

12 MANAGING ADULT LEARNING SETUP

S. GANGULY

Structure



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Learning Objectives



After going through unit 12, it is expected that you will be able to

- ❖ Relate how effective communication is one of the major strategy in adult teaching-learning process and how different means of communication give effect to a communication process
- ❖ Distinguish between internal methods of communication and external methods of communication
- ❖ Appreciate the role of a communicator in making effective communication with the audience and the skills of a good communicator
- ❖ Discuss the importance of oral and non-verbal communication

12.1 Introduction

So far you have learnt about the processes of documentation, dissemination and networking. You have also sensitized yourself to the use of different specified standards pertaining to procedures/and system/practices (both national and international) at your workplace. This has set the stage for you to efficiently manage an adult learning set-up. In addition to learning about the above-mentioned processes while managing adult learning set-up, you require also the basic understanding of two significant aspects of your professional expertise. One deals with human communication and the other one concerns organizational behavior. Unit 12 and Unit 13 discuss in quite some detail about human communication while Unit 14 and 15 are on organizational behavior.

An integral part of living and working with people involves communicating at

all levels, so also does adult education set-up entails a whole series of communication skills. Communication is an everyday interaction that we have with people around us. As such, communication is not restricted to speech alone as body language plays an important role in it. In addition, we now have access to mass media such as radio, television, newspaper and videos which are useful tools of communication. Unit 12 is about the various aspects of human communication in the context of adult learning. Beginning with explaining the concept, forms and methods of communication, you will learn about the art of effective communication and oral and non-verbal communication. As a professional adult educator, you will appreciate the value of learning about communication process and the skills for effective communication. Let us start with the importance of communication in the context of adult learning.

12.2 Adult Learning and Communication

Considering the centrality of communication in an adult learning set-up we will first discuss the meaning of the term 'communication'. Communication may be defined as giving, receiving or exchanging information, opinions or ideas by writing, speech or visual means, so that the material communicated is understood by everyone concerned.

Let us try to understand the process of

communication in terms of who are the people involved and what they do. So we try to understand communication as **Who says what? With what purpose? To whom? In what situation? By what means? and with what effect?** See Box 12.1 Who, What, Why, Whom and When of Communication. Then we will talk about the means and effect of communication.

Box 12.1 Who, What, Whom and When of Communication

Who?

As a communicator you must know what you are talking about. The people you talk to must believe in you and trust you. They must accept you as a person so your attitude is important. You must have patience and be willing to listen.

What?

What are the content of your message? What your message communicates - skills, attitudes or information. At different times you may have different messages which are dictated by the needs of the community making sure they are not conflicting messages.

Why?

Be very clear about the outcomes that are expected after you have communicated the message to the people. In the case of development worker, most of the communication will have purposes like: teaching skills, presenting facts, organizing knowledge, stimulating imagination or changing attitudes.

Whom?

To whom are we giving the message to? A person's background in terms of experience, literacy level, interests, attitudes and values will determine how the person accepts the message. There are times when we may feel that giving some information (say about vaccinations) is important, but the attitudes of the people whom we are trying to communicate with as well as their willingness to listen to our message is an important factor in effective communication.

When?

Communication is a cycle process that starts from understanding the need to communicate, the actual intervention of communicating the message, decoding of the message on part of the receiver and then getting feedback from the receiver. Again we will try to improve or react to the feedback received.

12.2.1 Means of Communication

One of the most important factors is the means that are being used to communicate the message. For a long time the only way of communicating was the spoken word. Even today many communicators depend on this for giving messages. There are certain other tools which are used for communicating.

a) Audio as Tool: For many people information heard directly from the mouth of another person is important if that person is well respected and trusted or is professionally qualified. Others increase the effect of the spoken word through dramatic gestures. Still others will use language and nuances to increase effectively. The spoken word itself, though, has certain limitations. Many people hear the words but may have little understanding of the idea

behind them.

b) Visual-Something seen: With many subjects, visuals arouse the interest and provide a clear mental picture. It facilitates understanding and help in memorizing a fact or issue.

12.2.2 Effect of the Communication

Here we come to the last part of the steps in communication. After communicating what is important for us is to know how the audience has perceived that communication. This will be clear if we note the effect of the communication on the audience.

Short-term effect: Expressions, actions and words of the audience will tell us whether they are bored, clear, confused. Look for and encourage some sort of a response. This is a short-term effect.

Long-term effect: The success of the communication is finally judged by what people will do when they are free to act

as they choose. The long-term value of communications is to be found in people's actions.

12.3 Forms of Communication

There are four major forms of Communication.

12.3.1 Intra-personal Communication

Communication is an ongoing process and that intra-personal communication is one aspect of this. For example, if we see food that we are allergic to, we will say, 'I should not eat that as it gives me stomach ache'. So we have communicated to ourselves the aversion to talking in certain food. This way we keep communicating with ourselves about factors that influence us or affect us.

12.3.2 Inter-personal Communication

Inter-personal communication takes place between two people who share some kind of a relationship. Inter-personal communication allows us to better understand the external world-events, other people and out environment. Interpersonal communication may take place between two people or between small groups of people.

12.3.3 Group Communication

When you are working in a village, you may address a group of women who have come together to take up some task, or you may in course of your work, be interacting with a group of people, say the village education committee. All these become forms of group communication.

12.3.4 Mass Communication

With the advent of printing and information technology, a new form of communication was introduced. Mass communication involves the newspapers (and other print media), television, radio, Internet. All these are forms of mass communication and can be used very powerfully to mould opinions and get people to act in the desired manner. Mass communication is a very powerful tool for a developmental worker if used in the proper way. The limitation of mass communication is that it can be used for giving information, but is not very effective for getting feedback.

Activity 12.1

Test yourself?

How many of these forms of communication have you so far used ?

12.4 Methods of Communication

The main methods of oral and written communication, both internal and

external, are shown in the following diagrams.

12.4.1 Internal communication

Figure 12.1 depicts the interface between oral and written communication.

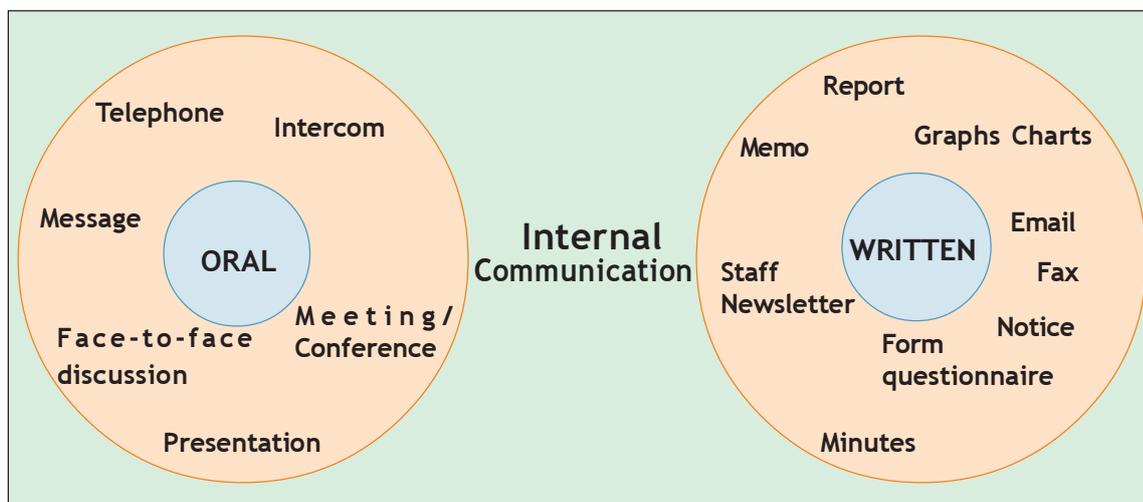


Figure 12.1 Interface between Oral and Written Communication

12.4.2 External communication

Figure 12.2 shows the different nature of oral and written communication.

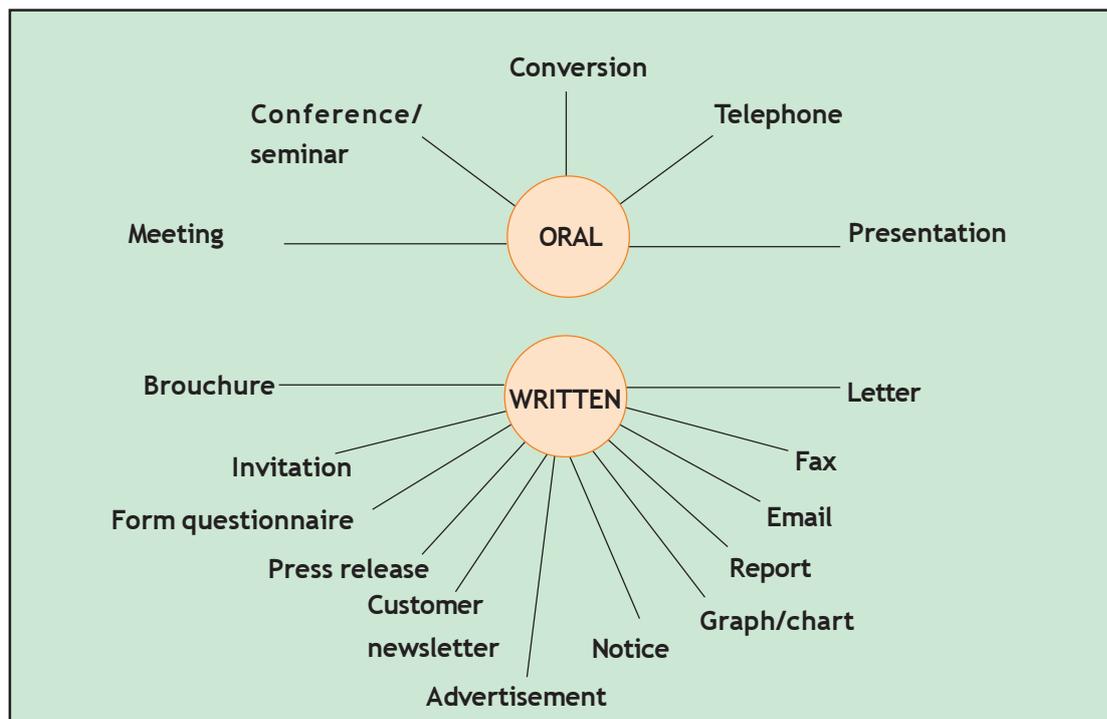


Figure 12.2 Difference between Oral and Written Communication

Activity 12.2

Which communication method would you use in each of the following situations?

- a) congratulating an employee on passing an important examination
- b) informing employees about an annual dinner and dance
- c) putting a nervous applicant at ease while waiting for an interview
- d) displaying the past 5 years' sales figures
- e) confirming a lunch appointment with an important client next week
- f) describing the location of a hotel where your company is hosting a seminar
- g) reminding staff of the security procedures at your company
- h) obtaining the reactions of staff to a new telephone system recently installed
- i) putting forward a proposal for a change in company policy
- j) sending an urgent message to an overseas client.

12.5 Effective Communication

Communication, whether oral or written, is all about understanding. Our aim should be to communicate a message successfully so that it is received as we intended, without any misunderstanding.

Effective communication can be achieved by having a thorough knowledge of the communication cycle, being aware of the barriers which exist and by considering carefully some of the vital factors mentioned in Box 12.2.

Box 12.2 Vital Factors in Effective Communication

What is the objective of the communication?: Is it intended to give information, to persuade, to request, to inform?

Who will receive the communication?: What is the relationship between the sender and the recipient? What is the recipient's background knowledge and experience?

Under what circumstances is the communication taking place?: Why is the communication happening? Is it urgent, serious, dangerous, emotive and informative?

How will the recipient react to the communication?: How will the message affect the recipient? Is it important? Will the recipient be offended or angered? Will it achieve the desired aims?

12.5.1 Communication Process

In human communication process, we shall be dealing mostly with interpersonal and group communication. In this process, we have a person formulating a message - acting as a source and another who receives the message - acting as the receiver.

In figure 12.3 you will find that there

are several steps between the time a message is conceived and the same is received and decoded.

As shown in Figure 12.3, the sender performs the following tasks.

i. Conceives the message: When you have something to say, consider the best means of putting our message across,

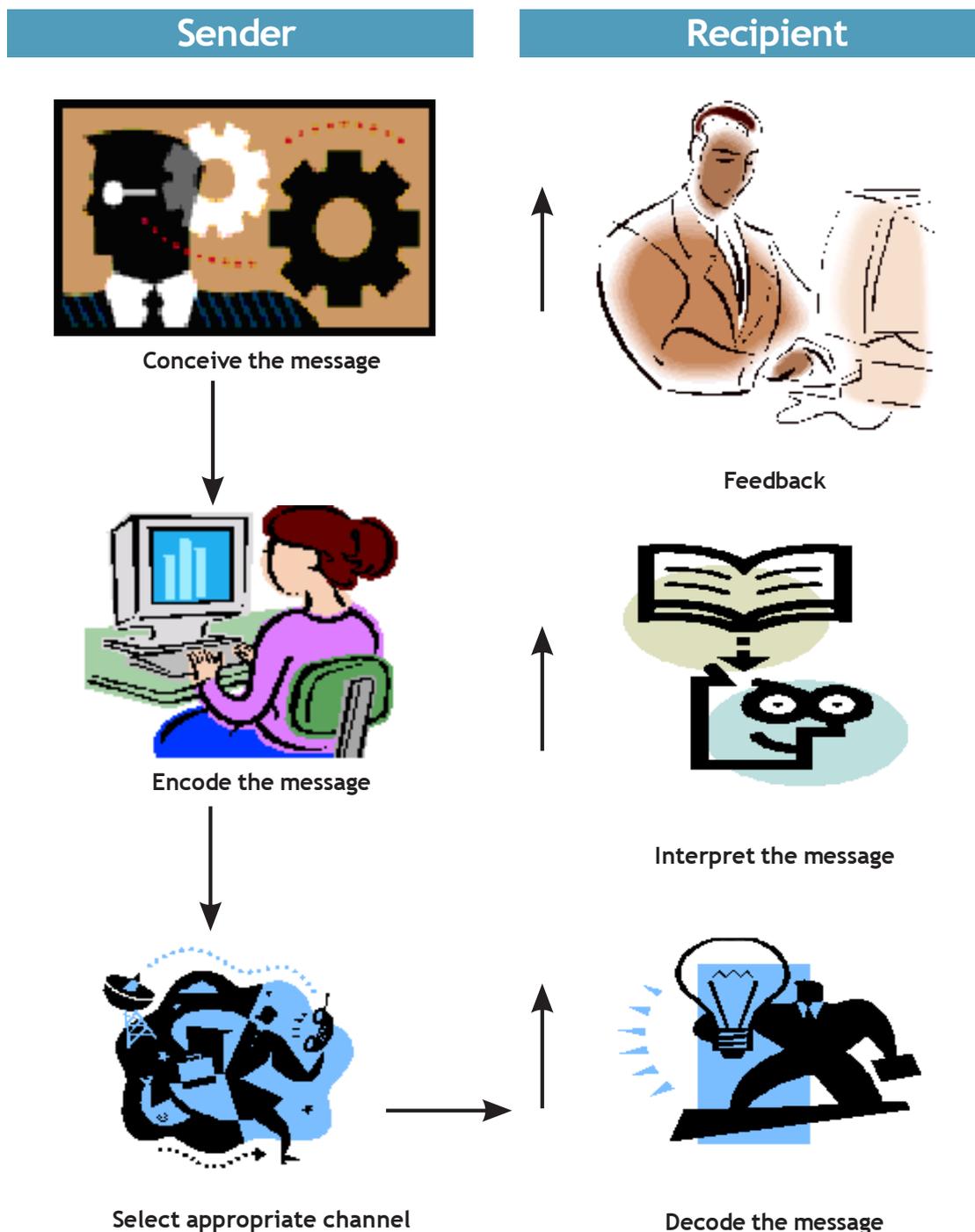


Figure 12.3 Communication Process: Tasks of Sender and Receiver

and bear in mind that timing is important. Consider your recipient carefully and aim your message to suit their specific needs.

ii. **Encodes the message:** This stage involves putting the information into an appropriate form suitable to both the sender, the recipient and the aim. Think before reaching for your phone or

putting fingers to keyboard. Decide first what specific outcomes you want from the communication. This will help you choose whether words will suffice, whether a printed record is necessary and whether graphics are appropriate. It will also help you choose appropriate language and tone.

iii. Selects the appropriate channel:

This stage is where the message is actually sent and the information is transferred. The technological revolution has brought about a wide range of telecommunication methods. You must consider all aspects: speed, cost, quick receipt, printed record, confidentiality, etc., and make an intelligent decision before sending your message. Time and money can be wasted if the wrong medium is chosen. As is clear in Figure 12.3, the recipient performs the following actions.

iv. Decodes the message: Because so many messages arrive in offices today, it is important to ensure that they are routed promptly and are given the attention they deserve. To achieve success at this stage it is also important to take the trouble to ensure that the recipient will understand the language and vocabulary used.

v. Interprets the message: Very often it is necessary to 'read between the lines'. It is always important to consider

carefully the tone and register used in your communication so that the correct message is received. For example, you do not want to risk antagonizing a good customer by using a harsh tone. Distortion of the message may occur if the sender has not carefully encoded the communication, in which case the recipient will interpret the message differently from how it was intended.

vi. Provides feedback: The communication process cannot be successful without appropriate feedback. In oral communication this is often immediate, in meetings the audience may nod or smile to show understanding and agreement. But with written messages courtesy and discipline are important to acknowledge receipt of messages until a full and appropriate response can be given.

TIP to Remember

How well you communicate is determined not by how well you say things but by how well they are received.

Activity 12.3

List the six stages in a two-way communication process, and briefly describe each stage. Next explain the importance of feedback in a communication cycle.

12.5.2 Barriers to Communication

Many problems encountered in our business and personal lives result from miscommunication. What the recipient understands by a message may not always be the message which the sender intended. Several communication barriers exist between sender and recipient, and they may be responsible for a message not being understood correctly, or a message becoming distorted (see Table 12.1). The table explains the nature of barriers to communication and suggest the ways to

maximise the import of a communication.

12.5.3 The Communicator

The process of effective communication is based on an effective communicator. And an effective communicator is one who has knowledge, attitude and skills. Lack of any of these can be a barrier for the communicator.

Knowledge

When you are knowledgeable about the subject you are communicating, you are

Table 12.1 Barriers to Communication

Barrier	What happens	How to maximise communication
a) Physical:	A learner may not be able to see or hear properly.	It is the responsibility of the communicator to be clear in speech and visual presentation.
b) Intellectual	A learner may not be willing and eager to receive the message. Their interest may not lie in what you have to say.	As a communicator, it is important that we design our communication in such a way that it takes into account the educational levels of the people, their experiences and backgrounds. We need to select appropriate examples and situations for explaining issues. The material that we use should also be carefully selected so that no ambiguous messages are given. Speak slowly if people are having difficulty in following you. Illustrate your points with lots of examples so that they are able to relate to what you say.
c) Emotional	A learner may not be able to understand what is being said or shown. This may happen because of lack of schooling, lack of functional literacy of different experiences and situations (for example you may be speaking about a city to a rural farmer)	People are interested and willing to change when they are given suggestions rather than lecture. So as a communicator, we need to learn the art of suggesting rather than telling. We need to offer our suggestions in a way that people recognize that the change will meet a need that they have recognized.

naturally more self-confident. Though knowledge about subject matter is one of the requisites of an effective communicator, it is important for us to remember that all knowledgeable persons are not good communicators.

Attitude

You are what your attitude is. This is manifested in our gestures, our tone of voice, our behaviour with people. Attitude will thus affect how we are perceived by the people as communicators. An attitude of openness and friendliness puts our audience at ease and invites them to be more

participative.

Skills

In the communication process we act or react as a whole. We cannot react only at the intellectual level or at the emotional level because we are not compartmentalized. Rather we react both intellectually and emotionally.

12.5.4 Factors Affecting Communication

There are always factors affecting communication and it is important that we recognize them. Let us discuss some of such factors.

Listening: In our day-to-day lives we listen to a lot of things. Listening is not the same as hearing. We may hear, but we may not listen. Hearing is a passive process that occurs subconsciously. Listening, on the other hand, is an active process that takes energy and commitment. Listening can be for enjoyment (as in listening to music), for information (as students or as trainees we pick up new ideas and information), for help (listening with the intention of being able to help others who have come to you with a problem).

Listening for Help is an important aspect of our work as developmental workers. We find that many times people have some problems and unless we listen to what they have to say, we cannot help them, cannot understand their needs. By listening carefully we can efficiently encode our messages. Listening helps a communicator to understand the priorities and needs of the people, the intellectual level at which they can be addressed, their attitudes and perceptions.

Voice: A pleasant voice is an asset. Those who do not have good voice can culture and improve their voice through practice. Voice needs to be controlled in volume and pitch. A loud and high-pitched voice can be grating on the nerves and put off the audience. Similarly, a low-pitched and soft voice can make the audience restless. Check the size of your audience. Although the voice should be loud and clear, if the group is small then a loud voice can be disadvantageous. If the audience is large make sure that there are arrangements for a mike, otherwise audiences in the back will start losing interest in the proceedings. Varying the tone of your voice can vary the connotation of a message. Emphasis on certain points can

be made by stressing on the words. Varying the tone also helps in making the message delivery more enjoyable. A monotonous or a singsong voice can be irritating to the audience.

Speed of Delivery: Along with the volume and pitch is the speed of delivery. Make sure that what you say is audible and clear to the audience; do not speak too fast or too slow. At the same time, when you are talking on technical subjects or giving information on subjects that are unfamiliar to the audience speak clearly and slowly. Illustrate your talk with examples to help the audience understand.

Quality of Content: The quality of content is influenced by the knowledge that you have of the subject. We cannot afford to be too abstract in our message delivery. We need to use as many examples as possible. We need to relate the content to the needs of the audience, their priorities and their situation.

Pronunciation: We have to be skilled enough to understand the accent of the local area and how to use that effectively to modulate our speech.

Body Language: Body languages comprises of movements and mannerisms. Both are sources of secondary communication. If we are confident of our communication, it will show in our body language - a body language that portrays confidence, openness, friendly nature, willingness to listen, ability to reach out and empathise with others, will all help in building rapport with the audience and make the communication easy.

Facial Expressions: Facial expressions are again a part of body language. Many times facial expressions can be used by a good communicator to communicate

a message. An encouraging sign makes the audience respond positively and open up to discussions. This is one part of it. The other part is how a communicator can use the facial expression on the audience to read the level of interest or to read how the message is being perceived and in short get a feedback from the audience. A skillful communicator will look for signs of disinterest, anger, eagerness, boredom and modify her message delivery style accordingly.

Maintaining Eye Contact: To maintain eye contact with the audience helps to monitor feedback. It is also essential for holding the interest and attention of the audience. At the same time, nervous shifty gaze and avoidance of eye contact can send out wrong signals to the audience.

12.5.5 Skills of a Good Communicator

As an adult educator you do need to acquire skills of a good communicator in order to perform your professional tasks. For becoming a good communicator you require the following skills.

- ❖ **Listening:** The first skill needed is the ability to listen carefully, picking out the positive aspects and the problems, difficulties and tensions of the audience.
- ❖ **Observation:** Going closely with listening is observation - the ability to pick up information and nuances about the communication needed in particular situations - the feeling from non-verbal clues.
- ❖ **Empathy:** The communicator needs to be able to identify with the issues/ situation as seen through the eyes of the participant.
- ❖ **Encouragement:** The communicator needs to build the confidence of the audience by appreciating their work, time and commitment. The communicator should also encourage the audience to ask questions, raise queries. This helps the communicator know that the message is being decoded correctly.
- ❖ **Summarizing:** The communicator needs to be able to summarize the information given in the sessions by picking the main issues discussed, the conclusions and analysis drawn. At the same time the communicator is to help the audience in paraphrasing messages in their own words.
- ❖ **Flexibility:** The communicator needs to be flexible in order to encourage creativity and a spirit of experimentation in the audience. A good communicator is also one who is willing to change the style of communication if she finds that the audience is not able to understand or participate in a certain style.
- ❖ **Timing:** The communicator needs a good sense of timing, when to encourage, when to challenge, when to ask a question, give suggestion, give support and keep track of the time.
- ❖ **Planning:** A communicator needs to plan the communication well ahead. The tools and methods to be used should be prepared well in time. In case you are using posters, ensure that there is enough place to fix the posters. Plan the communication from the beginning to the end—how do you introduce the topic, how do you ask questions, what are the expected outcomes and how do you evaluate these outcomes.

12.6 Oral and Non-verbal Communication

In your life you will probably spend much more of your time talking and listening to colleagues and clients than you will be writing and reading. In this process, both oral and non-verbal communications become quite significant.

12.6.1 Oral Communication in Practice

Oral communication can take a variety of forms. It can be over the telephone or face to face. It can be:

- ❖ A private discussion
- ❖ A conversation over lunch
- ❖ A gossip in the lift
- ❖ A telephone conversation
- ❖ A chance meeting in the corridor
- ❖ An informal gathering of staff
- ❖ Instructing subordinates
- ❖ Dealing with clients
- ❖ Formal meetings
- ❖ Interviews
- ❖ Training sessions
- ❖ Giving a presentation
- ❖ Conferences/seminars

12.6.2 Guidelines to Create a Structured Oral Message

Most people find talking easier than writing because phrases can be used in speech which would be unacceptable in written communication. However, if understanding is to be complete and effective, language needs to be chosen carefully. Effective oral communication

should be planned just as carefully as planning what you write.

Here are some guidelines to follow in order to create a well-structured oral message.

- ❖ Decide the desired outcome - what is the aim of your message?
- ❖ Select the important facts and figures to support your message.
- ❖ Identify key points of your message.
- ❖ Arrange the key points in a suitable order which will flow naturally from introduction to middle to conclusion.
- ❖ Choose an appropriate style in which to put your message over. Its acceptance will depend very much on
 - ❖ Facial expressions (sincerity, warmth, assertiveness, diplomacy, fairness)
 - ❖ Body stance and gestures (ease, physical presence, enthusiasm, conviction, determination, respect, eye contact)
 - ❖ Articulation (tone, enunciation, emphasis, volume, projection).
- ❖ When delivering the message, monitor the feedback constantly. Watch for unusual facial expressions, gestures, body movements. Be prepared to adjust your delivery or content in accordance with the listener's reactions.
- ❖ Know when you have said enough and try to end on a positive note.

Reflection

Do you use expressions like: um, er, you know, know what I mean, kind of, sort of? Take note of any speech patterns like this and try to correct them.

Activity 12.4

- ❖ Discuss the points to be remembered when communication with someone orally.
- ❖ What does the expression 'non-verbal communication' mean? Give examples of some non-verbal communication signals which you might associate with:
 - ❖ disagreement
 - ❖ sympathy
 - ❖ discomfort
 - ❖ boredom
 - ❖ attentive listening

12.6.3 Listening Skills

Listening is half of oral communication, and it is a skill that needs to be practiced and taken equally as seriously as speaking. All effective leaders and managers realize the importance of acquiring good listening skills.

Here are some guidelines to follow if you want to be an effective listener.

- ❖ **Prepare to listen:** Clear your mind so that your attention is assured. Concentrate on what is being said. Learn to listen, not just hear!
- ❖ **Avoid pre-judgment:** Do not pre-judge the speaker because of appearance of occupation, or jump to any conclusions before hearing what is said.
- ❖ **Be open-minded:** Hear what is being said, not what you would like to hear. Appreciate the speaker's point of view.
- ❖ **Establish eye contact:** This shows that you are listening, as does your posture.
- ❖ **Watch for signals:** Pick up aspects that the speaker considers important by watching posture and gestures, and listening to intonation in the speaker's words. This is like listening to the 'music' as well as the words.
- ❖ **Exact main points:** Pick out and repeat to yourself the key words or phrases. This will help to fix in your mind what is being said.
- ❖ **Give feedback:** Learns to give positive feedback non-verbally, by nodding and smiling. Be alert so that you can provide a suitable remark or ask a question to assist your understanding of the message.
- ❖ **Make note:** Record important conversations afterwards. Your notes will serve as a useful reminder. Develop your note-taking skills by jotting down the salient points of lectures or meetings.

Activity 12.5

Explain the importance of listening in oral communication and complete a short exercise. This exercise requires more than one person. You and one of your friends can carry it out. Describe to your partner something that you did recently - a movie you saw with an interesting story. Your talk should last about 4 to 5 minutes. Ask your partner to tell you the content of your talk. Then change over the roles and you do the listening. Let him narrate a story of the movie she/ he watched recently. Discover how good are your story telling and listening skills?

12.6.4 Interviews

One very important type of oral communication is an interview. You may be involved in various kinds of interviews:

- ❖ **Selection interview:** the kind when you consider someone for a job
- ❖ **Promotion interviews:** this takes place when you wish to be considered

for a job at a higher grade within your organization

- ❖ **Appraisal interviews:** this generally takes place annually to review progress and discuss the future
- ❖ **Counselling interviews:** this may be held to find out what has been troubling and employee or why someone has not been working to their usual high standard
- ❖ **Disciplinary interviews:** this is carried out when an employee has been accused of breaching usual procedures
- ❖ **Grievance interviews:** This is

carried out when an employee feels that he or she has been treated badly by another member of staff.

The Interviewer

If an interview is to be successful effective planning is essential. If the interviewer makes thorough preparations, the rewards will be well-structured, enjoyable, informative interviews for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Box 12.3 provides some useful inputs for such preparations before, during and after the interview.

Box 12.3 Preparations Before and During an Interview

Before the Interview

Aim: Think about the purpose of the interview and what you hope to achieve,

Information: Familiarize yourself with any relevant information - correspondence, job application forms, curriculum vitae, job specification, job description.

Setting: Choose a suitable time and place for the meeting. The room should be the right size and the furniture arranged appropriately, depending on the number of people involved. Consider if it is necessary to put a notice on the door to ensure you will not be interrupted, and to arrange for redirection of telephone calls.

Structure: Draw up a list of points for discussion so that you can discuss things in a logical order and make the most of the time available. Some companies have formal interview assessment forms which provide a permanent record of the interview and the applicant's suitability for the post.

During the Interview

- ❖ Your aim should be to put the interviewee at ease and help him or her to relax by being friendly and reassuring. Beware of closed questions which need no expansion; instead use open questions which give the interviewee an opportunity to talk freely and expand on important points.
- ❖ Give the interviewee your undivided attention. Smile, nod and use appropriate gestures to show that you have a genuine interest in what the interviewee is saying.
- ❖ Sum up the interview by stating any action you are going to take or anything expected of the interviewee after the meeting.

12.6.5 The Telephone

Most of us use the telephone several times a day to talk with friends or to make social arrangements. These calls are usually quite straightforward and require little planning. Using the telephone for business purposes is very different. In any organization the person on the telephone represents the centre

and gives an impression of the organization to the outside world. If you are to ensure good public relations, effective telephone techniques must be mastered. You should aim, to convey an impression of an efficient, friendly, progressive centre eager to give good service (for details see Box 12.4).

Box 12.4 Telephone Techniques**Before Calling**

Choose the right time to call: Consider the cost, urgency and convenience. When calling overseas you must also consider the time difference.

Check the number: A great deal of money is wasted each year on dialing wrong numbers.

Plan your call: Make a list of points and questions to be raised during your call.

Be prepared: Gather together any files, papers or other information which may be needed during the call. It is unprofessional to have to say 'Hold on while I look for that.'

Avoid interruptions Call at a time when you are unlikely to be distracted.

During the Call

Be courteous and establish a rapport: Make time for suitable pleasantries like 'How are you today Ashok?', 'Did you enjoy your holiday?'

Put a smile in your voice: Remember your caller cannot see you so use intonation to good effect and try to sound confident, decisive, helpful and interested.

Check your notes: Look back at your notes to ensure you have covered everything and quote figures and other data correctly.

Obtain feedback: Make sure the caller understands the message correctly, especially where deadlines and actions are involved.

Be courteous: Finish by thanking the caller for his or her time and trouble.

After the Call

Make notes: Let it be a habit to make notes of the call and place them in the appropriate file.

Take action: If you need to send a letter of confirmation or inform someone in your organization about any details of the call, do so immediately so that you do not forget important points.

TIP to REMEMBER

If you have to ask a caller to hold on, keep going back and assuring him/her that you will be as quick as possible.

12.6.6 Non-verbal Communication

In face-to-face encounters non-verbal communication is often just as important as verbal communication. As you are speaking information can be conveyed non-verbally as well as verbally. The non-verbal signals of listeners will provide instant feedback. Non-verbal communication is often referred to as body language.

Non-verbal communication techniques are often used unconsciously, for instance while speaking we may throw our arms around; while listening a sudden shock may result in a sharp intake of breath. Such non-verbal signals add impact to a meaning, and they combine to provide an instant impression in a way that written

communication or telephone calls cannot. Actions of this sort are an important part of the communication process.

Posture: The way people stand or sit can say an awful lot about how they feel. Someone who is nervous or anxious will fidget with their hands, tap their feet, drum the table with their fingers. Someone who is sitting well back in their chair, legs crossed at the ankle, may be seen as being relaxed and confident. Someone with a gloomy expression, head down and lifeless is probably feeling depressed or dejected. Someone sitting forward in their chair looking intently at the speaker, is showing a great deal of interest. The ability to interpret such signals and act as necessary is important in developing good human relations.

Facial expressions: Human faces are capable of communicating a wide range of expressions and emotion. A smile

conveys good humor, raised eyebrows denote questioning and disbelief, a frown denotes upset or worry.

Gestures: Many gestures are used as we speak, for example shaking a fist to denote anger, sweeping arms in excitement, using hands for emphasis. In listening, too, gestures are used, like nodding in agreement, shaking your head in disapproval, putting your hand to your chin in consideration, folding your arms in boredom. There are all valuable signs in communicating and you should learn to

read such gestures carefully.

Eye contact: The importance of eye contact is paramount. Looking someone directly in the eye suggests openness, honesty, confidence and comfort. Looking away gives an impression of being conniving or sly, or perhaps just unsure and uncomfortable. When speaking to one person try to look them in the eye. When speaking to a group avoid fixing your gaze on one or two people - let your eyes roam regularly to all corners of the room to let everyone feel involved.

Activity 12.6

Discuss with your colleagues the body language/facial expressions which may be used to express: anger, love jealousy, surprise, impatience, alertness, satisfaction, nervousness, assertiveness, friendship, hostility, sympathy, pain.

12.7 Apply What You Have Learnt

Finally, here are some tips for successful communication in Box 12.5 for you to practice as and when you have an opportunity to do so.

Box 12.5 Top Ten Tips for Successful Communication

- i. **Read:** Extend your knowledge of language by reading.
- ii. **Listen intelligently:** Remember that communication is a two-way process. Listening is just as important as speaking. Similarly, try reading your written message as if you were the recipient, and consider if it will be effective.
- iii. **Think and plan:** Think before you speak or write. Plan all your communications carefully, whether oral or written.
- iv. **Use appropriate language:** Use clear, simple language, and appreciate the same used by others.
- v. **Be open-minded:** Consider other people's viewpoints, be willing to adapt and change methods or procedures if necessary.
- vi. **Select appropriate media:** Consider carefully the method to be used for communicating your message. It should be appropriate to the desired objective.
- vii. **Time your communication appropriately:** Consider the best time for the communication and how long it should be.
- viii. **Use appropriate language:** Use words which are relevant to the topic and which will be understood by the recipient.
- ix. **Obtain feedback:** Obtain feedback to ensure that the communication was effective. If the message is not understood, rather than blame the recipient, ask yourself why the communication failed and how it could have been improved in order for it to be effective. Some questions you might ask are:
 - a) Did your expressions or language create confusion or misunderstanding?
 - b) Was your timing poor?
 - c) Was your message too long so that the main points were lost?
 - d) Were your tone and manner appropriate?
- x. **Aim high:** Set and maintain high standards in all your methods of communication, both in terms of language and presentation.

