

Objective

Students will build good communication skills for the workplace.

Process

Discuss verbal and non-verbal communication. List some ways in which both positive and negative non-verbal communication may be displayed. Encourage students to role play effective techniques of verbal and non-verbal communication on the job when giving or receiving instructions and resolving conflict.

Divide the students into groups and use case studies to role play the effective use of communication.

Non-Verbal Communication Activity

Much communication is non-verbal and many students do not appreciate its importance. A simple exercise to illustrate its importance is to divide your class into pairs, call one half of the pair A and the other half B. Tell the A half of the pairs to prepare a 1 minute monologue on something they can speak continuously and meet privately with the B half of the pair to give them detailed instructions on how to behave. Ask them to return to the other half of their pair and give eye contact, to face them directly, and to be open with their body (arms at sides and legs apart). As A begins to speak to B, B should gradually remove eye contact and look elsewhere, looking anywhere besides A's face and gradually closing their body (cross arms and legs) and finally, gradually, turning their entire body away from the speaker. B should pay attention to A's response to this process-did A speak louder, did A attempt to regain B's attention, how?

Repeat the process with A and B switching roles. Provide the same instructions to both half of the pairs.

Next unpack the process with the students as a whole group. Ask them how it felt to be A, to be B, gather comments regarding how it felt as the other gradually disengaged from active non-verbal listening, what tactics did A's engage themselves in to regain attention?

Verbal Communication Activity

Listening is probably the aspect of communication that requires the most attention. Often students need the opportunity to practice listening. Open, active, engaged listening requires effort and concentration. Allow students to work in pairs with distinct roles for each of the two.

Have A speak a sentence. Have B respond with the statement beginning, "What I heard you say was...and B's response should be a restatement of what A has said. Now have A speak three sentences. B's response should now be a paraphrasing of the three sentences A has provided. B must listen to A to provide the restatements and the paraphrasing. A must listen to B to hear if the restatements and paraphrasing are accurate.

Assessment

The following assessment tool provides a means to gather data during the learning experience itself. By observing the individual student engage in the three tasks of this activity the teacher may choose to allocate assessment in this manner.

