

The Artist as Entrepreneur

You Say Tomato, I See Tomato

Lesson Description

Most ads for employment these days contain some sort of statement alluding to the need for the candidate to possess excellent communication skills. Generally, this means that a person in the advertised position should be able to write and speak well. However, we communicate in many non-verbal ways, and other people's understanding of what we are communicating may be peppered with their impressions gathered from our non-verbal communication. This lesson furthers the art of negotiation by exploring the messages we send and those we receive through non-verbal cues.

Concepts

Non-verbal communication
Negotiation strategies

Related Subject Area

Communications

Objectives

Students will:

Identify and demonstrate non-verbal forms of communication

Materials

Handout 1, *Trading Dialogue for Lodging* (one for each student)

Visual 1, *Non-Verbal Communications*

Emotion Cards (Use five index cards. Write one of the following words on each card: angry, nervous, sad, jealous, happy.)

Procedure

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students why we try to conduct important conversations in person. What information is missing when we speak on the phone? (*answers may include facial expressions and body movement*) What information is missing when we write a letter or send an e-mail message? (*voice intonation, facial expressions, and body movements*)
2. Explain that non-verbal communication is a complicated mixture of physical appearance, posture, gesture, gaze, space, time, environment, and how words are expressed. It therefore offers an excellent opportunity for negotiators to discover a wealth of information about the other party's level of interest, agreement and level of comfort that allows the other party to revise their strategy based on what they observe.

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3. Explain that what is expressed non-verbally can be misleading and even humorous. Distribute Handout 1, *Trading Dialogue for Lodging*. After students have read the handout, ask the following questions.
 - How did the visiting monk interpret the young monk's hand signals? (*Students should relate the dialogue.*)
 - How did the young monk describe the result of the debate to his older brother? (*Students should relate the young monk's interpretation.*)
 - What does the story illustrate about the challenges of accurately interpreting non-verbal communication? (*Answers will vary.*)
4. Ask students for additional examples of gestures that are subject to different interpretations. (*Students can be prompted by the following examples: Someone who yawns could be tired or bored. During World War II, the V-sign meant "victory," but during the 1960s it meant "peace." Someone who scratches his head could be confused or just have an itch.*)
5. Display Visual 1, *Non-Verbal Communication*. Discuss each point as follows below. During the discussion, illustrate each point with a quick demonstration.

Physical Appearance

6. Explain that these characteristics, which remain unchanged during an encounter, are related to gender, age, race, physique, and disability. Generally, federal and state laws prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, commerce, and other matters based on these attributes. But most people would probably admit that initially, they tend to be more comfortable with people that are most like themselves. Physical appearance also includes clothing, hair style, and accessories such as eye glasses or jewelry.
7. Point out that when interviewing for a job, students are usually encouraged to wear appropriate business clothing. But in some arts-related settings, that attire might seem out of place. An actor who wears a three-piece suite to an audition might, for example, communicate that he is coming from a traditional job and may not be available for rehearsals. Or his shoes could send the message that he is not prepared to dance. Symphony orchestras believe that physical appearance may unfairly influence decision-making, so musicians audition behind screens.

Kinesthetics

8. Explain that this is commonly known as body language. Kinesthetics is the language of body position and movement. Researchers who analyze interpersonal communication generally define these five categories:

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- Emblems are non-verbal behaviors that are easily and confidently translated into words. Examples include the thumbs-up signal, the shush sign, and a goodbye wave.
- Illustrators emphasize or punctuate words or phrases. They may include pointing or redundantly drawing a picture in the air.
- Affect Displays are typically facial or eye movements that express basic emotions such as fear, happiness, anger, surprise, disgust, fatigue, and eagerness. Researchers say that some areas of the face are better suited to communicate certain emotions. For example, the nose, cheek, and mouth are best for communicating disgust.
- Regulators monitor, maintain, or control another person's behavior. Nodding your head, looking at your watch, raising your hand in class, adjusting eye focus, and making listening noises such as "mm-mm" are examples of regulators.
- Adapters are movements or gestures that serve a physical need. Examples include pulling an earlobe, tugging at clothing, crossing one's legs, and scratching until an itch is relieved.

Space & Environment

9. Explain that space has both physical and social meaning. We unconsciously and consciously structure space in a variety of ways. It defines relationships between people in their interactions and the organization of the workplace and other environments. Ask the following questions:
 - How does changing the distance between two people convey a desire for intimacy?
 - How does changing the distance between two people declare a lack of interest?
 - And, how does changing the distance between two people increase or decrease dominance?
10. Explain that environmental factors such as furniture, architectural style, lighting conditions, temperature, ambient noise, and colors can affect our mood and actions. Being aware of physical surroundings can also help negotiators accomplish their communication goals. Ask students if given the choice, where would they negotiate an important agreement – on their own turf, in a neutral territory, or in the other party's space? Ask students to provide advantages and disadvantages of each option. (*Students should recognize that locations that allow a person to feel more comfortable work to the person's advantage, while foreign or hostile locations put negotiators at a disadvantage.*)

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Eye Movement

11. Explain that where one looks, when one looks, and for how long is often considered the most important component of non-verbal communication. When eye contact falls short of our cultural expectations, we tend to think the other person is uninterested, preoccupied, or shy. Conversely, establishing and maintaining eye contact are generally considered signs of interest and engagement. The direction, duration, and quality of eye behavior also can signal status and friendship or compensate for the large physical distance between two people in a room.

Research shows that, when they listen and speak, women make eye contact more often and maintain it longer than do men. Explain that research into these differences was conducted by Deborah Tannen, author of a best-selling book, *You Just Don't Understand*. She analyzed videotapes of conversations between friends of different ages.

12. Invite two boys who are friends to bring their chairs to the front of the classroom and conduct a serious conversation. Allow two or three minutes. Repeat the process with two girls who are friends. Ask the following questions:

- How did the pairs orient themselves to each other with their bodies and their eyes?
- Did the boys position their chairs next to each other?
- Did they establish and maintain eye contact throughout their conversation?
- Did the girls position their chairs opposite each other?
- Did they establish and maintain eye contact throughout their conversation?

13. Discuss the content of the two conversations. Did the boys cover a serious topic as requested? Did the girls complete the assignment satisfactorily? Which pair was more engaged? According to Tannen, chances are the two pairs were equally involved – just in a different manner. In fact, tenth-grade boys she observed displayed more emotional intensity than any of the other pairs of friends studied although their physical postures were indirectly aligned and they rarely looked at each other.

Sound

14. How do we say what we say? Paralanguage refers to the vocal dimensions of speech such as stress, pitch, volume, rhythm, and rate.
15. Distribute an *Emotion Card* to each of five students. Ask each student to read his/her card in confidence and then to recite the alphabet expressing the assigned emotion. Ask the class what feelings were communicated by each student. Point out that the students' feelings were communicated even though their speech was

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content-free. Explain that most listeners are able to judge peoples' emotional state from the style and quality of their voices.

16. Explain that research shows that those who speak quickly are more persuasive and are evaluated more highly than those who talk at low or below normal speeds. Ask the following questions:

Why might this finding be of interest to advertisers? (With this information, advertisers are likely to select those who speak quickly as spokespeople for products.)

Why might this finding be of interest to politicians? (Politicians could use this information to prepare for speeches or debates. They would practice speaking quickly.)

17. Explain that silence can be a powerful negotiation tool. Silence gives the parties time to reflect, to process what others have said. Sometimes silence is used as a punishment – for example, some people use “the silent treatment.” Sometimes silence is used to demonstrate defiance. Sometimes it allows the parties to cool off or prevents them from saying what they may later regret.

Touch

18. Physical contact can be electrifying, comforting, irritating, rude, condescending, or ambiguous. Ask students to shake hands with their neighbors. Ask various students the following questions:

Were the hand shakes firm and confident? Too strong? Like a wet fish? Explain that the hand shake is the most widely used form of greeting in Western culture. It dates back to antiquity when clasping hands indicated that no weapons were being concealed. References to shaking hands on a deal can be found in the Bible and in Shakespeare.

19. Explain that a hand shake is frequently complemented by a clasp of the arm or a pat on the back. How should these gestures be interpreted? Read and discuss this excerpt from the novel Primary Colors. The narrator, Henry Burton, describes the handshake as “the threshold act, the beginning of politics. He says that Gov. Hack Stanton is the master:

“I’ve seen him do it two million times now, but I couldn’t tell you how he does it, the right-handed part of it – the strength, quality, duration of it, the rudiments of pressing the flesh. I can, however, tell you a whole lot about what he does with his other hand. He is a genius with it. He might put it on your elbow, or up by your biceps: these are basic, reflexive moves. He is interested in you. He is honored to meet you. If he gets higher up your shoulder – if he, say, drapes his left arm over your back, it is somehow less intimate, more casual. He’ll share a laugh or a secret then – a light secret, not real one – flattering you with the

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illusion of conspiracy. If he doesn't know you all that well and you've just told him something "important," something earnest or emotional, he will lock in and honor you with a two-hander, his left hand overwhelming your wrist and four-arm. He'll flash that famous misty look of his. And he will mean it."

Time

20. Use of time varies greatly, especially among cultures. American business people are, for example, noted for their time-consciousness. They expect punctuality and have a reputation for wanting to get down to business instead of taking the time to build relationships. Impatience can offend international counterparts. More importantly, it can limit negotiating power because those who are anxious to make a deal quickly are often the first to make concessions. Ask the following questions:
- A. How does the use of time communicate non-verbal messages? (By arriving on time, one may send a message that he or she is interested or anxious to get down to business. By arriving late, one sends a message of disinterest or lack of concern.)
 - C. How is time used in negotiations? (Negotiations may be limited to a specific time period, which might encourage people to cooperate to reach a conclusion. One person might make the other wait for a response.)

Closure

Explain that experts say that when two people converse, less than a third of their communication is verbal. More than 65 percent of what they communicate is conveyed through what is commonly known as body language. Because we rely heavily (and often intuitively) on non-verbal cues to express ourselves and to interpret what others are saying, effective negotiators must be able to observe and understand the sights and non-verbal sounds that reveal tension, empathy, anger, fear, trust and other emotions.

Continue to display Visual 1, *Non-Verbal Communication*. Explain that you will suggest different types of non-verbal cues, and students are to state which of the elements of non-verbal communication the cue illustrates.

A gallery director sets up an interview with an artist to discuss a show. The gallery director leads the artist into a room with a large round table, four foot in diameter. (*space and environment*)

An artist discusses her work with a gallery patron. As the artist speaks, she is staring at the floor. (*eye movement*)

The gallery director greets the patron as she enters the gallery. The director embraces the patron's hand, holding only the patron's fingers, shaking them loosely. (*touch*)

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The patron is considering underwriting a new show, and would like to get down to business because she has another appointment in one hour. (*time*)

While listening to the gallery director's ideas, the patron nods her head approvingly, but looks at her watch frequently. (*kinesthetics-regulators*)

After their discussion, the gallery director and the patron stand, shake hands, and the patron brushes the front of her skirt to smooth it. (*touch, kinesthetics-adapters*)

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Handout 1

Trading Dialogue for Lodging

Provided he makes and wins an argument about Buddhism with those who live there, any wandering monk can remain in a Zen temple. If he is defeated, he has to move on.

In a temple in the northern part of Japan two brother monks were dwelling together. The elder one was learned, but the younger one was stupid and had but one eye.

A wandering monk came and asked for lodging, properly challenging them to a debate about the sublime teachings. The elder brother, tired that day from much studying, told the younger one to take his place. "Go and request the dialogue in silence," he cautioned.

So the young monk and the stranger went to the shrine and sat down.

Shortly afterwards the traveler rose and went in to the elder brother and said: "Your young brother is a wonderful fellow. He defeated me."

"Relate the dialogue to me," said the elder one.

"Well," explained the traveler, "first I held up one finger, representing Buddha, the enlightened one. So he held up two fingers signifying Buddha and his teachings. I held up three fingers, representing Buddha, his teachings, and his followers, living the harmonious life. Then he shook his clenched fist in my face, indicating that all three come from one realization. Thus he won and so I have no right to remain here." With this, the traveler left.

"Where is that fellow?" asked the younger one, running in to his elder brother.

"I understand you won the debate."

"Won nothing. I'm going to beat him up."

"Tell me the subject of the debate," said the elder one.

"Why, the minute he saw me, he held up one finger, insulting me by insinuating that I have only one eye. Since he was a stranger, I thought I would be polite to him, so I held up two fingers, congratulating him that he has two eyes. Then the impolite wretch held up three fingers, suggesting that between us we only have three eyes. So I got mad and started to punch him, but he ran out and that ended it."

(reprinted from *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, compiled by Paul Reps, published by Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1989.)

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Visual 1

Non-Verbal Communication

I. Physical appearance

II. Kinesthetics

- A. Emblems
- B. Illustrators
- C. Affect Displays
- D. Regulators
- E. Adapters

III. Space & Environment

IV. Eye Movement

V. Sound

VI. Touch

VII. Time