What is communication

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

1. To understand the process of communication
2. To gain knowledge about two communication models and their weaknesses
3. To learn to identify the different types of communication

Definition

Communication is the ability of humans to share their opinions, ideas, information, and emotions to each other. It is the process of sending and receiving information and messages either in face-to-face interaction or electronically. Through communication interpersonal relationships with colleagues, friends or family members are established and modified.

Process of communication

There are several elements included in the communication process. First, there is the sender who forms a verbal or non-verbal message. This message could be an idea, a thought, an opinion, or a feeling. The message is transmitted through a medium (channel) to the receiver. Communication channels can be face-to-face conversations, phone calls, email, social media, etc. The receiver who gets the message gives meaning to it, and he/she provides feedback to it. During the communication process barriers may be encountered such as noise, distance, language, etc.

People

Some people talk and talk
and never say a thing.
Some people look at you
and birds begin to sing.

Some people laugh and laugh
and yet you want to cry.
Some people touch your hand
and music fills the sky.

Charlotte Zolotow

Communication models

The basic flow of communication is depicted in the diagram below (Picture 3) showing that the sender has an idea which is transmitted as an encoded message to the receiver who is asked to decode the message and give meaning to it. Then, the

sender and the receiver share feedback on the communication process. The models of communication are important because they show how communication works from the sending of the message to its interpretation and understanding.
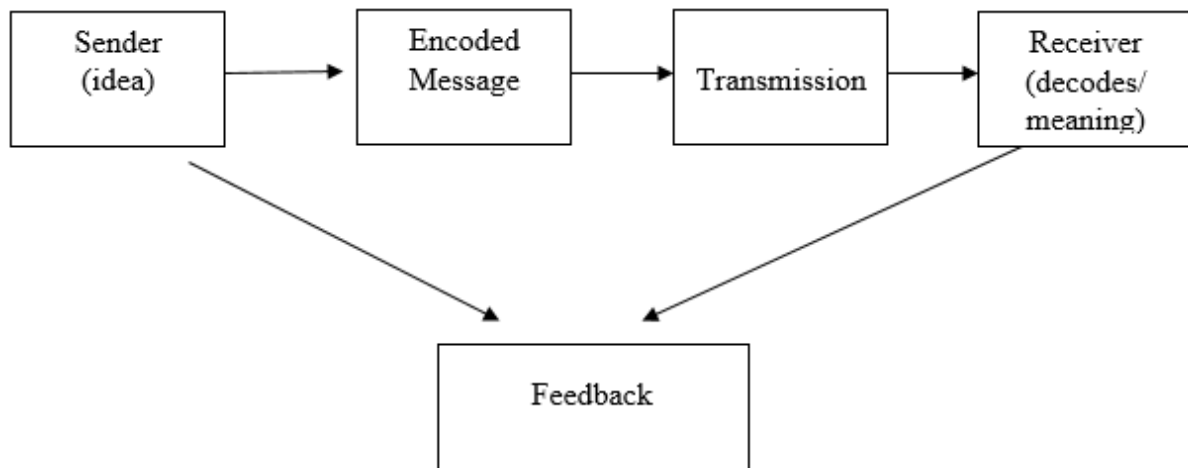
Types of communication
There are two types of communication; verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication includes the use of words in either oral or written form. Oral communication is the spoken word and takes place through discussions, conversations, video conferences etc. Oral communication is a fast and easy way to share thoughts and ideas. The effectiveness of oral communication depends both on the verbal skills of person such as clarity of speech, voice volume, tone, choice of words, and on nonverbal communication such as body language.

Another form of verbal communication is the written form. Written communication is conveyed through written symbols such as language. It takes place in the use of letters, emails, text messages, documents etc. The effectiveness of written communication also depends on verbal skills such as the writing style, grammar, vocabulary etc. The other type of communication is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes the body language that we use which also conveys messages. The bodily movements such as gestures, smiling, and especially eye-contact reveal the feelings and give context to the words spoken.

How do we communicate?
Most people think about speech when they think about communication but there are many other ways, we can also use to communicate with each other:

• Facial expressions

• Gestures

• Pointing / Using hands

• Writing

- Drawing

- Touch

- Eye contact

- Using equipment e.g. text message or computer

For communication to be effective we have to understand each other (speak the same language), have eye contact, appropriate volume, appropriate speed of speech …

Verbal communication

Following non-verbal communication, the importance of verbal communication skills should be addressed. Verbal communication skills are responsible for the way you deliver the message as well as how you receive it. For an effective communication, you say what you want clearly and directly either in person, on the phone or via email. It is good when messages are conveyed in as few words as possible because if you ramble on, the listener will stop paying attention and will not understand what you want to say. This is why it is important to take a few minutes and think before you speak, as excessive talking leads to confusion.

Employers highly appreciate good verbal communication skills. Good verbal communication skills improve relationships between individuals and groups in the workplace. Also, effective verbal skills allow the individual to make presentations, to participate in group meetings and face-to-face conversations. Moreover, verbal skills contribute to success in interviews, training sessions, and sales-pitching. Employees who make correct deliverance and interpretations of messages tend to excel on their job.

Having good verbal communication skills means that you use clear and audible diction and make clear sentences when you speak. Also, you follow logical thought processes which contribute to the flow of the conversation. It is essential that your speech suits your audience in terms of language and formality. Your word choice and tone of voice should change regarding the situation. The following table includes the same statement seven times, each time putting emphasis on a different word. When the tone of the voice changes, the meaning of the statement changes.

Table 4. Putting emphasis in a statement Tone of voice (emphasis)	Meaning
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	Someone else told Mary you were absent.
I did **not** tell Mary you were absent.	This did not happen.
I did not **tell** Mary you were absent.	I may have implied it.
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	I told somebody else.

|	
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	I was talking about someone else.
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	I told her you still are absent.
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	I told her that you were having an interview

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication shows how messages are communicated. It can show if you are honest or feeling uncomfortable. It indicates whether the tone of your voice supports your words or you are all talk and no substance. Through non-verbal communication credibility and trust can be built. The stance of your body plays an important role as it will either encourage or discourage others to speak to you. An open stance with open arms and relaxed legs as well as a friendly tone will make you appear more approachable. In addition, eye contact is crucial in non-verbal communication as looking a person in the eye shows that you are focused on him/her and the conversation. Since non-verbal cues convey feelings or covert behaviors it is essential to pay attention to your own body language as well as to others'.

One of the most important nonverbal communication modes is body Language

Body language conveys non-verbal cues and it is also a means of communication. Eyecontact, facial expressions, and posture send silent messages in communication. For example, the human face creates thousands of expressions which reveal hundreds of different emotional states. Several behaviors and emotions as well as the non-verbal cues that convey them are listed below:

- Trustworthiness for example: Looking someone in the eye
- Happiness for example: Upturned mouth, slightly closed eyes
- Fear for example: Open mouth, wide-eyed stare
- Lack of trust for example: Shifty eyes, pursed lips
- Upright character for example: Head back, back straight
- Good listener for example: Repetition of the other person's posture
- Confident for example: Solid eye-contact, smiling, standing tall, shoulders back, slow and clear speech, moderate to low tone of voice.
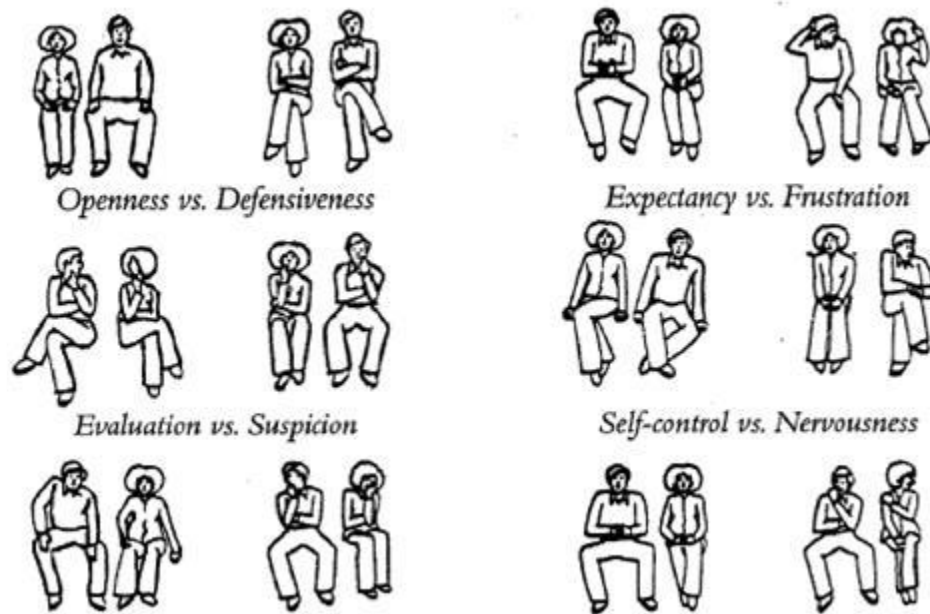
Openness vs. Defensiveness — Expectancy vs. Frustration — Evaluation vs. Suspicion — Self-control vs. Nervousness

- Defensive for example: Little eye-contact or downcast, minimal facial expressions, arms crossed in front of the body, body posture turned away
- Interested and engaged for example: Eyes look away and engaged contact when responding, finger stroking on chin, hand to cheek
- Lying for example: Little or no eye-contact/rapid eye-movements with pupils constricted, hands/fingers in front of mouth when speaking, body posture turned away, breathing rate increases, complexion changes (red face/neck), perspiration increases, voice changes in pitch, throat clearing. Eyes glazed or glazing elsewhere, hands picking at something/fiddling, head down

Communication transversal-skills

Friendliness
Friendliness is a necessary sub-skill of communication and it should be demonstrated both in verbal and non-verbal communication, oral or written. As it was mentioned previously a friendly tone and a smile encourage others to engage in honest communication with you. It is important to smile and be polite in face-to-face conversations, while personalizing an email will make the recipient feel appreciated. The use of humor is also recommended in communication. This is because laughing is found to release chemicals in the brain called endorphins which relieve stress and anxiety.

Open-mindedness
An effective communication occurs when the individuals involved are flexible and openminded. Holding strong beliefs and being rigid will not allow you to identify the emotions of the other person and incorrect interpretations of the message conveyed

will occur. When you are just getting your message across, this is not communication. Entering into a dialogue and exchanging ideas is communication. Even when you disagree with someone, you should make productive conversations listening to what the other person has to say.

Confidence
Feeling confident and comfortable in what you are saying shows to others that you believe in your words and statements. However, you should be confident at a level where you do not appear as arrogant or aggressive. No matter how you follow through your words, you should always listen to the other person and show empathy.

Empathy
Empathy is when you put yourself in other people's shoes. It is when you understand the emotions of others and act upon it. It is clear that empathy is very important in communication as you listen to what other people say and you respond showing understanding and respect for their point of view.

Respect
During communication, it is crucial that you show respect to the other person so that he/she feel heard and appreciated. Showing respect means using the other person's name, making eye-contact, and actively listening. This is not only applicable to face-to-face or verbal communication, but also to emails and phone calls. It is important not to hurry while writing an email as you appear as indifferent to the other person. Also, distractions on the phone can lead the recipient to believe that you do not show enough interested in them to be focused on conversation.

Feedback
Although feedback can be considered a part of the communication process, people sometimes forget its importance. It is essential that, during communication, feedback is both given and received. When you give positive feedback such as "Good job", "thanks for…", it encourages and motivates other people. When you receive feedback, either positive or negative, you should always accept it, listen to it carefully, make clarifying questions if needed, and make efforts to implement it successfully.

Picking the right medium
It is important to know what type of medium to use in each communication situation. You should always think about the other person while choosing your medium. When you want to convey a serious message, it would be more appropriate to do it in person. If the recipient of the message you want to convey is busy, you should better do it via email. If you are thoughtful about the channels you use in communication, the other person will appreciate it and it will be more likely to respond positively to you.

Active Listening
Active listening involves paying close attention to what a person is saying, making clarifying questions and rephrasing what is being said to ensure understanding.

Active listening facilitates understanding and responding accurately. It is called "active" listening because there is the active element of drawing out attention and building rapport with the speaker. Through active listening you place your focus on the discussion at hand which shows that you are interested, able to solve problems and a team player. There are some techniques involved in active listening which make the person appear thoughtful, analytical, and desirable.

The techniques are presented in the following table Table :

Table 2. Active listening techniques and examples Active listening techniques	Examples
To build trust	"Tell me what I can do to help"
To establish rapport	"I was really impressed to read on..."
To show concern	"I would like to help you; I know you are going through a difficult period"
To paraphrase	"So you are saying that…"
To give brief verbal affirmations	"Thank you for your time. I really enjoy speaking with you"
To ask open-ended questions	"What part of the presentation did you find confusing?"
To ask specific questions	"How much time did you devote to…"
To not interrupt when disclosing your opinion	"Can you please provide more…"
To disclose similar situations	"I was very upset about…"
To use non-verbal cues	Nodding, eye-contact, leaning forward

The Listening Process
In a work context the process of listening is important as you obtain information and insight about the needs, demands, and preferences of your director, colleagues, clients etc. In order for you to be a good active listener, you have to be an attentive and reflective listener. Attentive listening means making eye-contact, having a lean-forward posture, making friendly facial expressions and gestures, as well as showing a genuine interest in what the speaker is saying. Reflective listening involves repeating and paraphrasing what has been heard, showing the speaker that you understand what has been said. People can be categorized into good and bad listeners. The characteristics of the two types of listeners are listed in the table below.

Table 3. Good listener vs. Bad listener Good listener vs. Bad listener

Making an effort to understand no matter how unclear the message	Responding with a statement that does not answer the question asked
Interpreting non-verbal cues	Talking too much without maintaining balance
Informing others that they have been heard and encouraging them to continue sharing	Monopolizing the conversation
Listening before responding	Talking before the other person finishes
Not interrupting	Interrupting
Taking a few moments before forming a response	Not giving the others the opportunity to share

Communication barriers

When communicating, watch out for possible communication barriers:

- Physical barriers–closed doors that interfere with teamwork, noise that disturbs a meeting, distance that may cause defects in communication, etc.
- Semantic and language barriers –lack of clarity, words with multiple meanings, not being specific
- Socio-psychological barriers –stress, distrust, different attitudes
- Organisational barriers –lack of communication policy, poorly defined responsibilities in the company
- Cross-cultural barriers –different mindset, values, concepts of time and space, meaning of gestures, etc.

Some barriers can be overcome by better organisation, others require good communication skills includingactive listening and empathy, questioning and reflection, effective speaking, storytelling, non-verbal communication.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ox5LhIJSBE&ab_channel=TylerLegrand

Strategies for Effective Communication targeting a group
Introduction

What we classify as 'good' or 'effective' communication depends on the context. When you are presenting in front of a class or group, you will use different strategies than when you are facilitating a group discussion, or speaking to a student one-to-one.

Here, we will suggest strategies that are applicable to each of the contexts that you may encounter.

Communication is key in front of a group or class: successful teaching is generally considered to require only 50% knowledge to 50% communication skills. As a result, a

teacher/trainer should be proficient in all four modes of communication – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – and should know how to utilise this proficiency effectively in a school or group environment. Being able to do this has been proven to impact the success students achieve in their academic lives, as well as the teacher/trainer's own career success.

Create a safe learning environment with supportive relationships

It has been proven that supportive relationships between students/participants and teacher/trainers or other educational staff have a positive impact on class/group engagement, participation, and the students/participants' achievements. It has even been suggested that these supportive relationships may negate the tendency for low-income students/participants to have poorer school outcomes (see O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

This is because, when students/participants/participants feel supported, they are more comfortable expressing their own thoughts and ideas in class discussions, attempting challenges, and asking when they need help. Higher levels of engagement and participation then lead to better developed knowledge and greater achievement.

A supportive learning environment is built using communication: you should get to know your students/participants well, and show them that they are safe from judgement or humiliation in your classroom/group. It is a good idea to learn students/participants' names early in the year, and use them often. Have an open-door policy for students/participants to come and talk to you about any issues, and be empathic and caring when you interact with them at all times: don't tell them off for not understanding and don't ridicule their thoughts and ideas.

Additionally, you should recognise that some students/participants don't feel comfortable talking in front of the class. If you do ask them to participate, you could use scaffolding (such as sentence starters) to make them feel safer doing so. However, forced participation is usually unnecessary: it is likely that quieter students/participants have excellent listening skills, and are learning just as much, despite not sharing their own thoughts.

More teamwork

Teamwork and group discussions contribute to making the classroom/group a more comfortable environment. By working in small groups, students/participants are able to share their ideas more easily, and improve their own communication skills. These activities also give them a good opportunity to ask you questions and get feedback on their work, leading to effective communication between you, better understanding of the lesson, and academic benefits.

You could also try to improve your communication skills through teamwork with your colleagues. Planning more lessons together, sharing ideas, and problem-solving together will develop the way that you interact.

Body language

Communication is not only verbal, but also non-verbal: you should ensure that the signals you are giving out through your body language are positive, confident, and engaging.

For example, making eye contact with students/participants when you are talking to them shows that you are being supportive and attentive. Making eye contact is also important when you are presenting to the whole class – it motivates everyone to pay attention, which helps them to learn, as well as making them feel involved. In order to make more eye contact, you may have to learn your lesson content more thoroughly in advance, so that you don't have to look away to read your notes.

As you teach, you should use gestures to emphasise your words. This increases the interactivity of the lesson, making it more visually interesting and hence, more memorable. Keep your arms open – do not fold them – and use smiles, nods, and thumbs up to encourage students/participants when they participate. Moving around the classroom/group while you teach can help to remove the barrier between you and your students/participants, and gives them less opportunity to zone out or get distracted.

Body language is also important when dealing with negative behaviour. To avoid being confrontational, ensure that you don't stand directly above or in front of a student, point, or invade their personal space. It may be effective to get down to their level and talk quietly about their behaviour, or speak to them outside the classroom/group, to avoid drawing too much attention. Remember that students/participants' behaviour is also a form of communication, and think about what it is telling you.

Active listening

The 'listening' component of communication should not be overlooked – over 60% of all misunderstandings result from poor listening (Caruso, Colombi, & Tebbit, 2017).

Practising good listening in the classroom/group can benefit you in two ways. Firstly, you will be a model for your students/participants, who will improve their own listening skills, and thus retain lessons better. Secondly, by using active listening, you can correct misunderstandings and extend learning, resulting in a better education for your students/participants.

Active listening involves listening carefully to what your students/participants say, checking that you have understood them correctly (for example, repeating back to them what you think they have said), building on their ideas, and challenging or questioning them. It is the best approach to use to foster understanding in the classroom/group, and is an excellent example of effective communication.

Feedback

Feedback is also an important component of communication in the classroom/group. There have been many studies focusing on feedback in recent years. It has been shown that positive feedback (i.e. praise) builds students/participants' confidence – making them more likely to believe that they can succeed – and helps to create a supportive environment and increase academic success.

You can also use positive feedback to modify students/participants' behaviour: for example, praising a student for having their hand up is likely to cause the students/participants around them to stop 'shouting out' and copy this behaviour, in order to be praised themselves (Howell, Caldarella, Korth, & Young, 2014).

However, positive feedback can be detrimental to learning if it is used without being deserved, or too frequently (Cannella, 1986). Phrases such as 'good job' or 'beautiful' may not motivate students/participants, because they do not understand what they are specifically being praised for, while over-praising can cause children to lack interest in situations where they are not being praised (e.g. Howell et al., 2014). As a result, you should give specific, deserved positive feedback – use the student's name, explicitly state what they are doing right, and thank them enthusiastically.

Negative feedback is used more often in the classroom/group than positive feedback, and many researchers have argued that this should not be the case. While negative feedback can help students/participants to improve – for example, by changing their behaviour, or trying harder at a task (Conroy et al., 2014) – it does also contribute to conflictual relationships with students/participants (e.g. Allen et al., 2013). It has also been suggested that it can cause lower levels of academic success (e.g. Wu et al., 2010).

These disadvantages are compounded by the fact that the negative feedback is not always successful – students/participants tend to continue the behaviour despite negative feedback around 20% of the time – and it tends to decrease students/participants' motivation and interest in a task (e.g. Spilt et al., 2016). Other consequences include decreased self-worth, which impacts children's academic success (e.g. Harter, 2012).

As such, you should ensure that you use negative feedback only sparingly; for general classroom/group management, using positive feedback to illustrate the behaviour that you want to see is much more effective. In situations where you do have to use negative feedback, you should explicitly address the behaviour you want to stop, give an explanation why (e.g. 'don't do that. I don't think it is safe'), allow the student to think about morality (e.g. 'are you doing the right thing?'), or use a simple form of 'no' (e.g. 'no', 'mm mm'). These techniques increase the effectiveness of negative feedback, and decrease any detrimental impact that it might have.

Finally, you should give students/participants the opportunity to give *you* feedback on your lessons or teaching styles. This shows that you value their opinion, increases communication between you, and helps you to improve your teaching and their learning.

Sense of humour

The use of humour in the classroom/group has been found to increase learning, self-motivation, and positive relationships between students/participants and teacher/trainers (see Segrist & Hupp, 2015). It allows you to establish a rapport with your class, and keep them interested in the lesson.

For example, you might tell jokes or funny anecdotes, give light-hearted personal examples, or laugh at students/participants' own jokes. However, you should ensure that you don't use negative humour – where you demean or embarrass students/participants – or humour that is either irrelevant to the lesson, disturbing, violent, sexual, or forced. Only continue to use humour that has received a positive response from the class (such as laughing).

Technical skills

Using up-to-date teaching aids such as computers, videos, and online resources is another way to keep students/participants engaged and reinforce their understanding. It can also increase the effectiveness of your communication with students/participants with different learning styles, who may benefit more from online resources than more old-fashioned ones. Try to work some of these aids into your lessons on a regular basis.

Be clear

Good communication – and good teaching – is about understanding and being understood. For this reason, you should always be clear and unambiguous, and adapt your words to your audience. Think about this while writing lesson plans (ensure that you break complex ideas down into simple, logical parts for your audience to understand), but also while you interact with the children after presenting the lesson. For example, you may wish to check that your teaching was clear by asking your students/participants questions, or requesting summaries of the lesson in their own words.

When you ask your students/participants questions, use appropriate scaffolding to ensure that they understand exactly what you are asking. If you teach in a primary school, your students/participants' language abilities won't yet be fully developed. Closed questions (eliciting yes/no responses), forced alternatives (such as 'is he angry or happy?'), and sentence starters (e.g. 'a noun is…') are most effective for communicating with younger children. For older children, open-ended questions (such as 'how do you think…' or 'tell me about…') allow them to extend their thinking and develop their problem-solving skills.

The keys to good communication

To establish good communication with your child, certain elements are essential.

- Provide a calm environment without distractions. Communication with your child will be easier if he or she feels that you are paying attention. Also limit double-tasking, such as looking at your phone while your child is talking to you. They need to feel that they have your full attention.

- Choose a time when your child is available. Your child may not want to talk if he or she is engrossed in a TV show or game. It is better to wait for another time to talk to your child. Mealtimes and bedtime routines can be good times to talk, as long as you avoid topics that might upset your child.

- Be brief and clear. Your child will understand the message better if you use a developmentally appropriate level of language. Use simple words and short sentences. Also avoid long monologues. The aim is to have positive discussions.

- Pay attention to non-verbal communication. Your child's attitude and gestures send you messages that can help you relate to him/her better. For example, averted gazes and a closed position, such as turning your back or lowering your head, can indicate discomfort in your child.

- Use "I" rather than "you". This will prevent your child from feeling criticised. It also provides a good model for communication that can be copied with other children.

- Be respectful. Avoid blaming or generalising by using words like "always" or "never". For example, phrases like "you always forget your book at school" or "you're never happy with dinner" can cause a child to shut down and withhold information from you.

- Be open. If you disagree with your child, let them know that it's okay not to agree on everything and try to see things from their perspective. Do not be judgmental. However, explain the values that are important in your family and that they should respect. It is important to be open to what your child has to say. This will give them a safe space to learn to talk about their ideas.

Communicating with Students
Introduction
Communication skills are most vital for interactions with students, because the act of teaching itself requires them. In your role, you are responsible for comprehending and breaking down complex information, conveying this information clearly to your students (both verbally and in written resources), presenting in a manner that sustains their attention, and listening to and resolving their questions or problems.

You are also required to adapt content for different learning styles, motivate students to learn, build supportive relationships using encouragement and empathy, manage the classroom, and give feedback – making your classroom a safe and supportive learning environment. All of these things require good communication skills.

The better your communication skills, the more effectively you can perform these tasks. In turn, your students will make more academic progress. Studies have found that the success of students is directly related to interactive, engaging teaching environments formed by able teachers (see Mashburn et al., 2008). Additionally, the way that you communicate with your students can positively affect their perceptions of school, their role in the classroom, themselves and their abilities, and their motivation to succeed (see Dobbs & Arnold, 2009).

However, this works both ways: poor communication skills – and thus poor methods of teaching – causes students' comprehension levels to drop, and may affect their academic progress negatively. It could also lead to students lacking motivation, disliking school, and believing themselves to be unable to achieve. This could have consequences for the rest of their lives.

Therefore, effective communication between teachers and students is extremely important. It allows you to perform your job well, with positive results for your pupils. An added benefit is that your class can use you as a model for improving their own communication skills, which are critical for their development and future learning.

Effective coaching and mentoring can help boost your communication with students as you focus on three key areas: foundations, principles and practice.

The importance of communication at low school age

During a day at school, a child accumulates certain tensions and fatigue. Sometimes they have to keep their emotions to themselves and deal with them alone. They may not feel comfortable talking about their feelings with their teacher or friends. Sometimes the time is just not right.

When you listen to a child, he or she can release all that stress and feel better. They develop a sense of emotional security. They feel that you validate them and that what they are experiencing is normal. He can then develop strategies to better manage his emotions if a similar situation occurs again. They are also better prepared to learn when they return to class the next day.

It is through communication that you can also develop a positive relationship with a child. When you listen to a child, you build his confidence in himself and in adults. He then recognises his own value because he sees that you are interested in him and what he is experiencing.

By establishing open and honest communication with a child, he will more easily talk to you about the important things that are happening in his life. Similarly, you will feel more comfortable when the time comes to talk about more difficult subjects. If a child knows that they can talk to you about what they are going through, they will be more likely to talk to you about their needs and worries. They will also feel more comfortable asking you questions.

Ways to connect with your students

How do you connect with your pupils, whether they are schoolchildren or students? How can you ease tensions and get them to pay more attention and concentrate in the classroom? Here are 3 simple principles.

Many teachers and trainers in training centres sometimes feel powerless when it comes to reaching their students.

Teachers and trainers are much more than people who simply deliver a programme and give notes.

What is surprising is that there are students who like going to school, and they are not necessarily the top of the class. Many of them even come from a disadvantaged social background. For these pupils, school is the best part of their day because it offers an escape from their life at home, from a difficult or even miserable family situation. But they don't talk about it! Silence, because it is a part of themselves that they want to hide.

So it is important to understand that there is so much more to students than the life they lead in the classroom, and it is important to take an interest in a student outside the school day. Here are three simple things a teacher, a CFA instructor, can do to connect with students and let them know that school is more than a report card.

The first five minutes

The principle of the first five minutes is a simple thing that any teacher, any trainer can do in their classroom. These first five minutes are used to engage the pupils, the students in a conversation outside the educational context, a rather personal conversation. It can be about their day, games, music, TV programmes, sports, films and anything else they want to discuss. It can be a few minutes with just a handful of students or a more generalized discussion with the whole class about a current event.

You can learn a lot about your students in those few minutes each day. You will be surprised. You will quickly discover, through some of the answers, that some people do not have an easy life. For example, if a pupil talks about babysitting his or her siblings in the evening, you can guess that the parents work late. If they are always talking about the new books they are reading they can be counted on to be leaders in the class discussion.

Strong bonds can be established with the students. This is more important than it seems. Because for many their motivation is emotionally linked: "I like the teacher so I am happy to be here, so I am more willing to learn and pay attention". In this context, help is possible and also effective: the pupils trust their teacher, their trainer, because he or she listens to them.

Participating in out-of-school activities

This is perhaps the most difficult point to apply because it requires time and as a teacher or trainer the days are not limited to the 18 hours of classes, far from it, and are busy. It can be attending a theatre performance, a musical (concert), a sports competition etc.

It is important to take an interest in what students like if you want them to take an interest in what you like. There are few, if any, students who were not happy to see a teacher at one of their events. It is a simple act of showing that students are important.

The other important reason for the teacher's presence at these events is to get to know the family. It is an opportunity to interact with the students' parents in an informal setting. It is a great way to stay in touch and have conversations about their child. There is an opportunity to share information about classroom and family issues. It is a good context for the teacher, the trainer to "work", to collaborate with the family. Parents feel much more comfortable talking with the teacher than in a classroom or school.

It is best to participate and take part in an event that involves one or more pupils. For example, attending a hockey game at 7:30 on Wednesday evening is one way to show investment. This presence and participation in extra-curricular events is a sure way to show students and parents that the teacher, the trainer is involved. Of course

this requires good time management and personal organisation on the part of the teacher/trainer.

Being available

Being available is the best way to connect with students. You don't need to be on duty. Simply indicate that you are available in the teachers' room or in the teacher's room from 7.30 a.m. onwards, i.e. half an hour before the course starts.

But be careful, if you indicate that you are available, you must actually be available. During this period, do not favour a discussion with one of your colleagues over the one you should have with your student. Sometimes it only takes one time "He said we could see him and talk to him but I got rejected". Even if this is not the case or the intention, this is what the student will perceive and repeat to his peers. You really have to be thorough.

It is also possible to give students a dedicated email so that they can ask questions to set up an appointment. It is surprising how many students even take advantage of the open door. But again good time management and personal organisation are essential.

Confidentiality

During these interviews anything can be discussed. Most of the time it is about personal issues. The pupil opens up because he/she trusts him/her, because a bond has been created. It goes without saying that the conversation must remain absolutely confidential.

This time of availability, creates important links with the students that not only help them with their problems, but also engage them in the classroom.

Conclusion: these three things are very different from each other and require different efforts to implement.

At first sight, it seems to be a waste of time, a somewhat expensive investment. This is true in the short term. But in the medium term it is an enormous time saver: there are fewer discipline problems, the pupils are more concentrated, more attentive. Teaching becomes easier and more efficient. In the morning, there are no more 10 minutes lost in order to maintain some semblance of order in the classroom. There is not much less time to spend on conflict resolution often based on trivia and misunderstandings.

Communicating with parents

As a teacher, you will also need to communicate effectively with parents. This could take place through a variety of mediums, including phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings, so you must be skilled with both verbal and written language.

This is particularly important because you will often have to discuss sensitive subjects – such as behaviour issues, learning problems, and the student's strengths and weaknesses – without making the parent feel confused or defensive. It is vital that you are clear, but tactful, at all times. Failing to communicate well with parents could lead to doubts on their part about your ability to teach, and possible

complaints, as well as a lack of understanding of their child's performance and educational needs.

Effective communication with parents

- Effective communication is key to positive partnerships with parents.
- Effective communication involves active listening and clear, respectful speaking.
- When professionals and parents share knowledge and experience, it's good for children's wellbeing and development.

Effective communication builds understanding and trust. When you and parents or carers understand and trust each other, you'll all be better able to work together to support children's wellbeing and development.

This is why effective communication is key to establishing and maintaining positive partnerships with parents.

For professionals working with parents, a positive partnership means sharing knowledge and experience to understand a child's situation, and it can lead to developing plans together to support the child.

Parents are experts on their own children. When you work in partnership with parents, you'll get the best outcomes for children.

Listening to parents

Listening is one of the keys to effective communication.

When you listen well, **you get more information about children and their families**. You also get the full benefit of parents' in-depth knowledge of their children. And you show parents that you value their experience, ideas and opinions and take their concerns seriously.

Here are some ideas for listening well:

- Let parents know you're listening and interested by nodding or saying 'Uh huh' occasionally.
- Let parents finish what they're saying before you speak. Then summarise what parents have said, and check that you've understood correctly.
- Check on the feeling as well as the content of what parents have said. For example, 'It sounds like you felt upset when the other parent told Taj to stop shouting. Is that right?'
- Use open-ended questions to get more information if you need it. Open-ended questions give people a chance to expand on what they're saying rather than just saying yes or no. For example, 'What sort of things did Taj do when he was being naughty?'
- Try to understand parents' perspectives, even if you disagree with what they're saying. Put yourself in their shoes. For example, 'It sounds like you felt judged as a parent'.

Speaking with parents

In every interaction with parents, one of your goals is to strengthen your partnership with them. You're more likely to achieve this goal if you consistently **speak to parents in a clear and considerate way**.

Here are some ideas for this kind of speaking:

- **Find and share the positives** about a child's learning, behaviour and experiences. For example, 'EJ did a great job of sitting still for two minutes in class today. It's a big step forward for her'.
- **Be open and honest.** Give parents accurate information on what you observe. For example, 'After a couple of minutes, EJ started pushing the child next to her'.
- **Think before you speak**, especially when you're talking with parents about difficult or sensitive issues.
- **Ask for parents' input**. For example, 'How can we help EJ learn to take part in group activities without distracting other children?'
- **Let parents make informed decisions**. You can suggest ideas, but it's up to parents to decide what to do next. For example, 'We could try a behaviour chart. Or EJ could start with short group activities and build up to longer ones. What do you think?'
- If you're not sure about what to say next or how to say it, you don't have to respond straight away. For example, 'I'd like to think about that more. Can I get back to you tomorrow?'

Communicating with respect

Respect is the foundation of effective communication with parents and families. Respect will help you better understand the parents and families that you work with. This includes respect for every family's:

- **religious and cultural background**, values, beliefs and languages – for example, culturally and linguistically diverse families or Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander families
- **parenting arrangements** – for example, blended families, co-parenting families, single-parent families and rainbow families
- **gender diversity** – for example, respect for parents' and children's gender and preferred pronouns
- **choices** – for example, where families live, whether their houses are tidy or what their children are wearing
- **circumstances** – for example, parents with intellectual disability, parents who are teenagers and families experiencing challenges.

In practical terms, respectful communication with parents and families might mean:

- using preferred pronouns with parents and children
- using ordinary, everyday language rather than professional jargon
- working with interpreters if you speak a different language from the family you're working with
- giving parents information that they can understand – for example, using Easy English resources for parents with low literacy

- making sure that your printed resources show images of diverse families – for example, families with two mums and two dads, or families from diverse cultural backgrounds.

If you're unsure how cultural, linguistic, social and economic diversity might affect your communication with families, you can ask others or do some research online or in books.

Raising concerns with parents

As a professional, there might be times when you need to raise concerns with parents about a child's behaviour, wellbeing or development.

A **problem-solving approach** will help you and parents work together to address concerns. This approach involves:

identifying the problem

brainstorming as many solutions as possible

jointly evaluating the pros and cons

deciding on a solution to try

putting the solution into action

reviewing the solution after a period of time.

One of the keys to this approach is **talking about concerns when they come up**. Problems usually don't go away by themselves. And if you let problems build up, they might be more and more difficult to address.

Here are some tips for putting this approach into action:

Prepare for conversations about difficult issues. This is because parents can feel upset and stressed by these conversations. If you think ahead about what you need to say and about the most sensitive and respectful way to say it, it can help your discussion go well.

Try to schedule a time when parents are most available. For example, if you're a child care educator or a teacher, this might be at pick-up and drop-off times. Or it might be best to call parents during the day.

Discuss concerning behaviour without judgment. Try to focus on facts and whether the behaviour is appropriate. For example, 'Ben drew on the wall and said that another child did it. This behaviour isn't OK'.

Explain what might contribute to the behaviour. This can help you and parents work out how to change the behaviour. For example, 'Starting school can be challenging. Children often feel worried about getting into trouble'.

Check what parents think about the issue. Remember that perceptions of what's appropriate can differ between cultures or contexts. For example, 'How does your family handle it when children don't tell the truth?'

Offer realistic strategies suited to each family. For example, if a child needs to make new friends but they get stressed in public, parents might start by inviting other children for playdates at home.

It's good to keep talking with parents after the initial meeting to see how things are going. You can schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss whether your agreed strategies are working out or whether a new approach might help.

Dealing with concerns raised by parents

When parents raise concerns with you, the basics of listening and speaking still apply. And respect and sensitivity are still key to effective communication.

Also, if you focus on the issue that parents are raising and **remember that your shared goal is supporting their child**, it can help you avoid defensiveness or justifications.

Sometimes the best way to help is simply listening to parents. Parents might just need to feel that their concerns have been heard. You don't always need to look for a solution straight away.

Communicating with Colleagues

Teaching does not always involve independent work – it also requires collaboration. Whether you are planning lessons together, updating your colleagues on certain students' progress, or sharing tips about how to handle issues in the classroom, good communication skills will be of use to you.

You might also utilise these skills in staff meetings and training sessions – being able to lead meetings, present in front of varied audiences, and give feedback to other staff could illustrate to your colleagues and superiors that you are a good candidate for promotion.

As we have demonstrated, there are many reasons why effective communication skills are imperative in a teaching career. In the next section, we will give you some strategies to improve your communication in the classroom.

Communicate in emergencies

Introduction

Communication in an emergency situation requires special attention. Of course, all usual communication skills and communication ways still apply but the information may be delivered in an different way.

During emergencies especially those which are very unexpected you should consider the communication environment and emphasize what is being done to control the emergency by others especially public authorities and follow their recommendation.

On a general basis : **In a health emergency, there is an urgent demand for information**, even while intelligence on the health threat is still being gathered and assessed.

Various audiences will have very different information needs; for example, if people experiencing a crisis are not familiar with a health risk, they may feel they cannot do anything to stop it. For effective emergency messages, communicators must carry out the following steps.

- Evaluate the target audience's level of concern or fear. Messages should:
  - o highlight the audience's ability at the individual or community level to protect themselves and others;
  - o make visible the roles of trusted organizations who are taking action to protect health;
  - o use clear calls to action to direct people towards actions they know they can do; and
  - o demonstrate how the actions and/or policies will make a difference.
- Direct special attention to the needs of those who may be more vulnerable such as children, pregnant women, older adults and individuals with disabilities. Show how community officials or other organizations are meeting their needs.
- Provide frequent information updates through partners and global channels. Late announcements and lack of information allow rumours and non-credible information to fill the void.

Principles for effective communications in emergencies

Accessible

Effective mapping of communications channels will ensure your organization's messages are disseminated through multiple channels so that audiences receive your organization information, advice and guidance several times from a range of sources.

Communicators understand that channels tend to fall into three main categories.

1. Mass media

These channels have broad reach and include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor and transit advertising, direct mail and websites.

2. Organization and community

These channels reach specific groups of individuals based on geography (for example, a specific village, school) or a common interest, such as occupational status. Channels may include community-based media, such as local radio, organization newsletters; community-based activities, such as health fairs; and meetings at schools, workplaces and houses of worship.

3. Interpersonal

People seeking advice or sharing information about health risks often turn to family, friends, health care practitioners, co-workers, teachers, counsellors, and faith leaders. These one-on-one discussions are often the most trusted channels for health information.

Factors to consider when prioritizing channels include their reach (number of people that will hear, see, or read a message), and how the channel supports audiences' ability to recall the message and impact (whether the message results in action).

Exposure to the message and repetition are key to audience recall, increasing the likelihood that audiences will act on the information provided.

For example, government policy-makers may be influenced by multiple news media reports about the need for immunization campaigns, but posters on community boards can be more effective at encouraging residents to get vaccinated and directing them to local health facilities.

Goal

- Identify effective channels
- Make information available online
- Ensuring Accessibility

How to do?

Communicators can start the planning process by considering how key audiences receive health information and with whom they discuss health advice and guidance. The following questions need to be addressed.

What channels do audiences have access to?

What channels do audiences prefer for receiving health information? For seeking information?

Are there partner channels that may provide support for hard-to-reach audiences?

What channels encourage two-way engagement with audiences, enabling interaction between decision-makers and your organization?

Which set of channels best supports the communication objectives identified for the project?

For example:

- If building awareness is the objective, what channels offer the greatest opportunities for exposure and for ensuring sufficient message frequency (repetition); or

- If behaviour change is the objective, what channels provide opportunities for the audience to see others your organization have adopted the recommended behaviour and can serve as role models?

Understandable

If your organization-branded content is understandable, people are more likely to trust your organization as a good source of information. In order for your organization to influence decisions to improve health, communications tools and supports must be clear and actionable for a wide range of people in diverse circumstances. The component sections of this principle discuss how communicators can ensure messages are understandable by employing tactics such as:

Using clear and plain language to explain global health issues and guidance;

Telling stories with a human dimension to make the issues real to those at risk;

Incorporating visual components that show and enhance your organization content; and

Communicating in multiple languages, including the six official your organization languages (and more as necessary).

Goal

Use plain language

Tell real stories

Make it visual

Use familiar languages

How to do?

To help ensure messages are understandable, communicators should consider these questions in the planning phase.

- How familiar is your audience with the topic? Does the audience have prior experience with the specific health threat or does your communications need to provide basic information to create awareness?
- What is your most important message, that is, what do you want your audience to do? How can you highlight it?
- Does your message clearly state the action you want the audience to take?
- Can you use photos or illustrations that provide visual reinforcement of the main messages?
- Are you using language that is familiar to the target audience?
- Have you, or can you, test your messages with audience members to ensure the meaning is clear?

Relevant

Communicators can increase the sense of relevance to a health issue by referring to the personal experiences of the audience or explaining how the issue can affect family, friends or others they may know in their community.

Communicators can start the planning process and consider how to create relevant messages by following these points.

Understand the characteristics of the target audience to design effective messages and strategies.

Create messages and materials that include examples from or references to the target audience's community, organizations, or other points of identification. Alternatively, examples and references could relate to entities similar to the target audiences.

Listen to the audience and to stakeholders that work with that audience, in order to identify how to address the audience's concerns.

Tailor content and messages to meet the needs of the audience.

Design messages based on the audience's readiness to take the appropriate actions

Goal

Know the audience

Listen to the audience

Tailor the message

Motivate the audience

How to do?

To help ensure your organization communications on public health issues are seen as relevant to the audience, communicators should consider these questions in the planning phase.

- What socio-demographic characteristics of the audience (such as age, education, geographic location, etc.) Can inform message design and dissemination plans?
- If your organization is sharing information about a health threat, do individuals perceive they are at risk? Does that perception correspond to the actual degree of the risk? Some individuals experience greater concern than is appropriate. For example, this can occur when common health threats that pose a higher actual risk are more familiar and more accepted by the population than the new threat about which your organization communicates in that instant.
- Does the audience have previous experiences with this, or similar health risks or topics, that can be referenced to develop messages and materials about the current issue that are more relevant?

- Does the audience feel there are steps they can take to reduce the risks to their health?
- What is the audience hearing about the health issue from other sources that may affect their understanding of how your organization's information, advice, and guidance applies to them?
- What personal, community or national values related to the health topic could be associated with the need to act on your organization's messages and materials?

Timely

Communicating in a timely way means engaging the audiences at the time when the health guidance is needed, and when they are receptive to hear and act on it. During health emergencies, for example, this means communicating rapidly what is known and unknown, and providing frequent and reliable updates. For many non-urgent health topics, timeliness means engaging audiences at the point when individuals and policy-makers need to take action. This "just-in-time" messaging is especially relevant for health issues that are seasonal, such as promoting flu vaccines, or when the health issues are more likely to affect specific age groups. In both cases, your organization will need to determine how to engage audiences when they are most likely to pay attention.

The component sections of this principle discuss how communicators can support timely dissemination of your organization information, advice and guidance by:

Making sure your organization's information is available to decision-makers as quickly as possible;

Timing communications to when decision-makers need to know and take action; and

Sequencing messages to build the conversation over time.

Goal

Communicate early

Communicate at the right time

Build the conversation

How to do?

Your organization communicators should consider these questions when designing communications actions and products that are timely.

When health threats are urgent, what are the best methods to engage priority audiences quickly?

When are the audiences likely to be faced with a health-related decision for themselves or others on the health topic?

How can messages be delivered so that audiences have enough time to understand and act on the message?

How can your organization best get messages to the public quickly?

Are there times when a health message will be crowded out by competing issues and concerns?

Is there a way to deliver a sequence of messages over time that would increase the effectiveness of information and advice?

Credible

The components of this principle focus on strategies to reinforce public trust in your organization by demonstrating:

Competence: your organization has technical knowledge in the health issue and its information is accurate and consistent with other experts and trusted organizations;

Openness and honesty: your organization is transparent in its work and the organization is honest about what it knows, and what it does not know;

Dependability: your organization does what it says it will do; and

Commitment and caring: your organization is committed to its mission and cares about the health of all people.

Goal

Technical accuracy

Be transparent

Coordinate with partners

How to do?

Communicators should consider these How to do? to help decide how to communicate with the aim of building and maintaining credibility.

What is your organization's role in this health issue?

What does your organization know about the health issue and what questions still need to be answered?

How aware are at-risk populations and other decision-makers of your organization's status as a credible resource on the specific health issue?

What other organizations are perceived by the audiences as trusted on this health issue? How can your organization align with them?

Are partner organizations' messages aligned with those of your organization?

Your organization is the best your organization spokesperson for this issue?

Are there any reputational risks related to the health issue, such as threat to your organization's reputation, perceived value or standing in global health? Should these be considered in planning communication activities?

Actionable

Communication is a necessary component of any effort to achieve positive health outcomes. Your organization must provide accurate health information in a way that encourages audiences to take action and follow advice and guidance to protect safety and health.

There are many research-based social science models and theories that describe effective communications approaches leading to health protection action. Some communication practices and approaches focus on behaviour change at the individual level, while others have a broader social view, addressing behaviours and decision-making made by organizations and communities.

This principle comprises several components helping communicators develop messages and campaigns focused on behaviour change by understanding the audiences':

Level of awareness of the health risks and protection;

Feelings of personal relevance to the health risk;

Knowledge of appropriate health behaviours or policies to mitigate risks and promote health;

Confidence that they can take the recommended actions;

Sense that the recommended actions are endorsed by their community; and

Belief that the benefits of implementing actions outweigh the costs.

Goal

Move audiences to action

Behaviour change campaigns

Communicate in emergencies

How to do?

Communicators should consider the questions below to help identify if audiences are ready to take action. This insight can then be used to craft compelling communications products and activities that move decision-makers towards accepting and acting on your organization advice, guidance, and recommendations.

- What is the behaviour or action we want audiences to take to protect themselves or those they care about? Is there a behaviour or action that needs to be discouraged?
- Do the target audiences understand the situation, the health risks and recommended behaviours and policies?
- Do target audiences perceive the health issue as relevant to them; do they feel personally engaged with the issue?
- Do audiences understand the benefits of adopting the recommended behaviours or policies? Do they understand the consequences of not adopting them?
- What are the barriers preventing the adoption of health protection actions or policies?
- What social norms exist that could positively or negatively influence adopting the recommended action?
- How confident are decision-makers in their ability to endorse the safe and healthy behaviours, or to pass policies that promote health?
- Is the target audience able to act independently? If they need help in order to act, does the message describe what support might be available for them (either from the community or other stakeholders) or where to find additional information?

In short in case of emergency

1: Make information accesible Identify effective channels Make information available online Ensuring Accessibility 2 : Make information understandable Use plain language Tell real stories Make it visual Use familiar languages 4: Target the audiance Know the audience Listen to the audience Tailor the message Motivate the audience 3: Communicate Communicate early Communicate at the right time Build the conversation 4: Be sure Technical accuracy Be transparent Coordinate with partners 5: Get things done Move audiences to action Behaviour change campaigns Communicate in emergencies

Use a planning process that incorporates effective risk communication principles in your organization

At this level it is more the organizational level than the individual level that is targeted. Those communications and advices are less target to teachers only as they involve a your organizationle organization or interorganizational level.

To communicate during emergencies, ensure a rapid, regular, and comprehensive flow of information. As well take into account effective risk communication principles: transparency, rapid announcements, listening, and building trust.

- Analyze rapidly changing communications needs.
- Create and broadly share talking points and answers for frequently asked questions.
- Coordinate communication planning and execution with internal and external partners.
- Develop proactive messages for news and social media outlets.
- Respond to media enquiries.
- Update website content with the most recent information.
- Sequence messaging to ensure rapid release of key details. For example, a Twitter-first model allows for release of known informations until more detailed information is cleared.

If you are part of a larger organization you should speak as one voice to maintain trust and encourage appropriate action.

Most importantly: In an emergency, messaging must be consistent.

Get help from outside

Trained emergency communications experts can be deployed to provide on-site communication assistance during humanitarian crises and public health emergencies.

Support community engagement

Timely community engagement is particularly significant during health emergencies.

To support community involvement, communicators can:

> coordinate with institutions, community networks and partner organizations to reach the target audience; and

> use toolkits to create well-timed local messages.

Sources

1. *Barriers to Effective Communication*, https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/barriers-communication.html

2. Barry, B., & Fulmer, I. S. (2004). The medium and the message: The adaptive use of communication media in dyadic influence. *Academy of Management Review*, 29, 272–292. Chief blogging officer title catching on with corporations. *Workforce Management*, http://www.workforce.com/section/00/article/25/50/77.html

3. *Communication Blockers*, https://www.tutorialspoint.com/management_concepts/communication_blockers.htm

4. *Different Types of Communication and Channels*, http://open.lib.umn.edu/organizationalbehavior/chapter/8-4-different-types-ofcommunication-and-channels/

5. Doyle, A. (2017). Active Listening Definition, Skills, and Examples, https://www.thebalance.com/active-listening-skills-with-examples-2059684

6. Doyle, A. (2017). *Nonverbal Communication Skills*, At https://www.thebalance.com/nonverbal-communication-skills-2059693

7. Ekman, P., Friesen, W. V., & Hager, J. C. *The facial action coding system (FACS)*, http://face-and-emotion.com/dataface/facs/manual

8. *Interpersonal Communication Skills*, 2017, ttps://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/interpersonal-communication.html

9. Lee, D., & Hatesohl, D. *Listening: Our most used communication skill*, http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/comm/cm0150.htm

10. McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. (1995). *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger

11. National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2009). *Frequently asked questions*,
http://www.naceweb.org/Press/Frequently_Asked_Questions.aspx?referal=

12. Pearson, J., & Nelson, P. (2000). *An introduction to human communication: understanding and sharing* (p. 6). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

13. The College Board. (2004, September). Writing skills necessary for employment, says big business: Writing can be a ticket to professional jobs, says blue-ribbon group, http://www.writingcommission.org/pr/writing_for_employ.html