A Journey through Communications

An Introduction to Communication Studies

Melissa Lynn Doty

Dr. Abeer Ali Rasheed
Acknowledgements:

First Author: Melissa Lynn Doty
Corresponding Author: Dr. Abeer Ali Rasheed
Editor in Chief: Hannah Seagrave
Editing Team: Jeff Laune & Dana Murray
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PREFACE

Communication skills are required for each and every person. However, it became an essential requirement for the students during their study and subsequently after they join the market force. Hence it became an integral part of the Curriculum of Preparatory Year. Recognizing the importance of this soft skill, this book has been written and designed to acquire these skills. Substantial efforts and tremendous time have been exerted and spent by the authors to make this book available. I, personally, had a chance to read the book and I found it very useful for the purpose it was written. It is, therefore, hoped that the Methods and other Contents prescribed therein, are seriously studied, with letter & spirits.

Best of luck.

Prof. Dr. Abdullah A. Al-Rubaish

President
Dear Students,

It is our pleasure to provide you with this book to accompany you throughout your journey into the world of communication. It is our firm belief that in studying communications and being intentional about improving your everyday interactions, the world becomes a better place with increased understanding.

Though you have been communicating your entire lives, we encourage you to look at this subject with a fresh mind as you make your way toward being a professional and effective communicator!

Have fun!

Melissa Lynn Doty and Dr. Abeer Ali Rasheed
Chapter One:

Importance of Communication

“You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can’t get them across, your ideas won’t get you anywhere.”

- Lee Lacocca

Think back to the very first time in life that you communicated. It wasn’t the first word that you spoke, nor was it when you learned to write your name—it was through your first cry. As a newborn baby, you had needs to be fulfilled such as hunger and thirst. There were times that you needed a diaper change or wanted attention but you hadn’t yet learned “words” to communicate it. A cry let your caregivers know that you needed something. Your parents would hear the cry and attempt to figure out the exact message you were trying to communicate. Did you need to be fed? Maybe you had a fever and needed medical attention. Sometimes you just wanted a little extra attention. As you grew older, you heard the language spoken around you and learned that different words had different meanings.

Soon you were able to more easily identify what you needed by participating in this social world. By saying “ice cream” you were given a sweet treat, by saying “no” you showed
your dislike. Further communication competence allowed you to become a member of a family unit, a classroom, and even a larger community. Through many forms of communication you were able to engage in the world around you, oftentimes you may not have been aware that you were even communicating.

In this Chapter:
• Define the importance of Communication
• Understand how signs get their meaning
• Match appropriate communication channel with situation

What is Communications?

By now you’ve realized that communication is much more than just words: it includes body language, facial expressions, what we wear, the tone and volume of our voice, eye contact, and much more. Communication is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing this sense with others. Humans do this by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages. We are always communicating. In fact, a person cannot not communicate! Perhaps you are sitting in class feeling bored with the lecture, it is likely that your face and posture will show the teacher that you are not interested in the lecture.

Effective Communication is essential in college, with family, in marriage, the workplace, and throughout every stage of life. It is how we transfer information to one another. Richard Branson, businessman and owner of Virgin Airlines, said, “communication is a skill that you can
learn. It’s like riding a bicycle or typing. If you’re willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.”¹ It may take you time to practice and learn, but it will benefit you for a lifetime!

How We Communicate

People communicate through the use of symbols, signs, and behaviors. Symbols are arbitrary representations of something else; meaning that they have no fixed or concrete meaning—only the meaning and significance that people (we) assign to them. For example, an “apple” only becomes an “apple” when people collectively label that particular fruit as apple.

Often different individuals assign varying meanings to the same symbol. We talked about the meaning of the word “apple” being used to refer to a fruit. But that is not the only thing that apple means. In recent history, when people say apple they could be talking about the Apple (™) brand such as an iPhone (™) or Macintosh (™) computer. These kinds of words are called homophones, words with the same spelling and sound but different meanings.

This is the same with hand gestures. Look at the hand gesture depicted below². What does it mean to you?

² Francine Yep, Okay Doke, www.HealthTap.com
In places like the U.S.A, Australia, and the U.K, people generally view this hand gesture as a symbol for “okay” “great,” or perfect.” It would be normal to see a waiter ask the customers how they like their food and for the customers to respond with this hand gesture, especially if they had food in their mouths at the time that they were asked. The gesture would communicate to the waiter that the food good and everything was OK. However, this hand gesture does not hold the same meaning everywhere. In Brazil, for example, the very same hand gesture is considered extremely offensive and insulting. If a tourist or visitor in Brazil were to give this sign to someone it could get him or her into serious trouble or even cause a fight. Thus, it is important to understand that meaning is at the heart of communication and that we create it through the process of communicating.

Do you ever find yourself talking to clarify your thoughts, deciding how to interpret nonverbal behaviors, labeling feelings and hopes to give them reality? We actively create meaning by manipulating symbols. Remember, symbols can be words, sounds or visuals, which convey meaning to represent thoughts, concepts, objects, experiences, etc. Because we give
meanings to symbols, we must remember that not everyone will interpret a symbol in the same way. Understanding this may help in minimizing miscommunications around us.

**Language**

Language is a system of symbols (words or vocabulary) structured by rules that make it possible for people to understand each other. There are nearly 7,000\(^3\) languages in the world and every language has different dialects. Dialects are particular forms of language specific to a region or group of people. For example, though Arabic is spoken in both Jeddah and Dammam, the sounds of the words differ when spoken by the citizens of each city.

According to noted American Sociologist George Herbert Mead, “language is at the heart of the of the self. Human beings, unlike animals, communicate through symbols. Symbols represent objects in our own minds and in the minds of others. When we learn, in childhood to think of an object symbolically--whether the object is a parent or toy--we are making an initial step on the road to reflective thinking and autonomous agency.”

The words that we speak are symbols for objects and ideas. We learn this from our environment as we grow and hear it around us. We connect their meanings to words. It is important to note that language is symbolic. Meanings can differ from person to person and place to place. For example, in the U.S, “to take tea” refers to drinking tea. However, in England “to take tea” refers to dinner. If an American were to invite a British person over for “tea” the English guest would certainly leave hungry and confused if they didn’t know the American meaning.

We learn to associate certain ideas with certain symbols. Think about signs for restaurants or logos for clothing, perfume, hotels, or even automobiles. When we see them we associate a certain level of quality, price, luxury, prestige, or even a feeling! This is because advertisements and society’s perception of the products, and/or services.

Take a look at the logos on page 12 and see if you can identify them even though their names are not displayed. What do you think of when you see these logos? Are some seen as more elite than others? Why do you think that is?

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Lay’s®, Logo, im.rediff.com

Rob Janoff, Apple Logo, image.freepik.com

Carolyn Davidson, Nike Logo, famouslogos.net

Enzo Ferrari. Ferrari Emblem, listcarbrands.com

I’Gabrielle Chanel, Chanel, images.vectorhq.com

PPC Design, Pharmacy Logo, pharmacy.safeway.com
Real Story

Crossing the border from Khobar, Saudi Arabia to Bahrain one of the first things that a person sees is the sign for McDonald's. There was a family who travelled to Bahrain several times a month, they had a small child named Reema who could not read or write, but was learning to talk. Every time they crossed the border Reema would get excited and yell “Bahrain!” One day Reema was in Khobar, riding in the car with her mom when they passed a McDonald's and she saw the big golden M of McDonald’s. “Mama! Bahrain!” she yelled!

Discussion: Using the terms you have learned so far, why did Reema yell “Bahrain?”
Channels

In the 21st century, we have more ways to communicate with each other than ever before. **Globalization** means that societies, economies, cultures and peoples of the world are becoming more connected than ever before. We can virtually connect with someone on the other side of the planet in a matter of seconds through Skype™. We can keep in touch with friends and family from all around the world through social networking such as Facebook (™) and Instagram™. There is no shortage of ways for us to correspond with the world around us. When we need to communicate a **message**, a set of ideas or information, to someone, we have many choices as to how to get the message to them.

**Channels** are the ways that we get our messages to another person such as phone, e-mail, fax, or even the air when we are talking to someone face-to-face. With so many channels available it is necessary to consider which one best fits our purpose. So how do we decide on the correct channel?
We must consider both our intended message and audience, or to whom we are sending our message. To put it another way, what are we saying and who are we saying it to? Let’s imagine you want to invite your friend to your house in the evening for dinner. First you must choose the channel through which you will make contact. You could write a letter and send it through the mail, but it wouldn’t arrive in a timely manner. Furthermore, it would appear oddly formal between two close friends. Another option would be to create a video, however this would take a lot of time and effort for a simple dinner invitation. The best option here is to call or send a text message, direct message (DM), Snap, etc. to your friend.

If the message or audience were to change, then you would need to reconsider your channel. For example, let’s say that you were talking with your grandmother instead of a friend, and she is unfamiliar with texting, or the various forms of contemporary communication. In this case, you would call her or visit her, because sending a text would not be effective.

In 2014, the Ministry of Health (KSA) needed to inform the public of different elements regarding the Coronavirus. Their message included several components:

- Explanation/Definition of Coronavirus,
- Symptoms
- How the virus is transmitted
- Methods of protection

Their goal was to inform the public and prevent the spread of the virus. They had to make a very important decision—how to get the message to the people of Saudi Arabia. They could have sent doctors to every public building to speak with each individual. But this would have taken too much time and resources. Along with making videos about the Coronavirus, the Ministry of Health printed bright and colorful posters in many different languages and displayed
them in buildings all over the country. The posters covered all of the points and included a number and e-mail for people who had questions. Using the posters as the *channel* the Ministry of Health was able to deliver the information to a high number of people.

**Analyzing the Situation**

Sometimes different situations require different channels. For example, if you were in a crowded and loud mall, a text message would probably be the best way to tell your parents where to meet you. On the other hand, if a married couple is in an argument, face-to-face communication would most likely help them diffuse the situation better than messaging through an argument. When we use a *channel* like email, texting, or messaging services, it is very difficult to read the mood or attitude of the other person. In contrast, when speaking face-to-face, people can hear the tone of the other person’s voice and read body language, thus gauging the situation. Any communication channel that is not face-to-face is a *mediated channel*. All of the books that you have for university classes are examples of mediated channels. The authors wrote the books to reach a large crowd of students and share their knowledge and interests. The authors are not able to be physically present in each class and answer questions so it is helpful that they are able to mass distribute their books to students. A downfall to the author not being present in class is that if a student has a question, they cannot get an immediate answer from the person who wrote the book. Remember—all channels have advantages and disadvantages that we must consider before using.

Communication is indeed a journey that we embark on as we grow and experience life together. Regardless of how skilled of a communicator you are, there is always room for improvement and refinement. We hope that this book will help accompany you along the journey.
Vocabulary:
Communication
Dialects
Globalization
Symbols
Language
Message
Channel
Audience
Mediated Channel

Discussion Points:

1. Why would you recommend that someone study communications?

2. Have you ever used the wrong channel for your message or audience?

3. Have you ever had a misunderstanding due to a text message?

Case Study
Fatimah and Haya are meeting at a busy mall. They need to pick a location where they can meet together. Which channel do you think is best for them to use to decide the meeting point?

A phone call, a messaging service such as SMS or Whatsapp™ or and e-mail, why?
Chapter Two:  

Process of Communication

“Only through communication can human life hold meaning”

-Paulo Freire

A Finnish journalist and professor of economics, Osmo Wiio, became famous for creating a list of “Laws of Human Communications” between 1976-1978\(^5\). As an individual with much experience in writing, teaching, and speaking, Wiio created the laws as a commentary on what he observed in the communication world. Though the laws are somewhat funny, they point out many truths in communication. Here are two of his laws below:

1.) If communication can fail – it will
2.) If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be understood in the way that does the most harm.

Wiio’s laws remind us of how difficult it can be to effectively get our message across to another person. In this chapter, we go over different parts that comprise the process of communication.

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Communication as Transaction

Every time you buy something from the store, you are making a transaction. You pay the store and the store gives you your item(s). Communication is also a transactional process, in that it requires two or more people to make a transaction. Like a business transaction, each person plays an important role. Some people give and some receive, but instead of money, in communication, there is a message being exchanged. The person who creates the message is the source (also called sender); the person or people that accept or receives it are the receiver.
If a father tells his child “come here,” the father is the source and the child is the receiver. If a professor tells the classroom to “be quiet,” the professor is the source, and the classroom of students is the receiver. Before the source speaks, texts, writes, or communicates in any form they must first think of that message. This process is called **encoding**, or creating a message. While encoding, a person combines symbols to convey a message or idea. Once the source encodes the message and chooses the channel the receiver must **decode** it, or interpret it’s meaning.

Sometimes, the message that the sender thinks they are sending is not what the receiver decodes. It is important for us to always consider our message in relation to our audience. Consider this example below:

Ahmad and Saeed are classmates. During lunch, Ahmad looks at his chemistry homework and realizes that he doesn’t understand the questions. Ahmad sees Saeed and wants to ask him to help explain some concepts. Ahmad walks up to Saeed and says, “Hi, did you finish your chemistry homework yet?”

Saeed hears this and thinks that Ahmad is asking if he finished his homework because he wants to copy his work. Even though Saeed had finished his homework, he answered “no, I haven’t finished it yet” because he didn’t want anyone to copy his work. Ahmad said “okay, good luck” and left.
How could Ahmad have better communicated his need for help in this situation? Would things have gone differently if Ahmad had asked, “Do you understand the chemistry assignment?”

Figure 2.1: Noise

Often when we communicate something interferes or distracts from the message that we are trying to convey, this is called **noise**. Noise can be audible, for example, a loud car that is passing or a crying baby at a restaurant. This can make it very difficult to keep a conversation, as you can’t hear the other person well. Other times, the noise may be psychological. For example, a student may make a judgment about an instructor based only on their appearance (Ex: nationality, clothing, tattoo, gender, etc.). Because of this quick judgment, the student might not listen to the instructor and miss the message. Moving forward, noise can be physiological, meaning that it has to do with the body. For instance, imagine a person who is in a lot of pain with a severe headache. What would happen if this person tried to read their physics lesson? Would they understand the information presented to them or would their headache interfere?
In Figure 2.2 we can see a message being sent from sender to receiver, but this illustration does not capture all the complexities of the communication process. There is much more happening when we communicate with someone.
Figure 2.3 is a *Competent Model of Communication*, because it accounts for a variety of factors important in communication.

- Two or more people
- Channel
c. **Feedback**, a verbal or nonverbal response to a message. This is important because it lets a person know if their message has been understood correctly. Feedback is an essential part of understanding.

d. **Context** refers to the set of circumstances that surround a particular event. For example, it is important to consider the relationship between the communicating parties. A brother and a sister will certainly behave differently together than a boss and an employee would. Furthermore, best friends of ten years will feel more comfortable joking with one another than a man just meeting his fiancée’s mother. Something else to keep in mind is the situation or environment in which one is communicating. Culture also plays a big role in communication.

e. Noise

A competent communicator will continually assess the situation that they are in and adapt in order to communicate more effectively. They will ask the following questions:

- Am I understanding?
- Am I being understood?
- How could I improve?
You may have been friends with someone for so long that, in certain situations, you don’t even need to say anything to them, you could just raise an eyebrow and they would know exactly what you meant. Or perhaps as a young child, a parent, guardian or other adult figure in your life gave you a stern glance to communicate you should stop a certain behavior. In that instance, they did not need to say anything to you, but you understood you would be in trouble if you continued with that behavior.

**Noise in Nonverbal Communication:** It is important to take noise into account when communicating non-verbally. Just like verbal communication, cultural, ethnic, gender, or racial biases can all play a part in nonverbal communication. Additionally, sometimes nonverbal gestures can be construed or misunderstood. By raising your eyebrow at a friend, you may be trying to express surprise, but perhaps there is cultural noise and your communication partner interpreted the eyebrow raise as enthusiasm. It is important that a speaker’s verbal and nonverbal communications are in alignment so that the audience can fully understand the meaning.

Though culturally some things are different, one thing generally remains the same throughout all cultures: facial expressions. There are six emotions that all humans, regardless of gender, age, religion, culture, etc., all display in the same manner: sadness, anger, happiness, surprise, disgust and fear. As depicted in Figure 2.4, Dr. Paul Ekman, one of the world’s leading psychologists on human emotion and facial expression found that even when someone was trying to appear a certain way their face would show their real feelings through small expressions he named “micro-expressions.” Someone trained in micro-expressions can instantly tell the
difference between a fake smile and a real smile. Micro-expressions highlight the power of nonverbal communication because they show how much can be said with a tiny movement in the face.

Figure 2.4: Microexpressions

Adapted from TV series “Lie to Me” featuring actor Tim Roth Actor (Paul Ekman Group LLC: 2016), http://www.paulekman.com/universal-facial-expressions/
Listening

An essential part of communications is listening. In discussing listening it is important to note that listening and hearing are not the same thing. Hearing is the ear registering sound, but listening requires that the individual choose to pay attention to what is being said. It is possible for a person to hear but not listen. When we pay close attention to what is being said, this is called active listening. Active listening is one of the most important communication skills, and involves carefully listening with a present mind. When we engage in active listening we listen with purpose.

Tips for Active Listening:

- **Don’t interrupt**
  
  Allow the speaker to finish their thoughts before you interject

- **Focus**
  
  Be present in the moment

- **Listen for Understanding**
  
  Your goal should be to comprehend the message

- **Be mindful of your body language**
This shows the speaker that you are following along and are interested in what they are saying. You can do this by maintaining eye contact, having good body posture and keeping appropriate facial expressions. Appropriate body posture for active listening is sitting up straight, not crossing arms across the chest and appearing open and involved in the conversation. **Mirroring** is one technique that people often use, which involves reflecting the body language, facial expressions sitting position, etc of the speaker. This creates both a bond and trust between people as there is similarity between them.

- **Provide feedback**
  Occasionally nod your head as you listen, say “yes,” “mmhmm,” or “uh huh” to show that you are following along with the conversations, ask questions, give replies and ideas.

- **Clarify any doubts you may have**
  If you aren’t sure about something, ask! This will help resolve any ambiguity and prevent misunderstandings. Sometimes it helps to paraphrase what you think you heard and repeat it back to them in a question. For example: “What I’m hearing is that you are going to London for college and you are nervous about making friends there, is that correct?”

- **Suspend Judgment.**
  Always keep an open mind. Try to refrain from making judgments as you are listening, but instead listen to understand. One of our biggest faults as human beings is that we listen with intentions to respond, not to understand. Oftentimes instead of listening, we are trying to formulate a good response in our head and we miss out on what is being said. Regardless of how you feel about the topic, try to listen to the speaker and see why
they believe what they believe. Psychological noise may get in the way, but by actively acknowledging this noise and breaking down mental barriers, we expand our minds.
Vocabulary:

Active Listening
Context
Decode
Encode
Feedback
Listening
Noise
Receiver
Source

Discussion Points:

1. Create two communication scenarios, label both the sender and the receiver.

2. Give an example of “noise” in a communication situation.

Case Study

A mother and her 15-year-old son are getting ready to go outside to walk to a nearby store. The mother looks at her son and says, “it’s cold outside!” Her son says “okay, mom” and puts on his shoes. They begin to walk to the store and after five minutes, the son says, “it’s cold today!” The mother looks at her boy angrily and yells “I told you to wear a jacket, didn’t I?”
The mother had only told her son that it was cold outside, but for her it was the same as telling him to wear a jacket. What concepts in this chapter does this communication mishap relate to?
“If we are going to live with our deepest differences then we must learn about one another”

-Deborah J. Levine

There is an old story that goes a little like this:

There were once two kingdoms that were always at war with one another. Many citizens of both kingdoms became tired with the constant fighting and stress. It came to a point where they saw no hope for the future. Together, they begged their kings to do something to stop the fighting between nations. They urged their kings to do something to make the future better for their children. Finally, the kings decided to meet together and discuss the situation. The two kings agreed that the fighting needed to stop as it was harming both nations. But how would they stop fighting that had been going on for so many years? The kings talked for days without taking a rest—finally they had their solution. In a valiant gesture, they announced to the people of each kingdom that the eldest son of each king would go live in the other kingdom for one year. The son would live with the people of the other nation, get to know them and experience life from their perspective.

One year passed and the princes returned to their home kingdoms. To everyone’s surprise, their homecoming was full of beautiful stories about the other kingdom: sad stories, funny stories and ultimately people realized that the two kingdoms were more alike than
different. Each prince experienced life with citizens in the other kingdom and came to see them as brothers and sisters. The princes met together with their fathers, the kings, and together vowed to have peace and friendship between the nations. Soon the nations began trading together and prospered both culturally and financially.

Communication is more than a regular interaction with one another, or a way of transferring information to others around the world. Successful communication needs a deep understanding of the individuals you are interacting with. In order to understand individuals, it is important to be aware of their cultural background. The awareness of others’ cultural backgrounds is essential to facilitate the communication process, not only face-to-face, but via any communication channel. This awareness helps to find an appropriate way of communication with them and how, when and why to communicate.

In this Chapter:

- Discuss the role of culture in communication
- Understand parts of culture that are seen and unseen (in/visible)
- Explain the five Global Cultural Dimensions
- Describe a culturally competent communicator
Culture is defined as “the attitudes, habits, norms, beliefs, customs, rituals, styles, and artifacts that express a group’s adaptation to its environment. That is, ways that are shared by group members and passed on over time”.\(^7\) The concept of culture is connected to the notion of identity. Often the first answer we think of when asked “Who are you?” is our culture. Our culture is what teaches us values and forms our worldview or how we see the world around us. In turn, culture strongly affects how we communicate. Culture is the lens through which we see our surroundings, how we learn the part that we play in the world and how we are to interact. Nobody teaches us every aspect of our culture; however, we soak in like a sponge as we grow up. Think about a three-year-old child when he stands next to his father to pray.

It is incredibly important to understand how pervasive culture is in people’s lives: it shapes their lifestyle and it influences their communication process. For example, in the Arab Muslim culture, if a man wants to propose to a lady, the process of communication usually goes this way:

- The interested man informs his family about his interest in her
- His family contacts her family (usually the mothers communicate with each other)
- The parents ask the lady about her opinion
- If she agrees, her mother communicates with the groom's’ mother to arrange for the next step

However, in many European cultures, this complicated communication process is totally different: The man goes to the lady and asks her to marry him. If she agrees, they inform their family later.

**Visibility vs. Invisibility**

It is easy for us to assume that we understand someone’s culture at first sight. We assume that we understand people's cultural background from the color of their skin, the language they speak, the way they dress, the food they eat or the music they play. In other cases, the assumption of understanding the cultural background of an individual is because a person we are communicating with is from a similar cultural group as us. However, both these assumptions can lead us astray. Knowing the general aspect of an individual’s culture or dealing with
individuals from similar cultural groups does not mean that we really understand their cultures. The real culture that shapes a person's lifestyle is much deeper than what we can see. In fact, what truly defines an individual’s culture is often what we do not see.

Because much of culture is not visible and not observable, it is often compared to an iceberg. An iceberg has a small visible part above the water, and a larger invisible part below the water. Like an iceberg, the surface culture has some aspects that are easy to see and aspects that are hidden:

![Figure 3.1: The Iceberg Model of Culture](image)

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8 Jitrineek, “What is Culture and How is it Defined?,” *Cultural Conflict* (blog), November 9, 2013, https://culturalconflict.wordpress.com/2013/11/09/what-is-culture-and-how-is-it-defined/
As Figure 3.1 shows, many deep aspects of our cultures are invisible. When we meet an individual, we can observe some aspects of their culture, but many important aspects that can help us better communicate with them are not clear. For example, if you are a medical doctor and you are in the process of dealing with a family from a different culture whose son is the final stage liver dysfunction? They have white skin, blue eyes, blonde hair, and they wear jeans and shirts. They also speak English with a British accent. From the visible description, you can tell that they are from the United Kingdom, or at least live there.

However, the deeper aspects of that culture such as the role of family, their beliefs or meaning of death in their culture are not so obvious. Even though you recognize some visible aspect of who they are, knowing the deeper aspects of such culture is more important to facilitate the medical communication process with them. The awareness of visible “surface” and invisible “deep” cultural aspects helps with intercultural communication when we realize that some performances or behaviors might not be clear. What we see as appropriate might not be seen the same way in different cultures and vice versa. Thus, before we interact or judge the interactions of others, we need to consider the culture.
Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication occurs when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. Intercultural communication is “the interpersonal interaction between members of different groups, which differ from each other in respect to the knowledge shared by their members and in respect to their linguistic forms of symbolic behavior.” It is very important to understand and respect other people’s cultures for successful intercultural communication with them. For example, if you are a female Muslim student in an American University, you need to understand American culture and professionally present yourself, in order to communicate effectively with your teachers and classmates. Knowing that American culture is not gender segregated, meaning that it is normal for males and females to sit and interact with each other, you need to professionally introduce yourself and the way you prefer to communicate with them, for example, you can share that you do not shake hand with males. At the same time, you need to understand and respect their culture. If you do not understand and respect the cultural backgrounds of others, this can cause extreme communication challenges because culture and communication cannot be separated. In fact, they are tightly connected as we communicate based on our cultural background and our culture influences the way we communicate.

Challenges of Intercultural Communication

By nature, human beings prefer community. We favor being around people of our own kind, marrying our own kind and doing activities with familiar people. We usually feel safe, comfortable and less stressed around people of our own kind. On the other hand, dealing with strangers can be demanding, challenging and stressful. For some people, dealing with people from different cultural background is frightening, as they feel suspicious of others. For others, the idea of difference is not clear and whatever is not clear is preventable for them. Those people do not attempt to be open-minded to understand.

In fact, diversity is a good thing. It is a way for us to look at the world from different perspective. It expands our humanity, it extends our knowledge, it enriches our social world and it allows us to look at things from a different angle. It is a fruitful experience for us to be engaged with others from different background and perspective.

Even though diversity is a positive thing, we cannot deny the fact that it is still a problem for many people. Without understanding and respecting culture, communication will never thrive.
Global Cultural Dimensions

Each culture is distinctive and within each culture there are sub-cultures, meaning that a small cultural group within a large group that is often differentiated by ethnic background, religion, beliefs or behaviors.

Individuals in each culture and subculture have unique dimensions including particular learning styles, personality styles and talents. Thus, knowing general information about a specific culture is not sufficient when communicating with all individuals in that cultural group.

However, there are some global cultural dimensions that can be used for measuring cultures. Understanding these dimensions helps to facilitate communication with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In this chapter, we will discuss the following dimensions:

- Individualism/Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Masculinity/Femininity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
Individualism vs. Collectivism.

The two cultural core values of individualism and collectivism describe the degree in which people integrate into their cultural group. Collectivists, as different from individualists, define themselves as a part or aspect of a group. They have personal goals that overlap with the goals of their in-group, and if there is a disagreement between the two sets of goals, it is considered obvious that in-group goals should have priority over personal goals. For example, if a student is planning to study abroad (in the United States for example), but her family is against the idea of studying outside of her home country, the group decision must be accepted. An individual in a collectivist group is obligated to follow the group decision even if this decision is different their personal decision. In a collectivist society, the family relationship is very important.

On the other hand, individualistic cultures focus on self-concepts that can be different from the groups. They see their own needs and goals as a priority. Decisions are made on a personal level. For example, if a man decided to get married, he would choose his wife based on his personal feelings. Relationships are less important to individualists than to collectivists, and they can be dropped when the costs exceed the personal benefits.

It is important to note that in some cultures people may fall along a continuum, as they are not completely individualist or collectivist. Individualist core values are often associated with Western cultures, such as Europe and U.S, while collectivism is often associated with Eastern cultures such as Asia and the Arab world.  

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10 Abeer Rasheed, *The Lived Experiences of International Counselor Education Students During Their Field Based Clinical Supervision in the United States of America*, 2015
Understanding individualism and collectivism is very important for successful communication because these core values shape the individual’s personality, their thinking, their beliefs and the way they behave. For example, it is very common for a person from a collectivist society to be more supportive and loyal. He tends to appreciate group work and considers other people’s perspectives and opinions. It is also very common for a person with individualist core values to be independent and self-governing. This person has a tendency to work separately and to make serious decisions alone. Conflicts may occur if we face a situation in which we need to interact with each other without understanding the core value of individualism and collectivism. A person from a collectivist society will think that the other person is opinionated, selfish and careless, while someone from an individualist society might perceive the other person as dependent and not able to make decision.

Power Distance

Cross-cultural communication looks at the concept of power distance. Power distance refers to the extent to which people accept the idea that society is differentiated into classes. This means that people are not equal when it comes to power. In some countries, India for example, the category of higher power distance is very obvious and acceptable. People from higher power distance accept the hierarchical order between people and tend to believe that
power and authority are facts in their lives. They have learned from their culture that people are not equal in their social status, prestige and wealth. People from such cultures expect only their leaders to be responsible for important decisions. They rarely challenge their leaders as they are taught to respect and obey.

In contrast, people from low power distance cultures, such as Brazil, prefer equality and question authority. People who hold positions of authority tend to minimize inequality between themselves and avoid visible exhibitions of wealth. Leaders in such cultures support independent thought and encourage the contribution of others in solving problems. Understanding the concept of power distance is beneficial for cross-cultural communication as it gives you a better understanding of the channel that you need to use and the right person to contact. For example, if you are from a low power distance culture and you hold a position of authority and you are dealing with people from a high power distance culture, it is very common to find them overly respectful toward you. They will also leave the difficult decision for you, not because they are dependent or needy but because this is a norm in their culture.

**Masculinity vs. Femininity**

The concept of a masculinity and femininity as an individual gender identity refers to the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as masculine (man) or feminine (woman) in the society. The society usually emphasizes gender identity. For example, some societies perceive men as dominant, strong, brave and are given worker roles. Women, on the other hand, are perceived as sensitive emotional and are given domestic roles. Because the masculine and feminine identity is defined by societies, it is possible to find different gender identities across cultures. For example, countries like Japan and Mexico are categorized as masculine cultures
while countries like Taiwan and Brazil can be categorized as feminine cultures. A cross-cultural conflict might occur when a man from a masculine culture marries a woman from a feminine culture, as the roles and expectations of gender are different. Thus, it is very important in intercultural communication to be aware of culturally defined gender identities to avoid any misconceptions or conflict.\footnote{Igor E. Klyukanov, \textit{Principles of Intercultural Communication} (Boston: Pearson Education Inc, 2004).}

**Uncertainty Avoidance**

The concept of uncertainty avoidance refers to a society’s level of comfort toward ambiguity and unstructured situation. Members in some societies feel uncomfortable toward ambiguity and not knowing. People from these societies usually avoid anything unknown or surprising to them. Uncertainty-avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by forming their own laws and rules. They are less multicultural and tend not to accept different perspective from their own. France, Japan and Germany are examples of uncertainty-avoidance cultures. On the other hand, some cultures, like the United States for example, are described as uncertainty accepting, in which people are fine with ambiguity. They usually welcome different perspectives and they explore what they do not know. These people are more culturally alert which makes a cross-cultural communication with them simpler. However, it is obvious that communicating with those who avoid uncertainty can be more complicated as they are not willing to share or learn about different cultures.\footnote{Igor E. Klyukanov, \textit{Principles of Intercultural Communication} (Boston: Pearson Education Inc, 2004).}
Barriers

There are a number of barriers that can negatively impact intercultural communication. These barriers are as follows:

**Language differences**

If you speak only one language (native language), you will find it hard to communicate with others even if you are willing to communicate. It is not necessary to speak many languages, but aside from your native language you need to speak an international language that most people around the world understand, for example the English Language.

**Anxiety**

Many people feel anxious and uncomfortable around people they do not know. They find it hard to trust others so they decide to distance themselves and prefer to avoid dealing with others who are different from them.

**Assumptions about Similarities and Differences**

Wrong assumptions about others can be a serious reason for failure in intercultural communication. Some people assume that they can communicate with people from across cultures because they have some knowledge about that culture or because the culture they are dealing with is similar to their own. Others think that all humans are the same. These assumptions are not true. People from different cultures have different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and experiences.
**Stereotypes**

A stereotype is an unfair overgeneralization or image of people from specific group. For example, people who do not have a job are lazy or people who did not finish high school are stupid. We communicate with people based on the stereotype we have without giving ourselves a chance to understand them.

**Lack of Knowledge**

Lack of knowledge can be a major barrier to intercultural communication. Culture and communication are not separable, if you do not understand the person’s culture, you will face many communication difficulties.

**Closed Mindedness**

Another barrier for intercultural communication is being a closed-minded person, which means being rigid, narrow and not willing to accept others opinions and ideas. These people find it hard to communicate with others who are different from them because they cannot accept the difference.

It is very important to be aware of the barriers that can negatively impact your intercultural communication with others to overcome them and replace them with more skills that qualify you to be more competence in intercultural communication.
Cultural Communication Competence

Cultural communication competence refers to the individual’s ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with others from different cultural backgrounds. Simple awareness of different cultures is not enough to make an individual culturally competent. True competence needs knowledge, skills and abilities. Knowledge includes the awareness of your culture and others cultures. Skills like genuineness, warmth, acceptance, empathy and flexibility are needed. The ability to communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds, to discuss cultural issues openly, to respond to cultural differences effectively and work well with individuals from other cultural backgrounds. To master cultural communication competence:

- Be open-minded
- Be flexible and accepting of others
- Respect diversity
- Learn a second language, especially the international ones
- Avoid assumptions about similarities and differences
- Increase your knowledge about different cultures
- Participate in cross-cultural activates
- Introduce yourself to people from different cultures
- Interview people from cultures other than your own.
- Make social relationships with individuals from countries around the world
Ethical Considerations of Cross-Cultural Communication

Ethical standards differ across cultures. People from unrelated cultural backgrounds have different perspectives of what is considered right and wrong; what is considered good or bad; what to do and what to avoid. These differences can cause conflicts in intercultural communication because these rules are not the same around the world.

In order to deal ethically in cross-cultural interaction, you need to realize the fact that ethical principles differ across culture. For example, in some cultures, abortion is an acceptable decision in cases of need, while other cultures believe it is similar to killing. Understanding the ethical issues across cultures is very important to communicate with them appropriately and to avoid conflict. If your career requires a great deal of cross-cultural communication, such as counseling or medical fields, you need to be very aware of the client’s ethics before recommending anything inappropriate to their ethical perspective.
Vocabulary:

Collectivism
Culture
Culture Iceberg Model
Individualism
Intercultural communication
Invisibility of Culture
Masculinity/Femininity
Power Distance
Stereotypes
Uncertainty Avoidance
Visibility of Culture

Discussion Points

1. In which way does the awareness of the Global Cultural Dimensions can facilitate the communication process?

2. What did you know about the culture before reading this chapter?

3. How did this chapter enhance your intercultural communication knowledge?

4. How can you interact ethically with individuals from different cultural background?

5. Can you think of more strategies to enhance your cross-cultural competence?
Case Study

Dr. Nora is a psychiatrist in Saudi Arabia. One of her cases is about a couple from India who lost their two children in a car accident. A few months later, the couple started to experience serious anxiety and depression symptoms. Nora had just finished dealing with a couple from Saudi Arabia with the same case. However, she had never dealt with patients from India and she didn’t know about loss and grief in the Indian culture. Nora assumed that because the cases are exactly the same she could similarly communicate with both couples in the same way, especially in the process of communication and the treatment plan that she used with the couple from Saudi Arabia. A few months later, Nora realized there was not much progress in the treatment of her new case.

Discussion:

From your own perspective, why do you think Dr. Nora’s treatment plan was not effective?
Chapter Four:

Self and Others

“Friendship is the hardest thing to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven’t learned anything at all.”

-Mohammed Ali

There is a famous Spanish saying about friendship that has been translated into several different languages and shared worldwide:

“Dime con quién andas, y yo te diré quien eres”

Directly translated into English it reads, “Show me who you walk with and I’ll show you who you are.” This quote talks about the importance of good company and refers to the fact that we are often strongly influenced by those around us.

In our journey through communications, it is important to analyze and discuss relationships, special connections between two or more people. This chapter is dedicated to the relationships that we foster with others and ourselves. As social beings, we are always in contact with others. Let’s take a closer look at what these relationships involve and dive into both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication skills.
Interpersonal vs. Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal communication takes place within oneself. In intrapersonal communication, the person is both the source and the receiver as there is only one person involved. When you are making a specific decision or considering an idea, the thinking and inner-dialogue, or personal speech, is all contained within yourself.
Many people underestimate the great significance of intrapersonal communication; they assume that because it occurs within the self it is less important than interpersonal communication. Both, however, are highly integral parts of the human life and deserve our attention.

The Self

The first and most prominent relationship in our life is the one that we have with our self. To begin, it’s important to acknowledge that other people influence the way that we perceive ourselves. As mentioned in Chapter One, sociologist George Herbert Mead spent much time
studying the “social self.” Overall, Mead believed that the self was formed as a result of social interaction; that by participating in society and engaging with others, our selves emerged.

The concept of the Looking-Glass Self was formed in response to Mead’s idea of a social self. In this concept we conceptualize ourselves in light of three different perspectives:

1. How we appear to those around us
2. How they perceive and evaluate (judge) us
3. Our constant identity development based on judgment

In Figure 4.1 we see an individual looking into the mirrors that represent what people think about her.

“Across the spectrum of social life, we learn to view ourselves as other people see us. Adjusting and transforming our self-understanding in the light of ongoing social interaction and self dialogue.”

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14 Depiction of Charles Horton Cooley’s Looking Glass Self. Accessed October 10, 2016 https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/1b/c8/e1/1bc8e12a059653f09006ff434c661bf.jpg
Canadian-American sociologist, Erving Goffman, who also graduated from the same university as George Herbert Mead (University of Chicago), argued that the “self” is comprised of many different roles that we perform like an actor/actress. Consider all the different roles that you play in society. We are just one individual, yet capable of being in many different acts. For example you might be both a son and a cousin simultaneously. However, your father will mostly look at you through the lens of son, and your cousin will view you in your role as a cousin. You might notice that your mother is very proud of your role as medical student, but finds your role as artist as silly. Due to her judgment you may discuss art less and focus instead on medical school and classroom accomplishments.

Knowing yourself is very important in interpersonal communication. In fact, intrapersonal communication begins with knowing yourself, realizing your strengths, your weakness, your feeling and your personality. Self awareness requires understanding how you see yourself, known as the self-concept. Humans develop from intrapersonal communication. What you think of yourself, how you see yourself and your inner dialogue is very important in shaping who you are. If you think positively about yourself and you will see yourself as a successful person. Likewise if you are constantly filling your mind with negative self-talk it could affect your external world as well.

Theories in Communication Studies

A theory is a set of ideas or principles used to explain something. In communication studies, there are many theories that are helpful in understanding the way that human beings interact with
one another. To understand self and other, we will go over three popular theories in Interpersonal Communication.

**Uncertainty Reduction Theory**

Created by Charles Berger and Richard Calbrese in 1975, the first theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, states that when strangers meet their biggest goal is to reduce the uncertainty (the unknown) that exists between them. Even your closest friend began as a stranger who you slowly became familiar with.

Imagine being assigned a project with a partner who you have never met. There will be a level of uncertainty between you two. You may ask yourself is the person academically capable? Are they friendly? You may be worried that they have certain characteristics that are not compatible with your personality.

According to Uncertainty Reduction Theory, you will engage in different communication strategies to find out more about the person and thus reduce the uncertainty.

**How to Reduce Uncertainty?**

One can reduce uncertainty in many ways; one of the easiest ways to gather knowledge about another person is by simply observing them and their behavior. How do they interact with other people? What seems important to them?
Another strategy is by inquiring about the person through speaking to people who know them. We often do this without even thinking when we go to someone and ask, “Do you know him or her?” “What is their name? “Or “Where are they from?” This helps us to acquire information about another person, decreasing uncertainty that may surround them. Furthermore, in today’s society of instant technological access and social media, it is easy to gain information about a person by accessing their Facebook (™) Twitter (™) LinkedIn (™) or other social media account.

Finally you can always talk to the person whom you wish to discover more about. By communicating directly with said person you can avoid your chances of receiving false information. This is considered an interactive strategy in reducing uncertainty.

STOP & THINK

Berger, one of the founders of the “Uncertainty Reduction Theory” said:

“The beginning of personal relationships are fraught with uncertainties”

Consider a newly engaged couple and the uncertainty that exists between them. What might they want to know about the other person? What strategies might they use to get to know more about each other before marriage?
Imagine you are signing up for classes and deciding which professor might be the best fit in meeting your specific learning needs. You are anxious to start class because you don’t know anything about the professor. How might you reduce your uncertainty?

Would you look them up and observe their online behavior? Would you ask other students about their opinion of the professor? Perhaps, you would take the time to meet the professor and get to know their personality, teaching methods, and expectations.
Social Penetration Theory

Now that we’ve discussed the nature in which strangers decrease uncertainty surrounding one another, let’s focus on how relationships are developed between the two as they share information about themselves.

Layers

In a popular 2001 Disney movie, Shrek, one of the main characters, an ogre named Shrek, feels misunderstood because the community views ogres as scary monsters instead of beings capable of emotion. In one scene\(^\text{16}\), Shrek tries explaining to his friend “Donkey” that there is more to him than people think.

Shrek: Ogres are like onions.
Donkey: They stink?
Shrek: Yes. No.
Donkey: Oh, they make you cry?
Shrek: No.
Donkey: Oh, you leave em out in the sun, they get all brown, start sproutin' little white hairs.
Shrek: NO. Layers. Onions have layers. Ogres have layers. Onions have layers. You get it? We both have layers.
Donkey: Oh, you both have layers. Oh. You know, not everybody likes onions.

While ogres don’t exist, the onion metaphor is helpful in understanding humans, specifically human relationships. Just as onions have layers that slowly peel until they reach the core, so do human relationships. Let’s dig deeper!

Social Penetration Theory discusses the different levels or layers of relationships as they form. It says that at the start of a relationship we share superficial and shallower information, but as the relationship develops overtime and we come to know the person more--we begin to share deeper and more intimate parts of ourselves. This is where the onion metaphor comes in, just as we peel away layers of an onion until we reach the center, by revealing information about ourselves (self-disclosure) we peel away layers of ourselves until we reach our core being.

![Figure 4.2: Social Penetration Theory](image)
Imagine two strangers just meeting one another at the university. Generally they begin with introductions that include their name and job and have small talk that isn’t deeply personal. It would be odd for one of them to start talking about marriage problems or to share a personal secret with the other. However, over the course of time they may begin to share more personal information with one another. Perhaps they spend a lot of time working on a project together and become friends.

**Johari Window**

Understanding oneself assists in gaining insight that leads change in actions and perceptions. Self-understanding is gained by looking at the self-awareness as it described in the **Johari Window**\(^\text{17}\). The Johari Window is a tool and model used in communication studies to assist in understanding the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. In other words, this model discusses the link between the “self” and “others” by depicting levels of disclosure and relationship development as well as self-awareness. The term “Johari” is pronounced [Joe-Harry] and is simply the combination of the first names of the two psychologists who developed this model, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. Even though this model was created back in 1955, it is still widely used by communicologists and other professionals as a tool for understanding relationships between individuals.

The “window” aspect of the Johari Window refers to the visual representation of four quadrants or window panes. This is also reminiscent of a Punnett Square which is a diagram typically used for predicting the likelihood of genes. There are two subject categories considered in this model: the **Self** and **Others**. The self refers to the person using the model, in this case it would be us, the authors, as we explain it from a first-person perspective and it would also be

you, the reader, as you begin to understand and use the model. The self represents the core of who you are, the essence of you. Others are those you are considering as you examine your relationship with them. They could be your friends, family, classmates, or even one person instead of many, such as your best friend. While these categories could technically be on either axis, for the purposes of clear explanation, let’s say the “others” are on the y-axis (vertical) and the “self” is on the x-axis (horizontal). These are further segmented in terms of information that is known or unknown.

**Figure 4.3: Johari Window**

- **Known to Self**
  - **Open**
    - (Public knowledge; what I show to you)
  - **Blind**
    - (Feedback; your gift to me)

- **Unknown to Self**
  - **Hidden**
    - (Private; mine to share if I trust you)
  - **Unconscious**
    - (Unknown; new awareness can emerge)
Take a moment to examine the model in Figure 4.3. You will notice the four quadrants or areas divided by a combination of information known or unknown by the self or others. Each refers to an amount of information such as emotions, behaviors, motivations, ideas, attitudes, goals, etc. In order from the top right and circling around counterclockwise, these quadrants refer to the self as Blind, Open, Hidden and Unconscious. A detailed description of each is provided below.

As you read about each quadrant, remember the relationship examined is between the self and others and the measurement is the level of information known or unknown. While these quadrants are equal in size in their visual representation to help associate it with a windowpane, these areas are actually flexible and can vary depending on disclosure levels. For instance, the blind self may decrease as more feedback is received from others. Perhaps you are unaware of your habit of mumbling your words. When your friends mention they cannot understand you and ask for you to please speak up and enunciate, it is a way for your blind self to decrease as the information becomes open. Similarly, the hidden self may decrease in size vertically as more information is shared with your friends and what was once hidden becomes public knowledge. When you get to know someone, they often disclose information about their classes, work, likes and dislikes; however, you may not share specific personal information like your address or your passions. This remains part of your hidden self until you choose to share it with others. Once you share that information, it becomes part of the open self and the size of the windowpanes are adjusted accordingly.
**Blind Self**

The **Blind Self** (upper-left) refers to information that you do not know about yourself, but others do. You can think of this as a blind spot when driving a car. You don’t know the other person is beside you, but they can see you and know you are there. As a more concrete example, think about a situation where you’re eating at a restaurant and you unknowingly got some curry on your chin. Your friend notices the curry is on your face. At this point, the information is unknown for you, but known for them. However, this can quickly change as your friend points out the curry and motions for you to wipe your face. You become more self-aware and at this point, the information has become public or open.

**Open Self**

The **Open Self** (upper-right) can be thought of as a public area. This contains information that is known to both you and others. As you develop a relationship with someone, they disclose information about themselves and you reciprocate by sharing your goals, hobbies, fears, dreams, etc. Remember, you may choose the information you share with others. Think about your Facebook page, what images or posts do you make “public” or open? These are used a means of building a relationship with others. However, you may not want to share everything, perhaps keeping some things hidden is in your best interest for security and comfort.

**Hidden Self**

The **Hidden Self** (bottom-right) contains information that you know about yourself, but have not shown or discussed with others. This section is very large when you first meet someone because you do not know many details about them. Yet, it decreases as they develop trust and
share details about themselves with you. Remember this model is used as a way to examine relationships, so trust and disclosure are vital in the development of these connections. Those who have a more outgoing personality may find the hidden space decreases rapidly when talking and interacting with others, while those who are more introverted may take longer to open up and share personal information with new acquaintances and friends. There is no right or wrong, it is simply a way to examine your relationship with others.

Unknown Self

The final quadrant is representative of the information that neither you nor others in your group know about you; it is unconscious or your Unknown Self (upper-left). This could refer to cultural or social norms, which you and your friends have developed over many years. It could also encompass details about your ancestry including unknown illnesses. Essentially, it is information which neither of you know. Perhaps you and a friend are taking this course together. In the beginning, neither of you were aware of the important role communication has in every aspect of your lives. However, through discussion and working together to understand its significance, new awareness has emerged and not only do you now realize why it is critical to study communication, you also have become friends and now have a shared passion for continuing to apply these concepts in your lives.
**Vocabulary:**

Blind self  
Hidden self  
Inner-Discourse  
Interpersonal Communication  
Intrapersonal Communication  
Johari Window  
Open self  
Relationships  
Self-Concept  
Self-Disclosure  
Social Penetration Theory  
Theory  
Uncertainty Reduction Theory  
Unknown self

**Discussion Points**

1. How do theories help us to understand and explain phenomena?

2. Think back to a time when you first met one of your close friends. What is one of the first personal pieces of information that you shared about yourself with them?

3. Name something that is part of your Open Self that most people know about you.
Case Study

Hadeel made a new friend during the first week of university. The third week of university, Hadeel had to leave class early to visit her grandmother who was ill in the hospital. When Hadeel’s friend asked why she was leaving early, Hadeel said she had “family matters” to attend to, but didn’t share that her grandma was sick. A couple months later, Hadeel told her friend that she had to go visit her grandmother in the hospital as she did every week. Her friend became upset and asked, “why didn’t you tell me before? Don’t you trust me?”

Act as counselor between the two friends and explain the situation using the terms used in this chapter.
Chapter Five:

Public Speaking

“A good word is a charitable act.”

-Hadith

What scares you?

Whether it’s spiders, snakes, heights, or the dark—everyone is afraid of something.

Research has consistently showed that people fear public speaking more than death. If you are one of these people, there is good news! You have the power to overcome this fear and become an incredible public speaker and presenter. In fact, the more that you practice and incorporate positive thinking skills before your presentation, the better you will do and the more enjoyable it will be for everyone! This chapter is all about overcoming anxiety, preparing, and presenting the best presentation possible. It will provide you with different techniques to be a more confident public speaker.

Learning how to give a presentation is important for your university career and the rest of your life. Regardless of what career you have chosen, public speaking will be helpful to you as well as necessary to be a powerful and active professional, citizen, and family member.
How to Start

So you have been given the task of giving a presentation. To begin, you should determine the topic of your presentation. Maybe you were invited to speak at a conference on Heart Disease and you can choose the specific topic (ex: How to prevent heart disease, Heart disease in children, Heart disease in Saudi Arabia, Heart disease and stress). Perhaps your English professor asked you to speak about the subject of recycling to the entire class. You should keep three points in mind when choosing the topic that you will present.

1. **Familiarity**

   It is important to pick a topic that you are knowledgeable about. You don’t have to be an expert, but it is important to be at least slightly familiar with the topic so that you aren’t looking at this topic for the very first time before presenting. You might have learned about the topic in a class before or even have personal experience with the subject.

2. **Passion**

   [continued on next page]
If you are not passionate about what you are talking about, there is no way that you will convey excitement to your audience. If you aren’t excited about it, why should they be? Pick a topic that makes you feel alive. If you enjoy researching the subject and talking about it, most likely the audience will enjoy hearing about it.

3. **Audience Interest**

Lastly, it is important to ask yourself, will my audience care about this? Can I make this interesting for them?

After determining your topic, you should decide on the purpose of your presentation. Some speeches are meant to **inform**, these are all about increasing the audience’s awareness and
understanding through providing them with information. An example of an informative speech would be a speech on the history of Qatar. Other speeches are to persuade, or to convince people or influence them to change their beliefs, attitudes, or actions. For example, a speech on why smoking is bad is a persuasive speech because the purpose is to convince people that smoking is detrimental to their health and to get them to quit smoking. Lastly, some speeches are meant to entertain, that is they are meant for pleasure and interest of the audience. They may be funny or tell a story. These are often the kind of speeches given at parties or weddings to congratulate someone.
After deciding on the topic and purpose of your presentation it is important to analyze your audience, the group toward which your message is targeted. While it isn’t necessary to know every detail about the people in your audience, it’s nice to know the basics in order to tailor your message accordingly. A good place to begin is with audience demographics, or information and data about the particular group to which you will be speaking. Important demographics to consider include age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and profession. All of these factors are significant because they will affect the way that you address and interact with your audience. For example, knowing the age helps you choose the topic level and vocabulary to use
when speaking. You would speak very differently with a group of children than you would with a group of adults. With children you would use easy-to-understand words and not go too deep into any subject. Also, because their attention span is shorter, you wouldn’t give them a long presentation and maybe you would involve games to keep them interested and excited.

When speaking to a group of all men or all women, it is perfectly fine to address the audience as such (ex: ladies or gentlemen). However, when speaking to a mixed group it is necessary to speak to both the women and the men alike, do not act like one group does not exist or you will lose the attention of your audience and possibly offend half of the people present. Be aware of the unique experience of all genders. Beware of words like “he” and “mankind” in explaining everyone instead use “they” and “humankind” as they show that you are being inclusive of everyone.
It can be difficult to know the religious beliefs of your audience, but other times it will be obvious. If someone is presenting at a conference in Bahrain, it would be safe for them to assume that most of their audience is Muslim. On the other hand, if a speaker were presenting at a conference in Europe, it would be rational to assume that a number of different religions would be represented within the audience. A speaker should be aware of how to behave and what topics to avoid when with different religious communities. For example, in some religions men and women do not shake hands. Some religions can be identified by their clothing or dress code, Muslim women often wear hijabs, Sikh men often wear turbans, and Catholic women, who are nuns, generally wear a veil. It is recommended that a speaker research the religion of their audience in order to not commit a faux pas, or a mistake that embarrasses them in a social situation.

In image to the right\textsuperscript{18}, we see the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, greeting two Muslim women. Instead of extending his hand to them, which is custom in Canadian society, he puts his hand over his heart, smiles, and welcomes them. This shows that Prime Minister Trudeau was aware of how appropriately greet Muslim women. After this encounter, this picture was widely shared online in admiration of his knowledge of how to properly interact with Canadian Muslims.

**Ethnicity** can be defined as the belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. It is essential to respect the differences that exist within your audience. To do this, it is important to respect that everyone comes from different backgrounds and walks of life.

After understanding your audience demographics, the next step is to take into account how much your audience already knows about your subject. If you were talking to a group of medical doctors, you would talk to them about what the flu is because it is too basic of a topic and would be a waste of their time. If you were talking to a group of beginning engineers, you would not talk about advanced design. Try not to speak about something too advanced or too basic, you should aim somewhere in the middle to capture their attention. Avoid using **jargon**, highly specialized language and/or phrases used by a certain group or profession, as it’s likely that many will not understand its meaning. For instance, if you are a health professional speaking with a patient’s family it wouldn’t make sense to tell them “we’re going to start a Cardizem drip stat.” If they were not part of the medical word, they would not know what you are saying and you might even scare them! Instead you should explain simply, “Your mom has an irregular heart beat; if left untreated it could have potentially life threatening effects such as stroke or damage to the heart muscle. I am going to have the nurse start some IV medication called Cardizem. Once we have her heart beat regulated, we will switch her to pills taken orally to help prevent blood clots.”

Another important component in public speaking is the **attitude** of the audience, or how the audience feels. If you know that your audience feels angry about a topic, you can better prepare yourself to field angry questions in a calm manner. If you know an audience feels sad about your topic, you will be able to sensitively prepare your presentation, anticipating the
challenges that come with sadness. Always try to gauge, or measure, where your audience is emotionally before engaging in conversation. Approach everything from a place of respect and humility. What are the current events in today’s world? Is there something you should address while speaking, something to avoid? Lastly, not every audience member has come to listen to you voluntarily. Often times, employees are told that it is mandatory for them to attend a certain event such as a conference or a workshop. A person’s attitude and demeanor will be different if they are forced to be there in comparison to if they choose to be there. As the speaker, it is your job to welcome them, gain their trust, and ultimately engage them.

**Preparation**

Now you are set and ready to prepare! Preparation plays a key role in whether your speech is magnificent or mediocre. To begin, it’s smart to do some research and gather materials that support your topic. If a university student is doing a class presentation on the country of Sweden, then a good way to prepare would be to look into the country’s history, political system, culture, people, current events, etc. In this stage, it is good to take some time to find out as much as you possibly can about your topic. Become immersed in your presentation and surround yourself with information. You will not use all of this when you speak, but it will help you when you create your presentation. It also makes you a more credible speaker. **Credibility** is when the speaker gains the trust and respect of the audience. This is a very important aspect of public speaking because if you cannot form credibility from the beginning, it’s not likely that the audience will listen to what you have to say. We show the audience that we are credible when we prove to them that we know what we are talking about. One common way that speakers
prove they are trustworthy is through introducing themselves along with their education, accomplishments, and interests. We show that we are believable in the way that we present ourselves to others, this means that we should dress well, be intentional about body language, and speak confidently. When the public has faith that we know what we are talking about, they will not only hear--but also listen--to our message.

**Research**

So where can you find the information for your presentation? It’s good to start with a general Internet search or by browsing through some basic books on your topic. To find more advanced information you can access electronic journal articles through your university’s library website. Jstor, Ebscohost, and Proquest are all examples of academic databases that are great resources for finding specialized articles on different topics. A speaker can incorporate information from these journals, statistics, stories, etc. but must always cite their sources. This means that if you are speaking about information that you got from somewhere else, you need to tell the audience where you received your information from in order to avoid plagiarism, acting like someone else’s ideas are yours.

Personal stories are a great way to get audience attention and increase your credibility as a speaker. It shows that you have experience with what you are speaking about and the audience is always interested to hear about something that you know about from a personal level.
Outline

Once you have a good idea about your topic and you feel comfortable with resources to back you up, it’s time to create an outline. An outline exists to guide you through the planning of your presentation. It is not your speech written word for word, but instead a guide with main points and sub points. On pages 78-80 is a template you may use when creating an outline as well as an example of a completed outline:
STANDARD OUTLINE FORMAT

PLAN (Note: The “plan” is to guide you as the presenter; you do not share this part with your audience.)
- General Purpose
- Specific Purpose

INTRODUCTION
  I. Attention Getting Device
  II. Credibility
  III. Audience Relation
  IV. Central Idea
  V. Preview

---Transition---

BODY
  I. First Main Point
     a. Support
     b. Support
     c. Support

---Internal Summary/Transition---
  II. Second Main Point
     a. Support
     b. Support

--- Internal Summary/Transition ---
  III. Third Main Point
     c. Support
     d. Support

---Internal Summary/Transition/Signal for Conclusion---

CONCLUSION
  I. Summarize your main points
  II. Restate your central idea
  III. Relate it to audience
  IV. Motivate the audience
  V. Closing Statement

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: You should verbally cite your sources as you present their ideas, but may include full references at the end of the presentation.
EXAMPLE OUTLINE

PLAN (Note: The “plan” is to guide you as the presenter; you do not share this part with your audience.)

- **General Purpose:** To inform the audience about stage fright.
- **Specific Purpose:** At the end of my presentation, the audience will understand how to overcome stage fright.

INTRODUCTION

I. **Attention Getting Device:** When given the option, 90% of a worldwide sample of people chose public speaking as their #1 fear over death. – Gallup Poll, July 2016

II. **Credibility:** Adele, Megan Fox, and I learned to overcome our stage fright using the strategies I will provide.

III. **Audience Relation:** My fellow students, you too may have experienced this fear in past public speaking situations such as class presentations.

IV. **Central Idea:** Stage fright can be overcome using three simple techniques.

V. **Preview:** Solutions for stage fright include understanding what it is, then preparing and practicing.

**Transition** -- Let’s begin our investigation of the stage fright solution by first understanding what stage fright is.

BODY

I. **First Main Point:** Stage fright is a real problem
   a. **Support:** Definition – Synonyms/Description
   b. **Support:** Symptoms – Physical/Emotional/Psychological
   c. **Support:** Causes – Normal/Abnormal

**Transition** -- Now you are aware of the stage fright problem. Let’s continue our inquiry into the solution by looking at techniques to solve it.

II. **Second Main Point:** Stage fright can be overcome through preparation
   a. **Support:** Mental Preparation – Focus on Audience/Message
   b. **Support:** Physical Preparation – Research/Speech Writing/Outlining

**Transition/Internal Summary** -- As you can see, preparation is necessary both in thought and action to conquer your speaking anxiety. Next, I will explain another helpful technique to diminish this common fear.

III. **Third Main Point:** Practice overcomes stage fright
   c. **Support:** Verbal Speech Delivery – Vocal Inflection/Purposeful Pauses
   d. **Support:** Nonverbal Speech Delivery – Eye Contact/Gestures
The outline is an important part of the planning process. It is a part where you sit down and think about what you will say and when you will say it. Your presentation should contain three parts: the introduction, body, and conclusion. According to a theory called the primacy-recency effect, people are most likely to best remember the beginning and the end of an activity (speech, movie, etc.). This means that it is important to have a very strong introduction and a clear and concise conclusion at the end to tie everything together.

Introduction

The introduction is where you want to get everyone’s attention and convince them to listen to you. It is here that you want to create “information hunger,” meaning that the
audience is curious-- wanting to listen and find out what you have to say! There are many
different ways to excite an audience and get their attention from the very beginning.

One way to do this is by telling a story that relates to your topic. For example, if you
were presenting on Ramadan it would be appropriate to begin with a story of how you celebrated
Ramadan as a child.

“It was always my favorite time of the year. My family celebrated it with
smiles on their faces and warmth in their hearts. My mother made a
special lentil soup that we would break the fast with. Family would
always come visit and the house was full of happiness. I remember
bringing food to needy people with my older siblings. Ramadan was the
most special part of the year for me as I was growing up because of our
family traditions and celebrations. As an adult, I find it even more
important. Today, I’d like to share with you what Ramadan means to
me.”

The audience would likely be interested in your personal experience and motivated to
hear more as you continue your presentation. Personal stories are an incredible way to bond with
your audience and have them see you as a person of depth and likeability.

Moving forward, another way to introduce a topic is by posing a question to the room.
For example, if the topic were Alzheimer's disease:

“How would you feel if your grandfather who you were very close to
completely forgot who you were?”

Another way to introduce your speech is to begin with a dramatic or surprising piece of
information such as a powerful statistic or a fact. This is the strategy that famous English chef,
Jamie Oliver in 2010 used when he gave a Ted talk in the USA:
“Sadly, in the next 18 minutes when I do our chat, four Americans that are alive will be dead through the food that they eat.

My name’s Jamie Oliver. I’m 34 years old. I’m from Essex in England and for the last seven years I’ve worked fairly tirelessly to save lives in my own way. I’m not a doctor; I’m a chef, I don’t have expensive equipment or medicine. I use information, education.

I profoundly believe that the power of food has a primal place in our homes that binds us to the best bits of life. We have an awful, awful reality right now. America, you’re at the top of your game. This is one of the most unhealthy countries in the world.”

Chef Oliver began his speech with a very shocking reality--that during the time he and the audience were together, four people would die due to what he was talking about. This helped create audience interest in his subject by showing the importance and urgency of his topic.

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Conclusion

Just as important as a strong introduction is a strong conclusion. Your conclusion should summarize your presentation and remind the audience of your main points. Think of your entire speech as a journey and the conclusion as the end. You have led the audience all the way and you can not leave them without ensuring that they have arrived safely and comfortably to the very end. Many speakers make the mistake of hurrying their conclusion and this leaves their audience confused to whether or not the presentation has ended or not. As a speaker you need your presentation to be strong from the beginning to the end. So how do you make a strong and concise conclusion?
First, it’s critical that you summarize your presentation for the audience; this leaves them with a clear and compact version of what was previously said. A summary should be a brief account of the main points discussed in the presentation. Another way to finish your speech is by providing a call-to-action, or a next step to follow. For example, if you spoke about conservation and ways to protect the environment, an ideal way to end would be by asking people to recycle and reuse. Perhaps you could distribute a brochure with simple everyday tips like taking shorter showers and turning the lights off when you leave a room. A call to action gives people something to do when they leave your presentation; it allows them to invite your speech into their life. Finally, a great way to end is a question and answer session. This allows your audience to clarify any misunderstandings and connect with you. You should announce that you will answer any questions at the end, in order for people to know that there will be a special time allotted for them to speak to you later.
Practice

After you have finished your outline, it’s time to practice! This helps you familiarize yourself with the presentation and experience delivering it. Some people choose to practice in front of a mirror as they can look at themselves and practice facial expressions and gestures. Others prefer practicing with a small crowd of friends or family in order to get used to an audience and receive feedback afterwards.

There is not one correct way to practice, but here are some tips:

- Create cue cards
  - Write main points on index cards to remind yourself
- Plan gestures to use ahead of time
- Plan and prepare visual aids
  - Picture, Powerpoint (TM), Prezi(TM), Flipchart, etc.
- Video record yourself and watch
  - See what you do well and what needs improvement
- Give presentation to friends and family members
- Give presentation in front of mirror

Nerves/Anxiety

Mark Twain, a famous American writer once said, “There are only two types of speakers in this world, the nervous and the liars.” It’s important to note that feeling nervous is not a sign of weakness or something to be ashamed of. In fact, to be nervous before an important event like
a presentation or an exam is perfectly natural. Though a little bit of nervous energy is good, it is not okay to be consumed or overwhelmed by anxiety. Below are several ways to deal with speech anxiety:

- Practice breathing exercises
- Visualize yourself giving the presentation and doing well
  - Envision success
- Exercise
  - Take a walk
- Sleep well the night before
- Stay well hydrated
- Eat healthy food
- Get to know the area where you will present
- Seek help from teachers

Overall, the best way to ensure that you give a cool and confident speech is to practice your speech and know your material well. Believe in yourself and soon you will see that practice and positive thinking can make you an incredible speaker!

**Delivery**

The day has come and it is time for your presentation. By now you may be a little nervous about presenting in front of people, but because you have practiced and prepared
effectively you are confident in yourself and know that you will do well. There is no worse feeling than being ill prepared, so be sure that you are adequately equipped.

First, it is important to look the part. Dressing professionally makes you appear more credible to your audience and helps you feel more confident in yourself. The more confident you feel, the better you will perform as a speaker.

Eye Contact

While you are delivering your presentation it is very important that you maintain eye contact with your audience. Think of eye contact as a 3-5 second meaningful conversation with someone. This is one of the most important and most challenging parts of speaking. Once this skill is mastered, it can set you apart from everyone else as an efficient and professional speaker.

A good approach to eye contact is to make it as natural as possible, like an honest connection with an audience member as you are speaking. Do not scan the room back and forth rapidly when speaking, but instead take your time in one place and move throughout the room. One suggestion is to use an audience member on the other side of the room as an anchor, make eye contact with them, and slowly move towards them as you speak. Once you arrive to their side of the room, make eye contact with a couple other people near them.

Gestures

Sometimes when we speak in front of a group of people, we get nervous and restrict our hand movements. Other times, our anxiety makes us move our hands far too much! It is necessary to find a balance between these two extremes as we present. Often, speakers keep their hands near the core of their body (their abdomen and waist), but a more dynamic speaker will
reach outwards, away from their body as they gesture with their hands. Aim for wide and expressive gestures that help illustrate your message.

Vanessa Van Edwards studies human behavior. She is a published author who trains people in body language and people skills. She analyzed several episodes of the serial Ted Talks and found those that went viral featured speakers who used their hands the most. “The least-watched TED talks had an average of 124,000 views and used an average of 272 hand gestures. The top-ranked ones, meanwhile, had an average of 7.4 million views and 465 hand gestures during the same length of time.”

“When really charismatic leaders use hand gestures, the brain is super happy,” Edwards said. “Because it’s getting two explanations in one, and the brain loves that.” We find that the audience responds well to hand gestures because they are hearing and seeing and that helps them make sense of the subject.

Be careful to avoid putting your hands in your pockets, or holding any objects (such as a pen) while you are presenting.

**Space and Movement**

A common mistake that presenters make is to stay locked in one place during their entire presentation. Some, due to nervousness, stay with a third of their bodies hidden behind a podium to make their selves feel safer. This is not a good strategy because the audience will find the presenter boring and quickly lose interest. As a speaker, you must learn to own the stage, getting into the mindset that it is yours and becoming comfortable. You should learn to move freely about the area instead of being stuck in one spot the entire time.

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“When we are feeling powerless in virtually every way that we can, we make ourselves smaller. Rather than take up more space, we take up less--through our postures, our gestures, our walking, and even our voices. We shorten; slouch, collapse and we restrict our body language. And when other people watch us doing those things, they can’t help but see us as powerless and frightened.”

Be careful not to pace back in forth quickly. This could be distracting to the audience. You should always strive for balance.

**Voice**

Your voice is the main channel used in a speech—one of the main features! Therefore it is important you think about how you use it. First consider volume. Are you speaking loud enough for everyone to hear you? For some people, speaking loudly is very hard to do, but as a presenter it is a must.

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Pauses

Silence is something that often makes people uncomfortable. In group settings, there are people who are quick to fill in a quiet moment in order to not feel awkward. However, silence, if embraced, can speak louder than words. In speeches, it can serve as a very effective tool to allow the audience to reflect on a point.

Oftentimes, a presenter uses fillers, or words to fill in their quiet moments when they are not certain of what to say next, such as “umm” or “like.” A good speaker will learn to keep their fillers to a minimum in order to not distract their audience. One piece of advice is to learn to take
a deep breath in through the nose and out of the mouth when thinking of the next sentence. Allow yourself a moment to collect your thoughts.

**Transition**

By **transitioning**, a speaker moves smoothly from point A to point B. Just as a screenwriter who is writing a movie must make one scene flow into another, the public speaker must also transition well to ensure clarity. Transitions are a lot like bridges in that they bring two ideas of your speech together.

**Without Transition**

Tortuguero, Costa Rica, is translated as land of the turtles. This area of Costa Rica is home to four different species of Sea Turtles. Eco-Tourism is popular at Tortuguero, people like to see the animals and beautiful beaches. Some animals are endangered.

**With Transition**

Tortuguero, Costa Rica, is translated as land of the turtles. This area of Costa Rica is home to four different species of Sea Turtles and a number of other endangered animals. **Because of its vibrant wildlife and beautiful white beaches**, many people visit Tortuguero as part of Eco-Tourism.

**Signposting**

Furthermore, **signposting** should be used as you deliver your speech. We have already established that communication is a journey; signposts are the places throughout the journey
where you let your audience know where they are. Think of it as a big “you are here” sign that lets people know when you are introducing a new subject, moving on in a list of items, or coming close to concluding.

“The top three ways to learn English are through travel, movies, and reading books. I will first discuss how a traveler quickly learns language while travelling and then move on to movies and reading books later.”

During group presentations, where more than one person is presenting, it is especially important to use transitions to distinguish different speakers and topics:

“The top three ways to learn English are through travel, movies, and reading books. Today I will be discussing how travelling helps you learn a language quickly, while my colleagues Haya and Noorah will talk about the benefits of watching movies and reading books.”
## Transitions
### Linking Your Thoughts*

**Cause and Effect**
- Accordingly,                        Consequently,     Therefore,
- Otherwise,                        As a result,        Because
- For this reason,                   It follows that     If...then

**Addition**
- Furthermore,                      Moreover,           Also,
- Next,                             In addition,        Besides,
- Yet another                       Equally Important,  Too

**Instances**
- For instance,                      Either...or        For example,
- First, Second, etc.,              In this case,        In particular,
- Then                              Neither...nor       That is,

**Conditions**
- Nevertheless,                     If                 Even though
- But yet                           Although            In these circumstances,
- This being so,                     Otherwise          Though

**Logical Conclusions**
- Apparently                         Certainly,        Therefore,
- Evidently                          Of course,         Thus,
- Hence,                             Presumably,        For all that,

**Comparison and Contrast**
- Here again,                        However,          On the contrary,
- In a like manner,                  Nevertheless,      On the other hand,
- Conversely,                        Similarly,         Likewise,
- Whereas                            Yet                Also,

**Time Relationships**
- Meanwhile,                         Before,            Immediately
- Later,                             Formerly,          As long as
- At the same time,                  When,              Then
- Next,                              Subsequently,       Finally,
- At last,                           After,             In the meantime,

**Emphasis**
- In fact,                           Above all,         It follows that
- Indeed,                           For this reason,    Most important,

**Generalizing**
- As a rule,                         Ordinarily,        Usually,
- Mostly                            Generally,        Apparently,

*As adapted from http://worldtraining.net/transit.gif*
Vocabulary

In choosing the words that you will use in your speech, be careful about using engaging and colorful words. Think of your speech as a masterpiece that you are creating, like a skyscraper or a painting. Carefully think about how you will say what it is that you need to say. Take your time in planning how you will get your message across and consider the words that you will use.

Many speakers use **metaphors** when speaking, a figure of speech that implies a comparison (similarity) between two things. This helps the audience consider something from a different perspective by measuring it against something else. Consider this quote from Ali Ibn Abi Talib in which he likens the human being to a flower:

“Be like the flower that gives its fragrances to even the hand that crushes it.”

The author is not really suggesting that human beings act like flowers; instead he uses an example of something that human beings know well and proposes that we bless even the people who may hurt us. A metaphor is a useful figure of language. William Shakespeare is known for a famous metaphor in which he viewed us as actors and actresses:

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players”

To finish, look at saying of famous boxer, Muhammed Ali, in which he brags about his physical strength.

“Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. His hands can’t hit what his eyes can’t see.”
Vocabulary:

Audience Attitude
Audience Demographics
Credibility
Entertain
Faux Pas
Fillers
Inform
Information Hunger
Jargon
Metaphor
Persuade
Plagiarism
Primacy-Recency Effect
Signpost
Transition

Discussion Points:

1. Create a metaphor for the following words, and then compare with a partner.
   a. Life
   b. University
   c. Childhood
   d. Travel
2. How does a speaker create Information hunger?

**Case Study:**

Your friend calls you the night before he has to give a big presentation in front of his biology class. He is anxious and tells you that he plans on practicing all night in order to do well tomorrow. When you ask him how he plans to be awake for his presentation he tells you “that is what coffee is for!” Give your best advice for someone who is nervous to present.
Chapter Six:

Applied Communication

“If I do not speak in a language that can be understood there is little chance for dialogue”

-bell hooks

Pursuing a university degree is one of the biggest investments that young adults can make in their lives. Students spend countless hours traveling back and forth from school, preparing for exams, and creating presentations. Learning the importance of teamwork, students collaborate on assignments and become familiar with scientific-based inquiry as well as creativity.

Upon completing their program, students will be proud to receive a diploma. This piece of paper will is priceless when the time and effort put into it are considered.

Students will eventually enter the workforce and do their part to build a better future. When they do, the skills they acquire in the university will be an important part of their professional lives. This is due to the fact that a college career is designed to give students a strong foundation to build upon.

To stand out as a competent communicator among your peers, it is important to always strive to learn more advanced skills while polishing the basic ones. In this chapter, we will go over the fantastic four, or the four skills that you should perfect before graduating, but will also continue to sharpen after you are in the workplace. These are:
● Writing a professional e-mail
● Creating a Curriculum Vitae (CV) along with a cover letter
● Representing yourself in a job interview
● Professionally creating an effective visual aid

In this Chapter:

✓ Compose a professional e-mail
✓ Create a Curriculum Vitae
✓ Create a Cover Letter
✓ Prepare for a Job Interview

Professional E-mail

E-mail is one of the most common tools that people use for written electronic communication. Nowadays, communicating via e-mail is a process of everyday life for students, employees and business people as well as others who are not engaged in professional responsibilities. The process of writing a friendly e-mail is not complicated and people can do it the way they prefer. However, a professional e-mail has standard rules that need to be considered, especially as the way you write your email reflects the level of your ability. If you write a professional email to request a job opportunity without following the standard rules for
such an email, you are likely to be eliminated before reaching the interview step. By now you might be wondering how to write a professional email that gives a good indication about you.

Sample E-mail

When creating e-mail be sure to add a subject in order for the receiver to know what the e-mail is about. E-mails that do not have a subject are less likely to be read. Next, be sure to add an appropriate greeting such as “Ms.” “Mr.,” or “Professor.” This should be followed with the body of the e-mail. Here you should write in full sentences and avoid grammar and spelling errors. After writing the body, chose an appropriate closing and sign with your name. It is best to use a sans-serif font, such as Times New Roman or Tahoma for writing as it is easy to read. When writing, try to keep it short and stick to what is most important. You can bold something that is very important, but you should not overuse bold, italic, and underline as this is both annoying and unnecessary. The general rule for composing an email is to enter twice after writing the greeting, body, and closing.
Things to Avoid when Writing a Professional E-mail

1. **Emojis :)**

   While fine to use with friends and family, emojis may not be well received when writing a professional e-mail.

2. **Slang**

   Slang is an informal language. For example, in American slang, individuals say “my bad” meaning “I made a mistake. In each language, there are some informal languages (slang) that are not acceptable when communicating through Email.

3. **Writing in all Capital Letters**

   Writing in uppercase, “PLEASE COME TO MY OFFICE.” is often viewed as yelling.

4. **Wordiness**

   Get the point without providing unnecessary information.
Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae is a Latin word which means “course of life”. It is a written document that presents an individual’s education, career, expert skills, qualifications and experiences. A person continues building his or her own CV through their entire life. The CV is required to apply for a job or to apply for any position that requires an overview of your career life. For example, if you are planning to provide an educational presentation in any institution, they will ask for your CV to get an idea of your educational background and experience before giving you permission to speak for their population. Your CV presents who you are in a professional level; therefore, it must be written in a skillful way.

How to Write a Professional Curriculum Vitae

There are different formats for writing an effective CV. The CV must begin with your correct and most updated contact information at the top of the document, including your full name, e-mail address, phone number and street address. Next, write the objective of your CV, which needs to be specific to the job. For example, “seeking a position at the University of Dammam as an assistant professor in the psychology department.” The common format of a CV begins by presenting your academic qualifications starting with the most recent one. If you have a Doctorate degree, you present it first in your CV, then your Master degree and finally your Bachelor degree. The name of the institution and the date of graduation needs to be associated with each degree.
After the educational background, you can list your achievements, such as, work experience, voluntary experience, trainings, licenses, certifications, community services, honors and awards and publications. The order of the achievements does not really matter.

Followed by this, you can list your language proficiency, computer skills and personal skills. If your CV is more than one page, you need to list your personal information on each page, at least the name, e-mail address and phone number.
Cover Letter

A cover letter is a one-page document that is sent with the CV when applying for any position. The purpose of this cover letter is to introduce yourself to the intended company, to present your qualifications and to argue why you can be the best fit for the presented job. The cover letter is not less important than the CV, thus it must be written in an advanced, professional way. A smart cover letter can support you to get the job even if the CV is not very strong. For example, if you are newly graduated and you do not have much experience, the way you present yourself and your ability to convince the reader about your skillful abilities can help you to be nominated by the institution that is advertising the job. It is the first thing people usually look at and it gives an impression about the applicant. Similar to the CV, the cover letter must include your contact information, such as, full name, e-mail address, phone number and address.

The cover letter usually consists of three paragraphs: the opening paragraph, where you introduce yourself and your educational background. The body, where you highlight your skills and qualifications and emphasize your strengths related to the job requirements. Finally, the closing paragraphs, where you need to appropriately repeat your interest in the position and thank them for reviewing your cover letter. Remember to end your cover letter with professional closing words such as, “sincerely”, or “regards” and sign your name.
Job Interview

A job interview is a meeting between the job applicant and the employer, which is conducted to assess the applicant’s qualifications and skills and to decide the suitability of the applicant for the advertised job.

Preparing for a job interview

In order to pass the job interview, you need to be well prepared. First, you need to be organized. This means that your documents (the original documents and the copies) are all well organized in a folder. Prior to your interview, find out about the company that advertised the job and learn about it, not only because they might ask you about your knowledge of the company, but also because being knowledgeable about the company gives an indication that you are really
interested in the job. If you know the person who is going to do the interview with you, try to research them and understand their area of interest. Networking, meeting others in your field, is essential to your professional life and can be accomplished via any business-oriented professional networking such as LinkedIn or company profiles. It is also recommended to try to find information about their perspective in life. This information will help you to communicate with them professionally.

Part of preparing for the interview is sleeping well the night before. Getting enough sleep allows your brain to be clear and focused. You should also eat healthy before the interview and drink enough water. Be on time for the interview as being late can give the interviewer the wrong impression. Dress professionally for the interview. The way you dress gives an indication of who you are.

Moreover, it is also very important to research for the common interview questions that are related in your field as well as the general interview questions and try to find the best answer for them. Keep your key messages in your mind during the interview process, and work them into your responses even when you are not directly asked

**Common Interview Questions**

Even though the interview questions might differ from one field to another, there are some common interview questions that are commonly used to give the interviewers an idea of the applicant’s personality. The most common interview questions are:

- Can you tell us a little about yourself?
- What do you know about our company?
- What are your greatest professional strengths?
● What is your greatest accomplishment?
● What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
● Why should we hire you?
● How are you going to contribute to our company?
● How do you deal with job pressure and stressful situation?
● Tell be about a conflict that you faced in life and how did you deal with it?
● Where do you see yourself five years from now?
● Why are you interested in this job in specific?
● Why are you leaving your current job?
● What is your expectation of this job?
● What are your future goals?
● Do you have any questions for us?

If the interview question is more focused on your field, give a clear and specific answer that represents your knowledge. Use examples, the single best indication of future success and accomplishment are past success and accomplishment. If you do not have that specific knowledge, or if you forget the correct answer, you can respond by saying, “I am not able to remember the specific point right now, but I will research it and review it after this interview”.

**During the Interview**

The interviewer will observe your body language and your facial expression. Thus, you need to carefully watch your nonverbal communication. In the interview room, sit appropriately,
smile, make eye contact, and answer the questions in an appropriate tone of voice. At the end of the interview, do not forget to thank the interviewer for their time.

**Things to avoid during the interview**

- Asking about the salary
- Talking too much or too little
- Asking about the result of the interview
- Shaking legs while sitting
- Asking the interviewer any personal questions
- Talking negatively about your previous job or about your previous boss
- Being too nervous
- Texting or answering a phone call
- Chewing gum
- Holding many things (folder, cell-phone, cup of coffee, purse, etc.)
Vocabulary:

Cover letter
Curriculum Vitae

Discussion points:

1. How can a successful cover letter help you to get a job even if the CV is not very strong?

Case study:

After submitting her CV and Cover letter, Sara received an invitation to interview for a position as medical doctor at one of the hospitals in town. Sara was very excited for the interview. She prepared herself by studying the hospital. She looked up common interview questions in her field and reviewed the personality assessment questions usually asked by employers. On the day of the interview, she was on time, dressed professionally and came with all appropriate documents.

During the interview, she was asked to introduce herself. Sara provided her name, her educational background and some information related to her professional life. Then Sara was asked about her previous job and why she wanted to leave it. She said that she was overqualified to be in a newly established and relatively unknown hospital. She added that she did not feel comfortable with the team she was working with because they always treated her badly. When Sara was asked about her strengths, she mentioned that she was very hard worker, could work overnight and extra hours if needed and liked to overcome challenges. She added that she had good communication skills with patients. When Sara was asked about her weaknesses, she emphasized that she did not have any weaknesses because she learned to be strong from a young age and she does not believe in weaknesses. When the interviewer asked Sara where she saw
herself in five years, she said, “I’ll be the top manager at a well-known hospital.” Finally, when
the interviewers asked Sara if she had any questions for them, she said “When are you doing to
provide me with the results of the interview?”

Please look closely at Sara’s responses. If you were the interviewer, would you recommend her
for the job? Please support your decision.
Chapter Seven:

Communication Across Fields

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Maya Angelou

Communication travels with us beyond the university. As our goals change from studying to searching for a job, the skills that we have discussed earlier in the book make us employable adults. Forbes Magazine, a popular business publication, did a survey of 260 employers asking which factors are most important when considering a potential employee\textsuperscript{22}.

Nine out of ten of the skills that are most important to the employers are communication skills. This means companies are actively seeking out individuals who have competent communication skills. These skills prove all the more relevant for professions who deal directly with the public. By learning problem solving, time management, planning, teamwork, and communication skills students are richly investing in their lives. So what does communications look like in your field?
The world of science and engineering is a vast and diverse universe. There are mechanical, petroleum, electrical, environmental, and many more fields. Engineers apply hard science to real world problems, making the world an easier place to live in. Though their jobs are highly technical, involving physics, chemistry, and biology, this field also requires soft skills in order to meaningfully interact with the world around them.

In the past decade, universities have attempted to add more communication classes to engineering and science curriculum in order to create well balanced graduates who are ready to face challenges that lie ahead. In this chapter we address the unique concerns that students of technical fields encounter.
Explaining Ideas

Oral Communication

Competent communication can make the difference between the success and failure of a project. While engineers come from the same field, it is always important to remember that they come from a variety of different backgrounds (families, countries, etc.) and bring these experiences with them to every worksite. From beginning to end, it’s crucial that everyone is on the same page and that communication is clear and concise, leaving no room left for guesswork.

Real Story

In 1999 NASA engineers sent an orbiter to the planet Mars. The orbiter was supposed to check the climate on Mars, specifically its history of water, to see if there was any potential for life on Mars. After years of work and spending $125 Million on the project, the Mars orbiter crashed in space due to one avoidable and very embarrassing reason—lack of communication between engineers. Two different teams were working on the project. One team was using the metric system of measurement while the other team was using English units. Both teams assumed that the other team was using the same. Edward Stone, the Jet Propulsion Lab director, said “Our inability to recognize and correct this simple error has had major implications.” Communication is everything.


An important aspect of Engineering is having the ability to communicate an idea to another person, company or a client. As engineering is science-based and involves problem solving, it is often difficult for an engineer to explain what is in their mind to someone who is outside their field and does not have the same technical knowledge. “Knowledge and technical know-how are clearly important, but these must be presented with an excellent standard of
communication skills; particularly oral. Indeed, oral communication and presentation skills are considered one of the best career enhancers and to be the single biggest factor in determining a student’s career success or failure.\textsuperscript{23} Remember to never think less of someone due to their lack of technical knowledge, but instead to work with them in order to give them the clearest picture that you possibly can. One good strategy is to use examples in order to make the information more accessible. Always remember that you do not need to share every single technical detail of the project or plan, as this can be confusing or overwhelming. Only share what is necessary to increase their understanding.

It is always helpful to check for understanding and seek feedback after explaining a new concept. One recommended way to see if you were understood to say, “I’d like to see if I was able to explain that well, could you try and summarize that?” Or “can you explain that back to me to ensure it makes sense?” Be patient and remember that everyone has different ways of understanding the world in which we live.

**Visual Communication**

One way to explain a concept is through drawings and designs that allow them to clearly envision and illustrate a project or idea. There are software programs such as AutoCAD\textsuperscript{(TM)} and Microstation\textsuperscript{(TM)} that allow engineers to create highly advanced blueprints. **Visual communication**, or expressing an idea in visual form, plays a significant role in the field of engineering as it can often give a better vision of the project than an oral description. Imagine an engineer describing their plans for an eight story condominium complex with 170 units, high ceilings and skylights. They may use words such as “modern” or “elegant” to describe the style,

but it may be difficult for the other person to picture. This is where visual communication fills in the gap and assists in further representing a concept.

**Written Communication**

Whether you are writing a proposal, an outline, a report, or e-mail, written communication is important within technical fields. No project is approved without an approved proposal. The proposal serves as a formal written plan that shows what a person will do in their project. It is critical that the proposal is written in a clear and professional manner. Poor grammar or sloppy format reflects badly not only on the employee but on the potential project. Furthermore, e-mail will be a major form of communication between engineer and shareholder, partner, manager, etc.

**Interdisciplinary Communication**

An engineer does not work in isolation, in fact a lot of their work requires teaming with other professions in order to get a job done. Knowing a widely spoken world language increases our likelihood of understanding and being understood, whether we are contacting stakeholders, management, or hiring employees for the job. Engineers are constantly working with fields from other disciplines and backgrounds. This calls for them to be open-minded and adaptable as well as good listeners. Interpersonal and intercultural communication skills are key in all stages of project development—from creation to implementation. It is also important for technical fields to be competent in Intercultural Communication as their work reaches around the world.

**Teamwork and Leadership**
In the book, “Effective Communication Skills for Engineers,” author, Harry Chambers, made a list of “Critical Common Realities for Scientific and Technical Professions.” In this list he named 6 different problems faced by professionals such as engineers whose work is based in hard science and technical concepts. The first “Critical Common Reality” for these professionals was:

“You are more task-oriented than people-oriented”

This is a reflection on how professionals in technical careers are focused on the tasks and problems in front of them more than the people around them. This makes sense when we realize that their jobs revolve around those very tasks! But we live in a social world, and without effective communication skills, the engineer will not be ultimately successful. Every profession requires relationship building, networking, and teamwork. **Teamwork** involves individuals combining their efforts to achieve a common goal. Teams that work well together accomplish more and do better work. Good teamwork requires strong interpersonal skills. Apart from teamwork, **Leadership**, or leading a group of people toward a common goal, is an important skill to possess. In your career there will be many times in which you will need to step up and be a leader to your peers, whether it is delegating tasks, or resolving conflict. A strong leader motivates their group and inspires high **morale**, or overall mood of the group. They take responsibility for their actions and focus on group success rather than individual success.

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Possible Communication Barriers

- **Education and experience**
  The people who you are working with may not have the same background as you when it comes to education and experience. It is your job to make the world of engineering open and accessible to them.

- **Familiarity with Technical Vocabulary**
  Imagine that you are presenting a new project at a community board meeting. Your project involves *dredging*, or taking sand and sediments from the sea (or river) bottom to build or extend beach. An engineer may be very familiar with this process, but the public will probably not know all that it entails. Thus, it would be necessary to define it simply and illustrate the process through video, pictures or whatever means necessary.

- **Unrealistic Expectations**
  Technical careers may run into unrealistic expectations from those who hire them. They may find that people have impossible timelines, or goals that are unachievable.

- **Language**
  Different languages can be a big barrier in communicating ideas and speaking to team members, employees, etc. Remember that engineering has its own language (jargon) that outsider will not understand.

- **Lack of Clear Goal**
  Be sure to have a clearly defined goal/vision of what you are working toward.
Vocabulary:

Leadership
Morale
Proposal
Teamwork
Visual Communication

Discussion Points:

1. Why is it so crucial that engineers and technical fields communicate effectively with other fields?

2. What is the importance of visual communication?

Case Study:

Raheem is an engineer working on a project in Latin America where it is custom to take “siesta” or rest in the afternoon hours after lunch. He is working with locals who insist on resting for a small period after lunch and then return back to work. Raheem doesn’t like this and would prefer that the workers work right after lunch and then leave earlier in the evening.

As a communication expert, what would you recommend that Raheem do?
Communication in the Medical Health Setting

Effective communication helps to build a healthy, trusting and strong relationship between patient and provider. It also helps to reduce conflict with others. This is very important in any type of relationship and in every field. However, effective communication is vital in the healthcare field. Medical professions require a great deal of communication with people from different social categories: age, gender, religion, ethnicity, educational levels and cultural backgrounds. Health professionals such as, doctors, doctor assistants, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, surgeons or psychologists, are obligated to deal professionally and fairly with all patients. Thus, they need to master advanced communication skills to enable them to communicate successfully with all patients.

Professionals in the medical field need to build a healthy relationship with their patients, as this trust will empower their communication with each other and the facilitate the treatment
process. When the patient trusts their doctor, they feel relaxed, which is best for their health. However, if the patient does not feel comfortable with the doctor, they will not trust his treatment. Often, patients change doctors because they do not feel comfortable. This can lead to doctors losing their patients not because of poor skill, but because they are poor communicators.

**Forms of Communication**

As mentioned in previous chapters, there are two forms of communication: verbal, which is the spoken word and non-verbal, which includes body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye-contact, tone of voice. In this chapter, we will focus on verbal and nonverbal communication in the healthcare setting.

**Verbal Communication**

Spoken words are very significant, especially in a healthcare setting. Effective verbal communication is very necessary for responding to patients’ questions and concerns and providing information about their health case. Choosing the appropriate, understandable words and the appropriate way of delivering the message makes a big different for patents. For example, a doctor can say, “this disease can kill within few weeks if we do not treat it as soon as possible” or “this disease is serious, but we can start an immediate treatment that helps to control it, avoiding any negative consequences.” Both sentences show that the patient’s life is in danger, but the first one kills hope while the second one provides hope.

**Nonverbal communication**
Nonverbal communication, body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye-contact or tone of voice, are very important in the healthcare setting. Patients and their families observe the nonverbal communication of doctors and nurses and other health care providers very carefully to seek a message about their case. Think about a time when you were looking at the doctor’s facial expression while he was reading your test result.

One the other hand, non-verbal communication is a good channel for the health provider to learn about the patient’s medical case. Sometimes, the patient’s body language and facial expression reveal their feelings and explain their level of pain more than any words can. Thus, it is important for any health provider to be aware of this important channel of communication to effectively communicate with their patients.

Rana was waiting for her mother who was undergoing a liver transplant surgery. After eight hours of waiting, Rana was told that all patients who finished their surgery successfully are in the intensive care unit (ICU). Rana went to the intensive care unit to see her mother. She was very nervous and worried about her mother. Once there, she went to a nurse and asked about her mother. The nurse did not say a word; instead she looked down and slowly shook her head no. Rana started crying out loud, thinking that the nurse’s facial expression and body language meant that her mother was not okay. However, the nurse quickly explained that Rana’s mother was fine and that she didn’t know.

In the above-mentioned story, the nurse was obviously not skillful in non-verbal communication; thus, she sent the wrong message, which scared the patient’s daughter, without
saying a word. Therefore, healthcare providers need to be very careful with the nonverbal message that they send their patients.

Alternative Communication Methods

Real Story (Helen Keller 1880-1968).\textsuperscript{26}

Helen Keller was a famous author and public speaker in the United States of America. She was the first deaf-blind person to get a bachelor’s degree in an Art major. Helen was born in 1880, at the age of seventeen months she developed an illness called brain fever that resulted in loss of both hearing and sight. In her early childhood, Helen had very limited communication with others. She communicated by screaming, kicking and laughing to express her feelings and needs. With her impairments, people thought that she would be isolated and uneducated for the rest of her life. However, at the age of six, Helen was lucky to have a great teacher, Anne Sullivan, who started to teach her words by spelling the letter on her hand using her finger and letting her hold the object in her hands. The first word that Helen learned was “doll”, then “mug”, until she was able to complete sentences. Later in her life, Helen published a total of 12 books and several articles. Even though the process of teaching Helen was challenging for the teacher and frustrating for Helen, Anne Sullivan was able to effectively communicate with her. By adapting the method of communication to her student’s needs Sullivan was able to help Helen Keller overcome her obstacles and communicate with others.

\textsuperscript{26} Helen Keller, The Story of My Life (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954).
Helen Keller’s life story has many communication lessons to learn. One important lesson is that even people with severe disabilities can communicate effectively if they have other people who can use an alternative communication process with them.

In the healthcare setting, professionals can face many situations in which they need to communicate with people who have visual or hearing impairments. Even though not all healthcare providers are experts in alternative communication process such as Braille and sign language, they are obligated to provide their patients with experts who can facilitate the communication process with them. They must also respect their disability and treat them professionally.

Alternative communication is not only limited to people with disabilities. It can also be used with those who cannot express their feelings effectively, like children. Professionals in healthcare can use the pain measurement scale as an alternative communication process with children who are not able to express their level of pain. Pictures, toys and pen and paper can also be considered as alternative communication processes with children. Healthcare providers especially pediatricians, doctors who manage the children’s health concerns, can be a very creative way to build a good relationship with young children.
Doctor-Patient Communication

The foundation of healthy doctor-patient communication is established by building a healthy relationship. The establishment of a healthy relationship begins from the first meeting. After the first meeting, the patient usually decides to continue with the doctor or to seek help somewhere else. It depends on how the doctor treats the patients in the first meeting. A healthy relationship continues to build up as the doctor shows the patient important communication skills such as being respectful, an active listener, patient, empathic, honest, faithful and culturally sensitive.

Barriers to Communication in a Healthcare Setting

There are a number of issues that can block effective communication between the healthcare provider:

**Language differences**

Language differences need to be considered in the health setting, as it is usually a diverse environment that involves individuals from different ethnic groups and speakers of different languages.

**Jargon, slang and use of acronyms**

Jargon is an expression that is used by a group of a specific profession that others cannot understand. For example, FX is a medical jargon, which means bone fracture. If your doctor informed you that you had FX, you as, a person outside of the medical profession, will not be able to understand it. Slang language (informal language that is usually used by teenagers or specific group) can be a reason for miscommunication with others, as not everyone can understand the meaning of the language used. Acronyms (the initial letters of the words in a phrase, such as ADHD for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) can also be a barrier. Not all patients can understand this acronym, thus professionals in the field need to define what they mean for their patients.

**Cultural issues**

As discussed before, cultural differences can cause ambiguity and misunderstandings if it is not openly addressed. Understanding and respecting cultural differences is very important for a successful intercultural communication in a medical setting.
Health issues

Severe illness and injuries can be a communication barrier as patients in such cases either do not feel like interacting with others or not able to communicate because of the pain that they are experiencing. Doctors need to be patient when communicating with individuals in pain and try to find alternative ways to communicate with them if they are not able to talk. For example, they can ask them to determine their pain level by pressing on the doctor’s hand. Or they can write down what they want if they can.
**Emotional difficulties**

Emotional difficulties such as depression and anxiety or any other mental health problem can be a barrier for communication as in such cases the patient might struggle to express himself to the health provider. Doctors need to be aware of the impact of mental health issues on communication and be flexible with such patients.

**Time Constraints**

Due to sheer volume of patients and cases, many times a health care provider is not able to spend the amount of time he/she would like to with a patient. Many times this means that they must communicate their feelings in a short amount of time.

**Breaking Bad News**

Delivering bad news is one of the most challenging tasks for healthcare providers. Doctors always face a situation of providing bad news to their patients. Even though it is part of their job and responsibilities toward their patients, it is still difficult for them for many reasons: First, they might fear being blamed by their patients. Secondly, patients can react in unexpected ways. Some patients might over react to that news in a way that doctors find difficult to handle. Furthermore, delivering bad news can be a trigger for the doctor's personal experience. For example, if the doctor recently lost one of their family members or friends, delivering bad news might bring up the bad memory and the negative experience. Furthermore, after delivering bad news, the doctor-patient relationship might be impacted. In some cases, delivering bad news can be followed by hard questions to answer, for example, for how long is the patient going to live?
Is the patent going to die soon? Can the patient have children in the future? There are many more questions that doctors might not have an accurate answer for.

**Process for Delivering Bad News**

Healthcare providers need to deliver the bad news appropriately to their patients. A general process of delivering bad news is as follow:

*Set an appointment*

The best way to deliver bad news is to meet face-to-face with the patient or his family. Any other channel is not recommended unless it is urgent. For example, if a death happens late at night and there is no way to inform the family, give them a phone call.

*Be prepared*

It is important to prepare yourself for any emotional reaction. People react differently to bad news; they might cry, deny, freeze, or get angry. You also need to prepare yourself for your own reaction. You are a human and feeling for others is normal. However, you need to control yourself and your feelings. Also, being prepared involves providing the needed information, try to be ready for any possible question.

*Set the context*
When you give bad news, try to prepare the receiver. For example, you can say “Mr. Khaled, your mother has had a long battle with cancer. She has fought very hard…” These few sentences can prepare the patient’s mind to receive the bad news in a less uncomfortable way.

**Be honest and provide realistic hope**

Even though bad news can be hard for the patient and his family, do not cover the truth or give unrealistic hope. You need to be very honest and give clear information. For example, saying something like, “You have a stomach cancer, but we guarantee you that we can treat it,” is medically unethical. A patient can blame you if you do not keep your promise or if you provide incorrect information.

**Show empathy**

Being empathetic means sharing the feelings of others. Sharing the patient’s feelings and showing them that you care can improve the caregiver-patient relationship and encourage the patient to be strong and stick to the treatment plan.

**Provide information**

You need to provide accurate information about the patient’s case even if they do not request it at the moment. This information will be important for them later, when their head is clear and they start thinking about the next step.

**Ask for questions**

It is important to ask the patient if they have questions or concerns and encourage them to
contact you later if they have them. This shows the patient that you care about them. When the patient knows that someone knowledgeable and professional is supportive of them, they will feel much better.
Vocabulary:

Acronyms
Alternative communication
Empathy
Health professionals
Pediatricians

Discussion points:

1. Why is it important that healthcare professionals master advanced communication skills?

2. What lessons about communication did you learn from Helen Keller’s story?

3. As a future healthcare provider, can you think of any alternative methods that can be useful when communicating with children?

Case study:

Dr. Smith is one of the best medical doctors in his town; his specialty is in liver diseases. Besides his work as a professor at the university, he has a private clinic where he sees his patients. One day, his nurse came to Dr. Smith with the test results for one of his patients that showed final-stage liver dysfunction. Dr. Smith asked to meet with the patient in person to explain his case. When the patient came to the office, Dr. Smith welcomed him. Then, he informed him about his test results in a peaceful way with clear information about liver dysfunction. He also asked the patient about his understanding of this disease and his main
concerns. Moreover, Dr. Smith gave the patient a realistic hope: that if they found a liver donor as soon as possible, he could do a liver transplant to save his life.

From your perspective, did Dr. Smith successfully provide the bad news to his patient? Please explain.
## Glossary

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Bibliography


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