

Lesson D2–1

Introduction to Communication

Unit D. Employability in the Agriculture Industry

Problem Area 2. Developing Communication Skills

Lesson I. Introduction to Communication

New Mexico Content Standard:

Pathway Strand: Communications

Standard: II: Use oral and written communication skills in creating, expressing and interpreting information and ideas including technical terminology and information within AFNR.

Benchmark: II-A. Develop good reading skills to enable reading of technical materials with understanding and fluency.

Performance Standard: 1. Comprehend a broad range of reading materials containing technical concepts, knowledge and vocabulary to better understand written and electronic information. **2.** Locate organize and reference written information from various sources (books, journals, magazines, internet) to answer questions, solve problems, and develop written and oral communication.

Student Learning Objectives. Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Define communication and explain its purpose.
2. Identify the components of the communication process.
3. Identify the five different levels of communication.
4. Explain the barriers of successful communication.
5. Explain the relationship between communication and leadership.

List of Resources. The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

Recommended Resources. One of the following resources should be selected to accompany this lesson:

Hunter, Sharon, et al. *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 1997. (Textbook, Chapter 3)

Ricketts, Cliff. *Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success*. Albany, New York: Delmar Publishers, 1997. (Textbook, Chapter 9)

Other Resources. The following resources will be useful to students and teachers:

Agriculture Sale Communication (U6030); *Steps in Preparing for the Agricultural Sales Call*. (U6033). University of Illinois, Vocational Agriculture Service, 1401 S. Maryland, Urbana, IL 61801.

Applied Communication. 1988. Agency for Instructional Technology, P.O. Box A, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Cheek, Jimmy G., et al. *Effective Oral Communication*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 1995.

Understanding the Importance of Effective Communications Through the Spoken Word (#8369); *Understanding the Importance of Effective Communication Through the Written Word* (#8370); *Improving Communications Skills Through Organized Activities* (#8371); *Utilizing the Media for Effective Communication—Public Relations* (#8372). Instructional Material Service, Texas A&M University, F.E. Box 2588, College Station, TX 77843.

List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

Writing surface
Overhead projector
Transparencies from attached masters
Copies of Student Lab Sheet

Terms. The following terms are presented in the lesson (shown in bold italics):

Barrier
Channel
Communication
Deadline
Feedback
Filtering
Group communication
Interference

Leadership
Mass-media communication
Message
One-to-one communication
Parliamentary procedure
Public communication
Receiver
Selective perception
Self-communication
Semantics
Sender

Interest Approach. Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations.

Have students identify the many ways in which humans communicate. List these examples on the board. Next have the students identify factors that may result in failure to communicate. List those items on the board for discussion.

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective I: Define communication and explain its purpose

Anticipated Problem: What is communication and its purpose?

- I. Communication is a complex process involving distinct elements that together convey a message.
 - A. **Communication** may be defined as the process of sending and receiving messages in which two or more people achieve understanding; the process of exchanging information.
 1. Each workday consists of listening and talking 75% of the time.
 2. In the workplace, managers spend 70% of their time communicating.
 3. Most people fail in the workplace because of poor communication.
 - B. There are three major goals or purposes of communication.
 1. To inform: the process of giving information to another person.
 2. To influence: the process of persuading a person's behavior.
 3. To express feeling: the process of explaining feelings.

Students need to utilize text materials to understand the purpose of communication. Chapter 3 in Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success or Chapter 9 in Developing Leadership and Personal Skills are recommended. Use LS: D2–1A for students to complete a communication skills inventory.

Objective 2: Identify the components of the communication process.

Anticipated Problems: What are the major components of communication?

- II. The major components of the communication process (sender, message, and receiver) are present whenever there is communication.
 - A. Two factors that affect the success of communication are deadlines and interferences.
 - 1. A **deadline** is the limited time one has to communicate about a problem or gather information.
 - 2. **Interferences** are referred to as “noise” or barriers to communication.
 - B. There are three major components of the communication process—sender, message, and receiver.
 - 1. The **sender** wants to communicate something and decides to speak, write, send non-verbal signals, or produce a visual message.
 - 2. The **receiver** wants to understand the sender’s meaning and listens, reads, or observes the nonverbal signals of visual information.
 - a. The **channel** is the linkage between the sender and the receiver.
 - b. **Feedback** is the return channel from the receiver to the sender that allows the evaluation of communication.
 - 3. The **message** is the information that is being transmitted from sender to receiver.

*Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Students need text materials to introduce them to the components of communication. Chapter 9 in *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills* or Chapter 1 in *Effective Oral Communication* are recommended. Use TM: D2–1A to show the basic components of the communication process and TM: D2–1B to show a communication model.*

Objective 3: Identify the five different levels of communication.

Anticipated Problem: What are the five levels of communication?

- III. As communicators we participate in five levels of communication activity.
 - A. **Self-communication** is communication directed to yourself, sometimes referred to as an interpersonal conversation.
 - 1. It is a never-ending process.
 - 2. External communication will not be successful until you effectively communicate with yourself.
 - B. **One-to-one communication** takes place when an individual communicates directly with another person.
 - 1. This can be informal, such as a quick hello, or formal, such as a prepared presentation.
 - 2. This is the most widely used form of communication.

- C. **Group communication** is discussion within groups of people.
 1. In group communication, each participant must have equal opportunity for speaking.
 2. This form of communication is used most widely in informal settings, such as departmental meetings, board meetings, and business meetings.
- D. **Public communication** is presentations to groups of 20–25 participants.
 1. This includes oral presentations, press conferences, classroom situations, workshops, etc.
 2. In a public encounter, one person at a time has the presentational responsibility while others in attendance act as message receivers.
- E. **Mass-media communication** takes place when the sender is separated by some communication medium—print, film, radio, or television—from the receiver.

Chapter 1 in Effective Oral Communication is recommended for students to better understand this objective.

Objective 4: Explain the barriers of successful communication.

Anticipated Problem: What are some of the barriers of communication.

- IV. When there are barriers or interferences in the communication process, effective communication cannot exist.
 - A. There are six major barriers that can affect communication.
 1. **Selective perception** occurs when people block out information that they do not want to hear. This is sometimes referred to as selective listening.
 2. Poor listening skills occur when the receiver has his or her mind on something else, is not interested in the subject, or has a poor knowledge of the subject.
 3. Credibility of the sender affects how people will receive a message. If the receiver perceives the sender as insincere, communication barriers will exist.
 4. **Semantics** is when the same words mean entirely different things to different people. Slang is often referred to as semantics.
 5. **Filtering** is manipulating the information so it is perceived as the receiver desires. This frequently occurs in management when there are several levels.
 6. Avoiding details—Our minds usually avoid detail and cannot remember many details in a short period of time.
 - B. **Barriers** are sometimes referred to as interference. They can exist in the environment, from the sender, in the message, or from the receiver.
 1. Interference from the environment can be described as “static,” similar to what you hear on the radio or television.
 2. Interference may occur from the sender if the information is inaccurate or if the sender misinterprets the receiver’s feedback.

3. Interference in the message is usually the result of sending inappropriate words, signals, or images.
4. Interference from the receiver is usually the result of the receiver's personal opinions keeping him or her from listening or reading with an open mind.

*Several techniques can be used to help students master this objective. They will need text materials to learn about the barriers of communication. Chapter 9 in *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills* and Chapter 3 in *Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success* are suggested. Use TM: D2–1C to show the interferences that affect communication.*

Objective 5: Explain the relationship between communication and leadership.

Anticipated Problem: Why are communication skills important in developing good leadership techniques?

- V. Good leaders are good communicators.
 - A. **Leadership** is the ability to move or influence others to achieve individual and/or group goals.
 - B. All forms of communication are important when working with others.
 1. **Parliamentary procedure** is a method of conducting meetings in an orderly manner that is based on *Roberts' Rules of Order*. It is used in local, state, and national government.
 2. Public speaking is a necessity for people in leadership positions.
 3. Group communication skills and skills used in conducting meetings are necessary to be a good leader.
 4. Strong communication skills are utilized by people in leadership positions.

*Have students list individuals who they consider to be strong leaders in society. Then have them reflect upon each leader's communication skills and/or abilities. Chapter 1 and 3 in *Leadership: Personal Development and Career Success* and Chapter 1 in *Developing Leadership and Personal Skills* are suggested.*

Review/Summary. Focus the review and summary of the lesson around the student learning objectives. Call on students to explain the content associated with each objective. Use their responses as the basis for determining any areas that need to be covered again. Questions at the ends of the chapters in the recommended textbooks may also be used as a review process. Use the lab activity in reviewing and reinforcing student learning.

Application. Application can involve the following student lab activity:

Communication Skills Inventory—LS: D2–1A

Evaluation. Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activity. A sample written test is attached.

Answers to Sample Test:

Part One: Matching

1=g, 2=c, 3=h, 4=f, 5=a, 6=b, 7=d

Part Two: Completion

1. inform, influence, and express feeling
2. deadline
3. One-to-one
4. Interferences
5. selective perception

Test

Lesson D2–1: Introduction to Communication

Part One: Matching

Instructions. Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|------------|
| a. communication | d. feedback | h. channel |
| b. filtering | f. semantics | |
| c. receiver | g. sender | |

- _____ 1. Initiator of the message.
- _____ 2. Interpreter of the message.
- _____ 3. Linkage between the sender and the receiver.
- _____ 4. The concept of the same words having different meanings.
- _____ 5. Process involving distinct elements that together convey a message.
- _____ 6. Manipulating information so it is perceived as the receiver desires.
- _____ 7. Return channel from receiver to sender that allows the evaluation of communication.

Part Two: Completion

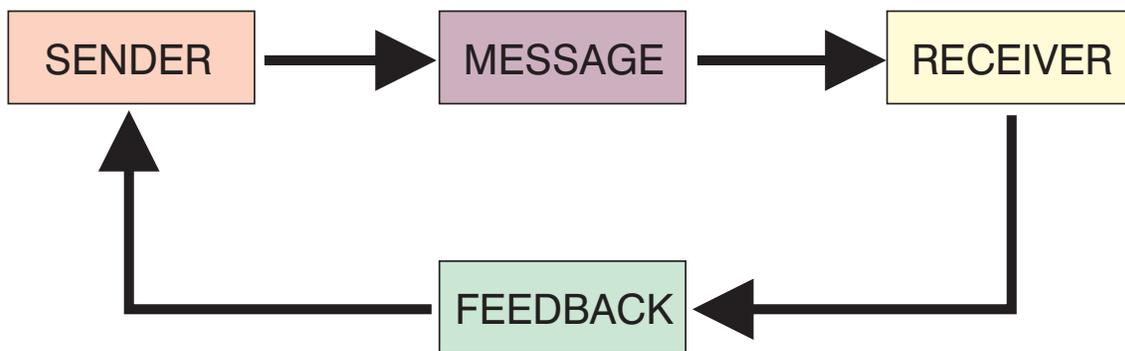
Instructions. Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

- The three major goals or purposes of communication are to _____, _____, and _____.
- A _____ is the limited time one has to communicate about a problem or gather information.
- _____ communication is the most widely used form of communication.
- _____ are referred to as “noise” or barriers to communication.
- When people block out information they do not want to hear they are practicing _____.

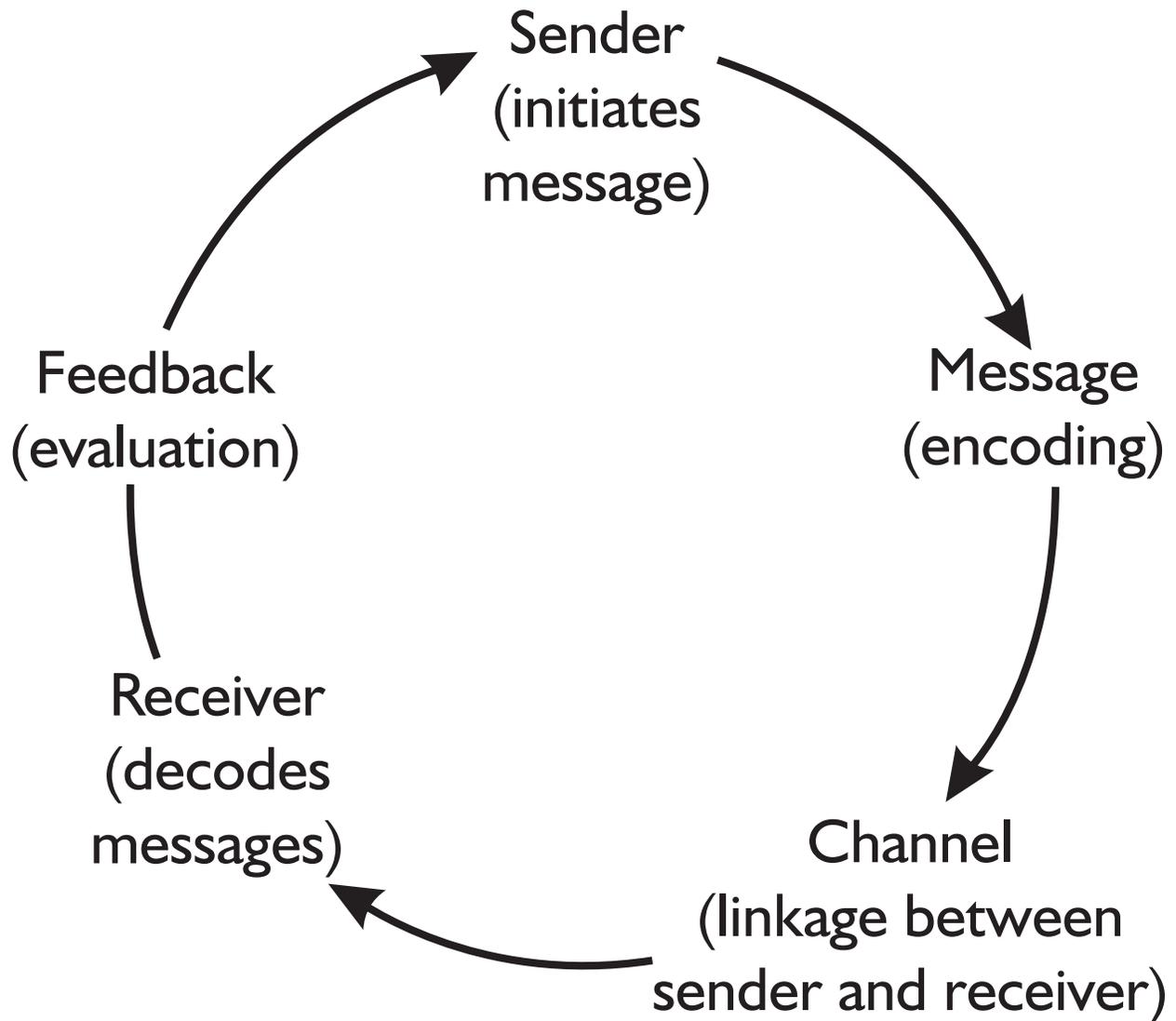
BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The sender wants to communicate something and decides to speak, write, send nonverbal signals, or produces visual message

The receiver wants to understand the sender's meaning, and therefore listens, reads, or observes nonverbal signals of visual information



COMMUNICATION MODEL



INTERFERENCES THAT AFFECT COMMUNICATION

INTERFERENCE
in the environment

INTERFERENCE
caused by the
sender

INTERFERENCE
in the
message

INTERFERENCE
caused by the
receiver



Lab Sheet

Communication Skills Inventory

Purpose:

1. To determine strengths and weaknesses in communication skills.
2. To recognize areas that need improvement in order to have strong communication skills.

Materials:

Lab sheet
Writing utensil

Procedure:

1. Complete the following inventory by circling the appropriate letter to indicate your skill level.
2. Use the following key: A=Always, S=Sometimes, R=Rarely, N=Never, U=Unsure.

Communication Skills Inventory

1. I use natural facial expressions and gestures to convey ideas and feeling.
A S R N U
2. I am aware of the barriers that affect communication (deadlines and interference).
A S R N U
3. I try to reduce factors that negatively affect communication (prejudices, environmental noise, message errors).
A S R N U
4. I am able to switch easily from sender to receiver when I communicate.
A S R N U
5. I am able to select the best mode (speaking, writing, visual, or nonverbal signals) for communicating.
A S R N U

6. I use standard patterns of organization (chronological order, comparison and contrast, cause and effect) to present information orally or in writing.

A S R N U

7. I listen with a purpose so I can concentrate on the message.

A S R N U

8. I adjust my spoken or written message to the needs of the people listening to or reading the message.

A S R N U

9. I use reading techniques like scanning, skimming, and summarizing to assist me in my work.

A S R N U

10. I write with attention to conventions—accurate content, grammatical and mechanical correctness, and proper layout and design.

A S R N U