

Communication

Interface 2018: Student Voices Transform Teaching

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The Content: effective and efficient means for student-faculty communication

- We receive messages on three basic levels: Vocabulary, Voice Inflections, Non-Verbal Behavior
- Active Listening is Key in Communication

Challenges

- Many different interpretations of a message based on such things as nonverbal behaviors or voice inflections that may not have been initially intended
- We often send what is often called “mixed messages” to others. A mixed message in this sense is when the actual words being spoken are not consistent with the speaker’s voice inflections and/or body language
- The average person speaks at about a rate of 150 words per minute (wpm). The problem is that we can hear at about a rate of 1,000 wpm. This obviously gives us a lot of extra time to be distracted when listening

Activities

- Guess the Emotion
- Bad Listening Habits
- Name the attitude of your Non-verbal Body Language
- Exaggerate your Inflection
- All Mixed Up

Takeaways

- We want our verbal and nonverbal communication to be congruent with our intentions
- Research on inflections shows that how you say something is five times more important than what you say.
- 7% of what we communicate is based on vocabulary; • 38% of what we communicate is based on voice inflections; and • 55% of what we communicate is based on nonverbal behaviors.
- By becoming more conscious and even in control of the way you say things, you can help ensure that you are being understood by others.

Practice Your Awareness

- People watch in a coffee shop and practice reading other people’s body language such as crossed arms, a defensive posture, or even facial expressions.
 - Tape record your end of some telephone conversations. Notice how your inflection changes depending on your listener.
 - If you are trying to change a habit, ask a friend to be your monitor
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Activities

1.) Guess the Emotion

Many people don't seem to be aware of the expressions they make that could either reinforce or detract from what they're saying, or could give the wrong signals to those they are listening to.

- a. Divide group into two teams. Give each team a set of cards with an emotion on it.

Have a participant from Team A act out the emotion on the card until his or her team guesses correctly. Switch and have Team B act out their card.

2.) Name the attitude of your Non-verbal Body Language

- a. Lead the group in trying different body postures, ways of sitting and or standing, and as a group we identify what the meaning it could be suggesting.

3.) Bad Listening Habits

- a. Have a volunteer come up to the front and describe their job or hometown. The first time through, the group are "good listeners." 2nd time through, the group adopts Bad listening habits listed on a card that is shown to them (eg. Daydreaming or thinking of something else (even something as simple as your list of groceries) while another person is speaking

4.) Exaggerate your Inflection

Inflections are the smooth pitch changes within words. They add interest and melody to the voice and speech. The four general types of inflection are rising, falling, and rising and falling circumflex. Research shows that the way you say something is five times more important than what you say. Inflections can greatly impact meaning and intention. Most people use the rising and falling inflections fairly well; they simply don't make them broad enough.

- a. Exaggerate the pitch change on the following to find a new way. In performance strive for a balance between the old and new.

"No! No!! No!!! No? No?? No??? Why! Why!! Why!!! Why? Why?? Why???"

- b. Repeat the previous words using rising (up-down-up) and falling (down-up-down) circumflex.
- c. Say the following words as many different ways as possible.

"Well Go Maybe Please Hey Wow So"

- d. Read these sentences

"I won't do it. I'd love to. She's my friend."

to reflect these emotions:

**anger fear doubt determination sarcasm disgust
joy pity curiosity indifference regret**

5.) All Mixed Up

We need to be careful in our communications not to send what is often called “mixed messages” to others. A mixed message in this sense is when the actual words being spoken are not consistent with the speaker’s voice inflections and/or body language. This confuses others and makes them unsure of what was the real message being sent.

- a. Give statements to participants and ask them to say them in such a way that their voice inflections and nonverbal behaviors are not consistent with the message.

(For example, I might say, “I am really very excited about being here,” however, say this in a monotone, low voice, lacking any enthusiasm. In addition, cross my arms and look down with a disgusted look on my face. Ask participants what the real message was in your communication and how it was different than the words you spoke.)
