**LEARNER GUIDE**

**Communication Level 4**

**Engage In Sustained Oral Communication**

**And Evaluate Spoken Texts**

Unit Standard 119462

Level 4 Credits 5

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# PERSONAL INFORMATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME** |  |
| **CONTACT ADDRESS** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Telephone (H)** |  |
| **Telephone (W)** |  |
| **Cellular** |  |
| **Learner Number** |  |
| **Identity Number** |  |
| **EMPLOYER** |  |
| **EMPLOYER CONTACT ADDRESS** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Supervisor Name** |  |
| **Supervisor Contact Address** |  |
|  |
| **Code** |  |
| **Telephone (H)** |  |
| **Telephone (W)** |  |
| **Cellular** |  |

# **INTRODUCTION**

#### Welcome to the learning programme

Follow along in the guide as the training practitioner takes you through the material. Make notes and sketches that will help you to understand and remember what you have learnt. Take notes and share information with your colleagues. Important and relevant information and skills are transferred by sharing!



This learning programme is divided into sections. Each section is preceded by a description of the required outcomes and assessment criteria as contained in the unit standards specified by the South African Qualifications Authority. These descriptions will define what you have to know and be able to do in order to be awarded the credits attached to this learning programme. These credits are regarded as building blocks towards achieving a National Qualification upon successful assessment and can never be taken away from you!

## Structure

### Programme methodology



The programme methodology includes facilitator presentations, readings, individual activities, group discussions and skill application exercises.

**Know what you want to get out of the programme from the beginning and start applying your new skills immediately. Participate as much as possible so that the learning will be interactive and stimulating.**

The following principles were applied in designing the course:

* Because the course is designed to maximise interactive learning, you are encouraged and required to participate fully during the group exercises
* As a learner you will be presented with numerous problems and will be required to fully apply your mind to finding solutions to problems before being presented with the course presenter’s solutions to the problems
* Through participation and interaction the learners can learn as much from each other as they do from the course presenter
* Although learners attending the course may have varied degrees of experience in the subject matter, the course is designed to ensure that all delegates complete the course with the same level of understanding
* Because reflection forms an important component of adult learning, some learning resources will be followed by a self-assessment which is designed so that the learner will reflect on the material just completed.

This approach to course construction will ensure that learners first apply their minds to finding solutions to problems before the answers are provided, which will then maximise the learning process which is further strengthened by reflecting on the material covered by means of the self-assessments.

#### Different role players in delivery process

* Learner
* Facilitator
* Assessor
* Moderator

### What Learning Material you should have

This learning material has also been designed to provide the learner with a comprehensive reference guide. It is important that you take responsibility for your own learning process; this includes taking care of your learner material. You should at all times have the following material with you:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learner Guide** | **This learner guide is your valuable possession:**This is your textbook and reference material, which provides you with all the information you will require to meet the exit level outcomes. During contact sessions, your facilitator will use this guide and will facilitate the learning process. During contact sessions a variety of activities will assist you to gain knowledge and skills. Follow along in the guide as the training practitioner takes you through the material. Make notes and sketches that will help you to understand and remember what you have learnt. Take and share information with your colleagues. Important and relevant information and skills are transferred by sharing!This learning programme is divided into sections. Each section is preceded by a description of the required outcomes and assessment criteria as contained in the unit standards specified by the South African Qualifications Authority. These descriptions will define what you have to know and be able to do in order to be awarded the credits attached to this learning programme. These credits are regarded as building blocks towards achieving a National Qualification upon successful assessment and can never be taken away from you! |
| **Formative Assessment Workbook** | The Formative Assessment Workbook supports the Learner Guide and assists you in applying what you have learnt. The formative assessment workbook contains classroom activities that you have to complete in the classroom, during contact sessions either in groups or individually.You are required to complete all activities in the Formative Assessment Workbook. The facilitator will assist, lead and coach you through the process. These activities ensure that you understand the content of the material and that you get an opportunity to test your understanding.  |

###  Different types of activities you can expect

To accommodate your learning preferences, a variety of different types of activities are included in the formative and summative assessments. They will assist you to achieve the outcomes (correct results) and should guide you through the learning process, making learning a positive and pleasant experience.



The table below provides you with more information related to the types of activities.

| **Types of Activities** | **Description** | **Purpose** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge Activities** | You are required to complete these activities on your own.  | These activities normally test your understanding and ability to apply the information. |
| **Skills Application Activities** | You need to complete these activities in the workplace  | These activities require you to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the workplace |
| **Natural Occurring Evidence** | You need to collect information and samples of documents from the workplace. | These activities ensure you get the opportunity to learn from experts in the industry.Collecting examples demonstrates how to implement knowledge and skills in a practical way |

### Assessments

The only way to establish whether a learner is competent and has accomplished the specific outcomes is through the assessment process. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence about the learners’ ability to perform a task.

**To qualify and receive credits towards your qualification, a registered Assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of your portfolio of evidence and competency.**

**This programme has been aligned to registered unit standards. You will be assessed against the outcomes as stipulated in the unit standard by completing assessments and by compiling a portfolio of evidence that provides proof of your ability to apply the learning to your work situation.**



**How will Assessments commence?**

#### Formative Assessments

The assessment process is easy to follow. You will be guided by the Facilitator. Your responsibility is to complete all the activities in the Formative Assessment Workbook and submit it to your facilitator.

#### Summative Assessments

You will be required to complete a series of summative assessments. The Summative Assessment Guide will assist you in identifying the evidence required for final assessment purposes. You will be required to complete these activities on your own time, using real life projects in your workplace or business environment in preparing evidence for your Portfolio of Evidence. Your Facilitator will provide more details in this regard.

**To qualify and receive credits towards your qualification, a registered Assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of your portfolio of evidence and competency.**

### Learner Support

**The responsibility of learning rests with you, so be proactive and ask questions and seek assistance and help from your facilitator, if required.**



Please remember that this Skills Programme is based on outcomes based education principles which implies the following:

* You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, research and workplace time effectively.
* Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide and Formative Assessment Workbook in the manner intended, and are familiar with the workplace requirements.
* The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time for this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.
* You are responsible for the safekeeping of your completed Formative Assessment Workbook and Workplace Guide
* If you need assistance please contact your facilitator who will gladly assist you.
* If you have any special needs please inform the facilitator

## Learner Administration



#### Attendance Register

You are required to sign the Attendance Register every day you attend training sessions facilitated by a facilitator.

#### Programme Evaluation Form

On completion you will be supplied with a “Learning programme Evaluation Form”. You are required to evaluate your experience in attending the programme.

Please complete the form at the end of the programme, as this will assist us in improving our service and programme material. Your assistance is highly appreciated.

### Learner Expectations

Please prepare the following information. You will then be asked to introduce yourself to the instructor as well as your fellow learners



|  |
| --- |
| Your name:  |
|  |
|  |
| The organisation you represent:  |
|  |
|  |
| Your position in organisation:  |
|  |
|  |
| What do you hope to achieve by attending this course / what are your course expectations? |
|  |
|  |
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|  |
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|  |

# UNIT STANDARD 119462

Unit Standard Title

Engage in sustained oral/signed communication and evaluate spoken/signed texts

NQF Level

4

Credits

5

Purpose

Competence at this level will enable learners to participate effectively in oral/signed communication in most situations. Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They listen effectively and critically. They are able to identify or adopt the style and language register required in different situations. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences in what people say/sign. They speak/sign fluently and confidently in both formal and familiar settings and can articulate their purpose and meaning clearly. They can use language to convey detailed information, and to express their ideas and feelings. They control complex sentence structures and language conventions in their spoken/signed communications. People credited with this unit standard are able to: Respond critically yet sensitively as a listener/audience; Analyse own responses to spoken/signed texts and adjust as required; Use strategies to be an effective speaker/signer in sustained oral/signed interactions; Evaluate spoken/signed discourse

Unit standard range

The learner can engage in extended oral/signed interactions in a wide range of socio-cultural, learning and/or workplace contexts

Specific Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

**Specific Outcome 1:** Respond critically yet sensitively as a listener/audience.

Assessment Criteria

* Responses show a clearly developed understanding of complex issues under discussion in one-on-one or group situations. Own understanding is clarified and further developed during discussions and opportunity is provided during interactions for the clarification of one another’s understanding
* Discussions and/or conflicts are managed sensitively and in a manner that supports the goal of group or one-on-one interaction: Disagreements in groups, personality clashes, conflict management, resolving deadlocks, positively summarising conclusions
* Characteristics of a speaker’s / signer’s style and tone/register that attract or alienate an audience are identified with reference to the particular effect of each feature in creating audience response.
* The underlying assumptions, points of view and subtexts in spoken/signed texts are identified and challenged when appropriate to clarify understanding, remove bias and/or sustain interaction.

**Specific Outcome 2:** Analyse own responses to spoken/signed texts and adjust as required

Assessment Criteria

* Own responses to spoken/signed texts are analysed in relation to audience, purpose and context. Inappropriate responses are identified and adjusted accordingly
* When confronted by opposing views, own position is put forward with confidence in a manner appropriate to the interaction
* Tone/register, approach or style is appropriate to context, and is adapted to maintain oral/signed interaction when it breaks down or is difficult to initiate or maintain. Pedantic, illogical or aggressive language is identified and modified to sustain interaction

**Specific Outcome 3:** Use strategies to be an effective speaker/signer in sustained oral/signed interactions.

Assessment Criteria

* Planning of content and presentation techniques is evident in formal communications
* The impact of non-verbal cues/body language and signals on audiences is analysed and used appropriately
* The influence of rhetorical devices is analysed and used for effect on an audience: Pause, rhetorical question, exclamation, analogy, emphasis, repetition, rhythm, use of inclusive/ exclusive pronouns, stress, intonation, non-manual features (NMF’s), volume/sign size and pace

**Specific Outcome 4:** Evaluate spoken/signed discourse: Formal and informal texts

Assessment Criteria

* Points of view in spoken/signed texts are identified and meaning described in relation to context and purpose of the interaction
* Values, attitudes and assumptions in discourse are identified and their influence on the interaction described
* Techniques used by speakers/signers to evade or dissipate responsibility for an issue are identified and interpretations of the text reflect this insight
* The impact (e.g., clarity of purpose, speaker’s / signer’s capability) is described, explained and judged

Critical Cross-field Outcomes (CCFO)

* Identify and solve problems: using context to decode and make meaning individually and in groups in oral, reading and written or signed activities
* Work effectively with others and in teams: using interactive speech/signing in activities, discussion and research projects
* Organise and manage oneself and one’s activities responsibly and effectively through using language
* Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information: fundamental to the process of growing language capability across language applications and fields of study
* Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills: in formal and informal communications
* Understand the world as a set of inter-related parts of a system: through using language to explore and express links, and exploring a global range of contexts and texts
* Contribute to the full development of oneself: by engaging with texts that stimulate awareness and development of life skills and the learning process

# RESPOND AS LISTENER AND ANALYSE OWN RESPONSE

Learning outcome

* Respond critically yet sensitively as a listener/audience

Assessment criteria

* Responses show a clearly developed understanding of complex issues under discussion in one-on-one or group situations. Own understanding is clarified and further developed during discussions and opportunity is provided during interactions for the clarification of one another’s understanding
* Discussions and/or conflicts are managed sensitively and in a manner that supports the goal of group or one-on-one interaction:
* Characteristics of a speaker’s / signer’s style and tone/register that attract or alienate an audience are identified with reference to the particular effect of each feature in creating audience response.
* The underlying assumptions, points of view and subtexts in spoken/signed texts are identified and challenged when appropriate to clarify understanding, remove bias and/or sustain interaction.

Communication

As human beings we communicate with each other every day and when we communicate it is with a specific purpose in mind.

* To interact
* To inform
* To find out
* To influence
* To regulate
* To entertain
* To record

You communicate by means of a language that is understood by the person or persons you are communicating with:

* You are communicating when you are speaking face-to-face, or speaking over the telephone or cell phone, or even the Internet.
* You communicate when you read an article written by an author in a newspaper, in a magazine, in a letter; in a report; and in a book.
* When you write you are communicating through written words rather than spoken words. You write the words instead of speaking the words.

Note Communicate - ..according to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means the “share or exchange of information”.

Since the beginning of time man has communicated with his fellow beings. This “sharing or exchange of information” may take on many forms and many instruments may be utilised to convey this information. The reaction to the transfer of information may also vary, depending on a number of factors, which will be discussed later.

Note Communication is a two way street – information is shared with another party and the other party normally reacts in some way, even if they do absolutely nothing.

A bus driver communicates with other people all the time. It starts when he receives his instructions about his schedule and route. He receives information and reacts to this exchange of information by getting into his bus and driving according to schedule. Upon his return to the depot he communicates information about the route and schedule e.g. road conditions, number of passengers, etc., as well as the condition of his vehicle back to the appropriate authorities.

Along his route he communicates with passengers when they board the bus. He communicates with the controller and fellow drivers. In the event of a breakdown he will communicate with the workshop personnel to inform them about the problem.

The most important communication the driver engages in is with other road users. By using warning devices like brake lights, indicators, hazard lights, hand signals (not the one- or two finger kind), he communicates his intentions to his fellow road users.

In the event of the driver NOT communicating his intentions he might cause an accident and have to communicate with the police and ultimately a magistrate. Avoid communication with these two at all cost!!

Definition of communication “Human communication is the process whereby meaning is created between two or more people.” (Tubbs & Moss, 1994)

The Communication Process

**Message**

*Recipient*

*Communicator*

**Feedback**

Communication is the interaction between at least two people, the communicator and the recipient.

There can, however, be more than one recipient, like an audience listening to a speech or watching a movie.

The Communicator

The communicator starts the communication process by conveying a message about what he feels, thinks or believes about a matter that he wishes to share with others.

The message

The message is that which the communicator wishes to convey to others by way of communication and can be used by the communicator to attempt to persuade someone to his way of thinking or it can be an idea, thought or feeling that the communicator wishes to share with others. This message needs to be communicated in some form, for while the message remains a thought in the communicator’s mind, it cannot be received or interpreted by a recipient.

The Recipient

The recipient receives the message, interprets it and reacts. This reaction is called feedback.

Feedback

Feedback is not always verbal, but can also be conveyed by means of other reactions e.g. applause after a good performance

What you do when you communicate:

* You **listen** to what someone is saying – you think about what has been said - you **respond**;
* You **think** about what you want to say- you speak your thoughts, opinions, etc. you **wait** for a response
* You **read** the words written by an author- you think about what you have read - you **respond**
* You **think** about what you want to say– you write the words you want to speak – you **wait** for a response.

**Response** refers to the feedback you give or get when communicating. It can either be oral or spoken, or it can be written. It can be in the form of a suggestion, advice, recommendation, statement, instruction, command, etc or it can be in the form of an assessment; a test, task, examination, demonstration, observation, etc.

* Remember: It is not always **what** you say that is important. It is **how** you say it. You are continuously being assessed either directly or indirectly in all you say, or do, or write. Your knowledge, competency or your capabilities are measured when you respond or give feedback
* Each type of feedback has different criteria or outcomes against which it is measured or assessed. These outcomes are in fact the skills you are required to demonstrate to prove that you are competent in what you are doing, saying, reading or writing.
* Meaningful feedback requires purposeful preparation and presentation.

When participating in a conversation you are constantly interpreting the words you hear so that you can unpack or extract important information. This you do in order give an appropriate response. It is a process that you work through instinctively before you respond or give feedback or say something.

You first have to **interpret** what you have heard, or read before you can respond or give meaningful feedback. Your, response or reaction demonstrates your interpretation, and your understanding of what you have heard, seen, felt, tasted, smelled, experienced or read.

When you interpret a message, whether it is a picture you look at; words someone is speaking; or the written word you are reading; your mind instinctively works through the following steps:

* First you **extract** or unpack key words and key concepts so that you can speak about what is relevant. They can be extracted from your general knowledge bank or your experience, or from what you have heard and read about.

 Unpacking or extracting key ideas is like a brainstorm. Ideas are randomly thought of and not placed in a specific order. This is part of preparing a response starting with careful planning what you want to say.

Example: You are required to give feedback on the effect crime has on a community and how it can be minimised

A Brainstorm to unpack or collect information

 Dissatisfaction Community poverty

 gangs

 unemployment fear

 boredom anger

 power recreation

 aggression

 security

 emotions

 job creation

 violence control

* Secondly you **repack** or rearrange and restructure these key ideas (keywords and key concepts) into sentences. Sentences are developed into paragraphs and organised into a logical sequence so that the information you share is meaningful.

In order to repack or make an interpretation of these key ideas you have to make use of questions (what, when where, why who and how) to rearrange or restructure the brainstorm into a mind map or a flow diagram. This you do by means of grouping key concepts or related key ideas to show how they link or flow into each other in a logical sequence, to make sense.

Example: A mind map or flow diagram to restructure and organise the key ideas generated on crime in a logic way.

 Because of- 🡪 dissatisfaction 🡪 involves🡪 community members

 ⮡unemployment ⮡ friends, family

 ⮡ boredom ⮡ youths

 ⮡ Poverty ⮡ children

 emotions -🡪 anger 🡪 resulting in 🡪 violence

 ⮡ fear ⮡ power struggles ⮡ aggression ⮡ control

 ⮡ gangs

 Prevented through -🡪 -community support.

 ⮡ Recreation opportunities

 ⮡ Job creation

 ⮡ security

You do not have to make two diagrams. You can start with a brainstorm and then with the help of questions (What; When; Where; Why; Who; and How) you can develop the brainstorm into a flow diagram to map out your thoughts or your interpretation.

* Then only do you **respond** by giving either verbal or written feedback. This is the final part of your preparation where you focus on how you are going to present your response or feedback. It is important to be familiar with the correct format in which you choose to give feedback or to respond.

Examples of oral feedback or verbal responses

1. Face to face conversations regarding a specific topic of interest or concern
2. Telephonic and electronic discussions
3. Presenting speeches, explaining and demonstrating procedures and schedules, discussing concerns and interests with groups of people.
4. Interviews both formal and informal
5. Giving instructions, guidelines, advice
6. Receiving instructions and requests.
7. Negotiations, debates,
8. Conversations, discussions
9. Practical demonstration
10. A verbal proposal
11. A coaching session
12. A presentation

# Various methods of communication

Written methods of communication make use of definite signs and symbols when presenting information in either a verbal context or in a written context.

|  |
| --- |
| **Various methods of communication. Verbal Messages** |
| **Signs and symbols** | **Method** |
| Facial expressionsGesturesTone of voiceEye contactBody language (way you dress, walk, stand, react, respond, move your body, etc),Pace and pitch- tone of voiceCommand of languageChoice of wordsPronunciationDialectAccentSign language (for the deaf) | TelephoneFace to faceConferenceMeetingInterviewBriefingInformal discussionsConsultationsBargainingMediationArbitrationSocial groupsThe grapevineGossipAnnouncementIntercom systemPresentationTelevisionDebatePanel discussionReportFilms, DVD, CDTraining programmesVideoSign language |

Effective verbal communication is very important to all of us. To communicate effectively the whole personality should be adapted to the effort of arousing certain thoughts and feelings in the mind of the listener.

It is to the speaker’s advantage to be face to face with his audience as his nonverbal cues such as mannerisms, gestures and facial expressions help to project his personality and assist him to remain in contact with his audience.

Respond to communication

Determine the Emotional State of the Speaker

Much of your emotional state is be reflected in the way that you speak. The tones, pitch, pace and volume of your voice or NMF’s and size of your sign, can determine how a listener will interpret what you are saying.

By controlling these vocal/sign characteristics you can become a more effective speaker.

When communicating with another person you must always be aware of these characteristics.

* By actively listening to what the person is saying/signing
* and the way in which it is said/signed

You can determine his emotional state and thus prepare yourself as to what you are going to reply and how you are going to do it.

Although the above illustrates how your natural reactions to different states of emotion can influence the manner in which you speak, it must be mentioned that you can intentionally alter some or all of these factors to enhance what you are saying.

Do not to overdo such variations as this might have exactly the opposite effect on what you are trying to communicate.

When communicating with someone else you must always strive to do it as **naturally and evenly** as possible. Be yourself!!

Adjust Own Tone, Pitch And Volume

It is a fact of life that during interaction with other people, at some stage or another there is going to be some sort of conflict. This may be due to a variety of reasons.

When dealing with any client it is important to adjust your own tone, pitch and volume of your voice to reply to both verbal and nonverbal messages in such a way so as not to offend the client in any way.

A satisfied client thanking you for going the extra mile will normally speak/sign in a relaxed and friendly manner, using warm tones/NMF’s and speaking at a moderate pitch and pace, or using moderate sign sizes.

It is easy and pleasant to reply to this client’s messages as there is no aggression or threatening behaviour from his side and there are not many variations in the verbal and nonverbal messages he is communicating and therefore you can conduct a relaxed conversation.

Dealing with an irate client is slightly more complicated as he is upset about something and his emotional state can change at any time.

Such a client must be handled carefully and considering and using the following simple guidelines can assist you to do this successfully.

* **Acknowledge the conflict** – speak/sign in a neutral tone and pitch and sign size and beware not to be drawn into a shouting match as this will only serve to aggravate the situation.
* **Listen actively** – be aware of verbal and nonverbal cues as to the emotional state of the speaker. Talking/signing rapidly at a high pitch and tone or signs, vigorous hand gestures and fidgeting will indicate irritability.
* **Reply with empathy** – when dealing with an irate client you don’t fight fire with fire. Let the speaker experience your empathy by speaking/signing calmly and indicating your calmness through your signs and NMF’s, even if he is excited. Do not raise your voice although you might feel irritated yourself. Allow him to voice/sign all his frustration and be ready with suggestions for a workable solution to the problem. Keep the discussion issue-orientated and don’t get personal.

## Extract The Main Idea From Verbal Communication

It is essential to have a clear grasp of what the other person’s needs are so that you can address those specific needs and not waste time on irrelevant issues. In order to achieve this you need to create an atmosphere that is conducive to listening.

* Maintain eye contact to indicate sincerity.
* Also use nonverbal cues and NMF’s such as a nod of the head to indicate that you understand what is said. This will make it easier for the client to continue and focus on the issues at hand.
* Repeat the main issues to show the client that you are taking notice of what is said and that you are committed to finding a solution to his problems.
* Focus on these issues and make notes to help you remember them.
* By summarising what the client said in your own words/signs will indicate to the client that you are paying attention. It will also help clarify any misinterpretation of what the client said and assist you to concentrate by actively involving yourself in the process.

Ask Questions

Often the other person will not reveal all the details of what a problem is. It is then necessary to determine the full extent of the matter by asking relevant questions to clarify his need.

Make sure that these questions are to the point and can once again be summarised in your own words to express understanding and commitment. Refer to the section about questions to guide you.

Record The Main Idea And Supporting Details

It is good practice to make rough notes of the main ideas during communication. This will enable you to recall these main points at a later stage.

Rough notes will usually take the form of a summary and you do this while talking/signing to the client.

Always also ensure that you check your summary with the client. You can say something like: “Can I make sure that this is the problem you want resolved…” and then you quote the problem/s from your notes.

Types of summaries:

* Paraphrasing: when you rewrite something using your own words.
* You can summarise in point form
* When you are summarising a big piece of text, you will make use of headings and sub-headings. This manual is an example of using headings and sub-headings to break a big piece of text into smaller pieces
* Another method of summarising is using a mind-map.

# ANALYSE OWN RESPONSES

Learning outcome

Analyse own responses to spoken/signed texts and adjust as required

Assessment criteria

* Own responses to spoken/signed texts are analysed in relation to audience, purpose and context. Inappropriate responses are identified and adjusted accordingly
* When confronted by opposing views, own position is put forward with confidence in a manner appropriate to the interaction
* Tone/register, approach or style is appropriate to context, and is adapted to maintain oral/signed interaction when it breaks down or is difficult to initiate or maintain. Pedantic, illogical or aggressive language is identified and modified to sustain interaction

Your Own Responses

A lot has been said in previous modules about the process of communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, managing conflict and solving problems.

It is important to note that your own understanding about written or oral text does not depend only on the point of view of the speaker or writer, but also on your own perceptions - the way in which you understand another person’s communication.

Your perceptions are influenced by:

* **Your own communication skills**: how poorly or well you listen to what others are saying/signing
* Your **values and norms**
* The **way you feel** about the other person
* Your **own opinion** of the subject being discussed
* Your **willingness to accept** that the other person’s point of view might have some essence of truth and value

In the business world, allowing your own perception to affect your judgement can be very bad to you personally in the workplace. You have to learn to listen to/view other people, accept that your point of view is not the only correct point of view and that other people’s statements do have value, even if you do not agree with everything.

You have to learn to listen/view and understand the communication of other people, especially if the subject is controversial or complex.

If you do not understand, it is your responsibility to ask questions and start discussions about the subject until you understand.

In the business world, the only one who will get into trouble for not understanding a communication from someone else will be you yourself.

During this section, you will have to prove that you have the ability to find out things you don’t understand when someone else is communicating with you. You will have to do this without causing conflict and sometimes even by defusing the conflict that exists between other people.

When you are listening to or reading/viewing a communication from someone else, you make assumptions about what the person IS NOT SAYING – you assume that the other person is leaving out facts and information. It will be necessary for you to identify what assumptions you are making about the other person’s communication.

You will also have to make sure you understand the speaker’s point of view or clarify understanding of subjects and issues that you are not sure of.

When you are involved in a discussion such as a meeting, a debate or even in class, you must always analyse your own response to whatever someone else says to you.

You have to think about:

* The **audience** – the other people who will be listening to you/watching you
* The **purpose** of your response
* The **context** in which the discussion is taking place
* The context of what you **want to say**/sign

Be careful of talking/signing **too quickly**, too heatedly and without thinking. You can easily say/sign something that is not acceptable to other people or that has no bearing on the discussion.

**Analyse** what you want to say/sign and, if you think your reply is inappropriate, change what you want to say/sign and how you want to say/sign it.

Not everyone will agree with your point of view, just as you do not agree with everyone else’s point of view. That is their right, just as it is your right to disagree with them.

When you want to say/sign something that opposes the speaker’s/signer’s point of view, think about how you are going to say it: the tone, pitch volume of your voice / the use of NMF’s and sign size, say/sign it clearly and with confidence. Do not become aggressive when someone else challenges your point of view, stay calm and keep on speaking/signing with confidence.

Make sure that you do not become illogical in order to win an argument, stick to the point and the facts and admit if someone else’s point of view is better than yours. Do not become aggressive or pedantic – obsessed with minor details. Always give the person with the opposing view credit for good arguments and give in gracefully if you seem to be on the losing end.

The most important thing in all communication is to sustain the communication until a point of agreement is reached.

Debates And Negotiations

Debates and negotiations can also be conducted in formal and informal formats.

A discussion of the weekend’s sports will be an **informal** debate where the debate is not structured and the outcome of the matter is not determined by putting it to a vote.

On the other hand a **formal** debate, such as during a meeting or session of parliament, is (supposedly) conducted in a structured manner with participants adhering to certain rules and procedures.

Debating should be conducted in an **orderly** manner. To achieve this goal participants and the Chairman should adhere to the following:

* Matters must be discussed in the order in which they appear on the agenda.
* Speakers supporting and opposing the motion should be allowed to speak alternately to maintain fairness and balance.
* Members from a minority group should be granted sufficient opportunity to speak.
* The debate may be interrupted at any time by raising a point of order when procedures aren’t adhered to.
* All persons addressing members should do so through the Chairman.
* The Chairman should ensure that procedures aren’t drawn out unnecessarily by repetitive arguments.
* Every participant should have the right to speak once to the motion and once to any amendment. The proposer of a motion should have the right to reply.
* The Chairman has the right to reply to the total debate by summing up or clarifying the issue.

Pointers for debating

* Although people have different opinions and ideas it does not necessarily mean that one is right and the other wrong. There is often something of value in every opinion.
* Allow everyone a turn to speak. Listen to what they have to say it could be of value to your argument.
* Try not to interrupt someone when they are speaking. In a heated argument this will not always be easy, it will require a lot of self discipline!
* Never get personal or insulting. The fact that you disagree with what someone is saying does not make them stupid.
* Sometimes a debate or difference of opinion cannot be resolved. Then the reasonable thing to do is for all parties to ‘agree to disagree’, which is a result where no one wins - but no one loses either.

### Negotiations

Negotiations happen all the time in our lives. We all want our own way but the person or people we are with also want their own way – so you negotiate.

To get what you want, you have to learn to compromise or learn to give something in return or to give up something.

In the workplace negotiations take place when situations have been debated and there needs to be a consensus regarding the outcome; e.g. an agreement has to be reach around salary increases. During negotiations a lot of persuasion and convincing takes place. Good communication skills and good people skills play an important role in successful negotiations. An unbiased chairperson is appointed to manage the negotiations between the relevant parties. The ideal outcome of negotiations should be a win-win situation, where although people might have had to compromise, neither side feels that they have given up too much and gained too little.

The following guidelines should be considered:

* Don’t go into negotiations angry or aggressive. You will not be negotiating wisely and by antagonising the other parties you can actually do your own position harm.
* Know what you want to gain and what you are prepared to give up.
* Allow the other person to speak and listen to what they are saying. They too have their own needs and desires.
* Have a notebook with you so that you can write down points to remember. Otherwise you will become so obsessed with having your say that you will not be listening and could easily miss something important.
* If the negotiations are planned where everyone is given warning, prepare your case. The better prepared you are, the stronger your case will be, the more in control you will feel and the more likely you are to get what you want.
* Seek advice from the experts. Depending on the situation, you might want to consult someone who knows the law or bookkeeping or whatever.
* Don’t make accusations or be insulting.
* Don’t lose your temper. If you lose your temper you actually give the other party power over you
* .If several of you are involved in the negotiations, you must choose a spokesperson to do most of the talking. If it is wage negotiations it could be your union representative
* Before the negotiations take place, each party must meet to make sure that you share the same vision and you want to achieve the same goal. You have to place your trust in your spokesperson, so choose them wisely.

### Responses To Differing Socio-Cultural Contexts

While communicating with an audience you must always be aware of the socio- and cultural diversity of the audience and be sensitive to the manner in which people from different social- and cultural backgrounds express themselves.

To achieve this goal it is essential for the speaker

* To be on the same level as those who he is addressing
* And to use language that they can understand and identify with.

It may be helpful to interact with the audience prior to addressing them in order to find out more about their background and customs so as not to offend them by speaking above their level of comprehension.

#### Pointers for Intercultural communication

It is in the workplace that people from different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other and unconsciously use different behaviour patterns that can lead to confusion and conflict. The following skills could help avoid unnecessary misinterpretations:

* Show openness and respect towards the norms, values and behaviour patterns of people from a different culture.
* Do not focus on the differences between people (race, colour, background, body language, accent, manners, behaviour) rather focus on what you have in common (self respect, integrity, the need to be accepted and to be recognised, working to be successful)
* Learn to know more about the culture of people whom you work with, it will make communication more successful. Know that other cultures are interesting and that you do not come from a superior culture.
* Choose your words carefully as they not only express your thoughts, they also impress the receiver and the impression your words make motivates the reaction you receive.
* Use clear simple language. Select vocabulary, gestures and a body language that your audience will relate to and understand
* Have empathy – put yourself in the other persons’ shoes and see the situation from their point of view.
* Learn to be not only an active listener but also someone who can read the actions, gestures and body language.
* Mind your manners, be polite acknowledge and respect the differences.

# EFFECTIVE SPEAKING

Learning outcomes

* Use strategies to be an effective speaker in sustained oral interactions..

Assessment criteria

* Planning of content and presentation techniques is evident in formal communications
* The impact of non-verbal cues/body language and signals on audiences is analysed and used appropriately
* The influence of rhetorical devices is analysed and used for effect on an audience: Pause, rhetorical question, exclamation, analogy, emphasis, repetition, rhythm, use of inclusive/ exclusive pronouns, stress, intonation, non-manual features (NMF’s), volume/sign size and pace

Plan Your Speech

Before you address any audience, even in a meeting with your colleagues, you have to plan what you are going to say/sign. If it is a formal debate, you will do your planning in writing and use cue cards to guide you. If it is a more impromptu speech, such as in a meeting, where you voice your opinion, you still plan what you want to say, even though it is mostly in your mind and you do not spend so much time in the planning process.

The steps you follow are the same steps as you follow when planning to write a piece of text

* Determine what you want to say/sign
* How you want to say/sign it?
* What visual aids will you use?
* What tone and register /NMF’swill you use?
* What devices will you use to reinforce your message, such as rhetorical devices, NMF’s sign size, etc?
* Prepare speech cards – these are little cards with lines on where you write your main points. The general rules are: not more than one main point per card and not more than 12 to 15 cards per speech. If you have too many cards, your speech is too long and it becomes boring.

These days, public speakers use computer presentations for public speaking and the main points of the presentation then takes the place of the cue card.

In the case of a formal speech, you will memorise your speech/signing and then you will practice – in front of a mirror, in front of your friends and family, until you can deliver your speech fluently. This is what all public speakers do – they put the speech together, memorise it and then they practice, practice, practice.

As with everything else in life, the more you practice, the better you become.

Forms of Communication

There are many forms of communication such as personal-, mass-, intercultural- and organisational communication.

Personal communication is when you communicate with yourself or with one or two other people.

* Organisational communication takes place within an organisation.
* Mass communication is when you are communicating with many people at the same time. Newspapers, radio and TV are examples of mass communication.
* Intercultural communication can be personal, mass or organisational communication, but takes cultural differences into account.

Furthermore, communication can be verbal as well as non-verbal, both of which will be discussed.

The purpose of communicating is to get your message across to the audience. In order to do this, you will make use of certain techniques that are aimed at capturing and holding the attention of the audience.

Verbal Communication

The way that you speak can reinforce your message and influence your audience.

When you speak in the same **tone**, **pitch**, **volume** and **pace** all the time it becomes boring for the audience and they can fall asleep. If you listen to public speakers, TV and radio commentators, you will notice that they vary the tone, pitch, volume and pace when they speak, in order to capture and maintain the interest of the audience.

The tones, pitch, pace and volume of your voice can determine how a listener will interpret what you are saying.

By controlling these vocal characteristics you can become a more effective speaker.

* The **tone** is the sound of your voice, e.g. bright or deep, and expresses your feeling or mood. A bright tone will indicate feelings of excitement, joy, etc. while a deep tone will indicate feelings of placidity or sorrow. So when you are addressing a serious subject, your will use a deeper tone of voice, while a lighter tone of voice is appropriate for a more light hearted subject.
* **Pitch** is determined by the tension on your vocal cords, i.e. how high or low your voice sounds. Generally you will speak at a high pitch when excited and at a lower pitch when relaxed.
* The **pace** or speed at which you speak can also influence your audience. When you are telling someone that you have won the Lotto you will talk much faster than when you are telling him that you cannot attend a major sporting event.

You need to adapt the **volume** of your voice to the environment. Factors such as:

* being indoors or outdoors,
* number of listeners in a room,
* the size of the room,
* background noise and
* availability of amplification will determine the volume at which you speak.
* The volume of your voice can also indicate whether you are excited or relaxed, angry or friendly. When you are saying something important, you will increase the volume of your voice in order to stress the importance of the point you are making.
* Pause is a useful technique to stress important points in your presentation. When you pause for a couple of seconds just after making an important point, the audience knows that what you have said is important.
* Using keywords is another technique to stress important points. In every presentation, not everything you say will be equally important. Some points will be main points and others will be extra information to explain what you are saying. You will use the main points to identify keywords in your presentation. When you get to the keywords you will stress them by adjusting the tone, pitch, volume and pace of your voice. This will give the audience the cue that the keywords and the point you made are important.

In the case of SASL, you will have to vary the size of your signs when you want to indicate an increase in volume in order to stress a main point. You should also use NMF’s (non manual features) to show important points, key words, tone and pitch. Varying the size of the sign and NMF’s will help you to capture and retain the interest of your audience.

Now that you know what it means to vary the tone, pitch, volume and pace of the way you speak, you can use these methods to:

* Enhance the meaning of what you are saying to the audience
* Respond appropriately to the audience, even in differing circumstances

Body Language

Nonverbal Communication

There are many different types of nonverbal communication but for the purpose of this unit standard we are going to deal with nonverbal communication that directly interacts with verbal communication.

When communicating verbally you can express different feelings without even noticing or voicing these feelings. It is important that you know what these signals are and to be aware that you are also communicating these signals to the people you are communicating with. Just as important is that you recognise these signals that others communicate to you.

Some of these signals are:

Handshake

This normally conveys a first impression of the person you are dealing with. A firm handshake will illustrate confidence and gets the other person’s attention.

Hold on to his hand a little longer than is necessary to keep his attention. A sloppy handshake will, in contrast, can be interpreted as a sign of insincerity and/or laziness**.**

Eye Contact

Much can be interpreted by eye contact or the lack thereof.

* ****Direct eye contact** and a friendly expression will indicate openness and honesty. Always look the other person in the eye and maintain eye contact to show the speaker that you are listening.
* **Lack of eye contact** can mean that the listener is not paying attention, is bored with what you are saying or is uncomfortable with what you are talking about. Not making eye contact can also indicate dishonesty and distrust.

Gestures

It is normal to make hand gestures during conversation to emphasise a point, but there are other gestures that convey your inner feelings without you making them consciously.

These include hand-, foot- and leg activity. Restless hands or shaking of the legs or feet can be a sign of agitation or nervousness. Of course, rude gestures are not allowed when you are giving a presentation.

Positive gestures can include raising your hands when making an important point. When you are using visual aids, you can also point at the specific poster, model or whatever visual aid you are using, or point at the objects in the poster or model that you are discussing. This directs the attention of the audience to the visual aid and helps them to understand what you are saying.

Posture

Sitting or standing straight will indicate that the listener is alert and paying attention, while slouching in a chair or leaning against a wall or door is a sign that the listener is not really interested in what is going on.

When you are giving a presentation it is important that you stand up straight and move around a little rather than staying in one place all the time. If it is possible, you can also move towards the audience or interact with the audience directly by moving between them.

Your posture should also be positive and not threatening towards the audience. When you invade someone’s personal space or point directly to them with your finger while leaning forward, the other person can feel threatened. On the other hand, you can walk to within one or two paces from the other person, look the person in the eye, smile and make your point in a non-threatening way.

Touch

Be very careful of this one as it can very easily be misinterpreted, especially in a working- or business environment. A hug and a “high-five” between winning team mates is an expression of victory or celebration, while stroking a secretary’s neck when dictating a letter to her can be seen as sexual harassment.

During or after the delivery of your presentation, you must be wary of touching members of the audience, since your intentions can be easily misunderstood.

Distance

All of us need personal space and when someone else invades that space we feel uncomfortable and threatened. Personal space is the distance between yourself and the person you are talking to.

The space between close friends or relatives will be much closer than the space maintained by a company director and a subordinate or opposing parties in an argument.

Determine what personal space is appropriate in a situation and maintain that space. Never intrude on someone else’s personal space, as this will make the other person feel threatened and distract his attention from what is communicated.

Nonverbal Messages

You can use your own body language(in the case of SASL, use the size of the sign and NMF’S) to enhance your verbal message in the following ways;-

A nonverbal message **reinforces** the verbal message by adding to its meaning. Banging your hand on the table while reprimanding someone conveys a stronger message than words alone, adds emphasis to your statement and captures the listener’s attention.

A nonverbal message can **complement** a verbal message when it conveys the same meaning. A greeting in a friendly tone of voice, accompanied by a warm smile will compliment your verbal message.

A nonverbal message may **substitute** the verbal message. When you arrive home and are irritable and impatient it is not necessary to tell anyone that you had a terrible day at work. Likewise a passionate hug and kiss will tell your spouse that you love him/her without you having to say it.

Nonverbal behaviour functions to **regulate** the flow of verbal interaction. Slight hand movements, eye contact, tone of voice, nodding of the head and other nonverbal behaviour tells the recipient to talk, repeat a statement, hurry up or finish the conversation. For example, the chairperson at a meeting uses eye contact or hand gestures instead of words to indicate who’s turn it is to speak.

A nonverbal message can **accentuate** what is said. While addressing an audience a speaker may talk louder and wave his finger in the air to stress a point that he is making. Speakers at political meetings are very good at this.

A nonverbal message may **contradict** the verbal message. This happens when a speaker says one thing but does another. A new company executive about to make his first presentation to the board of directors may claim not to be nervous despite his trembling hands and sweating forehead. Contradictory cues often tell us when someone is being sarcastic or merely teasing.

Remember to smile at your audience: they are more likely to respond to a friendly speaker than an unfriendly one.

Barriers To Effective Communication

Many barriers to effective communication exist and can be detrimental to effective communication. Following are a few that have bearing on what is dealt with in this unit standard.

Poor interpersonal skills

Poor interpersonal skills include poor listening and/or sensitivity to nonverbal communication.

We have discussed listening skills and nonverbal communication at length. When you deal with customers or the general public, you have no excuse for not listening to what the other person is saying/signing or listening to non verbal communication. It is part of you job and you have to do it. When a client is discussing something with you, the client is entitled to your undivided attention.

Always remember: you cannot listen while you are talking. In order for you to listen, you have to keep quiet and pay attention.

Failure to identify the needs of the receiver

This happens when you listen to only part of what the person is saying and then start jumping to conclusions instead of listening to the speaker until he has stopped talking. Only then can you come to conclusions, which you have to check with the client anyway, by repeating the issue as you understand it to the client.

“Am I correct in understanding that you want ….. done” or “As I understand, the problem is …..”

Different cultural backgrounds

The audience will not always take differences in cultural backgrounds into account, but you have to. You are not allowed to judge anyone you are talking to because their cultural background is different to yours.

When you are giving a presentation, it is part of your job and your duty to take the audience’s different cultural backgrounds into consideration. During the planning stage, you have to ensure that your presentation does not include material that can be offensive to cultures other than your own.

If you don’t know much about other cultural beliefs, you have to make an effort to find out what they are. This will make future communication with the audience easier.

Lack of intercultural understanding

This is a major problem in our country today. Unfortunately, when you are dealing with other people, you have to ensure that you do not suffer from a lack of intercultural understanding. Just as your culture is important to you, their cultures are important to them. Put yourself in their shoes and try to understand that it is not acceptable to offend people only because their culture is different to yours.

Messages with too much/little information

Many people find it difficult to express themselves clearly when they are under stress. They will usually either give you too much or too little information.

You have to be aware of this, so that you can:

* Focus on the important and relevant issues when a person gives too much information
* Ensure that you get all the relevant information when a person gives too little information

“I was mugged, they hit me over the head, there was blood all over the place, I had to go to the hospital to get stitches and my handbag was stolen.” This is an example of too much information. You have to find out what the problem is that has to be addressed.

“My handbag was stolen.” This is too little information and you have to find out what the issue is that the person wants resolved.

Irritating mannerisms that prevent people from listening

When a person is tapping on the desk or tapping a pencil against his teeth the whole time that you or he is talking, or when someone shakes his knee or twitches his shoulder all the time.

Some people say “You know…” a lot, others say “ah…” all the time while talking.

There are many more examples of irritating mannerisms that you should not adopt while giving a presentation. On the other hand, when someone in the audience displays these mannerisms, you have to ensure that they do not distract you from listening to what the person is saying.

Use of insensitive or abusive language by the sender or receiver

This is never acceptable, but can sometimes happen when a person is angry or irritated and perceives that his problem is not going to be addressed properly.

The best way to handle this is to calm the person down without saying anything about his insensitive or abusive language.

You will find in most instances that the person will apologise as soon as he can see that his problem is going to be addressed in a way that is satisfactory to him.

You must always be aware of how you talk to other people in order to ensure that you do not use insensitive or abusive language, as many people stop listening when you talk to them in a way that they don’t like.

When giving a presentation, you must be able to identify these barriers and overcome these barriers by using the skills that you have developed. You must also ensure that you do not erect barriers to communication by one of the above actions.

Reinforce the Message

Before addressing an audience you need to plan what you are going to communicate to the audience. It is essential that you prepare a detailed and complete plan of your address in writing, outlining the introduction, body and conclusion. Refer to these notes to assist you to keep track of main ideas and adhere to timelines.

This topic has been covered comprehensively in the previous modules and unit standards. Refer to your notes when drawing up a plan for your verbal communication.

Visual Aids

During the planning of your address you must also identify where you are going to make use of visual aids like:

**Cue cards**: these are smaller than posters and contain only one visual cue. If you are doing a presentation to children about the importance of brushing teeth, you might have a cue card with a tooth, one with a toothbrush and one with toothpaste. You will show these to the audience at the appropriate place during your presentation. At the end of the presentation, you would summarise and at the appropriate place show the cue card without saying anything, encouraging the audience to name the object. You would show the card with the tooth, for example and maybe ask the audience: “Every morning you must brush your …” and then wait for the audience to supply the missing word.

**Posters**: we have all seen posters of music starts, movies, videos and so on. A poster that you design for a presentation does not have to be as elaborate as one of these but if you plan it correctly it can have just as much impact.

**Models**, etc. We have all seen models of trains, cars, houses, large buildings and so on. These are very effective visual aids and you should use them whenever appropriate and when you can get hold of one.

Handouts And Multimedia

You can also make use of handouts given to the audience. Handouts are notes about your presentation that you give to the audience.

Multi-media visual aids include:

**Flipcharts**. You can use the flipchart to make notes during your presentation, much as your facilitator does during the lesson, or you can write out your flipchart sheets beforehand and put them up at the appropriate time.

**Whiteboard**: same use as a flipchart, however you have to rub out what you have written as soon as you want to write something new.

**Overhead projector**. You have to prepare the slides beforehand and show them at the appropriate time in your presentation. Your facilitator makes use of this visual aid during class.

**Data projector**. It works like an overhead projector, but is connected to a computer and displays visual aids that you have prepared on the computer beforehand.

**Slide shows**. These are prepared on a computerised presentation programme and can be shown on individual computers or through a data projector. You can, of course, also use photographic slides in a slide projector, although this method has become somewhat outdated.

**Video presentations**. These are video clips or training videos prepared especially for the purpose of your presentation.

Feedback From The Audience

When addressing an audience you must always strive to capture and retain their interest and attention.

It is fairly easy to determine whether you have the attention of the audience by taking note of **verbal** and **nonverbal** feedback from the audience. Verbal and nonverbal clues to communication has been covered has already been covered in a previous section. Refer to you notes.

If you are the participant in a debate you can judge from questions or remarks whether the audience is following you or not.

A person asking questions frequently indicates that he is following what you are saying and participating, while one who just sits there because he has to be there and doesn’t participate at all indicates that the person is not really interest in what you have to say.

Likewise if you are addressing a meeting you can observe the body language of the audience to indicate their level of participation or attention/interest.

* A person that looks around and at his watch every now and then and follows it up with a big yawn is not listening to you with attention.
* Some people will actually fall asleep.
* On the other hand the person keeping eye contact with you and occasionally taking notes has your undivided attention.

During presentations it is of utmost importance to get feedback from the audience. If they are not asking questions or participating in the presentation you can ask them questions. Do not embarrass them, however. It is usually good practice to ask a question and then let someone from the audience answer the question. If no one answers, you can answer the question and then ask someone if they agree. This is only one example of many, watch what other people are doing and, if you like the technique, adopt it.

If you have the interest and attention of your audience you know that what you are saying and conveying through your body language is getting through to your audience, but if you realise that your audience is not paying attention you need to employ some or all of the following strategies to capture their attention.

* **Repeat** and **emphasise** **key words** and phrases to stress their importance. You do this by adjusting the volume and pitch of your voice.
* Adjust the **pace** at which you speak to compliment what you are saying. You can talk slower and emphasise words to make a bigger impact on the audience.
* **Pause** for a second or two after saying something of importance to give the audience a chance to think about what you have said. The audience will make the connection that what you have said is important. Increase the volume and raise the pitch of your voice to emphasise important facts.
* **Ask rhetorical questions:** a rhetorical question is a question that does not require an answer.

Repeating words and phrases is very effective if you want to emphasise the importance of the statement. Sir Winston Churchill made very good use of repetition in his famous speeches during World War 11.

On 22 May 1940, after the British soldiers had been evacuated from Dunkirk, he said:

“**We shall fight** on the beaches, **we shall fight** on the landing-grounds, **we shall fight** in the fields and in the streets, **we shall fight** in the hills; *we shall* never surrender…

On 13 May 1940, just after he was elected prime Minister, he said that he had one aim:

“**Victory – victory** at all costs, **victory** in spite of terror; **victory**, however long and hard the road may be.”

Of course, he said many more memorable things and it is worthwhile reading about him. He was the Prime Minister of Britain during World War 11 and he was a rather colourful character – just what the British needed during wartime.

Political speakers are very good at capturing and holding the attention of the audience: sometimes they bang their hands or make use of exaggerated gestures to emphasize certain points they want you to think is important. They also adjust tone, pitch and volume to emphasize what they are saying. Another good example is a musical awards ceremony: have you noticed how the presenter drags out the moment of the announcement and then dramatises the announcement: “And the WINNER is….. SO AND SO FOR ….”

By mastering these techniques you can improve the effectiveness of your verbal communication. Learn from public speakers and apply their methods. You must, however, be careful of dramatising too much in the business world. Use their techniques, but tone it down – don’t shout or bang your hands on the dias or desk, instead talk louder and faster or slower to emphasize what your are saying.

As indicated previously, **body language** is a form of nonverbal communication and you as speaker can deduce what the level of interest of the audience is by observing their body language.

Likewise you can use body language to enhance what you are saying.

* Hand gestures,
* Facial expressions,
* Posture, etc.
* should be used by the speaker to reinforce important ideas and messages.

Ask Questions

Asking questions is one of the ways in which you can involve the audience in your presentation. To do this, however, you have to know the different types of questions and how to use them.

Certain types of questions will be more helpful than others:

Open Questions

These generally begin ‘How …?’ ‘What …?’ “Where …?’ “Who …?’ They require a fuller answer than ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. They may be used to**:**

* Gain information: ‘What happened as a result?’

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* Explore thoughts, feelings, attitudes and opinions: ‘What were you hoping to achieve?’ “How are you feeling having done that?’ “What’s your view on that?’
* Consider hypothetical situations and explore options: ‘What would help?’; ‘How might you deal with …?’; ‘What are the possible options for …?’
* ‘Why?’ questions are useful open questions, but can sometimes be less helpful if they sound too much as if they are judgmental – seeking justification for action. In such circumstances they can sound moralising: ‘Why did you do that?’

Closed questions

These invite a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer and as such may unhelpfully close down the options for responding: ‘Did you not think of that possibility?’; ‘Do you get on well?’

Repeated use of closed questions can take the discussion along a downward spiral of awkward communication with the client saying less and less and you becoming pressured to ask more and more questions.

There are times when closed questions are useful as a questioning summary: ‘So, overall, you are saying you were pleased with that session?’

Elaboration questions

These may or may not be open questions, and are used to encourage the person to elaborate on what has already been said: ‘Can you give me an example?’; ‘Can you say a little more about that?’

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Leading questions

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These suggest to the audience that a particular answer is expected, and that there are particular beliefs or values that should be held: ‘Do you really think that …?’ ‘Shouldn’t you be considering …?’

Multiple questions

Several different questions are asked in one sentence leading to potential confusion for both the client and yourself: ‘Is it that you feel … or that you think it would be better if … or perhaps that she should …?’.

Usually, you would use a mixture of the above questions when trying to elicit a response from the client.

Then, of course, you have to

* **Listen** to the answer,
* Pay attention to person’s body language for any hidden messages.

Active Listening

Now that you know how to capture and hold the audience’s attention and get feedback from the audience, you have to apply active listening skills to hear and understand what they are saying. You have to pay attention and focus on what the speaker says in order to respond appropriately to their comments and questions.

Listening should be active, not passive. There are several ways in which listeners can exert control in a discussion and prevent more powerful, educated or argumentative speakers from dominating the negotiation.

* Ask searching questions and stay with them until the replies satisfy you
* Restate the speaker's points as you understand them, forcing him/her to clarify cloudy areas
* Do not respond, or continue to make non‑committal responses until the speaker develops his argument more specifically
* Paraphrase the speaker's words, exposing the hidden cultural assumption and/or feelings of superiority.
* Ask questions that will bring the discussion back to the basic conflict of interests if this is being blurred.

Active listening is a **skill** and is as important as giving orders in obtaining results.

* Give your full attention to what is being said.
* Make sure that you really understand.
* Listen between the lines.
* Look for non-verbal clues.
* Mentally summarise and evaluate objectively.
* Be empathetic.
* Determine whether he expects: guidance, support, motivation, action or silence.

What Makes A Good Listener?

This is actually a question of feedback. Good listeners use a variety of non-verbal and minimal cues to keep the other person talking. These include the use of phrases such as:

* “Yes”
* “I understand”
* “And then what”
* “Tell me more”
* “If I understand you correctly…”

Although the above illustrates how your natural reactions to different states of emotion can influence the manner in which you speak, it must be mentioned that you can intentionally alter some or all of these factors to enhance what you are saying.

Do not to overdo such variations as this might have exactly the opposite effect on what you are trying to communicate.

When communicating with someone else you must always strive to do it as **naturally and evenly** as possible. Be yourself!!

Continuity And Interaction

During your address you need to maintain continuity and interaction throughout. This can be achieved by employing the following techniques.

**Respond to queries from the audience. This promotes participation from the audience and helps to maintain interest and attention.**

**Repeat information to stress importance and to allow for time to take notes.**

* **Reword** important ideas to ensure repetition of the message. This means that you say the same thing more than once, using different words.
* Ask **questions** to promote interaction and ensure understanding of the idea or message.
* Refer to **cue cards** to refresh listeners’ memory.
* Use **timing techniques** – coordinate use of visual and other aids to be appropriate to the message or idea.
* Respond to **cues** that audience contact is being lost. Employ techniques discussed thus far to overcome and remedy this problem.

Audience interest and attention

Politicians, such as our president, have their speeches prepared for them by someone else and they then read the speech, as you can see when you watch them on TV. This is fine if you are the president. If you are not, you had better not read your speech in front of your audience – you will lose their attention immediately.

When addressing an audience you must always strive to capture and retain their interest and attention.

It is fairly easy to determine whether you have the attention of the audience by taking note of **verbal** and **nonverbal** feedback from the audience. Verbal and nonverbal clues to communication has been covered extensively in the previous modules and sections. Refer back to your notes for full information.If you are the participant in a debate you can judge from questions or remarks/signs whether the audience is following you or not.

A person asking/signing questions frequently indicates that he is following what you are saying/signing and is participating, while one who just sits there because he has to be there and doesn’t participate at all indicates that the person is not really interest in what you have to say/sign.

Likewise if you are addressing a meeting you can observe the body language of the audience to indicate their level of participation or attention/interest.

* A person that looks around and at his watch every now and then and follows it up with a big yawn is not listening to you with attention.
* Some people will actually fall asleep.
* On the other hand the person keeping eye contact with you and occasionally taking notes has your undivided attention.

During presentations it is of utmost importance to get feedback from the audience. If they are not asking/signing questions or participating in the presentation you can ask/sign questions. Do not embarrass them, however. It is usually good practice to ask/sign a question and then let someone from the audience answer the question. If no one answers, you can answer the question and then ask someone if they agree. This is only one example of many, watch what other people are doing and, if you like the technique, adopt it.

If you have the interest and attention of your audience you know that what you are saying/signing and conveying through your body language is getting through to your audience, but if you realise that your audience is not paying attention you need to employ some or all of the following strategies to capture their attention.

* **Repeat** and **emphasise** **key words** and phrases to stress their importance. You do this by adjusting the volume and pitch of your voice, the size of your signs and using NMF’s..
* Adjust the **pace** at which you speak to compliment what you are saying/signing. You can talk/sign slower and emphasise words to make a bigger impact on the audience.
* **Pause** for a second or two after saying/signing something of importance to give the audience a chance to think about what you have said/signed. The audience will make the connection that what you have said/signed is important. Increase the volume and raise the pitch of your voice or size of your sign to emphasise important facts.
* **Ask rhetorical questions:** a rhetorical question is a question that does not require an answer.

By mastering these techniques you can improve the effectiveness of your verbal communication. Learn from public speakers and apply their methods. You must, however, be careful of dramatising too much in the business world. Use their techniques, but tone it down – don’t shout or bang your hands on the dias or desk, instead talk louder and faster or slower to emphasize what your are saying.

As indicated previously, **body language** is a form of nonverbal communication and you as speaker can deduce what the level of interest of the audience is by observing their body language. Likewise you can use body language to enhance what you are saying. Hand gestures, Facial expressions, Posture, etc. should be used by the speaker to reinforce important ideas and messages.

During your address you need to maintain continuity and interaction throughout. This can be achieved by employing the following techniques.

Respond to queries from the audience. This promotes participation from the audience and helps to maintain interest and attention.

**Repeat information to stress importance and to allow for time to take notes.**

* **Reword** important ideas to ensure repetition of the message. This means that you say the same thing more than once, using different words.
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* Respond to **cues** that audience contact is being lost. Employ techniques discussed thus far to overcome and remedy this problem.

Improve Your Communication Skills

Pointers before you speak:

* If you are uncertain ask questions. Do not make assumptions by hearing what you want to hear. Make sure what you hear is correct.
* Be well prepared. If you know what you are speaking about you command attention and respect.
* Choose your words carefully as they not only express your thoughts, they also impress the listener or receiver. The impression your words make motivates the reaction you receive.
* Think before you speak. Organise your thoughts and know what you want to say. Don’t just ramble on.
* Use clear simple language. Select vocabulary that your audience will relate to and understand.
* Be specific in your choice of words so that your message or information can be correctly interpreted. Assumptions result in the incorrect interpretation of your message, your answer or the information you are sharing.
* Use correct pronunciation. Use your mouth, relax your jaw and move your lips to help you pronounce words correctly.
* Watch your pace, don’t speak too fast and don’t speak too slowly either.
* Watch your stance, or the way in which you stand and move about. Certain movements such as fidgeting and twitching can be irritating.
* Remember that your body language, and your voice control, together with your facial expressions, especially your eyes, is the mirror of your emotions. They will tell whether you are nervous, afraid, uncertain, happy, sad, angry, irritated, uncertain, confident, satisfied, positive, hesitant, insolent, sure of yourself, etc.
* Be polite and considerate. Respect the thoughts and opinions of others even if you do not agree.
* The pitch of your voice must be acceptable, not too high or too low.
* Listen to the rise and fall (inflection) of your voice. Do not speak on the same note it becomes monotonous or boring.
* The tone of your voice creates the atmosphere or setting for the conversation. It could be friendly or aggressive, sad or happy. The tone determines the response or the amount of interaction you will receive.
* Make use of the pause especially if you want to make a point or stress an important fact. But don’t pause too often.
* Avoid making use of qualifiers such as repeatedly using “OK” or “Um or Er and Ah”
* Listen before you answer
* Never chip in or interrupt to say something.

Improve your listening skills

**1. Stop talking:** You cannot listen if you are talking.

**2. Put the talker at ease:** Help a person feel free to talk, create a permissive environment.

**3. Show a talker that you want to listen:** Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while someone talks. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.

**4. Remove distractions:** Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?

**5. Empathise with talkers:** Try to help yourself see the other person’s point of view.

**6. Be patient:** Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt a talker. Don't start for the door or walk away.

**7. Hold your temper:** An angry person takes the wrong meaning from words.

**8. Go easy on argument and criticism:** These put people on the defensive, and they may "clam up" or become angry. Do not argue: Even if you win, you lose!

**9. Ask questions:** This encourages a talker and shows that you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

**10. Stop talking!:** This is the first and last, because all other guidelines depend on it. You cannot do an effective listening job while you are talking.

* Take notes and ask the speaker to repeat phrases that are not clear

Surveys show individuals listen about 25% of the time.

**You recall only 50% of what you hear when you actually listen.**

70% of all misunderstandings happen because people do not listen to each other.

If we do not upgrade our listening skills we increase the potential for conflict to occur.

What can we do? Focus on developing the following will go a long way to building good working relationships and minimising misunderstandings.

1. Patience



2. Focus

3. Open-minded

Two men were walking along a crowded sidewalk in a downtown business area. Suddenly one exclaimed, “Listen to the lovely sound of that cricket!” But the other could not hear. He asked his companion how he could detect the sound of the cricket amidst the din of people and traffic. The first man, who was a zoologist, had trained himself to listen to the voices of nature, but he did not explain. He simply took a coin out of his pocket and dropped it on the sidewalk, whereupon a dozen people began to look about them. “ We hear,” he said “ what we listen for.”

When You Are The Communicator

When you are the communicator of the message, it is your responsibility to ensure that the format of the message is suitable for the recipient. It is also your responsibility to ensure that the recipient understands the message.

* Think about the message that you want to convey
* Think about the format of the messsage – written or verbal
* Think about the language of the message, especially when technical terms are involved
* Consider cultural differences and the effect this will have on the message and the recipient
* Consider the needs of the recipient of the message
* Do not assume that the recipient has a certain level of knowledge about the subject
* Ensure that you give the recipient enough information
* Ensure that the recipient knows which part of the message is important
* Be aware of your own perceptions when you think about the content of the message
* Communicate directly with the recipient where possible

The best way to determine whether the recipient has received and understood the message is not by asking: Do you understand?”, as the recipient is likely to say Yes. Rather have the recipient repeat the message in his/her own words. Then you can check whether the message was understood.

# EVALUATE SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Learning outcome

Evaluate spoken discourse

Assessment criteria

* Points of view in spoken/signed texts are identified and meaning described in relation to context and purpose of the interaction
* Values, attitudes and assumptions in discourse are identified and their influence on the interaction described
* Techniques used by speakers/signers to evade or dissipate responsibility for an issue are identified and interpretations of the text reflect this insight
* The impact (e.g. clarity of purpose, speaker’s / signer’s capability) is described, explained and judged

Manipulative Use of Language

People use different techniques to manipulate their use of language to distort reality. This is used in advertising, news coverage and political speeches, to mention a few. This can be done deliberately or unintentionally.

Fact and Opinion

A fact is something that everyone accepts as being true, as it cannot be perceived to be anything else, e.g. night follows day follows night etc. This fact has always been true and will be true for as long as we exist.

An opinion, on the other hand, is not necessarily based on fact and can be challenged by proving the contrary, e.g. there are dark clouds in the sky, accompanied by thunder. Due to these factors you are of the opinion that it is going to rain, however, the storm can blow over without a drop of rain falling.

Omission of Necessary Information

Often it is not what is said, but that what is NOT said that conveys a specific, and sometimes deliberate, message to the receiver.

During compiling a summary of a speech or statement, some important ideas or facts may be omitted by the person compiling the summary, thus conveying a different message from the message originally intended by the speaker.

Politicians more than often emphasise what their party does in respect of a certain matter and then neglects to admit the shortcomings of the party regarding the same matter.

Advertisers often unscrupulously leave out necessary information in order to promote their products. Before advertising of tobacco- and related products was banned by legislation, the niceties of using a certain brand of cigarette or related tobacco product was promoted, without warning the prospective user of the potential hazardous effects of smoking. Smokers were always shown having so much fun in exotic holiday destinations: water skiing, swimming, lazing in the sun and then having a cigarette afterwards. The message was that you would have a good time if you smoked, which is, of course not true – not everyone can afford a luxury overseas holiday in Hawaii or some exotic place. In fact, if you smoke you can be sure of having a very sordid and agonising death from lung cancer or some other smoke related disease.

Most advertisers use some form of deceit when advertising their products: “You can buy a cell phone for only R….. “ and then right at the end they say: “Terms and conditions apply.” In effect, you first have to find out what the terms and conditions are before you can decide whether the product is such a bargain.

Newspaper and TV journalists are known for adding sensation to their stories. One of the ways in which they do this is by only giving one point of view.

Be alert when you deal with advertisements and other forms of mass communication. Always wait and see if there is something more behind the message than what is said. If you can, find out for yourself what the other facts of the matter are that they are not telling you.

We all use manipulative language from time to time. When I was a child and I got into trouble over doing something wrong, I did not usually tell my parents everything since I would get into even more trouble. Where possible I left out the worst details and hoped that they would not find out.