

Non-verbal Communication: Distance and Space

Summary

Nonverbal Day

The majority of our communication is nonverbal. Nonverbal communication is often referred to as body language. Body language includes facial expression, posture, eye contact, gestures and many other subtle signals that we all interpret subconsciously. Body language is something that is learned. When there is a conflict between verbal and non-verbal communication we always believe the nonverbal. Culture, regional area and even gender can influence nonverbal communication.

Body Language Day

Our comfort level around people is greatly affected by distance and space. Distance and space are a part of our nonverbal communication/body language.

Main Core Tie

Adult Roles And Responsibilities

[Strand 2 Standard 2](#)

Additional Core Ties

Adult Roles and Financial Literacy

[Strand 4 Standard 2](#)

Materials

- [Vocabulary Nonverbal Teacher Key and Student Worksheet](#)
- [Nonverbal Communication Instruction Sheet](#)
- [Nonverbal Communication Reading Packet](#)
- [Nonverbal Communication Worksheet](#)
- [Nonverbal Communication Worksheet Teacher Answers](#)
- Sign for door
- DVD or video
- Ads from magazines
- [Nursery Rhymes Worksheet](#)
- [Pantomime Worksheet](#)
- Index cards with emotions written on each card
- [Body Language Worksheet](#)
- [Personal Space/Distance Lecture Notes](#)
- [Personal Space/Distance Lecture Transparency](#)
- [Personal Space/Distance Lecture Student Worksheet](#)
- [Personal Space/Distance Lecture Student Worksheet Answers](#)
- Video
- Assignment on people's reaction to breaking rules of nonverbal behavior

Instructional Procedures

Vocabulary

Primary Vocabulary

Nonverbal Communication

Body Language

Supplementary Vocabulary

Intimate Zone
Personal Zone
Social Zone
Public Zone

Introduction/Pre-Assessment

Introduction for Nonverbal Communication:

In a reflective journal, or a prompt writing assignment, have the students write about "What is nonverbal communication" and/or "How important is nonverbal communication?"

Introduction for Personal Space/Distance Territory:

Complete the following activity on personal space.

Have a volunteer leave the classroom. The teacher informs the rest of the class that when the volunteer returns to the classroom, the teacher will move closer and closer to the volunteer student invading his/her personal space. The class should notice at what point the volunteer feels uncomfortable and what the student's reactions to the situation are.

The volunteer returns to the classroom and is instructed to stand in front of the class to be interviewed. The teacher should begin by standing 3-4 feet away from the student volunteer. As the teacher talks with the student, the teacher slowly inches closer and closer to the student, forcing the student to back away when his/her safety zone has been invaded. The volunteer will likely begin backing away as the teacher gets within about 18 inches. The student will most likely be comfortable at a distance of about 24 inches.

As a class, try to determine at what distance they felt the volunteer was most comfortable, at exactly what point the student became uncomfortable, at what point did the volunteer began backing away.

Content Outline, Activities and Teaching Strategies:

Option 1: Nonverbal Day

Supplies:

Sign for the door that states "This is an experience in nonverbal communication. There will be NO talking in this class today".

- [Nonverbal Communication Instruction Sheets](#) (pdf)

for each student (a classroom set)

a classroom set of the [communication packet](#) (pdf)

a [nonverbal communication question sheet](#) (pdf) for each student

video or DVD of a movie that is appropriate to show, and preferably one that the students have not seen so they have to watch the movie to see what it is all about (older movies are good choices)

15 ads taken from magazines with the captions cut off. Mount these ads on construction paper, number them and then attach the captions on the back. (Laminating these ads help them last longer).

Begin your class period with the nonverbal day activity. Write in large letters on the whiteboard "Today will be an experience in nonverbal communication. There will be NO verbal communication in this room at all". The teacher will use nonverbal communication to show students what they will be doing this class period (this is found in the nonverbal communication instruction sheet). (Exaggerating motions and hamming it up is helpful in getting attention and showing them what needs to be done. Do not allow ANY verbal communication to take place). See supply list for this activity.

Allow 45-60 minutes to complete this activity. At the end of the allotted time period talk about the experience they have just completed. Discuss in detail what they have done that day, such as the worksheet and packet, the video and the ads.

- What was the nonverbal communication that was going on that period?
- How did they feel about this day?
- Were they able to do what they needed to do with verbal communication?

- How close to what they wrote in their journal or prompt writing assignment were they to what they learned today about nonverbal communication?

Option 2: UEN Lesson Plan ARR

Look at the [nonverbal communication lesson by Doreen Robinson](#). Read the article, "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" Sherlock Holmes activity.

Option 3: Nursery Rhymes

Have volunteers recite the same nursery rhyme, using non-verbal means to portray different feelings and moods.

Option 4: Pantomime

Have students act out the described action on the [Pantomime Worksheet](#) (pdf). You could also invite your drama club to come in and do some pantomimes. Discuss with the class how our bodies communicate much more than our language in given situations.

Option 5: Charades

Play charades. Write as many emotions as you can possibly come up with (such as anger, boredom, confusion, excitement, happiness, guilt, surprise, impatience, shyness, etc.) on index cards. Divide the class in half and have each team select a volunteer to come up, and with actions only, portray the emotion that is listed on the index card. Set a time limit to guess. The winning team is determined by the most points or correct guesses made. Teacher could also act out body language signals that are sent to teachers from students. Have students guess what these body signals mean, such as: head on the desk, looking at the clock, eyes fixed on teacher and nodding head in affirmative manner, etc. each card.

Option 6: Body Language Worksheet

Have students complete [Body Language Worksheet](#) (pdf).

Option 7: Textbook

Have students read from the textbook: *Strengthening Family and Self*, pages 109-127.

Personal Space/Distance/Territory

Option 1: Lecture/Discussion on Personal Space/Distance

Follow [Teacher Notes on Personal Space](#) (pdf) to teach about passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior and how they relate to conflict resolution. Have students take notes on the [Worksheet for PAA and Conflict Resolution](#) (pdf).

Option 2: Video

Have students watch the video entitled *Body Language/Beyond Words and Body Language II: Reading People* from <http://www.learningseed.com/>.

Option 3: Writing Assignment

This is a report on what happens when we break the rules of nonverbal behavior. Assign each student to choose one commonly accepted rule of nonverbal behavior and then to break that rule. They should report on other peoples' reactions to their behavior. (Example: Standing too close to person, standing too far away, moving in on someone else's "marked territory", moving another person's "territorial markers", walking against the traffic flow in the hall, taking someone else's seat in another class, turned the wrong direction in an elevator, etc.) Make sure they conduct this "experiment in a safe environment". Report to the class what they did and what their findings were.

Authors

[CTE LESSON PLANS](#)