

## Course Information

<b>Course Code:</b>	<b>LIS 211</b>
Course Title:	<b>Learning and Communication Skills</b>
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## Ice Breaker

Upload your passport and introduce yourself by stating your names, what you do for a living, your hobbies, your expectation in this course and the name you would prefer to be called during this course.



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

*LIS 211 (Learning & Communication Skills)*

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## **Course Guide**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to **LIS 211: Learning and Communications Skill**. This is a two-credit (2-CR) unit course which is compulsory for all the undergraduate students in the department. It is designed to enable you to explore and apply the strategies to develop learning and communication skills. This will facilitate excellent successful academic journey and enhance your personal development and social status in the community.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- i. Recognise the learning and communication skills you require for a successful academic study and career.
- ii. Identify the techniques to develop effective reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.
- iii. Apply the strategies to become effective communicator throughout your study and beyond.
- iv. Determine the barriers that cause miscommunication, predict when communication failures are to occur and how to prevent them.
- v. Develop the confidence, tact and art of successful public speaking.
- vi. Formulate the basic principles of technical communication to be able to write technically.
- vii. Determine the precepts and practice and the practical application in academic communication.

### **Working Through this Course**

To successfully complete this course, you are required to participate in both the theoretical and practical parts of the course. You are also to read the study units, listen to the audios and videos, do all assessments, examine the links and read, participate in discussion forums; read the recommended books and other materials provided, prepare your portfolios, and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, summary conclusion, and references/further readings. The introduction opens the door to each unit and gives a glimpse of the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) which outlines what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. This will help you evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the designed objectives (outcomes). To achieve the intended learning outcomes, the content of each section is presented in modules and units with

videos and links to other sources to enhance your study. Click on the links as may be directed but where you are reading the text offline, you may have to copy and paste the link address into a browser. You can download the audios and videos to view offline. You can also print or download the texts and save in your computer or external drive. The unit summaries provide a recapitulation of the essential points in the unit. It's an indispensable brief that garnishes your journey through the unit. The conclusion brings you to the climax of the study and what you should be taking away from the unit.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and Self-Assessment Exercises. The summative assessments would be used by the university to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as Computer-Based Test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of three computer-based tests will be given with only one final examination at the end of the semester. You are required to take all the computer base tests and the final examination.

### **Study Units**

There are 20 study units in this course divided into four modules. The modules and units are presented as follows:

#### **Modules 1: Definition of Concepts**

- Unit 1 Definition of the Concepts of Reading and Learning
- Unit 2 Types and Methods of Reading
- Unit 3 Types and Methods of Learning
- Unit 4 Effective Reading and Learning Skills

#### **Module 2 Communication**

- Unit 1 Introduction to Communication
- Unit 2 The Communication Process and Types
- Unit 3 Communication Skills
- Unit 4 Communication for Academic Purposes

#### **Module 3 Public Speaking and Presentation Skills**

- Unit 1 Art of Public Speaking
- Unit 2 Importance of Public Speaking
- Unit 3 Guides to Effective Public Speaking
- Unit 4 Presentation Skills

## **Module 4    Communication in Libraries and Information Centres**

Unit 1        Staff Communication in the Library

Unit 2        Communication in Organisations

Unit 3        Technical and Development Communication

### **Presentation Schedule**

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and at facilitation. Remember, you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guard against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence in academics and liable to heavy penalty.

### **Assessment**

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored: The Continuous Assessments and the final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-folds. **There will be two Computer Based Assessments. The computer-based assessments will be given in**

**accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to.**

The Computer Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while your participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade. The final examination for LIS 211 will be a maximum of two hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 70 multiple choice questions that reflect cognitive reasoning.

Note: You will earn 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios otherwise you will lose the 10% in your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using Google Doc. What are you expected to do in your portfolio? Your portfolio should be note or jottings you made on each study unit and activities. This will include the time you spent on each unit or activity.

### **How to get the Most from the Course**

To get the most in this course, you need a functional personal laptop and access to the Internet. This will study and learning easy and the course materials accessible anywhere and anytime. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved the outcomes.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation as scheduled. Where you miss a schedule for online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your convenience. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform. In addition to the real time facilitation, watch the video and audio recorded summary in each unit. The video/audio summaries are directed to the salient points in each unit. You can access the audio and videos by clicking on the links in the text or through the course page.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

### **Facilitation**

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner centred. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- Present the theme for the week;
- Direct and summarise forum discussions;
- Coordinate activities in the platform;
- Score and grade activities when needed;
- Upload scores into the university recommended platform;
- Support and help you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent;
- Send videos, audio lectures and podcasts to you.

For the synchronous:

- There will be eight hours of online real time contacts in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The eight hours shall be of one-hour contact for eight times.
- At the end of each one-hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for viewing at your pace.
- The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that are must know in the course.
- The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation timetable at the beginning of the course.
- The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. Contact your facilitator if you:

- do not understand any part of the study units or the assignments.
- have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises.
- have any question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provided for technical support.

Read all the comments and notes of your facilitator especially on your assignments; participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you the opportunity to socialise with others in the programme. You can discuss any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Finally, respond to the questionnaire. This will help the university to know your areas of challenges and how to improve on them for the review of the course materials and lectures.

## **Contents**

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- Unit 2            Communication in Organisations
- Unit 3            Technical and Development Communication

*The future is yours, so embrace it. You may not know what the road ahead has to offer, but you can prepare yourself to achieve. Remember to carefully and thoughtfully take it step by step. Reaching your goals can be challenging. You may encounter several twists and turns. But in the end, you will have succeeded.*

*Ford, Knight & McDonald- Littleton*

## **MODULE 1:        DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

- Unit 1            Definition of the Concepts of Reading and Learning
- Unit 2            Types and Methods of Reading
- Unit 3            Types and Methods of Learning

## **UNIT 1            DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **Contents**

- 1.0     Introduction
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- 3.0     Main Content
- 3.1     Definition of Reading
- 3.2     Definition of Learning
- 4.0     Summary
- 5.0     Conclusion
- 6.0     Tutor Marked Assignment
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### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

To succeed in any endeavour in life, you must acquire the necessary skills. A successful driver must have the skill to drive carefully, cautiously and safely. A plumber must possess the skill to flourish as a professional. To pursue your studies successfully, i.e. pass all your examinations, acquire the required knowledge and be equipped to function in your chosen career and contribute meaningfully to your society, it is crucial to understand and acquire specific learning and communication skills. Learning and



communication skills will help you to learn and communicate effectively; therefore, they are vital to your success in your studies and beyond. If you carefully and diligently follow the discussion, the exercises, and the self-assessment tests outlined in this course, you will discover the powerful hidden skills that are in you that will lighten your educational fire and lead you to a “lifelong learning journey.”

## 2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to define and determine the various definitions and the meanings of reading and learning which will enlighten your path to reading and learning; you will be able also to ascertain the different types of reading and learning will build you to read and learn effectively.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 DEFINITION OF READING

Francis Bacon once said, “reading maketh a full man...” This summarises the essence of reading; that reading should fill a person with ideas. Kosak (2017: 7) defines reading as “a skill which enables you to get a message; recognising the written words; getting the meaning; grasping information from texts.” Reading is a process that involves word recognition and comprehension. Reading consists of decoding and making sense of words, texts and sentences. Reading enables you to acquire language, communication and facilitate sharing information and ideas. Leipzig (2011: np) says that reading is a multifaceted process involving word, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. By this explanation, Leipzig also agrees that reading involves word recognition, comprehension and creating meaning. The English Club (2019: np) portrays reading as “the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. This process combines the use of your eyes to receive the symbols and your brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate meaning to you.”

The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistic describes reading as “perceiving a written text to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading). The understanding that results is called reading comprehension; saying a written a text aloud (oral reading). This can be carried out with or without an understanding of the content.” Reading is described as a mental process, a highly personal activity, an interactive process that leads to acquiring information (UK Essays, 2017). Reading is a two-way interaction between the reader and the writer. Brunan (1989) says that “reading is a two-way interaction in which information is exchanged between the reader and the author.” Smith (2004: 2) writes that reading is “an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver.” This explains reading as an indispensable thoroughfare of communication.

Reading is one of the necessary skills of learning and communication. Reading is an activity that can be silent or loud. When you read, you receive information. Therefore, it is described as a ‘receptive skill.’ It is also a productive skill which requires pronouncing the words you read. It is a productive skill in the sense that when you read, you are receiving and transmitting information simultaneously. Reading is a solitary affair, a precious skill that ‘greatly broadens your vocabulary, thus helping you in speaking (and in listening and writing).’

Reading involves systematically identifying and understanding strings of words, signs or symbols. It is a process that requires word recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Sandhu (2018: np) sees reading as a “cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at meaning. Wikipedia adds that reading “is a means for language processing; it is a means for language acquisition, communication, and sharing information and ideas.” Reading is an active process of constructing meanings of words. Primarily, reading is aimed at three goals: decoding, understanding and comprehending. Accordingly, Sandhu (2018: np) writes that to achieve these goals, “the reader uses strategies to understand what is being read, uses themes to organise ideas, and uses textual clues to find the meanings of new words.

Although reading involves word recognition, comprehension and fluency, it can be a very difficult activity. However, it remains the most inexpensive avenue of acquiring knowledge, entertainment and relaxation. Reading books, journals and several other ephemeral materials such as magazines and newspapers are the cheapest way to gain knowledge and improve your lifestyle. Effective consistent reading guarantees success in academics, career and relationships. Reading is very beneficial to your entire activity in life. The iEdunote (2019: np) highlights some of the major benefits of reading:

### **It Gives Satisfaction**

Readers all over the world derive great satisfaction from reading. Although, the virtual environment is here with us, yet, the satisfaction you get from reading books and other related items is irreplaceable. “Curling up with books” is a phrase that creates an image of a warm and close relationship with the book. How do you feel when you see your kids reading books? Parents also feel satisfied when they see their kids read books.

### **It Enhances Concentration**

Reading is a solitary affair. It demands the involvement of the totality of your being to achieve the goals and benefits of reading. It is a mental activity that requires a long duration of focus. Therefore, you must concentrate your mind fully to be able to read

effectively. When you read consistently and regularly, it reshapes and improves the power of your concentration and focus.

### **It Imparts Knowledge**

Reading is a significant source of acquiring knowledge. It also enhances your knowledge and provides you with the platform to achieve and gain usefulness, fruitfulness and value in life. When you read meaningfully, you acquire importance and the chances to participate in fruitful discussions and decision-making processes.

### **It Exercises the Brain**

Reading is generally believed to be a mental activity that exercises the brain. When you read, your brain cells are activated to work for decoding, understanding and comprehension. This stimulates your brain and polishes it to think and internalise the content of the material you may be reading. When you read, your brain remains sharp, focused and alive. When you stop reading, your brain begins to sleep, decay and eventually dies. Have you seen some graduates who got into some business such as driving and stopped reading? The resultant stagnation, retrogression, decline and loss of value is alarming. Remember, the common saying, “when you stop reading, you start dying.”

### **It Reduces Stress**

The habit of reading, when acquired is useful throughout life. Reading can dramatically change your life. Reading entertains, amuses, and enriches with knowledge. Escapist reading helps to reduce stress, relieve tensions and boost your energy. Recreational reading can carry you to the realm of dream and amusement which you need to balance your stand on the complexities and vicissitudes of life.

### **It Enhances Analytical Thinking**

Reading enriches and sharpens your knowledge and helps you to analyse and evaluate things thoroughly and better. It enhances your analytical thinking.

### **It Improves Vocabulary**

When you read, you are exposed to new and unfamiliar words. Reading skilfully, therefore, provides you with the avenue to increase your vocabulary and teach you better ways of expressing yourselves.

### **It Improves Writing Skills**

You cannot write meaningfully if you cannot read effectively. Effective reading enhances your writing skills. It boosts your ability to think; facilitates writing your thoughts in your journal notes, which eventually enhances your writing skills. You can never be a good writer without first being a good reader.

### **The Reading Process**

Reading is described as a complex process that brings the reader and the text together. It is a process that requires continuous practice, development and refinement. There are three stages of the reading process: the pre-reading stage, reading stage and post-reading stage. In the pre-reading stage, you make use of your prior knowledge, examine the text, and develop a purpose for reading. In the reading stage, “you make predictions as you read and then confirm or revise the predictions. For example, the double-entry journal enables you to write the text from you reading on one side and your reaction on the other side.” The post-reading allows you to “retell the story, discuss the elements of a story, answer questions and/or compare it to another text. For example, students can create summaries, where they take a huge selection and reduce it to its main points for more concise understanding.” Comprehension is an intentional, active, and interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a piece of writing.

Reading is a rigorous academic activity that involves a great deal of time, especially at the higher levels of education or study. It is an active process which facilitates and improves learning. When you read to learn, you must make conscious efforts to understand and comprehend your text to be able to apply what you learn to your studies. Remember, at this stage, your reading involves an in-depth approach to make the most of your studies. This means that you must interpret, question and sometimes refute what you read. The implication is that as you progress in your academic endeavours, your reading should truthfully understand the author’s perspective of the world, which may differ from yours.

### **The Goals of Reading**

People at different levels read for various purposes. If you get to the vendor’s newspapers and magazine stand, you will be amazed at the number of persons swarming around the stand like bees. All the bystanders make efforts to read a newspaper or magazine. Try and find out the purposes for reading. Again, you will be amazed at the divergent views of the people on why they read. For instance, you are reading this text for a particular purpose. Another person can pick up this document and read for a different purpose. However, you read to gain information for entertainment, to pass an examination, for recognition and

the need for belongingness and acceptance or to improve your social status. The purpose may be to escape from the stress around you and relieve some tensions.

Many of us read newspapers and magazines, either in print or online, to inform us about current events. In some cases, the bias of the writer is explicit, and this leads us to interpret what is said considering this bias. It is, therefore, easy to view an article as a statement of opinion rather than fact. Political preferences, for example, are well known in the press. When you read while studying your course, your principal goal will be to gather information to answer a Tutor-Marked Assessment (TMA) question or gain further information on a subject for an examination or other types of assessment.

Underlying this is the more general theme of learning and development, to develop your thoughts, to incorporate new ideas into your current understanding, to see things from different angles or viewpoints, to build your knowledge and understanding and improve yourself. Learning, therefore, comes about not from reading and remembering details, but from developing your understanding of the meaning of the details (skillsyouneed.com, 2019).

### **Reading Materials**

One aspect of reading that is critical to every reader is the materials to read. You will have grapple with this situation and work hard to find relevant reading materials for your academic pursuit. This is one of the major setbacks in developing reading habits in developing nations. Many tertiary institutions are hit by scarcity of relevant and current reading materials. Our libraries are filled with obsolete materials, and related electronic resources are rarely accessible to students and staff. What you read is important and how to secure relevant reading materials is equally important.

### **Sources of Reading Materials**

In your course, there are different sources of reading materials provided for you. Devote yourself to them and get the best for your academic success, learning and development. Your reading materials will include course materials, core texts which include online resources referenced in your course materials, audio-visual materials also referenced in your course materials and suggested readings at the end of every unit or module. The course material is one comprehensive material that should be your closest companion in your university programme. It is a compendium of what the course covers, the various topics discussed, what you are expected to do, and the assessment required. It also points you to other types of essential reading materials which you should not ignore. The videos are carefully selected to enrich your learning and development. Watch them and if possible, several times.

## **Other Sources**

I agree with a writer that said, “perhaps one of the most important academic reading skills is to identify your additional reading materials.” This is a critical point to note if you are going to stand tall in your academic journey. Do not just limit yourself to what has been selected and recommended. Forage further and expand your knowledge by reading as widely as you can, especially, subjects areas related to your course of study. Keep a note of relevant ideas, points and thoughts and the full bibliographic reference of material you read. You will need the references for your reference list when writing your assignment, term paper or proposal. You must learn to be a proper university student – who stops at nothing to discover knowledge and learn effectively.

## **3.2 DEFINITION OF LEARNING**

Learning is a common word that has easily been misunderstood. It means different things to different people. Learning, academic, study and research skills are sometimes used interchangeably. What is learning? Basically, it means acquiring new experiences and ideas and making progress in your life and in society. Students generally confuse studying with learning. Studying and learning do not mean the same thing. In simple terms, you can study without learning but you cannot learn without studying – structured or unstructured. Learning encompasses the totality of life’s experiences. Jiddu Krishnamurti, once remarked: “There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.” (Mwangi-Powell, 2015). Haselgrove (2016: 2) explains learning as a “relatively permanent change in behaviour because of experience.” This implies that learning brings change, progress and development. Therefore, for learning to take place, you need to understand, acquire and develop learning skills. Whether in the pursuit of your academic programme or degree course or the world of work, learning skills are widely applicable. Learning skills could be regarded as abilities that students need to succeed in their studies and careers. These are skills that will help you to be competitive in the 21st century. Zook (2019: np) summarises some of the essential requirements for success in the 21st century, which includes:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Information literacy
- Media literacy
- Technology literacy

- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Productivity
- Social skills

You will be coming across these terms as you walk through this course.

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the various definitions and meaning of reading and learning. Recall that reading was in a nutshell described as a mental process, a lonely activity, an interactive course that leads to information and knowledge acquisition. Some of the benefits of reading, includes, *inter alia*, satisfaction, knowledge, brain development, enhanced concentration and stress reduction. As a student, you need to read extensively, especially your course materials, suggested texts, selected online materials, recommended video items, etc. This unit also defined learning as the whole of your experiences in life, which causes a permanent change in your behaviour. Therefore, learn to read and read to learn and academic excellence would be the result.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

Reading is a powerful but inexpensive tool that can change your human life dramatically. It enriches, entertains, amuses and endues you with knowledge, skill and experience. Reading is a thoroughfare of communication that builds you and facilitates the development of effective communication skills. Effective reading is a ladder to academic success, career development and stability in life's endeavours. Similarly, reading and learning are interwoven. Reading leads to learning and learning, in turn, leads to reading. Learning encompasses the totality of your life's behaviour that leads to a permanent change in behaviour. Reading and learning are harbingers of change and development.



*Every student reads for different reasons. Identify three reasons why you read and relate how your reading goals facilitate effective learning*

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- I. What are the stages of the reading process?
- II. Reading enables you to acquire language, communication and facilitate sharing information and ideas. (Discuss)

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

EnglishClub 2019. What is reading? Retrieved from: <https://www.englishclub.com/reading/what.htm> (June 4, 2019).

iEduNote (2019). 8 Reasons Why Reading is Important for a Student. Retrieved from: <https://iedunote.com/why-reading-is-important-for-student>. (July 6, 2019).

Ravinder Sandhu 2018. What is reading? Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-reading-definition-process.html> (July 5, 2019).

## **UNIT 2: TYPES AND METHODS OF READING**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As you progress in academics, career and social relationships, there is the increasing need to be involved in various types of reading. The ability and the habit of reading effectively and wholly is the key to great strides in all ramifications of your life. This unit, therefore, brings you to the various types and methods of reading that contains a repertoire of strategies to apply in different circumstances.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

At the end of your study in this unit, you should be able to recognise and identify the various types of reading; determine the various strategies for effective reading explore and apply these strategies to your academic pursuit to achieve excellent academic success; and explain how the reasons for reading dovetails with what you read.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 TYPES OF READING**

People read for different purposes. Similarly, there are different types of reading. Kosak (2017: 7) identifies three major types of reading viz: skimming reading, general reading and close reading. Skimming reading is described as the most rudimentary that enables quick familiarisation with the material you are reading. It is carried out to “confirm expectations or for communicative tasks”.

The reading strategy for newspapers and magazines is different from that of academic and scholarly texts. Your reading strategy should fit the material. When you read magazines or newspapers, you scan or skim the contents and turn to interesting articles. This is because magazines and newspapers most often portray fragmented coverage of issues. They often concentrate on the most “interesting and glamorous aspects of a topic.”



Which helps to boost their sales. They usually neglect or relegate to the background, supposedly fewer exciting details that may be essential to a full understanding of a subject. You cannot skim or scan when you are reading your academic texts for assignments, examination, term papers or for preparing proposals

General reading is reading for general understanding. It is reading that enables you to retrieve specific information. It is also known as scanning. “It is looking through a text quickly to get a specific piece of information” or moving your eyes quickly over the page to find words names or phrases relevant to your task.” This type of reading is helpful when you are looking for the answer to a known question. It enables you to quickly scan through an item to read from the top of the page to the bottom.

Close reading as the name implies describes reading for a complete understanding of the material. It is the most important type of reading for a successful academic pursuit. It is reading to extract information accurately from the entire document. This requires careful reading to understand the full content of what is read. It is also known as searching or detailed reading. Some writers describe this as analytical reading.

Wambui, Kibui & Gathuthi (2012: 70) added other types of reading:

### **Sub-vocalisation**

This is a painstaking slow kind of reading. This kind of reading applies to texts that are difficult to read. It is reading slowly and systematically that may require saying the words out loud or combining sight reading with internal sounding of the words as if spoken.

### **Extensive reading/Light Reading**

This is reading quickly with minimal concentration or trying to understand every word in the text. This is more like the general reading. Reading novels and large amounts of high-interest materials mainly to build confidence, enjoyment and comprehend main ideas constitute extensive reading.

### **Intensive reading/Study Reading**

This is deep reading that involves thinking, understanding and recalling what is being read. This kind of reading requires “reflection, thought, analysis, criticism, comparison, notes made, points highlighted and emphasised, arguments followed and evaluated, the whole text summarised. It is intensive reading that calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, and rhetorical relationships.”

### 3.2 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE READING

Reading is a major problem in developing countries. There is a prevalence of poor reading habits, especially in countries like Nigeria. Even the university undergraduates have poor reading habits. Most students read principally to pass examinations. Remember, the common saying that ‘if you want to hide a treasure from a Nigerian, hide it inside a book.’ African culture is rooted in oral tradition. Therefore, anything written was considered alien to our culture. This became deeply seated even in our educational system. Does it not surprise you that schools in Nigeria exist without reading materials, no libraries and there are no significant conscious efforts to reverse this trend. How many undergraduate students in Nigeria would get pocket money and remember to buy books? How many professors have personal libraries? Which Minister of Education in Nigeria, has addressed this malaise seriously in primary, secondary and tertiary schools? Lip service all through.

In a University in Nigeria, a Professor saw the Vice-Chancellor in the university library and said ‘oh Prof; you came to the library? And the Vice-Chancellor, replied, library? I am already a Professor, what do I need the library for? Just imagine that. Do you think the library will develop with that kind of disposition? The Professor, the head of the institution, the Vice-Chancellor says he does not need the library anymore since he has attained the professorial status. This is the mentality that contributes to poor reading habits in developing countries.

The environment of our schools, homes and reading rooms have contributed to the development of poor reading habits. Discouraging situations where there is noise and other distractions, lack of conducive atmosphere for reading, lack of electricity and lack of reading space is a collective experience of rural and several cosmopolitan city dwellers.

The trend of poor reading habits must be checked. You must consciously develop reading habits that will guarantee your success in life. This is part of the reason for this course. Reading strategies are essential for useful reading. In fact, “effective readers use strategies to understand what they read before, during, and after reading.” To read effectively, make use of your prior knowledge, make predictions about the probable meaning of the text, and preview the book by skimming and scanning to understand the overall content. When you read, ask questions in your mind, think and reflect on the ideas and information in the text. At the end of your reading, relate what you have read your experiences and knowledge., clarify your understanding of the book, and extend your knowledge in critical and creative ways (Cross-cultural literacy, 2018: 21).

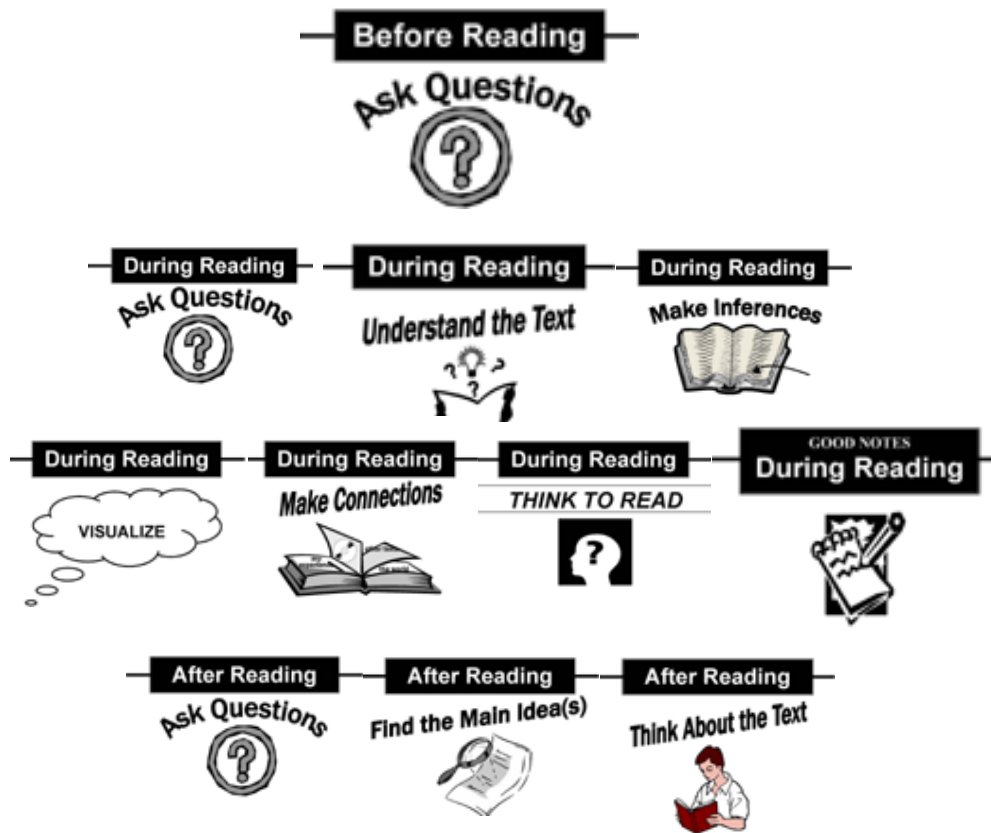


Fig. 1: Culled & modified from: Cross-curricula literacy


#### 4.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed the different types of reading, ranging from skimming, general and close reading. We also classified reading into sub-vocalisation, extensive and intensive reading. When you read, ask questions, understand the text, make inferences, visualise,

make connections, think to read, find the main ideas and think about the text, and reading will be meaningful and rewarding.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In the real world of contemporary times, you cannot achieve significant progress without being able to read effectively. Rote learning and the regurgitation of facts without understanding and application earns you little gain in this life. You cannot get an edge over others, be better at your job, or be a solution provider if you are not an avid reader. Your purpose for reading determines how you read. An author put it succinctly, “how you read matches why you’re reading.” If reading sounds like hard work, it is. Reading at the university level is difficult. Several students will not read. That is what sets you apart.

 **QUIZ?** *What type of reading is most suitable for excellent academic success*  
6.3 **FOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT** *Justify your choice*

1. What is close reading?
2. What is general reading?

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## **UNIT 2: TYPES AND METHODS OF LEARNING**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Strategies for Effective Learning
  - 3.2 Characteristics of Effective Learning
  - 3.3 Barriers to Effective Learning
  - 3.4 Overcoming the Barriers to Effective Learning
  - 3.5 Understanding Learning Skills
  - 3.6 Effective Ways to Develop Learning Skills
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Securing admission to the university to acquire education is not only about getting degrees. It is your journey to gain life skills, which are more than the classroom. In your life, you need skills which live with you and are exercised daily for better performance. Learning skills are indispensable in your entire life journey. They will help you pass your examinations and move forward and acquire a better personality. In our contemporary world, to operate successfully in the globalised environment, effective learning skills are inevitable. This section explores the basics of effective learning skills and the strategies to recognise, develop and apply them in your life.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

This section brings you face to face with learning skills. Therefore, at the end of this unit, you are expected to explain learning skills; determine the strategies for effective learning and apply them to your learning programme; recognise the barriers to effective learning and explore and acquire the various ways to overcome them, and develop effective learning skills using the methods discussed.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING**

All over the world, learning is recognised as an uphill task. It is entertainment, neither is it relaxation. It is a journey that requires you to make earnest conscious efforts. Think of a medical doctor and the journey to becoming certified. What do you think of a Lawyer? Likewise, when you have secured admission to any degree programme, your journey of

learning has moved upward the ladder of life, certification, and development. This is another opportunity to develop your memory and learning potential. To effectively learn, you must identify the learning style and methods that work for you. Some people are fast learners. Others are very slow learners. Be yourself. “Give yourself a voice as a student or a career professional. Don’t compare yourself to anyone else, like the Yiddish proverbs say, “If I try to be like him, who will be like me.” No one is better than anyone else. Take independent action by focusing on what you do and how well you do it” (Ford, Knight & McDonald- Littleton, 2001: 73).

When you have determined your learning style and methods, consciously pursue learning with vigour, commitment and self-discipline. There is no learning method or style that guarantees success without your direct involvement in rigorous studying. Aikkola (2013: 2) writes that “learning only happens as a direct result of your efforts.” She observes further that “you can develop your learning skills through active and critical thinking, questioning assumptions, and practical application of knowledge. The method you adopt in organising new information is crucial to learning.

To facilitate your journey of learning at this University, take note of the following tips as supported by Aikkola (2013: 2):

### **Learn to Make Notes**

Forming and making your notes is very significant in your learning. Form the habit and build on it through practice. Taking notes helps to make learning easier. It helps to clarify what you are learning, quicken and support your memory and the learning process. Forming notes is an invaluable skill in the overall academic journey and in your professional or career life. Several people have turned their notes into textbooks or journal articles or materials for speech presentation.

### **Develop or Join a Study Group**

Our society today encourages collaboration. Independent candidates are lone-rangers, and they do not go very far. Join others and discuss various subjects together. It is pleasant and useful from the perspective of learning when you work through questions and ideas with others. Study groups allow each member to share his thoughts or ideas and receive inputs from others. This broadens understanding and helps the memory to retain what you have read. When you share what you have studied with others, you would be able to ascertain your level of understanding of the subject, your limitations and probably the areas you may need help the most.

### **Keep a learning journal**

Maintaining a learning journal requires a lot of self-discipline but very valuable. It will help you to organise your thoughts and measure your learning progress. It is a tool that enriches, deepens and helps you to evaluate your learning process. Aikkola counsels you to use the journal to “write down your own insights, perceptions and questions as well as things you need to find out or problems you need to solve. Write regularly. A journal will be especially useful for seminar and thesis work, where you will have to organise information that you have collected yourself.”

### **Be Acquainted with Course Materials, Books and Other study Materials**

What reading technique have you discovered works best for you? When you find out and apply a suitable reading technique, you will achieve the optimum result from books and other reading materials.

Applying your own reading technique can help you get the most out of books and other reading materials. Mnemonics are very helpful in learning. Mnemonics are learning techniques that aid the memory in information retention or retrieval.

### **Carefully nourish and care for your Brain**

The brain is the centre and controller of all activities of your life. Carefully nourish take care of it to achieve your maximum potential. Make sure you get enough sleep each day. There is no substitute for this. When you get a good night’s sleep, your brain and memory receive strength and support. When you experience regular insufficient sleep, it weakens your concentration and breed restlessness. To help your brain function optimally, you must live a healthy lifestyle. Illicit drugs, smoking, alcohol is harmful to the brain. Eat nutritiously and drink a lot of water daily and reduce sugar intake. Leaving your body dehydrated starves your brain of lubrication. Therefore, keep your body well hydrated. All of these are helpful to your health in general and essential to concentration and learning.

I am sure you have heard of the benefits of exercise on your health and on learning. It relaxes, reduces stress and improves concentration. A sedentary lifestyle is detrimental to your health, your brain and causes the memory to deteriorate unnaturally. It also increases memory loss, tiredness and exhaustion.

## **3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING**

The following characteristics are noticeable when effective learning has taken place:

- i. It produces permanent change
- ii. It involves activities, action and interaction
- iii. It is a continuous process that lasts throughout life



- iv. It involves problem-solving
- v. It involves thinking
- vi. It occurs by experience, conditioning or information acquisition

### 3.3 **BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LEARNING**

These are problems that hinder, slow down or make learning difficult. Some of these problems force students and pupils to drop out of school.

- i. Poor learning atmosphere. This could be related to environment, content, presentation and situational factors such as a change in the social and economic conditions of the learner.
- ii. Poor reinforcement strategies.
- iii. Emotional and health failure of the learner.
- iv. Poor policy implementation or policy change that forces learners out of the learning track.
- v. Lack of financial support.
- vi. Political instability such as coups, political riots, strikes, and terrorism.

### 3.4 **OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

Barriers to progress in virtually every meaningful pursuit in life are common to everyone. As a learner, you must face specific difficulties which may be very discouraging. You must develop a thick skin and devise strategies to overcome identified barriers.

- i. Learn to use the library. If you are going to learn effectively, the library should be your closest friend. Physical visits to the library are crucial as well as the use of library e-resources. The library is the most active force in the pursuit of learning at every level. Register in the library. Borrow books from the library. Read steadily in the library. Regularly and consistently use electronic resources in the library. The library and books will build you.
- ii. Take conscious steps to develop your communication skills. This will help you in learning easily: reading, writing, listening and speaking. When these skills are properly and adequately developed, learning becomes interesting, comfortable and excellent.
- iii. Develop interest and skill in the use of ICT and the new technologies of information. They will help you go very far in today's learning requirements and expectations.
- iv. Be determined to work hard and study well despite temporary challenges. The challenges that come your way are springboards to more exceptional achievements. No man has ever turned out great without facing and confronting

challenges. If there are no challenges in whatever you do, it is an indication that you should reconsider that pursuit. It may not be worthwhile.

- v. Feedback is indispensable in effective learning. It is a form of assessment on what you are doing. Provide feedback avenue for honest and accurate assessment of your status and seek feedback to determine where you stand and what changes to make.

### **3.5 UNDERSTANDING LEARNING SKILLS**

Learning is a process of assimilation of information that results in a permanent change in behaviour. Learning is also seen as a change in behaviour as a result of experience or conditioning. Steers and Porter ( 1991.6 ) describes learning as any “relatively permanent change in behaviour potentiality that results from reinforced practice or experience.” Hulse, Deese, and Egeth define learning as a, “relatively permanent change in behaviour or potential behaviour that results from direct or indirect experience.” According to S.P. Robbins, “Learning is any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of experience.” According to Scott Miller, “Learning is a change that occurs in response to thinking or other sensual stimuli.” All the definitions emphasise a permanent change in behaviour.

It is the accumulation and application of knowledge, which leads to an expansion of what is already known. You can gather a lot of information without request. When this happens, it means learning has not taken place. Several people attend lectures, accumulate information and nothing changes about them. They maintain the same old methods of attending to issues, stagnated and retrogressive. Learning produces changes which affect your personality or behaviour. Learning is supposed to be continuous in life. It is difficult to ascertain when learning begins and where or when it ends. Every activity, experience, travels and interactions are ingredients of learning. When you stop learning, you stop living. That is why they say, ‘learning is from the cradle to the grave.’ Learning ceases when you die. The questions to answer: are you still learning? Are you still living?

Like driving, learning is a skill that is consciously learned. To learn very effectively, you must understand the required skills, develop and improve on them. This will enable you to succeed in your academics, career, family and social relationships. Without the necessary skills, learning will be tedious, drudgery and discouraging. Learning skills are described as universal needs for any academic study or career. Zook (2019) summarises learning skills in 4Cs, which he describes as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication.

#### **Critical Thinking**

He describes critical thinking as “the mechanism that weeds out problems and replaces them with fruitful endeavours. It is what helps students figure out issues for themselves when they do not have a teacher at their disposal.” From this explanation of critical thinking, you should understand the place of critical thinking in your daily activities. Critical thinking is generally referred to as “left-brain” activity.” Some of the critical thinking abilities identified by Zook (2019) include:

- **Analysing** which enables you to break complex issues into parts, scrutinise each part and how they fit together. It also involves examining the causes and effects of a problem and finding ways to alleviate the causes or effects.
- **Logical arguments** which enable you to reach meaningful conclusions.
- **Defining and Describing** - this involves explaining all shades of meaning of terms which may include denotation, connotation or synonyms and antonyms. It also involves the proper description of concepts such that others can easily understand them.
- **Evaluating** is deciding on the worth of something by comparing it against an accepted standard of value.

### **Creative Thinking**

On the other hand, creativity is a skill that enables you to see things or concepts in a different dimension, which often leads to innovation. Creativity helps you to depart from “the way things have always been done.” It leads to change.

### **Collaboration**

Zook explains further that collaboration gets students to work as a team, “achieve compromises, and get the best possible results from solving a problem.”. Working together for the common but greater good of the organisation is the main essence of collaboration.

### **Communication**

He describes communicating as “the glue that brings” all the other skills together. Communication is discussed in detail in module 2, unit 2. Other learning skills such as reading, listening, speaking and study skills are discussed in other sections of this course material.

Learning skills are for now and for life. They pay lifelong dividends. They affect personally, mentally, academically, financially, socially and all round.

### 3.6 EFFECTIVE WAYS TO DEVELOP LEARNING SKILLS

The Education Corporate Bridge Consultancy (2018: np) outlines some of the ways to develop effective learning skills, which include:

**i. Keep yourself prepared**

When you do not know where you are going, any way becomes the way for you. This underscores the need for preparation. There is nothing like haphazard learning. To learn effectively, you must be ready with all the requirements. Always prepare yourself for study and learning. Ensure you get the relevant books, download the required materials or software and keep with you the jotting notes.

**ii. Be organised**

In your academic journey being organised is indispensable. Organise yourself properly, your notes, journals and files. This makes your tasks easier. Build this into your habit and stay organised.

**iii. Be Punctual**

‘Punctuality is the soul of wit’ says a wise man. When you learn to be punctual, you learn to take charge. Punctuality does not cost you anything but being late to classes, occasions, ceremonies or appointments can be extremely expensive and risky. You can miss a golden opportunity for life. Punctuality will affect your concentration level; help you focus better and enable you to be calm and prepared for your class or study. It takes away the rush that leads people into mistakes, omissions and disorganisation.

**iv. Maintain an Effective Note**

In the academic and scholarly journey, keeping notes is indispensable. It is helpful to develop effective note taking in your journey. It provides an excellent review for you, especially when you very close to the examination. If you keep a consistent note of your studies and facilitation, you will be freed from the hassle of reading through your entire course content. It makes review easier and helps to remember the essential aspects of the course. It makes it easier also for you to review a topic before the next.

**v. Establish your Learning Style**

Everybody has a learning style that works for him or her. Accordingly, some persons have photographic or Eidetic memory, while others have poor memory. Determine and recognise your learning style and follow appropriate strategies that will help you learn effectively.

**vi. Create a Perfect Study Place**

Every serious student requires a functional study venue. This may not be readily available. Create one for yourself where all your study materials are kept and easily accessed. The learning process is a significant responsibility in your entire life. Therefore, your books and other learning materials should be within reach and in an environment that is relatively suitable for prolonged study. Usually, the library is the most conducive environment for study and research. Visit the library regularly in the university or any nearby university library. You can secure inter-library cooperation from the University Librarian to enable you to use other university libraries that are closer to you. You should avoid dull, activity-filled, or noisy places that are not suitable for any serious studying.

vii. **Develop a Functional Schedule**

It is essential to work with a functional schedule that will regulate how you want to study when you want to study and where you want to study. Your plan should be flexible so that you can make changes easily. Many students do not consider a schedule important in their studies. It is helpful, and it is one of the strategies you need to discipline yourself in pursuing your studies. Also, create a time limit and effort to complete assignments. If you are on a clock to complete a task, you tend to make more concentrated efforts to complete the tasks. This will help you to prevent procrastination and shabby delivery of assignments.

#### 4.0 **SUMMARY**

Remember, we have looked at the strategies for learning and the characteristics of effective learning. Similarly, this unit identified and discussed the problems that hinder, slow down or make learning difficult. Therefore, develop a strong character, lean forward and meticulously follow and apply the techniques for overcoming the barriers to learning as discussed in the unit. We also explored the importance and components of learning skills. Effective learning skills incorporates critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication. To develop effective learning, this unit highlighted seven effective ways to follow.

#### 5.0 **CONCLUSION**

Learning is more than passing university examinations and earning degrees. It is a continuous process that regularly and consistently shapes your behaviour and perspectives of the world. Effective learning skills will enable you to develop creative and critical thinking.



*What steps would you take in your academic journey to develop effective reading skills.*



## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- I. List all the strategies for reading discussed under this unit.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION**

- Unit 1: Introduction to Communication
- Unit 2: The Communication Process
- Unit 3 Communication Skills
- Unit 4: Communication for Academic Purposes

**UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Definitions of Communication
  - 3.2 Types of Communication
  - 3.3 Verbal Communication
  - 3.4 Written Communication
  - 3.5 Non-Verbal Communication
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to communication and the various dimensions of it. This is another vital component that determines your success or failure in life. Your ability to communicate clearly and effectively is a significant bedrock for success in life, work and in the society. According to Kuhnke (2013: 1) “no matter how innovative your ideas, how sincere your feelings or how passionate your beliefs, if you fail to connect with other people and communicate in a way that persuades, inspires or motivates, your efforts will be in vain.” The world in which you live, function and relate with others requires effective communication. If you observe your environment very well, you will notice that several people find it challenging to communicate effectively. This limits them in virtually every area of their lives and hinders progress in their endeavours. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively facilitates understanding and engenders intimacy. Therefore, it is imperative for you to develop and successfully apply communication skills. Effective communication is learned. “If you do not work on it, it will not work for you.’ In the words of Kuhnke, “communication works for those who work at it.” Communicating effectively is not a given. You must make conscious and concerted efforts to understand, develop and apply communication skills in your entire academic journey and beyond.



## 2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of communication.
- Identify the various types of communication.
- Discuss the characteristics of each type of communication identified.
- Identify and demonstrate the effective use of various non-verbal communication

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a common word that connotes different meanings to different people. What comes to your mind when you are faced with the question: “what is communication?” Your answer might be, communication is the exchange of ideas or thoughts or information. Communication involves the transfer or sharing of ideas, between two or more people. This is defining communication in very simple terms. The Captain’s announcement as the aircraft is preparing to land, the teacher in the classroom discussing information storage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the Nurse discussing birth control methods with nursing mothers are all sharing thoughts, ideas and information. In other words, they are communicating. As you are reading this text, I am sharing with you my knowledge, thoughts and information on this subject – communication. The word ‘communication’ derives from Latin, which means ‘to share’ or ‘common’. “It belongs to the family of words that includes *communion*, *communism* and *community*. Until you have shared information with another person, you have not communicated it” (Barker, 2006: 1). Arising from this premise, the Entrepreneur Handbook (2019: np) sees communication as the “sharing of information between different individuals. It includes the sharing of ideas, concepts, imaginations, behaviours and written content. It is simply defined as the transfer of information from one place to another. This transfer of information can be conducted in different ways.” Therefore, the sharing or exchange of information between persons or systems forms the root of every communication. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2009: np) defines communications as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour.” It is the sending and receiving of information from one point to another or between two or more persons. According to Ojomo (2004: 78), communication is the “sharing of ideas, feelings, thoughts, information and messages with others.” Looking through the various definitions, the authors are agreed on the meaning of communication. It involves sharing or exchange. Communication binds humans together. Davito (2012: 1) writes that “of all the knowledge and skills you have, those concerning communication are among your most important and useful. Your communication ability will influence

how effectively you live your personal and professional life; it will influence your effectiveness as a friend and lover. It will often make the difference between getting a job and not getting it. Your communication skills will determine your influence and effectiveness as a group member and your emergence as a group leader. Your communication skills will increase your ability to communicate information and influence the attitudes and behaviours of others in a variety of public speaking situations.”

Communication is essential in your life, studies, career and general interaction with others. Every activity of your life, career or pursuits involves communication. Communication is a bridge that connects people, places and/or machines. The world and all its systems cannot exist without one form of communication or the other. In fact, without communication, the world is flat, motionless and uninteresting. Communication is vital to the advancement of our environment and society in general. Effective communication helps students or employees to eliminate confusion and turn every member into a valuable team player. However, “when employees communicate poorly, whole projects fall apart” (Zook, 2019: np). The National Planning on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) (2019: 7) writes that “*the success of a leader, manager, teacher, or any professional depends on his/her ability to communicate. Success is directly proportionate to one’s ability to communicate. Communication failures, especially in a professional context, are very costly because it can affect productivity.*”

### **3.2 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

There are several forms of communication which can be formal or informal. This includes:

- i. Verbal communication
- ii. Non-verbal communication
- iii. Intrapersonal communication
- iv. Interpersonal communication
- v. Mass communication

#### **3.2.1 Verbal Communication**

Generally, verbal communication involves the use of language in the form of oral communication and words in the form of written communication. According to Toppr (2017: np), verbal communication most often refers to communication in the form of spoken words only. In the context of communication, verbal communication covers the spoken and written forms. This means that verbal communication may be oral or written. Verbal communication is the most prevalent form of communication but the most

misunderstood. When you communicate, the general assumption is that your audience understands your message as intended. This is usually not the case in all circumstances. Your words may be misunderstood, misinterpreted or distorted. Therefore, in verbal communication, keep your messages short, simple and unambiguous.

**Oral Communication** is a form of communication which directly or indirectly employs the spoken word to convey ideas or information. This could be through the phone, face to face conversations, radio, video, and voice over the Internet. In face-to-face communication, it's easy to monitor the tone, body language, and reactions to what is said. The effect of eye contact helps you to check if the receiver is listening and the reaction that follows; you can also communicate easily using body language. However, in face-to-face communication, it may be difficult to hide your true feelings; your expressions and body language may become a hindrance to the process of communication.

Similarly, telephone communication, which is a form of oral communication, is the most abused. A lot of people do not have good telephone ethics. Although you do not see the other person in a telephone conversation, it is still imperative to display effective speaking and listening skills. When on the phone, speak pleasantly. Avoid talking too softly like in a bedroom lovers discussion or loudly like the touts in the motor parks. Your telephone conversation should be clear, polite and straightforward.

You must remember that oral communication is crucial among human beings. This form of communication can build or destroy relationships, homes or groups. Although corporate environments mostly use written communication, oral communication still occupy a very important place in organisational communication. As you progress in your career, studies or in the executive ladder in the organisation, the better your oral communication should be. Imagine, your village wants to honour their undergraduate son/daughter in an elaborate ceremony. Dignitaries are gathered from different places. At the end of the ceremony, you are requested to close the service in a five minutes speech. What you say, how you say it may take the ceremony to the climax or destroy all the efforts of the community who organised the occasion. Your speech should be short, precise and to the point and should not leave any room for misunderstanding, unhappiness or regret. Oral communication has ruined marriages. Rabble-rousers thrive on the power of verbal communication.

**Advantages/Disadvantages of Oral/spoken communication** (Wambui, et al, 2012: 3)

**Advantages of Oral/spoken communication**

- i. Oral communication provides an avenue for immediate feedback; the receivers can ask questions. The sender can evaluate the effect or result of the message and decisions can be made instantly.
- ii. Oral communication is very flexible; the sender can make changes to the message based on the result and effect of the message. It is also adaptable to diverse situations.
- iii. Oral communication saves time, money and efforts.
- iv. There is a high level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal.
- v. Oral communication is most suited to resolving problems. Conflicts, disputes and differences can be settled through dialogue.
- vi. Oral communication is essential for teamwork and group energy. It promotes receptivity and encourages morale among organisational employees.
- vii. It is suitable for handling private and confidential matters.

### **Disadvantages**

- i. Oral presentation easily generates misunderstanding and negative responses, especially when the message is poorly presented. Sometimes, messages may be incomplete and may lack essentials.
- ii. In formal and organised sectors, oral communication is not suitable. An effective business organisation is not built on oral communication.
- iii. Oral communication in long speeches during meetings can consume a lot of productive time.
- iv. It requires attentiveness and high receptivity on the part of the receivers/audience.
- v. Oral communication (such as speeches) is not frequently used as legal records except in investigation work.
- vi. Spoken communication is influenced by both verbal and non-verbal communication such as tone or body language, which may twist the meaning of your message in the mind of the receiver.

**Written** Communication, on the other hand, denotes the exchange of information or messages in written form. This constitutes the major form of communication in formal and organised settings. Written communication may be handwritten, inscribed or printed. This can take the form of letters, reports, bulletins, memos, manuals, electronic mails, etc. for internal communications. Written communications are relatively permanent, stable and can stand as evidence in dispute. Therefore, written communications strongly consider the style of writing, vocabulary and grammar, language and clarity. It is the most common form of communication in organisations and businesses, generally. Written communications, according to Wambui (2012: 5), have several advantages and disadvantages.

### **Advantages of Written Communications**

- i. Written communication is suitable for complicated and vital instructions, which can be given in a precise and uniform manner.
- ii. Principles, policies and rules for running organisations are preserved in written communication.
- iii. It provides a relatively permanent means of information storage which can be used for future reference. This helps in records management.
- iv. It assists in a proper delegation of responsibilities; it generates more precise and explicit messages. Authority is transmitted more effectively with a written order than with an oral one.
- v. Legal defences depend more on written communication for accurate records.
- vi. There is a lesser chance for the message to be misunderstood.
- vii. Messages can be constructed, re-constructed, edited and revised many times before being sent.
- viii. Written communication can easily be duplicated, and backup provided. It provides a record for every message sent and can be saved for later study.
- ix. The reader can read the information at a pace that suits them.
- x. Feedback to written communication is more reliable, well thought out and polite.

### **Disadvantages of Written Communication**

- i. Most times the receivers may not always read the written communication.
- ii. It can be impersonal, very formal and unfriendly.
- iii. Written communication is expensive in terms of stationery, preparation and delivery of the documents.
- iv. Written communication is time-consuming because feedback is not always immediate and there is no room for direct questions and answer.

### **3.2.2 Non-Verbal Communication**

I want you to understand that a lot of what you do to communicate with others are without words at all. Non-verbal communication is achieved without the usual conventional use of words. This form of communication relays messages without oral or written words. The messages may be described as wordless. It takes the form of gestures, body language, and symbols. It uses non-verbal cues like signs, symbols, physical movements to express feelings or convey information. A man said, “what you say is a vital part of any communication. Surprisingly, what you do not say can be even more important.” Non-verbal communication can communicate effectively and accurately without words. Interestingly, individuals and organisations, send, receive and decode non-verbal communication the same way verbal messages are decoded. Although non-

verbal messages are seldom used in corporate environments, they are still instrumental in sending messages to the employees. Bhasin (2018: 4) says that “if an employee is demoralised, a gentle pat on his shoulder from one of the executive staff can reawaken him. On the contrary, taunting, making faces or ignoring him will demoralise the employee further. Thus, non-verbal skills play a major role in office culture.” Non-verbal communication is an effective way of communicating among humans and animals. “To be an effective communicator, your body language, appearance, and tone must align with the words you are trying to convey” (Siegman, 1985).

### **Types of Nonverbal Communication**

There are different types of non-verbal communication, which include:

#### **i. Body language**

Body language is commonly employed in communicating messages. It is embedded in different cultures. Your body language can convey simplicity, sincerity and warmth. These attributes are vital in communication. Similarly, handshakes and smiles are deployed in communication to convey trustworthiness, confidence or uncertainty, insincerity and deceit. Body language is seldom used in official organisational communications. However, the smiles and handshakes of the manager, speak volumes to the employees. “Folded arms, crossed legs, hunched shoulders, hands in pockets, looking down are some of the expressions you deploy to convey different emotional state and should be avoided when giving a presentation or speech. Appearing relaxed makes us exert dominance and authority. Take note of public speakers, and observe how relaxed and confident they appear, talking slowly and making positive body movements. Use your arms to emphasise a point and illustrate the message” (Barnard, 2018). The use of body language varies across cultures.

#### **ii. Eye contact**

Eye contact communicates a lot to others. It is an important channel that regulates the flow of communication. It helps to establish balance and increase your credibility during a presentation. Eye contact can also speak of warmth and interest just like it can repel and discourage.

#### **iii. Gestures**

Gestures are used every day as part of communication tools. Gestures make you appear lively and active. When you speak without any form of gestures, you are likely to be perceived as boring and old school. When articulated gestures are displayed in your communication, you capture the attention of the audience, make the discussion lively, and the subject will likely be more interesting. Your gestures communicate positive or

negative reinforcements and can provide active instant feedback from your audience. Gestures are expressed through the arms, legs, hands, heads and eyes.

iv. **Facial expressions**

In every culture, the face is a communicator. It is generally believed that the face is the index of the mind. Although this is against Shakespeare's thought that, "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face." Your facial expressions reveal different codes to others. According to Ekman, Friesen & Hager (2008: np), the human face is filled with thousands of different expressions. These expressions have been decoded by experts to correspond to hundreds of different emotional states. Your face is a communication tool to the outside world. Happiness, trustworthiness, confidence, pretence, surprise, uncertainty, fear and worries are easily understood from your face. Your emotions expressed through your face convey secure messages to the audience. This makes your appearance very important during conversations, presentations and discussions. Your face can send a silent message without saying a word. A feeling of confidence, uneasiness during an interview can all be seen from your face.

v. **Signs and symbols**

Signs and symbols are representations of ideas, a physical entity or a process. They are commonly used in various cultures to communicate different messages and meanings. For instance, several signs and symbols are used to effectively communicate traffic information. Teachers employ a lot of signs and symbols to teach children concepts and alphabets.

vi. **Visual communication**

Effective communication occurs through different forms of visual aids such as maps, posters, charts, diagrams, etc. Such communication that occurs using any visual aids is known as visual communication. Visual aids are used as powerful communication tools all over the world. The meaning and interpretation of visual aids have universal appeal. The sign of danger, for instance, means the same wherever it is used. So also, is the stop and no smoking signs. Every culture and language understand these signs and their meaning.

Effective nonverbal communication, according to North (2019: np) includes:

- i. Proper attire
- ii. Good posture
- iii. Natural gestures
- iv. Purposeful movement
- v. Appropriate eye contact

- vi. Energy and enthusiasm

### **3.2.3 Intrapersonal Communication**

This is communication within yourself. So many times, people talk to themselves, discuss issues and reach decisions within themselves. This is communication that takes place inside you. Intrapersonal communication deploys the communicator's thoughts, perceptions, culture and experiences in communicating. Every communication essentially begins from within – intrapersonal, interpreting texts, symbols, signs or non-verbal communication, etc.

### **3.2.4 Interpersonal Communication**

This is the communication that takes place between two or more people. It is called dyadic communication. Interpersonal communication can be verbal or non-verbal, which involves face-to-face communication or telephone conversation. Interpersonal communication is vital in every business, personal and group activities. It takes place among individuals who operate on a relatively common platform. Most managers engage in interpersonal communication with their subordinates to show that they care about the employees. When managers relate well with the employees, they feel valued; which breaks down the wall of barriers they may have built around themselves and makes communication easier. Interpersonal communication helps to build relationships in the organisation and increases the job satisfaction of the workers.

### **3.2.5 Mass Communication**

Mass communication refers to avenues or media through which information is shared with the public. This exchange of information with the audience could be simultaneous, instantaneous or at different times. The media of communication with the public include television, radio, books, newspapers and magazines. Mass communication provides access to information to the viewers, listeners or readers who may be placed different geographical locations. It enables communicating to the masses at the same time as the television or radio and sometimes the newspapers. It brings to you, the views, events, issues and people from different cultures and environments. Mass communication uses specialised media to send messages to large audience that are mostly anonymous and heterogenous. The messages for mass communication are homogeneous while the audience is large and heterogeneous.

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

Communication derives from the root word communion, communism or community, which commonly means to share. Communication is the sharing of information between individuals. Success is directly proportionate to your ability to communicate. Communication failures, especially in a professional context, are very costly.



Communication could be classified into verbal communication, non-verbal communication, intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, and mass communication. Verbal communication could take the form of oral or written communication. The various types of non-verbal communication are body language, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, signs and symbols and visual communication.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In your academic journey, personal life, social and career pursuits, your ability to communicate effectively is a significant asset. Failure in communication does not only lead to academic failure but a jettison of dreams of progress in all areas of life. Through communication, you establish and maintain or distort and destroy relationships.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is referred to as index of the mind?
2. What is a type of communication that involves the use of visual aids?
3. What is a form of communication that relays message without oral or written words?
4. What is a type of communication that uses specialised media to send messages to large audience?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2: THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Elements of the Communication Process
  - 3.2 Need for Effective Communication
  - 3.3 Barriers to Effective Communication
  - 3.4 Language use of Skills in Communication
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to the basic process of communication. It brings to focus the various elements involved in the communication process ranging from the sender to the receiver. It highlights communication as a process that progresses from the cradle to adulthood and to the grave. Effective communication entails an interplay of the various essential elements that create, build and decode messages. Each link in the chain determines when miscommunication or failure in communication occurs.

Several upheavals in the organisation, failures in interpersonal relationships and distortions in individual lives are likened to failures in communication. Therefore, the discussion on the barriers to effective communication is paramount. This means that a proper understanding of effective communication will mitigate against the barriers that cause miscommunication.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)**

This unit brings to you the various components of the communication process; it exposes you to the need for effective communication and the barriers to effective. Therefore, at the end of this unit, you should identify the various elements of the communication process; recognise what constitute barriers to communication and you should be equipped to communicate effectively.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

Communication is a process that involves several elements. It is essential for you to have a proper understanding of these elements to be effective in the communication process.

These elements regulate, control and are vital to every communication process. They include such factors as the sender, receiver, channel, message, feedback and noise.

**Sender:** This is the initiator of the process of communication. The sender as the source of the message in the communication process, determines to a large extent, the success or failure in the communication process.

**Message:** This is the information you want to communicate. Without the message, there will be no need for communication. You do not communicate just for the sake of it. Take, for instance, clowns, drunks and comedians. These group of people seem unserious in their lifestyle. They entertain and joke over virtually everything. In the midst of that, they communicate to their audience clearly.

**Encoding:** This is the process of transferring your message into a format that can be shared with your receiver. It is referred to as encoding. For communication to take place, the message should be in the form the other party can receive, decode and understand. This requires a knowledge of your audience – who is your audience? What is their level of understanding?

**Channel:** This is the medium for sending the information. The format of the message determines the channel for sending it.

**Decoding:** If there is encoding, there is also decoding. This is the art of interpreting the message to become meaningful and understandable. The decoding process can impact on the message. There will be a failure in communication if the receiver is unable to decode the message.

**Receiver:** This receives your message. The differences in experience, perspectives, and expectations between the sender and receiver will affect how the message is received.

**Feedback:** This is the result of communication. It helps you to gauge the effectiveness of your messages. Feedback is beneficial in communication. You can receive feedback in various forms. It can come in writing, body language, or facial expression. It is a proper metre for measuring the success or failure of the communication process.

**Noise:** This refers to any interference in the process of communication. It is anything that has a negative influence on the message. Noise hinders or distorts communication. This interference can occur at any of the points of communication. Noise can occur in the form of ambiguous messages, poor telephone connection, wrong decoding of the message, etc.

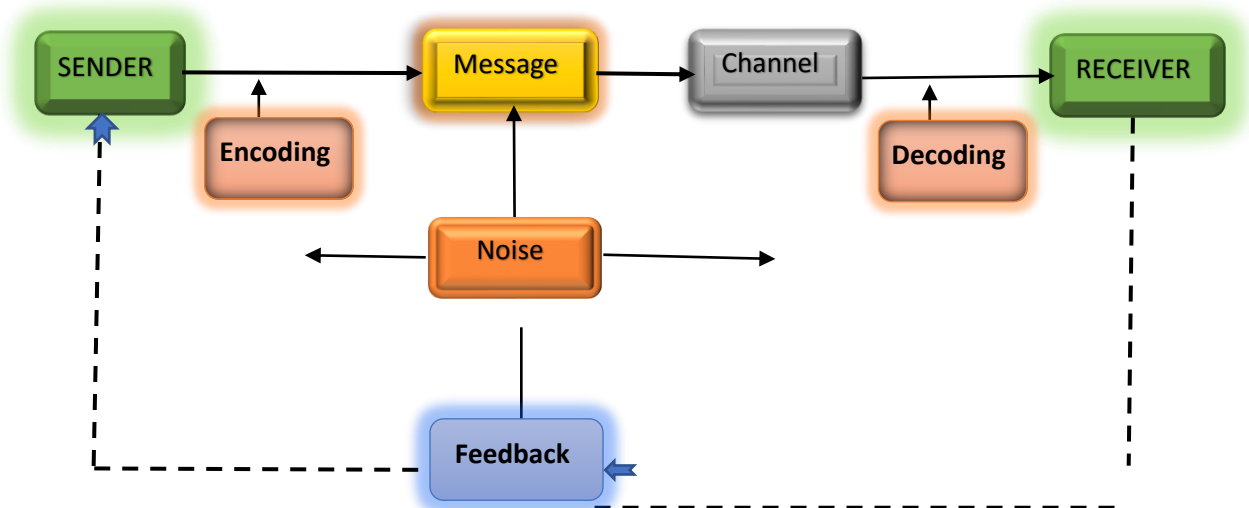


Fig 1: *Elements in the communication process*

### 3.2 NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There is no organisation or institution that can exist without effective communication. The success and the life of every meaningful venture rest on effective communication. So many ventures fail today because of failure in communication or what is generally described as ‘communication breakdown.’ Industrial unrests, social disharmony, protests and business collapse have a lot to do with miscommunication. A study in America found that most malpractice lawsuits against medical doctors are due to poor communication and not medical errors (USA Today, 1997). This indicates that ineffective communication is costly in terms of money and time. To eliminate waste, therefore, you need to understand how to communicate effectively throughout your period of study; and in your chosen career, business or regular relationship with others. I stumbled on this example of divorce miscommunication, which illustrates the place of effective communication:



A judge was interviewing a woman regarding her pending divorce, and asked, “What are the grounds for your divorce?”



She replied, “About four acres and a nice little home in the middle of the property with a stream running by.”



“No,” he said, “I mean what is the foundation of this case?”



“It is made of concrete, brick and mortar,” she responded.



“I mean,” he continued, “What are your relations like?”



“I have an aunt and uncle living here in town, and so do my husband’s parents.”



He said, “Do you have a real grudge?”



“No,” she replied, “We have a two-car carport and have never really needed one.”



“Please,” he tried again, “is there any infidelity in your marriage?”



“Yes, both my son and daughter have stereo sets. We don’t necessarily like the music, but the answer to your questions is yes.”



“Ma’am, does your husband ever beat you up?”



“Yes,” she responded, “about twice a week he gets up earlier than I do.”



Finally, in frustration, the judge asked, “Lady, why do you want a divorce?”



“Oh, I don’t want a divorce,” she replied.  
“I’ve never wanted a divorce.”

This is the result of ineffective communication. From this example, you can see the role of the sender, receiver and the message in creating miscommunication. If the sender understood the value of effective communication, he would have presented his messages differently. Likewise, if the receiver listened well or sought for clarification, effective communication would have resulted. In the sharing of information, you must remove ambiguity. This example illustrates the importance of effective communication. It is evident that ineffective communication causes frustration and leads to dysfunctional personal relationships. This can also affect academic performance, family life, and professional development and promotions (NPTEL, 2019: 16). Ineffective communication breeds ineffective action.

Organisations and institutions consider effective communication as an asset. Alsop (2006: np) found that 85 business schools ranked communication and interpersonal skills as the most important skills for recruitment. In the present dynamic society, so many people erroneously believe and accept that the Internet, social media, video conferencing and the like have replaced the need for effective communication. This is far from the truth. The influx of these new forms of information storage, retrieval and dissemination in every sphere of life makes effective communication indispensable. The question is: “are there pointers that describe or characterise effective communication? Every effective communication should be:

**Clear:** every effective communication must present the message clearly so that the meaning cannot be given a double interpretation. Messages should be simple and clear. Sentences should be short, simple and devoid of ambiguity. Several messages should not be stated in one.

**Concise:** summarise your essential points. Long, lengthy messages are often dull and lead to loss of the critical points. Presenting your points concisely is a bloodline of effective communication.

**Coherent:** to facilitate understanding and create meaning your message should be logical, starting from the beginning to the end. In simple terms, you need to be coherent. You do not tell a story from the middle or from the end; you start from the beginning. Someone said: “you need to understand what goes where and what comes when.” The key to a coherent message is a well-planned, logical and sequential presentation of information. Incoherent messages lead to miscommunications.

**Courteous:** every effective communication should have some flavour and comfort that makes the message easy to receive. The receiver will welcome the message better if it is dotted with respect, politeness and a measure of honesty. An inconsiderate, insolent and rude sender will find it difficult to sustain the audience even when the message “is perfectly effective and important.” Toppr (2017) says that effective communication should involve clarity of thought, a calm demeanour, and an assertive but polite approach. You should be able to put forth your point of view without offending others.”

### 3.3 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

*The biggest single problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*

*-George Bernard Shaw*

Communication breakdown, communication gap, miscommunication or failure in communication are common terms that apply to misunderstanding and failure of communication. Why do many people take communication for granted? This is because they assume it is easy; they have been communicating all their lives. While there may be some truth in this simplistic view, communication sometimes is complex, confusing and frustrating because of barriers that are introduced on the way. These barriers are the reasons why communications fail. To eliminate these misunderstandings, it is necessary you understand the most common obstacles to effective communication. What comes to your mind when you hear of ‘barriers to effective communication?’ Barriers could be anything that interferes with your ability to easily and clearly construct and express your thoughts or ideas. These obstacles may be intrinsic or extrinsic. They might be physical or emotional; whatever causes hindrance to free flow and expression of ideas constitute a barrier to communication. Barriers that cause miscommunication are like electrical short-circuit that distorts the flow of electrical current. Have you ever experienced an electrical short-circuit? Electrical short-circuits can create a bridge, a spark or disconnection, thereby hindering the flow of electrical current. Sometimes, a short-circuit can result in a disaster. This is how barriers are to effective communication – a short-circuit, disconnection, a spark or disaster. The barriers to effective communication make” communication incomplete, unforceful, ineffective and imperfect” (Alex, 2014: 97). Once again, remember that ineffective communication can be very costly to you, your studies, professional development or to your organisation. It is important to remind you that just like you study and learn the essential components of life such as hygiene, good eating habits, good table manners, driving, right dressing styles, effective communication is consciously learned.

The Barriers to effective communication could be of many types like physical, perceptual, linguistic, psychological, emotional and cultural. Others include information overload,

interpersonal barriers, presentation, the medium and technological barriers. All these types are discussed in detail below.

### **Physical barriers**

Physical barriers constitute one of the major hindrances to effective communication, especially in big organisations. Large multinational companies, banks, industries understand clearly the effect of the physical obstacles to effective communication. These organisations operate behind closed doors or in secluded offices which restrict access and affect the movement of messages to and from those that occupy the offices. They operate almost a completely closed-door policy which also closes the door to effective communication. Physical barriers also include noise, communication equipment failures, closed doors and physical separation between the sender and receiver (Fiugo, 2012: np).

### **Information Overload**

You will quickly notice that the amount of information generated daily is overwhelming. This leaves you in a state of imbalance where you receive more information than you can process. You receive countless messages every day – advertisements, e-mails, chats, memos and conversations from those close to you and even from unsolicited quarters. Schick, Gordon & Haka (1990: 199) argue that “when the information processing demands on an individual’s time to perform interactions, and internal calculations exceed the supply or capacity of time available for such processing”, information overload results. There is too much information for an individual to process and absorb. Think of it and recall the myriads of information from the television, newspapers, magazines, WhatsApp, IMO, Facebook and several other unsolicited messages beckoning your attention every day. This formidable punch of information creates barriers to effective communication. When you are overwhelmed by information overload, you miss out on essential messages; misunderstand several others and distort quite a lot of others.

### **Emotional Barriers**

Scientific observation shows clearly that emotions play a significant role in effective communication. Mood swings can affect the way you relay or receive messages. People’s temperaments ranging from choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic or sanguine moods are known to affect communication. Sometimes, people wake from the wrong side of the bed and all through that day, every form of communication is distorted, leading to misunderstanding and failure of communication. Do you know that the emotional intelligence quotient of senders or receivers influences the ease with which they communicate? Frustration, anger or humour are emotions that can interfere with the effectiveness of your communication. It is generally believed that those who are emotionally balanced or matured are likely to communicate effectively than those who allow their emotions blow the lid open in the face of unsavoury circumstances.



Miscommunication can arise when your ego is up in the high heavens, and you are inconsiderate, intractable, egocentric and selfish.

### **Cultural barriers**

Communication involves people. People come from different backgrounds with diverse cultures. The cultural diversity affects in one way or the other, interactions, relationships and communication. To overcome the barrier of cultural diversity, companies initiate organisational culture where all members are guided by the same rules and regulations that supersede individual peculiarity.

### **Interpersonal barriers**

There are several interpersonal characteristics that may affect how messages are perceived. The manner of interaction and relationship can create barriers in communication. Interpersonal barriers can take the forms of withdrawal which separate one party from the other or rituals which are meaningless and repetitive routines that create barriers between people.

### **The Medium**

‘The medium is the message’ according to Marshall McLuhan. This underscores the importance of the medium in communication. Defects in the communication devices used for transmitting messages are major barriers to effective communication. When the communication instruments fail, messages are distorted or incomplete and cause miscommunication, which may lead to unwanted actions. When instruments fail, the communication, presentation or speech should be rescheduled. It is better and safer to reschedule a presentation when devices fail than to manage and distort whole message. The result would be obvious – miscommunication.

### **Perception**

People have different levels of perception. Most often, different people see, interpret and understand the same message differently. It is crucial you know this so that your messages can be presented clearly. In communication, you must not forget that we see the world differently. Individual’s perception and assumptions shape their understanding of the beauties, ugliness or the realities of the world. Examine this anecdote (Alex, 2014: 98), which touches on how perception affects communication:

*A traveller was walking down a road when he met a man from the next town. "Excuse me," he said. "I am hoping to stay in the next town tonight. Can you tell me what the townspeople are like?"*

*"Well," said the townsman, "how did you find the people in the last town you visited?"  
"Oh, they were an irascible bunch. Kept to themselves. Took me for a fool. Over-charged me for what I got. Gave me a very poor service."*

*"Well, then," said the townsman, "you will find them pretty much the same here."*

On the other hand, several people select from a message what they want to retain depending on the message, the presenter and the mode of delivery. Selective perception is a barrier to effective communication. Therefore, present ideas simply and attractively if you want to communicate effectively to the largest audience.

### **Technological barriers**

In our society today, the effect of technology is commonly seen and felt. The speed of technological development, the new advances, and cost are factors that may constitute barriers to effective communication. The application and adoption of technology in any environment are not automatic. It bestows huge responsibilities financially, physically, psychologically and otherwise on the users. The fear and the thought of how to cross the hurdle creates a gully that becomes a crucial barrier that may affect the whole communication process.

### **Noise**

Noise is a major barrier to communication. It is an interference with your message. Noise is anything that interferes with your receiving a message. Noise can distort or prevent the sender's message from getting to the receiver. There are four variants of noise in communication (Devito, 2013: 21):

- i. Physical noise which is the interference that is external to both the source and receiver. This interferes with the physical transmission of the message. Physical noise interferences from cars outside, the humming sound of electronic devices, the short-circuiting of public address systems, misspellings and poor grammar.
- ii. Physiological noise is the barrier embedded in the sender or receiver such as visual impairments, hearing loss, memory loss, and articulation problems, which affects the sender's message or what the receiver receives or both.
- iii. Psychological noise is the mental interference in the speaker or listener and includes preconceived ideas, wandering thoughts, biases and prejudices, close-mindedness, and extreme emotionalism. Sometimes, the receiver holds a viewpoint that is built on a wrong premise yet refuses to listen to anything contrary. The mind is already closed or biased. This kind of noise becomes a bulwark against effective communication.

- iv. Semantic noise is interference that occurs when the sender and receiver have language or dialectical differences, especially in the use of terms that have double or more interpretations. This is most prevalent in professional areas that use technical jargons or overly abstract terms like medical doctors.

<b>Lack of Interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both in face-to-face or written communication, the interest of the receiver in listening to or reading between the lines is a necessity.</li><li>• If the receiver shows no lack-lustre attitude to grasp the meaning of the message, the intent of sending the message is defeated.</li></ul>
<b>Lack of Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the receiver has little knowledge about the subject-matter of the message sent, he/she fails to understand it in the desired manner.</li><li>• Also, lack of expertise in knowledge and semantics on the part of the receiver is also a major barrier in understanding the message.</li></ul>
<b>Lack of Communication Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the receiver does not have requisite skill to communicate, he/she fails to actively participate in communication process.</li><li>• Skills like speaking and writing ability in prescribed language is a must for effective communication.</li></ul>
<b>Conflicting Message</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both in face-to-face or written communication, the interest of the receiver in listening to or reading between the lines is a necessity.</li><li>• If the receiver shows no lack-lustre attitude to grasp the meaning of the message, the intent of sending the message is defeated.</li></ul>
<b>Emotional Distraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the receiver remains emotionally or mentally engrossed in a different thought or found to be affected by any emotional breakdown, worries, anger etc. at the time of receiving message, he/she may fail to receive the message as desired.</li></ul>
<b>Information Overload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the receiver is already overloaded with information, he/she cannot receive well the intended message.</li><li>• Being pre-occupied with uncleared messages, the receiver misses the true intent of the message sent now.</li></ul>

Summary of communication barriers

Source: *Tutorialspoint*

## **Language**

Differences in language is a major barrier to communication. Have you had to deal with a Chinese? He does not understand the English language, and you do not understand Chinese. Just imagine the barrier that will exist between you in trying to relay your messages and vice versa. Chinese engineers visit Nigeria regularly and it is interesting to witness their interactions with Nigerians. Most often, they communicate using sign language. This constitutes a barrier to effective communication. Several years ago, in the days of NITEL, a German engineer had a contract with one of the Radio rooms of NITEL office in Zaria. It was an arduous task relating to Nigerian counterparts. One of the days, he wanted to end the day's work and he said: "*Lapitee, me go*" which meant he was done for the day and ready to leave the office. Sometimes, the linguistic barriers to effective communication hang on a bushy dialect that may render the communication ineffective.

Closely related to this is the problem of semantics. Meanings are in people and not in words. This means that words can mean different things to different people. The meaning the sender is conveying may be completely different from what the receiver understands. Sometimes, messages are delivered in highly professional and technical terms that restrict the level of understanding and comprehension to even the experts. Professional jargons are common in several fields, but they constitute obstacles to effective communication.

### **3.4 LANGUAGE USE OF SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION**

A language is a standard tool in everyday transactions and dealings with one another. The world will stand still if languages are taken away. As there are countries, regions, tribes, ethnic groups, etc. so there are languages in the world. The primary purpose of every language is to communicate. It is the foremost and most important tool in communication. At the root of every language whether simple or complex, written, oral or signal or symbol, lies communication. Interestingly, language is a tool of communication that is equally available to everyone. Generally, although languages appear complex, they are the most comfortable to use in communication. Statistics show that there are about 6,500 languages in the world. In Nigeria, there are over 500 languages (Wikipedia).

In this discussion of language use of skills in communication, I will be presenting a bird's eye view on the principles of language. According to Devito (2013: 92), "language is both denotative and connotative, varies in abstraction, varies in directness, is rule-based, and its meaning is best viewed in people rather than in words."

#### **Characteristics of Language**

Devito (2013: 92) outlines five principles of language as a tool of communication. These principles are discussed below:

### **Language is Both Denotative and Connotative**

Language is a major tool of communication. And the use of your language can be connotative or denotative. Denotation is used to describe the literal or objective meaning of a term as provided in the dictionaries. It is the common meaning given to the word. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the subjective, personal or emotional meaning given to a word by a specific group of say speakers or listeners. This is the associated meaning of a term. The use of words in a language can mean (denote) one thing to the sender and a completely different thing (connote) to the receiver. For instance, ‘love’ may mean (denote) affection, emotional attachment to a lady and mean (connote) patriotism to the politician.

### **Language Varies in Abstraction**

Your use of language determines how effective you communicate. This is because language varies in abstraction. You communicate more effectively when you use more specific terms i.e. you are less abstract in the choice of words. Devito (2013: 93) writes that “effective verbal messages include words from a wide range of abstractions.” In other words, in the use of language to communicate, you can use abstract or specific (less abstract) terms that best suits your needs to convey your messages

### **Language Varies in Directness**

Language can be used to convey messages directly or indirectly. Although indirect messages can be sarcastic, but they help to express views or ideas without insults; are milder, courteous and allows you to interact politely. Direct messages are stronger, more forceful and sometimes considered impolite and offensive. Gender and culture are major determinants of directness in messages. Some cultures regard indirectness as manipulative while others consider it courteous and polite. Most cultures see indirectness as associated with women to express powerlessness and discomfort while directness with men who are most often judged as blunt, rude and overbearing.

### **Language is Rule-Based**

Effective use of language is based on “a wide variety of rules.” Language is guided by grammatical rules which combine words into sentences; semantic rules for using words meaningfully, and the rules that guide combining sounds. Language is therefore based on the rules of syntax, semantics and phonology which you learned when you were growing up. You learned these rules in the language you were exposed to – your local dialect; and learned the rules of English when you were exposed to it. The other aspect of the rule of language is cultural rules. Different cultures have different styles of communication or rules that govern communication, which members are expected to imbibe and follow.

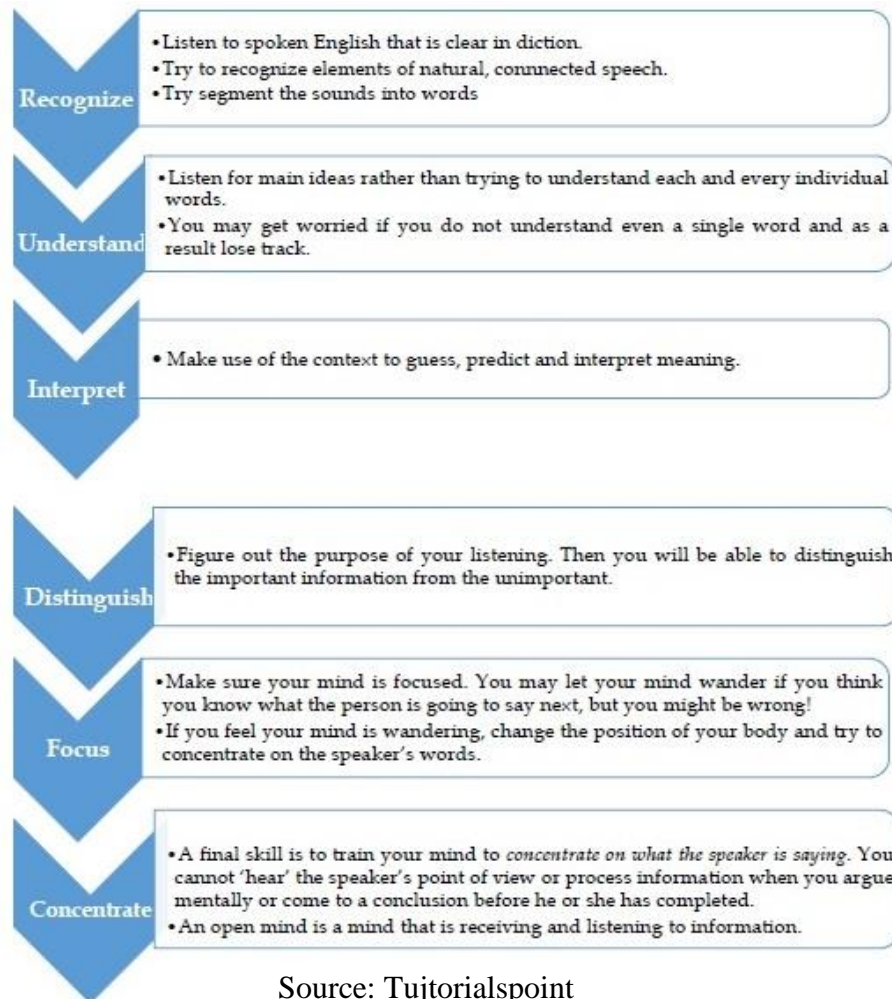
### **Language Meanings are in People**

Language, terms, words create different meanings in people. You use words to mean what you want. And what it means to you may not be what it means to another. Meanings are in people and change as the people change. The meanings to the messages you received have changed over a period. Have you noticed that the meanings you created of certain messages have changed even though the messages remain the same? The romantic letter written to you several years ago from a girl you fell in love with remains the same letter but the meaning you created then has changed. The same girl has fallen in love with another man and years have passed. You have also fallen in love with another girl and years have passed. When you read the same romantic letter, you create a new meaning. A man met a beautiful girl years ago. They courted and married. He delighted in being called sweetheart, darling and the like. Today, he has created a different meaning from being called darling by his wife. Now, darling is synonymous to making the request he must grant and has nothing to do with love or affection. Meanings are in people not in words. Therefore, the word ‘darling’ may mean love and affection to you and to another, a ploy to exhort money.

Finally, according to Devito (2013: 109), to develop communication skills and communicate effectively, think critically of the general principles of language: “language symbolises reality, but it is not the reality itself; language can express both facts and inferences, yet often obscures the important distinction between them; language is relatively static and unchanging, but the world and the people it describes are changing all the time; language can obscure important distinctions among people.”

In studying and developing effective communication skills, it is important to understand how meaning is communicated from one person to another.

The diagram below illustrates how to deal with barriers in verbal communication.



Source: Tujtorialspoint

#### **4.0 SUMMARY**

This unit examined the communication process. It discussed the elements that control and regulate the communication process. The sender initiates and communicates the message through a format (encode) and sends it through the channel. The receiver interprets (decode) and receives the message. The result of communication is referred to as feedback. Noise is the interference in the communication process.

Communication breakdown is the bane of several organisations and relationships. Therefore, there is need for effective communication. Your communication should be clear, concise, coherent and courteous. There are several obstacles to effective communication which include physical barriers, perceptual barriers, linguistic barriers, emotional barriers, information overload and language.

Language is a major tool of communication which can also cause impediment in communication. This is because language can be denotative and connotative; it varies in abstraction; it varies in directness; it is rule-based, and its meaning is best viewed in people rather than in words.

#### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Effective Communication is one of the most important skills that you require in life. It plays very significant roles in your personal, family, work and social life. This places the onus on you to develop and cultivate the skills to enhance your worth.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What is referred to as the initiator of the process of communication?
2. What is a process of transferring message into the format that can be shared with the receiver?
3. What is the art of interpreting a message to become meaningful and understandable?
4. What is a metre for measuring the success or failure of the communication process?



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## **UNIT 3: COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Understanding Communication Skills
  - 3.2 Reading
  - 3.3 Writing
  - 3.4 Listening
  - 3.5 Speaking
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This section focuses on the primary communication skills, namely, reading, writing, listening and speaking. Most failures or communication gaps exist because of a lack of understanding of the need for effective communication. Therefore, it is essential to discuss and explain the skills you need to develop to enable you to become a very effective communicator. Also, when you have excellent communication skills, you will be equipped to overcome the barriers to effective communication. A good understanding and deployment of communication skills are essential in your entire pursuit in life. It plays a role in a smooth family relationship, business deals and in interpersonal relationships.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)**

This unit is intended to enable you to identify the steps to become an effective communicator. At the end of this unit, you would also be expected to recognise the various elements of communication skills; determine the essential components of effective listening and explore the requirements of effective writing skills.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Hasson (2012: 1) says that “good communication skills make you interesting. They can help you connect with people, build friendships and develop relationships at work and home.” Are you worried about developing better communication skills? A lot of people are afraid and concerned. Part of your journey as a student is to work hard to improve

your communication skills and enjoy more exciting conversations. Liao (2019) provides useful tips on how you can easily improve your communication skills:

### **Eliminate Filler Words**

This can be achieved through deliberate and continuous practice. Exercise regularly to remove the filler and crutch words such as:

- Um
- Ah
- Er
- You know
- Like
- I mean
- So (starting a sentence)
- And (run-on sentences)
- Well
- Alright (beginning of a sentence)
- Long pauses (unintentional and in the middle of sentences)

Devito recommends ways to make your communication powerful:

- i. Avoid hesitations; they make you sound unprepared and uncertain.
- ii. Avoid uncertainty expressions; these communicate a lack of commitment, direction, and conviction.
- iii. Avoid over politeness; such forms signal your subordinate status.
- iv. Avoid disqualifiers (*I didn't read the entire article, but . . .*); they may call into question the validity of your statements.
- v. Avoid tag questions (questions that ask for agreement; *That was great, wasn't it?*); these may signal your own uncertainty.
- vi. Avoid slang and vulgar expressions; these usually signal low social class and little power.

When you successfully eliminate the above, your sentences become concise.

### **Improve Through Purposeful Training**

To refine any skill, you must put in the work. Therefore, to improve your communication (verbal and written) abilities, you need to practice speaking and writing. To enhance your writing expertise, you must write consistently. For further enhancement, do the following:

- Read books
- Expand your vocabulary

- Sharpen your grammar and sentence structures
- Study about writing

As for speaking, instead of using crutch words, replace with pauses. Take a moment to think of an answer. This way, you will sound more articulate and intelligent. Also, listen actively to others and identify what they are saying. This allows you to do the following:

- Read between the lines and recognise subtleties
- Formulate an eloquent response
- Make others feel heard

By being fully engaged in conversation, you give yourself the highest probability of creating a suitable response. To express your thoughts clearly, avoid jargon and use exact and appropriate words for your context. This way, you will be brief and concise.

### **Harness Social Awareness and Intelligence**

Your message is important, but what matters more is your delivery. Factors include:

- Nonverbal signals (body language, facial expression, hand gestures, etc.)
- Vocal tonality
- Eye contact

It is helpful to have a sense of humour and not take yourself too seriously. Once internalised, you can learn to relax during conversations. As a result, you express a composed body posture and a friendly demeanour. Even when the interaction isn't positive, you can still display cordial conduct despite others' lack of reciprocation. That's because you are always in control of your behaviours. Detaching yourself from any outcome, you can appreciate the person you are talking to. In addition, embodying honesty and humility, you can be open and welcome feedback.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Whether it is at work, home, or at the store, communication is a skill you must use everywhere you go. Therefore, it is paramount you have a firm grasp of it. Having the ability to discuss meaningfully with others will make you more persuasive and influential. Benefits may include the following:

- Persuading your partner to watch any movie of your choice
- Negotiating a raise or promotion
- Selling your ideas to your colleagues
- This superpower will lead to more success and happiness.
- Make a conscious effort to harness and master this important skill.

### 3.2 **READING**

Jahzeel (2018: np) defines reading as the “cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at the meaning.” Reading is an active process of understanding words, signs or symbols to create meaning. It is a mental process that develops from the readers' prior knowledge. It is also a thinking process that enables the reader to decode and process what is read. This is also in line with the Longman’s Dictionary of Applied Linguistic that reading is “perceiving a written text to understand its contents. This can be done silently (silent reading).” It also states reading as “saying a written text aloud (oral reading). This can be achieved with or without an understanding of the contents.”

#### **Importance of Reading to the Student**

Reading has been described as an indispensable thoroughfare of communication. Students cannot survive in their studies without reading. Reading, e.g. books, newspapers, journal articles are one of the most inexpensive sources of knowledge acquisition. Reading is one of the most influential and potent tools for personal development. Reading is wealthy and relevant to you, your family and society.

#### **Stimulates and Exercises the Brain**

Your brain will become dull and sleepy when you do not read. Imagine a farm that is not tended, weeds will overgrow and cover everywhere. Likewise, the brain. Reading stimulates and exercises the brain. It keeps the brain sharp, active and excellently activated. Reading sharpens the mind to think, understand, memorise and remember. When a supposed dull person begins to read, the dullness will soon be cleared and replaced with a sharp articulation of facts and ideas.

#### **Evokes Satisfaction**

There is no alternative to the satisfaction you get from reading. Remember, I said earlier that, reading is a powerful communication tool. When you read, a great deal of communication between you and the writers takes place. The reader derives great satisfaction from this. Effective readers develop a warm relationship with their books.

#### **Enlarges and enhances the mind**

The mind is empty and devoid of information and ideas without reading. The more you read, the more your mind is expanded and filled with knowledge and understanding. This invariably helps to improve your power of concentration, focus and thinking. By broadening your mind, your knowledge also is enriched. It sharpens your mind and induces analytical thinking. When your mind is enlarged, it gathers vocabularies from reading. Reading remains the primary source of building vocabularies and helps you to express yourself better. Why are so many people bereft of ideas? They do not read. They

spend time chasing shadow, following frivolities or dwelling on non-essentials that will eventually backfire on them.

### **Improves your writing skills**

No writer is not an avaricious reader. Reading boosts your ability to think, develop words and phrases and spurs you to write.

### **Reduces tension and Stress**

Effective reading changes lives and personalities in very dramatic ways. Martin Luther became a reformer by reading the Bible. Reading empowered him so much that he could challenge the then Papal power that was regarded as sovereign. People find solace in reading. Reading has transformed so many people from a state of despair and hopelessness to a state of courage and determination to face challenges with confidence. It helps to reduce stress and tensions and transports the reader to a dreamland, “far away from the real world” full of complexities.

### **Strategies to improve reading skill**

#### **Identify the purpose of reading**

Your reading must be directed at achieving the identified reasons or goals for doing so. Why do people read? They read for several reasons. One of the fundamental reasons for reading is utilitarian. Reading compulsorily to pass examinations. This is also called achievement reading. This is reading because you must. Reading in the developing countries is mainly utilitarian.

Interestingly, several senior academic fellows in our citadels of learning read-only for achievement purposes. They read to prepare for their lectures – for those who do that. They read to enable them to write, publish and be promoted. The reading ends when they have reached the position of Professor. Do you have Professors around you? Find out from them, the number of books they have read in the past six months. Find out also the kind of books they read.

Another reason for reading is escapist or recreational. This is reading for relaxation. Picking up a light reading material when you want to ease up or relax is escapist reading. There are several things people engage in when they want to unwind; reading light novels, magazines and newspapers is one of such activities to relax – recreational reading.

Others read for religious reasons. They read to understand their belief, identify with their convictions, to be accepted in their religious group or as an obligation in their faith. So many people read for religious reasons.

There is reading for social reasons. This is reading for the sake of reading. Reading to identify with a class; to be informed on the reigning trend; reading for the need to belong and display your status.

When your reason for reading is clearly identified, it will spur to more reading and help to improve your skills.

### **Develop an acceptable reading strategy**

To develop your reading skills, determine the reading strategy that works for you, motivates and encourages you to read. Select the reading strategies that help you to understand and comprehend your texts easily. When you read for achievement purposes, you might develop some mnemonics to help you remember what you read. Your reading strategies should be used flexibly and interchangeably.

### **Select relevant texts**

One major barrier to reading is the scarcity of relevant reading materials. When you do not have good and acceptable materials to read, your reading habits will become stunted. One of the first steps to improving your reading skills is to identify and select the documents relevant to you and your reasons for reading.

### **Develop the Habit of Journaling**

Develop the habit of recording essential points from your reading. Journaling can help you reach a wide range of goals, clear your head, make valuable connects between thoughts and buffer the effect of tiredness from reading. It helps you to build vocabularies, develop quotations and record useful ideas you may refer to in the future. A good habit of journaling will enhance your writing skills.

## **3.3 WRITING**

Writing is one of the most conventional means of communication. It is regarded as an expressive skill. It generally signifies the act of putting ideas, thoughts and information on paper or other devices using obvious signs, symbols or codes. Usually, writing accomplishes objectives, aim or purpose. Writing is a communication skill that is consciously learned, practised and developed. It works better with constant practice. Academic, scientific and professional writing requires a deal of effort and consistent hard work. Writing works with reading. You will be a poor writer if you have an unfortunate reading habit. Writing is tedious. Good writing must be coherent and meaningful. This means that sentences and paragraphs are logically and sequentially connected. Writing is



one of the most potent means to express ideas. The power of ideas and thoughts is expressed through writing. Effective writing requires thinking, creativity and proper articulation of your thoughts. Also, it requires adequate knowledge of language and techniques of writing. Without these, you cannot write skilfully, logically and excellently.

### **3.3.1 Techniques for Developing Effective Writing Skills**

#### **Tailor the Language to the audience**

Every effective writing is addressed to a specific group of readers or audience. The audience must be kept in mind while writing. This means that the writer must understand the audience the material is meant for. The readers must occupy the centre of your writing. To communicate effectively to the audience, you must tailor the language to them. The readers' knowledge, level, feelings and orientation are essential in the choice of language in writing. The use of language in writing for the literary audience is different from the science readers. Every area, level and speciality have its technicalities. You must consciously consider this when you are writing.

Similarly, the writer should use words and language that convey the same meaning to the readers. You should avoid vague and ambiguous use of words. You should also avoid sweeping generalisations in your writing. Study your words and language carefully and their precise meaning. Words that convey double or multiple meanings should be scarcely and carefully used.

#### **Use Familiar Words**

Your writing will be judged strange if the words of the text are foreign or unfamiliar. Writing is an effective communication tool. To communicate with your readers, it is important to use familiar words that are prevalent in everyday communication. Your writing might be turned into jargon if it is filled with complex and challenging words that are not easy to understand by your readers. Your writing should communicate clearly and meaningfully to the specific audience. However, technical, professional and complex words that fit into the subject and connect with the audience are recommended in every professional writing. For instance, you cannot write on economics and use the journalist's newspaper words and language. Words that are suitable in the subject, although technical and complex are still preferable. Effective writing utilises actual words that communicate clearly and sharply. Avoid the use of abstract words and vocabularies which most writers introduce to impress. You do not write to impress; it is to communicate.

#### **Use short sentences**

The shorter your sentences in writing, the better. Writing short sentences makes writing simpler. Generally, the longer your sentences, the higher the likelihood of

misunderstanding or misrepresentation. Writing in short sentences communicate better than long sentences that are most times difficult to understand. Long sentences should be used when there is no alternative way of shortening them or when converting the writing to short sentences will alter the meaning. You should deliberately avoid disjointed sentences. Ensure your sentences belong together.

Writing is the communication skill that enables you to record your ideas and thoughts in a permanent format. Those who have effective writing skill preserve fundamental thoughts and ideas about life, society, relationships, career and developments. The less you write, the ephemeral our life becomes; you will be light-headed and easily tossed about; you will lack substance in the scheme of things. There is a measure your brain can store information. Writing helps you to provide an intelligent, meaningful and excellent backup.

Therefore, effective writing skill is beneficial for the following reasons:

- i. When you are confronted with conveying very complex information, writing becomes essential. The reader can refer to the written text severally until the content becomes easy to comprehend and understand.
- ii. It helps you create and preserve a permanent record for present use and future reference.
- iii. Sometimes, to leave a *footprint on the sands of time*, when you are with a very large audience, writing your ideas and thoughts is preferable. This is mainly in situations where your audience is geographically separated or in a rural setting where video messages may not easily be accessible. This is also applicable when it is not possible to physically interact with the audience. It will also help you to convey the same message to the people in different places.

### 3.4 LISTENING

*“Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we do not listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what’s behind the words.”*

— Roy T. Bennett

Listening is a common term that many may find difficult to define. What is listening to you? Schmitz (2013: 260) defines listening as “the learned process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating and responding to verbal and non-verbal messages.”

This definition indicates that listening is a process which involves receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating and responding.

Listening is a skill that is often overlooked. Joshi (2017: 30) says that a lot of persons have good hearing but not good listening skills. People play down the place of listening in everyday communication. Interestingly, you spend more time listening than reading, writing or speaking. Barker (2009: 3) writes that the communication time of an average person is distributed thus:

Writing	9%
Reading	16%
Talking	30%
Listening	45%

The research shows that adults spend about 45 percent of their time listening, which is more than any other activity in the communication process. There are also situations that warrant you to spend more than 45% of the time listening. On the average, workers spend 55 percent of their workday listening, and managers spend about 63 percent of their day listening (Hargie, 2001: 177). In whatever situation or circumstance, you may be involved in, listening is a principal means through which you learn new information. “Listening to what others say about you helps you to develop an accurate self-concept, which can help you more strategically communicate for identity needs to project to others your desired self. Overall, improving your listening skills can help you become a better student, better relational partner, and more successful professional” (Schmitz, 2013: 260).

Take time and think for a moment, do you listen carefully to what people tell you? It is generally believed that most human beings hear only a quarter of what is being said (Barker, 2009: 3). Listening is an essential part of communication. It is a skill that requires you to pay attention to discussions, developments, prevailing circumstances to enable you to gather relevant information, ideas and fresh perspectives on issues. When you develop effective listening skill, you build long-lasting relationships, trust and confidence in others. Like any other communication skill, you can cultivate, develop and polish your listening skills with constant practice and efforts. Effective listening skill is one attribute of a team player. Members of a team – group discussion, family, workplace, etc. must learn to communicate effectively. “Listening is an essential skill for making and keeping relationships. If you are a good listener, you will notice that others are drawn to you. Friends confide in you and your friendships deepen. Success comes a little easier because you hear and understand people; you know what they want and what hurts or irritates them. You get “lucky” breaks because people appreciate you and want you around” (McKay, Davis & Fanning, 2009: 1). You miss important information when you do not listen well. Listening is a difficult skill that requires a great of conscious efforts to

learn. Yates (2010: 1) writes that “one of the basic building blocks of communication--and one of the most difficult skills to learn and practice--is effective listening.”

Does being quiet while another is talking constitute listening? Effective listening entails the following:

- i. Being calm and attentive
- ii. Understanding the subject of discussion
- iii. Learning from the discussion
- iv. Quiet and attentive in order to give help
- v. Enjoying the company

McKay, Davis & Fanning (2009: 17) outline four steps to effective listening:

### **Active Listening**

Do you know that some people listen like a corpse – quiet, still and no response. Listening is an active process which requires your involvement and participation. Being passive and absorbing without response leaves the communicator unsettled or unsure if the message is understood or what level of understanding is achieved. Active listening makes an effective collaborator in the communication process. Active listening involves three aspects: paraphrasing, clarifying and giving feedback. Paraphrasing makes you active in trying to understand what is being conveyed. It means to state in your own words what you understand is being said. When you read texts, you need to paraphrase. When you listen you also need to paraphrase. This makes it essential and necessary to understand the basics of paraphrasing.

Active listening also involves clarifying to enable you to get the picture better. It means asking questions, seeking for more information to fully understand what is being said. “clarifying helps you sharpen your listening focus so that you hear more than vague generalities.”

Active listening thrives on feedback. When you listen and understand what is discussed, your feedback indicates your involvement, understanding and provides the partner who talked the basis into checking your level of understanding. Feedback offers a forum to share your thoughts or feeling or knowledge of the subject discussed. Giving feedback speaks a lot about your listening skill. Feedback helps the speaker to assess the weight of his communication. It provides room for correction and helps resolve misconceptions. It’s a chance to weave ideas together – yours and the speakers. Feedback has to be “immediate, honest and supportive.”

### **Listening with Empathy**

Listening with empathy requires you listening with concern. You put yourselves in the shoes of the one you are listening to, remembering that you share the same struggles. “Every second of the day, you are trying to survive both physically and psychologically. Every thought, every choice, every movement is designed to preserve your existence.” Listening with empathy is paying rapt attention and accommodating the shades of the opinion of the speaker.

### **Listening with Openness**

A good listener listens with openness without judging or finding faults. When you listen with bias, indifference, you are likely to be selective in what you hear, thereby filtering out essential details and misjudging every idea or thought portrayed. You gratify yourself by being unduly judgmental, critical and uncomplimentary.

### **Listening with Awareness**

Listening effectively entails a balanced check of what is being said with what you already know. “You compare what is being said with your knowledge of history, people, and the way things are.” You listen with an honest assessment of the facts projected, the sensibility in the message and be ready to clarify and provide feedback to help correct any discrepancy. Although you should not be unduly critical or judgmental, you should not also “settle for an incomplete or confusing message.”

Please note that to communicate effectively as a student, career professional, husband or wife, you need to learn some useful approaches and techniques for effective listening.

### **Misconceptions about listening**

So many people wrongly believe that those who listen actively are weak. The general notion is that those who are talkative are better than the quiet, calm and silent persons. Similarly, they believe as a good speaker, you do not need to be a listener. Those who are talkative without listening to others become unpopular easily. Communication being a two-way process most often requires speaking and listening. The efficacy of your communication is directly proportional to your ability to listen carefully to others. That is why good communicators know already that good listening is the key and focuses on active listening (Ravichadran, 2019: 3).

It is a misconception that will result in miscommunication if you think listening is not a skill that should be learned, developed and cultivated. Failures in communication usually arise when people give in to one form of misconception or the other. Which do you consider more important: speaking or listening? Several people think talking is more important than listening. This makes them talk more and listen less. They are mistaken. It is easier to talk

than listen. To be a good speaker, you must first be a good listener. Listening is an active process which involves the mind and consumes energy.

According to Ravichadran, (2019: 4) excellent communication requires good listening and summarises the link between the two:

Both listening and speaking are top skills for winning through job interviews and group discussions. A person with poor listening skills will not listen properly to the questions in the interview and give irrelevant answers, owing to which s/he will be rejected. In group discussions, marks are given for active listening. Listening is the “receiving” part of communication. And listening is all about receiving information through your ears and eyes! Active listeners, besides paying full attention to verbal communication, keenly observe the nonverbal cues for grasping the message completely. Good listening is an active, integrated communication skill that demands energy and know-how. It is purposeful, powerful and productive. An excellent communicator is essentially a good listener. S/he modulates various verbal/nonverbal symbols which she displays depending on the feedback s/he gathers through simultaneous listening. Research shows that effective communication involves 50% more listening than talking. So, it is more important to realise that listening is not just paying attention to the other person’s words but also to his tone, facial expressions, and body language. In a highly fast-paced technological world, sadly, people are impatient to listen to others completely. This aspect is poignantly satirised by Simon and Garfunkel in their famous “Sounds of Silence” in the following lines: *And in the naked light, I saw Ten thousand people Maybe more People talking without speaking People hearing without listening.*

Have you noticed that generally, you spend much of our time hearing other people, but not necessarily listening to what is being said? A lot of people you assume are listening to what others are saying may be daydreaming, formulating responses before hearing the whole point, and interrupting to ask questions or refute the ideas of the speaker.

As I end this segment, please note that to be an effective listener, you must remove distractions while listening to others. Do not interrupt a conversation if you agree with the viewpoint of the presenter/speaker. You require a calm, quiet and calculated disposition to maintain clarity of thought. It is essential also to take notes or jot down important points. Do not hesitate to ask questions at the right time to show you understand the subject and that you are genuinely involved in the discussion.

## **Categories of Listeners**

Ravichandran (2019: 2) exhaustively discusses the different groups of listeners. He listed the different types of listeners as active listeners, passive listeners, non-listeners and evaluative listeners. His thorough discussion is reproduced below:

### **Active Listeners**

As the term implies, active listeners involve themselves actively in the communication process by keenly listening not only to the message but also to the way it is being delivered. They focus on the content as well the delivery. This means that they will take note of the verbal content along with its nonverbal subtexts. They will not hesitate to seek clarifications, ask leading questions, show their approval by nodding the head, and summarise to indicate that they fully follow the speaker. In this way, the active listeners are quite sensitive towards the feelings of others, and they understand the mood of the audience. They show empathy and make the audience, or the other person cared for. Once the audience gets the feeling that they are being cared for, they will devote themselves entirely to the communication process. Once there is mutual involvement, there will be a hundred percent success in terms of communication. The message sent will be received correctly, and feedback is given favourably. So, it leads to a win-win situation and causes effective communication. Contrarily, if the audience would sense that the speaker is insensitive towards their feelings, they would remain cold and distant.

### **Passive Listeners**

Passive listeners exhibit precisely the opposite behaviouristic traits of active listeners. They pay attention only to partial message and lack sensitivity to the nuances, inner meanings, nonverbal subtexts involved in communication. They allow someone to speak, without interrupting or seeking clarifications. They do not make notes, nod their head in approval, maintain eye contact and keep themselves idle. Passive “listening,” is hearing not listening! Since passive listeners keep their minds closed, communication with them is futile and incomplete.

### **Non-listeners**

The non-listeners do not listen to all because they are genuinely disinterested in the subject. These people pretend to follow the speaker while they are preoccupied with something else. So, they will fake attention, but they could easily be recognised by their blank stare, impatient and nervous mannerisms. They might be suffering from the rigidity of thinking and egotism. Their complete insensitivity and insensible nature make them incapable of understanding others. They do not even try to hear what the other person is saying. You will find no listeners among authority figures who will do most of the talking and will not let their sub-ordinates easily express their ideas. Although, they

frequently interrupt by saying “I understand,” and “I know,” they do not know anything or understand the subject!

### **Marginal Listeners**

Impatient to listen to the main ideas, marginal listeners pay superficial attention and are interested only in the bottom line. They merely hear words but fail to grasp their meanings. They do not go to the deeper level in arguments. They use external distractions to excuse themselves from conversations. They will not have the patience to sit through complex technical presentations and jump to findings and conclusions. It is risky to communicate with marginal listeners because they are not focused on the main ideas and often misunderstand their import.

### **Evaluative Listeners**

Evaluative listeners assess the verbal content based on words, not paralinguistic or nonverbal cues. Generally, they use logic to understand the content; hence, they distance themselves emotionally from the subject. As a result, they do not show empathy or sensitivity to the speaker. They are mostly prejudiced and judgmental as they presume the meaning before the speaker completes a sentence. Now, you will be surprised to know that most of us are evaluative listeners! If we observe ourselves, most of the times, we behave like evaluative listeners. Without paying full attention to the content, we always evaluate what somebody is trying to tell us. Those of us in a professional environment, assess the message in terms of its usefulness and mentally reject the speaker even before the speech is delivered to us.

Having discussed the various types of listeners, you may wonder which type you should aspire to become. Obviously, you should become an active listener. All effective communicators, for that matter, are active listeners.

### **Barriers to Effective Listening**

**Language:** To understand a speaker, you must understand the presenter very well. Weak language proficiency and lack of adequate vocabulary are significant barriers to effective listening and hinder active participation in the communication process.

**Disinterestedness:** Lack of interest in any lecture, discussion or presentation will limit your level of understanding and participation.

**Negative attitude towards the speaker:** The listener’s mindset can result in poor listening. If there is any resentment or hatred towards the speaker or disapproval of the topic of the presentation, there would be poor listening and distortion and



reconstruction of the speaker's ideas. When the listener tries to undermine the speaker's viewpoints, a barrier to effective listening is automatically created.

**Deep-rooted beliefs:** When the listener has cultural or religious beliefs that are firmly rooted, the mind will also be sealed to new ideas and fresh viewpoints. Entrenched beliefs as a result of cultural or religious convictions act as barriers to the process of effective communication. Deep-rooted beliefs lead to superficial listening, distortion or disagreement with the speaker's ideas and thoughts.

### 3.5 Speaking

Speaking is an act of expressing thoughts and feelings in speech. It is an art that requires the speaker to know what to say and how to say it. According to Joshi (2017: 31) in speaking, both the content and manner of presentation are important. "A wrong word here and there and/or an unpleasant tone could cause irreparable damage." To speak effectively, the speaker must understand the subject and know the audience. This is irrespective of whether you are talking to an individual, a small group or a large gathering. This subtopic - speaking is discussed in Module 3 of this course material.

#### **Techniques for Improving Communication Skills**

We have discussed communication as a skill which you can develop, cultivate and improve on. Generally, every skill demands specific techniques to improve on it. The Surgeon is trained to be one and practices to be a Consultant. The training is one stage. The practice is another. Strategies and techniques are important in advancing from whatever stage or level you may be. Follow these techniques to improve your communication skills and the result would be rewarding:

#### **Cultivate your Mind Deliberately**

A lot of people talk while they think or talk before, they think. The result is that they say meaningless things that are poorly assessed by others, and therefore become nervous when they must comment on issues. When you talk while you think, it reduces the credibility of what you say. Learn to build your mind to be still, to listen more and respond thoughtfully. Like the farmer who cultivates the fallow farmland to sow, develop your mind carefully and deliberately to build credibility in responses. The advice of Barnard (2018) is important when engaging in conversation, keep the following formula in mind and reply in a short, clear and concise way: think, breathe and speak. You should refrain from impulsive speaking. Be clear and understand what exactly you want to say. Take the time to train your mind.

#### **Train Your Listening Skills**

In developing effective communication skills, there is no substitute for active listening. Listening as discussed earlier is more than hearing. Active listening means you listen to understand the message and carefully reflect and think before responding. If you listen attentively, you will be able to provide a thoughtful response. A man once said: “listen more than you talk.”

### **Develop Your Voice Perfectly**

Your voice is a powerful tool in developing your communication skill. You can magnet or repel the audience through your voice. The important content of your message could be distorted through your voice. So many cultures have a great influence on people’s voices. Your voice can be trained; it can be modulated, and the pitch regulated. This will help you to eliminate any unfavourable linguistic habits you may have developed. Taking this into consideration will affect the development of your communication skill. When you have a well-regulated and modulated voice, your audience will be excited and enthused and therefore may be easily persuaded.

### **Breathe Deeply to Communicate Effectively**

Barnard (2018: np) writes that “every time you think, you breathe. Every time you speak, you breathe.” The fact that we breathe subconsciously means we often do not think about it when speaking. When we get nervous, our breathing becomes shallow. Maximising your breath and filling your lungs when speaking is very important for building effective communication skills. It makes you sound influential. Remember to pause for emphasis, pause to take in a breath and pause to allow your message to sink in.

### **Watch Videos of Experts**

This is indispensable in your journey to developing effective communication skills. Watch and listen to online videos of motivational speakers and experts in communication. Watch the videos below and take note of the speakers’ tone of voice, how they present themselves, the speed at which they speak and gesticulations.



1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAnw168huqA&feature=youtu.be>

2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cpc-t-Uwv1I&feature=youtu.be>

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

To recap the main ideas discussed in this unit, remember that you need to work hard to develop your communication skills. Regular exercise and practice are necessary to eliminate filler and crutch words that diminish the effectiveness of your communication. You must develop the strategies to improve your reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. They are the tenets of success in your journey.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Reading, writing, listening and speaking are skills you use regularly. Therefore, the success of your routine duties as a student, a career professional or in filial relationships lie on how effective you develop these communication skills. To communicate effectively, you should pay equal importance to a proper integration of reading, listening, writing and speaking. A writer said: “The more one reads, the more one knows, and the more one knows, the more one writes; the more one writes, the more one reflects; the more one reflects, the more one listens; the more one listens, the more one learns; the more one learns, the more one speaks; the more one speaks, the more one communicates.” Study, learn and master the techniques for improving your communication skills and be a master of the art.



*What is the difference between listening and hearing? Apply the following to differentiate between listening and hearing: reception, selection, organisation, assimilation, interpretation, evaluation and response.*

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. what is the act of putting ideas, thoughts and information on paper using sign, symbols and codes?
2. What is an active process of understanding words, or symbols to create meaning?
3. which category of listeners pay attention only to partial message and are not sensitive to inner meanings.?
4. which category of listeners pay supercial attention and are only interested in the bottom line?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 4: COMMUNICATION FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to communication for academic purposes which is otherwise referred to as scholarly communications. There are different forms of communication as you are already aware of. Communication for academic purposes has its tenets and principles. It is imperative to understand what is expected of you as part of your training and preparation to be a scholar. This unit brings to you the basics of communication for academic purposes.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)**

This unit is designed to help you build on the skills required for written academic work. It will prepare you to write for various academic purposes. At the end of this unit, you are required to determine what communication for academic purposes entails; identify the tenets for scholarly communications; apply the principles of carrying out research online and locating materials from the library and explore the value of Microsoft Word in scholarly communications.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

As a student, it is not difficult to understand the relevance of communication in your academic pursuits. Communication is the heart and the lifeblood of every academic journey. Effective communication skills are tied to academic success. Studies show that poor listening skills contribute significantly to students' failure in the first year at the university. Also, students who take a communication course report more confidence in their communication abilities, and these students have higher grade point averages and are less likely to drop out of school. Much of what you do in your academic pursuits—whether it is the interpersonal interactions with your course mates and lecturer, individual or group presentations, or listening—are essential in building or adding to a foundation of excellent communication skills and knowledge that you can carry through to other contexts (Zabava & Wolvin, 1993). Different settings require different communication modes that tally with the environment. When you interact with your friends and colleagues in the class, you are more informal than when you interact with your lecturers. Academic communication or often known as scholarly communication, “refers to methods of communication that are highly structured and generally used in educational settings. Academic communication is sometimes used to refer to the ways in which information, ideas or reports are distributed among scholars. You can find academic

information disseminated in such places as scientific journals, newsgroups, online course management systems and research libraries (Learn.org, 2019).

The prevalent and permeating use of the Internet in every sector of society has also influenced academic communications. The information and technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have facilitated significant advances in academic communications. It has widened the avenue and dynamics of sharing scholarly information globally. Similarly, it has also introduced complications and complexities in safeguarding academic outputs. The connectedness to one another has increased the risk of plagiarism as much as monitoring plagiarism has become easier. Therefore, proper acknowledgement of sources is a major adjunct to academic communications.

One of the values of this course is to expose you to what is required in academic communications; it is designed to equip you with the ways academics communicate and learn to improve your communication skills. It is imperative to learn how to write in formal and scholarly tone to captivate your readers who could be any member of the academic community. Scholarly communications require high-level communication skills. The core academic activities of educational institutions such as research papers, reports, book reviews, literature reviews, term papers, thesis and general academic argument require formulating your ideas and disseminating them in very high standards. Therefore, there is no substitute for learning how to communicate academically.

In the course of your studies, you will be expected to write essays, research reports and theses, and give presentations on a variety of areas. This is not going to be easy. The process of developing a thesis proposal, preparing term papers, presenting research proposals or reports, building a logical argument, following bibliographic citations are aimed at building your skill for academic communications. It may be tedious, rigorous and demanding but helpful in preparing you to join the scholarly community.

### **3.2 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

In the tertiary environment, there are different types of communication. In each type, you are required to apply the tenets and write or communicate effectively. According to Horkoff (2018) part of managing your education is communicating well with others at your institution. This may range from simple writing such as email to your lecturer to explain why you have not submitted your assignment to complex thesis preparation for your final graduation.

The table below summarises the different types of writing for academic purposes. It lists the minor, less formal, formal and major categories of writing for academic purposes.

Type	Description	Example
Personal response paper	Expresses and explains your response to a reading assignment, a provocative quote, or a specific issue; may be very brief (sometimes a page or less) or more in depth	For a labour management course, students watch and write about videos of ineffective management/staff interactions.
Summary	Restates the main points of a longer passage objectively and in your own words	For a psychology course, students write a one-page summary of an article about a man suffering from short-term memory loss.
Persuasive/ position paper	States and defends your position on an issue (often a controversial issue)	For a criminal justice course, students state their positions on capital punishment using research to support their argument.
Problem-solution paper	Presents a problem, explains its causes, and proposes and explains a solution	For an emergency management course, a student presents a plan for implementing a crisis communications strategy.
Critique/ literary analysis	States a thesis about a literary work and develops the thesis with evidence from the work and, sometimes, from additional sources	For a literature course, a student analyses a short story and how it relates to the field of criminology OR compares multiple works by analysing commonalities and differences.
Research/ literature review	Sums up available research findings on a topic	For a course in criminology, a student reviews the past 20 years of research on whether violence in television and movies is correlated with violent behaviour.
Case study or case analysis	Investigates a person, group, or event in depth for the purpose of drawing a larger conclusion from the analysis	For a health science course, a student writes a case study demonstrating the successful treatment of a patient experiencing congestive heart failure.
Laboratory report	Presents a laboratory experiment, including the hypothesis, methods of data collection, results, and conclusions	For a psychology course, a group of students presents the results of an experiment in which they explored whether sleep deprivation produced memory deficits in lab rats.



Research journal	Records a student's ideas and findings during a long-term research project	For a capstone project, a student maintains a journal throughout a semester-long research project within the local fire department.
Research paper	Presents a thesis and supports it with original research and/or other researchers' findings on the topic; can take several different formats depending on the subject area	For a criminology course, a student chooses a topic/thesis on de-escalation techniques and conducts background research on existing evidence then creates his or her own research tool to measure the effectiveness of such techniques.

Source: opentextbc.ca

### 3.3 STRATEGIES FOR GATHERING RELIABLE INFORMATION

Your research and writing begin from a successful choice of a topic. This is a hurdle for so many students. Half the hurdle is crossed when you choose a researchable and meaningful topic. Several students make mistakes in this area; to impress, they choose a topic that is vague, dysfunctional, not researchable and meaningless. Sometimes, they waste time working on such topic and eventually discard it. Therefore, choosing a topic is an essential step you should take seriously. When choosing your topic, you must consider the purpose and audience your writing is meant for.

When you have chosen your topic, the next stage is to begin your research. This stage also has its hassles. It can be exciting as well as challenging and discouraging. To succeed, you need to learn how to locate sources efficiently.

Remember our discussion on information overload which is characteristic of this present-day technological advancement particularly the rise of online media. This means that as a student you have countless sources of information available at your fingertips. The question is how do ascertain which source is reliable? This section highlights the strategies for critical evaluation of sources.

#### Primary and Secondary Sources

In scholarly communications, sources of information are commonly classified into primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are regarded as the direct, first-hand sources of information. This gives the impression that primary sources are sources from the point of origin. Some examples historical documents, research articles, data from diaries or letters etc.

Secondary sources on the other hand, are the second-hand sources which are derived from primary sources. Secondary sources interpret, analyse and discuss, information from primary sources to produce a second level of information source. Secondary sources are information are considered one step removed from the primary source of information. Biographical books, documentaries, magazine and newspaper articles are examples of secondary sources. Most academic writings combine primary and secondary sources simultaneously. The technology today has widened effective search for sources of information to include print and electronic sources.

### **Locating Print Resources**

Most often academic writings begin with print sources. Although today, so many lazy students do not want to take the steps to locate print sources. They want to rely on electronic sources. Please note that so many standard scholarly academic texts do not have electronic versions yet. Therefore, do not limit yourself to electronic sources. The table below indicates various forms of print sources you would find in the university library.

Resource Type	Description	Examples
<b>Reference works</b>	Reference works provide a summary of information about topics. Almanacs, encyclopaedias, atlases, medical reference books, and scientific abstracts are examples of reference works. Reference books are to be consulted in the library. Note that reference works are many steps removed from original primary sources and are often brief, so they should be used only as a starting point when you gather information.	The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2015 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Encyclopaedia Britannica
<b>Nonfiction books</b>	Nonfiction books provide in-depth coverage of a topic. Trade books, biographies, and how-to guides are usually written for a general audience. Scholarly books and scientific studies are usually written for an audience that has specialised knowledge of a topic.	The 30-Day Low-Carb Diet Solution Fundamentals of Nutrition
<b>Periodicals and news sources</b>	These sources are published at regular intervals—daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Newspapers, magazines, and academic journals are examples. Some periodicals provide articles on subjects of general interest, while others are more specialized.	The Globe and Mail Maclean's <i>magazine</i> CMAJ, Canadian Medical Association Journal, Library Literature
<b>Government publications</b>	Federal, provincial, and local government agencies publish information on a variety of topics. Government publications include reports, legislation, court documents, public records, statistics, studies, guides, programs, and forms.	Statistics Canada Juristat
<b>Business and nonprofit publications</b>	Businesses and nonprofit organizations produce publications designed to market a product, provide background about the organization, provide information on topics connected to the organization, or promote a cause. These publications include reports, newsletters, advertisements, manuals, brochures, and other print documents.	A company's instruction manual explaining how to use a specific software program A news release published by UNICEF Canada

Source: opentextbc.ca

Some of these resources also available in electronic format. To begin your search for print resources, it is essential to identify your keywords – major terms and concepts as lead search words. This is where the library plays a significant role. Consult the

university library through the library catalogue or Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Make use of periodical indexes and databases (electronic databases can lead you to valuable print resources); and consult the reference librarian



*Visit the Library of Congress's website at <http://id.loc.gov/authorities> and conduct searches on a few terms related to your topic*

Online databases are indispensable in academic writing of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most university libraries have one type of database or the other. The common and frequently used databases include Academic Search Premier, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, ProjectMUSE, MEDLINE, Library and Information Science Abstracts.



*Visit your library's website databases would be useful for your research. Print out or bookmark your search results.*

### 3.4 REFERENCING STYLE FOR ACADEMIC COMMUNICATIONS

Academic communications are highly regulated according to certain international standards. One of the controls in academic writing is the citation of sources. Citation is something that happens in one form or the other in your daily life although you may not realise it. For instance, in the course of your discussion, you have once said, 'I heard in the AIT news today, that the Federal government has approved automatic scholarship for all students in tertiary institutions.' Or that the news on Channels says one pastor has stepped aside for being accused of rape. This is it. By stating where you got your information, you are citing your source though casually. The citation gives credibility to what you say; protects you on what is said; and gives credit to the originator of the information.

In academic communications, it is mandatory to correctly, truthfully and consistently include the details of the information you have referred to in your assignment, essays, research reports, research proposals and theses. When you fail to do this, you are clearly attributing to yourself as the originator of the fact, idea or information. When you read books, you gather information, ideas or knowledge which you may reconstruct and produce your own idea or thought but acknowledge the source of information in the form of citation. The details of the citation are arranged logically at the end of your work and titled references. This list usually includes every bibliographic detail of each source you consulted, such as the author(s), date of publication of the item, title, place of publication, and publisher.

In academic writing, citation provides the proof and support of your research process and helps you to avoid plagiarism. The negative consequences of plagiarism can be very devastating but can be prevented. This section of the course is designed to help you prevent the lethal effects of plagiarism.

It is vital to note the recommended style in your department or the discipline you might be writing for. Consistency is important in your chosen style. You must never combine different styles in one document.

### Citation Styles

There are several predefined citation styles used in academic communications. The different styles set out how to prepare your citation. The most popular is the Modern Languages (MLA) Association format, American Psychological Association (APA) format, Chicago Manual of style and the Harvard referencing style. Each discipline or department prefer one style over the other. Sometimes, a style is recommended throughout the university.

### American Psychological Association Style

This is commonly used as a writing style and format for citing sources, especially in the behavioural and social sciences. The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is contained in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. It provides examples for the general format for research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes and the reference page. Although the APA style is prevalent in the behavioural and social sciences, it is also widely used by hundreds of other scientific journals in the medical and other public health professions, in many textbooks and in academia (Wikipedia).

Reference type	Template	Example
Journal article	Author, A., & Author, B. (year). Title of the article. <i>Journal Title</i> , Volume, page range. DOI	Schmidt, F. L., & Oh, I.-S. (2016). The crisis of confidence in research findings in psychology: Is lack of replication the real problem? Or is it something else? <i>Archives of Scientific Psychology</i> , 4, 32–37. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000029">https://doi.org/10.1037/arc0000029</a>
Whole book	Author, A., & Author, B. (year). <i>Title of the book</i> . DOI/URL/Publisher location: Publisher Name.	Brown, B. (2010). <i>The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you are supposed to be and embrace who you are</i> . Center City, MN: Hazelden.
Edited book	Author, A., & Author, B. (year). Title of chapter.	Singh, A. A., Hwahng, S. J., Chang, S. C., White, B. (2017). Affirmative counselling

chapter	In E. Editor & A. Editor (Eds.), <i>Title of book</i> (pp. xx-xx). DOI/URL/Publisher location: Publisher Name.	with trans/gender-variant people of colour. In A. Singh & L. M. Dickey (Eds.), <i>Affirmative counselling and psychological practice with transgender and gender nonconforming clients</i> (pp. 41–68). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/14957-003">https://doi.org/10.1037/14957-003</a>
Website	Author. (year). Title of page. Retrieved Date, from <a href="http://xxxxxxx">http://xxxxxxx</a>	American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Divisions. Retrieved October 28, 2018, from <a href="http://www.apa.org/about/division/">http://www.apa.org/about/division/</a>

Source: Wikipedia

### Modern Languages Association Style

The modern Languages Association (MLA) style is common in the arts and humanities, particularly in the United States of America (USA). The MLA style is contained in the MLA Handbook (8th ed., 2016). The Association claims that the MLA style “has been widely adopted for classroom instruction and used worldwide by scholars, journal publishers, and academic and commercial presses.”

**Books** (MLA Guide section 5.5.2): Format:

*Author's lastname, Author's first name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date. Format. (date accessed if electronic).*

Example:

Donald, Rex. Introduction to Economics. Lagos: Oxford University Press, 2019.

#### **Print.**

*If there is an editor and no author, list by the editor's name and add: , ed.*

Example: Marshall, John, ed. Oral Literature and Politics in Africa. London: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

*If there is more than one author, add a comma and the other names in first name, lastname order:*

Example: Duke, A.B., and J. Tanko. The Madness of Kuyata: An Introduction to English Literature. Ibadan: Spectrum, 2002.

**Articles from Journals** (MLA Handbook Section 5.4):

Format: *Author's last name, Author's firstname. "Title of Article." Title of Journal volume.*

*number (date): pages. Format. Database name if applicable. Date Month Year accessed if electronic.*

Example: Greg, Woli. "The Beauty of Poetry." *Literary Criticism* 18.1 (1984):1-39.

## **Harvard Style**

The Harvard style is very similar to APA. Where APA is primarily used in the USA, Harvard referencing style is commonly used in the UK and Australia and is recommended for use in the humanities. The Harvard referencing style has two types: in-text citations found in the main content of the essay and contain very little bibliographical information, and the reference list, which is included at the end of the essay or report and contains full bibliographic details of each source used in the work.

## **Books**

### **Citations for books with one author:**

Surname, first initial. (Year). *Title*. Edition (if not the first edition of the book). City of publication: Publisher, e.g.

Soyinka, W. (1994). *The man died*. Ibadan: Vintage.

Soyinka, W. (1997). *The open sore of a continent*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

### **Citations for books with two or three authors:**

Surname, first initial., Surname, first initial., and Surname, first initial. (Year). *Title*. City of publication: Publisher.

Adegbite, K., Ogbe, J., and Ubaji, S. (2008). *Nigeria in a sorry state*. Abeokuta: Vikas.

Rilwan, A., Cosmos, M. and Uba, A. (2012). *Exporting cocoa from Nigeria*. Ilorin: Veras.

### **Citations for books with four or more authors:**

If a book has four or more authors, only the first author's name should be listed in-text followed by 'et al.', meaning 'and others'. However, all authors should be listed in the reference list in the order they are credited in the original work.

Surname, first initial., Surname, first initial., Surname, first initial., and Surname, first initial. (Year). *Title*. City of publication: Publisher.

Yusuf, A., Oke, S., Debola, H., and Sani, K. (2008). *Communication skills*. Zaria: Guwon Press.

### **Citations for a chapter in an edited book:**

In a book of reading, you cite the chapter consulted and page range (pp.) of the chapter and the edition.

Last name, first initial. (Year). Chapter title. In: Editor's name/s (ed/s) *Book Title*. Edition. City of publication: Publisher. Page/s.

Cole, R. (2012). *Politics and economy in small nations*. In: Richard, R., ed., *The Fall of Nations*. 1st ed. Kaduna: Yaliam Press, pp. 43-62.

### **Citations for Print Journals**

Last name, First initial. (Year). *Article Title*. Journal name, Volume (Issue), Page/s.

Lawal, G. (2004). *Scholarly Communications in Tertiary Institutions*. Journal of Communications, Volume 3 (2), pp. 2-8.

### **The Chicago Manual of Style**

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) generally referred to as Chicago is a style published by the University of Chicago Press. It is in the 17<sup>th</sup> edition which prescribes writing and citation styles used in publishing. It is widely used in the United States because it focuses more on American English. Like other citation styles, CMOS also has two parts: in-text citation and reference list.

When you write your essays, pay attention to the style recommended by the lecturer or the department. Today, there are several citation generators that generate citations in whatever recommended format.

## **3.5 THE MICROSOFT WORD IN ACADEMIC COMMUNICATIONS**

In academic communications, you engage in large volume creation, editing and printing of documents. The Microsoft Word is a contemporary powerful word processor that helps you to create, edit and print documents. It is the most ubiquitous word-processing application on the market; it's intuitive even for the most technologically illiterate computer users and is backed by the powerful Microsoft Office suite (Dashevsky & Cohen, 2019). It has become a tool of *What You See Is What You Get* (WYSIWYG) which shows you exactly what would print on your final document. It is a full-featured document processor with advanced features that includes (Beal, 2019).



**Grammar checking:** Identifies sentences, paragraphs, and punctuation that does not appear to meet commonly recognised rules of grammar.

**Footnotes and cross-references:** Automates the numbering and placement of footnotes and enables you to easily cross-reference other sections of the document.

**Automated lists:** Automatically creates bulleted or numbered lists, including multi-level outlines.

**Graphics:** Allows you to embed illustrations, graphs, and possibly even videos into a document.

**Headers, footers, and page numbering:** Allows you to specify customised headers and footers that the word processor will put at the top and bottom of every page. The word processor automatically keeps track of page numbers so that the correct number appears on each page.

**Layout:** Allows you to specify different margins within a single document and to specify various methods for indenting paragraphs.

**Macros:** Enables users to define and run macros, a character or word that represents a series of keystrokes. The keystrokes can represent text or commands. The ability to define macros allows you to save yourself a lot of time by replacing common combinations of keystrokes.

**Merge:** Allows you to merge text from one file into another file. This is particularly useful for generating many files that have the same format but different data. Generating mailing labels is the classic example of using merges.

**Tables of contents and indexes:** Allows you to automatically create a table of contents and index based on special codes that you insert in the document.

**Thesaurus:** Allows you to search for synonyms without leaving the word processor.

**Collaboration:** Allows users to track changes to the document when more than one person is editing. Some cloud-based word processors also allow multiple users to edit the same document at the same time.

**Internet features:** Allows users to embed Web links into their documents and format their documents for the Web. Some also link to Web services that can help users create their documents.

**translation and speech:** As artificial intelligence capabilities become more commonplace, some word processors have gained the ability to read text aloud, to accept voice commands, and to translate text from one language to another.

Microsoft Word is go-to tool for producing important documents. It is dependable, customisable, and has lots of baked-in functionality that makes preparing academic communications easier.

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

This unit has reiterated the nature of communications for academic purposes. It is a nut that ties together every of your academic activities. It is the heart and lifeblood of your academic journey.

In the course of your pursuit, you would need to prepare different academic papers ranging from personal and persuasive papers, literary analysis, case studies and analysis, reports, research proposals and thesis. In the light of this, the tips and tact for preparing academic papers become useful. Therefore, you need to employ the strategies for gathering reliable information combing primary and secondary sources to enable you successfully prepare your papers when necessary. It is therefore vital to explore how to consult print and online resources especially databases to equip you always for your academic writings. Closely related to this, is citing and listing all resources deployed in your writings and following approved international standard of citation such as APA, MLA, Chicago etc. The unit also highlighted some of the features of the Microsoft Word that would help you in every academic communication. It is a powerful tool. Delve into it and explore the great features.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

In the advancement of knowledge, academic communications is a bedrock. You cannot advance beyond the level of academic communications you build for studies, career and social engagements. Academic communications is a pivot in which your entire will revolve and will determine to a large extent you far you may proceed in your entire life.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is the method of communication that are structured and used in educational setting?
2. Which of the citation style is used in behavioural and social science?

3. Which of the citation style is used in arts and humanities?

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## MODULE 3: PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PRESENTATION SKILLS

### UNIT 1: ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING



(source: <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/what-are-the-benefits-of-public-speaking>)

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a subject that touches you in one way or the other, now or later. The art of public speaking provides information on every aspect of speaking in the public that would make you distinctive and a master of the art. Most public speaking that turned out to be disaster had the message, the content well-packaged, but the basic communication instruments poorly tuned. Newscasters, politicians, masters of ceremonies, radio presenters are public speakers who have gone through coaching on basic communication instruments – eye contact, gestures, body movement, voice and tone moderation. Nowak (2004: xi) observes that the trained public speakers’ “statement and movement looks phoney and calculated. Each gesture and each glance draw attention to itself. Each phrase and each pause look like the tidy execution of a coaching tip that has not been assimilated.” This means that the coaching and training the public speakers received has turned them to experts and masters of the art. Therefore, this subject is of great importance to you.

#### 2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)

At the end of the study in this unit, you are expected to:

- Determine the principles of public speaking
- Ascertain the tenets of effective public speaking
- Identify the pitfalls to avoid in public speaking
- develop strategies to manage anxiety and fears of public speaking
- discover the tactics to employ to deal with unexpected developments when speaking to the audience.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Public speaking is the process of preparing and orally presenting a message to an audience large or small. This sounds simple, but there are complexities. Effective public speaking does not happen by chance or accident. It requires you to know the audience, have well-defined goals, clear understanding of the topic, integration of the elements that will engage the audience and the ability to deliver the message skilfully. This implies that you must plan, organise and rehearse your material thoroughly. However, public speaking creates fears and concerns in people. This concern arises from the feeling of nervousness or unexpected developments and how to deal with it. This happens to everyone who is a public speaker or wants to be one. Studies (Wallechinsky, Wallace, & Wallace 1977; Boyd, Rae, Thompson, Burns, Bourdon, Locke, & Regier 1990 & Schmidtz 2014) show that the “fear of speaking in public consistently ranks at the top of lists of people’s common fears. The fear of public speaking ranks up with the fear of flying, death, and spiders” and I add, in developing countries, the fear of poverty. Most times, this kind of fear relates to a feeling of incompetence, or the thought that things could go wrong. The idea of misplacing speaking notes, the disapproval of the audience on presentation style, tone or subject and technical challenge with instruments for presentation. For you to be an effective public speaker, you must know how to deal with any unforeseen difficulties.

This lecture will help you develop strategies to manage your anxiety and fears of public speaking. It will also introduce you to the tactics you can employ to deal with various unexpected developments when you are face with speaking to the audience.

#### **3.2 CONFIDENCE BEFORE AN AUDIENCE**

Public speaking or standing before an audience to deliver a speech evokes fear in so many people. It is a subject of stress for so many people. It is common knowledge that several people who have never made a speech in public fear to do so when asked to. Standing before the audience makes so many nervous. Why does public speaking evoke so much fear in people? Fear comes from the worry or concern that you might give a bad

talk. You worry that your failure to deliver a captivating speech will have a ripple effect on you, your studies, career or future pursuits in life. Every public speaker wants to confidently and fearlessly mount the stage to deliver a speech, “breaking the ice with the perfect joke, captivating the audience with compelling stories, handling the most difficult questions with ease, and exciting to cheers and applause” (Bonchek & Gonzalez, 2018: np). This is usually not the case when faced with an audience. Many people, especially the inexperienced and first timers, have stumbled on the stairs; some forgot their lines, transformed into stammering or went blank and lost all confidence before the audience. To be an excellent public speaker, you must learn to conquer your fears. Facing a live audience regularly or acquiring experience as a public speaker does not entirely take away stage fright. Treat your talks like a stand-up comedian. According to Markman (2018: np) “if you treat talks like stand-up comedy, you will not instantly be a stress-free presenter. But you are likely to dread it less and less as you realise that you got through another talk without the world ending. And hopefully, one day, you might even realise that you are more excited than worried about the prospect of getting up in front of a group.” By addressing the source of the worries and fears, you will learn to speak in the public with greater ease and control. There are important guides or tips that you must follow that will help you achieve a stunning performance in your next speech presentation. In public speaking, you are judged on your confidence and competence as well as on your content, the way you appear and sound during the presentation. Gallo (2018: np) the popular author of *Five Stars: The Communication Secrets to Get from Good to Great* writes that “you might have a great idea or results to share, but if you do not deliver your message with confidence, it will fall on deaf ears. Look and sound as strong as your content and you will find a receptive audience.”

**Be Prepared:** This sounds like a familiar tone. Being prepared is not only peculiar to public speaking. It applies to every meaningful project in life. Imagine you are going to write your degree examination without adequate preparation. The result would be visible – outright failure, a ‘serious shortfall.’ So also, it is with public speaking. You should be adequately prepared. This means you must master the material so well that it becomes a part of you. Study the material, emphasise and embellish the essentials and lose the non-essentials. It also means that you carefully ensure your logistics are set in advance. Imagine where you are the speaker and you are stranded on the way to the venue. This will create tension and agitation in you, and emotional, psychological and physical instability may all set in. It is usually helpful to draw out a checklist of all the necessary details. Go through your checklist carefully and convince yourself that all the grounds have been covered. If you are introducing any technology, illustration or visual in your speech presentation, cross-check very well, ensure the items are well arranged without errors and the technical team to assist you are reliable and capable. You take steps to

ensure you are relaxed, focused and not distracted. “A speaker must have a live subject, must treat it in a live way and must convince the audience that he is himself alive.”

**Know your audience:** You will misfire if you do not understand the audience you want to speak to. Your first assignment is to know the audience. Ask questions about the audience. Search Google to find out information on the people you will be meeting. When you do not understand your audience, you speak out of context and if you talk out of context, you speak yourself out of the stage. It is vital to be properly guided on the people you want to talk to.

**Exude confidence:** Virtually everyone will have feelings of anxiety when faced with a room full of professionals. This is not the same when you stand before a group of people who are clowns, entertainers or very unserious people. Rowh says it is natural to feel intimidated if you are talking to famous persons at a conference or presenting your speech to a roomful of seasoned researchers. In this situation, you should not allow your anxiety to show. You are advised to “take deep breaths and remember that you know more about your research than anyone else.” It is easy to feel overwhelmed while others are being critical of you, do not forget that you are on the stage, you should be in control and “let your passion and confidence take the lead.” According to Rowh, “one sign of confidence is simply modulating your voice. If you speak slowly and calmly, you will appear more confident than would otherwise be the case. The same goes for making eye contact instead of constantly looking down at notes.”

**Be real:** Be real to yourself. When you are overwhelmed with the desire to impress the audience with a topic you know very little about, you will heighten your fear. This might be the beginning of disappointment on the stage. It is important you consider the time allotted to you and cut down the material to fit in accordingly. Do not exaggerate your fears or overrate your confidence.

**Be present:** When you appear before the audience, connect with them immediately by being physically onstage. You must not be absent-minded. Your feeling of anxiety should not overwhelm you such that you become uninspired to deliver your speech. You must exude enthusiasm and physically composed to show you are in control of the stage. “When you are on stage, a quick way to get grounded is to feel your feet on the ground, take a breath, and find a friendly face in the audience to connect with — anything that gets you back in the present moment” (Bonchek & Gonzalez, 2018: np). When you have a speech to present to the public, do not connect with those who run you down or heighten your fears. Connect with those who bring out the gifts in you.

Gallo (2018: np) discussed five ways to project confidence in front of an audience which includes:

**Dress 25% better than anyone else in the room:** Rowh (2012: 32) observes that “whether on a job interview or in a meeting, how you look, and act can matter as much as your ideas.” When you walk into a room, people size you and one of the first things they do is to notice your clothes. “People form impressions of your personality in a matter of seconds. It is not necessarily fair, but it’s a reality,” says Yu Han (2017: np). “You have probably heard the advice to “dress to impress.” And you probably would also have heard, “you are addressed the way you dress.” You do not ‘dress to kill’ but always dress a little better than the audience and exude some confidence. Your clothes should be appropriate for the occasion. However, a very loud dressing will produce a counter effect. Do not dress like comedians or clowns whose primary duty is to entertain. A public speaker is more than an entertainer. James Citrin, a leading CEO recruiter, once advised job candidates to “dress 25% “more formal” than the prevailing dress code at the company. Update your wardrobe once or twice a year, wear clothes that fit your body type, choose colours that compliment your skin or hair colour, and avoid worn or scuffed shoes.” Dress neatly and professionally in an attire you are comfortable with.

**Keep your presentation simple:** This is particularly important if you are to talk to a general audience. There is nothing impressive about technical jargons that your audience do not understand. "People tend to give presentations the audience does not understand. The curse of knowledge is that once you know something, you forget what it was like when you didn't know it," says Barry Schwartz.

**Diversify your delivery:** People do not learn just by listening—different people learn in different ways, says Susan H. McDaniel, APA’s 2016 President. Use visual tools (such as slides or a video), incorporate research and tell stories. Anecdotes can be a particularly useful way to connect with an audience. "It could be a story about yourself, especially if you are using humour and making fun of yourself," says McDaniel. One crucial tip to keep in mind about multimedia presentations: do not let the technology obscure what you are trying to say, says Schwartz. "PowerPoint is incredibly powerful, but use it to get halfway there, rather than expecting it to do the whole job for you," he says.

 <https://youtu.be/9XGUpKITeJM>



### 3.3 PITFALLS TO AVOID

#### **Wrong Notions of Anxiety in Public Speaking**

There is no dispute there are anxieties and discomforts of speaking to an audience. However, there are no mysteries surrounding such concerns. Several people have been misled to believe in wrong notions surrounding fears of speaking to the public. Several years ago, a young lecturer had a paper to present in a conference of a large audience in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. He travelled to the conference hale and hearty. When it was time for his presentation, he mounted the podium and seconds later, collapsed and passed on. This was quite shocking and frightening. Of course, a lot of conclusions were drawn from this incident. Wrong notions filled people's heads. Many wrongly and erroneously concluded that the lecturer was killed by fear of standing before the audience. But has he not been teaching his class? Sometimes, he handled very large classes. Some of the wrong notions of speaking anxiety are:

**Fear and speaking anxiety arise from being neurotic.** It is important to remember that professional speakers and novices experience speaking anxiety. This is a common problem; it is not connected with any form of neuroses (Brothers, 2008).

**Memorise your speech word for word to build confidence.** This is far from reality except you want to overload your mind with details that result in 'information overload.' Memorising the whole speech might heighten your anxiety. Reciting a script in a public speech has never attracted applause except for children. Besides, when you forget a point during the recitation, you may likely derail from that point. When you memorise your materials, your delivery is likely to be poor, dull and unprofessional. Adequate preparation is the antidote to rote learning before a public presentation.

**Mistakes will ruin you.** Is there any level in life anyone can get to and mistakes are completely eradicated? Mistakes are common and remain with humans. Schmidt says "you have to make effort to relate to the audience naturally and be willing to accept your mistakes. You should be smart to rewrite your mistakes instead of resigning to sense of failure.

**It is traditional to start your speech with a joke or story.** This is not a requirement. Several speakers have delivered powerful earth-shaking speeches without a single story. A lively relevant story smartly presented will embellish and garnish your presentation,

but it is not mandatory. Telling a joke effectively and intelligently to connect with your speech can pose a hurdle. Therefore, you must be cautious in telling jokes so that it does not become ‘a tale told by an idiot.’ Someone said that “nothing is worse than waiting for a laugh that does not come.” One person’s joke is another person’s slander. It is extremely easy to offend when using humour. The same material can play very differently with different audiences. Telling a story or using humour to begin your presentation is recommended when you are sure it is intelligent and connects directly with your presentation.

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

Presenting a speech or speaking to the public is a necessity in the journey of life. Effective public speaking does not just happen. You have to train and practice to master the art. To be a confident speaker, you must be prepared, know your audience, dress appropriately and use effective delivery tactics. And work hard to avoid the pitfalls that characterise public speaking.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

In public speaking, you have something to give; speaking is the opportunity to present your gift.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. A process of preparing and orally presenting a message to a large or small audience is known as -----
2. The following are ways to project confidence, except-----?
  - A. Be present
  - B. Be prepared
  - C. Do not know your audience
  - D. Be real

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## **UNIT 2: IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In my short journey of life and experience, I have discovered that oral communication skills are *sine qua non* in successful academic and career pursuits. Zekeri (2004: 413) study also highlights oral communication skills as the number one skill that college graduates found useful in the business world. This brings to the fore, the importance of learning about public speaking. Whatever course you may be pursuing, or your professional career interest, you must have dealings with the public and the need arises to address or present a speech to an audience. There are several benefits of communicating effectively to the public. This unit, therefore, examines some of the personal benefits you will derive both from a course in public speaking and from giving public speeches.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME (ILOs)**

This unit is dedicated for you to explore the importance of public speaking. At the end of the study, you are therefore, expected to:


- Determine the value of public speaking
- Explain the benefits derived from speaking in public
- Recognize the benefits of taking a unit in public speaking

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Is public speaking still important in these days of social media and Internet technology? If you go through the field of public speaking, it will amaze you the number of books, conferences, journal articles on public speaking. For instance, go to Google and search for the Harvard Business Review. You will be surprised by the number of articles on public speaking in the journal. This speaks of the importance of public speaking. Technology, the Internet and social media have not diminished the importance of speaking effectively to the public. On the other hand, the information available on public speaking is alarming because it continues to be relevant despite the developments and technology in communication. It is interesting to note that rather than relegate the importance of public speaking to the background, technology has enhanced and enlarged the significance of public speaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today, technology can assist you in reaching more audiences than before. Have you heard of Randy Pausch's "Last Lecture?" Millions of people who heard about it watched it online. Randy Pausch was a Carnegie Mellon University Professor who retired at the age of forty-six after developing brain tumours. On September 18, 2007, the Carnegie Mellon University Professor and alumnus delivered a "one-of-a-kind last lecture that made the world stop and pay

attention. It became an Internet sensation viewed by millions; a speech turned into a DVD, an international media story, and a best-selling book that has been published in more than 35 languages” (Carnegie Mellon University, 2008).

 [https://youtu.be/ji5\\_MqicxSo](https://youtu.be/ji5_MqicxSo)

You may not be a Randy Pausch who delivered a very inspirational speech in the last lecture, but you will undoubtedly find yourself where you are confronted with the need to give a speech or speak to the public. Even in this course, you will meet occasions where you will be asked to deliver a speech or present a lecture to an audience.

Good public speaking provides you with the opportunities for better career development as well as improving your reputation. When you deliver a bad speech, your chances of recognition, rewards or promotion become slim. On the contrary, a well-delivered speech may throw up privileges and social recognition and you may catch the eye of your supervisors for greater benefits.

### 3.2 BENEFITS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

It is interesting to note that several people shy away from public speaking. They are so afraid of standing before the audience and filled with the fear of failure. This closes the door of several opportunities for advancement. Public speaking, according to Barnard (2017: np), is a “great way of building personal development on many levels, since improving communication skills is helpful in almost every area of life. Whether your goal is to engage in political, social or professional debates, make a career as a motivational speaker or gain confidence in front of an audience, public speaking can help you meet your goal.” Public speaking brings you out of your comfort zone and matriculates you into a probable eventful future. Does public speaking hold any good for anyone? There are outstanding benefits if you are a successful public speaker. One of the benefits is that it lets you stand out in a world that is filled with professionals. Fasano (2017: np) provides two specific benefits of public speaking viz:

**It makes your job easier:** When you are privileged to present your project to the public, it brings you out and shows your efficiency. When your worth is displayed, you get support to move forward in your pursuits. Also, you secure the support and cooperation of the audience when you have successfully presented your thoughts and ideas across to them.

**It makes you look good:** A very effective presentation attracts the applause of the audience and thereby a very high assessment and assurance that you know what you are

doing. However, when you give a poor presentation, it might destroy your foundation and erode your confidence.

In this segment, of the course, I have reproduced the thoughts of Barnard (2017: np) on the benefits of public speaking. I want you to look at the specific points carefully and understand the value of public speaking. Although some of the points have earlier been mentioned in one way or the other, Barnard's thoughts on each benefit are worthy of note:

### **Career Advancement**

Effective public speaking skills most often reveal creativity, critical thinking skills, leadership abilities, poise, and professionalism. These qualities constitute the bedrock for career advancement. They are valuable for the job market. Speaking at events and conferences is a right way of building credibility. The more well known the event, the better, as you can add these speaking achievements to your curriculum vitae. Public speaking can also help you stand out at work. You will learn to speak up in meetings, to promote your ideas, and to present yourself as a professional. Speaking skills can also help you excel in job interviews. After speaking at a few events, people will remember you and begin to see you as an authoritative figure in your area of expertise. You will find yourself getting new clients and business from people who have listened to you before. New business and speaking opportunities are likely to open for you.

### **It Boosts your Confidence**

When you speak to the public, you gain confidence. This helps you to overcome the fears and insecurities associated with public speaking. It can significantly boost your confidence and overcoming the fears and insecurities that accompany public speaking. Effective public speaking skills is empowering and can easily connect you with audiences. This enhances your morale and reminds you that you have valuable insights and opinions to share with the public. It will help grow your confidence level as you graduate from speaking to small groups of people to large audiences. This will also benefit you on stage, in everyday life as well as other engagements that involve the public. Successful public speaking turns your weakness into a strength.

### **It Builds your Critical Thinking Skills**

Public speaking provides an excellent opportunity to develop and build critical thinking skills. Preparing a speech for public speaking “requires a great deal of careful thought, from the audience analysis to the closing sentence. It is not enough to have a message; you also need to figure out how to tailor the message to fit the needs of your audience.” It is a tedious assignment generating the ideas and thoughts that suit the listeners and easy to understand. To

successfully prepare and develop such a message will quicken your critical thinking skills and improve your general communication style.

### **Personal Development**

Communication skills are crucial for personal and professional success. Therefore, to be able to speak to the public, you must develop and improve this skill. Preparing a speech forces you to think critically about effective ways to communicate. Once the skills have been developed, you help to advance in several ways throughout your life.

### **Improve Communication Skills**

This is obvious. Public speaking mandates you to develop and cultivate your communication skills. Writing your speech makes you think carefully on the best framework, persuasive strategy, and diction to communicate your message to the audience. This results in an improvement in your communication skills in other areas of life. Personal relationships, social interactions, and work situations require you to communicate ideas to other people. Public speaking focuses on communicating ideas. You can learn to calmly take up opposing views, to present your ideas in an organised and coherent manner, and to defend your views before the public.

### **Make New Social Connections**

Public speaking engagements are good places to meet other people who share your interests. This connects you with people easily. Public speaking is not only about speech delivery; it also enables the expansion of social connections and contacts. This means that when you are opportune to speak to the public, provide correct details about yourself, which includes your full contact information, including social media links. Public speaking provides opportunities for networking, which you should exploit to optimal advantage. After any successful public speaking, your connections expand. It is a valuable opportunity for making friends and building business relationships.

### **Personal Satisfaction**

Public speaking creates shivers in people that they would prefer to engage in almost anything instead of standing in front of an audience to present a speech. It creates a widespread phobia. A lot of people are daunted and intimidated when called upon to deliver a speech. However, with practice, determination, courage and careful adherence to the tips for successful speech presentation, the presentation can result in a rousing ovation. What then started with a nightmare and fear then turns into a significant boost and satisfaction.



### **It Provides an Opportunity to Learn Persuasion**

Every opportunity you must stand before the public is a chance to persuade them to believe in what you must present. People use the avenue of public speaking to influence others to listen, consider and accept their point of view. Politicians, preachers, activists use public speaking to persuade their audience to a course of action. They have used public speaking as a catalyst for nonviolent activism and political change. History is replete with instances of people who have used the power of public speaking to make a difference. Therefore, when you master the art of public speaking, you also imbibe the art of persuasion.

### **It Helps to Build Leadership Skills**

If you let others do your talking for you in the past or found it hard to express what you wanted to say, that will fade. Not only will you be able to fluently speak your mind, but you will find yourself doing it for others too.

When you stand up to speak powerfully, you aim at presenting your speech in a way that will change people's minds on issues. You consciously learn to master the skill of changing hearts and minds and learning how to persuade, would place on the pedestal of one of the major aspects of leadership. When you successfully speak in public to a group of people, you stand the chance of performing better in a more individualised setting. Leaders require the capacity to drive change, and public speaking skills are vital in learning that ability.

### **Learn performance skills**

When you are privileged to speak in public regularly, you will learn time management, when to pause and how long for. It will also help you to learn, understand and manage vocal variety, how to shift through changes in volume, speech rate, and tone. It changes your articulation and builds more confidence in you. You will also become conversant with stage tactics and skills such as mime, props and storytelling. All these acting skills enhance your speech.

### **It Helps Develop Vocabulary and Fluency**

The opportunity of speaking in public is a good one to read, study and prepare. This, in turn, will help you build your vocabulary and expose you to knowing the effect of words on the audience. The choice of words to express your message to match different listeners becomes the impetus to develop fluency. Using this medium enrich your vocabulary, build and refine your expressions will turn you into a professional speaker.

### **It's the Antidote Against Fear of Impromptu Speaking**

The fear of impromptu speaking prevented a lot of people from trying and developing their hidden talents. Have you had an occasion when called upon to say a few words at a moment's notice at a wedding, awards ceremony or other special events, and how did you react? Obviously, your heart began to pound to your hearing. When you often speak to the public,

you will attain the status of graciously accepting the opportunity for an impromptu speech. This is a considerable benefit of public speaking, and you will stop constantly worrying at formal events about being asked to speak.

### **It Teaches You Meaningful Argument**

Planning and preparing your speech for public presentation allows you to package your thoughts and arguments meaningfully. The preparation, the practice and the presentation, provide avenues for you to learn the art of debate, especially when you get to engage with your audience in some form of questions and answer.

### **It Helps you drive change**

Discussions with the audience provide powerful avenues to strike hot and deep. People will listen to you more when you stand before them to present your message than when you send the message through email, WhatsApp or handbills. Think of the effects of speaking to the public, listening to their questions, and providing answers and being able to clear very grey issues. This has long-lasting effect and result. Most times, it helps you to drive home your essential points and convictions that might trigger a remarkable change in your audience. Imagine speaking to an audience of 300 versus one-on-one, and the serious change you could be driving. The larger the audience, the more seed of change you can implant.

### **It Builds You a Better Listener**

Effective listening is a scarce commodity. People like to speak more than listen. Listening appears to be a lost art, but a public speaking course teaches you to become a better listener. When you attend occasions, ceremonies, conferences, or presentations, you will listen to several different types of speeches on a wide variety of topics, from people who may be very different from you. This will passively build your listening ability and note-taking.

These benefits of public speaking make getting out of your comfort zone and giving a speech worth it. You will be nervous the first few times you speak; however, you will quickly learn to enjoy the experience.

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

It is essential to remember that despite the Internet, social media and the mass of information available today, effective public speaking is still important. Effective public speaking announces you and shows your efficiency. It improves your communication skills and helps in your personal development.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

No matter the reasons for public speaking, the skills to speak effectively to the public are applicable in other areas of your life, profession or relationship. When you develop

effective speaking skills, you will be able to influence your generation, develop leadership skills and open opportunities to occupy leadership position and you may also become reference point for ideas and solutions.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List and explain four benefits of public speaking.

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## UNIT 3 : GUIDES TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING



*“Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively” – Gerald R. Ford*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this section, we have been discussing public speaking. Again, I want you to understand that communication is an important aspect of job interviews, meetings, workshops, public presentations, and several other public events. Therefore, this unit brings you to the tips and guides to effective public speaking. This will help you in taking proactive steps to master the strategies for effective public speaking.

### 2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOME (ILOs)

This unit is aimed at opening your understanding of the strategies you need to adopt if you are going to be an effective public speaker. Therefore, at the end of this segment, you should be able to identify the tips for effective public speaking. Also, at the end of the

lesson, you should acquire the performance mindset that would help you successfully speak in public always.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING**

From everyday reality and our discussions on the art of public speaking, it is obvious that effective communication is an essential ingredient in your success as a student, business executive, or an important member of your family. Nikitina (2011: 8) notes that you “might have the best products or services, years of experience or an outstanding business idea, but if you do not communicate this to your target audiences, you are limiting your effectiveness.” In every aspect of your life, it is important to learn to speak in public effectively. To persuade and motivate other people to follow your lead, it is imperative to learn how to convey your ideas in front of a group of people in a clear, structured, and captivating manner (Nikitina, 2011). Do not forget that effective public speaking increases your self-confidence, improves your communication skills, removes the fear of speaking in front of others, and gives you greater control over your emotions and body language. Remember that the common saying that “very few people are born orators. Most of them live and learn” underscores the need to deliberately learn and acquire the strategies that would facilitate effective public speaking.

#### **3.2 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Ironically, communication is indispensable to humans. As social and gregarious beings, there is always a need to communicate with each other. Communicating with each other is a natural phenomenon. However, when you are faced with talking in front of a group of people, this same natural asset of talking to each other becomes a tortuous path for several persons. Some of you develop frozen cold feet when you are confronted with facing the crowd or presenting a speech in a meeting. Please note that you are not alone in this kind of development. Virtually, every human being at one time or the other developed cold feet when faced with talking to the crowd. This is usually, the natural tendency in the first or second appearance. However, if you fail to learn and develop the strategies for effective public speaking, you will always fear failure and disgrace before your audience. Remember also, that public speaking does not necessarily mean speaking at political rallies or speaking at professional meetings or conferences. It may mean talking to your colleagues during class presentations, leading group discussions, addressing a group of persons in your enclave, or taking the centre stage to address members of your age grade. To succeed as an effective public speaker, you must think of developing yourself regularly. You must be updated and trendy. The greatest pitfall to

avoid when you appear before an audience is maintaining the status quo and ignoring developments and changes in society. When you present yourself before an audience and you are out of date and ancient, you have dug a pit that is boldly labelled FAILURE & DISGRACE. Therefore, what are some of the important tips for effective public speaking? What are some of the things you should know? The tips are important pegs to stand on.

a. **Know your subject.** The cleverest way to be an effective speaker is to be a master of your subject. Do not accept to speak on what you have very little knowledge of. Have you heard of rabble-rousers? They are clever speakers who can persuade people to act violently or aggressively for the speaker's political advantage. What can you learn from rabble-rousers? They know their subject – they are professionals in their domain. You will fumble, fail, and stammer when you delve into an unfamiliar terrain especially before an audience. When you know your subject, it becomes easy and natural to employ good examples and anecdotes to garnish your speech. The ideas that flow from you when you stand before an audience are very important. They make or mar the entire exercise of public speaking. Whenever you open your mouth to speak, the audience is particularly interested in the ideas that flow from your head. Make belief, lies, half-knowledge, or false and dishonesty before an audience are not sustainable and lead to loss of confidence before your listeners. People must find your speech credible. When you are before an audience, you must speak relevantly.

b. **Practice and rehearsal.** This is closely related to knowing your subject. When you have a speaking engagement no matter how simple, the rule is that you must practice, practice, and practice and rehearse the entirety of your speech before the day of presentation. Artists, fashion designers, footballers, etc engage in a lot of practice and rehearsal. Take, for instance, an occasion like convocation goes with a lot of practice and dress rehearsal before the occasion. If the professors in the citadel of knowledge who have been organising and attending convocations yet engage in practice and rehearsal for every convocation, the responsibility lies on you to do more.

c. **Passionate appeal.** You cannot afford to stand before your audience and be lifeless, cold, and uninteresting. You must put passion into your talk. A man said, *if you are passionate, whatever you say rings true and earnest.* You must make your passion felt when you speak to the public. This means that you put your whole body, soul, and mind into your speech. You cannot make great speeches by reciting by rote what is committed to memory. Presenting an effective speech also implies being alert and watchful to note the feelings of your audience.

A man summarized the major tips for effective public speaking to include *the right stance*. The way you carry yourself when on the stage is a prelude to the success or failure of your speech. Effective speakers deploy *The right tone* that keeps the audience captivated throughout the speech. Effective speakers also know how to sustain the interest of their audience, give the right examples and employ the right closing.

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

You cannot be an effective public speaker by accident. It requires dedicated effort to develop your skill towards presenting dazzling speeches. You must be a master of the subject you speak on, practice and rehearse thoroughly when you have a speech to present and be passionate in your presentation. This means that if there are effective public speakers, you can be one of them.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

To be an effective speaker, you must keep learning, improving and expanding your horizon. Study other speakers and learn from them. Constant practice will advance you towards a perfect speaking horizon. To make public speaking an enjoyable activity, you have to conquer the stage, the microphone and the subject.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Public speaking is restricted to political rallies and conferences. True or False.
2. What are the 3 tips for effective public speaking?
3. ----- tip of public speaking requires you to master your subject?

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## **UNIT 4: PRESENTATION SKILLS**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to the precepts of presenting your speech or ideas to your general or expert audience. The nitty-gritty of presentations is presented below including videos that would assist your understanding.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

At the end of the study of this unit, you are expected to:

- Determine how to develop the skills for effective presentation to your audience.
- Identify the easy but effective ways to organise your presentation.
- Recognise the tips for adequate preparation before presentation.
- Explain the intricacies of practice and rehearsal before presentation.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 PRESENTATION SKILLS**

In Unit 3, we discussed the art of public speaking, the importance, benefits and all of that. As you progress in life, career and other social requirements, you will be confronted with the need to talk to the general public, professional group or highly specialised audience on different subject areas of your specialisation. This would call for tips for effective public speaking. You will also be expected to prepare your speech in such a way that you can captivate your audience. This is followed by the actual presentation of your speech. To succeed in your presentations, you need to learn, develop and demonstrate the skills for effective presentation. Your speech is a summary of you, your personality, knowledge, experience and your ability to offload what you are and know to your audience.

#### **Developing Your Speech**

Speech preparation is a hassle, especially to first timers. You must understand your direction before you begin the preparation. You must understand what is required in the speech before you start the preparation. To develop your speech effectively, you should take note of the following points:

#### **Focusing Your Topic**

The actual speech making starts with the topic. It is assumed you should be familiar with your topic and understand the length and breadth of the requirements for the speech. Therefore, you must focus your topic on conforming to the expectations of time and content. Your subject should be clearly defined to enable you to develop the points unambiguously. This is where your creativity should be displayed. Develop your speech to be captivating, exciting and meaningful to your audience. Plan to keep the suspense of your audience active till the end. You should be careful in using humour to embellish your speech. According to Lucas (2001: 65), audiences love witty remarks, jokes, and funny situations, but humour should be effectively used. This should flow naturally out of the content of the speech rather than being contrived. “In no case should you include humour that involves obscenity, embarrasses individuals or negatively stereotypes groups of people.”

### **Organising Your Speech**

After developing your topic, you should organise your speech. It should structurally and systematically flow from the beginning to the end. Most speeches are naturally segmented into introduction, main content and conclusion. You might consider following the same pattern. The introduction helps you to capture the interest and attention of the audience. There are several ways you can introduce your speech: a startling remark, a dazzling story, a quotation or a rhetorical question. Your introduction must be captivating to arouse suspense. Remember to weave your introduction into the subject of the speech. Where you do not have a dazzling opening remark, you can intelligently provide a preview of the main points your speech is focusing on.

A Professor wanted to gain the full attention of his first-year students. So, he asked the students during the first contact lesson:

Professor: Good morning class

Students: Good morning sir, chorused the enthusiastic audience

Professor: I have you know why we are here today?

Students: All the students chorused a loud yes, sir.

Professor: In that case, there nothing else to do with those who already know why they are in class.

Students: The students were surprised, not knowing exactly where the Professor was heading to.

That incident ended the class for that day. And the students innocently dispersed. Another contact period also generated a similar incident:

Professor: Good morning class

Students: Good morning sir

Professor: I hope you know why we are here today

Students: The students again, enthusiastically answered, this time, no sir, remembering the effect of a yes answer the last time they met.

Professor: I am sorry, I do not have any business with those who already know why they gathered together.

Students: The students became confused and lost. The Professor left when they answered 'yes' and when their answer was a 'no'.

They did not understand what was going on and did not know what else to do in the next class of the Professor. Therefore, they met and resolved that in the next lesson, they were going to divide themselves into two groups. When the Professor asks the same question again, a group would answer 'yes' while the other a 'no'. They got it. When the Professor came the third time, this transpired:

Professor: Good morning class

Students: Good morning sir

Professor: I hope you know why we are here

Students: There was confusion as one group said yes, and the other said no.

Professor: Very good. I am here to resolve all your confusions.

Imagine the applause. The students were impressed, captivated and glued to the lecture all through. The professor had weaved a magic wand on them and got their suspense and attention.

When you have settled with your introduction, you are ready to go straight to the main content. Your ideas should flow logically and convincingly. Avoid irrelevant information and do not be repetitive or monotonous. It is an excellent practice to provide a connecting

link between the critical points in the body of your speech. Then, your conclusion should end dramatically in “a clever, thought-provoking note” (Lucas, 2011: 67).

There are several essential points you consider when you are developing your presentation. These include:

**Remember Your Audience:** without the audience, there is no need for any presentation. The audience constitutes the most critical element in any presentation. Therefore, the success or failure of your presentation begins from you place the audience. The needs, level, experience, and expectations of the audience are important points for you to take note of. If you ignore these, your presentation will likely be flat, dull, dry and uninteresting. Your rating during and after the presentation will be very low, discouraging and might even be destructive. You might engage your natural talents and abilities that are in line with the purpose of your presentation and suitable to the audience in your presentation. Take, for instance, an incident between a man, his friend and Officer of the law in the city of Lagos:

Officer: Hey, park, can we know you and what do you do for a living

Comedian: Good afternoon officer. My name is Wazobia, I am a Comedian.

Officer: And what does that mean?

Comedian: I make people laugh

Officer: Okay, make us laugh.

The Comedian enthusiastically scratched his head to remember one of the most exciting jokes he has in his collection; told the joke and was expecting a hilarious laugh from the Officer. To his amazement and disappointment, the Officer was dry and unmoved. The Officer asked: is that what you say you do, and people waste their time listening to you? The Comedian told another rib-cracking jokes and yet no effect on the Officer. The Officer told the Comedian that he is a timewaster. The confused Comedian was lost and did not know what other jokes to tell. His friend, in a whisper, asked if there was any money on him. The Comedian pulled out a one thousand Naira note. And he was advised to hand it over to the Officer. As soon as this was done, the Officer laughed so widely and acknowledged that he is indeed a Comedian.

This is a simple analogy. You can use your natural talents during a presentation, but it must be suitable for your intended audience.

**Prepare adequately for the presentation:** There is no substitute for adequate preparation before the presentation. Shabby, half-hearted preparation before any presentation will leave you in regrets and tears and sometimes, this may last throughout your life and career. Make notes of your main points, argument, summary and conclusions. It is necessary to visit the venue before the day of the presentation and inspect or try out the technical instruments you will use. When you are not adequately prepared, failure becomes inevitable.

**Develop and use visual aids:** Use charts, graphs and infographics to communicate your concepts. Your audience is likely more of visual learners. Technology has empowered and enhanced the art of presentation. PowerPoint has become common in presentations of today. Learn to use it profitably. Bullets are becoming clichés and are randomly used these days. Develop and use visuals; they are catchy, easy to remember and sustain the attention of the audience longer. Spice your presentation with well-thought-out a variety that will linger in the minds of your audience for a long time. However, the use of gimmicks, jingles, animations is discouraged in presentations. They are more distracting than attracting. Use technology as a tool and not for entertainment. Remember, effective presentation requires dedication, determination and hard work.

Video




<https://youtu.be/MnIPpUiTcRc>

**Make Provision for questions:** You should be conscious of time. Allot time for every segment of your presentation including questions. You command more respect and exhibit confidence in your material when you allow people to ask questions after your presentation. Prepare for a very powerful rap up and recap if there are no questions. Let your presentation end when the ovation is loudest.

### 3.2 PRACTICE AND REHEARSAL

Practice and rehearsal create effective results in any activity. Footballers practise and rehearse diligently before the actual play. Actors and actresses practice and rehearse their scripts before the performance. Practice and rehearsal apply to public speaking and speech preparation and presentation. Practice and rehearsal can extend from simple to very complex. Successful, comfortable and smooth delivery of your speeches is the result of great of practice. In practice and rehearsal, you work hard to gain control of your ideas and thoughts instead of trying to learn the speech word for word. Practice helps you to improve and correct mistakes. Practice and rehearsal have been simplified with the use of virtual reality. You can create a simulation of your speech and then go through your presentation in a dress rehearsal. This can take place in your office, living room or classroom with a few persons in attendance. When you rehearse in front of a simulated

audience with low stress, you will not crack under pressure when you are faced with the real situation.

**Video**  1: <https://youtu.be/ya6YQix-esM>  
2: <https://youtu.be/W4raWBJLP-U>

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

To raise the bar of your presentations, it is vital to learn, develop and demonstrate the skills for effective presentation. Your speech summarises your personality, knowledge, experience and your ability to project what you are and know to your audience. This will take developing your speech effectively, focusing on your topic, organising your speech appropriately and preparing adequately through practice and rehearsal.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

It is important to note that well prepared and engaging presentations can persuade and inspire the audience. To be different, you have to raise the bar of the quality of your presentations. When you have presentations to make, it is no time to be timid. To be an agent of change, how you comport yourself and present your ideas matters a great deal. Prepare to be different.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. In developing effective speech, you must focus on -----.
2. Effective presentation requires dedication, determination and -----.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **. MODULE 4: COMMUNICATION IN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES**

### **UNIT 1 STAFF COMMUNICATION IN THE LIBRARY**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Staff Communication in the Library
  - 3.2 Barriers to effective communication in the library
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is designed to enlighten you with the ideas and thoughts on the synergy that should exist among library staff to enable achieve maximum productivity in service delivery. The tool to achieve this synergy is effective communication upward, downward and horizontal. Library and information services will fail or stand based on the staff share ideas, interact and collaborate. It cannot be emphasised that the library or information centre is a conglomeration of a myriad of activities that would bring the world of information to the users. This unit is, therefore, aimed at bringing to you the nuggets of effective staff communication in the library.

#### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

At the end of this unit, you should identify the strategies for effective staff communication in the library and information centres. You should also determine some of the pitfalls to avoid in creating a desirable synergy among the library staff; how to enhance internal service excellence; identify the principles of open communication and positive approaches to problematic people and determine the ways to achieve effective collaboration.

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

##### **3.1 STAFF COMMUNICATION IN THE LIBRARY**

Libraries all over the world are essential institutions in every educational environment. It is particularly important and indispensable in tertiary institutions. And the libraries support the tripartite functions of the university – teaching, research, publication and



extension services. The library shoulders huge responsibilities with high expectations to provide adequate services. This is where staff synergy plays a significant role. Therefore, effective communication among staff in the library is a *sine qua non*. Effective communication provides a common ground for staff to understand themselves, share thoughts and ideas and pursue institutional goals with the same zest. According to James, Isaac and Oludayo (1999:2) effective communication in the library “helps staff to understand themselves, to keep in touch with other people, to understand them and to predict their responses to situations, also it is the medium through which relationships are established, extended and maintained; provides a means by which people act and interact; exchange information and ideas; develop plans, proposals and policies, make decisions and manage men and materials.” The key to any well-run institution is effective communication. When communication fails, institutions or organisations are bound to crumble.

In the library, staff communication could be formal or informal, written, oral or non-verbal. A proper mix or combination of these forms of communication is required for the smooth administration of the library. As we have already established in module two, there is no organisation that can function efficiently and effectively without effective communication. Effective library staff must flow downward and upward. The University Librarian, for instance, who occupies the top of the library administrative hierarchy must communicate effectively with the other line staff. Likewise, the departmental library heads must communicate upward with the administrative head and horizontally with their colleagues of equal status. If staff communication is not properly managed, library functions will stagnate, and the entire library will be poorly managed. On the contrary, where communication flows appropriately, the library will stand out as an institution of reference. Etebu (2010: 3) affirms that communication facilitates the achievement of institutional goals. In the library, where the division of labour and departmentalisation is well-established, effective communication is vital. This will ensure that library materials go through all the necessary departments for processing without delay and distortion. Good communication gives a sense of direction and guide to the staff. Miscommunication or failure in communication leads to stressful encounters. Radford (2015: np) writes that “if we can reduce the stressful encounters and multiple the satisfying ones, our working lives will be more enjoyable.” Satisfying interpersonal communication encounters among library staff fosters connections, collegiality, and cooperation. According to Radford, the general principles of effective staff communication includes:

- i. Be direct
- ii. Be clear
- iii. Be honest
- iv. Ask for feedback

- v. Be brief – don't beat around the bush
- vi. Be assertive

Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwR9ybeE7Dw&feature=youtu.be>

Effective interpersonal communication in the library is vital in creating a thriving workplace relationship. According to Singer and Francisco (2005) communication among staff in the library “can be as informal as a “Good morning,” or as formal as a semi-annual performance appraisal meeting. Whether formal or informal, there are a variety of tools that can be used:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Memos
- Newsletters
- E-mail
- Telephone
- Voice mail
- Meetings
- Intranets
- Text and instant messaging
- Blogs
- WhatsApp



*Which of these methods of communication is most effective in your library?  
What are the reasons for your choice?*

Libraries and information centres operate in different environments. As the environments differ so also the communication needs, peculiarities and challenges. It is important for a library to ascertain which methods of communication work effectively in the workplace. Different ways of communication may work for a different level of employees. However, in this era of dynamic and technological developments, it behoves libraries to continually update and improve their modes of communication. This would attract young technology-savvy employees and retain the old experienced employee. The use of technology in staff communication should be applied with caution and carefulness. It should not replace interpersonal face-to-face conversation or take the place of certified channels of disseminating confidential information.

Singer and Francisco (2005) suggest ways of enhancing the effectiveness of all types of communication among staff in the library:

**Listening:** This involves knowing when to stop talking and start listening. This is vital when emotions are high, when a team is involved, and when sharing ideas openly. When “listening,” pay close attention to what is being said and not what to say next; allow others to finish and repeat back what was just said to you.

**Facilitating:** This involves hearing what was said, integrating that into the topic and saying something to move the conversation forward. This will prevent the conversation from “going in circles.”

**Questioning:** There are many types of questions that can be asked to gather information. There are closed questions that only require a yes/no answer, and there are open questions that require an explanation or scenario.

**Use discretion:** Know when to keep the information confidential so that trust is not lost.

**Directing:** Use in order to give directions clearly so that people know exactly what to do and what is expected of them.

When effective communication is taken seriously throughout an organisation many benefits will be realised: There will be a more pleasant, more productive work environment, employees will feel valued, ideas will be shared openly, and a trusting relationship will be established.



### **Discussion: Open-door policy in the library vs Open communication**

When library supervisors, managers, and directors operate a closed-door policy, there will be no open communication. To promote effective communication among library staff horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or upward and downward, open-door policy should be dovetailed with open communication.

## **3.2 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE LIBRARY**

- i. Poor listening skills
- ii. Language barriers
- iii. Cultural/religious bigotry
- iv. Sycophancy and self-seeking
- v. Inferiority complex

vi. Stereotyping

#### 4.0 SUMMARY

Effective communication in the library provides a common ground for staff and users to understand themselves, and pursue institutional goals facing the same direction. The key to a well-run and managed library is effective communication. When communication fails, the library is bound to crumble. The general principles of communication in the library could revolve around:

- i. Be direct
- ii. Be clear
- iii. Be honest
- iv. Ask for feedback
- v. Be brief – don't beat around the bush
- vi. Be assertive

And avoid the barriers to effective communication in the library.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

Miscommunication, failure in communication or poor communication can lead to disastrous consequences on the workforce and on the overall productivity of the library. It will affect the flow of ideas, employee productivity, cooperation and innovation. Effective communication is the lifeline of the library workforce. It will help to work towards achieving institutional objectives “collectively, effectively and efficiently.”

#### 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. According to Radford, what are the general principles of effective communication?
2. What are the general principles of communication that a library could revolve around?
3. According to Singer and Francisco (2005) suggest ways of enhancing the effectiveness of all types of communication among staff in the library:

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING MATERIALS

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## **UNIT 2: COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Communication in Organisations
  - 3.2 Importance of Communication in Organisations
  - 3.3 Patterns of Communication
  - 3.4 Characteristics of Effective Organisational Communication
  - 3.5 Barriers to Organisational Communication
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Communication in organisations encompasses formal and informal ways of information flow horizontally, laterally or upward, downward to and from the employees. Organisations employ or combine ways to disseminate official information to the employees and receive feedback in response. When organisations handle official communications with levity, hearsay, rumours and gossips replace official communication. When this happens, the organisations heads to the doomsday. Therefore, this unit introduces you to the importance of communication in the organisation, how communication flows and the obstacles that can cause communication failure in the organisation.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

This unit is intended to enable you study communication in organisations. At the end of your study in the unit, you will be expected to: define organisational communications and discuss the importance of communication in the organisation. You are expected also, to identify the patterns of communication in the organisation, recognise the characteristics of effective communication in the organisation and determine some of the barriers to organisational communication.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### 3.1 **Communication in Organisations**

Communication is vital in every aspect of society. Learning to communicate is an essential skill for professional and personal development. Effective communication skills are important in organisational productivity and relationships in the workplace. Johnson (2012: np) writes that “communication in organisations encompasses all the means, both formal and informal, by which information is passed up, down, and across the network of managers and employees in a business.

### 3.2 **Importance of Communication in Organisations**

Every effective organisation is characterised by certain essential functions such as planning, organising, controlling and directing and coordinating. These functions cannot be performed efficiently without effective communication. This implies that communication helps organisations to carry out their daily duties and responsibilities. Communication is the ‘lifeblood’ of any organisation. The success of the different aspects, departments and programmes of the organisation is anchored in effective communication. North (2018: np) states that “anyone who has collaborated with colleagues on a group project knows just how hard it can be to share and receive ideas. To move the project along, it is essential for everyone to communicate. The same holds even when you’re sending an e-mail to one co-worker: Say the wrong thing, and you may damage or even jeopardise a key professional relationship.” Juneja (2015: np) writes that “effective communication is a building block of successful organisations.” He summarises the importance of communication:

- vi. Communication provides a veritable avenue to inform and motivate the workers on tasks, mode of operation and ways to improve performance.
- vii. Communication is an indispensable source of information for decision-making in the organisation.
- viii. Communication plays a crucial role in raising the morale of employees, i.e. an informed workforce will have a better attitude than the less informed. Organisational magazines, journals, meetings and various other forms of oral and written communication help in moulding employee’s attitudes.
- ix. Communication is a tool of socialisation. It fosters togetherness among the workers.
- x. It is also a means of controlling the functions of the organisation.

### 3.3 **Patterns of Communication**

In formal sectors such as organisations, institutions and groups, communication flows according to designed levels and patterns. Organisations are structured to reflect the line of duties, authority and communication. The patterns relate to work efficiency, line of reporting and decision-making process. The flow of communication follows the

established pattern in the organisation. The level of communication can be all-one where the line of communication flows from many persons to one. This is common in group communication and in small organisations. Similarly, where one person sends messages to many, it is one-to-all communication. Communication patterns are categorised into five, according to what is referred to as the Leavitt experiment. These are circle, chain, Y, wheel and network patterns.

### **The Circle Pattern**

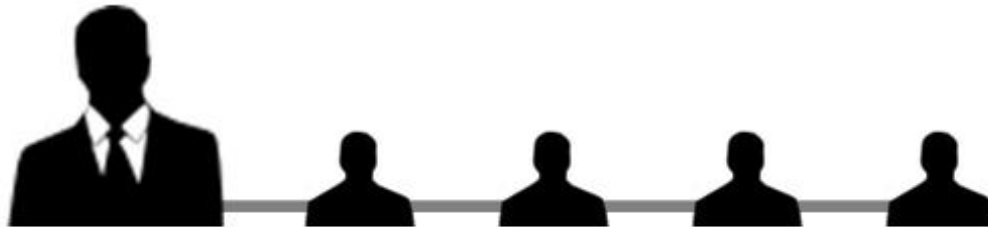
This pattern depicts communication that flows according to the hierarchies in the system. In this pattern, messages or information are sent following the hierarchies. Subordinates communicate with the member next to him upward or downward. Usually, in this pattern, words flow from each level to the next until it reaches the top hierarchy or vice versa. This pattern of communication does not allow group members to communicate with the leader directly. Low-level staff in this pattern cannot send any message no matter how important or urgent to the leader without going through other group members in the chain of command.



Circle pattern of communication

### **Chain (Line) Pattern**

The chain pattern, like the circle follows a line of chain command. It is a one-way flow of communication; messages are sent either top to bottom or bottom to the top level of staff. In this pattern, all members of the group do not have the privilege to communicate with the leader. Messages from the leader too might get distorted before they reach the receiver. When this happens, the leader will not know what distortions have occurred, and the member in the lower chain of command also will not know what the original message was or what changed.

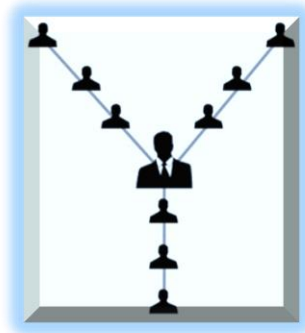


Chain pattern

source: <https://www.communicationtheory.org/patterns-of-communication/>

### “Y” Pattern

In the Y pattern, the receivers are divided into three sub-groups, and all communications between groups are through the leader. The leader manages the sub-groups. There is also a chain of command within the sub-groups, like in the circle and chain communication pattern. Communication flows from the lowest level of each sub-group to the senior member, and the senior member communicates to the next until it gets to the leader. Likewise, the communication flows downward to the lowest member in the sub-group. There is no communication between the sub-groups. Messages are sent to the sub-groups through the leader only. This pattern of communication is very complicated and is not common in modern organisations.



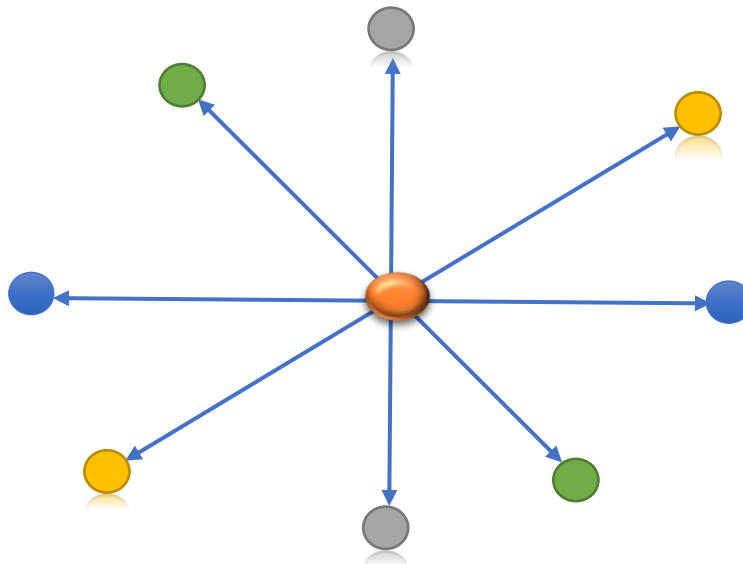
“Y” pattern

source: <https://www.communicationtheory.org/patterns-of-communication/>



### **Wheel (Star) Pattern**

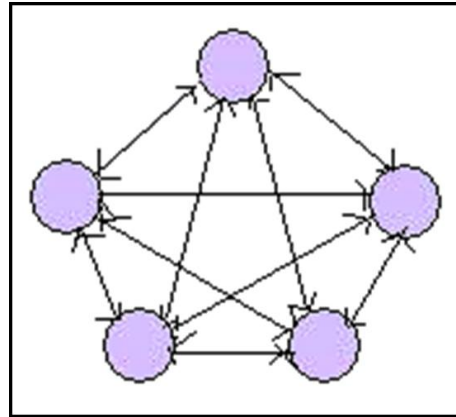
This wheel pattern places the leader at the centre to receive all communications from the members. The members have equal standing and communicate directly to the leader and vice versa. The members of the group do not communicate with one another. This wheel pattern has less attendant communication problems; it is quick, and messages are received as original communication without distortion. In modern and large organisations, the wheel pattern of communication saddles the leader with documents to study and personally attend to.



Wheel pattern

## Network Pattern

According to Maharjan (2018: np), the structure of communications in bureaucratic organisations is regarded as a network pattern of communication. It is a “non-symmetric network of people with social relations. Their job roles are interlinked. Communication in networks can be prescriptive, like rules given from leader to other members or descriptive like case reports given by members to leaders.” The network pattern allows free flow of communication among the members according to their needs and requirements.

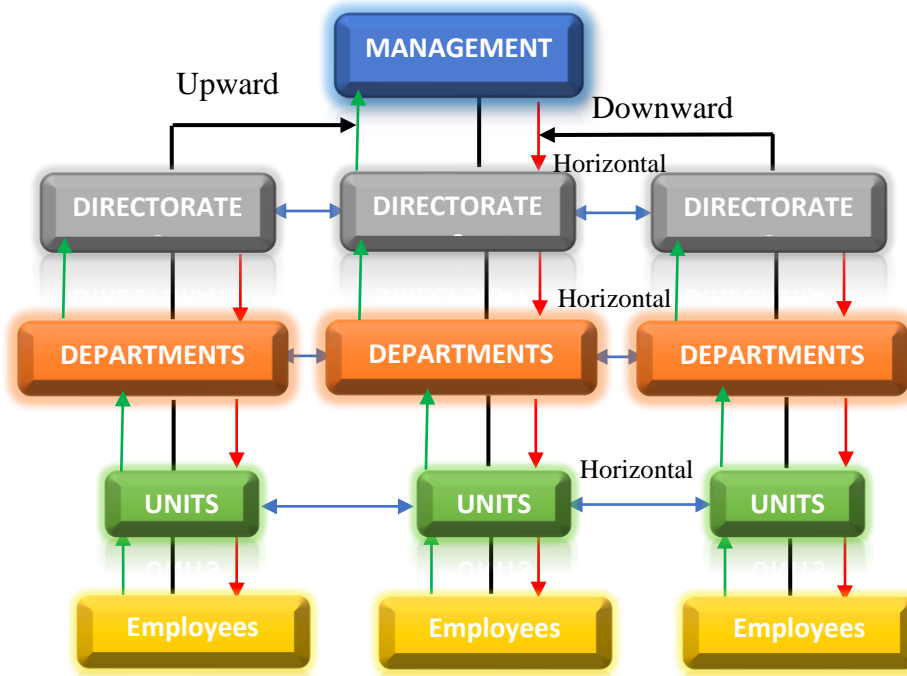


Network pattern

source: [http://pdpnotesbygm.blogspot.com/2013/08/communication-15\\_29.html](http://pdpnotesbygm.blogspot.com/2013/08/communication-15_29.html)

Some authors have considered vertical, horizontal, diagonal, internal, external and grapevine communication as patterns of communication. Generally, communications in organisations are either downward, upward, horizontal or lateral. Downward communication flows from the superiors at the upper levels to the subordinates at the lower of the organisation. This is common in organisations with a chain of command with an established hierarchical structure. The Vice-Chancellor’s instruction to the staff of the university is a form of downward communication. On the other hand, upward communication flows from the lower to the upper levels of an organisation. It also applies to organisations that have an established structure and chain of command. Similarly, when communication flows across the units of an organisation, it is described as horizontal communication. Horizontal communication is also referred to as lateral communication. This applies to units and departments in the organisation which are of equal status. Horizontal communication encourages information sharing and working together to solve problems. It promotes team approach, discussions and analysis in arriving at decisions. Horizontal communication widens the channel for decision making and problem-solving in an organisation. Generally, most organisations have established

structure and system that combines upward, downward and horizontal communication in their administration.



Direction of communication in an organisation

## **Grapevine**

One of the most informal but established and entrenched forms of communication in the organisation is the “grapevine” which flows through every level of management. Kurland & Pelled (2000: 428) describes grapevine as “the informal gossip network, which is a lifeline for many employees seeking information about their company.” The informal “grapevine between and among top management, middle management, line management, and employees have always been, and no doubt always will be, part of the process of doing business.” In the history of business communications, the grapevine is the first informal company communications, (Johnson, 2012: np). The grapevine thrives when there is a void in official word from management on burning or pressing issues. When this silence persists, the employees fill the void with guesses and rumours. Sometimes, this happens innocently. At other times, it will originate from the mischievous employees who want to discredit the management of the day. It spreads through gossips and rumour. Grapevine travels faster than official information through informal channels. A Grapevine is an upward form of communication which employees create to understand the goings-on in the organisation. The grapevine also thrives when the employees discover that the management of the organisation has been deceiving, lying or depriving them of any of their rights or privileges. The administration sometimes initiate rumours to gauge the direction of the employees. The employees, on the other hand, create rumours to force the administration to release the official information on the prevailing subject. Usually, the grapevine appears more powerful and receptive than formal communication. The grapevine is vital in organisations but can flow out of the organisation’s control and lead to disorder, apathy, disloyalty or work-to-rule. Most organisations do not permit grapevine in the system. However, the grapevine cannot be stopped in the running of organisations. Instead, organisations should always be forthright and formal using the appropriate channel in addressing the concerns of workers. Threats and intimidations will heighten rumours among the workforce.

### **3.4 Characteristics of Effective Organisational Communication**

The IEduNote Group (2019: np) identify seven attributes of effective organisational communication in what they described as ‘7Cs’ of communication in the organisation:

- i. Credibility
- ii. Courtesy
- iii. Clarity
- iv. Correctness
- v. Consistency
- vi. Concreteness
- vii. Conciseness

### **Credibility**

Credibility in communication is vital for the survival, progress, and productivity in the organisation. It is easy for employees to accept messages from credible sources in the system. The managers, directors and the entire management in organisations are responsible for building trust and honesty through the established process of interaction and relationship with the workforce. When credibility is built in the system, it becomes easy to communicate to the employees.

### **Courtesy**

Communications in the organisation are usually formal. Formal communications are characterised by the language that is polite, courteous and dignified. Courtesy and diplomacy are at the soul of business. When messages are coated with threats and intimidation, uncertainty, discontent, and disloyalty will stare at the company in the face.

### **Clarity**

Ambiguity distorts or destroys any message. To achieve an effect, absolute clarity of messages from the organisation is of the utmost importance. To avoid double interpretation, misinterpretation and rigorous explanation, the message should be simply clear. This will enhance comprehension and compliance. Messages meant for the employees should not be drafted in a high-sounding language filled with professional jargon.

### **Correctness**

The importance of accuracy in messages cannot be overemphasised. Facts, figures, and data included in the content of the message should be crosschecked for accuracy before sending such to the public. Discrepancy and incorrect information in the hands of the general workforce can turn the entire system upside down. Stereotypes, cultural traits that connote negativity and professional discrimination should not be part of organisational communication.

### **Consistency**

Communication that originates from the organisation should be consistent in content. Every form of contradiction or inconsistency that might lead to confusion in the mind of the receiver should be strictly avoided. Employees are always wary of managers who are filled with double talk. An organisational approach to communication should, as far as possible, be consistent. When the needs arise to change a stand earlier taken, the employees should be informed.

### **Concreteness**

Concrete and specific expressions should be employed to convey organisational communication instead of vague and abstract expressions. In this regard, the facts and figures presented should be accurate. The employee is more apt to listen and comprehend the factual details.

### **Conciseness**

Company messages to be communicated should be brief and concise as much as possible. The weighty language may sound impressive, but the workers would be suitably impressed into doing precisely nothing. As far as possible, only brief and straightforward statements should be made. Excessive information can also sway the receiver into either a wrong direction or into inaction.

## **3.5 Barriers to Communication in the Organisation**

As a leader, supervisor or manager, you must understand the reasons for any barriers to communication in the organisation and take preventive steps to eliminate or minimise them. It is imperative to create an atmosphere that fosters effective communication in the system.

*Lombardo (2018: np) enunciates five issues that create barriers to organisational communication:*

Language or semantics, denotation and connotation, cultural diversity, gender differences, status differences, credibility distrust, information overload and physical separation. These are specific items that can result in communication failure in any organisation. According to Lombardo, the “ability for a company to recognise the communication issues and come to a resolution can drastically improve working conditions, sales and organisational culture.”

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, communication in organisations, the importance of communication in organisations, patterns of communication, characteristics of effective organisational communication and barriers to communication in the organisation were considered.

Communication is vital in every aspect of the society and effective communication is fundamental to organisational productivity. Organisations cannot function without effective communication. Communication is the avenue to inform and motivate the workers; raise the morale of employees; it's a tool that unites the workers and a means of controlling the functions of the organisation.

In organisations, communication flows according to designed levels and patterns. The Leavitt experiment shows communication pattern in organisations as circle, chain, Y, wheel and network patterns. In the same vein, levels of communication in the organisations are viewed as vertical, horizontal, diagonal, internal, external and grapevine.

The characteristics of effective organisational communication are described as ‘7Cs’ of

- Credibility
- Courtesy
- Clarity
- Correctness
- Consistency
- Concreteness
- Conciseness

Finally, communication failures in the organisation could occur as a result of semantics, denotation and connotation, information overload, credibility distrust, cultural diversity, gender differences, status differences and physical separation.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Communication is a potent tool that enables administrators and employees to perform their tasks efficiently. When communication fails in the organisation, productivity will fall, and smooth operations, employee interaction and relationship will crumble. Communication is the building block of success in the organisation.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Mention the characteristics of effective organisational communication, often known as the 7cs.
2. What is the importance of effective organisational communication?
3. Explain the “Y” pattern of communication?

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## **UNIT 3: TECHNICAL AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Introduction to Technical Communication
  - 3.2 Purpose of Technical Communication
  - 3.3 Characteristics of Technical Communication
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Conclusion
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Suggested Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this course, we have established that communication is at the root of every human activity. It provides the tool for humans share or transmit knowledge, ideas, information and experiences. Communication enables people to understand, persuade, and control others. Communication is also a tool of development. It motivates and persuades the people for positive response to various developmental ideas. Therefore, development communication has become a major concern for regions and groups as a force for social equality and economic growth.

Similarly, technical communication is indispensable in every aspect of organisational or institutional existence. Its importance in advancing research, development, manufacturing and protecting consumers and patents unarguable.

This unit, therefore, introduces you to these importance areas.

### **2.0 INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOS)**

At the end of this unit's lesson, you are expected to perform the following:

- define development communication;
- explain the relationship between communication and development
- explain the meaning of technical communication.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definitions and Discussion of Development Communication**

Development communication describes the application of communication to improve social development. Quebra (2001: 16) defines it as “the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty

to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential." The World Bank defines development communication as the "integration of strategic communication in development projects" based on a clear understanding of indigenous realities (Okunnu, 2014: 3). It is seen as bringing to communities such information that can transform their lives which makes public programmes and policies meaningful and sustainable (Thusong Service Centre, 2000). Development communication requires the planning and logical application of communication resources to support the goals of socio-economic, political and cultural development (Bessette, 2006). Development communication employs the power of communication to bring about development. Therefore, it is regarded as the "*Fifth Theory of the Press*" which employs transformation and development and the fulfilment of basic needs (Okunnu, 2014: 5).

Development communication techniques include information dissemination and education behaviour change social marketing social mobilisation media advocacy communication for social change and community participation.

Several literatures on development communication indicate that the importance of communication in the development process has long been recognised. Lerner (1958) identified mass media growth as the democratic political development create opportunity for empathy which helped men from developed nations to acquire skills that spell modernity. Schramm (1964), in an excellent exposition on the relationship between the mass media and national development, listed twelve things which the mass media can do in the task of national development. These include:

- i. widen horizons;
- ii. focus attention;
- iii. raise aspiration;
- iv. create a climate for development;
- v. help change strongly held attitudes or values;
- vi. feed the interpersonal channels;
- vii. confer status;
- viii. broaden the policy dialogue;
- ix. enforce social norms;
- x. help form tastes;
- xi. affect attitudes lightly held and canalize stronger attitudes; and
- xii. help substantially in all types of education and training.

These points express Schramm's strong faith in the power of communication in development.

Almon and Verba (1963), classified communication as vital in political integration. Pye (1963) thought the problem of political development is one of cultural diffusion and of adapting and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands. Because communication is the web of society, its flow determines the direction and pace of dynamic social development. Deutsch (1964) pointed to communication as a prerequisite for successful political democracy.

All these ideas express the integration of communication in development. Therefore, Moemeka (1991: 19) sees “development communication as the application of the processes of communication to the development process. In other words, development communication is the use of the principles and practice of exchange of ideas to fulfil development objectives. It is, therefore, an element of the management process in the overall planning and implementation of development programmes. In a very broad sense, development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people through what Rosario-Braid (1979) has described as the identification and utilisation of appropriate expertise in the development process that will assist in increasing participation of intended beneficiaries at the grassroots level.”

The field of development communication has been approached from different angles. From this, different models emerged tilting to cultural, geographical and ideological contexts. This gave rise to the emergence of six different schools of thought on development communication. The schools of thought include:

- i. Bretton Woods which emphasises the impact of using the media for development.
- ii. Latin American which emphasises media for development and participatory communication.
- iii. Indian emphasises media for development and media development
- iv. African emphasises participatory communication.
- v. Los Banos in the Philippines, development communication metamorphosed through approaches and theories into an academic discipline culminating to the establishment of the Department of Development Communication in the College of Agriculture with undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This began in the University of the Philippines, Los Banos.
- vi. Communication for Development and Social Change school.

### 3.2 INTRODUCTION TO TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

A lot of writing takes place in organisations, institutions and companies. Employees produce technical documents regularly. Managers, directors and chief executive officers

(CEOs) spend time writing in the workplace. Technical communication is significantly different from literary, poetic, journalistic, expressive writings. The Study.com (2019) describe technical communication as “writing about your business, the products you help create, and the services your company offers - how to develop, advertise, distribute, or use your goods.” Technical communication does not use symbolism or vague literary expressions in its language. It is not designed to entertain but to inform an expert audience with clear and concise information on an area.

### 3.3 **PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION**

The Study.com (2019) highlights the purpose of technical communication which helps to make information clear and understandable in order to make business, research and academics more productive and consumer goods more convenient. It helps to advance economy by giving impetus to viable research and development, safeguarding design and manufacturing, and protecting consumers through accurate and informative documents. In the organisation, good technical communication will:

- Help employers understand and complete job tasks more successfully.
- Provide backgrounds on which new ideas can be built without repetition.
- Prevent problems with the development and manufacturing of products.
- Inform consumers how to assemble, fix or use a product.

### 3.4 **CHARACTERISTICS OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION**

What are the characteristics of technical communication? it is vital to explore the characteristics to prepare you to prepare documents that meet the needs of your audience. In doing this, you will take cognizance of the subject and style of technical communications. As we mentioned earlier, you cannot prepare technical document in the language of the journalist or in the high-sounding language of the political orator.

You already understand the importance of effective communication in the organisation. When you examine the daily official activities of most organisations, you would realise that a lot are on communication. These are mostly technical communications. These are used to:

- Guide, instruct and control the workers on carrying out assigned tasks.
- To prepare documents for other companies according to specification of goods and services.
- To instruct the audience on the technical specifications of products and how to use them.
- Provide research information and accurate data on specialized areas of focus.

Technical communication deals with specific and specialised area which could be scholarly, business products, patents or organisational services. The subject of technical communication always focuses on a particular area and the peculiarities of that restrict area. As the subject of technical communication is restricting, likewise, the audience is restricted. The audience for technical communication is “specific and targeted who are the most important focus of the communication. A clear understanding of who you are writing for will determine what you say, making the audience just as important as your subject in technical communication.” The style of technical communication as earlier said is different. It is not to entertain; does not aim at evoking emotions in the reader, does not use connotative words capable of several interpretations. The style of technical communication must convey specificity, must be clear, brief and simple. Preparing a technical document may not be easy; the language may not be flowery and decoding the contents also may not be appealing but it can be made attractive to the reader. Visual aids, graphics, attractive and readable fonts and headings and the proper segmentation of sections and chapters will help the reader to patiently go through the document noting the important areas.

#### 4.0 **SUMMARY**

This unit has explored the place of communication in the development especially the mass media. The involvement of the mass media in development creates a climate for progress and development, raise aspirations, focus attention and widen horizons.

On the other hand, technical communications are important part of formal and informal communications. Through that, the expert audience are well-informed with clear and concise information in their fields of endeavour. It helps employees to understand and complete their jobs successfully, prevent problems with development and manufacturing of products and information consumers on how to assemble, fix and use recommended products.

#### 5.0 **CONCLUSION**

Technical and development communications are important and indispensable part of communications in formal and informal environments. A clear understanding of the requirements for technical writing and the role of communication in development is imperative.



*Explain the term development communication.*

*2. Discuss the place of the mass media in development*

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define development communication.
2. Mention the characteristics of technical communication.

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