
INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

TOPIC #4: Communication

TIME PERIOD: 2-3 days

CORE STANDARD #1: Individual: The students will examine the principles of personal development related to self-awareness and relationships.

OBJECTIVE: Students will identify and practice the skills necessary for effective communication.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS (COMPETENCIES):

- 20.0001-0112 Examine the importance of good communication skills.
- 20.0001-0113 Define the term *communication*.
- 20.0001-0114 Differentiate between verbal, nonverbal, and written methods of communication.
- 20.0001-0444 Identify communication-related careers.

LIFE SKILLS:

- * Lifelong Learning
- Complex Thinking
- * Effective Communication
- Collaboration
- Responsible Citizenship
- * Employability

RELATED CAREERS:

Writer
Public Relations Specialist
Newscasters
Advertising Specialist
Teachers

OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTERS:

Business-Information Management
Business-Marketing/Management
Business-Marketing/Sales
Business-Marketing/Sales
Social-Humanitarian; Family and Consumer Sciences

**LIST OF ACTIVITIES:****SUPPLIES REQUIRED:**

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | "The Water Closet" Story (Motivator) | |
| 2. | Communication Basics | |
| | A. Definition of Communication | Small posters or overhead transparency (4.13) |
| | B. Communication Methods: | Small posters or overhead transparencies (4.14-4.16) |
| | - Verbal | |
| | - Nonverbal | |
| | - Written | |
| | C. Types of Communicators | Scrambled words (4.17-4.22) Mobile posters (4.23-4.28) Masking tape |
| 3. | Nonverbal Communication Activities | |
| | A. Nonverbal Class Activity | |
| | B. Nonverbal Communication Collage (Extra credit/homework activity) | Magazines, paper, glue, scissors |
| 4. | Speaking/Listening Activities | |
| | A. Speaking/Listening Game | Copies of directions for students (4.29-4.30) |
| | B. Waiter/Waitress Activity | Restaurant menus (4.31) Order pads, pencils |
| 5. | Identification of Related Careers | Career information (4.32-4.33) Career posters (4.34-4.38) |



PROCEDURE

CONCEPT: Our communication skills are the basis of our relationships—when we communicate well, we can build strong relationships; when we communicate poorly, we tear down or damage relationships. To have success in relationships, on the job, at home, or at school, we must practice good communication skills.

1. **"THE WATER CLOSET" STORY (MOTIVATOR)**

Read "The Water Closet" story (page 4.12) to the students. Then have a brief discussion that leads the students to identify that the basic problem was a lack of adequate communication on the part of the little old lady (the sender) and the schoolmaster (the receiver). Then direct their attention to the misunderstandings that followed and potential problems stemming from the inadequate communication. This story illustrates why good communication skills, both sending and receiving, are very important.

2. **COMMUNICATION BASICS**

A. Discuss the definition of the term communication and the three major methods of communication with the students using the patterns on pages 4.13-4.16 for small posters or overhead transparencies.

**COMMUNICATION: THE PROCESS OF EXCHANGING
THOUGHTS, MESSAGES, OR
INFORMATION BETWEEN TWO OR MORE
PEOPLE.**

B. There are three major methods of communicating:

Verbal = Exchanging messages with spoken words
Nonverbal = Exchanging messages with body language
Written = Exchanging messages with written words.

Each method requires a sender and a receiver for communication to occur.

C. There are six types of personal communicators.

The communicator types are:

| | | | |
|-------------|-----|--------------|-------------|
| 1) SPEAKERS | and | 2) LISTENERS | (VERBAL) |
| 3) WRITERS | and | 4) READERS | (WRITTEN) |
| 5) ACTORS | and | 6) OBSERVERS | (NONVERBAL) |

Divide the class into six (6) groups and give each group one of the communicator types to unscramble (pages 4.17-4.22). When each group finishes, have them display their words on the chalkboard or bulletin board.



NOTE: It is recommended that the letters for each of the six types of communicators be run on a different color to avoid mix-ups and facilitate the classroom activity.

Using the small posters depicting the six types of communicators (pages 4.23-4.28), make three mobiles to illustrate the necessity of having both a sender and a receiver for communication to occur. In each of the methods of personal communication, there are always two parties involved:

Writer >>> <<< Reader (Mobile 1)

Speaker >>> <<< Listener (Mobile 2)

Actor >>> <<< Observer (Mobile 3)

Communication is a two-way activity and cannot be completed alone. Each type of communication requires certain skills to be practiced for successful communication. Some of those skills will be learned during this unit of study.

D. Discuss the following items briefly:

1) we communicate information about ourselves by the way we act, speak, listen, and dress

2) through our actions, speech, dress, etc., we communicate to others:

- how we feel about ourselves
- what is important to us
- the kind of person we are

Review with the students some of the ways self-concept is communicated from Topic 2: Self-Concept (pages 2.3-2.6).



3. **NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES**

A. Nonverbal Class Activity

As this activity begins, have the students "freeze" in their physical positions. Ask the students what message(s) he/she is sending to you, the teacher, about him/her by the way he/she is sitting, etc., without saying any words? Then discuss the various methods and aspects of nonverbal communication with students. Lead the students into identifying commonly used forms of nonverbal communication. The teacher might keep a running list of these on the board as the discussion and identification process continues. Some forms of nonverbal communication are:

- The way we sit, stand, walk, act
- The way we dress, colors we wear, comb our hair, etc.
- The way our bedroom looks
- The way we do our homework/schoolwork
- Being on time to class or meeting
- The way we treat others:
 - being interested, attentive listening
 - ignoring what someone else says
 - the distance we place from people we don't know; moving toward people we like
- Our body gestures:
 - shrugging our shoulders
 - waving, saluting, other hand gestures
 - touching (hitting, pinching, patting, shaking hands, tapping)
 - staring at someone or something
 - slamming a door, drawer, or whatever
 - pouting, the silent treatment
- Our facial expressions:
 - smiling, frowning, lip gestures
 - rolling our eyes, raising our eyebrows
 - tightening our jaw
 - face coloring, blushing
 - widening or squinting our eyes

These are all examples of nonverbal communication about ourselves. Caution students that many times their nonverbal communication speaks louder than the things they say.



B. Nonverbal Communication Collage

Have the students make a collage (individually or in pairs) of pictures depicting various forms of nonverbal communication. Give the students some magazines, paper, glue, and scissors and let them find pictures of people sending a nonverbal message by their body gestures or facial expressions. Students should find pictures depicting five (5) different messages. Have the students write the nonverbal message depicted below the pictures. This activity could also be used for extra credit and/or homework.

4. SPEAKING/LISTENING ACTIVITIES

A. Speaking/Listening Game

Divide the class into pairs. One person in each pair should have one of the #1 directions (page 4.29) and the other person should have one of the #2 directions (page 4.30). Instruct the students NOT to let their partner see their set of directions. Allow students about two minutes to complete this exercise.

NOTE: It is recommended that the direction sheets for the students be copied on different colors of paper to avoid confusion. Also, the teacher might put the #1s in one basket or container, and the #2s in a second basket or container for drawing. The teacher needs to copy enough of the directions on pages 4.29-4.30 so each student has either a #1 or a #2. Also, there needs to be an equal number of #1s and #2s so the students can work in pairs.

At the end of this exercise, discuss with the students how they felt during this exercise. Then review some good listening skills with the class. A good listener will:

- * Sit or stand near the person with whom they are communicating.
- * Maintain good eye contact.
- * Give feedback—let them know you are listening.
- * Concentrate on what they are saying.
- * Let the person finish what they are saying without interrupting.
- * Watch the speaker's body language—it will help you understand what he/she is really saying.
- * Not try to do something else while someone is talking to him/her.

Good listening skills improve communication. The way we listen to others may distract or enhance communication. We need to practice our listening skills in order to improve our communication.



B. Waiter/Waitress Activity

Discuss with the students the fact that listening is a very important on-the-job skill for all jobs and/or careers. Many accidents or harmful things can occur when people don't listen or follow instructions carefully. For example:

- What could happen if an employee didn't listen to directions on how to operate expensive or complicated equipment?
- What would happen if a delivery person (or ambulance driver) didn't listen to directions on how to get to an address?
- What would happen if a pharmacist didn't follow a doctor's prescription carefully?
- The teacher can add other illustrations as desired.

Have students practice their listening skills by playing waiter/waitress. Divide students into groups of four or five. One student should be the waiter/waitress, the others will be the "family" ordering the food. Give each group a copy of the menu (page 4.31). The family should order their dinner, just as they would in a restaurant—except they CANNOT repeat their order. They may only state what they want one time. After the waiter/waitress has taken all of the orders, he/she should repeat the order to check it for errors. Members of the group should then change roles and take turns taking the order.

Continue the class discussion by addressing the following questions:

- What problems were discovered in this activity?
- How should a person speak if they want to be understood?
- What could you do to become a better listener?
- Does it irritate you when someone doesn't listen to you?
 - a. What could you do to remedy this problem?
 - b. How do you think others feel when you don't listen to them?
- What jobs require excellent listening skills?

Listening is an important on-the-job skill. Speaking clearly and listening attentively are both very important parts of successful communication.



5. **IDENTIFICATION OF RELATED CAREERS**

Although good communication skills are a necessary part of all jobs and/or careers, some careers are specifically communication based. Using the career information (pages 4.32-4.33) and the career posters (pages 4.34-4.38), identify some of the specific communication-related careers. The career posters can be hung in the room or displayed in the presentation area for reference as the teacher talks about these careers.

The software, CHOICES and/or CHOICES, JR., is available in your career counseling center to obtain current salary and job outlook information regarding the careers identified in this topic.

SUMMARY: Communication is a two-way activity and cannot be completed alone. There are three major methods of communication and six types of personal communicators. Each method of communication requires certain skills to be practiced for successful communication. Communication skills can be improved with practice. Good listening skills always improve communication

Listening is an important on-the-job skill. Speaking clearly and listening attentively are both very important parts of successful communication. Nonverbal communication often speaks louder than the things we say. Printed or written information is a very common form of communication that is easy to understand but often more difficult to write. Good communication skills are helpful in making group decisions.

**CORE TEST QUESTION BANK****UNIT: INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS****TOPIC: COMMUNICATION****20.0001-0112 Examine the importance of good communication skills.**

1. Good communication skills are important when:
 - a. Making a group decision
 - b. Handling personal conflicts
 - c.* Answers a and b are both right
 - d. Neither answer is right

2. Good communication skills are:
 - a. Something we are all born with
 - b.* Something we must learn and practice
 - c. Always learned from television
 - d. Always learned from other kids

3. Good communication skills:
 - a. Help us to be better workers
 - b. Help us to be better family members
 - c. Help us to be a better friend
 - d.* All of these answers are right

4. Poor communication skills:
 - a.* Can increase tension at home
 - b. Are okay to use most of the time
 - c. Are easier to understand
 - d. Make others feel good about themselves

5. Clear, concise written communication is:
 - a. Not important to know how to do
 - b. Not necessary on the job or at school
 - c.* Often difficult to do
 - d. Easy for everyone to do

6. Learning to express ourselves clearly in written communication:
 - a.* Is an important life skill to have
 - b. Is not an important life skill to have
 - c. Won't make any difference in our lives
 - d. Is not important on a job



TEST QUESTIONS

7. Being a good listener:
- Doesn't take any practice
 - Comes naturally
 - * Takes a lot of practice
 - Isn't really important
8. A good listener:
- Is always anxious to speak
 - Can cause problems in a friendship
 - Should always express their opinions
 - * Makes the speaker feel important
9. Place a check by each of the four (4) items that are skills of a good listener:
- | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | a. | Sit or stand near the person with whom you are communicating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | b. | Look at the person's hair and hands while they are talking to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | c. | Maintain good eye contact and concentrate on what the speaker is saying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | d. | Watch the television while someone is talking to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | e. | Let the person finish what they are saying before you say anything |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | f. | Watch their body language for nonverbal messages |

20.0001-0113 *Define the term communication.*

1. "Communication" means:
- Reading, writing, and arithmetic
 - Speaking, writing, or acting
 - * Exchanging thoughts, messages, or information
 - Teaching a school subject

20.0001-0114 *Differentiate between verbal, nonverbal, and written methods of communication.*

1. Place a check by each of the four (4) items that are types of nonverbal communication.
- | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | a. | Shrugging your shoulders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | b. | Smiling or frowning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | c. | Raising your voice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | d. | Slamming a cupboard door or drawer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> * | e. | Ignoring someone when they speak to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | f. | Interrupting another conversation |



TEST QUESTIONS

2. Place a check by each of the three (3) items that are methods of communicating about ourselves to others:
- * a. The way I talk and act
- * b. The way I treat others
- * c. The way I do my homework
- d. The way my brother or sister acts
- e. The way my mother talks
- f. The way my dad dresses

20.0001-0444 Identify communication-related careers.

1. Some careers that relate to communication and require excellent communication skills are:
- A. Writer, school teacher, plumber, administrative assistant
- B. Newscaster, professional ball player, retail sales
- C.* Advertising specialist, physician, school teacher, writer
- D. Movie star, carpenter, musician, paper carrier
2. Any career path can be enhanced by the use of effective communication skills.
- A.* True
- B. False
3. A public relations specialist:
- A. Serves as the spokesperson for a company with the media
- B. Develops strategies to improve a corporate image
- C. Writes news releases for a company
- D.* All of the above
4. School teachers don't need to be very good communicators because the students know what they mean anyway.
- A. True
- B.* False