



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Abstract:

The current study discusses the communication skills, sheds light on the significance of communication skills and how it helps us to share our thoughts and ideas. Besides that, it explains the elements of communication skills and modes of communication. Also, it shows the effect of communication skills and states the barriers of such communication skills.

Introduction:

Most people would agree that communication between two individuals should be simple. It's important to remember that there are differences between talking and communicating. When you communicate, you are successful in getting your point across to the person you're talking to.

Communication skills are an essential part of our daily life and to success in this world. Communication skills define as the process of exchange information between two individuals. This paper attempts the readers to overview the importance of communication skills and how it helps us to develop our relationships with others in our jobs, families and identifying the main elements and levels of communication skills, in addition to over viewing the modes of communication skills. Further, introducing the reader to the barriers of communication skills and the ways of overcoming to these barriers, so that their communication becomes effective. Besides, this paper will help the readers to develop their communication skills, how to communicate effectively, what is the important form of communication skills, and how they can develop it, what are the main factors that influence the process of sending information.

The problem of study:

This study seeks to find suitable accounts above the concepts of communication. It gives the right levels of understanding student's level. In other words, many students do not know the perfect definition of communication, its kinds, modes and factors. That is, the current study represents a condensed survey to have a sufficient idea about it.



Aims of the study:

This study aims to prove the following points:

- 1- Mentioning the accurate definitions of communication and enlightening its significance.
- 2- Studying the kinds of communication as they are applied in life, since it is the tool of communication, emotion, ideas,...etc.
- 3- Commenting on the factors of communication and their modes in different settings.
- 4- Since it is related to main doctrines of linguistics, the elements of communication are very important to study.

Hypotheses of the study:

This paper hypothesizes the following points:

- 1-It assumes that communication is the element of life.
- 2-It proves that the main factors of communication are related to human needs like exchanging feelings, emotions, cultures, information...etc.
- 3-It supposes that communication differs from cultural background to another.
- 4-It proposes that all branches of linguistics are involved in order to give communication its main elements.

The procedures of the study:

After identifying the topic, the researcher, on one hand, attended the library to collect references. However, there were many problems in finding certain references because the confusion between communication skills of teaching that involves (writing, reading, ...), and the present topic communication skills that involves (verbal communication and non-verbal communication). Lot of references, that have been used in supporting the current study, are taken from internet and hard books, articles, journals, etc.

The value of the study:

The study under discussion includes valuable information about communication with condensed accounts about its communication, elements and factors. These information, which are written in such a paper, are collected in neat way for readers and researchers.



The limitations of the study:

This study is formed within the limits of general linguistics, it contains the definition of communication skills and their factors, elements, and barriers that effect such skills.

Definitions of the concept of communication skills:

Before defining "communication skills" one must know the origin of the word communication. So, the word communication is derived from the Latin noun "commuins" and the Latin verb "communicate" that means to make common, to transmit, to impart (Bhatnagar, et al., 2012:13).

However, communication has been defined by many theorists. According to Behind Brown who states that "communication is the transmission and interchange of facts, ideas, feelings or course of action". While, Mtd Training stuff defines communication as "the art and process of creating and sharing ideas". Effective communication depends on richness of those ideas (www.mtdacademy.com).

Moreover, Ordway Tead mentions that "communication is a composite of information given and received, of a learning experience in which certain attitudes, knowledge and skill change, carving with them alterations of behavior of listening effort by all involved, of a sympathetic fresh examination of issues by the communicator himself, of a sensitive interacting points of view, leading to a higher level of shared understanding and common intention". Besides, M. T. Myers and G. E. Myers exclaim that "communication refers to a special kind of patterning: patterning, which is expressed in symbolic form". Generally, For communication to take place between or among people, two requirements must be met:-

- A symbolic system must be shared by the people involved (we need to speak the same language or jargon or dialect).
- The associations between the symbols and their referents must be shared.

Besides, all these theories, we can define communication skills as, transmitting information, ideas from one person to another. Also, Keyton, 2011 affirms that communication skills are the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another

(<http://ebookbrowse.com/managerial-skill-development-pdf-d50140368>).

In addition, Theo Haiemann (cited in Reddi, 2009: 38) defines communication as " the process of passing information and understanding from



one person to another. It is the process of imparting ideas and making one self-understood by others".

Indeed, Chan, J.(2002:7) advises the communicators to follow the underlying steps to make their communicative process:

1. One should listen carefully when the others are speaking.
2. One tries to understand what other people mean in their speech.
3. The listener shouldn't interrupt when people are speaking.
4. The listener should listen with open mind even when he or she doesn't agree.
5. And, one should ask for manifestation when the other's speech is not understandable.

The elements of communication process:

Dixon, et al (n.d.,:5) identify six elements of communication process:-

1. Sender (Encoder):- is the person who transfers messages contain signals and symbols . They can occur in various ways, including visual (non-verbal, written), auditory (verbal and sub-vocal speech), tactile (touch, bodily contact) and olfactory (perfumes, aftershaves) formats.
2. Channel:- is the means which is used by the sender to deliver the messages and the related formats. Means used for communication include face to face, telephone, radio, and video communication.
- 3.Receiving the message:- is the process of decoding and constructing the messages by person 2 for the signals encoding by person 1. In order to achieve effective communication, person 2 must be accurate decoder.
4. Feedback:- is the process of understanding and responding by person 2 for the messages sent by person 1. Actively listening to feedback is a key skill for effective communication.
- 5.Context:- is the situation in which the sender communicate. It involves the environment that the senders and receivers are in.
- 6.Noise (interference):- is anything that blocks or deface the meaning of the message, By other means the berries of effective communication which will be explained in the next papers of this research.



Broadly speaking, it had been mentioned more than six elements of communication process, these are as follows:-

- 1- Source:- is the sender of the information to communicate. It may be an editor, a filmmaker, a teacher, a writer or anybody who starts dialogue.
- 2- Encoding:- is the process of transferring and taking your message and put it in a proper format in order to share it with your audience . In order to encode your message successfully , you should know the other's needs, including their personality, the language they understand, and their culture).
- 3- Message:- it's important part of communication process is whatever that the sender went to communicate with the receiver, it could be anything or idea or emotion.
- 4- Channel:- is the method through which a message carried from the sender to the receiver. The channels of communication are a lot and differ like written, spoken, verbal, non-verbal and mass media.
- 5- Noise:- it can be inferenced in communication process; it has many forms: external noise, for example, sound and sign, internal noise, for example, the thought and feeling and semantic noise.
- 6- Receiver:- is the recipient of the message and shares thoughts or information with the source.
- 7- Decoding:- is the process of interpretation of message by the receiver, also there are many cases may be message misinterpretation.
- 8- Receiver response:- is the reaction of the receiver after receiver and decoded the message.
- 9- Feedback:- is the process of the receiver react after receiving the message on the other hand, by using feedback the success or failure of communication is decided by feedback alone.
- 10- Context:- is the final component of communication process. It is the environment in which the communication occurs; in brief it's the time and place where communication occurs.

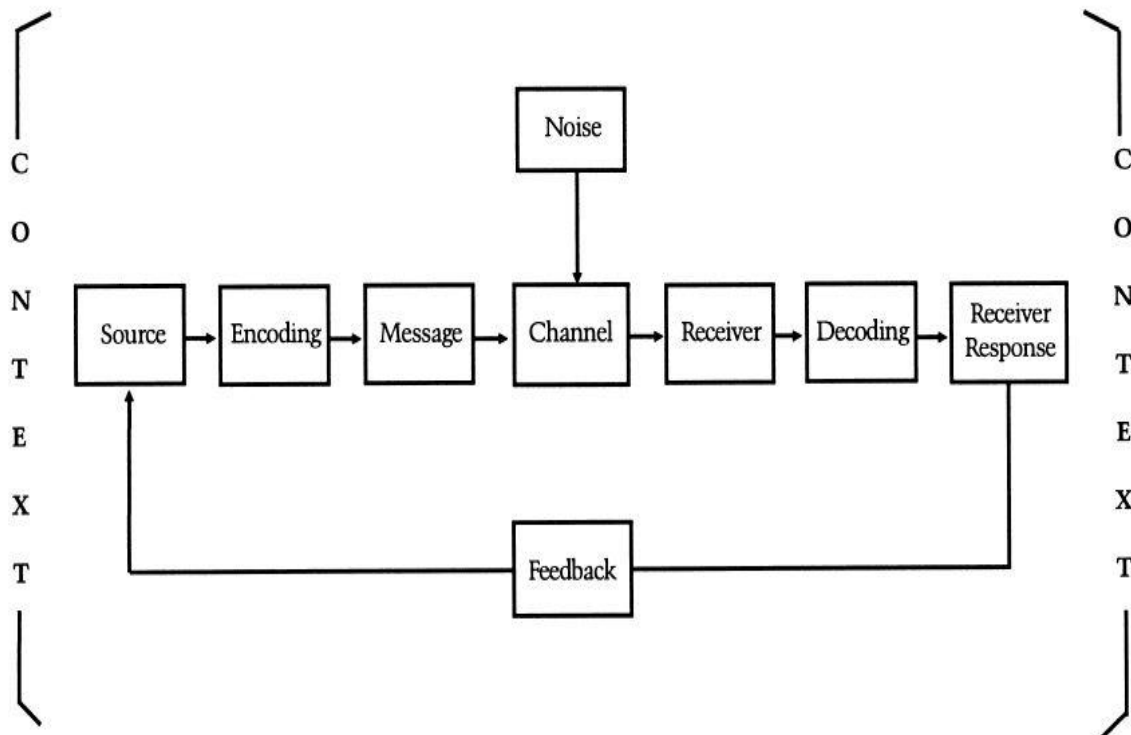


Figure (1): Communications within context.

(<http://www.yorku.ca/wsywong/course/ysdn3104-04/jandt4echp2.pdf>).

The Levels of communication skills:

There are different levels of communication depending upon the situation in which communication occurs or happens. The communication levels are as follows:-

Intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication and public communication.

1- Intrapersonal communication:- is a process of communication that takes place within the individual's mind. In brief, is communicating within the one self, and we all do this in most of our time, for example, when we lie to our bed at night before we fall asleep we review what happen all the day and what our plan for the next day. In addition, we had conversation with ourselves about our dreams, beliefs, thoughts, solving a problems, planning for the future and have a clear understanding of ourselves or clarifying ideas or analyzing situation.

2- Interpersonal communication:- is the process of communication between two or more than two persons . It occurs in our day to day life, for example, when we wake up in the morning, we communicate with our family and speak to our



brothers and sisters, in addition we have to solve a problem, share information, help and discover, play, develop our relationships in home with our families. In the work with the others, we have to fill our social needs and influence, to express our feeling, and ideas to our friends. Besides, there are two types of interpersonal communication according to the number of the participants:-

A- Dyadic communication:- is a communication between two persons. For example, two friends talking, interviews with an employer, talks with a parent or sisters or stranger or child and expressing personal needs and understanding the needs of others.

B- Small-group communication:- is a communication between more than two people. It occurs in small-group of people. For example, families, work groups, religious group, university study group and group for solving problems or making decisions.

3- Public communication: - is the process of communication in which one person conveys a message to a large number of people. Today, it occurs in our public life. For example, when you share information and introduce a guest speaker to a large group of people, heard a religious leader giving a discourse or a teacher giving a lecture.

(<http://highered.mcgrawhill.com/sites/dl/free/0073385018/537865/pearson3ech01.pdf>).

The Modes of communication skills:

Everyone uses communication in his daily life, therefore it's important to have an idea about the modes of communication .In fact ,there are two modes of communication skills: verbal communication skills and non-verbal communication skills.

1- Verbal communication skills: are form of communication that uses language, speech, sounds and words to convey messages.

2- Non-verbal communication skills: are the most important form of communication skills that make sure transmitting the messages effectively. They use signs and symbols to convey messages .The non-verbal communication skills comprise the following elements:

2.1- Intonation: It states how the speaker rises and falls his voice when he conveys messages to the listener; it shows whether the speaker expresses questions or statements messages. In written communication, it's expressed by means of a comma, semicolon, exclamation mark and question mark.



2.2- Tone of voice: is the use of voice by which the speaker expresses his attitude to the messages. For example, speaking causes lacking of confidence. Another examples are critical , disappointed , friendly and vivid .

2.3- Body posture: it includes the use of the position of the speaker's body to reveal how he feels toward others or himself. For example, someone sitting forward, looking intently the speaker, is probably very interested in what is being said. (Sillars, 1988 :90).

2.4- Body gesture is the use of the body's movement like hand, legs, and fingers to show the variety of feelings and thoughts of the persons. The body gestures comprise famous types that called "emblems" .For example, the signals of the hands like waving "Hi" and the "high five" signaling victory. In addition , the gesture 's movement reveals different meanings in different cultures for instance , people of China hand everything with their both hands to show their respect, but for Muslims , they think the left hand is unclean and do not eat or pass anything with it. In addition, crossing one's legs in the united states is a sign of being relaxed while in Korea it's not allowed.

2.5- Facial expression and eye contact: are the important kind of body language that reflect the emotions, feelings and attitudes of the speaker and showing the inner feelings and responds through transmitting the messages. Facial expressions show the surprise, smile, fear, sadness, happiness and disgust. For example, if the lips wide opening means happy or angry. Eye movements show the emotions and feelings in more effective ways. For example, eyebrows outer edges up show anger, eye centered means focused, rubbing eyes means tired.

2.6- Pause: its temporal pause in the voice of the speaker's conversation shows the speaker's hesitation, unsure and allows the speaker time to plan ahead. For example, while the speaker conveys messages, pauses on important words (Colta, 2010: 777-779).

The effective communication skills:

Effective Communication skills: are a process of exchanging information, thoughts, ideas and emotions among individuals by using verbal and non-verbal signs and symbols effectively. This process is important, helping to convey our needs to others, developing our relationships with friends and family, building trust and respect between people. Effective communication skills involve many tools such as:

1-Active listening is an essential part of effective communication skills. To be active listening you must not only hear the word of the speaker but pay attention to the speaker carefully. So, it comprises both verbal and non-verbal



communication. Verbal communication includes pay attention to the words of the speaker and non-verbal communication includes physical attention to the speaker and realizes the meaning of non-verbal messages.

2-Direct expression: when speaking to others speak clearly without confusion, try not blaming the others in your speech and making positive response and avoiding negative. Body language and non-verbal communication: include using the non-verbal signs correctly in situations, realize the meaning of body language, use facial expression , postures and gestures.

3- Managing emotions: when speaking use the right emotions with your state, avoid behave anger when you express your point of view or request, so that not confuse and others remember you as you were angry.

4- Developing Positive dialogue: to promote positive dialogue avoid negative conversation, allow the others to finish their speech, respect others view, even if it differs from yours.

(<http://www.aje-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Effective-communication-and-Active-listening.pdf>).

Furthermore, Gruba, et al, (2004:4-5) see the effective communication skills as the ability to:

1. Convey ideas to people who don't necessarily understand a particular concept.
2. Be concise, confident and adaptable in presenting yourself and your ideas.
3. Take criticism and listen to conflicting views/ideas.
4. Conduct a productive meeting; be diplomatic in small group situations.
5. Effectively utilize a variety of modes of presentation.
6. Construct reasonable, rational, logical arguments and to arrange evidence appropriately to support an argument.
7. Listen or read others' communications , comprehend and understand.

The barriers of effective communication skills:

Generally speaking, when we talk, we tend to erect barriers that hinder our ability to communicate. For Eisenberg 2010 (cited in Lunenburg, 2010:3), there are four types of barriers of effective communication skills:



1-Process barriers: include sender, encoding, medium, decoding, receiver, and feedback barriers

2- Physical barriers: include telephone call, drop-in visitors, distances between people, walls, and static on the radio.

3- Semantic barriers: the meaning of the words used in communication. We should use specific words in suitable situations to avoid communication barriers. The same word may mean different meaning for different persons. Words and phrases such as *efficiency*, *increased productivity*, *management prerogatives*, and *just cause* may mean one thing to a school administrator, and something entirely different to a staff member.

4-Psychosocial barriers: these barriers are linked with three important concepts:-

A- Fields of experience: include people's background, values, perceptions, needs, and expectations. It is due to the individual's perceptual and personal discomfort. It depends on the people's state of mind and each person interprets signs according to his perception. When there is an overlap between sender and receiver's field of experience, there will be difficult communication.

B- Filtering (emotion): Means people see and hear according to their emotions. How the receiver feels at the time of receipt of a communication message will influence how he or she interprets it. It includes the individuals feeling of fear, sadness, happiness, mistrust, worry, excitement. These are due to the people's childhood and preventing them to express themselves clearly. For example, if someone feels ill, nervous, excited and afraid, it influences his speech and feeling and he will be unable to send his message correctly. On the other hand, the emotions barriers can also affect the communication process of the receiver, if he is angry he will be unable to receive the message correctly.

C- Psychological barriers : the psychological distance between people that is similar to actual physical distance

In addition to the above, there are other common barriers which badly affect effective communication:-

1- Cultural barrier: cultural barriers comprise difference in cultural, age, education, health, cultural background, social status, values, standards and economic position. For example, messages from organizations misinterpreted by members of a particular groups or someone miscommunication with others because of cultural differences.



2- Language barrier: using different language prevents people of understanding each other's, accent, vocabulary, dialect, people from different part of country speak different dialects, group of people have own expressions and words, slang, for example, persons from different countries cannot communicate properly because of their different reasons which have mentioned above.

3- Gender barrier: the deferent ways of speaking for both women and men and not respecting their differences. For example, women conversations are more likely complement, empathy politeness, more conciliatory and mixing logic. While, men are more directives in conversations, call attention to their accomplishment.

4- Interpersonal barrier: it prevents persons to take a part in interactions and communicate with each other's like lack of confidence, lack of co-operation, poor relationships.

(<http://Seven-barriers-communication.html>).

Factors influnceing the communication skills:

There are many factors that influnce communication skills:

1- Attitude: is the internal predilection of a person to behave toward situations and the way we interpret messages from people. The attitude can express directly the failure or the succes of communication. For example, the person with negative attitude may answer "its not work, its the end". While, the person with positive attitude may answer "come on, lets try we will do it".

2- Sociocultural background: it refers to different culturs that cause misinterpretation to the messages between peoples and misreading of non-verbal signs. For example, Japanese's style using indirect verbal and non-verbal communication, but American's style use direct verbal and non-verbal communication.

3- Past experience: it refers to the past positive or negative experiences which effect the individual's ability to communicate and express his feelings and thoughts. For example, a person who lives hard life and bad experience may have problems to communicate with others and express his thoughts corectly .

4- Knowledge of subject matter: it refers to the information of the people about particular topics. For example, the lack of knowledge of the topic enable the person to communicate well and responde correctly. On the other hand, the person who knowledgeable may communicate with others easily.

5- The ability to relate to others: is about who some people have the ability to communicate with others in such easy way, it's their nature .while ,others can not easily contact with others .



6- Interpersonal perception: it's about how we perceive communication with others and how we interpret the messages in our own mind. For example, a person interprets what he sees on the basis of his background, thought and attitude.

7- Environmental factor: it comprises time, place, noise. For example, in a noisy environment it causes inability to hear correctly that results in misunderstanding of messages between individuals, uncomfortable sitting affects the communication in a meeting.

These factors are shown in the figure below:

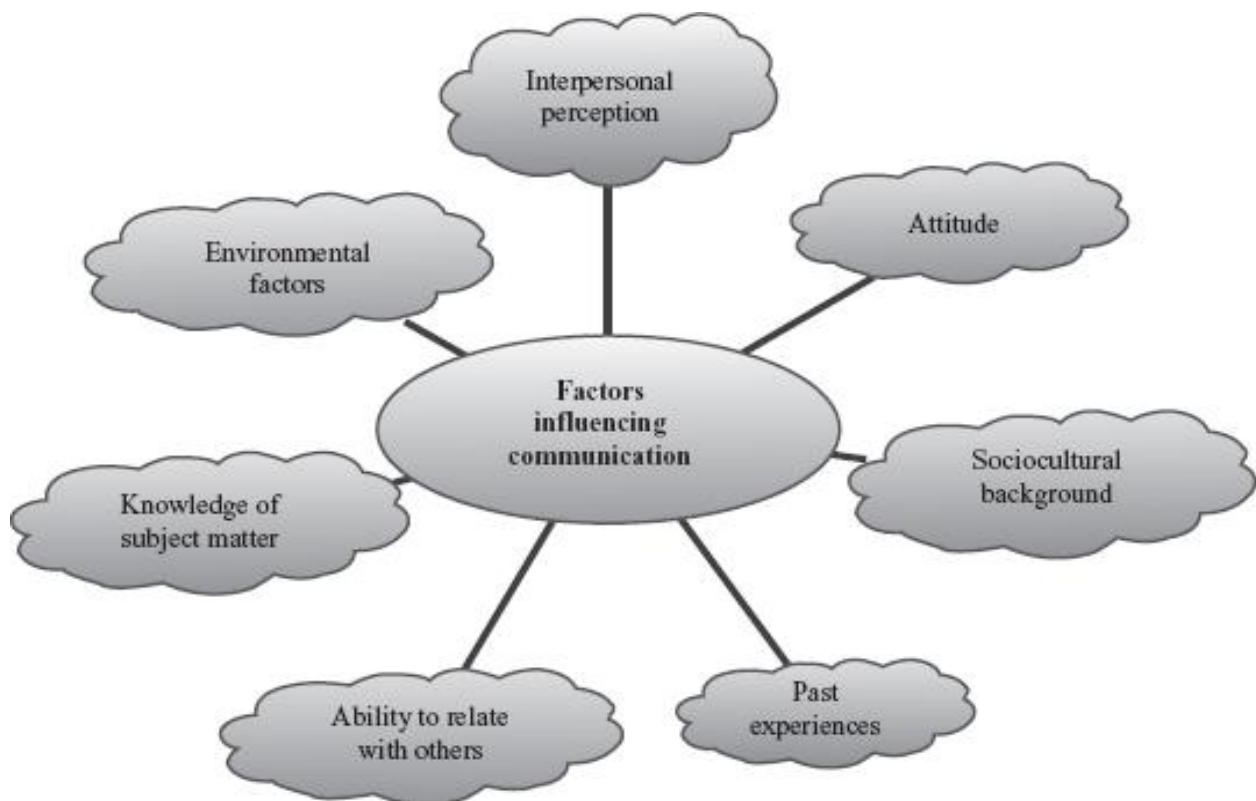


Figure (2): Factors influencing the communication skills

(<http://My.safaribooksonline.com/book/medicine/9789332501461/chapter1-review-of-communication-process/ch1-6-xhtml>).

Overcoming the barriers of communication skills:

After mentioning the barriers of communication, there are some solutions to overcome these barriers. The solutions are as follows: taking the receiver seriously, delivering messages skillfully, paying more attention to the speaker, using alternative forms of communications, listening actively, using specific and



accurate words that easy to be understood, using less of absolute words such as "never", "always", "forever". Also, maintaining eye contact with the speaker and making him comfortable.

Language barriers are a common challenge in international business settings, and a two-way process. What native speakers often don't realize is that frequently it is not the other person's accent but their *own way of speaking* that creates the greatest barriers to effective communication. The following strategies should be used to ensure effective international communication.

1. Speak slowly and clearly. Focus on clearly enunciating and slowing down your speech. Even if you're pressured for time, don't rush through your communication. Doing so often takes more time, as miscommunication and misunderstanding can result and you'll ultimately have to invest additional time in clearing up the confusion.

2. Ask for clarification. If you are not 100% sure you've understood what others say, politely ask for clarification. Avoid assuming you've understood what's been said.

3. Frequently check for understanding. Check both that you've understood what's been said and that others have fully understood you. Practice reflective listening to check your own understanding(e.g. 'So what I hear you saying is...') and use open-ended questions to check other people's understanding. Ask, 'what's your understanding of this process?' instead of 'is that clear?'

4. Avoid idioms. Business language is often contextual, and therefore culture specific. For example, in the US, baseball terms are used extensively: 'Straight off the Bat,' 'Ballpark figures,' 'Out in left field,' 'Touch base,' 'Strike a deal'. As a good general rule, if the phrase requires knowledge of other information— be it a game or metaphor—recognize that this may make your communication more difficult to be understood.

5. Be careful of jargon. Watch the use of TLAs (Three Letter Abbreviations) and other organizational language that may not be understood by others. If you use them, provide in parentheses a description of what these are so others can learn to use the same language you do.

6. Define the basics of business. In international business contexts terms such as: 'success', 'doneness', 'meetings', 'punctuality', etc. may mean different things to different people. Spend time early in your communication defining



what these mean to you and others. Invest in building a shared vocabulary (Benardo,2007).

7. Be specific. Spell out your expectations and deadlines clearly.

Instead of, 'Please get back to me shortly,' say 'Please email the completed report by 5 pm Eastern Standard time on Wednesday, February 21.'

8. Choose your medium of communication effectively. Carefully choose your form of communication (phone or video conference, email, instant message, etc.). Be mindful not to 'overuse' email. While useful, there are times when the medium is likely to be ineffective. When a message is complex and complicated or there is tension or conflict that needs to be resolved, switch to another medium.

9. Provide information via multiple channels. Follow phone calls with emails that summarize what's been said. When possible, provide presentations, agendas, etc. in advance so those working in their non-native language can get familiar with materials.

10. Be patient. Cross-cultural communication takes more time. If not at all times, certainly initially you cannot expect your communication to occur with the same speed and ease as when you are communicating with someone from your own culture.

Conclusions:

Communication is not a one-way street. To have others open up to you, you must be self opened. Communication skills are integral part of our life we cannot success in our life without using them. But, people differ in their ability to communicate. On the one hand, some people naturally can easily communicate with others while others cannot easily do. On the others hand, these communication skills can be learned by practicing, identifying the elements, levels, and modes of communication skills in which they can develop the communication process. In addition, non-verbal communication differs from culture to culture. The communication process can be effected by many barriers include noise, place, environment, variant cultures, and attitudes of individuals.



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