

Student name: _____ Date: _____

MODULE 21

Demonstrate basic skills for both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Objectives:

- A. Define the communication process.**
- B. Identify some of the causes of ineffective communication.**
- C. Identify forms of nonverbal communication.**
- D. Describe why communication is important.**

MODULE 21: INFORMATION SHEET

***TO THE STUDENT:** Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activity at the end of this module.*

What is the communication process?

In order to be a good communicator, you must first understand the process we as humans use to communicate. Communication is the process by which we share information, ideas and feelings through the use of spoken or written words, symbols, or gestures.

There are four basic elements to communication: (1) sender - the person doing the sending, (2) receiver - the person doing the listening or reading, (3) message - the communication to be sent, (4) response - the reaction to the message.

SENDER. Messages begin with the sender. This person or group of people decide on what is to be sent and how it is to be sent. An idea to raise money for your Career & Technical Service Organization (CTSO...SkillsUSA/VICA, DECA, HERO, or FHA club, for example) can be communicated to a lot of people via a public address system, flyers, or word of mouth.

RECEIVER. The receiver is the person to whom the message is transmitted. The receiver gets the message from the sender through words (written or spoken), gestures (such as a smile or frown), and pictures (drawings or photographs).

MESSAGE. The information, idea or feeling that the sender wants to communicate is the message. Communication is not always easy to understand. The message can be misunderstood or not understood at all. Sometimes problems arise because the verbal message does not match the nonverbal message. When you ask someone how things are going and they say "great," but you notice they have a frown on their face at the same time, you get contradictory messages. The "great" usually communicates things are going well, but the frown tells you something is wrong.

RESPONSE. The receiver responds in words or action when the message is received. The response tells the sender whether the receiver understood the message that was sent. Understanding of the message is based on the receiver's ability to decipher the message and the receiver's background and experiences. If you are asked to draw a polygon, but don't know what a polygon is, you will not be able to respond to the message correctly. Likewise, if your friend has illegible handwriting or you have a bad phone connection, you will not be able to respond correctly to the message.

Questions for thought

1. Think of a definition of what communication means to you.
2. Think about the communications you have had during the past day or two. Can you describe two situations in which you knew from the response you obtained that the receiver did not understand your message?

The basic elements of the communication process

Identify the basic elements of the communication process by reading the following situation and considering the questions.

A supervisor talking to one of his employees said, "Well, you've made another error. I have repeatedly given you instructions on how to do this job. Can't you get it through your head?" The employee, with a shrug of his shoulders, turned and left the room.

- Who is the sender?
- Who is the receiver?
- What is the message?
- What was the response?

What are the causes of ineffective communication?

Suppose you are trapped in a giant bubble. No one can hear you; you can hear no one else. Then another bubble floats towards you. Someone else is trapped in a bubble just like yours. Can you talk to that person? Can you become friends? Not as long as the bubbles remain between you. If you have trouble talking to other people, if it is hard for you to say what you feel, you are trapped in just such a psychological bubble.

In good communications, the receiver reads or hears your message the way you intended. To be successful in employment, you must "plug in" to the communication network. Good communication skills come with practice. In order to become a good communicator, it is necessary to overcome barriers.

Poor choice of words

Some of the barriers you must overcome are your own creation. Most messages are misunderstood because of a poor choice of words. You must choose your words carefully and use words that will not be misunderstood. You must also consider your receiver's background and experiences. Small children and teenagers, as well as adults, have their own language. To be understood, you must learn to use the words in your receiver's language. You should speak to customers in a calm and courteous manner using good pronunciation and diction. Most personnel interviewers rate you on your ability to communicate with others. This is also one of the most common questions asked of a former employer.

Lack of trust

Another barrier to good communication is suspicion. Suspicion or lack of trust is a common barrier. Both the sender and the receiver become more concerned with protecting themselves than with communicating if trust is missing from the communication. If you confide in a friend and tell him/her a secret, you expect that your secret will be kept. How would you feel if that friend told your secret to someone else? It would be difficult to trust this person again and they would have to work hard to regain your confidence. However, it does not mean you should become suspicious of everyone.

You will never learn to trust anyone unless you can open up to other people and spend the time it takes to get to know them. Trust or lack of trust, which are so important to effective human relations, grows from

the experiences that you have with others. Are you a person who can be trusted? Do you keep confidences? If you say you will do a job, do you keep your word? It is important that you feel that you can trust others and it is important for others to feel that they can trust you. The development of trust between people can pave the way for better communication.

Nonverbal communication

One of the most difficult barriers to overcome is understanding nonverbal behavior. Nonverbal behavior has also become known as "body language." If you want to become a good communicator you must become aware of the importance that nonverbal communication plays in your communications. Your body motions, facial expressions and gestures are all used for nonverbal communications. Have you ever had someone tell you something, but you knew from their facial expression they didn't mean what they said? Researchers tell us that in face-to-face conversation as much as 90 percent of the meaning is carried in the nonverbal behavior of the speaker. Studies also show that when the verbal and nonverbal messages contradict each other, the nonverbal message receives more attention than the verbal one. The nonverbal messages sent by the receiver can be equally important to the sender because they give some indication of how the message is being received.

Listening

Developing good listening skills is essential in learning to communicate with others. If you are not listening, or your receiver is not listening to you, the communication process begins to break down. Being a good listener takes practice and is a useful art. If you want to improve your listening ability, you should:

- (1) concentrate on the speaker, and
- (2) avoid some of the stumbling blocks of good listening.

In face-to-face listening you may find yourself planning your reply instead of concentrating on what the speaker is saying. This same tendency may be your downfall when you listen to a lecture. You may find your mind wandering to personal matters instead of listening to the speaker. One way to avoid this is by putting other thoughts out of your mind. It involves tuning in to the other person's words. You should repeat the speaker's key ideas, associate key points with related ideas and relate the speaker's points to your own experiences and

background. You must be mentally alert and avoid the stumbling blocks of daydreaming and turning your attention to distractions. When you feel your attention wandering, look at the speaker, anticipate what will be said next and think of possible examples that might be used to underline the points made.

Your surroundings may distract you. Noise in the room, someone else trying to get your attention, and street noises are major distractions. You must try to ignore all these distractions. Concentrate on what is being said. Let all unimportant matters go.

Listening sounds like a lot of work doesn't it? It is. Be sure to work at it when you listen.

Questions for thought

Identify the communication barrier in each statement. Then consider how you would reword each statement to overcome the barrier.

1. *As he slowly backed away, Bill said, "Oh, I'll take care of the situation."*
2. *"Are you serious? Ask her to get my assignments? She'd forget. Once before I asked her to do something for me and she forgot all about it."*

The importance of good communication skills

Can you imagine a world in which no one communicates? Can you imagine a day at school or work in which you talk to no one and make no contact with anyone? Think about how much time is wasted and how human beings have hurt one another because of ineffective communication. It is impossible to live in our everyday world without communicating with others. Studies have shown that Americans spend approximately 70 percent of their waking hours in some form of communication--either listening, speaking, reading, or writing.

Good communication skills are a must in the work world. It is impossible to work without communicating with others. Communication problems are so common in the world of work that companies spend millions of dollars each year on workshops and seminars to help their employees become more effective communicators. Some companies have even been founded just to provide these seminars and workshops to the general public and businesses.

Other people form impressions of you through the way you communicate. They decide what kind of person you are. They also decide whether they have much in common with you and whether they want to spend time with you. The way you express yourself to others is one of the most important keys to your independence and fulfillment as an adult.

Points to remember

- Good communication skills are essential to success in many adult roles.
- To avoid misunderstanding during a conversation, consider the effect of your words, voice, and body language.
- Your message may be misunderstood if the words you use are not in the receiver's language and do not take into consideration the receiver's background and experiences.
- Sometimes writing is the best way to communicate because it allows you more time to get your message right and allows you to create a record of your message.
- Being a good listener is crucial to being a good communicator.

MODULE 21: STUDENT ACTIVITY

***TO THE STUDENT:** After you have read and studied the information sheet, complete the following activity.*

Activity 1: Communication Self-Check

To rate your communication skills, place a check mark (✓) **in the column that** most appropriately describes your behavior.

	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
1. I listen carefully to other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. I am alert to the non-verbal communication of others.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. I am sensitive to how other people feel.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. I trust others.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. I make sure that I understand what the other person is saying before I respond.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. I let other people know my feelings about what is being said.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. I talk freely and openly.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. I make sure that other people understand my language.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. I consider other people's experiences and background.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. I examine the facts as they are presented.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. I judge other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. I categorize other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. I become upset when my ideas are questioned.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. I criticize other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. I plan what I am going to say when other people are speaking.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Activity 2: Persuasive Essay

Write a one page persuasive essay describing your ability to communicate with others verbally and nonverbally in a specific situation.

MODULE 21: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE**Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Career Education and Work****13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)**

- A. Analyze work habits needed to advance within a career.
- B. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:
 - Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving
- C. Evaluate team member roles to describe and illustrate active listening techniques:
 - Clarifying
 - Encouraging
 - Restating
 - Reflecting
 - Summarizing

Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.4.11. Types of Writing

- C. Write persuasive pieces.
 - Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
 - Include a variety of methods to advance the argument or position.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)**PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Sociability: Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in new and ongoing group settings.

COMPETENCIES

Interpersonal: Works well with others, including being skilled team members and negotiating with others to solve problems or reach decisions.