

3.1 Verbal Communication

Related Areas: Communication

Lesson Objective(s): *The objective of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance of effective verbal communication by listening carefully, by asking the right questions, and by thinking quickly and creatively in conversation.*

Outcome Goal(s): *By the end of the lesson the student will have a concrete understanding of the importance of communication, the potential roadblocks, and how to foster good communication.*

Instructor Preparation Checklist

☐	Supplies and Tasks	Materials and Resources
	Media & Audio	
	Websites	
	Read/Review	Communication Model
	Field Trips/Co-op/Outings	
	Supplies Needed	Graph paper sheets, pencils/pens, markers or crayons, index cards, tape
	Print/Copy/Laminate	
	Miscellaneous	Extemporaneous speech topics, role play topics
Additional Notes:		

Warm Up: Draw It Out

Description: Hand out two pieces of graph paper to every student. Instruct them to draw a simple image on one piece of graph paper without allowing anyone to see it. Then have the students get into pairs, continuing to keep their drawing out of view.

Explain that one student will be the “communicator” and the other will be the “receiver.” Each student will play both roles. Students will sit back-to-back and the first “communicator” will verbally describe to the “receiver” how to draw their simple graphic image without allowing the “receiver” to see it. Next, have the students switch roles, so that the previous “receiver” is now the “communicator,” giving verbal instructions on their own initial graph drawing.

Once both students have had an opportunity to be “communicator” and “receiver,” allow them to compare their original drawings with what they instructed their partner to draw.

Purpose/Key Skills: The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate the importance of good communication. Students will have to be thoughtful in how they communicate and attentive as listeners.

Notes/Vocabulary: The instructor might emphasize the point by talking with the class about occupations that involve cooperation and instructions. For example, all the people working in an operating room must be able to communicate clearly and quickly with each other in order to ensure their patient’s safety.

Materials: blank graph paper sheets, pencils/pens, markers or crayons (optional)

(1) Encoding/Decoding Lecture and Discussion

Description: Show students a communication model and explain how it works:

1. The speaker “encodes” their idea into language
2. The speaker sends a “message.”
3. The listener “decodes” to message.
4. The listener gives “feedback”
5. The speaker may “clarify” their message.

Explain that though we don’t necessarily use these terms, all conversations happen in a cycle fairly similar to this one. Then ask the students to highlight all the places within the communication model where the message might be misinterpreted and how, e.g. the speaker and listener speak different native languages, and have them discuss ways to overcome these roadblocks, e.g. a translator, charades.

Purpose/Key Skills: The purpose of this lecture and activity is to have students consider the process by which conversation happens and how they can be more effective speakers *and* listeners.

Notes/Vocabulary: Encode, decode, message, feedback, clarification

Materials: Communication Model, board

(2) Famous Pairs: Asking the Right Questions

Description: Write out a list of famous pairs and write each on separate index cards, example: “peanut butter” on one card and “jelly” on another card, “Batman” and “Robin”, “Barack

Obama” and “Michelle Obama”, etc.

Line up the students shoulder to shoulder. Without the student seeing his or her card, tape a card to each student’s back. Each student is only allowed to look at the card of the person to his or her left. Students may use only yes or no questions directed at the person to their right to figure out who they are while also answering questions to the person on their left.

Once students have determined who they are, they have to find their partner. Without looking at other’s notes or saying who or what they are, students must use yes or no questions to find their partner. At the end, the teacher will tell them whether or not they are correct.

Purpose/Key Skills: Students will have to ask thoughtful questions to figure out who they are and who their partner is. They’ll have to think critically to ask the right questions. They’ll also have to work cooperatively with one another in order to complete the exercise.

Notes/Vocabulary: The instructor may choose a different type of pairing such as synonyms or antonyms.

Materials: Index cards, tape

(3) Extemporaneous Speeches

Description: Give each student a prompt and have him or her come to the front of the room and deliver a three- to five-minute extemporaneous speech on the subject.

The instructor may pick subjects related to the class or a potpourri of subjects students are not well versed in, such as plumbing or Bonnie and Clyde.

Purpose/Key Skills: The point of this exercise is not to have students demonstrate knowledge of their subject material, thus random topics present more of a challenge. Rather, it’s to have them learn to speak confidently under pressure and think on their feet. Whether at networking events, work meetings, or even social gatherings, students will often have to quickly come up with ideas in small or large group settings. Conversations often necessitate flexibility and quick mindedness. Though this exercise may be humorous, it gives students an opportunity to use their improvisational skills and public speaking skills.

Notes/Vocabulary: Extemporaneous (without preparation)

Materials: List of topics

(4) Role-Play

Description: Have the students come in pairs, one pair at a time, to the front of the room. Give each pair a role-play scenario and give them an allotted amount of time to work it out successfully. A successful finish is if both parties understand one another. Examples:

1. Neighbor A is playing loud music and Neighbor B wants them to turn it down.
2. A college applicant wants to explain a bad grade they got last year to a college admissions office.
3. A customer calls a store customer service representative to complain about his/her defective gadget.

Purpose/Key Skills: The purpose of this activity is to help students use their communication skills to think on their feet while also listening and responding to another person. This is a culmination of the previous exercises.

Notes/Vocabulary:

Materials: Role play topics

Formative Assessment

☐	Skill Description and Assessment	Notes
	Student can explain the communication model	
	Student is able to work cooperatively and communicate with peers	
	Student participates in all activities.	

Sources

Famous Pairs: <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/communication-activities-adults-students/#students>

Communication Model: <https://speechgeekmarket.com/products/communication-model-poster>