

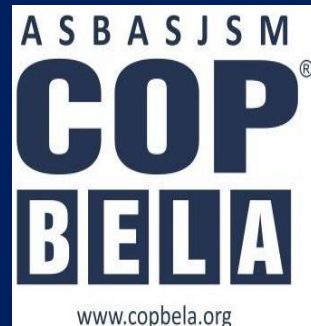


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COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

(An Autonomous College)

BELA (Ropar) Punjab



Name of Unit	Communication Skills
Subject Name	Communication Skills
Subject Code	BP105T
Module No.	1
Class	B.Pharma 1 ST semester
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Learning Outcomes of Unit

LO	Learning Outcome (LO)	Course Outcome Code
LO1	Students will learn about the definition and importance communication.	BP105T.1
LO2	Students will learn about the Communication Process.	BP105T.1
LO3	Students will learn about the Barriers to Communication.	BP105T.1
LO4	Students will learn about the Other factors affecting our perspective.	BP105T.1

Module Content Table

S.no.	Topic
1	Introduction, definition, the importance of communication.
2	The communication process –source, message, encoding, channel, decoding, receiver, feedback, context
3	Barriers to communication -physiological barriers, physical barriers, cultural barriers, language barriers, gender barriers, interpersonal barriers, psychological barriers, emotional barriers
4	Perspectives in communication introduction, visual perception, language, other factors affecting our perspective - past experiences, prejudices, feelings, environment

INTRODUCTION

This topic gives you an overview of communication and introduces you to the main elements in the communication process. It also highlights the importance of writing clear, positive messages and offers you some basic tips and guidelines on this form of communication so that you may become more proficient in the kind of writing needed at home as well as in the college and workplace. You will also learn about some of the common pitfalls which may impede the effectiveness of written communication.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is a learned skill. However, while most people are born with the physical ability to talk, not all can communicate well unless they make special efforts to develop and refine this skill further. Very often, we take the ease with which we communicate with each other for granted, so much so that we sometimes forget how complex the communication process actually is.

Elements in Communication

Have you ever wondered why some people can communicate so well while others fail to get their message across? What are the elements that must be present in the communication process before it can be successful and effective? Well, communication has been defined as the act of giving, receiving or exchanging information, ideas and opinions so that the „message% is completely understood by both parties. Look at Figure 1.1 below. The illustration shows clearly that in a communication process, there must be a sender who speaks or sends a message, and a receiver who listens or receives the message.

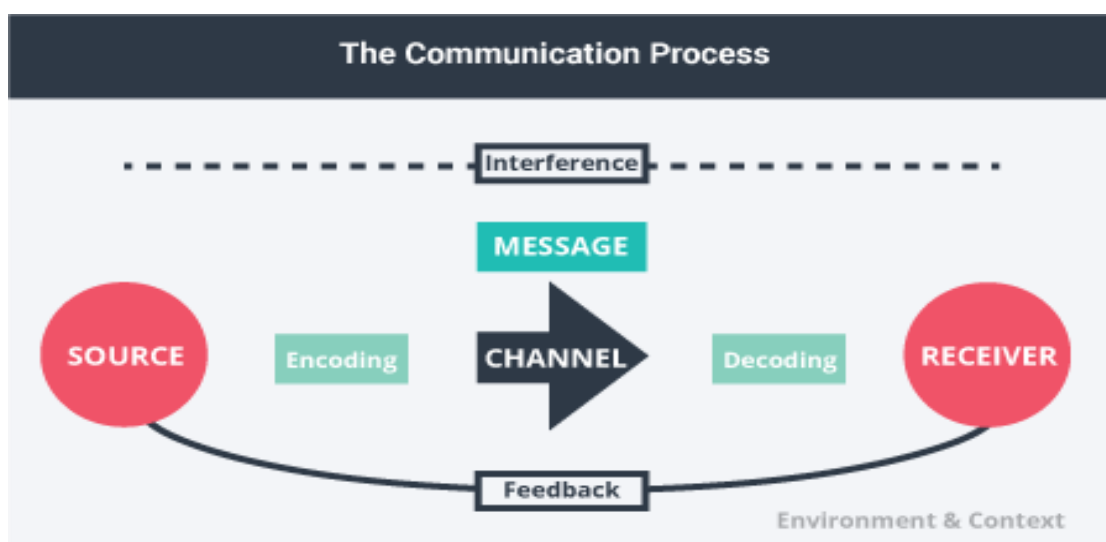


Figure 1.1: The communication process

The sender sends a message with a certain intention in mind. The receiver of the message tries to understand and interpret the message sent. He then gives feedback to the original sender, who in turn interprets the feedback. This process, repeated continuously, constitutes communication.

Clearly, there are several major elements in the communication process – a sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback, context. There is both a speaker's intention to convey a message and a listener's reception of what has been said. Thus, listening skills are just as important as speaking skills in order for communication to be effective.

This means that if you want to get your message across accurately, you need to consider these three things:

- The message;
- The audience or receiver; and
- How the message is likely to be received.

A message is only considered successfully communicated when both the sender and the receiver perceive and understand it in the same way. If this does not happen, then there may be a breakdown in communication, which may ultimately stand in the way of you realizing your goals, either personally or professionally.

Factors Affecting Communication

As mentioned earlier, effective communication is a two-way process but there are a number of factors which may disrupt this process and affect the overall interpretation and understanding of what was communicated. Myriad problems can pop up at different stages of the communication process. These can relate to any of the elements involved a sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context. It is therefore important to understand some of the factors that affect communication so that you can try to get your message across with minimal misunderstanding and confusion.

Below are some possible problem areas that may turn out to be **barriers** to effective communication:

(a) Status/Role

The sender and receiver of a message may be of equal status within a hierarchy (e.g. managers in an organization) or they may be at different levels (e.g. manager/employee, lecturer/student,

business owner/clients). This difference in status sometimes affects the effectiveness of the communication process.

(b) Cultural Differences

Cultural differences, both within or outside the organization (for example, inter-departmental dealings and communication with outside organizations or ethnic minorities) may impede the communication process.

(c) Choice of Communication Channels

Before you choose your communication channel, you should ask yourself whether the channel is appropriate for a particular purpose and the person/receiver you have in mind. Sending messages via inappropriate channels can send out wrong signals and end up creating confusion.

(d) Length of Communication

The length of the message also affects the communication process. You need to be sure that it serves the purpose and is appropriate for the receiver. Is the message too long or too brief?

(e) Use of Language

Poor choice of words or weak sentence structure also hampers communication. The same goes for inappropriate punctuation. The two sentences below illustrate clearly how different placement of punctuation can change the entire meaning of a sentence:

Woman, without her, man is nothing.

Woman, without her man, is nothing.

(f) Disabilities

Disabilities such as impaired sight, dyslexia and poor mental health can also be barriers to good communication, and should be taken into consideration when evaluating the effectiveness of the communication process. You may need to use hearing aids, sign language, magnifying systems, and symbols to alleviate problems caused by disabilities.

(g) Known or Unknown Receiver

Whether the receiver is known or unknown to you also plays a major role in determining the effectiveness of your communication. A known receiver may be better able to understand your

message despite having insufficient information as both of you probably have common experiences and a shared schemata. An unknown receiver, on the other hand, may require more information and time to decode the message.

(h) Individual Perceptions/Attitudes/Personalities

Sometimes, the method of communication needs to take into consideration the receiver's personality traits, age and preferred style. The elderly and children, for example, have different communication needs and preferences when compared to young adults. Is the receiver of your message a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic sort of person? How do you think they will react to your message? Can you adapt your communication style to suit theirs?

(i) Atmosphere/Noise/Distraction

Our surroundings can sometimes pose as barriers to effective communication. A noisy place (a party, for instance) usually puts a strain on oral communication as both the sender and the receiver need to put extra effort to get the message across and ensure that it is understood clearly and correctly.

(j) Clarity of Message

Is the message conveyed in a clear or ambiguous manner?

(k) Lack of Feedback

Feedback is important as it enables confirmation of understanding to be made by both parties. The lack of feedback can sometimes create problems as it can lead to uncertainty and confusion.

Perspectives in Communication

A communication perspective focuses on the way in which our shared meanings and practices are constituted through language and symbol, the construction of messages, and their dissemination through media, organizations, and society.

We all come to each communication exchange with our own 'filter' through which we see the world, the person we are communicating with and the situation or topic we are communicating about. These filters mean that we don't always start with the same perspective as the person we are communicating with.

“Our individual perceptions are the ‘filter’ through which we communicate with others.”

Visual perception

Visual perception is the ability to see and interpret (analyze and give meaning to) the visual information that surrounds us.

The process of "taking in" one's environment is referred to as perception. If perception is inaccurate, incorrect or altered in any way - problems with reading, spelling, handwriting, math and comprehension occur. Visual perceptual skills involve the ability to organize and interpret the information that is seen and give it meaning. The importance of visual perceptual skills in academic success is agreed upon by many, acknowledging reading would not be possible without adequate visual perception.

Language

The different perspectives we experience can be with language as well. How many times have you received an email that seemed to have a certain ‘tone to it,’ and that perception of tone colored the way that you might have responded?

Other Factors Affecting Our Perspective

There are a multitude of other factors that can affect our perspective, thereby affecting how we communicate with another person.

Past Experiences

Imagine that you are in a meeting where you will be discussing changes in your personnel policies at work. What will you be bringing to that conversation? You might have examples of other company’s personnel policies. You might have examples from your own time in the company that demonstrates why you feel that certain changes might need to be made. Or you might come to the table empty-handed, with just a pad of paper and a pen in order to take notes.

What influences you to do any of these things? Your past experience. You would bring outside information because you have learned in the past that comparing situations can be helpful in decision making. You bring examples of your own experience because you have learned in the past that examples can be powerful ways to make your case.

Prejudices

We all have prejudices. They occur when we take our past experiences with a person and assume that the same type of experience will happen with all people who are similar to the first. Prejudices are partly due to culture and partly due to personal preference or experience. Not all prejudices involve a negative characteristic either; for example, you could consider all of one group to be smart.

The problem with prejudices is when they start to influence how or to whom we communicate.

Feelings

For this area of influence, there are actually two ways in which your feelings can influence your communication with another person. The first simply refers to the way that you feel on a given day; if you feel well, you'll communicate in one way and if you feel ill you'll communicate in another. Since your wellbeing fluctuates, it makes sense that the way you communicate will change somewhat with how well you are feeling. If you find yourself experiencing difficulty in communicating due to an illness or other physical stressor, recognizing and acknowledging it, when appropriate, can be very helpful when others might interpret the change in your communication as having something to do with them.

The second aspect related to feelings refers to how you feel about a specific person. When you genuinely like someone, the way you communicate is going to show it. Unfortunately, the same can be said for when you don't like someone. However, as you continue learning about effective communication skills in the following chapters, you will find some tools to help you be as effective as possible in communicating, even when it's with someone that you dislike.

Environment

The last area of influence on your communication is your environment. All of us communicate differently in different environments. This is simple enough to observe in everyday life. Do you speak to your colleagues the same way that you do to your friends? Do you talk to strangers with more or less formality than people you know well? Do you talk to your subordinates the same way when your own boss is there as you do when she is not there? As you go through your workday, notice how where you are, what is going on and who else is present may be impacting the way that you communicate.

Recognizing how the environment might be affecting others you communicate with is a skill that can come in handy for you, particularly when you perceive that the environment is having a negative impact on your ability to communicate effectively with someone. This skill will help you to perceive why someone might be communicating in the way that they are. It will also give you a factor that you can alter in order to make the person more comfortable or to establish a level of formality that you feel is important in a particular situation.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Long answer questions:

1. Elaborate the communication process in detail. (10)
2. What is communication? Explain the process of communication and factors affecting it in detail.(10)

Short answer questions

3. What are barriers in communication process? (5)
4. Differentiate between language and cultural barriers.(5)
5. What is the importance of communication process in human being's life?(5)

Very short answer questions:

6. Define communication.(2)
7. What is feedback?(2)
8. What is visual perception?(2)
9. What is decoding?(2)
10. What is the role of sender and receiver in communication process?(2)