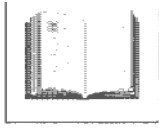


UNIT 1: WHAT IS COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is vital for the survival of any educational organization. As a manager, you will appreciate that successful managers are effective communicators. Without effective communication your organization can grind to a halt. It is therefore necessary that you have a clear understanding of what effective communication entails. To help you understand what effective communication is all about, this unit will focus on the following aspects:-

- Definition of communication
- Importance of effective communication
- Types of communication
- Communication models
- Barriers to communication
- Strategies for overcoming communication barriers

OBJECTIVES

After working through this unit you should be able to:-

- Define communication
- Classify the two types of communication
- Discuss the importance of effective communication
- Identify the communication models
- Describe the barriers to communication
- Explain strategies for overcoming communication barriers



Read Text

CONTENT

DEFINITION

As a manager in education, you will realize the importance of understanding what communication entails, as it is a tool for the efficient functioning of your institution. The

following definitions will help to clarify your understanding of the concept communication:

- According to Smit and Cronje (1995 : 354) communication is defined as “a process involving the acquisition and the use of information for planning, organizing, leading and controlling”.
- Fielding (1995 : 4) on the other hand, defines communication as “a transaction whereby participants together create meaning through the exchange of symbols”.

Both these definitions are relevant to you as a manager in education. Although they appear to be different, in essence, both emphasize the importance of having a shared meaning. Please note that the latter definition focuses on four major points, namely:-

- Communication as a transaction
- People working together
- The creation of meaning
- The exchange of symbols

It is essential for you to know what is meant by each of the above aspects, as this will enable you to communicate more effectively.

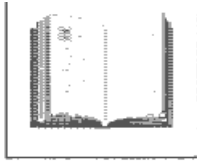
Communication as a transaction involves two or more participants constructing meaning together, based on a set of rules.

People working together entails paying attention to each other simultaneously. Only if mutual awareness exists can they learn to develop mutual expectations.

Creation of meaning can only be achieved if people ensure that others understand what they are communicating.

Exchange of symbols entails the creation of meanings through the following forms:

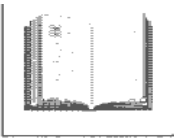
- verbal :- the use of words when speaking or writing.
- non-verbal:- for example, body language such as gestures, facial expressions, and many others.
- graphic:- for example, tables, graphs, diagrams.



Read Text

IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As a manager, you should appreciate the importance of effective communication in the education system. You will no doubt agree that ineffective communication will result in poor quality of education for our learners. Effective communication is basic to the smooth functioning of any organization. Through effective interaction you can motivate your staff and learners to strive towards the achievement of educational outcomes. Moreover, it will enable you to co-ordinate various activities at your institution. Effective communication is essential for empowering staff to become involved in decision making, generating new ideas, and adapting to changes. Effective communication helps you to ensure that various duties are delegated appropriately and that the staff works harmoniously. Furthermore, effective communication is essential for them to understand the educational objectives of the institution and work towards achieving the same. Finally, effective communication allows for the smooth flow of information among various role players in the education system.



Read Text

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

There are different types of communication which can take place through:-

- speech (involving speaking and listening)
- the written word (which involves writing and reading) or other visual displays or electronic devices.
- non-verbal forms of communication, for example, tone of voice, gestures and many others.

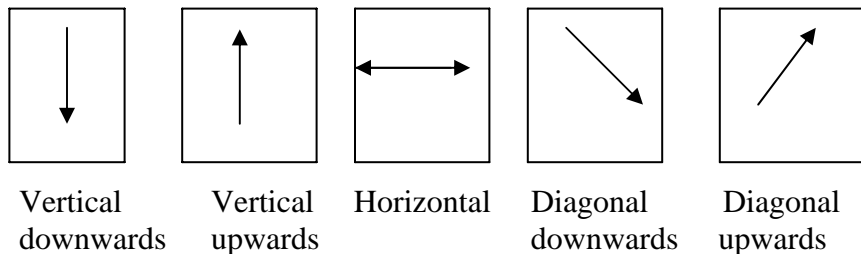
Communication may take place in different contexts, such as:

- **Informal communication**, for example, by word of mouth, telephonic communication, gestures.
- **Formal communication**, for example, official circulars, internal memos, letters, staff meetings.

Informal communication channels are commonly referred to as “grapevines”. The definition of grapevine, according to the Webster Dictionary, is “a secret means of spreading or receiving information” (Atkinson et al, 1993: 122). Deal and Kennedy (1982) claim that this is a primary means of communication as it unites all parts of the organization irrespective of status or position. It serves several purposes such as clarification of formal communications, gauging staff concerns and dissatisfactions. However, the disadvantage of informal communication is that it is not a reliable means of information flow as confidential messages can be conveyed without any validation. Personal biases, gossip and rumours can be transmitted without any checking (Atkinson et al 1993: 123).

In your capacity as a manager you will need to master the means of effective communication. This implies that information transmitted through this means has to be validated, or else it could lead to miscommunication within your institution.

Formal communication within an organization occurs in **downward, upward, horizontal** and **diagonal** directions, as shown in the diagrams below:-

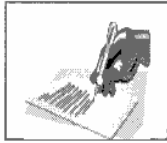


Downward communication is common in the hierarchical system of most institutions. It helps to clarify goals, assists in the induction of new members of staff and serves as a means of keeping staff informed. Mission statements, policy formulations, memos, instructions, manuals and job descriptions are the most common forms of downward communication.

Upward communication flows from lower levels to higher levels within the organization. It is an important means of providing information alerting managers or superiors about problem areas. However, it is not always easy to achieve this flow as staff may withhold information from management because of fear of placing their careers at risk, or because of lack of trust. Davis and Newstrom (1977) recommend the following practices to improve upward communication: staff meetings, group discussions, an open door policy, suggestion box, staff letters, and participation in social groups. The subordinate and not the manager is the communicator. You should encourage this kind of communication at your institution as staff members are important sources of information.

Horizontal communication takes place between staff at the same level. It not only serves as a means of socializing for staff members, but it is also essential for integration and co-operation among different departments within the institution (Smit and Cronje, 1995: 363 – 364). In your capacity as a manager, you should try to promote communication through horizontal flow as it helps prevent departments from functioning in isolation.

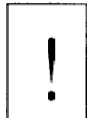
Diagonal communication bypasses the usual ‘channels’ of communication, whereby the message reaches directly the person or group for whom it is intended. It is important in situations such as emergencies, as it allows for participants to quickly relay messages without having to follow protocol (Atkinson et al; 1993: 123 – 124). As a manager, you need to inform your staff that this form of communication is acceptable and necessary especially when an emergency occurs at your institution.



Self Evaluation

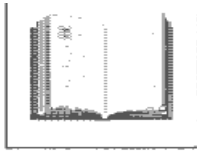
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- In your own words, define “effective communication”.
- Identify the different directions of formal communication that occur at your organization.



Important-take note!

Possible points to include in your answers are given at the end of the unit.



Read Text

COMMUNICATION MODELS

As communication is a complex process which is difficult to analyse, researchers have devised the following two models to help you understand the chief elements in this process:-

- a linear model
- a convergence model
- The **linear model** involves communication as a system of interrelated and interdependent elements working together towards a specific goal.

These elements are:

- A sender (initiates message).
- A receiver (interprets and reacts to message).
- A message (must have a specific purpose).
- A channel (must have a specific format, for example, a report).
- Feedback (depends on clarity of message).
- Potential barriers, for example, noise, poor reproduction of a faxed message; (barriers could be physical or psychological).
- A result (barriers could affect the result of the intended communication adversely).

The **convergence model** emphasizes the point that “communication is a transaction in which meaning is created by both sender and receiver working together” (Fielding, 1995 : 13). This means that for communication to be successful, you and your staff will need to share the same meanings for words, concepts and ideas.

In this model you and your staff should continue to exchange messages until there is common understanding. Therefore, both you and your staff are encoders and decoders of the messages. As you send messages back and forth, you assume different roles as either sender or receiver. This allows for effective communication.

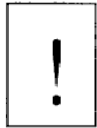


Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

Which communication model do you think is preferable for your institution? Give reasons for your preference.

Explain the terms “sender”; “receiver”



Important-take note!

Possible points to include in the answers to these questions are to be found at the end of the unit.



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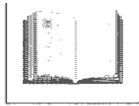
BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Barriers to communication can demotivate staff and may vary from institution to institution. As a manager, you need to ensure that your messages are clear and that barriers are eliminated so that effective communication can take place.

The following list mentions a few barriers; you may add to the list from your own experience:

- failure to analyse the needs of the receiver.
- poor listening and lack of attention to feedback.
- assuming that the receivers know more than they really do.
- different cultural backgrounds.
- insensitive or poor choice of language by sender or receiver.
- message unclear due to insufficient information.
- language that is too technical for the receiver.

Your role as a manager demands that you adopt firm measures to ensure that staff members are not demotivated as a result of barriers to communication.



Read Text

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Needs and goals

Senders and receivers have different needs. If you and your staff bear this in mind when sending and receiving messages, each person will become more sensitive towards the other's needs and goals. This will allow for more effective communication.

Listening empathetically and attentively

As a manager, you need to listen empathetically and attentively to the content of messages and emotions expressed by the staff. You also need to ensure that you capture the attention of your staff by sending clear, unambiguous messages.

Know the limitations of your staff

Do not take for granted that the content of your message is within the field of understanding of your staff. If necessary, preface your message by a clear, concise explanation.

Consider the cultural diversity of your staff

Different cultural backgrounds of your staff must be taken into account when relaying messages. Avoid negative generalizations (commonly known as negative stereotyping) about the culture of other people. Acknowledge the cultural values of others.

Language must be meaningful and relevant

Choose words that are clearly understood. Ensure that your message does not contain technical terminology that may be beyond the comprehension of your staff.

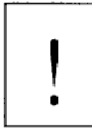


Practise Activity

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

- The importance of upward communication cannot be sufficiently stressed, as it provides a vital link between management and staff. Discuss some of the measures that you could introduce at your institution to promote effective upward communication.

- List the directions of formal communication which are practiced at your institution.



Important-take note!

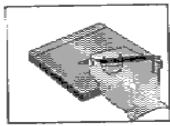
Possible points to go into the answers to these questions are to be found at the end of this unit.



Assessment Task

SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

In your position as a manager, you will realize that barriers to communication will adversely affect the smooth running of your institution. Identify some of the communication barriers that you have experienced at your institution, and explain the measures you have adopted to overcome them.



Summary

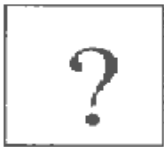
SUMMARY

This unit has introduced you to a number of very important issues and concepts in communication. These include: definition, importance of communication, types of communication, communication models, barriers to communication and strategies for overcoming these barriers. It has therefore equipped you with a better understanding of how to communicate more effectively with your staff. It is hoped that through improved communication skills you will be a more efficient manager and that this will impact positively on the quality of education at your institution.



Reflection

Given the insights that you have gained from this unit, reflect on your performance as a manager in education. Think about how you can encourage and promote effective communication at your institution. Bear in mind that this is one of the most important tools for the achievement of quality education for the learner.

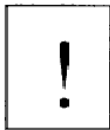


Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Effective communication is an important tool for the successful operation of any organization.

Bearing this in mind, discuss the importance of effective communication at your institution.



Important-take note!

The possible answer to the Unit test is given at the end of the unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

Answers to this question may differ. For example:

- Communication may be defined as:
 - a process of acquiring and using information for organizing, planning, controlling and leading.
 - a transaction in which people mutually create shared meaning through the exchange of symbols.
- The answers may vary. However, you could consider the following: downward, upward, horizontal and diagonal.

SELF - EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Answer may vary depending on your experience at your institution. However, the convergence model is preferable as both sender and receiver work together to create meaning. They continue to exchange messages until there is a common understanding.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

- Answers to this question may vary, but the following points could be included: employee meetings; group discussions; an open door policy; suggestion box; employee letters; participation in social groups.
- Answers could vary, but may include one or more of the following: upward, downward, horizontal and diagonal.

SELF – ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Answers may vary according to individual experiences. However, the following points to overcome communication barriers could be included in your answer:

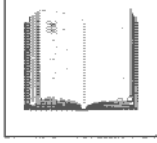
- Needs and goals of senders and receivers differ, therefore people need to be more sensitive in this regard.
- People need to listen more empathetically and attentively so that the message is clearly understood.

- Know the limitations of your staff with regard to their knowledge and understanding of the content of the message. Adjust your message accordingly.
- Be clear and concise.
- Consider the cultural diversity of your staff and avoid negative stereotyping.
- Use language that is meaningful and relevant.

UNIT TEST:

- effective communication is important for good quality of education at your institution
- it is also basic to the smooth functioning of any organization
- you can motivate your staff and learners to strive towards the achievement of educational outcomes through effective communication
- effective communication will enable you to co-ordinate various activities at your institution
- it is essential for empowering staff to become involved in decision making, generating new ideas and adapting to changes
- effective communication helps to ensure the appropriate delegation of various duties and the harmonious working of your staff
- it is essential for the smooth flow of information among various role players in the education system.

UNIT 2: EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Sherman et al (1996 : 536) maintain that no aspect of human resource management “is so persuasive as communication”. Managers must therefore learn to communicate effectively through the spoken word to employees at all levels. Effective oral communication is an essential component of the role function of a successful manager.

In unit 1 we focused on aspects of communication in general, such as types of communication, communication models, barriers to communication and strategies for overcoming these barriers.

This unit will deal with the following aspects of prepared oral communication:-

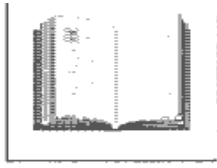
- Format of talks and oral reports.
- Procedure for preparing a talk or oral report.
- Presenting the talk or oral report.
- Using audio-visual material to support a talk or oral report.
- Using the telephone effectively.
- Barriers to effective oral communication.
- Strategies to overcome barriers to effective oral communication.

Please note that oral communication includes both speaking and listening skills, which are interrelated. However, while unit 2 focuses on effective communication through the spoken word, unit 3 will focus on effective listening skills.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this unit you should be able to:

- explain what is meant by oral communication.
- design a format for a talk and an oral report.
- prepare a talk or oral report.
- discuss the techniques of presenting a talk or oral report.
- list the audio-visual material that can be used to support an oral presentation.
- discuss the handling of questions.
- demonstrate the effective use of the telephone.
- identify barriers to effective oral communication.
- explain the strategies for overcoming barriers to effective oral communication.



Read Text CONTENT

WHAT IS ORAL COMMUNICATION ?

Oral communication involves competency in both speaking and listening skills. It is a means of imparting or exchanging ideas and information through the spoken word. It is a process by which a person conveys thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs through the medium of speech. This can be done in an informal or a formal manner, through impromptu or prepared speech.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION

Any manager of an organization needs to be competent in oral communication skills for optimal performance and success.

As a manager of an educational institution you will no doubt spend a great deal of time speaking to your staff. Much of this is impromptu, and people have to respond immediately to many questions, statements and requests. The advantage of effective speech lies in the speed of transmission of communication. Moreover, it is more personal, and you can gain immediate feedback. You will no doubt find that many situations arise at your institution that necessitate immediate responses. Therefore, effective oral communication skills will help you tremendously in implementing your managerial duties more successfully.

Well-presented prepared talks and oral reports will also contribute to your efficiency as a manager. A good command of spoken language helps boost your confidence and image as a manager, and assists you in achieving credibility on the part of your audience. It will also enable you to be a more assertive and persuasive manager.

Effective handling of telephonic communication will also assist in expediting your duties as a manager. Oral competency skill will enable you to conduct interviews and counselling sessions with your staff more successfully. It improves your interpersonal communication skill. Effective oral communication will help you, as a leader, to set a good example for the rest of your institution, and this will result in improved quality of education of the learners.

FORMAT FOR A TALK AND ORAL REPORT

You will be interested to know that there is a specific format for each of these oral messages. As an education manager, each has relevance for you.

Format for a talk

A simple structure is required for a talk to capture attention and sustain the interest of the audience. Fielding (1995: 215) suggests the following format:-

- a beginning
- a middle
- an end

The **beginning** of the talk is very important as it is at this stage that the audience sums up your attitude towards them and the subject, and your knowledge of the subject. First impressions usually are lasting ones, so you should strive to create a very good first impression. You should tell the audience why they are listening and what they will gain from listening. Try to capture their attention by using one or more of the following techniques:

- Ask a question.
- Add interest by linking the topic with recent or current events.
- Begin with an unusual statement that attracts interest.
- Show a diagram, object or picture to capture attention.
- State the main points of your talk clearly.

From your experience you will be able to add to the list of techniques to gain the attention of your staff at the beginning of your talk.

The **middle** of the talk is usually the stage where the audience tends to “switch off”, especially if the topic is not interesting. You should therefore strive to:-

- Attract and sustain the audience’s attention with good non-verbal communication.
- Organize your information very well and present material coherently and logically.
- Use audio-visual material to support your key points.

The **end** of the talk should leave a lasting impression. Ensure that you end on a high note. Don't allow your talk to fade out. You could use some of the following techniques, in addition to what you already practise, to achieve the desired impact to end your talk:

- summarize the main points
- end with an appeal for action
- pose a challenging question
- use a quotation, statistics or vivid illustration to sum up the main idea
- remind the audience of the significance of the main points to them
- do not introduce new material at the end as it may confuse the audience.

Format for an oral report

An oral report is normally based on a written report and it will follow the format of the written report. Since the written report will be fully dealt with in Module 11, you will find only a summary of the main points in this unit. A report is usually based on an investigation of a problem, the feasibility of a project, or a situation.

An oral report usually has a more rigid format than a talk. The format below is recommended by Fielding (1995: 217):-

Introduction

- A brief statement of the terms of reference or instructions given to the speaker.
- An overview or summary of the report.

Body of Report

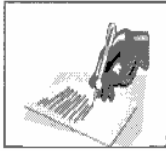
- A brief statement of the procedure used to gather information.
- The main findings, backed up with visual material e.g. flip chart.

Conclusion

- The insights gleaned from the facts and the implications thereof.

Recommendations

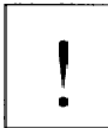
- The proposed plan of action to be taken, based on the findings.



Self Evaluation

SELF-AVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- 1.1 List the three components pertaining to the format of a talk.
- 1.2 List the four components pertaining to the format of an oral report.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of the unit.



Read Text

PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING A TALK OR ORAL REPORT

As an education manager you should strive to turn vague information into messages that communicate. Fielding (1995: 218) emphasizes that a good oral presentation requires careful preparation for effective delivery. He suggests the following procedure for preparing a talk or oral report:-

- Decide on your purpose, for example: to inform; to persuade; to entertain; to compliment; to admonish.
- Analyse your audience's needs.
- Be focused; decide what your audience needs to know at the end of your presentation.
- Prepare a mind-map of your ideas.
- Prepare a topic outline of your selected key and supporting ideas – which form the body of your talk. Indicate the approximate time-frame for each section.
- Add the introduction and conclusion to the plan.
- Prepare post-card size cue cards as your notes, and ensure that you:
number each card; write key points with large letters for easy reading; write on one side only; tie the cards together to facilitate using them without dropping any card.

PREPARING A PERSUASIVE TALK

Preparing a persuasive talk requires a special approach. Persuasion is not always based on facts alone. It is usually a combination of facts and personal appeal based on the audience's needs, goals, beliefs and attitudes. In your position as education manager you are likely to come up against situations, which call for persuasive talks. To help you prepare adequately, Fielding suggests that you use the following approach:-

- a logical appeal.
- a psychological appeal.
- a personal appeal.

A **logical appeal** is based on facts. If you feel that your audience has a negative attitude, start with points with which they can agree, before moving to your point of view. Do not argue from one point of view as you may appear to be dogmatic. Use both sides of the argument to persuade your staff. Be sure of your facts. Only then can you come across as an assertive and confident manager. Your own attitude and enthusiasm will contribute to success.

A **psychological appeal** stresses the benefits to the audience. You will need to analyse your audience's needs, goals, desires and motives in order to use this approach of persuasion successfully.

A **personal appeal** is based on your reputation or credibility with the audience. Credibility is vital. Your staff needs to believe in you. Smit and Cronje (1995: 364) maintain that failure to engender trust can result in the entire communication message being rejected regardless of the content.

OUTLINE PLAN FOR PREPARING A PERSUASIVE TALK

Fielding (1995: 221) suggests the following plan:-

Introduction

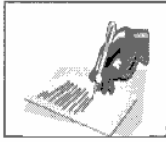
- Capture the audience's attention.
- Establish common ground with the audience.
- Work on points of agreement with the audience.
- Emphasize the benefits for the audience.

The Middle

- Develop the argument in terms of its merits and demerits.
- Work from the problem to the solution.
- Continue to stress the advantages to the audience.

The End

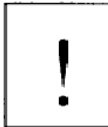
- Stress the desired action in terms of its benefit to the audience.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- What do you need to do when preparing cue cards for an oral report or talk?
- Prepare a set of cue cards for a talk that you have to present at your institution. List the main points you will include.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to these questions are to be found at the end of the unit.



Read Text

PRESENTING THE TALK OR ORAL REPORT

Once you have prepared your talk or oral report you are advised to rehearse it in front of an audience. If the talk or oral report is aimed at reaching the entire staff, you could perhaps enlist the support of your management team in this regard. Encourage them to discuss problems with you and to check your timing, so that you allocate the correct time-frame for each stage. Ensure that you utilize audio-visual material effectively.

When presenting your talk or oral report pay attention to the following:-

- Non-verbal communication – your voice, eye contact, gesture, posture,
- Your dress and general appearance.
- Your style, attitude and level of enthusiasm.
- The quality of your audio-visual media and how efficiently you use them.
- Remember that as a manager of the institution you need to display good leadership qualities of confidence and assertiveness, and lead by example.

Show genuine concern for your audience. Make eye contact with your audience and avoid reading too much from your cue cards. When you start, distribute your weight evenly on both feet. Do not cross your arms and legs or twist your back. Use gestures for emphasis of key points and for keeping contact with the audience. Avoid over-use of gestures as this could be distracting to the audience. Ensure that you dress appropriately; speak in a lively manner; vary your tone and pace; speak clearly; use pauses for impact; use your voice to emphasize key points.

USING AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL TO SUPPORT A TALK OR ORAL REPORT

The use of audio-visual material enhances the presentation of a talk or report. It is essential if you want your staff to remember key points. Audio-visual materials have several advantages and if used effectively they serve to:-

- Create an immediate impact.
- Sustain the attention of the audience.
- Make ideas more concrete.
- Clarify points in a different way.
- Help convey ideas more effectively if time is limited.
- Emphasize and reinforce key points.
- Add variety to the presentation.
- Create a lasting impression of professional competence.

Fielding (1995: 224) reminds us that audio-visual material should support the talk or report, but should never replace it. You therefore need to bear in mind the following points when using audio-visual material:-

- You must not over-use them because they could destroy the balance of your talk or oral report.
- Ensure that they are working efficiently.
- Plan carefully so that you use them at the appropriate time during your talk.
- Keep them on long enough to create the desired impact.

There are several audio-visual materials that you could use to enhance the presentation of your talk. You will have to choose whichever is best-suited for your purpose and whatever is available at your institution. Some of these are:

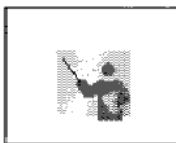
- the overhead projector
- the tape recorder
- the video machine
- flip charts
- posters
- models

- chalkboards
- white boards
- slide projectors

HANDLING QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR TALK

You can enhance your oral presentations by involving the audience and through good management of questions. These could be prepared in advance and built into your talk. You could also start or end with questions. Well-formed questions could develop your argument, stimulate your audience and encourage participation. They could be used as an effective technique to reinforce the key points at the end of your talk. As a manager you will need to control the situation so that you do justice to the content of your speech within the given time-restrictions. Too many questions and interruptions can ruin what could be a very good oral presentation. Fielding (1995: 227) suggests the following guidelines to help you control questions:-

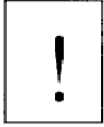
- Ensure that you know your audience, your subject and your purpose.
- Try to anticipate what aspects of your talk are most open to questioning so that you can predict the type of questions that the audience will ask, and be prepared with appropriate answers.
- Try to respond to each question as best you can. Do not think that you have to win every situation and do not pretend to know everything. If there is a question that you cannot answer, your audience will respect you if you admit it and mention that you would attempt to find out the answer and get back to them as soon as possible.
- Avoid discouraging people from asking questions by adopting an over-bearing attitude, or by embarrassing them in any way.
- Be approachable and encourage people to ask relevant questions. Remember, a good manager leads by example, so set a good example.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

- List, in order of priority, the points that you consider to be important when presenting a talk or oral report.
- Identify three guidelines which you feel will be most beneficial to you as a manager, when handling questions based on your talk or oral report.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to these questions are to be found at the end of this unit.

EFFECTIVE USE OF THE TELEPHONE

As a manager of your institution, you will need to develop a good telephonic communication procedure and encourage your staff to do the same. The telephone is usually the first point of contact with an organization, so you must ensure that any telephonic communication will help create a positive image of your institution.

Fielding (1995: 234) suggests the following points to be borne in mind for developing a good telephonic communication procedure:-

- Use your voice effectively to create a positive image – sound friendly, interested, courteous, concerned and efficient.
- Follow four stages in answering calls, namely:-
 - establish a good relationship
 - record the message
 - solve the caller's problem
 - end the call on a positive note
- Listen for facts and emotions or opinions.
- Take notes on a properly designed message pad.
- Choose words carefully.
- Be assertive rather than being aggressive or submissive.
- Prepare for calls that you are expecting.
- Plan your calls to make them as efficient as possible.
- Be prepared to tell the caller if the timing is inconvenient.

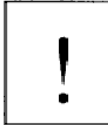
The effective use of the telephone can help you run your institution more smoothly. The way you use your voice – especially tone – can contribute to the way people will judge you and your institution.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

What in your opinion, are the five most important points you need to bear in mind to help you develop a good procedure for the effective use of the telephone?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to these questions are to be found at the end of this unit.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION

Barriers to effective oral communication can wreak havoc in the smooth functioning of your institution. In your position as education manager, it is important for you to be aware of possible barriers that might detract from your efficiency as a manager. You can then take appropriate measures to overcome these barriers so that your institution can proceed, unhampered, towards the achievement of its desired educational goals.

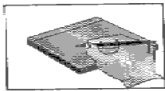
The following are some of the barriers to effective oral communication:-

- Lack of credibility on the part of the speaker. If the audience does not have trust in you as a manager, your oral communication will be ineffective, no matter how good the content.
- Poor planning and presentation of talks or oral reports. If your talks or oral reports are not properly structured and well thought out, it could result in miscommunication through lack of understanding, and confusion among your staff.
- Inappropriate use of vocabulary which is beyond the level of comprehension of your staff. If you do not consider the level of language of your staff when presenting a talk or oral report, the message could be easily lost.
- Ineffective use of your voice and other non-verbal means of communication, such as body language (posture, gesture), eye contact and facial expression. Your audience can lose interest and pay little attention if you have a monotonous voice and little eye contact with them. This can lead to unsuccessful oral communication.
- Intercultural miscommunication as a result of a semantic barrier in oral communication. If diverse cultural groups exist at your institution and all do not share the same meaning for words, messages could be misconstrued.

- Distractions such as noise, inappropriate choice of venue, poor lighting, extreme heat, cold or humidity, and ineffective use of audio-visual materials can result in ineffective oral communication.
- Display of negative attitudes in response to questions. If you discourage your audience from asking questions, or respond to their questions in a defensive or aggressive manner, it could result in a breakdown in communication.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION.

- Establish your credibility by developing a reputation of trust, respect and confidence among your staff.
- Plan and present your talks and oral reports thoroughly.
- Use a language that is suited to the level of understanding of your staff.
- Use appropriate non-verbal forms of communication such as tone of voice, gesture or eye contact to enhance the presentation of your talk.
- Be aware of limitations such as semantic barriers that exist if you have a staff of diverse cultural groupings.
- Try to eliminate distractions such as noise or ineffective use of audio-visual material during oral presentations.
- Encourage your staff to ask relevant questions and respond honestly and positively to their questions.



Summary

SUMMARY

In this unit you covered the importance of effective oral communication to you as a manager, and your organization. The unit further gave you insights into the format for talks and oral reports; procedure for preparing and presenting a talk and oral report; the effective use of audio-visual material to support a talk or report; the handling of questions based on your talk or oral report and the effective use of the telephone as a means of communication.

Thereafter, you were exposed to barriers to effective oral communication and strategies to overcome these barriers in order to enhance your effectiveness as a manager.

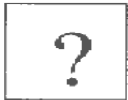
To consolidate your understanding of the unit content you engaged in a variety of activities. Hopefully you now know what it takes to be a successful education manager through the effective use of oral communication skills.



Reflection

REFLECTION

Having gone through unit 2 which focused on various aspects of oral communication, reflect upon how you, in your position as education manager, can improve the quality of education at your institution through effective oral communication.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Why is effective oral communication so important to you as an education manager, and to your institution?



Important-take note!

Answers to the Unit test can be found at the end of this unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- Answers may vary. However you could consider the following:
 - The beginning is the most important because this is when your audience sums up your attitude, and your knowledge of the topic. First impressions are lasting impressions. This is when you capture the attention of the audience.
- Answers may vary. However, you may consider the following points:
 - summarise the main points
 - end with an appeal for action
 - pose a challenging question.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- When preparing cue cards for an oral report or talk, ensure that you
 - number each card
 - write key points with large letters for easy reading.
 - write on one side only
 - tie the cards together to facilitate their use without dropping any card.
- Answers will vary depending on your topic. However, you need to bear in mind the points listed in activity 2 above when you engage in this practical task.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Your answers may differ, but you may consider the following points in order of priority, when presenting your talk or oral report:

- confidence and assertiveness
- effective use of non-verbal communication
- your level of enthusiasm, attitude and style
- your effective use of appropriate audio-visual material
- your dress and general appearance.

The guidelines you identify as being most beneficial to you in handling questions based on your talk or oral report will differ, depending on your audience and the situation at your institution. The following is a suggestion:-

- Know your audience, subject and purpose.

- Anticipate the type of questions your staff will ask and be prepared with your answers.
- Be approachable and encourage your staff to ask relevant questions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Your answers may differ as each manager may have different opinions, but you may consider the following possible responses:

- Use your voice effectively to create a positive image.
- Be assertive rather than being aggressive or submissive.
- Plan your calls to make them as efficient as possible.
- Follow the four recommended stages in answering calls, namely; establish a good relationship; record the message; solve the caller's problems; end the call on a positive note.
- Take notes on a properly designed message pad.

UNIT TEST

- Effective oral communication is essential to you as an education manager as it helps you to run your institution more smoothly, and achieve your institution's educational goals more easily.
- It allows for immediate responses to questions, which is required in certain situations such as emergencies.
- It helps to boost your confidence and image as a manager and enables you to become more assertive and persuasive.
- You will be better equipped to handle counselling sessions, interviews, oral presentations and telephonic communications.
- It will boost the image of your institution.
- It will help you conduct impromptu conversations with your staff with ease and, in turn improve interpersonal communication.
- It will help you improve the quality of education of the learners at your institution.

UNIT 3: EFFECTIVE LISTENING



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you learned more about what oral communication is all about and in this unit you will focus on active listening. Effective listening is essential in all communication activities.

Active listening cannot be divorced from oral communication because when you deliver an oral message competently, there is an audience who should listen attentively and objectively. As a manager, you need to listen more attentively to spoken conversations from your staff. Research studies (Sherman, et al (1996 : 554), show that “despite the willingness to improve their speaking skills, too frequently managers have the feeling that there is little that can be done to improve listening skills”. However, there are a variety of things you can do to improve your own listening skills.

In this unit some important aspects of active listening will be discussed. These aspects of listening can be useful in work-related situations; so you need to learn how to apply them in your institution.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this Unit you should be able to:-

- Define active listening.
- Explain why active listening is important.
- Identify strategies to overcome the barriers to active listening.
- Discuss how you could motivate your staff to listen attentively and objectively.
- Distinguish between hearing and listening.
- Differentiate between a good listener and a bad listener.

CONTENT



Read Text

DEFINITION OF ACTIVE LISTENING

According to Fielding (1995: 105) “Listening actively means that you strive to be in touch with facts, opinions and attitudes expressed by the speakers. You give feedback and ask prompting questions to show that you are listening”.

Moorhead and Griffin’s definition (1995: 412) shows that listening actively involves **decoding** and **encoding** of messages. This means that you must first perceive the message, then translate the symbols into meaning and then interpret it.

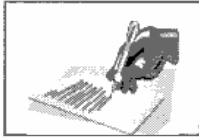
One of your duties as a manager is to decode and encode messages during the process of active listening. It is through this process that messages can be perceived and translated into meaning. Therefore, it is critical that you understand what active listening is all about.

IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE LISTENING

The key to active listening is in your hands. As a manager you must have a desire for improving, encouraging, and motivating others to develop their listening skills. The following list describes some benefits of active listening:-

- Active listening does not stop the flow of messages. As there is no interruption during conversation, time is saved and the listener learns more.
- Active listening leads to clear understanding of the message.
- Better decisions can be taken because better and more meaningful information is gained.
- The participants can determine how well their messages are received. There is enough time to evaluate messages.
- The message receivers are stimulated to participate and speak better.
- Participants are less inclined to be critical, and can be easily persuaded when they understand messages.
- Understanding is increased through active listening.

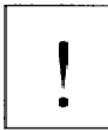
When you read through the above benefits of active listening, you may notice that effective listening is a quality of an effective manager. As a manager you need to listen attentively to the ideas and opinions of your followers, and get feedback from them. Your followers can be motivated to contribute their opinions when they know that you appreciate and respect their ideas.



Self Evaluation

SELF-AVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- (a) Explain why active listening cannot be divorced from oral communication.
- (b) List six objectives of this unit.
- (c) Describe seven benefits of active listening.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of this unit.



Read Text

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HEARING AND LISTENING

In order to get a clear understanding of active listening, it is also important that you know the distinction between “hearing and listening” as these two terms are often confused.

Fielding (1995: 107) gives a clear distinction between the two terms. “Hearing” as he argues, “is a positive process in which we receive the sounds in a conversation”, whereas, “active listening is a process whereby we are deeply involved with the speaker”.

The latter process is so important to you as the manager because it helps you to pay attention to both the facts and the opinions expressed while listening; whereas the former

process encourages passiveness which results in poor understanding of the speaker's facts, opinions, attitudes and emotions.

MAJOR BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Wherever communication takes place, poor listening can be due to the following:-

- **Cultural differences.**

In organizations people bring different cultures. If these are not tolerated, there could be a breakdown in active listening.

- **Speaker's and listener's roles.**

If both the speaker and the listener are not actively involved in listening there may be confusion in the interpretation of the message.

- **Semantic barrier**

Insensitive use of language can discourage people from listening attentively.

- **Environment**

The place where listening occurs may not be conducive enough for active listening.

- **Negative emotions** of the speaker and listener can contribute to poor listening.
- **Effects of non-verbal behavior.**
- **Language that is too technical** for the receiver.
- **Jumping to conclusions** before the speaker has finished.
- **Status difference** - refusing to listen to people whom you think are inferior.

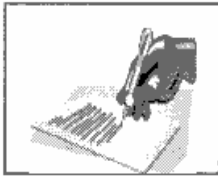
As an education manager, you should eliminate whatever barrier that may detract from effective listening, so as to create an effective communication environment.

TECHNIQUES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LISTENING

It is very important to eliminate any barrier that can hamper active listening. The following techniques are essential in overcoming the barriers listed above:-

- Know exactly why you are listening.
- Teach yourself to listen actively, attentively and objectively.
- Respond only after you have understood the full message.
- Decode and interpret the full message correctly.

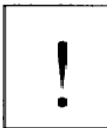
- Listen empathically; that is, see the message from the speaker's point of view.
- Try to summarize the key points.
- Avoid biases and prejudices about the speaker as you listen.
- Ask questions wherever you want clarification.
- Respond to the speaker's message by providing clear and unambiguous feedback.
- Identify and correct your listening errors.
- Talk less and listen more during conversation to allow time for reflection.
- Be conscious of the points you need to know. During a conversation, listen for answers to your questions.
- Paraphrase what the speaker has said, giving him or her a chance to correct errors.
- Follow instructions you think are necessary.
- Consider the cultural diversity of your staff.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Distinguish between “hearing” and “active listening”.
- Give five barriers that you consider as the major ones for hampering active listening at your institution.
- Write five techniques for overcoming barriers given above.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of this unit.



Read Text

LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Bovee (1986: 536) gives five related activities which occur sequentially when one is listening attentively.

- **Sensing**
Distractions can be overcome when you take note after hearing the message.
- **Interpreting**
Try to determine the speaker's point of view.
- **Evaluating**
Form an opinion about the message by noticing the speaker's remarks, separating facts from opinions.
- **Remembering**
To retain what you hear, you must take notes, or make a mental outline of the key points, or summarize what you have been listening to.
- **Responding**
This may take either the form of oral or written feedback. You must give meaningful feedback to show that you have been listening attentively.

As a manager you should apply the above five listening activities whenever you are listening. You should also know that, to listen attentively, you need to take cognizance of both verbal and non-verbal cues.

THE FOUR TYPES OF LISTENING

There are four types of listening that you need to be aware of to accomplish the above listening activities stipulated by Bovee (1986: 536). The four types are:-

- **Content listening**

This enables you to understand and retain the message by identifying the key points of the message. You must concentrate and listen for the clues to the structure of the message by outlining, summarizing and enumerating points. Afterwards, you must review what you have learnt.
- **Critical listening**

This enables you to evaluate the information by the logic of the argument, strength of the evidence, validity of the conclusions, the implications of the message, the speaker's purpose and motives.
- **Empathic listening**

It is used to understand the speaker's feelings, needs and wants in order to solve the problem. However, you must not judge the rightness or wrongness of the speaker's feelings.

- **Active listening**

As stated in the beginning of this unit, active listening will help you understand the other person's point of view. This is so important in resolving conflict.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

It is also important for you as an education manager, to differentiate between bad listeners and good listeners. Bovee (1986: 538) tabulated the characteristics of bad listeners and good listeners. Study these characteristics and associate them with your behaviour together with the behaviour of your staff:

| To listen effectively | Bad listeners | Good listeners |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Find areas of interest | Tune out dry subject. | Opportunize and ask: what's in it for them? |
| 2. Judge content, not delivery. | Tune out if delivery is poor. | Judge content; skip over delivery errors. |
| 3. Hold your fire. | Tend to enter into argument. | Judge only after comprehension is complete and interrupt only to clarify. |
| 4. Listen for ideas. | Listen for facts. | Listen for central themes. |
| 5. Exercise flexibility. | Take intensive notes using only one system. | Take few notes; using 4 to 5 different systems, depending on speaker. |
| 6. Work at listening. | Show no energy output; fake attention. | Work hard; exhibit active body state. |
| 7. Resist distractions. | Get distracted easily. | Fight or avoid distractions; tolerate bad habits; know how to concentrate. |
| 8. Exercise your mind. | Resist difficult expository material or seek light, recreational material. | Use heavier material as exercise for the mind. |

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9. Keep your mind open. | React to emotional words. | Interpret emotional words; do not get hung up on them. |
| 10. Capitalize on the fact that thought is faster than speech. | Tend to daydream with slow speakers | Challenge, anticipate, mentally summarize, weigh the evidence, listen between the lines to tone of voice. |



Read Text

THE LISTENING LADDER: A FIVE STEP APPROACH

As a manager in education you need to be a good listener and also help the audience to do so. Barker & Gaut (1996 : 48) give the following important listening ladder you can use to help yourself listen more effectively. You need to examine the challenges and difficulties listeners face at each step of the ladder of the listening process. The ladder represents the five steps you go through when communicating with others:

Barker & Gaut (1996 : 48)

Attending Level

The first step of the listening process, which affects the success of all the other steps, is attending. As a manager, you must show differing degrees of involvement in verbal and non-verbal environmental stimuli. You need to demonstrate conscious efforts to listen to others through attending behaviours such as eye contact, forward lean, appropriate facial expressions, and concentration on the message.

Perceiving Level

At this step you must use all your senses when listening. Your perceptions are also influenced by your personal interests, past experiences, knowledge, and skills.

Interpreting Skills

You need to interpret what you have perceived by trying to understand the meanings of messages.

Assessing Level

After interpreting the message you must make judgements about it and its importance to the audience. This occurs by perceiving the accuracy and credibility of the message, and by evaluating the importance of it.

Responding Level

Listening is not complete until there has been some kind of response. As a manager and a listener you must react to the message or sender.

As a manager, you need to know and practice them the following tips for effective listening:

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

1. When listening to “uninteresting” subject matter, look for benefits and opportunities by asking “What’s in it for me?”
2. Judge content – not the appearance or delivery of a speaker.
3. To avoid getting overstimulated by some part of a message, hold your reaction. Wait until message is complete to make a judgement.
4. Listen for central themes and ideas, not just facts.

5. Be flexible when taking notes; take fewer notes and use different systems of note-taking depending on the speaker.
6. Assume an active listening stance (for example, lean forward, make eye contact with speaker). Don't fake attention.
7. Resist distractions by fighting or avoiding them; learn how to concentrate.
8. Seek out difficult material rather than avoid it; use "heavy" material as an exercise for the mind.
9. Keep an open mind when confronted with an emotional word with which you are uncomfortable.
10. Use the thinking-speaking time differential to summarize mentally, weigh evidence, and listen "between the lines."

Barker & Gaut (1996 : 60)

SOME RESPONSES THAT BLOCK ACTIVE LISTENING

It is also important for a manager to be aware of the types of responses that block active listening. Discussed below are 10 types of responses that you must know (Locker 1992 : 415).

- ♦ **Ordering**
Tells the receiver that the speaker doesn't want to listen to what has to be said, for example, "I don't care how you feel. I want that report today".
- **Threatening**
Also tells the receiver that the speaker doesn't want to listen to what has to be said. For example, "If you don't do this job, I'll fire you".
- **Preaching**
Tells the receiver that the speaker doesn't want what is said, or has to be said. For example, "You should know better than to air the department's problems in a general meeting".
- **Interrogating**
It also tells the receiver that the speaker doesn't want what is said, or has to be said. For example, "Why didn't you tell me that you didn't understand the instructions"?
- **Judging, criticizing, blaming**
This attacks the other person. For example, "Look at this section you wrote. It's terrible. Spelling errors typos parts of it don't even make sense".
- **Praising**
Includes empty flattery and distances the person who has a problem. For example, "You're smart. I'm sure you'll figure out a way to solve this problem".

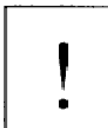
- **Interpreting**
Labels the problem and denies the other person's uniqueness. For example, "You just have a problem with authority figures, don't you"?
- **Minimising the problem**
This suggests that the other person's concern is misplaced. For example, "You think that's bad. You should see what I have to do this week".
- **Advising**
This shuts off discussion. For example, "Well, why don't you try listing everything you have to do and seeing which items are most important?"
- **Name-calling**
This attacks the other person. For example, "That remark just shows what a male Chauvinist you are".



Assessment Task

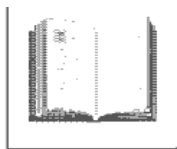
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACITIVITY

The above ten blocking responses have negative responses that you, as a manager, should avoid. Each response has a negative utterance. For each blocking response given, write a possible positive response that indicates active listening.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this task are to be found at the end of the unit.



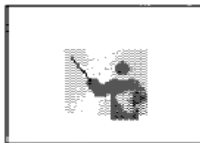
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DIAGNOSING YOUR LISTENING SKILLS

Good listening skills are essential for effective communication and are often overlooked when communication is analyzed. The "self assessment questionnaire" below examines your ability to listen effectively. (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995: 358 – 359).

Instructions: Go through the following statements, ticking “yes” or “no” in the space next to each one. Mark each question as truthfully as you can in the light of your behavior in the last few meetings or gatherings that you attended.

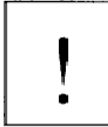
| Yes | No | | Yes | No | |
|-----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | 1. I frequently attempt to listen to several conversations at the same time. | | | 8. I usually respond immediately when someone has finished talking. |
| | | 2. I like people to give me only the facts and then let me make my own interpretation. | | | 9. I evaluate what is being said while it is being said. |
| | | 3. I sometimes pretend to pay attention to people. | | | 10. I usually formulate a response while the other person is still talking. |
| | | 4. I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal communications. | | | 11. The speaker’s “delivery” style frequently keeps me from listening to content. |
| | | 5. I usually know what another person is going to say before he or she says it. | | | 12. I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning. |
| | | 6. I usually end conversations that do not interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker. | | | 13. I make a concerted effort to understand other people’s point of view. |
| | | 7. I frequently nod, frown, or in some other way let the speaker know how I feel about what he or she is saying. | | | 14. Most people feel that I have understood their point of view when we disagree |



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Complete the questionnaire above.



Important-take note!

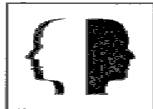
Scoring for this practice activity is to be found at the end of this unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

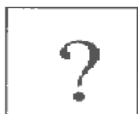
In this unit the definition of active listening was given to you. In addition, the aspects of active listening and the barriers to active listening were explained. You also learnt the techniques for overcoming barriers to active listening. Four types of listening and ten responses that block active listening were discussed. You are now aware of how to become an active listener, a quality which will help you to perform better as a manager in education.



Reflection

REFLECTION

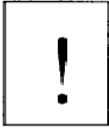
As a manager, you can become an active listener and reduce the conflict that results from poor listening if you practice the techniques and activities covered in this unit. Reflect upon these, since the responsibility is on you to create an effective listening communication channel in your organization.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Having gone through this unit you now understand what active listening entails. Discuss how you, as an education manager, would promote active listening in your work environment. Relate this to your experience as an educational leader.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question are given at the end of this unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- When you deliver an oral message, there is an audience who should listen attentively and objectively.
- Five benefits of effective listening: Answers may vary. However, you may consider the following important:
 - Effective listening does not stop the flow of messages. As there is no interruption during conversation, time is saved and the listener learns more.
 - Effective listening leads to clear understanding of the message.
 - Better decisions can be taken because more meaningful information is gained.
 - The participants can determine how will their messages are received.
 - There is enough time for evaluation.
 - The message receivers are stimulated to participate and speak better.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Hearing is a passive process in which you only receive the sounds in a conversation; whereas listening actively is a process whereby you are deeply involved with the speaker, translating and interpreting the message.
- Five barriers considered to hamper active listening:_
 - cultural differences
 - speaker's and listener's role
 - semantic barrier
 - environment
 - status difference

SELF-ASSESSMENT TASK

Locker (1995 : 415) suggests the following positive responses that indicate active listening:-

- **Ordering:-**
“You’re saying that you don’t have time to finish the report today”.
- **Threatening:-**
“Could you finish it if you had help with part of it?”
- **Preaching:-**
“It sounds like the department’s problems really bother you”.
- **Interrogating:-**
“I’m frustrated that the job isn’t completed yet, and I’m worried about getting it done on time”.
- **Judging, criticizing, blaming**
We need to fix the typographical errors and spelling errors and revise some parts of this. “What’s the best way to get the revision made in the time we have?”
- **Praising**
“What parts of the problem seem most difficult to solve?”
- **Interpreting**
“Are you saying that Jabu shouldn’t be supervising our work so closely?”
- **Minimizing the problem**
“You feel overwhelmed right now, don’t you?”
- **Advising**
“Is there anything I could do that would help?”
- **Name-calling**
“I get angry when people suggest women don’t belong in the workplace. It makes me feel that I have to prove myself all the time, when I’d rather just concentrate on doing my job”.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

- **SCORING**

The correct answers according to Moorhead & Griffin, (1995 : 358 – 359) are as follows:-

No for statements 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14.

Yes for statements 4, 12, 13,

If you missed only one or two responses, you strongly approve of your own listening habits, and you are on the right track to becoming an effective listener in your role as a

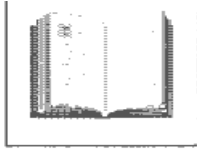
manager. If you missed three or four responses, you have uncovered some doubts about your listening effectiveness, and your knowledge of how to listen has some gaps. If you missed five or more responses, you probably are not satisfied with the way you listen, and your friends and workmates may not feel you are a good listener either. Work on improving your active listening skills.

UNIT TEST

Answers to this question will vary according to your experience. However, some of the following points could be included in your answers:

- Know exactly why active listening is important.
- Teach yourself to listen actively, attentively and objectively.
- Respond only after you have understood the full message.
- Decode and interpret the message correctly.
- Listen empathetically.
- Show involvement in non-verbal and verbal stimuli.
- Use all your senses when listening.
- Make judgements about the message.
- React to the message.

UNIT 4: EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AND READABILITY



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Oral and listening communication discussed in unit 2 and 3 respectively, and non-verbal methods to be discussed in the following unit (unit 5), are not the only primary methods of communicating in an organization. Written communication also plays an important role in the flow of messages. Frequently, organizations produce a great deal of written messages in many forms. Your performance as a manager is directly related to your competency in handling written communication, including message writing ability and reading with understanding.

It is therefore very important to be aware of the following aspects of written communication and readability as they also form an integral part of all organizational activities:- objectives, definition of terms, importance of written communication, barriers to effective writing, techniques for overcoming barriers, aspects of readability, barriers to readability, techniques for overcoming barriers to readability, and forms of written communication. Some of the important aspects of written communication are discussed in Module 11. Therefore, you are advised to refer to this Module.

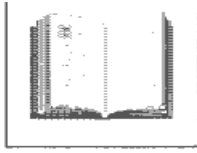
All the above aspects are what you, as a manager, should know and practice for the smooth running of your organization.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this unit, you should be able to:-

- Describe what written communication is.
- List the advantages of effective written communication.
- Give examples of barriers to communication.
- Explain the techniques of overcoming barriers to communication.
- Plan and organize your written message in a cohesive and coherent way.
- Select words which suit the receiver's knowledge and purpose.
- Select the right level of formality.
- Decide on the right level of layout to achieve good readability.
- Use the most effective message form.
- Avoid ambiguity, when you write messages.

- Draft and revise your own message.



Read Text

CONTENT

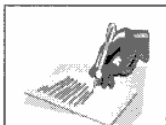
WHAT IS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION?

Written communication involves the following instruments in an organization: report writing, letter writing, proposals, instructions, letters to the press, advertisements, faxing and electronic mail, writing memorandum, brochures, writing minutes of a meeting, complaint boxes, essays and articles, and notices and circulars. Managers communicate internally and externally.

Internal communication is an integral part of all organizational communication activities as most of them (activities) occur within it. Internal communication involves employees communicating with each other, managers informing and giving instructions, and reports being written and studied.

External communication is the flow of information from an organization to the public. When communicating externally, the manager communicates with the parents, company, unions, professional services, suppliers, government agencies, the courts, foreign governments and offices, trade associations, special interest groups, the general public, and stakeholders.

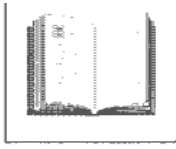
As a manager in education, you should be able to communicate in writing, both internally and externally. With increased involvement in projects and courses, every manager can learn to use effective written communication strategies.



Self Evaluation

SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- Define the following types of communication and give the forms you use in your institution.
 - Internal communication
 - External communication



Read Text

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

As a manager in education, there is a need to understand the importance of written communication. Written communication has the following advantages:-

- Written documents serve as permanent records; the message is often better prepared and you can refer back to it if necessary. Carefully written messages enable you to use your earlier experience without having to rewrite a new message every time people tackle a recurring problem.
- Written channels, including graphics, are more effective than oral ones for presenting numerical data and complex information.. Oral lists of numbers are hard to follow and remember. Written lists and graphics, for example, pie charts, graphs, flow charts, make it much easier to understand numbers and other complicated data.
- Written channels are more convenient for the recipient than oral ones. The receiver can read the written messages when it is most convenient, and can proceed at a convenient pace, skimming easier or less important sections and rereading difficult or key sections.
- Written messages enable the sender to convey the message more effectively. In writing, you can take as much space as you need to present your message clearly.
- Written messages can reach all people in an organization, who are then kept informed about what is going on in the institution.
- Complete data can be given.
- The message or information can be prepared beforehand.
- The written message contributes towards providing consistent insight into policy for subordinates.
- The recipient is able to read the document carefully and understand the message better.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

Written communication, like all the other types of communication, has barriers that you, as a manager, should try to overcome for effective conveyance of your message. The following are some of the common examples:-

- Written messages do not provide quick feedback.
- As Van der Westhuizen (1994: 436) points out, “it may give rise to a so-called ‘paper war’ if it is uncontrolled and used injudiciously”.
- Poor writers are placed at a disadvantage. Therefore it cannot always convey meaningful messages as poor writers lack writing skills.
- It is an impersonal communication medium because it is not a face-to-face communication and the audience is divided into four different broad categories. Sometimes it does not cater for the needs of a certain audience. For example, the message can be addressed to:- a lay person who is not an expert in your field; a person who is an expert in your field; a technical audience who might or might not be experts in your special field; or a mixed audience who consist of experts and non-experts. It is therefore, difficult to address different groups. Sometimes senders use ambiguous words, and words which are not relevant to the context.
- The use of jargon. For example, the language may consist of technical words; a large number of long, unfamiliar words, many unnecessary words, long, complicated sentences, and stock phrases.
- If the message is not revised, edited and proofread before it is conveyed to the audience, mistakes may occur.
- Sexist language. For example, written messages which assume that men are superior to or take precedence over women.
- Language which is racist and agist, that is, discrimination against race and age groups.
- Photographs and illustrations which show bias.
- Channel overload. When the channel cannot handle all the messages that are being sent.

- Information overload. This occurs when more messages are transmitted than the receiver can handle. Some human receivers process information “first come, first served”. Some may try to select the most important messages and ignore others.

TECHNIQUES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

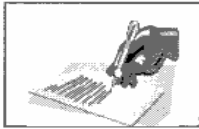
- Make sure that you provide quick feedback. This allows the receiver to respond timeously.
- Control and use the written message judiciously.
- Make sure that poor writers are trained on writing skills in order to convey meaningful messages.
- As the written message is not a face-to-face communication it should be simplified to help everyone to understand.
- Technical words, many unnecessary words, long complicated sentences, and stock phrases should be avoided.
- Make sure that you revise, edit and proofread your message before conveying it to the audience.
- Use non-sexist language; that is, language which treats both sexes neutrally; language which does not make assumptions about the proper gender for a job; and language which does not assume that men are superior to or take precedence over, women.
- Make language non-racist and non-agist; that is, language which treats all races and ages fairly, avoiding negative stereotypes of any group.
- Avoid channel overload; that is, make sure that the channels used can handle all the messages that are being sent.
- Avoid information overload; that is, do not transmit more messages than the receiver can handle at the same time.
- Know your audience. Decide who your audience is. Locker (1992: 82) divides the audience into four groups: primary, secondary, initial and gatekeeper. The primary audience decides whether to accept your recommendations or acts on the basis of your message; the secondary audience comments on your message, or implement your ideas after they have been approved; the initial audience routes the message to other audiences; a gatekeeper has the power to stop your message instead of sending it to other audiences.

As a manager you also need to consider four different broad categories of audience. For example, you can write to a lay audience who are not experts in your field, but experts in other fields. You will need to explain technical terms to this audience. There is also an audience who are experts in your field. You do not have to explain technical terms or give much background information to such an audience. A technical audience might or might not be experts in your special field. They are interested in the practical results of your message. A mixed audience consists of experts and non-experts. They could, for

example, be a board of directors who are going to decide on a proposal that you have written.

As a manager, you should have different writing skills for different types of audience. You should also analyse the needs of your audience. Ensure that you:-

- Outline your message before writing it by choosing an appropriate style. This helps you to ensure unity, coherence and emphasis.
- Use a creative pattern or mind-maps to organize your information.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- List the barriers to effective written communication in your organization and suggest ways of overcoming them.
- Discuss the importance of effective written communication in your organization.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

FORMS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

The following are some important instruments that you can use in written internal and external communication:-

Reports

Fielding (1995: 249) defines a report as an “informative, fixed-format document – normally because someone has been instructed to investigate a problem, draw conclusions and recommendations”.

Your report should consist of the following two sections: Preliminaries (pages numbered with Roman numerals) and Body of Reports (pages and each section numbered with Arabic numerals). Each section should start on a new page. The sections should include the following:

Preliminaries

- Title page.
- Acknowledgements
- Terms of reference (brief)
- Summary
- Table of contents
- List of illustrations
- Glossary
- List of symbols

Body of Report

- Introduction
- Procedure used to gather information
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- List of references
- Bibliography
- Appendices

Memoranda

Use these to communicate information to a group of people who have to attend a meeting; to inform people about company policies; to confirm points made in a conversation or meeting; to confirm decisions or agreements; to keep people informed of events in the company; and to contact staff who are difficult to reach by other means.

Proposals

You should also be able to write proposals to get action. These are accompanied by letters and are set out like reports.

Notices and minutes of the meeting

Although you delegate duties, as a manager, you should know how to write notices and minutes of a meeting.

Suggestion box

A manager should also place a suggestion box for employees to place their written information about their comments, questions or complaints.

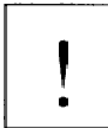
Other forms of writing you should be aware of and be able to use are: journals, notice boards, training manuals, induction programmes, letters, circulars, articles, advertisements and electronic media.



Practise Activity

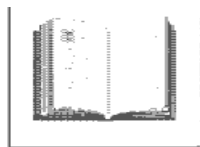
PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Give four examples of forms of written communication you mainly use in your organization. Show how effective they are in conveying written messages.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

READABILITY

WHAT IS READABILITY?

Readability, defined by Fielding (1995: 198) “refers to all the elements in a written message that make it attractive and help people to read it easily”.

There is a link between written communication and readability because written messages have to look attractive and readable. Writers and readers are important because readers need to gain meaningful information and writers have to cater for this need.

It is therefore important for a manager to know and apply the following elements of readability:-

- Writer and reader.
- What can writers do to cater for reader's needs?
- Using a multiple decimal numbering system.

Writer and reader

As you write the message you should cater for the receiver's needs and abilities. As Fielding (1995: 198) points out, what you have to cater for are:-

- The readers' emotional needs. Their needs are to be treated in a friendly way.
- The message needs to be clear and easy to follow to help the readers gain information from a message.
- The writer should also know the readers' ability to read efficiently, and also their ability to understand the message.

What can writers do to cater for readers' needs?

You, as a writer, can use the following techniques to cater for the readers' needs. You should use the following:-

- summaries at the introduction.
- messages that are well-organised, unified, coherent and with the right emphasis.
- good transitions between paragraphs.
- good linking words in paragraphs.
- simple words suited to the audience.
- explanation of difficult ideas by giving clear examples.
- punctuation to help readers understand.
- short paragraphs.
- underlining key concepts.
- headings and signpost words.
- numbering system.
- colour to attract the reader.
- cover page (for longer messages).
- title page (for longer messages).
- table of content (for longer messages)
- use active verbs most of the time. They are better because they are shorter, clearer and more interesting. Be concise.
- Combine sentences to eliminate unnecessary words. Begin most paragraphs with topic sentences so that readers know what to expect in the paragraph.

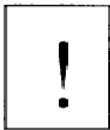
The techniques listed above are not the only guidelines to the style of writing because different organizations have different ideas about what constitutes good writing. Therefore, to polish your own style, you should read widely and write a great deal.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- Define readability.
- Give ten techniques for presenting a written message in a highly readable way.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to these questions are at the end of the unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

This unit stressed the following aspects of written communication:- objectives, definition, advantages, barriers, techniques for overcoming barriers, forms of written communication and readability. To know these aspects is not enough. As a manager, to polish your own style, you should read widely and write a great deal.



Reflection

REFLECTION

As a manager you can become an effective writer and message conveyer if you practice the techniques of writing and reading. Reflect upon ways in which you can improve your style of writing so as to communicate more effectively.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

How can you motivate your staff to write effectively?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question are given at the end of this unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- **Internal** communication occurs within the organization. Employees and managers communicate with each other through reports, notices, circulars, memos, notice board, instructions.
- **External** communication is the flow of information from an organization to the public. Managers communicate with parents, unions, professional services, mass media, etc. This can occur through proposals, letters, memos, etc.
- Forms you use in your institution: Answers may vary. However, the following may be included in your answer:
 - reports
 - memoranda
 - proposals
 - notices and minutes of the meeting.

SELF EVALUATION UNIT 2

- Answers to this question may vary. However, the following may be included:

Barriers to effective written communication.

- Poor writers
- Is an impersonal communication medium
- Sexist language
- Racist and agist language
- Channel overload and information overload
- No quick feedback
- Semantic barrier.

Ways of overcoming barriers

- Train poor writers
- Language should be simplified to make everyone understand
- Use non-sexist language
- Make language non-racist and non-agist
- Avoid channel overload and information overload
- Know your audience. Send the message in time
- Write meaningful sentences and paragraphs.

The importance of effective written communication

- Serves as a permanent record
- The receiver can read the written message when it is most convenient and can understand the message better
- Reaches large groups
- Complete data can be given.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Answers to this activity will vary according to your experience. However, you could include some of the following points in your answer:-

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reports | - | they give detailed information |
| Memoranda | - | they are informative and can be stored for future reference |
| Minutes of the meeting | - | Are useful for future reference |
| Suggestions box | - | It is important for the staff's comments, questions, and complaints |

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- Readability refers to all the elements in a written message that make it attractive and help people to read it easily.
- Answers to this question may vary. However, the following techniques may be included:

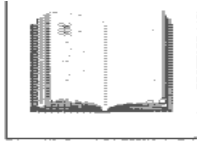
Ten techniques for presenting a written message.

- Good transition between paragraphs
- Short paragraphs
- Heading and signpost words
- Numbering system
- Simple words
- Summaries at the introduction
- Well-organised, unified, coherent and emphasized messages
- Good linking words
- Use topic sentences
- Underline key concepts.

UNIT TEST

- Set an exemplary standard.
- Organize writing courses to train your staff.
- Form writing and reading clubs.
- Encourage them to read and write widely.
- Involve them in many activities which will involve writing skills.

UNIT 5: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you were exposed to various aspects of effective written communication. This unit focuses on non-verbal communication. Effective communication depends on, among other things, active listening (as you have gleaned from reading Unit 3), as well as people's ability to interpret non-verbal communication. The following aspects of non-verbal communication will be covered:-

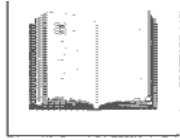
- What is non-verbal communication?
- The importance of non-verbal communication.
- The difference between non-verbal and verbal communication.
- Types of non-verbal communication.
- Problems associated with non-verbal communication.
- Strategies to overcome problems associated with non-verbal communication.

OBJECTIVES

After working through this unit you should be able to:-

- explain what non-verbal communication is.
- differentiate between non-verbal and verbal communication.
- discuss the importance of non-verbal cues for effective communication.
- distinguish between various types of non verbal cues.
- identify problems associated with non-verbal communication.

CONTENT



Read Text

DEFINITION

What is non-verbal communication?

Non-verbal communication is usually associated with most forms of communication, including oral and written forms. It includes “all the elements associated with human communication that are not expressed orally or in writing. Sometimes it conveys more meaning than words”. (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995: 355)

These human elements include conscious and unconscious facial expressions and physical movements, the latter of which is commonly known as body language, while the eyes are the most expressive component of the face.

Environmental elements such as buildings, office space and furniture can also convey messages non-verbally.

Non-verbal communication is a continuous process and is the basis for all interpersonal communication. It is often more reliable than spoken communication. It is also a better way of showing emotions. However, successful communication at the interpersonal level depends largely on people’s ability to understand and interpret their own and other people’s non-verbal communication.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

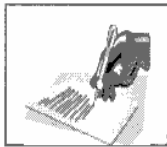
As an education manager, it would be very beneficial for you to be aware of what non-verbal communication is all about as it can help you to understand your staff more fully and gain a clearer insight of what their attitudes, moods and feelings are. You will be able to “read between the lines” so to speak. At the same time it will enable you to convey your message more meaningfully if you are aware of the impact that non-verbal cues have on interpersonal communication.

Fielding (1995: 113) maintains that “we need to be as sensitive as possible to non-verbal cues for five major reasons:

- People often rely on first impressions to make up their minds about strangers. They form their impressions by observing non-verbal cues conveyed by people in new situations. They notice obvious things about them. From these superficial

cues they form their opinions and often make inaccurate judgements about them. We might, for example, judge a stranger who has a high forehead and wears spectacles as very intelligent, but we may be completely wrong in this judgement. Similarly you may recall instances in your experience as a manager when you might have misjudged people.

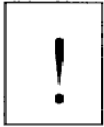
- We often judge strangers in terms of our own beliefs about appearance and non-verbal behaviour. We use these beliefs to fill in gaps that exist in our knowledge about strangers, even though these beliefs may be inaccurate.
- First impressions are usually lasting impressions, and are often hard to change. It is therefore important for you, in a managerial position, to create a good first impression among your staff. Your own non-verbal behaviour can work in your favour and help you to communicate more effectively.
- We often judge people on facial expressions, eye contact, shape of mouth, voice qualities, gestures, posture and what they wear. From your own experience you may be aware of how easy it is to form false opinions about people through misinterpretation of such non-verbal cues.
- We often use non-verbal stereotypes for judging people, for example some people may assume that black women managers are incompetent, or that white males make the best managers. How often you will have seen the fallacy of such cultural stereotyping!



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- What do you understand by the term non-verbal communication?
- As an education manager, what do you think is the most important reason for understanding what non-verbal communication is all about?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are at the end of this unit.

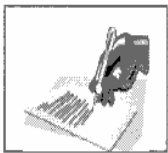


Read Text

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NON-VERBAL AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION

There are three major differences between non-verbal and verbal communication:-

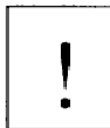
- Non-verbal communication is usually a more effective way of showing or gauging emotions, moods and attitudes than is the spoken word.
- In face-to-face interactions non-verbal communication is a continuous process. Communication is going on even if people have nothing to say to each other.
- Non-verbal communication is usually to be trusted above what people say. It may be easy to tell a lie, but people will have to be skilled to lie verbally and non-verbally at the same time.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

Identify one difference between non-verbal and verbal communication.



Important-take note!

A possible answer to this question is to be found at the end of this unit.

TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Body language is a common way of showing moods, feelings and attitudes. However, it is important for you, as a manager, to know that non-verbal communication covers for more than simply body languages as there is a wide range of non-verbal communication. The following is a list of the types of non-verbal communication that will be described in this unit:-

- Silence
- Paralanguage
- Kinesics or body language
- Facial expressions and eye contact
- Touching
- Proxemics or distance and territoriality
- Clothing and accessories such as jewellery
- Objects and the environment within which people work
- People's views of time

Each of these types of non-verbal communication will be explained so that you will understand them better. This will help you in your positions as education manager, when interacting with staff to improve classroom effectiveness, as well as with other role players in education.

- **Silence**

Silence is an important feature in interpersonal communication. Used positively, “it helps people to engage in genuine two-way communication. Silence encourages effective turn-taking, and can show that the other person is listening”. (Fielding, 1995:114)

In public speaking, silence in the form of pauses is important for creating an impact. It allows the audience time to absorb what the speaker is saying, particularly if the information is not familiar. It helps to reinforce salient points. Momentary pauses between various aspects of our oral presentation enhance clarity and diminish confusion that might arise through information overload. Silence can have a number of meanings depending on the situation. It might for example, show:-

- Contemplation
- Fear
- Shyness
- Concentration
- Boredom

- Anger
- Embarrassment
- Respect
- Anxiety
- Hurt feelings
- Grief
- Tolerance

- **Paralanguage**

This word refers to the ways in which we say things rather than what we say. How many times we hear people who have been offended say “It’s not **what** he said; it’s **how** he said it.” Paralanguage includes clearing of the throat, coughs or sobs during speech. In addition, it covers the following aspects of our voice:-

- Intonation, that is, the rise and fall of voice.
- Pace, that is, how fast or slowly we speak.
- Volume, that is, how loudly or softly we speak.
- Resonance, that is, how deep and strong our voices are.
- Pitch, that is, our voices could be high or low pitched. A high pitched voice denotes a high level of tension in our voice.
- Harshness – that is how cold, unkind, bitter, abrupt or hard our voices could be.

As we observe and listen to paralanguage we form opinions about the speaker’s.

- age
- emotions
- opinions about herself/himself and his/her subject
- attitudes towards the audience
- intelligence level
- level of sophistication

- **Kinesics**

This term is often referred to as body language. It describes our body movements as we interact with others. The study of kinesics covers, inter alia, the following:-

- the way we walk
- how we stand in relation to others
- our arm and hand movements (haptic communication)
- the ways in which we sit
- the messages sent by our feet (pedic communication)

All these movements and positions affect the ways in which we communicate. It also affects the way in which people interpret us. As an educational manager you need to be constantly aware of your own body language and that of the person/people with whom you are interacting. It is important not to convey wrong signals through confusing body language. Correct interpretation of body language will convey messages more meaningfully when used effectively together with the spoken word.

Body movements which can convey messages very plainly and simply are obvious. You might, for example enter a room with your eyes lowered, head bent down, and shoulders drooping. Your staff will then assume that you are very tired, or that you are the bearer of bad news or that you are not very interested in working with them. They will then develop a negative mind set and this could result in ineffective communication. On the other hand, if you walk briskly into the room and look at people, they are more likely to sit up, be more attentive, and communicate positively with you. (Fielding, 1995: 116)

On the other hand, body movements can be more subtle and not so obvious. You might, for instance, find yourself adopting the same body posture as another person that you like. This is referred to as echo posture. It assists in creating a closer relationship and harmony between two people interacting with each other. An example of echo posture is crossing your legs when interacting with another person whose legs are crossed.

(Fielding, 1995: 117)

The manner in which you sit during a conversation can indicate how tense or relaxed you are, and your feelings towards the other person or subject. Leaning forward to listen is an effective posture indicative of active listening, or the level of interest the subject generates. It could also denote tension. Leaning back could show that we wish to withdraw from the communication. It could also indicate that you are relaxed. We tend to be relaxed with people of equal or lower status and tense with people of higher status.

Body language that focuses on hand movements as a way of transmitting a message is known as haptic communication. The most universally accepted form of haptic communication is the handshake. It conveys a positive message of acceptance, cordiality, acknowledgement or agreement. It is a common form of greeting, even among people who do not speak the same language. Your hand movements during conversations are very important for signaling turn-taking. While speaking, open palms can indicate to your audience that you have not quite finished saying what you have to say. Open palms with effective hand movements also help you to sustain the attention of your audience. Open body position with your arms spread helps you to convey an attitude of sincerity, warmth, love and acceptance.

Non-verbal communication involving messages sent by the feet. This is known as pedic communication. Such behaviour as foot-tapping, swinging one foot while sitting, and alternating the position of the body, first on one foot, then on the other, can communicate messages to others.

In your position as a manager you would have probably observed the manner in which some members of staff use their hands during a conversation or staff meeting, to denote various attitudes and emotions such as anger, fatigue, determination, fear and anxiety.

(Smit and Cronje, 1995: 360)

- **Facial expressions and eye contact**

We often judge other people by their facial expressions. We observe their eyes, mouth, jaws, chin, forehead and even their hair and skin. However, people generally adjust their facial expressions to ones that they perceive to be socially acceptable. We therefore need to observe people's faces very carefully if we are to gain a true indication of their feelings.

One form of non-verbal communication which involves messages, other than words sent by the mouth, is termed labic communication. Smiles, frowns and pouting of the lips are some examples of labic communication. The dropping of the lower jaw is a common way of showing surprise or shock. Pouting of the lips can indicate a person's dissatisfaction, anger or irritation with the speaker, while frowning is an indication of confusion or doubting the validity of the speaker's message.

A very important form of non-verbal communication in face to face interaction is eye contact. Good eye-contact is an indication that the channels of communication are open. This form of non-verbal communication in which people send messages using the eyes is known as **optic** communication. The eyes

can convey a message more powerfully than words can, in some instances. A wink, which is one of the most common forms of optic communication can convey a message that even the most eloquently expressed words cannot impart.

Eye contact, especially during a face-to-face conversation can have different connotations in different cultural groups. From a Western point of view, people tend to be suspicious of people who do not look directly at them during face-to-face interaction.

People from the Western culture feel confident when their audience looks at them while they are speaking. It gives them a sense of worth and authority. Lack of eye contact on the part of a person could be viewed as disinterest, rudeness, inattentiveness, shyness or guilt.

On the other hand, in some cultures, such as in the African culture, traditionally, a minor may not look at an adult or a superior straight in the eyes, as it is considered rude or disrespectful. Instead, as a mark of respect, minors are expected to look down or away from the speaker's eyes.

It is advisable for you, in a managerial position, to take note of cultural differences in non-verbal communication if you have a culturally diverse staff. Try to respect their different attitudes to eye contact. It is also important for you to know that you can be judged as being dominant or submissive depending on the amount of eye contact you have during your interaction with people. The greater the amount of eye contact you have, the more dominant and confident you will appear to be. If you do not have much eye-contact you will seem to be lacking in confidence and assertiveness. When you address a large audience, try to look at individuals rather than sweeping your eyes across the audience, especially during speeches.

- **Touching**

This non-verbal form of communication is viewed differently across cultures. Some Western cultures for instance, are regarded as non-touch or non-contact cultures where touching can be an indication of intrusion into a person's privacy. People from other cultures, on the other hand, may value touching during conversations, especially when they want to interrupt or gain attention. Even in non-touch cultures, however, a gentle touch to the elbow or shoulder can be reassuring, since it is seen as non-threatening, especially if the attention is for gaining a person's attention. Such touching can also be an indication of empathy with a person who is undergoing trauma or anxiety. Touching can also be an indication of approval or acknowledgement of accomplishment, for example when a person receives a pat on the shoulder. Touching may also encourage a person to disclose more information than they otherwise would. It can also be an

indication that the message being conveyed is confidential. Touches to the face or head are strong signals of affection.

(Fielding, 1995: 118)

- **Proxemics, or distance and territoriality**

Proxemic communication is concerned with personal territory or personal space. It relates to the placement or proximity of individuals in a social setting, usually when they are talking. The study of proxemics involves people's use of space and how they react to the space around them. It also refers to individuals' territoriality and their preference to keep their distance or maintain their own space. Associated with proxemic communication is the study of the physical layout of a room, the placement of furniture, table seating and table shapes. All these factors may determine how individuals position themselves.

Fielding (1995: 119) refers to territoriality as a person's comfort zone or "space bubble". An invasion into an individual's space bubble is like an invasion of privacy and this makes a person feel uncomfortable. Territoriality varies from one culture to the next. In the Western culture, people prefer to keep a distance of at least one-and-a-half metres when they meet people for the first time. They use this distance when conducting business interactions at an interpersonal level.

On the other hand, people from other cultures might, prefer to work within a more confined space. These differences in preferences may cause tension for people from different cultures working together. You may find this situation prevailing at your institution. Both sides will have to make adjustments in order to work harmoniously for the benefit of your organization.

When people are forced to be very close together as in a lift, taxi, bus or train their **intimate zone** is being invaded. They cope with this discomfort by maintaining silence, turning their eyes away, and maintaining a rigid standing or seating position that minimizes contact. People who are friendly and familiar with each other tend to stand closer together when talking. They might, for instance, have a personal distance ranging from 50 cm to one-and-a-half metres.

People often express their attitudes towards territory by referring to “my office”, “my desk”, “my table”. Some try to increase their space by placing their hands on their hips. Others expand their territory by surrounding themselves with books, bags and briefcases. There may be a tendency for management staff to invade the space of junior staff by entering unannounced, and demanding instant attention. The reverse could also happen. This invasion of privacy and territory could create tension. In your capacity as an educational manager, you need to encourage, among your staff, mutual respect for one another’s privacy. This is best accomplished by setting a good example for your staff to emulate.

It is therefore important for you in your capacity as an educational manager to be mindful of proxemics so that you can encourage more effective communication with your staff. You might want to increase their awareness of the differences in one another’s spatial preferences so that staff can work comfortably with one another for the successful operation of your institution.

- **Clothing and accessories**

Clothing and accessories such as suits, ties, belts and jewellery satisfy our desire for attention and the need to be accepted as members of the groups. They also boost our self-esteem. However, there are other reasons for attaching importance to clothing and jewellery. They are an integral part of communication within an organization. The manner in which we dress for work is an important part of the impression that we create among other people. It is a way of making a statement about our opinions, our status, our interest and our personalities. Our dressing can influence our successful performance at work. As a manager you would probably feel more comfortable in formal attire as this reflects on your leadership role. It helps you to portray a positive self-image. It might increase your sense of being in control of your institution. You need to remember, though, that you must feel comfortable at work, whatever your attire, so as to maximize your performance.

- **Objects and the environment**

The objects in your office such as furniture, curtains, carpets, pictures, plants, notice boards, table and table-cloths influence the type of environment in which you work. A cluttered, untidy office with loud colours tends to create an atmosphere of tension, a feeling of being hemmed in and possibly, a sense of

claustrophobia. It also impacts negatively on you as a manager, and creates an impression of you as a disorganized person. You need to pay attention to the way you set up and furnish your office so that it creates a conducive working environment which is a pleasure for anyone, including yourself, to walk into. It also sets a good example for other members of staff. Pastel shades of blue or green are supposed to create a calm, soothing atmosphere, so perhaps you could consider these colours when choosing curtains or tablecloths. You also need one or two chairs in your office so that “visitors” can be comfortably seated. This type of non-verbal communication is important for you, as a manager of an educational institution, to promote effective communication.

- **Time**

Perceptions of time vary from culture to culture. For instance, in many Western cultures view time as a precious commodity that should not be wasted, since time lost can never be regained. Therefore, punctuality is greatly valued, and lateness is unacceptable. Where people of higher authority are involved, lateness to work is regarded as a negative message, or even as an insult. On the other hand, other cultures may view time differently and therefore may not regard punctuality as important, as they may view time as renewable.

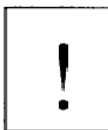
As a manager, you need to be aware that if you work with a culturally diverse staff you will get different opinions regarding time. You will have to workshop ideas with your staff to come up with a common understanding and acceptance of the operational times that work for your institution, bearing in mind the minimum number of working hours that are applicable, as set out by the Department of Education.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- List the various types of non-verbal cues that are important for effective communication.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this task are to be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The following are some problems associated with non-verbal communication:-

- Just like words, non-verbal communication cues can be ambiguous, and may cause confusion.
- It is not easy to understand the meaning of a non-verbal message unless it is established from the total context. In many instances meaning is established from the non-verbal behaviour in isolation from the total context, and the message can be misconstrued.
- Non-verbal signs are often misinterpreted because they are seen individually rather than in clusters, for example a person with arms folded may not be setting up a barrier but may simply be trying to be more comfortable.
- Different cultural groups attach different meanings to various non-verbal cues. This could lead to miscommunication or a breakdown in communication between people of different cultures. You will find more information in this regard in Unit 8 of Module 2.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Try to establish the reason behind certain non-verbal cues that are ambiguous, without assuming that the person is unwilling to communicate.
- Try to understand the non-verbal cue in its total context, instead of in isolation, so that you do not attach any negative connotation to a person's non-verbal behaviour.
- Try to become aware of the different perceptions of non-verbal cues across different cultures so that you can avoid setting up barriers to communication.

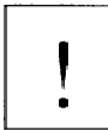
- As part of a staff development programme, hold a workshop to raise awareness among staff about non-verbal communication.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

List two problems associated with non-verbal communication and explain how you would attempt to overcome these problems.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question are to be found at the end of this unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

In this unit you learnt about the importance of non-verbal communication to you in your capacity as education manager.

This unit also gave you an insight into the differences between non-verbal and verbal communication. The different types of non-verbal communication were explained. You were then given exposure to the problems associated with non-verbal communication and strategies to overcome these problems.

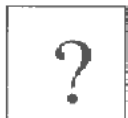
To consolidate your understanding of the unit content you engaged in a variety of activities. Hopefully, your increased knowledge of non-verbal communication will help you perform your managerial duties more efficiently, and contribute to the successful operation of your institution as a result of improved communication skills with various stakeholders in education.



Reflection

REFLECTION

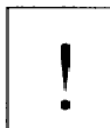
Having gone through unit 5, reflect on how you can improve your performance as an education manager and thereby enhance the quality of education at your institution through your understanding of non-verbal communication.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

What are your views regarding the importance of understanding non-verbal communication as a means of helping you to communicate more effectively with various role players in education?



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this unit test are to be found at the end of the unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- Non-verbal communication is the basis for all interpersonal communication. It is a continuous process and is often more reliable than spoken communication. People can communicate attitudes, feelings, moods and intentions through non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture, clothing, jewellery and colour. Successful non-verbal communication depends on people's ability to understand and to interpret their own and other people's non-verbal cues.
- As an education manager, your views may differ from those of other managers depending on the circumstances you find yourself in. However, you might consider one of the following as the most important reason for being aware of non-verbal cues:-
 - An understanding of non-verbal cues helps you to communicate more effectively with your staff. First impressions are usually lasting ones and as a manager you need to create a good first impression. Using non-verbal cues can help you do this .
 - If you interpret non-verbal cues correctly you can gauge people's moods, feelings, intentions, and attitudes as you interact with them. This will help you to communicate more effectively as a manager

SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

Answers may vary from one manager to another. However, one of the following differences between non-verbal and verbal communication should apply:-

- Non-verbal communication is a more effective way of showing or gauging emotions, attitudes, and moods than is verbal communication.
- Non-verbal communication is a continuous process, and can go on even if conversation stops.
- Non-verbal communication is usually more reliable than oral communication, for example it may be easy to tell a lie but it is not easy to lie verbally and non-verbally at the same time.

SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- Silence
- Paralanguage
- Kinesics or body language
- Facial expressions and eye contact
- Touching
- Proxemics or distance and territoriality
- Clothing and accessories such as jewellery
- Objects and the environment within which people work.
- People's views of time.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

A variety of responses may be possible, for example:

- Non-verbal communication can be ambiguous. You should therefore try to understand the reason behind a person's non-verbal behaviour without assuming, for example, that the person is unwilling to communicate.
- Diverse cultural groups attach different meanings to various non-verbal cues, and this could lead to miscommunication or misunderstanding within a staff composed of people from different cultural groupings.
Try to become aware of how diverse cultural groupings interpret non-verbal cues.

UNIT TEST

Various responses are possible. However, you may consider the following points:-

As an educational manager it is important for you to be aware of the importance of non-verbal communication as it can enhance your communication skills as you interact with your staff and other role-players in education. It will help you gain a clearer insight into what people really feel, what their moods and attitudes are, and what they really think about the subject under discussion.

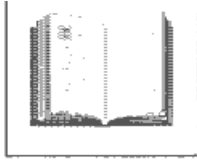
You will be able to "read between the lines" so to speak.

A good understanding of non-verbal communication will also help you to convey your messages more effectively. First impressions are usually lasting ones and you will be able to create a good impression by using appropriate non-verbal cues.

Your understanding of, and skill in, non-verbal communication will enable you to encourage better communication skills in a staff coming from different cultural backgrounds if you understand how different cultural groupings interpret various non-verbal cues.

You will be better equipped for interpersonal communication which is an essential component in the duties of an education manager. This, in turn, will help you to run your institution more efficiently and achieve your educational goals more easily, as you will gather from your reading of Unit 7 of this Module.

UNIT 6: EFFECTIVE GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

In Units 4 and 5 you studied written communication and non-verbal communication respectively. This unit will cover aspects of graphic communication. The discussion will not be divorced from written and non-verbal communication, as graphic communication includes words and is sometimes called non-verbal communication.

The unit will describe graphic devices in terms of their suitability for a specific audience. It is therefore important for you to choose a device that is suitable to your purpose, audience and the form of writing. The unit will cover objectives, importance, types of graphic devices and how to design effective graphic communication.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:-

- Define graphic communication.
- Discuss the importance of graphic communication.
- List some of the graphic communication activities.
- Design effective graphic devices.
- State the purpose of using graphic devices.

CONTENT



Read Text

DEFINITION OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

Fielding (1995: 355) gives the following definition:

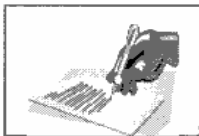
“Graphic Communication is communication using devices such as tables, bar graphs, line graphs, cartoons, pictures and pictograms”. These devices combine numbers, shapes and words.

IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

Graphics can help you:-

- To represent complete ideas. For example, a table can show you whether you have included all the items in a comparison.
- To check to see what relationships exist.
- To make your points vivid. Readers skim memos and reports; visuals attract the eye and this encourages concentration.
- To emphasize material that might be skipped if it were buried in a paragraph, visuals allow you to emphasize important material, wherever it logically falls.
- To present material more compactly and with less repetition than words would need. Words can help to call attention to the main points of the visual, without repeating all of the device's information.
- To show groups of numbers that would be very difficult to show in a written message.
- To give a quick visual impression that enables you to compare information quickly.
- To see all the components and the relationships at once.
- To explain difficult ideas, to show relationships, and to summarize.

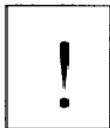
Good visuals have, therefore, a greater impact than just the spoken or written word. Graphic devices add visual appeal to both messages.



Self Evaluation

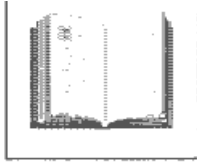
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

What is a graphic device, and how can graphic devices help you in oral and written messages?



Important-take note!

Possible answers for this activity are found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

TYPES OF GRAPHIC DEVICES

It is important for you to know the following types of graphic devices: tables, pie-charts, bar graphs, histograms, the Gantt chart, line graphs, diagrams, pictograms, maps, hierarchical flow charts, flow charts, cartoons. These will be described and illustrated.

Tables

Tables pertain to the grouping of numbers and other information in rows and columns. They can present large amounts of information in a small space. Tables have a column heading and a sub-heading.

Example

Table 1
Machine Breakdowns at XYZ Factory

| MONTHS | MACHINE BREAKDOWNS | | |
|----------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Machine One | Machine Two | Machine Tree |
| January | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| February | 1 | 4 | 9 |
| March | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| April | 7 | 8 | 5 |
| May | 6 | 6 | 3 |
| June | 8 | 4 | 5 |

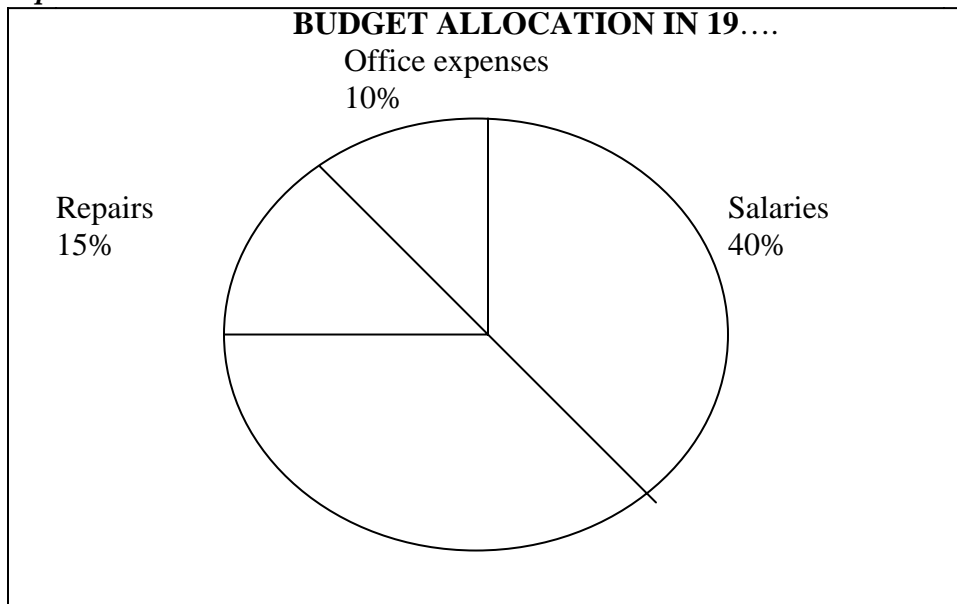
Fielding (1995: 357)

- Every table should be numbered above.
- You should write a clear title telling the reader exactly what the table is about. This title should appear above the table.
- Your subheading should be at the top of the left-hand column.
- Write the general heading that describes the data in the columns. Each subheading describes the data in the columns.

Area graphs (Pie-charts)

These show you how a total or area is divided up. Area graphs are suited to a lay audience. They are used to show the relative sizes of the parts of a whole.

Example:



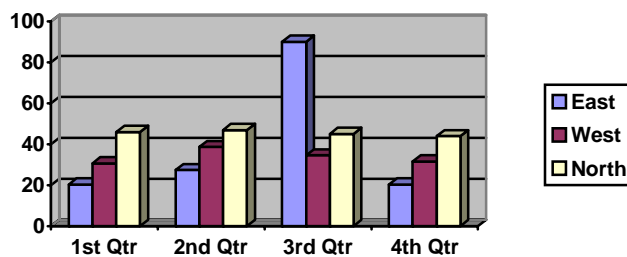
(Fielding; 1995: 359)

Bar graphs

These show discrete information and are also good for comparing amounts. They can be written horizontally or vertically. They are used to: compare the size of several items at one time, to show changes in one item over time, and to indicate a consumption of several items over time.

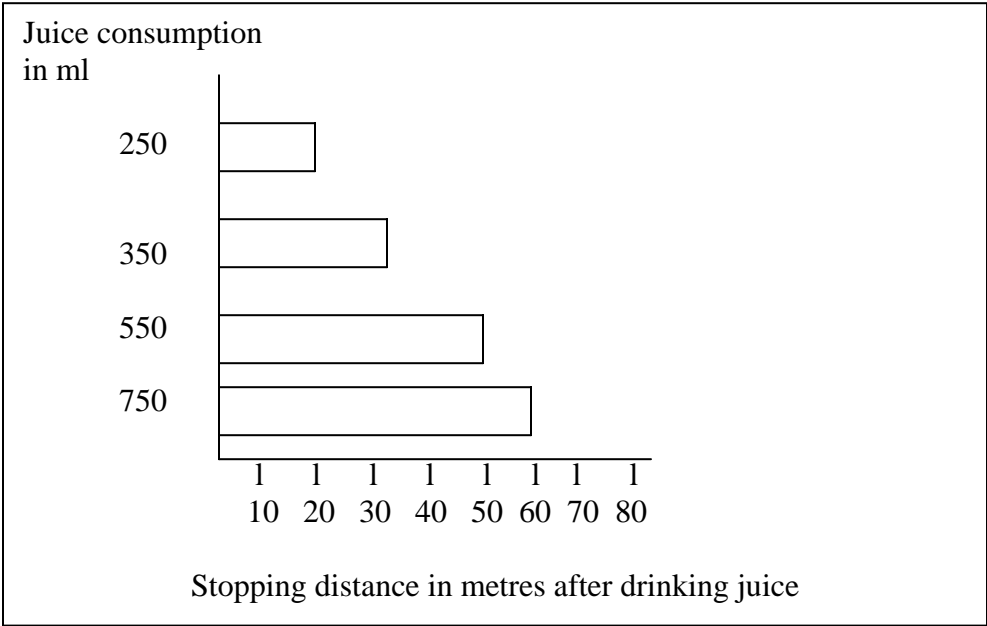
Examples

Vertical bar graph



(Fielding, 1995)

Horizontal bar graph

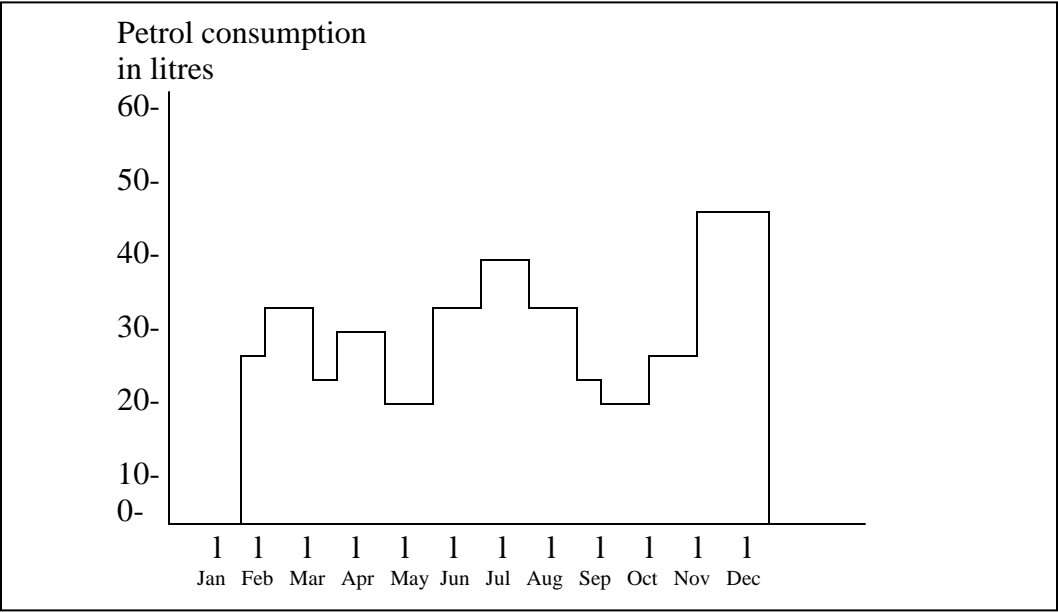


(Adapted from Fielding; 1995: 362)

Histograms

Histograms show you the distribution of something such as rainfall in terms of amounts or frequencies. They are aimed at an expert or technical audience.

Example

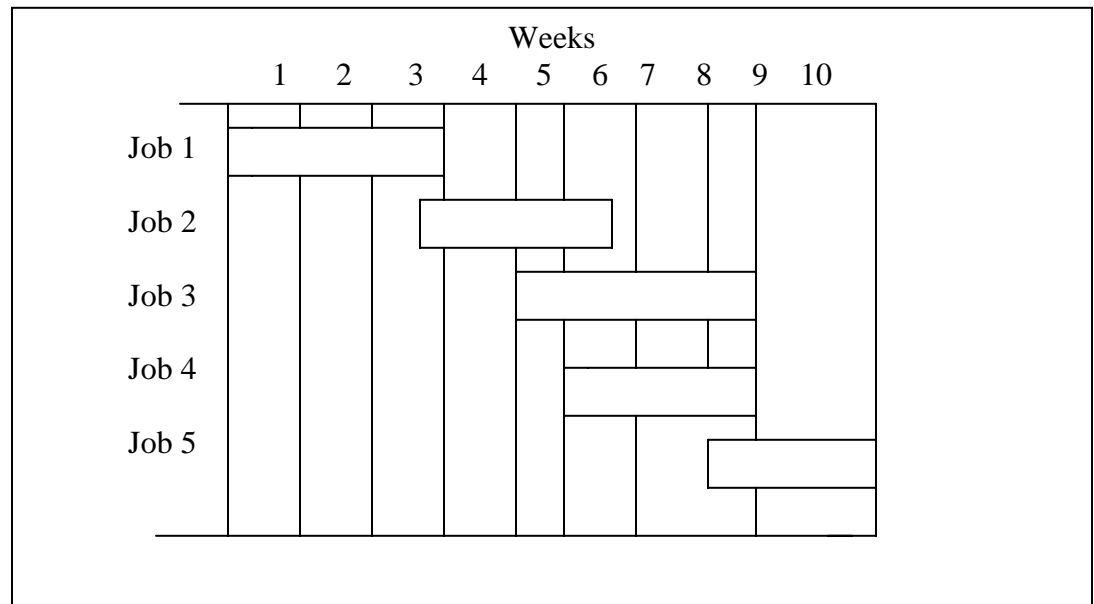


(Fielding; 1995: 363)

Gantt Chart

You can use this in project planning to show when each stage in the process starts and finishes.

For example



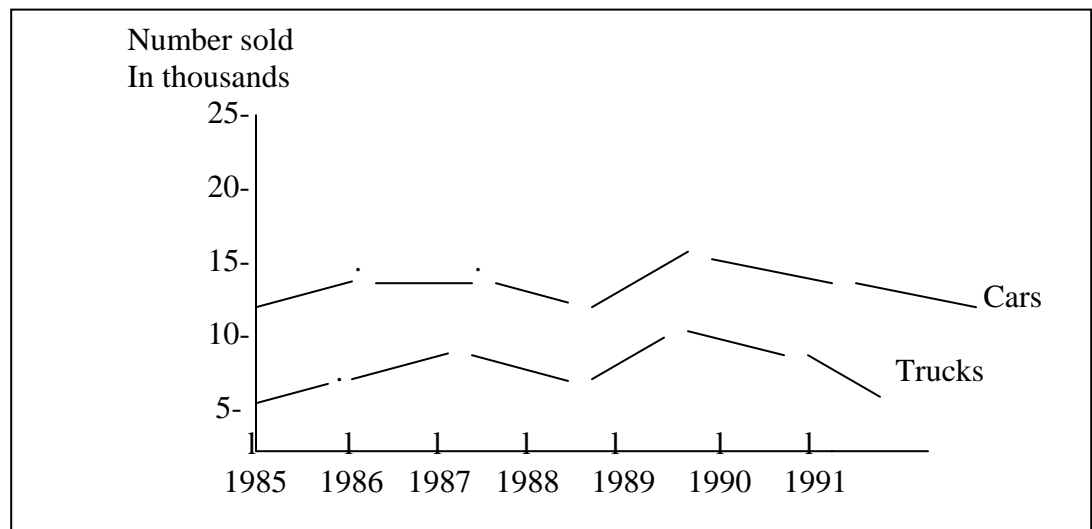
(Fielding; 1995: 363)

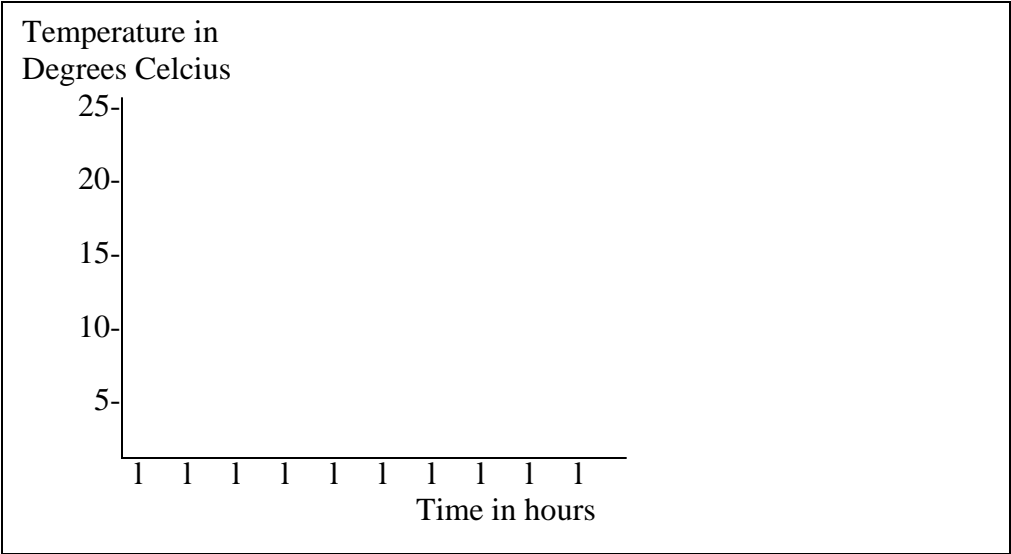
Line graphs

Use these to show a continuous relationship between variables. They are divided into jagged line, curve, and cumulative-jagged graph.

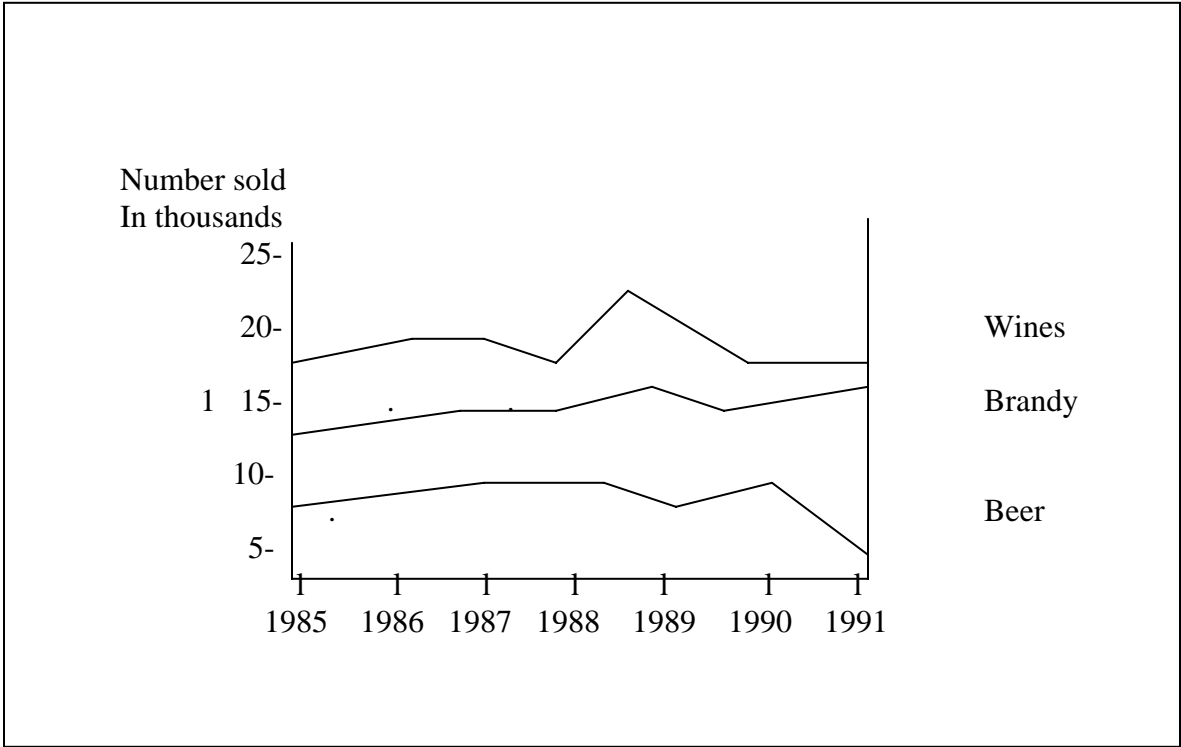
Example: Jagged line graph

(Fielding; 1995: 365)





(Fielding; 1995:365)



(Fielding; 1995: 365)

Diagram, drawings and photographs

These are useful for simplifying complex material and ideas. They are useful for a wider audience. They show how something looks or operates.

Example:

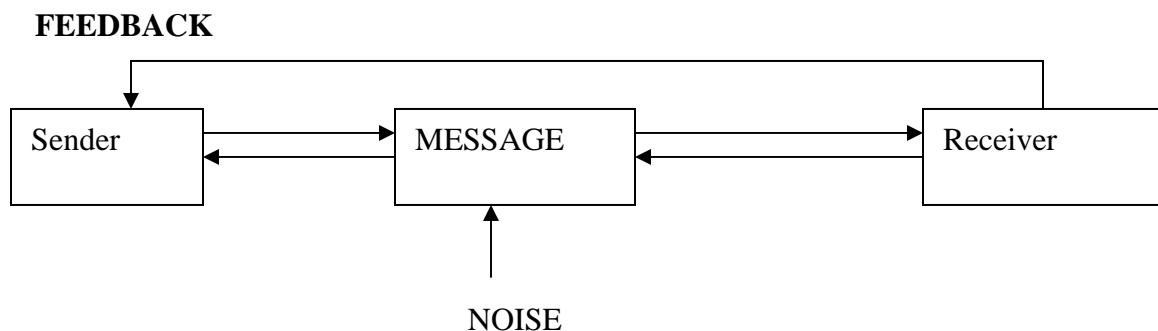


Diagram to show the communication process

(Fielding, 1995)

Pictograms, drawings and photographs

They show statistical and other information. They are useful for a lay audience. They show how something looks or operates.

Example:

Pictogram to illustrate the growth in the number of women employed from 1989 to 1991
Example of pictogram showing population growth

(Fielding, 1995)

Maps

Maps appeal to a wide audience and vary from simple to highly technical. They might be used to show regional differences and sites. You can illustrate these maps to suit your needs, using dots, shading, labels, numbers and symbols.

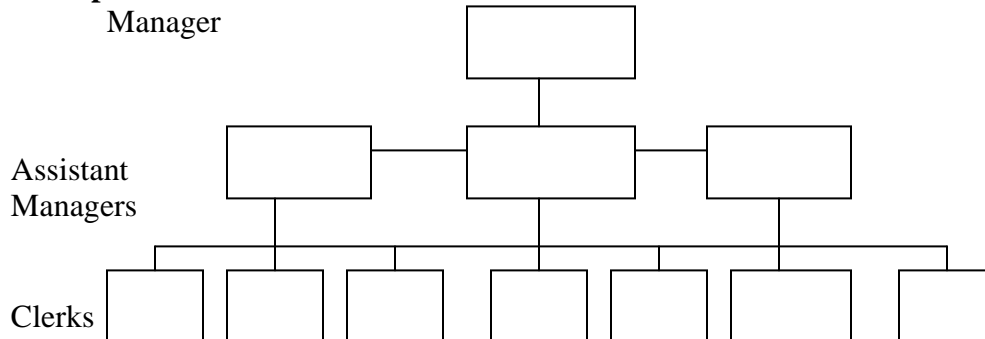
Example:

Fielding, 1995

Flow Chart

A flow chart can show you how groups of people work together in an organization. This shows relationships in a hierarchy. It illustrates the positions, units, or functions within an organization.

Example



Hierarchical flow chart to show how manager and clerks are organized.

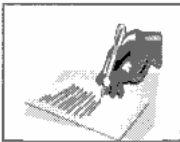
Cartoons

Cartoons can be used to entertain, to educate, to advertise and to make social comment.

Example:



The graphic devices discussed and illustrated above will have the greatest impact when placed in the text where they are referred to. As an education manager you can use these to give a vivid picture when writing, for example, reports, essays, or delivering a written speech.



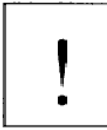
Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

State clearly when the following graphic devices are used:-

- Cartoons
- Flow-chart
- Maps
- Pictograms
- Diagrams
- Gantt chart
- Histograms

- Bar graphs
- Pie charts



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question are found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE GRAPHIC DEVICES

It is also important to know how to design graphic devices so as to use them effectively. To help you, Locker (1992: 573) gives five steps. These include the following:-

- Determine the story you want to tell. Every device should tell a story chosen.
- Choose the graphic device that fits the story. You need to choose a device that best matches the purpose of presenting the data. For example, use drawings to show dimensions or details; or maps to emphasize location.
- Follow the conventions for designing typical devices. For example, use tables only when you want the audience to focus on specific numbers. This means, every device has its rule to follow.
- Use colour and decoration with restraint. Colour makes visuals more dramatic; but you need to be careful because it is interpreted differently from culture to culture. Make sure that the images of people show a good mix of both sexes, various races and ages, and various physical conditions.
- Make sure that the visual is accurate and ethical. You should always double check your visuals to be sure that the information is accurate. Visuals are easily interpreted; and audiences remember the shape quickly, not the labels. If the reader has to study the labels to get the right picture, the visual is unethical even if the labels are accurate. Therefore, it is important to use images of people carefully in histograms to avoid sexist, racist, or other exclusionary visual statements.
- It is also important to pay special attention to the following, when designing graphic devices: size of the graphic, amount of the material to be included, the title of the device, the wording of the captions, the clarity of the device for the audience, and the integration of the graphic into your message.



Assessment Task

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

List the techniques that you would use in designing graphic devices.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this question are found at the end of this unit.



Practise Activity

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Design a vertical bar graph to represent the percentage of absenteeism of your staff members during the period, January to June.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this practice activity are found at the end of this Unit.



Summary

SUMMARY

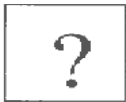
In this unit you studied the objectives of graphic communication, its definition, its importance and the types of graphic devices. You also studied how to design these graphic devices. Illustrations were used to give a picture of each and every device.



Reflection

REFLECTION

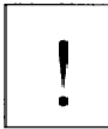
The number of graphic devices you will need can depend on your purpose, the kind of information, and the audience. You may, therefore, use more devices when you want to show relationships and to persuade, when information is complex or contains extensive numerical data, and when the audience values devices. Some audiences can expect oral presentations and reports to use lots of devices; others may see this as time waste. As a manager in education reflect the types of graphic devices that you can use at your institution, in order to communicate more effectively.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Explain the differences between, graphic communication, written communication, and non-verbal communication.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this Unit test are found at the end of this unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- Answer to this activity may vary according to your experience. However, your answer may incorporate the following:
 - Tables, graphs, cartoons, pictures and pictograms.
 - Graphic devices can help to:
 - present ideas vividly
 - show graphs of numbers that would otherwise be very difficult to show
 - present the reader with all the components and the relationships at once
 - explain difficult ideas, show relationships and summarize information
 - emphasize the material that might be skipped
 - present material more compactly and with less repetition.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Cartoons:- are used to entertain, to educate, to advertise and to make social comment.
- Flow chart:- it shows relationship in a hierarchy.
- Maps:- They appeal to a wide audience and vary from simple to highly technical.
- They show statistical and other information. They are useful for a lay audience
- Diagrams:- these are useful for simplifying complex material and ideas. They are useful for a wider audience.
- Gantt Chart:- you can use this in project planning to show when each stage in the process starts and finishes.
- Histograms:- they show you the distribution of something such as rainfall in terms of amounts or frequencies.
- Bar graphs:- these show discrete information and are also good for comparing amounts. They can be written horizontally or vertically.
- Pie Charts:- These show you how a total or area is divided up.

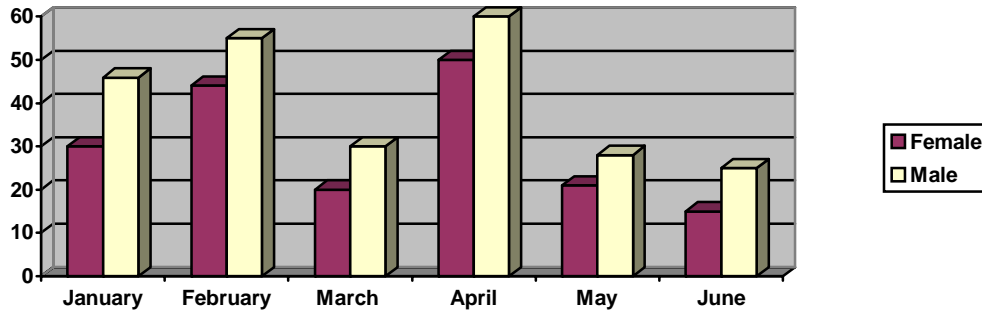
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- Determine the story you want to tell. Every device should tell a story chosen.
- Choose the graphic device that fits the story.
- Follow the conventions for designing typical devices.
- Use colour and decoration with restraint.
- Colour makes visual more dramatic.
- Make sure that the visual is accurate and ethical.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Graphs will vary from one institution to the next. The following graph is only an example.

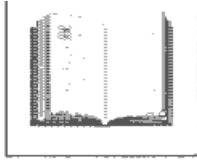
KEY:



UNIT TEST

Graphic communication includes devices such as, diagrams, graphs, cartoons, charts, etc. While written communication deals with written words or messages. Non-verbal communication is about body language. There is a link between these because graphic communication adds vivid meaning to both types of communications.

UNIT 7: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is essential for the successful operation of any organization. “Good person-to-person communication is the basis for all effective communication”. (Fielding, 1995: 96).

In Unit 6 you were exposed to various aspects of graphic communication. This unit will focus on the following aspects of interpersonal communication:-

- Explanation of terms:- interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.
- The importance of effective interpersonal communication.
- Intrapersonal communication and perception.
- Unwritten rules in interpersonal communication.
- Managerial styles in interpersonal communication.
- Barriers to effective interpersonal communication.

OBJECTIVES

By the time you reach the end of this unit you should be able to:-

- Explain the terms interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication.
- Discuss the importance of effective interpersonal communication.
- Outline problems pertaining to perception.
- Identify unwritten rules in interpersonal communication.
- Distinguish between different managerial styles in interpersonal communication.
- Identify barriers to effective interpersonal communication.
- Explain the strategies for overcoming barriers to effective interpersonal communication.



Read Text CONTENT

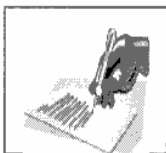
EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Interpersonal Communication:

Interpersonal communication is any form of communication that takes place between two or more people. It is commonly known as person-to-person communication and covers all types of communication including oral, written and non-verbal communication. The most common form of interpersonal communication is oral communication. It is the basis for all effective communication.

Intrapersonal Communication

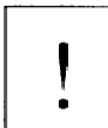
Intrapersonal communication refers to the way in which we communicate with ourselves. The messages we give ourselves help us to form opinions about ourselves. This is known as a 'self image', which we build up as we interact with other people. Our self-image could be positive or negative. A positive self-image helps us to work confidently with others, but a negative self-image might cause us to perform below our potential and make us defensive. This is known as a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Fielding, 1995: 97). A negative self-image can cause a barrier to communication.



Self Evaluation

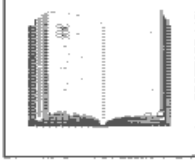
SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

Explain the difference between interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.



Important-take note!

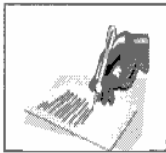
A possible answer to this activity may be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

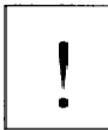
- Effective interpersonal communication is a transaction in which both the sender and receiver work together to create meaning, and this is vital for communication.
- Person-to-person communication is the basis of all effective communication. An organization may have the best communication systems, but if individuals, within the organization do not work harmoniously and have poor interpersonal communication skills, these systems will fail. This will adversely affect the efficient functioning of an organization.
- As an educational manager, competency in interpersonal communication skills will help you to communicate effectively with members of staff at your institution as well as with other role players in education, so that together, you can drive the process of education forward into the twenty first century.



Self Evaluation

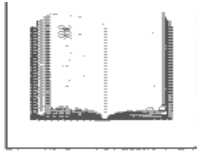
SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Using a scale of 1 – 10 how would you rate effectiveness of interpersonal communication at your institution?
- Discuss the importance of effective interpersonal communication to the successful functioning of your educational institution.



Important-take note!

The possible answer to this activity is to be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTION

This section will deal with:

- the process of intrapersonal communication
- implications for communication
- problems with perception in organizations
- ways to improve perception.

The process of intrapersonal communication

Through our sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste, our brains become aware of internal and external stimuli. A process of selective perception occurs. We pay attention to the most intense stimuli and ignore the rest. As a manager, you need to constantly remind yourself that people do not perceive the world in the same way. You cannot assume, for example, that members of staff will see any situation in the same way as you do, because people differ in the way they make sense of reality, and give meaning to expression. People's selective perception is influenced by:-

- self-images
- previous experiences
- emotions and needs
- interests
- language
- attitudes and beliefs
- knowledge

We build up a frame of reference through which we perceive the world, and this depends on our values and attitudes. We tend to distrust messages that do not concur with our frame of reference and we protect our self-images against what we see as threats or attacks (Fielding, 1995: 98).

Implications for communication

- As an education manager you need to bear in mind that you and your staff may differ with regard to your frames of reference and past experiences.

- Your set of values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions and prejudices may differ from those of your staff and from one member of staff to the next, and the way in which all of you communicate will be affected accordingly.
- Personalities of people at your institution will differ. Some personality traits encourage communication while others act as barriers. As an educational leader you will have to be mindful of this, and encourage staff to accept the fact that, because personalities differ, it could constitute a barrier to communication.

Problems with perception in organizations

The following is a list of some false judgements we are likely to make because of illogical perceptions:-

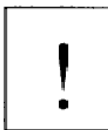
- We may judge a person's honesty because of his smile.
- We tend to perceive people we like and respect as correct, and we tend to value their opinions.
- We tend to stereotype groups of people such as union members or managers, and when dealing with an individual from the group we may erroneously apply our group judgement to that person.
- We judge people according to a 'halo' effect by forming a general impression that is favourable or otherwise. We then apply this general impression to judge specific traits. For instance, we may judge a person who is punctual as productive and efficient, whereas this may not be true.
- We sometimes project our feelings onto others. If we are, for example, undergoing stress, we might perceive managers as stressful, whereas they may not be so.



Assessment Task

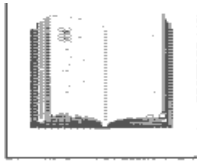
SELF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

List, in order of priority, the factors which you think influence the way you and members of your staff engage in selective perception.



Important-take note!

A possible answer to this activity is to be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

UNWRITTEN RULES IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATON

Interpersonal communication that is effective contributes greatly to the successful operation of your institution. Poor interpersonal communication can result in frustration and job-dissatisfaction and this can have disastrous results for the quality of education at your institution. It is therefore necessary for you and your staff to understand what is involved in person-to-person communication.

More often than not, interpersonal communication involves two people working together. This is known as a dyad. Each person is equally responsible for :-

- Sending messages.
- Receiving messages.
- Giving feedback.
- Interpreting non-verbal messages.
- Listening carefully both to the facts and feelings underlying the facts.

Staff who join your institution have to learn two sets of rules:-

- The first set covers the formal written rules that govern their work.
- The second set involves the unwritten rules that govern people's interpersonal communication. Some of these unwritten relate to:-
 - The Johari Window.
 - Dyads: roles and rules.
 - Interpersonal communication skills that are useful in dyads.
 - Active listening.
 - Non-verbal communication.

What follows is an explanation of only the first three aspects listed above. Since active listening was covered in detail in Unit 3 and non-verbal communication received comprehensive coverage in Unit 5, these two aspects will not be discussed here. Nevertheless they are equally important in understanding interpersonal communication.

The Johari Window

The Johari Window was designed by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham, to show the relationship between what you choose to reveal about yourself and what you choose to keep hidden. In the process of disclosure, the more organizationally relevant information that you disclose about yourself, the greater the degree of communication with your staff. (Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 104)

The **Open** section stresses that there are certain things you know about yourself that you are willing to share with others. The sharing of our hopes, fears and expectations with others facilitates communication.

The **Blind** section denotes that there are certain areas of yourself that you are not aware of but other people observe, for example, running your fingers across your forehead, or rubbing your nose (or some other distracting mannerism) while talking, and not realizing it.

The **Hidden** section indicates that you are aware of certain aspects about yourself, for example, certain hopes, fears or biases, but choose not to reveal them to other people. You may, for instance know that you lack self confidence, but you prefer not to let others know this.

The **Unknown** section represents information that we do not know about ourselves, and others do not have this information either.

| | KNOWN TO SELF | NOT KNOWN TO SELF |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| KNOWN TO OTHERS | OPEN | BLIND |
| NOT KNOWN TO OTHERS | HIDDEN | UNKNOWN |

THE JOHARI WINDOW

(Fielding, 1995 : 100)

Varying sizes of the sections

These sections have been shown as equal in size. However, they will vary in size according to the kind of one-to-one communication that you engage in. For instance when you communicate with a stranger, your open area will be smaller and the hidden area larger. As you become more familiar with the person these areas will change in size.

Levelling and feedback

In order to reduce your hidden area you need to share with your staff, organizationally relevant information about your hopes, fears, and knowledge that you have kept hidden. This is referred to as **leveling** with others. You may choose to level with your staff or not according to the value you place on the communication.

In order to reduce your blind area you must be willing to receive **feedback** from your staff. You learn from what others tell you about yourself and this will contribute to improved interpersonal communication.

Open-receptive communication

In your person-to-person communication you should try to increase the size of your open area as much as possible. Your hidden area should be as small as possible and you should strive to reduce your blind area as much as you can. This will promote more effective interpersonal communication and contribute to the successful operation of your educational institution.

Dyads: Roles and rules

As your person-to-person communication changes from day to day, so too, do your roles. These roles will influence the way in which you relate to others. They help you to interpret other people's behaviours and to negotiate meaning with them. These roles could be negotiated according to:-

- the situation
- the other person's position
- your view of your position

Roles are usually linked to your own and the other person's professional status, age, gender, level of seniority, authority and experience.

Once you have decided on your role and the other person's role, you will develop patterns of behaviour that you think are appropriate for any situation.

As you work together in person-to-person interactions, you develop a set of rules which are unwritten, but understood. Some of these rules could, for example, include:-

- turn taking
- amount of eye contact
- the distance you maintain
- appropriate timing of meetings
- people's special likes and dislikes.

As an educational manager you need to make deliberate attempts to become aware of the roles and rules for interpersonal communication. You could then sensitize your staff to the same. This will promote effective interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal skills in dyads

Effective one-to-one communication demands certain skills, some of which include:

- being assertive rather than aggressive.
- Clearly stating your feelings, interpretations and perceptions of what others have said and/or done.
- clearly stating your intentions and motives.
- giving and receiving feedback.

In your position as an educational manager, you need to be aware of the interpersonal skills in dyads so that you can communicate more effectively with various role players in education. Only then can you hope to achieve the educational goals of your institution and improve the quality of education of our learners.

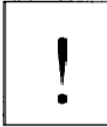


Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Explain the significance of the Johari Window as it applies to you at your institution.

- Explain the significance of the Johari Window as it applies to you at your institution.
- State which sections need to be increased or decreased, giving reasons.



Important-take note!

A possible answer to this activity is provided at the end of this unit.



Read Text

MANAGERIAL STYLES IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

There are different managerial styles in interpersonal communication, four of which are discussed below. (Smit and Cronje 1995: 368)

- The A-TYPE manager is generally autocratic and negative, unwilling to use exposure and feedback and therefore fails to reduce the blind and hidden areas (as shown in the Johari Window).
- The B-TYPE manager finds it difficult to express feelings, is unwilling to be open with subordinates and creates a façade (a false impression). Subordinates tend to be suspicious of B-Type managers who, inspite of receiving feedback, contribute nothing to ideas and opinions.
- The C-TYPE manager rejects the ideas and opinions of others, is self-centered and not really interested in other people. Such a manager soon creates uncertainty and even hostility.
- The D-TYPE manager strikes a balance between exposure and feedback to increase the open area (as shown in the Johari Window). Such a manager has a positive self image, is confident, readily communicates ideas and opinions, and is interested in feedback.

The first three managerial styles described above are not conducive to effective one-to-one communication, and in fact, could have a detrimental effect on your educational institution. This could impact negatively on the harmonious working of the staff at your institution.

You should strive to develop the D-Type of managerial style to ensure open-receptive communication so that creative ideas are freely exchanged. This in turn will have a positive influence on your staff and contribute to the upliftment of education at your institution.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

The following are some examples of barriers to effective interpersonal communication:-

- Autocratic, aggressive and negative managers who do not allow exchange of views or feelings create a tense working environment which leads to a breakdown in communication.
- A manager who is not prepared to be open with staff about feelings and opinions, confuses others, creates a false impression and contributes nothing to views about issues pertaining to the institution makes communication with staff difficult, and is not easily trusted.
- A manager who dominates the staff, rejecting ideas and opinions of others, is egotistic and not interested in others constitutes a barrier to effective interpersonal communication.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- Be assertive, but not aggressive and dominating. Allow for exchange of views by creating a friendly and supportive environment and understanding perceptual biases and needs.
- Be open and honest with staff regarding your views, and feelings. Do not create a façade or false impression. Avoid confusing the staff. Try to build up their trust and confidence and work towards establishing credibility among staff, by giving clear statements about perceptions and feelings. Do not “sit on the fence”. Come clear with staff. Give a clear statement of facts, intentions and actions.
- Avoid rejecting ideas of others and pushing forward only your point of view. Try to strike a balance by considering all the factors. Do not be dogmatic as this is an indication that you have a closed mind.
- Conduct staff development programmes in which you can sensitize staff about important aspects of interpersonal communication so that, as a team, you could strive towards more effective communication at you institution.



Summary

SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt about the importance of effective interpersonal communication. You also gained insight into intrapersonal communication, unwritten rules in interpersonal communication and different managerial styles in interpersonal

communication. You were then exposed to barriers to effective interpersonal communication and strategies to overcome these barriers.

To consolidate your understanding of the unit content, you engaged in a variety of activities. It is hoped that your improved knowledge of, and skill in, effective interpersonal communication will help you interact with your staff more effectively and that this will impact positively on the way you manage your institution.



Reflection

REFLECTION

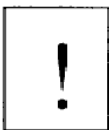
Having gone through Unit 7, reflect on the type of managerial style you possess and how you can improve interpersonal communication at your institution.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

- Study the four managerial styles discussed in this unit. State which type best describes you as a manager at your institution.
- State which type of manager is most likely to promote effective interpersonal communication and why.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this unit test are at the end of the unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

- Interpersonal communication is any form of communication, be it oral, written or non-verbal communication that takes place between two or more people. It is commonly known as person-to-person communication, and is the basis for all effective communication.
- Intrapersonal communication refers to the way in which we communicate with ourselves. It concerns the messages we give ourselves which help us to form either positive or negative self-images. A positive self-image helps us to work confidently with others while a negative self-image prevents us from achieving our full potential and makes us defensive. A negative self-image can be a barrier to communication.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

- Answers will vary. You may use the following rating as a guide: 1 – 3 Poor: 4 – 4 Average: 6 – 8 Good: 9 – 10: Excellent.
- Effective interpersonal communication is a transaction between sender and receiver, both of whom must work together to create meaning, which is vital for communication. If you and your members of staff can communicate and work well together, it will augur well for the efficient functioning of your educational institution. However, if there is poor interpersonal communication between you and your staff and among staff members, your educational institution is not likely to run smoothly and in fact progress can grind to a halt! Effective interpersonal communication is essential to drive the process of education forward in the twenty first century.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Answers will differ from one educational manager to the next. However, the following may be applicable at your institution.

- emotions and needs
- self-images
- attitudes and beliefs
- previous experience
- interests
- knowledge
- language

- Answers may vary. However, you may consider the following:
 - judging a person's honesty by his smile
 - stereotyping groups of people
 - judging people favourably according to the 'halo' effect
 - judging those we like as correct
 - projecting our own feeling onto others.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Answers may vary. from one educational manager to the next. However, the following points relate to most managers:-

The **Johari** window shows the relationship between what you reveal about yourself to others and what you choose to keep hidden, such as your fears, hopes, biases, aspirations, doubts and so on.

The **Open** section shows that there are things we know about ourselves that we are prepared to share with others.

The **Blind** section shows that there are certain things that we are unaware of about ourselves, but are known to others. They may be mannerisms that others may find irritating, such as picking your nose in public.

The **Hidden** section shows that we are aware of certain things about ourselves which we choose to keep secret and not reveal to other people, for example fear of losing credibility among the staff because of low qualifications. A manager might feel uncomfortable especially if the staff are more highly qualified and therefore qualifications are kept secret from the staff.

The **Unknown** section shows that there are certain things that we do not know about ourselves and neither do others.

- As an educational manager you should strive to increase the size of the open section and reduce the size of the blind and hidden section of the Johari Window to encourage more open and receptive interpersonal communication at your institution.

UNIT TEST

- Answers to this question may vary depending on individual managerial styles.

The best type of managerial style is the **D-TYPE**.

This type of manager succeeds in balancing exposure and feedback in order to extend the open area (as shown in the Johari Window). Such a manager is self confident, readily communicates ideas and opinions, and is also interested in feedback from the staff, as this promotes the free exchange of creative ideas.

UNIT 8: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



Read Text

INTRODUCTION

Every person grows up in a culture which provides patterns of acceptable behaviour based on values and beliefs. In South Africa, with its eleven official languages and a diversity of cultures, we can be compared to a colourful and interesting mosaic. In addition, immigrants also exert an influence on intercultural communication. Understanding one another's cultures is crucial if intercultural communication is to be used as a tool to drive South Africa forward in the twenty first century. Each and every one of us, and more so, managers, need to become adept at understanding intercultural communication.

In the previous unit we focused on various aspects of interpersonal communication.

In this unit, based on **intercultural communication**, we will focus on the following:

- Definitions of terms used in intercultural communication.
- Importance of effective intercultural communication.
- Aspects of intercultural communication.
- The convergence model.
- Barriers to effective intercultural communication.
- Strategies to improve intercultural communication.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- define terms used in intercultural communication
- explain the importance of effective intercultural communication
- discuss various aspects of intercultural communication
- explain how the convergence model can improve your understanding of intercultural communication
- identify the barriers to effective intercultural communication
- outline the strategies for improving intercultural communication.

CONTENT



Read Text

DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are a number of terms used in intercultural communication which you, as an educational manager, need to know, in order to promote effective intercultural communication at your institution. The main terms defined are:-

Culture

This term refers to systems of beliefs, attitudes and values that people share. A set of common rules binds them together as a group. They share a common view of themselves and of the world. They are also united by a shared symbolic code such as a common language (Fielding, 1995: 442).

Affirmative action

Affirmative action involves taking special measures to help, train and employ people of specific cultural groups. It also addresses gender imbalance in society. In both cases people may have been seriously disadvantaged as a result of discrimination against them for the following reasons:-

- They were denied access to good education
- They were not allowed to hold certain jobs
- They were prevented from pursuing higher education and training because of lack of finance.

Cultural Stereotyping

This refers to generalising about people of a specific culture or ethnic group by labelling every member of that group in the same way. There is disregard for individual differences within the group. For instance, people may classify all members of a particular cultural group as late-comers or dishonest even if this is not true.

Ethnocentrism

This term refers to people's conscious or unconscious belief in the superiority of their own culture, and the inferiority of another, without proof. "They place their culture at the

centre of their world. They then measure all other cultures in relation to their own and view them as inferior”. (Fielding, 1995: 444).

Racism

Racism is based on ethnocentrism, prejudice and feelings of superiority of one racial group over another. It describes the belief in the biological superiority of one group over another. One group will communicate with the other group in ways that make their feelings of superiority known to the other group. A racialistic view which highlights differences between cultures could lead to conflict.

Intercultural Communication

This refers to a special type of communication in which people from different cultures have to communicate with one another. Because people from different cultures have different world views, they find it very difficult to understand other people’s ways of thinking. This can create tension and anxiety. People from diverse cultural groupings may attach different meanings to verbal and non-verbal codes, and will therefore have to negotiate meanings carefully. We may have to change our views and attitudes to promote intercultural communication. We can achieve a better understanding in this regard if we are:

- aware that your preferred values and behaviours are influenced by your culture and are not necessarily “correct”
- flexible and open to change
- sensitive to verbal and non-verbal behaviour
- aware of the values, beliefs, and practices in other cultures
- sensitive to differences among individuals within a culture.

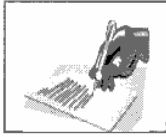
World view

This refers to any culture’s philosophical view of God, man, nature and the universe. It influences all aspects of cultural life and is central in any culture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- Effective intercultural communication is essential for promoting harmony among people of different cultural groupings who work together.
- It facilitates positive interaction and participation of people from diverse cultures.
- It promotes active listening, and change in behaviour and attitudes towards those from other cultural backgrounds.
- It promotes tolerance and sensitivity to other people’s world views, beliefs and values.

- It eliminates stereotyping, prejudices and assumptions about the way people from other cultures behave and think.
- It promotes shared meaning of messages.
- It reduces superiority complexes that may exist within an organisation.



Self Evaluation

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

List the various terms used in intercultural communication that you, as an educational manager, need to be aware of in order to promote effective intercultural communication at your institution.



Important-take note!

Answers to this activity will be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Values, beliefs and practices

Values and beliefs, both conscious and unconscious influence our response to people and situations. Our values and beliefs are strongly influenced by religion. Because people's religious beliefs differ, their values will also differ accordingly. For instance, while one cultural group may value working individually and quietly, another cultural group may value group interaction. Religion may also influence what foods we may eat and on what days businesses may operate. For instance, Hindus do not eat beef; Muslims consider pork unclean; orthodox Jews eat only kosher meats. In addition the way people dress traditionally, differs according to their culture. You may have come across such cultural differences in values, beliefs and practices among staff and learners at your institution. In your capacity as an educational manager, you are duty-bound to become aware of cultural differences so that you will be empowered to make informed choices regarding ways of promoting intercultural communication.

Oral communication

The most obvious difficulty in intercultural communication is the language differences. Perhaps you have observed this problem at your institution. As an educational leader, you can set an example for the rest of your staff by learning at least a little of the other languages spoken by people at your institution. This will help you in several ways. Firstly, it will give you a glimpse into the culture. Secondly, it will help you manage the basic communication skills. Thirdly, it will help create a more conducive working environment at your institution. Both staff and learners will appreciate your interest in their language and culture.

Conversational Style

Your conversational patterns and the meaning you attach to them are indicative of your conversational style. It includes the way you show politeness, interest and appropriateness. The way in which you answer the following questions reveals your own conversational style.

- How long a pause tells you that its your turn to speak?
- Do you see interruption as rude? Alternatively, do you interrupt while other people are still talking to show people that you are interested and to encourage them to say more?
- Do you show interest by asking lots of questions? Alternatively, do you regard questions as intrusive and wait for people to volunteer whatever they have to say.

People with different conversational styles may feel uneasy without knowing the reason. For instance, in the Western culture, direct requests are regarded as impolite, while indirect requests are regarded as polite. On the other hand, in the African culture direct requests are regarded as acceptable, for example, if an African member of staff said to a white member of staff, ‘Give me a pen’, it might be regarded as an impolite request. However, if the request was indirect, for example, “May I have a pen?” it would be regarded as a polite request.

The differences in the perception of politeness across cultures could constitute a barrier to effective intercultural communication. Likewise, compliments, silence, apologies, rejection, exaggeration and understatements can be viewed differently across cultures. As a manager you have to become aware of different conversational styles across cultures in order to avoid miscommunication at your institution.

Voice qualities

Tone of voice, pitch and stress vary from culture to culture. For example, someone who varies the tone of voice, pitch and stress may appear to be enthusiastic and intelligent, while someone who speaks in a monotone may seem apathetic and unintelligent. Non-

native speakers, whose first language does not emphasize variation of tone, pitch and stress to convey meaning and attitude, may need to work hard at varying these voice qualities.

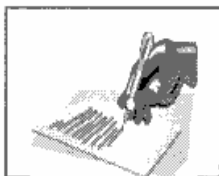
Volume

This is a measure of loudness or softness. In some cultures it is considered rude to shout. Loud voices connote anger and impending violence. In other cultures, everyday conversations are loud. As an educational leader you may have observed cross-cultural differences in the volume of speech among members of your staff and learners. An awareness that such differences exist helps you to understand, that what is not acceptable to one cultural group, is perfectly “normal” to another. You should encourage your staff to become aware of cross-cultural differences so that these do not become a barrier to effective intercultural communication.

Written Communication

Non-verbal communication

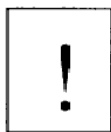
The above two aspects have been extensively covered in units 4 and 5 respectively, and although they constitute an important component of intercultural communication, they will not be repeated in this unit. Suffice to say, that as an educational leader you need to give due consideration to these aspects, noting the cross-cultural differences that prevail at your institution so as to avert any breakdown in communication.



Self Evaluation

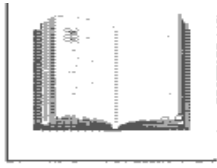
SELF EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

List the various aspects of intercultural communication that you consider to be important for effective intercultural communication at your institution.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are to be found at the end of this unit.



Read Text

THE CONVERGENCE MODEL

The convergence model supports the view that good intercultural communication is a negotiation of meaning. This is very important especially when people from different cultures are involved in face-to-face negotiation.

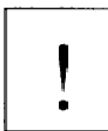
The details of this of communication have been covered in Unit 1 of Module 2 and will not be repeated in this unit. Suffice to say that in this model, communication between two people continues until improved understanding is reached. This is therefore a useful way of encouraging good intercultural communication.



Assessment Task

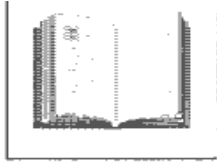
SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Do you think that the convergence model is a useful way of encouraging effective intercultural communication at your institution? Give reasons to support your view.



Important-take note!

A possible answer to this question is to be found at the end of this Unit.



Read Text

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Barriers refer to the way in which communication is made difficult or stopped. Cross-cultural communication barriers go beyond language. They also include differences in non-verbal communication. For instance, in appraisal interviews and in meetings at the work place, second language speakers may hesitate to communicate their ideas for fear of revealing their limited language skills. Alternatively, their culture may have taught them to respect authority even when they believe that the authority is wrong. (Sherman et al, 1996: 556)

In your position as an educational leader, you will need to address the communication problems that may occur as a result of cultural differences at your institution. You will also need to take note of the following barriers to effective intercultural communication:-

- **Defensiveness**

This occurs when people are not open to new possibilities; they are reluctant to listen to new ideas; they refuse to change from past attitudes and styles.

- **Different ways of interacting**

Some cultures place high value on being direct and getting to the point. On the other hand, other cultures may value a less direct approach.

- **Prejudices**

People may, for instance, have strong negative beliefs about another culture without evidence to support their prejudices.

- **Different values and beliefs (world views).**

People perceive the world differently.

- **Assumptions**

People assume that certain things are true without proof.

- **Different ways of thinking**

People from different cultures may think differently. For instance, one culture may value facts as proof. Another may value intuition as way of solving problems.

- **Unequal power**

If people from different cultures have different levels of power at an institution they may not communicate well if one person perceives himself/herself as superior to the others.

- **Cultural stereotyping**

This refers to generalising about all members of a particular cultural group, and not considering individual differences within the group.

- **Ethnocentrism**

People tend to believe, consciously or unconsciously, in the superiority of their own culture and see other cultures as inferior, even though they have no proof.

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- Since cross-cultural communication frequently creates problems in the work place, there is a need for managers to undergo training in communication and cross-cultural differences.
- As a manager, you need to be open to new possibilities and to listen to new ideas. Do not cling on to past attitudes and styles which hamper effective cross-cultural communication.
- You will need to raise your level of awareness regarding the differences in the values and beliefs across cultures.
- As an educational leader you may have to change your attitudes in order to eliminate any prejudices or biases that you may have about other people.
- You should avoid making generalisations about all members of a particular cultural group. Instead, be open to individual differences within a culture, so that you avoid cultural stereotyping.

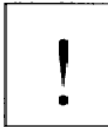
- You will need to make deliberate attempts to learn about the differences in the non-verbal cues across cultures.
- As a leader, you will need to help staff to understand the transactional nature of cross-cultural communication, so as to eliminate barriers to effective communication. Encourage your staff to learn about other cultures. This can be more easily achieved through:
 - Informal socialising
 - Open and honest approach to problems
 - Awareness and avoidance of cultural stereotyping
 - Reducing fear of one culture for another
 - Creating an atmosphere of trust.
 - Awareness of different world views across cultures
 - Encouraging staff to learn the basics of the other languages spoken at the institution.



Practise Activiy

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Identify two most common barriers to intercultural communication at your institution and suggest ways of overcoming these barriers.



Important-take note!

Possible answers to this activity are to be found at the end of this unit.

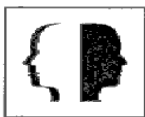


Summary

SUMMARY

In this unit you covered the definitions of various terms relating to intercultural communication. You also looked at the importance of effective intercultural communication. You then learnt about various aspects of intercultural communication such as values, beliefs and practices; oral communication; and the convergence model as a tool for improving intercultural communication. Finally, you were exposed to barriers to effective intercultural communication, and you gained an insight into strategies for overcoming such barriers.

To consolidate your understanding of the unit content, you engaged in a variety of activities. You should now be better equipped to promote effective intercultural communication at your institution so that the quality of education of your learners will progress by leaps and bounds.



Reflection

REFLECTION

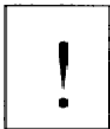
Having gone through unit 8, reflect on how you as a manager, can promote more effective cross-cultural communication at your institution by raising your own level of awareness and that of your staff, to various aspects of intercultural communication.



Unit Test

UNIT TEST

Discuss the importance of effective intercultural communication at your institution.



Important-take note!

The possible answer to this question will be found at the end of this unit.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO UNIT ACTIVITIES

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 1

Answers may vary from one educational manager to another. The following is an example:

- culture
- affirmative action
- cultural stereotyping
- ethnocentrism
- racism
- intercultural communication
- world view.

SELF-EVALUATION ACTIVITY 2

Responses may vary. However, your response may include:

- values, beliefs and practices
- oral communication. For example: conversational style, voice quality such as tone, pitch, stress and volume
- written communication
- non-verbal communication.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

Most education managers would agree that the convergence model is a useful way of encouraging effective intercultural communication because it support the view that good intercultural communication is a negotiation of meaning. Communication between tow people continues until common understanding is reached. This model is therefore a useful way of encouraging good intercultural communication.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Answers to this activity will vary, but can include the following:

- Prejudices:- can be overcome by raising your level of awareness regarding the differences in the values and beliefs across cultures.
- Cultural stereotyping:- avoid making generalisations about all members of any particular cultural group. Consider individual differences within a culture.

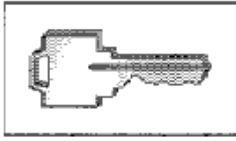
UNIT TEST

Answers may vary. However, our response, regarding the importance of effective intercultural communication, may include the following:

- Effective intercultural communication is essential for promoting harmony among people of different cultural groupings who work together.
- It facilitate positive interaction participation of people from diverse cultures.
- It promotes active listening and change in behaviour and attitudes towards those form other cultural backgrounds.
- It promotes tolerance and sensitivity to other people's world views, beliefs and values.
- It eliminates stereotyping, prejudices and assumptions about the way people form other cultures behave and think.
- It reduces superiority complexes that my exist within an organisation.

MODULE TEST

1. Discuss how you could improve your overall, communication skills as an educational manager.
2. Explain why oral communication is an essential component of the role function of a successful manager in education.
3. It is important for you as an education manager to differentiate between a good listener and a bad listener. Identify weaknesses and strengths that typify your own experience in this regard.
4. Managers in education need to be equipped with all aspects of effective writing skills. Do you agree? Substantiate your argument.
5. Non-verbal communication includes elements of human communication that are not expressed orally or in writing and it is often a more reliable way of communicating. Do you agree? Provide reasons to support your views.
6. List ten types of graphic communication devices. Explain how these can help you in oral and written presentation.
7. Good interpersonal communication is the basis for all interpersonal communication. With this in mind explain the concept of the Johari Window and explain how you, as a manager, can increase the open section of this window.
8. How can you overcome barriers to intercultural communication that exist at your institution?



Key Words

GLOSSARY

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| admonish | : | urge, give advice, warn |
| affirmative action | : | special measures to help, train and employ people who have been disadvantaged in the past |
| agist | : | discrimination against age groups |
| autocratic | : | domineering or dictatorial |
| barrier | : | hinderance to progress |
| cognizance | : | be aware of, having knowledge |
| communication | : | the imparting or exchange of ideas, information or feelings |
| culture | : | the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge shared by a group |
| decoding | : | interpreting a message |
| defensiveness | : | protecting own ideas and resisting change |
| dogmatic | : | forcibly assertive, authoritative, unchallengeable |
| dyad | : | person-to-person interaction involving two people |
| egotistic | : | inflated sense of self-centredness, importance and superiority |
| empathic | : | understanding another person's feelings |
| feedback | : | information or an opinion in response to an inquiry or proposal |
| grapevine | : | an unofficial means of relaying information |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| haptic communication: | | non-verbal communication using arms and hands |
| interpersonal | : | between two or more people |
| intrapersonal | : | within oneself |
| intercultural | : | across cultures |
| jargon | : | gibberish |
| johari window | : | shows relationship between what one chooses to reveal, or hide, about oneself |
| non-verbal | : | communication not expressed orally or in writing |
| paralanguage | : | refers to how we say things rather than what we say |
| proxemics | : | refers to space, distance and territoriality (in non-verbal communication) |
| pedic communication : | | non-verbal communication sent by the feet |
| readability | : | able to be read or deciphered |
| stereotyping | : | labelling or generalising without considering individual differences |
| territoriality | : | refers to space maintained between people (during interactions) |
| transaction | : | communication which involves two or more participants constructing meaning together based on a set of rules |

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