

Fire Instructor, Pre-Course Assignment 4

Text: *Fire and Emergency Services Instructor*, Seventh Edition, Fire Protection Publications, Stillwater, OK, 2006. Chapter 4, “Effective Interpersonal Communication,” pp 84–98.

NFPA 1041 (2007) JPRs addressed

- 4.4.3, 4.4.3 (A), and 4.4.3 (B)
- 5.2.6
- 5.5.3
- 6.2.7

Objectives

After completing Pre-Course Assignment 4, you should be able to

- Define *interpersonal communication*.
- List and explain the six elements of the communication process.
- Identify the purposes of interpersonal communication.
- List four guidelines for instructors to follow when selecting and using words to convey a message.
- State six guidelines for instructors to follow to improve their verbal skills.
- Explain the importance of the nonverbal component in interpersonal communication.
- Describe the five aspects of kinesics.
- Outline the concepts for improving nonverbal communication.
- Distinguish between *hearing* and *listening*.
- Describe each of the five major listening skills.
- Identify the barriers to being a good listener and how to overcome them.

Reading

Chapter 4, “Effective Interpersonal Communication,” pp 84–98. (On pages 7 and 8 of this assignment, note clarification for information on pages 90 and 96 of the text.)

After reading Chapter 4, you should be able to answer the following:

1. Define the term *interpersonal communication* and list its characteristics.
2. What are the six elements of the communication process? Using the six elements, explain the communication process.
3. What is *clear-text*?
4. What can a receiver of a message do to overcome an internal interference?
5. What can a receiver of a message do to help control external interference at an emergency incident?

6. List and define the five general purposes for interpersonal communication.
7. What guidelines should instructors follow to develop verbal skills that build understanding?
8. In general, what part do verbal and nonverbal elements play in interpersonal communication?
9. Define *kinesics* and describe its main elements.
10. Explain six concepts instructors should apply to improve nonverbal interpersonal communications.
11. How is *listening* different from *hearing*?
12. List and define each of the parts of the listening process.
13. Cite four ways that you can improve your listening skills.
14. What step should you take to overcome the barriers to listening?

Reflecting

Provide a written answer to each of the following questions. Continue answers on a second sheet, if necessary.

Recall an instructor you have had whose interpersonal communication skills you considered to be well-developed and effective in the training environment. Analyze that instructor's interpersonal communication skills. Describe what there is about the instructor that made him or her an effective communicator. (Provide specific details.)

Evaluate your own interpersonal communication skills. What are your strengths? What aspects of your oral and nonverbal skills should you work to improve? Outline what you will do to improve each skill you identified as needing improvement.

As the instructor, what would you say to students to impress upon them the importance of well-developed interpersonal communication skills in their work environment?

Match the definition in the right-hand column with the related communication term in the left-hand column. Write the letter of the correct definition in the blank to the left of the number of the communication term.

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|-----------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Clear-text | A. The active process of attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding to a message. |
| _____ 2. Hearing | B. Eliminating filler words from the communication process. |
| _____ 3. Interference | C. Factors that create a barrier to communication. |
| _____ 4. Kinesics | D. The listener to a message. |
| _____ 5. Listening | E. The originator of a message. |
| _____ 6. Mnemonics | F. Plain English. |
| _____ 7. Paraphrasing | G. The physiological process of sound waves striking the eardrum. |
| _____ 8. Receiver | H. Restating a message using one's own words while maintaining the original meaning of the message. |
| _____ 9. Sender | I. A system or technique for remembering. |
| | J. The use of body motion and position in communication. |

Circle the letter of the **best** answer for Items 10–15.

10. Radio communications may result in miscommunication **mainly** because _____.
- A. feedback between sender and receiver is not possible
 - B. the communicators' frames of reference are different
 - C. the nonverbal aspects of communication are lacking
 - D. they are routinely transmitted in the form of clear-text
11. The success of a communication for sender and receiver is dependent upon the sender and receiver _____.
- A. agreeing on the purpose of the communication
 - B. being face to face during the communication
 - C. giving each other feedback immediately
 - D. having communicated with each other before

12. The statement “Fire fighters resist change” is an example of _____.
- A. a fact
 - B. a generalization
 - C. influencing
 - D. paralanguage
13. All of the following guidelines are appropriate for improving your communication skills **EXCEPT** _____.
- A. recognizing a receiver’s particular frame of reference
 - B. exaggerating mouth movements for hard-of-hearing receivers
 - C. taking a “time-out” before handling an emotional problem
 - D. working toward accuracy and clarity when communicating
14. Instructors provide an example for students by using language that _____.
- A. applies their personal feelings to another person
 - B. disregards the symbolism and effect of words
 - C. promotes understanding and develops relationships
 - D. refers to the general traits of a group of people
15. The listening skill that involves decoding the message and giving the message meaning is _____.
- A. attending
 - B. evaluating
 - C. remembering
 - D. understanding

Instructor 1, Pre-Course Assignment 4 Answer Key

<u>Item</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Text page #</u>
1.	F	p 87
2.	G	p 94
3.	C	p 86, 88
4.	J	p 92
5.	A	p 95
6.	I	p 95–96
7.	H	p 95
8.	D	p 88
9.	E	p 88
10.	C	p 87
11.	A	p 89
12.	B	p 91
13.	B	p 91
14.	C	p 90–91
15.	D	p 95–96

CLARIFICATION

Verbal Component, page 90, paragraph 2

One way words may be categorized is whether they are **abstract** or **concrete**. An **abstract word** is a word that refers to an intangible concept, emotion, or quality. Examples of abstract words are *love, honor, personality, patriotism, good, and excellent*. Speakers and listeners assign their own personal meaning to abstract words; that is, everyone has his or her own idea of what constitutes *honor* or what is *good*.

A **concrete word** is a word that refers to a tangible object or substance capable of being perceived by the senses. Examples of concrete words are *tool, book, building, crowbar, fire fighter*. Because the senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting—help to determine the meaning of concrete words, there is a high level of agreement among speakers and listeners regarding the meaning of concrete words. That is, speakers and listeners assign essentially the same characteristics to the object or substance that a concrete word represents.

Additionally, concrete words may be categorized as **general** or **specific**. A **general word** refers to a class, group, or category of concrete words. Examples of general words are *tool, book, building, and doctor*.

A **specific word** is a concrete word that refers to a particular something with distinguishing characteristics. Examples of specific words are *crowbar, dictionary, school, and pediatrician*. Many concrete words have numerous levels of specificity. The word *school* may be made more specific with words such as *elementary school* and *college* and made even more specific with the proper nouns *Stafford Elementary School* and *Florida State University*.

As a rule, to be an effective communicator, an instructor should choose concrete words over abstract ones and choose concrete words that are specific rather than general. Although technical terms may be specific, instructors should use technical terms only to the extent that his or her audience can understand them. As the text says, instructors should “select and use words that accurately symbolize the image that they are trying to convey.”

CLARIFICATION

Evaluating, page 96

In evaluating a message, one should distinguish among **valid facts**, **invalid facts**, and **opinions**. Generally, a fact is information that can be verified or disputed through experience or observation. A **valid fact** is information that has been verified as having happened, that has been verified through observation or experience to be true. An **invalid fact** is information that cannot be verified as having happened, that can be proven through observation or experience to be false. Facts are objective.

Rather than a generalization, an **opinion** is

- A personal view, attitude, appraisal or belief.
- The expression of a belief that is held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof.
- A personal belief or judgment that is not founded on proof or certainty.

One may hold an opinion that is well-informed through knowledge of facts; however, the opinion is not factual, it is neither true nor false. An opinion cannot be proved or disproved because an opinion is personal and subjective.

Using examples from the text,

- That an engine company has applied water to a fire is verified by observing smoke changing from gray to black. This is a valid fact because it is verified by observation.
- A witness says that everyone has exited the structure. This is an invalid fact because it can be proved or disproved only by a search of the structure. If search of the structure proves that everyone did exit the structure, then the witness's statement becomes a valid fact. If the search cannot confirm (prove) that everyone exited the structure, then the witness's statement remains an invalid fact.

Let us say that the fire fighters who answered the call to the fire agreed that it was the worst fire in the city in the past ten years. This is the opinion of the fire fighters, which may be well informed by their knowledge of fires in the city over the last ten years. Others in the city may agree with the fire fighters and hold the same opinion. But, that the fire was the worst in ten years is a personal value judgment nonetheless. Others in the fire department and the city may hold a different opinion about what has been the worst fire in the city in the last ten years.