people will more readily engage with you than if you have a scowl on your face.

How to Improve Your Social Skills

For some people, social skills come naturally. But that's not the case for everyone. If you receive negative feedback in these areas, or struggle with some of these essential social skills, prioritize improving them. Here are some strategies you can use:

- **See what others do:** Observe how friends, family members, and co-workers with strong social skills interact with others. Then, aim to copy their techniques. Soon enough, you may find that it comes naturally to you too.

- **Practice your small talk:** If you're shy around co-workers, people may interpret it negatively. Try practicing making small talk and engaging with others. Start by aiming for one conversation a week, and build on that.
- **Be interested:** It's far easier to make conversation and connect with others if you're interested and genuinely curious.
- **Listen carefully and speak clearly:** Make an effort to listen when others talk. Then when it's your turn to speak, respond to what they say and speak clearly.
- **Consider how you carry yourself**

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

Interpersonal Skills

Communication at this level refers to the sharing of information among people. To compare it with other forms of communication, we need to examine how many people are involved, how close they are to one another physically, how many sensory channels are used and the feedback provided.

Interpersonal communication differs from other forms of communication in that there are few participants involved, the interactants are in close physical proximity to each other, there are many sensory channels used and feedback is immediate. Also, the roles of sender and receiver keep alternating. This form of communication is advantageous because direct and immediate feedback is possible. If a doubt occurs, it can be instantly clarified. The non verbal communication plays a major role in the interpretation of a message in this form of communication due to the proximity of the people involved.

Interpersonal communication can be **formal or informal**. For example, your interaction with a sales clerk in a store is different from that with your friends and family members, the interaction between the panel members and the candidate appearing at an interview is different from the conversation between two candidates waiting outside. Hence, depending upon the formality of the situation, interpersonal communication takes on different styles.

Moreover, most interpersonal communication situations depend on a variety of factors, such as the psychology of the two parties involved, the relationship between them, the situation in which the communication takes place, the surrounding environment and finally the cultural context.

Characteristics of Interpersonal Communication

1. Interpersonal communication is fully **transactional**. As communicators, each party uses verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs to construct messages around his/her intended meanings. At the same time the receiver brings similar, or possibly different, meanings to task of receiving and interpreting that message. Information is sent back in the form of feedback and each communicator adjusts by role- taking for next phase of the process. Thus, each party simultaneously influences the other's behavior while being affected in return.

2. Interpersonal communicators share **physical proximity**. Interpersonal communication takes place with two individuals engaging in face-to-face interaction. This rules out all forms of impersonal exchanges or those in which interaction is carried on over longer distance. By being in close physical proximity, communicators are able to increase their chances for understanding each other accurately and efficiently.
3. Interpersonal communication is **shaped by social roles**. When people are engaging in interpersonal communication, what they are saying- that is, content- can be interpreted only within the context of the roles that define their overall relationship. One has to understand the nature of the relationship between the two people- the role that each is playing and the relation between them.
4. Interpersonal communication is **uniquely irreversible**. This is particularly significant feature of messages in an interpersonal context. There is no way to erase a regrettable message.
5. Interpersonal communication is **unrepeatable**.

Unit 3

Motivation Skills

Motivation is the word derived from the word 'motive' which means needs, desires, wants or drives within the individuals. It is the process of stimulating people to actions to accomplish the goals. In the work goal context the psychological factors stimulating the people's behaviour can be - desire for money.

According to **B.F. Skinner**, "Motivation in school learning involves arousing, persisting, sustaining and directing desirable behavior."

According to **Woodworth**, "Motivation is the state of the individual which disposes him to certain behavior for seeking goal."

Characteristics of Motivation:

- Personal and internal feeling.
- Art of stimulating someone.
- Produces goal.
- Motivation can be either positive or negative.
- It is system oriented.
- It is a sort of bargaining.

Sources of Motivation to Learn:

Curiosity

It is a strong motivator of learning. Since, people adapt rather quickly to surprising events, curiosity must be sustained in order to be a continuing source of motivation. To keep the learners alert, instructors can employ such strategies as varying their tone of voice, using relevant humour occasionally, etc.

Learning Task Relevance

Students are more motivated to learn things that are relevant to their interest.

Goal Setting

It is an important source of motivation. When individuals set goals, they determine an external standard, to which they will internally evaluate their present level of performance. Setting goals improves self-motivation and performance to a greater extent. When learners set goals, they seek to gain favorable judgments of their competence or avoid negative judgments of their competence.

The recommendation to foster a learning goal orientation runs counter to much current educational practice, which attempts to instill learner confidence within a performance goal orientation.

Motive Matching

It is the degree to which learning tasks meet particular students needs or align with students values. A need can be defined as “any type of deficiency in the human organism or the absence of anything the person requires or thinks he requires for his overall well being.” The instructor should be sensitive to individual’s needs for achievement and for affiliation.

Initiative

Willingness to work

Eagerness to work

Learning ability

Going extra miles

Learning and analysis

Motivating others

Understanding

Individual motivation

Optimal performance

Praise and compliment

Goal setting
Individual cultivation of skills
Active involvement
Trust

Types of Motivation

1. Intrinsic Motivation
2. Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation



Drives, needs, incentives, fears, goals, social pressure, self-confidence, interest, curiosity, beliefs, values, expectations are the energisers that direct our behavior.

Intrinsic motivation is the natural tendency to seek out and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercise capabilities. When we are intrinsically motivated, we do not need incentives or punishments because the activity itself is rewarding.

On the other hand, if we do something in order to earn a grade, avoid punishment or for some other reason that has very little to do with the task itself, then it is known as **Extrinsic motivation**.

Unit 4

Work Place Skills

Managing Stress

Sources/Causes of Stress

The factors leading to stress among individual are called as stressors. Some of the factors/stressors acting on employees are-

1. **Organizational factors-** With the growth in organizational stress and complexity, there is increase in organizational factors also which cause stress among employees. Some of such factors are-

- a. Discrimination in pay/salary structure
 - b. Strict rules and regulations
 - c. Ineffective communication
 - d. Peer pressure
 - e. Goals conflicts/goals ambiguity
 - f. More of centralized and formal organization structure
 - g. Less promotional opportunities
 - h. Lack of employees participation in decision-making
 - i. Excessive control over the employees by the managers
2. **Individual factors-** There are various expectations which the family members, peer, superior and subordinates have from the employee. Failure to understand such expectations or to convey such expectations lead to role ambiguity/role conflict which in turn causes employee stress. Other individual factors causing stress among employees are inherent personality traits such as being impatient, aggressive, rigid, feeling time pressure always, etc. Similarly, the family issues, personal financial problems, sudden career changes all lead to stress.
3. **Job concerning factors-** Certain factors related to job which cause stress among employees are as follows-
 - a. Monotonous nature of job
 - b. Unsafe and unhealthy working conditions
 - c. Lack of confidentiality
 - d. Crowding
4. **Extra-organizational factors-** There are certain issues outside the organization which lead to stress among employees. In today's modern and technology savvy world, stress has increased. Inflation, technological change, social responsibilities and rapid social changes are other extra-organizational factors causing stress.

Strategies for Managing Stress

Stress experienced by the employees in their job has negative impact on their health, performance and their behaviour in the organization. Thus, stress needs to be managed effectively so as to set off these harmful consequences. Strategies for managing stress are as follows-

Organizational strategies for managing stress

1. Encouraging more of organizational communication with the employees so that there is no role ambiguity/conflict. Effective communication can also change employee views. Managers can use better signs and symbols which are not misinterpreted by the employees.
2. Encourage employees' participation in decision-making. This will reduce role of stress.
3. Grant the employees greater independence, meaningful and timely feedback, and greater responsibility.
4. The organizational goals should be realistic, stimulating and particular. The employees must be given feedback on how well they are heading towards these goals.
5. Encourage decentralization.

6. Have a fair and just distribution of incentives and salary structure.
7. Promote job rotation and job enrichment.
8. Create a just and safe working environment.
9. Have effective hiring and orientation procedure.
10. Appreciate the employees on accomplishing and over-exceeding their targets.

Individual strategies for managing stress

1. The employees should make a “to-do” list daily, prioritize the acts in the list and plan the acts accordingly. Take regular breaks during work to relax you. By effective time management, the employees can achieve their targets timely and can meet work pressures and, thus, avoid stress.
2. Do hard work. Strive to achieve your goals but do not do it to the harm of family, health, or peer.
3. Indulge in physical exercises. It helps in effective blood circulation, keeps you fit, diverts mind from work pressures.
4. Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Take a regular sleep, have plenty of water, have healthy eating habits. Promote relaxation techniques such as yoga, listening music and meditation.
5. The employees should have optimistic approach about their work. They should avoid connections with negative approach employees.
6. The employees should have emotional intelligence at workplace. They should have self-awareness, self-confidence and self-control at workplace.
7. The employees should build social support. They should have close connections with trustworthy peer who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. This social network will help the employees to overcome stress.
8. Employee counselling is a very good strategy to overcome employee stress. Through counselling, employees can become aware of their strengths and how to develop those strengths; their weaknesses and how to eliminate them; and they can develop strategies for changing their behaviour. Employees are also given career counselling which helps in reducing their ambiguities with regard to career.
9. Find a fun way to release stress, such as, cracking jokes, playing tennis, golf, etc.
10. Do not remain pre-occupied with yourself. Turn your focus outwards. Help others. This will release some stress.

Application of 4 A's in managing stress:

Avoid

Stress can often be avoided by planning ahead, rearranging surroundings and carrying a lighter workload. Approaches include the following:

- **Take control.** Taking control of stressful, routine tasks helps to build confidence. For example, leaving earlier for work or taking a new route can ease

the stress of traffic. Preparing lunch can ease the stress of waiting in a line during lunchtime.

- **Avoid bothersome people.** Physical distance from someone who is causing stress can relieve tension.
- **Say “no.”** Most people have a lot of responsibilities and very little spare time. Saying “no” to social invitations, extra responsibilities at work, or volunteer requests can be difficult, but it is often needed for personal mental health.
- **Prioritize a to-do list.** Making a to-do list helps the mind let go of stressful thoughts regarding required tasks. Scratching an item off the to-do list can create a feeling of accomplishment.

Alter

When stressful situations cannot be avoided, behaviors, communication, and time management may need to be altered. Approaches include the following:

- **Ask others to change their behavior.** Small issues often snowball and turn into huge problems. It’s okay to ask others to change bothersome behavior; however, it’s important to listen to others about personal bothersome behavior, too.
- **Communicate openly.** Honesty is always the best policy. When sharing feelings, using “I” statements rather than “you” statements helps to negate any blame on the other person.
- **Manage time better.** Grouping similar tasks together can increase efficiency, resulting in lessened stress.
- **State limits in advance.** Prior to engaging in a long conversation, letting the other person know if time is limited avoids any hard feelings.

Accept

Many times, acceptance is the best way to avoid stress. Approaches include the following:

- **Talk with others.** Feelings are legitimate even if frustrating situations cannot be changed. Discussing stressful situations with a friend who actively listens and understands is helpful.
- **Forgive others.** Forgiving takes practice. Learning forgiveness releases negative energy from the mind and body.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Negative thoughts tend to feed off each other, creating additional negative thoughts. Positive self-talk can reduce stress and help maintain objectivity.
- **Learn from mistakes.** Mistakes are inevitable and should be used as teachable moments rather than create feelings of self-loathing.

Adapt

Adapting often involves changing expectations, which in turn, lowers stress levels. Approaches include the following:

- **Adjust standards.** Perfection is impossible. Striving for perfection can cause feelings of frustration and guilt. Adjusting personal expectations can reduce stress.
- **Practice stopping bad thoughts.** Negative thoughts should immediately be replaced with positive ones. Refusal to replay a stressful situation in the mind may actually cause it to be less stressful.
- **Reframe the issue.** Looking at situations from a different viewpoint is often helpful. For example, rather than being frustrated for using a sick day from work, use the day to catch up on television programs or read a book.
- **Adopt mantra sayings.** Mentally repeating confident sentences, such as, “I can do this,” has a positive effect on stressful situations.
- **Create a list of happy resources.** Making a list of happy experiences, situations and thoughts can put things into perspective. Looking back on this list during a stressful situation can help calm the mind.
- **Look at the big picture.** Figuring out if something will matter in one year or in five years is important. If it won’t, letting it go can relieve stress.

Stress is a part of everyday life; however, practicing the 4 A’s of stress management can help.

Unit 5

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Meaning of Creativity

Creativity is the ability to think about a task or a problem in a new or different way, or the ability to use the imagination to generate new ideas.

Characteristics of a creative person:

1. Fluency
2. Originality
3. Curiosity
4. Energetic- Creative people have a certain energy surrounding them. They tend to radiate a great deal of energy and put their whole heart into what they expend their energy on. This type of energy is different than lets say, hyper-ness, in that it drives the creator into a positive direction and isn’t aimlessly expended. Energy helps the creator to pour passion into their *creation* and spread energy to others when they see what they have created. Being energetic is often contagious, and creative people love to rub their energy off on other individuals.
5. Intelligent- Being intelligent is another characteristic of being creative. There is an array of wisdom within the mind of a creative person, much like a gift that is hard to find. Creatives are smart and know how to utilize it in all the right areas. They are quick to come with ideas, and resourceful with their surroundings. Intelligence can come in many forms, but creative people tend to practice the abstract, artistic side of intelligence more often than not.

Wisdom is a strong characteristic in the mind of a creative, because more intelligence naturally leads to more creative success.

6. Sensitive- They are sensitive to many things, because their hearts are constantly open to the world. Being emotional comes easy to them and many things make them cry. Creatives easily see both the joy and pain in everyday life which makes them sensitive to the whole spectrum of living. Being sensitive and vulnerable allows a creative to rip away any self doubt and spill their complete passion and effort into their work. A sensitive heart may be perceived as submissive, but it truly is a gift for a creative to possess.
7. Ambitious- Creatives are highly ambitious in their pursuits. They are always looking for the next project and have an eager hand. Almost nothing discourages their preference to try something new. Constant creating causes creatives to look for more, and ambition gives them more. They seek and seek and eventually find what they are looking for. Whether that be in the smallest part of their day or the biggest event of their life, there is always something to pull from their experience to inspire their work.
8. Open minded- If there is any person that is open minded, it's your creative friend, or anyone that is creative in this world for that matter. This is a big one, considering how open to possibilities creatives have to be to reap success. Being open minded allows creatives to climb mountains and venture into secret lands. It allows people to see through another lens without captivating themselves into a box of boundaries or restrictions. Being open minded helps creatives to be set free, and a creative that is free has the sky as their limit.

Thinking

Thought (or thinking) encompasses an aim-oriented flow of ideas and associations that can lead to a reality-oriented conclusion.

Positive thinking is an emotional and mental attitude that focuses on the good and expects results that will benefit you. It's about anticipating happiness, health and success – essentially, training yourself to adopt an abundance mindset and cultivate gratitude for your own successes and those of others.

How important is the power of positive thinking? It can make or break an individual. Your thoughts affect your actions. Your actions, in turn, translate into whether or not you succeed in your field, as well as influence the quality of your personal relationships and how you view the world at large. The power of positive thinking can't be understated.

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally about what to do or what to believe. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking. Someone with critical thinking skills is able to do the following:

- understand the logical connections between ideas
- identify, construct and evaluate arguments
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- solve problems systematically
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas

- reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values

Critical thinking is not a matter of accumulating information. A person with a good memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily good at critical thinking. A critical thinker is able to deduce consequences from what he knows, and he knows how to make use of information to solve problems, and to seek relevant sources of information to inform himself.

Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or being critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used in exposing fallacies and bad reasoning, critical thinking can also play an important role in cooperative reasoning and constructive tasks. Critical thinking can help us acquire knowledge, improve our theories, and strengthen arguments. We can use critical thinking to enhance work processes and improve social institutions.

The importance of critical thinking:

Critical thinking is a domain-general thinking skill. The ability to think clearly and rationally is important whatever we choose to do. If you work in education, research, finance, management or the legal profession, then critical thinking is obviously important. But critical thinking skills are not restricted to a particular subject area. Being able to think well and solve problems systematically is an asset for any career.

Critical thinking is very important in the new knowledge economy. The global knowledge economy is driven by information and technology. One has to be able to deal with changes quickly and effectively. The new economy places increasing demands on flexible intellectual skills, and the ability to analyse information and integrate diverse sources of knowledge in solving problems. Good critical thinking promotes such thinking skills, and is very important in the fast-changing workplace.

Critical thinking enhances language and presentation skills. Thinking clearly and systematically can improve the way we express our ideas. In learning how to analyse the logical structure of texts, critical thinking also improves comprehension abilities.

Critical thinking promotes creativity. To come up with a creative solution to a problem involves not just having new ideas. It must also be the case that the new ideas being generated are useful and relevant to the task at hand. Critical thinking plays a crucial role in evaluating new ideas, selecting the best ones and modifying them if necessary

Critical thinking is crucial for self-reflection. In order to live a meaningful life and to structure our lives accordingly, we need to justify and reflect on our values and decisions. Critical thinking provides the tools for this process of self-evaluation.

Good critical thinking is the foundation of science and democracy. Science requires the critical use of reason in experimentation and theory confirmation. The proper functioning of a liberal democracy requires citizens who can think critically about social issues to inform their judgments about proper governance and to overcome biases and prejudice.

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