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1

Introduction to Written Communication: Some Basic Principles

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Introduction to Communication
- 1.2 Problems in Communication
- 1.3 The Communicator's Behaviour
- 1.4 Written Communication
- 1.5 Helping Other People Communicate with You
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This topic introduces students to the basic principles of written communication. It provides an introduction to clear, positive messages and to understanding basic writing strategies. It is designed to help you be more proficient in the kind of writing you need to do at home, college and the workplace.

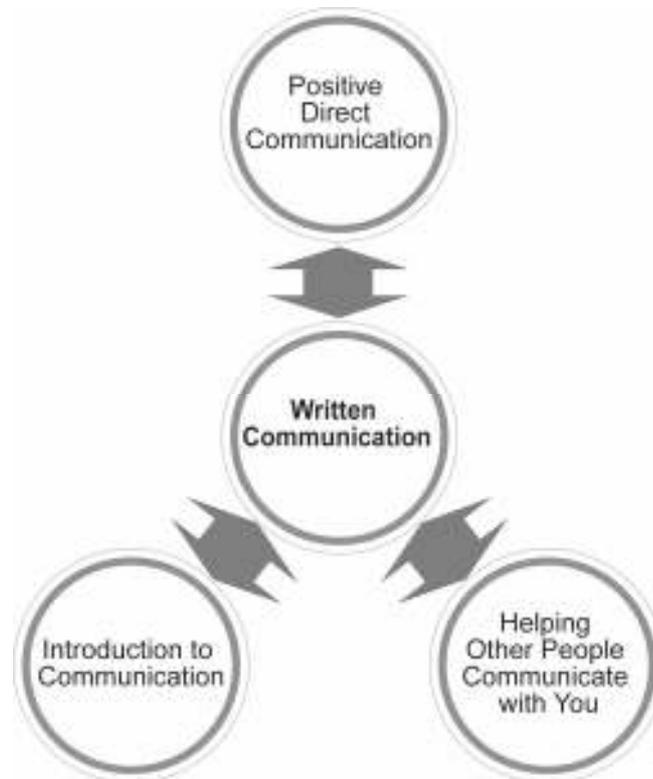
Communication is a learned skill. Most people are born with the physical ability to talk, but to speak and write well are skills that we have to learn and develop.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

1. identify some basic principles of communication;
2. define the various types of communication;
3. identify the true meaning of communication;
4. comprehend the importance of communication in construction;
5. solve problems in communication; and
6. distinguish between oral and written communication.

MIND MAP



1.1

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

"A communication has two ends to the stick – it is composed of a speaker's intention and a listener's reception of what is said."

Linda Slakey

Communication, both oral and written, has become such a normal part of our everyday lives that we easily take communicating with each other for granted. However, the field of communication includes a wide variety of activities and situations. It is important to strive for competence in both oral and written communication, particularly in relation to the effective operation of the organisations. The quality of communication affects people internally (through staff motivation/performance) and externally, where the whole perception of the organisation which both existing and potential clients depend upon.



ACTIVITY

"The meaning of communication is in the way that it is received". What do you think of this statement?

The purpose of communication is to get your message across to others. This is a process that involves both the sender of the message and the receiver. This process leaves room for error, with messages

often misinterpreted by one or more of the parties involved. Therefore, this causes unnecessary confusion and counter productivity.

1.1.1 What is Communication?

Communication is usually defined as giving, receiving or exchanging information, opinions or ideas so that the “message” is completely understood by everybody involved. Listening skills are equally important as speaking skills. Non-verbal communication or “body-language” from either party can influence the message (e.g. posture, gestures, facial expression, eye contact, dress). To some degree, there are also “barriers” which may intervene with either verbal or written communication.

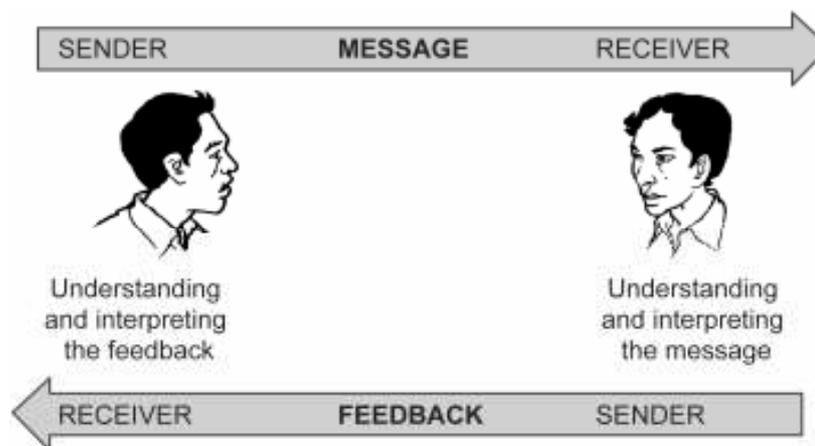


Figure 1.1: The communication process

1.1.2 Importance of the Message in Communication

Getting your message across is paramount to progressing. To do this, you must understand what your message (written or oral) is, what audience you are sending it to and how it will be perceived. You must weigh the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational and cultural contexts.

In fact, a message is successfully received and comprehended only when both the sender and the receiver perceive it in the same way.

By successfully getting our message across, we convey our thoughts and ideas effectively. When not successful, the thoughts and ideas that we convey do not necessarily reflect our own, causing a communication breakdown and creating “roadblocks” that stand in the way of our goals — both personally and professionally.



ACTIVITY

You and your colleague feel the need to write a letter to your boss asking for a raise in salary. How do you ensure that your message is conveyed to him successfully? What are the points that you should include in your letter?

Draft the letter to your boss to communicate your need. Then, have it read by your tutor or your friends to see if your message is communicated, and if your letter can be improved.

1.2

PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is obviously a two-way process but there are a number of factors which may distort this process and could affect overall interpretation and understanding.

Communication problems can popup at every stage of the communication process (which consists of sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context) and have the potential to create misunderstanding and confusion.

To be an effective communicator and to get our point across without misunderstanding and confusion, our goal should be to lessen the frequency of these problem areas at each stage of this process with clear, concise, accurate and well-planned communications.

If we were to check at each stage of the following process we might be able to minimise these barriers, which include:

(a) **Status/Role**

The sender and receiver may be of equal status within a hierarchy (e.g. communication between managers, with the sender first to establish credibility; between equivalent people in different organisations) or they may be at different levels (e.g. manager/employee; lecturer/student). Communication may also be with customers, clients or stakeholders of various types.

(b) **Cultural Differences**

This may be a significant factor within or outside the organisation, for example, dealings between different departments, international communications with other organisations or ethnic minorities.

(c) **Choice of Communication Channels**

Are they appropriate for the purpose and the receiver? For example, written/verbal use of poor verbal and body language can also confuse the message.

(d) **Length of Communication**

Is it appropriate for the purpose and receiver? Is the message too lengthy? Disorganised? Does it contain errors?

(e) **Use of Language**

Poor choice of vocabulary and/or poor structure of the communication could create a barrier to understanding.

(f) **Disabilities**

Impairment of hearing or sight, dyslexia, mental health, etc., should be taken into consideration (e.g. use of hearing loops, sign language, magnifying systems, symbols rather than words).

(g) **Known or Unknown Receiver**

Is the message created appropriately? Does the message contain too fast?



too much information
ACTIVITY

(h) **Individual Perceptions/Attitudes/Personalities**

How is the message received? It helps if you are aware of the individual's character. Sometimes, methods of communication, for example, with the elderly or with children, may need special consideration. Are you aware of the preferred communication style of the receiver — visual, auditory or kinesthetic — and can you amend your own appropriately?

Your father is not too keen on your idea to study medicine in the UK. How will you try to persuade him and justify your stand? Bear in mind the barriers in communication which you might encounter.

(i) **Atmosphere/Noise/Distraction**

These may be a barrier to effective verbal communication.

(j) **Clarity of Message**

Is the message clear? Could anything be ambiguous?

(k) **Lack of Feedback**

This can create problems for either party. One - way communication may be quick but feedback enables confirmation of understanding by both sender and receiver.

Therefore, in choosing the most appropriate method of communication to avoid/lessen problems, communicators need to heed the following:

- Think carefully about all the possibilities.
- Consider all aspects of the communication process (interpretation, understanding, feedback).
- Consider the possible barriers.
- Consider the complexity of the subject matter and how it might be best conveyed.
- Ask Who? – Characteristics of the receiver(s).
Why? – The purpose of the communication.
What? – Content of the “message”.
How? – Oral, written, visual or combination of these.
- Whether you are in a meeting or speaking to individuals.
- Face-to-face or via telephone.
- Letter, e-mail, memo, report.
Where? – Location of a meeting.
When? – Timing/time limit/expected response time.

Choices of methods of communication also relate to a range of other factors such as cost, time, confidentiality, convention, urgency and whether written records are required.

1.3

THE COMMUNICATOR'S BEHAVIOUR

To be an active communicator and to get your point across without misunderstanding and confusion, your goal should be to lessen the frequency of would-be barriers at each stage of the process (sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context) with clear, concise, accurate, and well-planned communication.

In simple English, be yourself. For instance, if you want to be a better writer, READ. Not just books on writing, but magazines, websites, newspapers, newsletters — everything that you can get your hands on. Do not worry about grammar and spelling when you start out. Fix it later. Get your thoughts down first. Better still, talk through your topic and type the way you speak. You can edit and refocus the piece later. In addition, practise writing everyday. By doing so, I can ensure you that you can change your habit and your behaviour. By doing so, you should be able to communicate confidently with others around you.



ACTIVITY

Come up with a dialogue where you and your listener are engaged in a deep discussion of an important topic, that is, university admissions. Write a brief dialogue between you and the other person but make sure that it is of reasonable length. Cite examples wherever necessary.

1.4

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

To put it simply, written language communication is communication by means of written symbols that is communicated by or to or between people or groups.

Thus, written communication is the presentation of ideas or essays that make a clear point, supply details supporting that point and demonstrate unity and coherence of thought. The mastery of good or standard written English and the ability to comprehend and write about information acquired through reading, note-taking and listening are also elements of written communication. The goals of every student in written communication are to be able to write unified and coherent essays, to have knowledge of the vocabulary and conventions of the field, and a mastery of written English.

1.4.1

Ways to Improve Written Communication

"We all use language to communicate, express ourselves, get our ideas across and connect with the person to whom we are speaking. When a relationship is working, the act of communication seems to flow relatively effortlessly. When a relationship is deteriorating, the act of communicating can be as frustrating as climbing a hill of sand."

Chip Rose

Successful written communication requires careful thought and clear planning. It is clear, correct and easy to read. A plain writing style is easy to understand and reduces the chances of misunderstanding and ambiguity.

In order to improve your written communication skills, you need to continually practise writing in the language and write with a clear purpose that meets the needs of the reader. You decide what you want

to say and put this in a logical and suitable sequence. Such an approach will ensure the clarity of your message. It will also help you to avoid omitting relevant details.

When you start writing, your tools are the words, sentences, paragraphs and lay-out. Use these to convey your meaning concisely, courteously and confidently. When you reach the final stage of writing, have the courage to edit your own work critically as well as from the reader's point of view. Therefore, your written work must undergo three important stages before you print it out or submit it to be marked or sent to the printer, namely:

- planning stage,
- writing stage, and
- editing stage.

In addition, if your work fulfills the preceding formats, this written document should have:

- efficiency,
- equity, and
- effectiveness.

If your work is written in plain English, it would be easy to read and understand and the number of readers who would seek clarification is reduced.

Therefore, a useful tool in improving your writing skills is writing — start writing in simple, plain English, then move on from something concrete to something abstract and expressive. We would never improve our writing ability if we do not start somewhere. According to Sebranek, Meyer & Kemper (1996), writing, like “basketball and juggling, is not a God-given mysterious talent given only to a chosen few but, rather, a skill that gets better with practice, practice that involves increased challenges and, therefore, risk.” By continually practising and editing your own work, you can also avoid making grammatical errors. Errors in writing make a document difficult to read and cause communication barriers.

Therefore, to remove them you need to edit. Judith (1993) has identified four common errors which you must avoid in order to improve your writing competency, as shown in Figure 1.2.

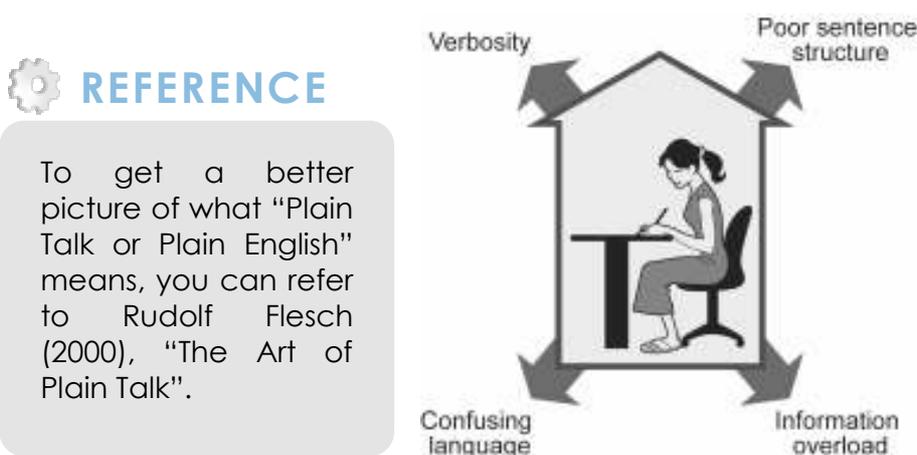


Figure 1.2: Common errors in writing

(a) Confusing Language

Confusing language means confusing words that can mislead the reader and cause communication breakdown or barriers between the writer and the reader. Some words are ambiguous, bombastic, vague, sexist, trendy, exaggerated, inflated and archaic. Again, we must always remember to write to convey meaning in plain English. It is better to use the familiar word to the far-fetched, the concrete word to the abstract, the single word to the circumlocution and the short word to the long. As defined by

Webster's Dictionary, circumlocution means "the use of an unnecessarily large number of words to express an idea".



ACTIVITY

When it comes to writing, why do you think it is necessary to "omit needless words" as attested by Strunk and White (2000)?

(b) **Verbosity**

Verbosity, on the other hand, means the use of too many words. The overuse of words interferes with understanding. Sometimes they are unnecessary because they interrupt the reader's understanding of the message. If verbosity persists, it may antagonise, confuse and bore the reader. For example:

- He's quick. (Ok)
- He moves quickly. (Better)
- Adnin was the winner! (Ok)
- Adnin won! (Better)
- The rugby ball went to the centre field. (Ok)
- The rugby ball sailed to the centre field. (Better)
- "The stability and quality of our financial performance will be developed through the profitable execution of our existing business, as well as the acquisition or development of new businesses." (Cook, 1999) (Too long, too wordy, passive voice)
- We will improve our financial performance not only by executing our existing business more profitably but by acquiring or developing new businesses (Better, shorter, active voice)

(c) **Poor Sentence Structure**

Poor sentence structure relates to writing fragments instead of complete sentences and writing sentences that lack unity. Try to keep your sentence(s) short and compact to ensure that they are correct, logical and easy to read. Long, complicated sentences can be difficult to read and understand. Word order is important for meaning. Words have to be structured to the extent that what precedes should be in accordance with those that follow.

(d) **Information Overload**

Information overload means giving too much information, hence, the reader becomes overwhelmed and confused. This may also cause frustration and cast doubts on the writer's credibility. Therefore, as a writer, you must decide what sort of information is required in order to produce a clear, concise and relevant written work.



ACTIVITY

The following examples have misplaced modifiers. Try to reorder the words to make them acceptable, presentable and most importantly, grammatical.

For sale. Antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers. Fur coats made for ladies from their own skin. Enraged cows injures farmers with an axe.

(Taken from Ratner, B.D., 2004)

1.4.2

Letters of Memorandum

Reports intended for readers who are external to the organisation are often written as letter reports, usually on the organisation's letterhead. A letter report may present a problem, proposal, solution or reply to a request.

The minimum acceptable standard of a letter report includes a subject line plus the seven basic parts of a business letter:

- The writer's address.
- The date.
- Reader's address.
- Salutation.
- Body.
- Complimentary close.
- Signature block.

Memorandum reports are used for routine information. This includes information about a special issue, problem or information needed for decision - making and problem - solving within an organisation. The memorandum report format is the least formal report format.

The minimum acceptable standard of a short memorandum report includes the following five components:

- Reader's name.
- Writer's name.
- Date.
- Subject line or title.
- Body.

Whatever format you choose, organise information into separate sections. If headings make it easier to understand the report, use them. However, if the headings serve no purpose, leave them out. Make the decision on the basis of the report's purpose, content and the reader's needs. In short, you have to be consistent in your presentation. If you use headings, you should proofread for consistency of font types and sizes in headings and subheadings.



ACTIVITY

"Tell me and I'll forget.
Show me and I may not
remember. Involve me
and I'll understand."
(Native American
saying)

In your opinion, how does this saying relate to the art of written communication?



ACTIVITY

Write a memorandum to your subordinate in the school stating the need to revamp the current dress code policy for extra-curricular activities. As a principal, among other things, you plan to set up a committee to oversee this aspect and provide reasons for the need for change. (Please refer to format as outlined in 1.4.2)

1.4.3

Formal and Informal Reports

A report is a document containing comprehensive information about a specific subject. To write a good report, the following three stages must be discussed.

- Planning.
- Writing.
- Editing.

Once the mentioned skills have been acquired or have become automatic or second nature, report writing tends to be less daunting. The writing stage really is the second priority, because without careful planning and gathering of necessary information (i.e. pre-writing stage), there will be no substance to your words. The larger the report, the more editing will be required. It can be useful to get someone else to read it through for you.

"Tired eyes pressing up against a deadline often miss silly mistakes."

Claire Cook (1999)



ACTIVITY

Why do you think formal written work should always be documented?

The purpose of the report often determines what type of format is used to present the information. A number of different formats are used in report

1.4.4

Documentation

The purpose of documenting written work varies, depending on the nature of the piece of work. The question is, "Why do we need to document written work?" There is some work kept for research purposes, some historical work kept for posterity, and some for others to know and see. There are also others which are used to keep abreast with on-going projects, for remembrance, acknowledgement and as a teaching-learning tool to improve one's writing skill. We may also want to use such documents as avenues to project our ideas or opinions to be shared with others as well as establish and defend our points of view. These boil down to the fact that 'writing is our thinking made public'.

Therefore, all writing must come out of the context of ideas. Then, someone has to read that writing.

So, what must be documented? Any idea, logic or argument or phraseology derived from an outside source must be documented. You must give credit for all borrowed materials; for example, quotations, references, primary and secondary sources; facts, data and statistics, opinions, ideas and interpretations which you have gathered from your reading and research. Borrowed materials must be acknowledged whether you paraphrase,



TIPS

You must cite and document all ideas and arguments borrowed from an outside source.

summarise or quote directly. The only exception is what is loosely termed “general knowledge” or “common knowledge”, which is information or ideas generally known and accepted by the writer and audience.

1.5

HELPING OTHER PEOPLE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU

Many people are intimidated by writing. Even so, there are times when writing is the best way to communicate and often times the only way to get your message across.

Effective communication is a two-way process but there are a number of factors which may distort this process and could affect overall interpretation and understanding. Checks at each stage of the communication may help to minimise these barriers.

In order to help other people to communicate with you, we need to choose the most appropriate method of communication. We need to bear in mind the following:

- Think carefully about all the possibilities.
- Consider all aspects of the communication process (interpretation, understanding, feedback).
- Consider the possible barriers.
- Consider the complexity of the subject matter and how it might be best conveyed.
- Ask Who? Why? What? and How?
- Consider whether it is going to be in the form of a letter, e-mail, memo or report.

Choices of methods of communication also relate to a change of other factors such as cost, time, confidentiality, convention, urgency and whether written records are required.

When we use the written form of communication, such as letters, e-mails, memos, reports, minutes, forms, questionnaires, enquiries/replies, records, leaflets/brochures, advertisements and press releases, the objectives vary in each type of situation. We should not communicate only because of the needs or expectations of the recipient(s), but we must do so with careful planning in terms of content, structure, proofreading and editing as well as with proper decision - making.

It is only through communication with others that we convey our ideas and opinions in messages delivered, as well as receive and process information for immediate or later transaction.

Communicating through words, however, can be more concrete with less room for error and even less room for mistakes compared with verbal communication. This presents written communicators with new challenges, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, style of writing and actual wording. Thankfully, today’s technology makes memo, reports, letter and proposal writing much easier by providing reliable tools that check and even correct words and incorrect grammar. Unfortunately, these tools are not misspelt and will require your support, thus making knowledge in this area important fool proof.

Currently, we transact messages electronically using e-mail, or we call over the phone, use SMS or write letters, memos or other means at our disposal to enable people to communicate with us. If, for whatever reasons, certain procedures must be followed, some are written while others are, by convention, ethical and moral. Unless we adhere to certain norms, others might not want to communicate with us by whatever means.

1.5.1

Problems Other People May Have Writing to You

The purpose of communication is to get our message across to others.

Having gone across we assume it is delivered, received and understood by the reader. This is a process that involves both the sender of the message and the receiver. Sometimes our messages are conveyed successfully, which means that our thoughts and ideas have been transmitted. On the other hand, if they are not conveyed, they will cause communication breakdown and create roadblocks that stand in the way of our goals.

In spite of the numerous opportunities currently present in this technological age, many individuals continue to struggle with this and are unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to communicate in the workplace and stands in the way of career progression.

Getting our message across is paramount to progressing. To do this you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to and how it will be perceived. You must also weigh the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational, contextual, cultural, formal, informal or professional.

People may not want to write to you for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons have been stated earlier in the text, while others may appear in the following forms:

- One's weaknesses as a writer (for example, language deficiencies).
- Too much information in the text.
- Too many grammatical errors and mistakes.
- Barriers between the sender and receiver (for example, cultural, status, role).
- Message not clear or precise.
- Wrong choice of channel/format deliverance.
- Past experiences (for example, treatment received).
- Documents not structured, messy or not well laid out



ACTIVITY

What do you think are some of the problems other people may have writing to you?

1.5.2

Using Questions to Overcome Problems

As stated earlier, it is the reciprocal nature of the communication process that is in question. All written forms of communication, if delivered smoothly, will certainly be understood by the receiver, with no questions asked.

However, there is no one-way trip to know whether your document has been safely delivered to the receiver and most importantly, entertained by him/her. We need to find out the reasons behind the positive/negative impact of the delivery. These can be done only through questions posed by you as a writer.

Nevertheless, there are varieties of modes or activities that we can use to start the communication processes moving. It is of utmost importance that we strive for competence in written communication. The quality of communication affects people internally and externally, where the whole perception of the organisation by both existing and potential clients may depend on it.

If the communicative channel is blocked or has come to a standstill, we need to ponder and assess ourselves. Somewhere along the line, things are not in order. We should pose certain questions to ourselves. Where did it go wrong? Why was the message not understood or interpreted by the receiver? Was the timing wrong? Did I use the correct channel to deliver the message? Are there many errors or mistakes in the document? Many other questions of this nature can shed some light on the problems faced by the communicators.

1.5.3

Flow of Questions

Flow of questions must also be looked into. In 1.5.2, we discussed questions that we may want to pose to the receiver/reader to solve problems arising from the written work. Questions, however, need to be structured or ordered. You should arrange them so that the key facts and conclusions are very accessible. Remember, not everyone will read the whole report, so ensure that your message will get across even if a person only skims the document.

For example, if the document is report writing, we may want to ask questions such as:

- What is the report about?
- What are you trying to say?
- To whom is the report addressed?
- Who are you writing for?
- Who will read the report?
- How is the content of the report?
- How long can the report be?
- What type of information is to be included in the report?
- How shall I gather and present it?
- What sort of language should I use?
- Has the report been proofread?
- What is the minimum length of the report?
- When should the report be sent?

1.6

COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE AT ALL ORGANISATIONAL LEVELS

Communication in general and verbal communication, in particular, are arguably the most important of all human behaviours. Our use of language defines us as a species and profoundly influences all our other behaviours. Communication makes human organisation and cooperation possible, and verbal as well as written communication establish culture and civilisation. In the history of humanity, written communication is a fairly recent phenomenon.

Just as oral communication greatly increases our ability to accumulate and transmit information and knowledge, writing further amplifies ability of language to overcome the barriers of time and distance. With the advent of writing, the ability to store and transfer information from individual to individual and group to group no longer depends entirely on memory. Writing provides records that exist independently of the writer.

Based on these premises, we need to remember that written work breaks barriers and borders, and knows no boundaries. We communicate at all organisational levels. Hence, we need to know every minute detail before it gets to the receiver. We should consider our readers very early in the planning process as the information is to be imparted to them. Thus, we should organise and design the written work in a way that guides the reader through the main points to a full comprehension of the content.

To achieve a powerful effect and to ensure that your document is easy to read, make sure to provide the following:

- A clear indication of your purpose.
- Accurate and objective information.
- Suitable headings.
- A suitable order of information.

1.6.1

Giving and Receiving Good Instructions

Communication is effective when a concise and a clear message is delivered well, received successfully and understood fully. All effective communicators must consider purpose, occasion and audience when planning their written work. As the communication process involves both sending and receiving, it stands to reason that communication will be most effective when the writer or speaker considers the variables that will affect the reception of his or her message.

All written documents produced need to be specifically stated with regards to contents and actions to be taken. This is more so if a memorandum is sent by management to subordinates. The receiver should be able to read and understand the contents and take the necessary actions. Therefore, instructions must be clear and precise.

When commenting on papers, a teacher can show students precisely where their meaning is unclear, pose questions designed to illuminate problems underlying the unclear communication and provide models for expressing analysis more clearly.

The reader or the receiver who obtained the report and read the instruction must know how to respond to it. He/she should be able to understand clearly and precisely what actions need to be taken, how to do it and in what manner.



ACTIVITY

In your opinion, what would be the best way to facilitate effective communication at the organisational level?

1.6.2

Communicating at Your Own Organisational Levels

Although internal correspondence at organisational levels looks simple, easy and fast, it may not appear to work to one's advantage. Often times, mails do not arrive on time, for reasons unknown to the receiver, or there seems to be a breakdown in communication between the sender and the individual entrusted to despatch the messages. Or, the receiver could not understand the contents of the memorandum. A lack of information or misunderstanding can cause problems and sometimes, hardship. Forms and documents should be accurate, complete and clear in meaning.

At other times too, internal mails, such as electronic e-mails, chat lines, and gophers do not reach their destination as expected. This may be due to communication or electrical breakdown. Thus, messages are not delivered and meetings or scheduled gatherings of employees may not take place.

 ACTIVITY

Think of a problem that you have, possibly some ideas (for example, congestion in school hallways, damage done to school properties, too little community recreational activity, noise in the library and so on). Briefly describe the problem and outline the actions you would take to solve it. Write a memo to the appropriate person using the following guidelines:

- Clearly state the problem.
- Explain the relationship between the problem and the solution and why the solution is good.
- Describe any action that needs to be taken.

1.7

COMMUNICATING WITH GROUPS

Communication in groups may be formal or informal. In a group formal setting, such as meetings, workshops, seminars or conferences, people meet to discuss subjects stated on the agendas. They make every attempt to settle matters at their disposal. In an informal setting, on the other hand, matters discussed are of minor importance. This does not mean that serious matters are not discussed.

1.8

WHEN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IS MOST IMPORTANT

Sometimes verbal communication may fail us. We do not receive the necessary response from the receiver. This could be due to the 'noise' in the message, that is, the message is not understood due to the language barrier or it may be wrongly interpreted. When this happens, we may want to resort to the written form; it is formal and can be recorded. Official letters or documents, such as memorandum of understanding (MOU), memorandum of agreement (MOA), letters of

agreement and appointment, and job applications are all documented. Since they are in the written form, they are considered items of great importance.

You can check out the website: <http://www.writersresources.com/tips.html> which is an online community for writers and readers of all interests and backgrounds.

SUMMARY

This topic attempts to highlight some basic principles of written communication, its meaning, importance and the relationship between the message, sender and receiver. Problems encountered in communication are also briefly discussed.

G L O S S A R Y



Channel	– This refers to the line of communication used in the communication process. For example, written or oral, electronic or printed.
Chat lines	– Chat lines are websites where users can send written messages to each other and reply in 'real time', in which the person receiving the message sees it as soon as it is typed and can reply immediately.
Communication	– Communication is the process of education transfer from a sender to a receiver who understands the message from the sender.
Documentation	– This refers to texts composed, constructed, written and delivered to the sender. They may appear as electronic mail, e-mail, SMS messages sent over the phone and other printed form, such as letters, minutes, reports, theses and dissertations.
e-mail	– This refers to electronic mail which allows the user to send and receive messages. Through the use of e-mail, learners can communicate with others around the world. They can also participate in discussion groups.
Gopher	– It is an Internet tool that provides access to information through a menu system. The items on the menu allow you to move through the Internet in an organised manner. As gopher sites are located and/or organised by a 'server', they are not all available on the World Wide Web. Neither do gophers give access to all the sites of the World Wide Web.
Memorandum	– A memorandum (memo) is a form of communication used to relay information within a company, club or other organisation. The memo is usually concerned with only one topic and is kept as short as possible.
Minutes	– Minutes are records of proceedings at meetings. Accurate minutes are extremely important as a review of minutes is a way for all who were at the meeting to agree on what was said and decided.
Written communication	– Written communication provides records for future reference. This is a major advantage as a single message can be sent through mail to many people.

TEST 1

You are a laboratory assistant of a secondary school. You are to report to your school principal about the loss of two desktop computers. In your report, you need to state the approximate time and the day you discovered the loss and the circumstances surrounding it. You must include other relevant information that you feel is necessary. The report must be brief, in plain English and must follow the format given.

TEST 2

As a teacher, you are very concerned about your students' work in written communication. You know that you should assist them in whatever way possible. Write a letter to your head of department stating your intention and possibly how you plan to conduct your lesson to improve their weaknesses.

REFERENCES

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