

Curriculum Guide: Interpersonal Communication

Seminar in Applied Communication

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Interpersonal Communication Curriculum Overview

Interpersonal Communication takes place when two or more people engage in exchanging information amongst each other. This course examines elements and concepts of communication. During this course students will study the impact of gaining awareness of self and others. We are constantly sending and receiving messages verbally, non-verbally, intentionally and unintentionally to those we encounter on a day-to-day basis. Every time we interact with another human being we have the capability to affect them positively or negatively with our actions or words. Interpersonal communication courses were designed to help students communicate effectively and to help students identify ineffective communication as well. This guide was designed to help Interpersonal Communication Instructors prepare & administer lectures, introduce activities, and to suggest class discussion ideas.

Overall Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, student will be able to:

- Analyze the dynamics of interpersonal communication in personal and professional relationships
 - Understand different behavioral roles
 - Understand the importance of staying present in the moment
 - Know the fundamentals of being of being a good listener
 - Describe the characteristics of interpersonal communication
 - Create a plan to improve interpersonal communication
 - Resolve conflict effectively
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Course Lesson Plans & Lecture Guides

Lesson #1 – What is Interpersonal Communication

Objective:

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define Interpersonal Communication. They will be able to identify and analyze the interpersonal communication that takes place in their life.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to compare and contrast interpersonal communication with other forms of communication
2. Students will be able to identify transactional, impactful, and dyadic forms of communication
3. Students will be able to analyze ones perception of self and others

Material:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Lecture:

- I. Instructor will ask class to define Interpersonal Communication in their own words.

Activity:

Split class into groups of five, and ask students to define interpersonal communication using 15 words or less.

- This activity will help students share thoughts with one another while discussing prior knowledge. This activity prepares the class for the lesson of defining Interpersonal Communication.

Lecture:

- II.** Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 1 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

The Definition of Interpersonal Communication -Interpersonal

Communication is a Dynamic form of communication between two (or more) people in which the messages exchanged significantly influence their thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and relationships (McCornack, 2013, p. 11).

***Instructor should emphasize on the four significant suggestions in the given definition:**

1. Remind students that interpersonal communication is *dynamic* which means it is always changing over time. Interpersonal communication differs from other forms of communication because it is based off of moods, thoughts, and emotions.
2. Interpersonal communication is sometimes transactional. For Instance, you and your spouse are on a date and exchange a number of affectionate compliments.
3. Interpersonal Communication is dyadic meaning that it includes 2 people. For example, talking to a friend via e-mail or a family member of dinner is an example of dyadic interpersonal communication.

4. Interpersonal Communication generate impact it changes ones thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and relationships (McCornack, 2013, p. 11).

Class Discussion:

Encourage students to discuss dynamic, transactional, dyadic, and impactful communication norms within their day-to-day life.

Lecture:

III. Discuss and analyze self-presentation goals, instrumental goals, and relationship goals.

- Self –Presentation Goals: Desires you have to present yourself in certain ways so that others perceive you as being a particular type of person.
- Instrumental Goals: Practical aims you want to achieve or task you want to accomplish through a particular interpersonal encounter.
- Relationship Goals: Building, mainlining, or terminating bonds with others (McCornack, 2013, p. 11).

Assessment:

Students will write a reflection essay and give a presentation.

Prompt: Select a song or scene from a movie or television show that exemplify ones perception of one’s self or the perception of a personal relationship. Write a 750-word reflection essay explaining why you chose your selection. After analyzing the song or scene create 3 goals either for self, instrumental, and/or relationship(s). Student should identify if the relationship they chose is impactful, dyadic and/or transactional. If the student chooses to write his/her reflection essay about oneself they should emphasize on the dynamics of their mood/emotions and

how it affects them personally and/or professionally. Student should also present the content of his/her essay to the class using a PowerPoint presentation.

References

McCornack, S. (2013). *Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication* (3rd Ed.), *Introducing interpersonal communication* (pp. 1-33). Boston, MA: Bedford

Lesson #2 – Mastering Listening

Objective:

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to describe aspects of practicing active listening. Students will be able to incorporate effective listening strategies and identify different listening styles.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to draw contrast between poor listening versus active listening
2. Students will be able to define and interpret the five-step process of active listening
3. Students will be able to evaluate their listening skills
4. Students will have the ability to master being in the here and now by practicing positive feedback, mental bracketing, recalling, and back-channeling cues.

Materials:

Textbook- *Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Work Sheet- Active Listening Inventory

Lecture:

I. Present two different video clips to the class. One clip should exemplify poor listening, and the other clip should exemplify active listening. Encourage the students to take notes about what stands out about each video as it pertains to listening. The students should consider what the poor listener could have done better. They should also identify the active listening skills that were executed properly.

*Video Suggestions: Poor listening clip- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AzNPWnzc4>

Active listening clip- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VOubVB4CTU>

Class Discussion:

Ask the class to share their observations of the video. Encourage students to draw from personal experiences of being engaged with a poor listener and/or active listener.

Lecture:

II. Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 5 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

What happens when we practice Active Listening? We transcend our own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs, and begin to directly experience the words and worlds of other people (McNaughton, Hamlin, McCarthy, Head-Reeves, & Schreiner, 2007).

Listening: A Five-Step Process

1. One must understand that listening is not an isolated experience. The first step of listening is receiving.
 - Receiving a message includes seeing and hearing the communication of others.

2. One must attend to information energetically and alertly.
 - “Always practice being in the here and now.”
 - Improve listening skills by limiting: multitasking, control factors that impede attention, and practice mental bracketing.

* Mental Bracketing- Systematically putting aside thoughts that are not relevant to the interaction at hand if your attention wanders when listening. *

3. One must understand the meaning of communication by comparing information in our short-term and long-term memory, using prior knowledge to evaluate the meaning of new information.
4. One must respond to the communication of others concisely and constructively. Responding includes: positive feedback & back-channel cues.

*Feedback- Verbal and nonverbal messages that receivers use to indicate their reaction to communication, such as a smile or saying, “I agree.”

Back-channel cues- Nonverbal or verbal responses that signal you’ve paid attention to and understood specific comments- For instance, saying, “Okay, I understand” after someone is telling you how to bake a cake.

5. One must be able to recall.

Recalling- The fifth stage of the listening process in which a listener is able to remember information received(McCornack, 2013, pp 146-172).

Activity:

Ask for 2 volunteers. Give volunteer 1 a card which instructs her to discuss why she is failing her math class with her mother (Volunteer 2). Volunteer 2 should attempt to practice active listening by following the Five-Step Process. After the role play is complete have the students discuss what volunteer 2 successfully executed, and what she could have done better.

Lecture:**III.** Discuss and analyze the four major listening styles.

Listening Styles:

- People-oriented listeners, view listening as an opportunity to establish commonalities between themselves and others (McCornack, 2013, p. 161).
- Content-oriented listeners, prefer to be intellectually challenged by the messages they receive during interpersonal encounters (McCornack, 2013, p. 161).
- Time-oriented listeners, prefer brief and concise encounters (McCornack, 2013, p. 161).
- Action-oriented listeners want brief to-the-point, and accurate messages from others (McCornack, 2013, p. 160).

Assessment:

Provide students with Active Listening worksheet. Students should complete the evaluation. After the completion of the evaluation; students should identify which listening style they can relate to. They should also consider if they are successfully implementing the five-step process.

Active Listening Inventory**[Self-evaluation sheet]**

Please respond to the following items as honestly as you can in terms of your normal, average interactions with others. Do not respond in terms of how you think you should act; respond in terms of how you actually see yourself acting. Place a check in the column that best fits your response.

	Yes	No
1. I frequently attempt to listen to several conversations at the same time.	_____	_____
2. I like people to give me only the facts and then let me make my own		

- interpretations. _____
- 3. Fairly often, I pretend to pay attention to people speaking when I am not. _____
- 4. I consider myself a good judge of nonverbal communication. _____
- 5. I usually know what another person is going to say before they say it. _____
- 6. I tend to end conversations that don't interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker. _____
- 7. I have a hard time not making facial expressions to indicate how I feel about what the speaker is saying to me. _____
- 8. I usually respond immediately when someone has finished talking. _____
- 9. I evaluate what is being said, while it is being said. _____
- 10. I usually formulate a response while the other person is still talking. _____
- 11. A person's awkward or poor delivery style frequently keeps me from listening to the content of their message. _____
- 12. I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning. _____
- 13. I make a concerted effort to think about, and understand, the other person's point of view before I speak. _____
- 14. I frequently hear what I expect to hear rather than what is said. _____
- 15. Most people feel that I have understood their point of view. _____
- 16. I tend not to engage in other activities (e.g., opening mail) while others are trying to tell me something. _____
- 17. I am pretty good at summarizing what others have said. _____
- 18. I tend to nod appreciatively at intervals when people are speaking. _____

Active Listening Inventory

[Other-evaluation sheet]

SCORE _____

Please respond to the following items as honestly as you can in terms of this person's normal, average interactions with others. Do not respond in terms of how you think this person should act; respond in terms of how you actually see the person acting. Place a check in the column that best fits your response.

	Yes	No
1. Frequently attempts to listen to several conversations at the same time.	_____	_____
2. Likes people to give me only the facts and then let me make my own interpretations.	_____	_____
3. Fairly often, pretends to pay attention to people speaking when I am not.	_____	_____
4. Is a good judge of nonverbal communication.	_____	_____
5. Thinks s/he knows what another person is going to say before they say it.	_____	_____
6. Tends to end conversations that don't interest him/her by diverting attention from the speaker.	_____	_____
7. Has a hard time not making facial expressions to indicate how s/he feels about what the speaker is saying to me.	_____	_____
8. Usually responds immediately when someone has finished talking.	_____	_____
9. Evaluates what is being said, while it is being said.	_____	_____
10. Usually formulates a response while the other person is still talking.	_____	_____
11. A person's awkward or poor delivery style frequently keeps him/her from listening to the content of their message.	_____	_____
12. Usually asks people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning.	_____	_____
13. Makes a concerted effort to think about, and understand, the other person's point of view before I speak.	_____	_____
14. Frequently hears what s/he expects to hear rather than what is said.	_____	_____
15. Most people feel that s/h has understood their point of view.	_____	_____
16. Tends not to engage in other activities (e.g., opening mail) while others are trying to tell her/him something.	_____	_____
17. Is pretty good at summarizing what others have said.	_____	_____
18. Tends to nod appreciatively at intervals when people are speaking.	_____	_____

References

- McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Listening actively* (pp. 145-171). Boston, MA: Bedford
- McNaughton, D. Hamlin, D., McCarthy, J., Head-Reeves, D., & Schreiner, M. (2007). Learning to listen: Teaching an active listening strategy to preservice education professionals. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 27(4), 223-231.
- Portland State University. (2014). *Active listening inventory*. Retrieved from <http://www.sba.pdx.edu/faculty/pamt/ptaccess/MGMT448SU09/activelisting.doc>

Lesson #3 – Verbal Communication

Objective:

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define verbal communication. They will be able to analyze the verbal communication that takes place in their life and around them.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to describe the characteristics of verbal communication
2. Students will be able to identify the functions of verbal communication
3. Students will be able analyze positive and negative verbal communication

4. Identify and describe the 4 barriers to cooperative communication

Material:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Lecture:

- I. Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 6 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

Verbal Communication- The exchange of spoken or written language with others during interactions, known as verbal communication.(McCornack, 2013, p. 177).

Class Discussion:

The text book closely analyzes Muhammad Ali's verbal communication skills. Ask the class about their favorite and/or least favorite famous communicator. This conversation will prepare them for their assessment.

Lecture:

- II. Discuss and analyze the functions of Verbal Communication
- When speaking we use both denotations and connotations.
 - Connotations are used in informal settings
 - Denotations are typically used in formal settings
 - Linguistic determinism suggest that our capacity for thought is defined by the limits of language because language is defined by culture, people from different cultures perceive and experience different realities, due to linguistic relativity (McCornack, 2013, p. 186).

Linguistic Relativity- the theory that languages create variations in the ways cultures perceive and think about the world

- Although language shapes our thoughts, we control language through the power of naming (McCornack, 2013, p. 186).

Naming- Creating linguistic symbols to represent people, objects, places and ideas

- We use language to perform speech acts, and our conversations are in large part structured in accordance with the types of speech acts we perform (McCornack, 2013, p. 187).

Speech Acts- The actions we perform with language, such as the question, “Is the antique clock in your window for sale? And the reply, Yes, Let me get it out to show you.

- We use language to manage our relationships by sharing out thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences whether positive or negative.
(McCornack, 2013, p. 11).

Lecture:

III. Discuss and analyze the 4 barriers to cooperative verbal communication

- 1. Communication apprehension-** The fear or nervousness associated with communication with others (McCornack, 2013, p. 198).
- 2. Defensive communication-** Impolite messages delivered in response to suggestions, criticism, or perceived slights
(McCornack, 2013, p. 198).
- 3. Verbal aggression-** The tendency to attack, others’ self-concepts- their appearance, behavior, or character- rather than their positions
(McCornack, 2013, p. 200).

4. Deception- Deliberately using uninformative. Untruthful, irrelevant, or vague language for the purpose of misleading others (McCornack, 2013, p. 201).

Assessment:

Students will write an analytical essay.

Prompt: Select a famous person either from the past or present that was known for verbal communication. For instance, you can choose a political leader, talk show host or activist. Write a 750-word essay analyzing his/or verbal communication techniques. Are they effective communicators? Are they deceptive, verbally aggressive, apprehensive and/or defensive?

References

McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Communicating verbally* (pp. 177-201). Boston, MA: Bedford

Lesson #4 – Non-Verbal Communication**Objective:**

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define non-verbal communication. They will be able to analyze the non-verbal communication that takes place in their life and around them.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to describe the principles of non-verbal communication

2. Students will be able to identify the functions of non-verbal communication
3. Students will be able analyze positive and negative non-verbal communication symbols

Materials:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Website- Communication Cache

<http://www.communicationcache.com/>

Lecture:

- I. Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 7 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

Non-Verbal Communication Codes- Different ways to transmit information nonverbally: artifacts, chromatics, environment, haptics, kinesics, physical appearance, proxemics, and vocalics (McCornack, 2013, p. 217).

Advantages of non-verbal Communication:

According to Hodgins & Belch, “nonverbal skill is associated with a host of positive outcomes, including high self-esteem, perceptions, of attractiveness and popularity by others and relationship satisfaction (2000).

Functions of nonverbal communication codes:

Nonverbal communication codes send powerful messages of intimacy, dominance, and submissiveness

- Intimacy- A feeling of closeness and union that exists between us and our relationship partners (McCornack, 2013, p. 234).
- Dominance- The interpersonal behaviors we use to exert power over others (McCornack, 2013, p. 235)
- Submissiveness- The willingness to allow others to exert power over you, demonstrated by gestures (McCornack, 2013, p. 238).
- Emblems- Gestures that symbolize a specific verbal meaning within a given culture, such as the “thumbs up” (McCornack, 2013, p. 219)
- Regulators- Gestures used to control the exchange of conversational turns during interpersonal encounters (McCornack, 2013, p. 220).
- Illustrators- Gestures used to accent or illustrate a verbal message (McCornack, 2013, p. 219).

Assessment:

Students will access the Communication Cache website; locate the nonverbal communication video archives and give a real life example or anecdote for each video found on the website.

References

- McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Communicating nonverbally* (pp. 209-240). Boston, MA: Bedford
- Hodgins, L., & Belch, C. (2000). Interpersonal violence and non-verbal abilities. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 24, 3-24

Objective:

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define conflict and implement conflict management-techniques. Students will be able to identify conflict and then solve them with conflict management techniques.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to describe conflict pertaining to interpersonal communication
2. Students will be able to manage conflict
3. Students will be able analyze positive and negative conflict resolution

Materials:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Movie- Mrs. Doubtfire (1993)

Lecture:

- I. Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 8 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

Definition of Conflict- The process that occurs when the people perceive that they have incompatible goals or that someone is interfering in their ability to achieve their objective. (McCornack, 2013, p. 246).

Ways of Handling Conflict:

1. **Avoidance-** Away of handling conflict by ignoring it, pretending it isn't really happening, or communicating indirectly about the situation (McCornack, 2013, p. 255).

2. **Accommodation-** A way of handling conflict in which one person abandons his or her goals for the goals of another (McCornack, 2013, p. 257).
3. **Competition-** A way of handling conflict in which the conflict is approached as a win-lose contest. (Rothwell, 2007, p. 334).
4. **Collaboration-** A way of handling conflict by treating it as a mutual problem-solving challenge (McCornack, 2013, p. 258)
5. **Compromise** – A way of handling conflict in which each party gives up something to get something (Rothwell, 2007, p.332).

Assessment:

Students will watch the movie Mrs. Doubtfire, and they will identify the conflicts in the movie. They should also discuss the way the conflicts were handled.

Students will present their observations to the class using any visual guide of their choice

References

McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Introducing interpersonal communication* (pp. 1-33). Boston, MA: Bedford

Lesson #6 – Relationship with Family**Objective:**

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define what family means to them. Students will be able to identify different types of families.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

4. Students will be able to identify different ways family communicate
5. Students will be able to understand the defining features of family
6. Students will be able identify the type of family they are a part of

Materials:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),
by Steven McCornack

Journal

Lecture:

II. Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 10 in the *Reflect & Relate* textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

Definition of Family- A network of people who share their lives over long periods of time and are bound by marriage, blood or commitment (McCornack, 2013, p. 324).

Types of family and Family dynamics:

1. **Nuclear Family-** A wife, husband, and their biological or adopted children (McCornack, 2013, p. 325).
2. **Extended Family-** When relatives such as aunts, uncles, parents, children, and grandparents live together in a common household (McCornack, 2013, p. 326).
3. **Consensual Families-** Families high in both conversation and conformity (McCornack, 2013, p. 332).
4. **Protective Families-** Families are low on conversation and high on conformity (McCornack, 2013, p. 332).

5. Laissez-Faire Families- Families are low in both conversation and conformity (McCornack, 2013, p. 333).

Families create closer bonds and exchange history/facts by sharing stories such as birth stories and survival stories.

Activity:

Have each student create a journal entry using the following prompt: Choosing an opposite family style of your family write a short entry describing what you think your life will be like if you came from a different family dynamic.

Assessment:

Students should give a presentation of to the class identifying their family type. They should include the positive and negative outcomes of being from that particular family type. Student should include the values they developed from their family as well share personal stories to give the class a better perception of the family dynamics of the presenter.

References

McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Relationships with family* (pp. 321-349). Boston, MA: Bedford

Lesson #7 – Relationship with Friends

Objective:

At the completion of this lesson students will be able to define the nature of friendship.

Students will be able to identify different types of friendship.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to identify different ways friends communicate
2. Students will be able to understand the defining features of friendship
3. Students will be able identify the type of friendships they are a part of
4. Students will learn how to maintain a friendship

Materials:

Textbook- Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (3rd Ed),

by Steven McCornack

Journal

Lecture:

III.Instructor & Class will read and discuss Chapter 11 in the *Reflect & Relate*

textbook together. The class will review and analyze the following topics:

Definition of Friend- A voluntary interpersonal relationship characterized by intimacy and liking (McCornack, 2013, p. 355).

Types of friends:

1. **Best Friends-** An individual who you may count on for identity support. A friend who you may share scared information with, seek counsel from, give and receive advice from.
2. **Cross-Category friends-** powerful way to break down in-grouper and out-grouper perceptions of negative stereotypes (McCornack, 2013, p. 384).

Friendship Challenges:

- Betrayal
- Geographic separation
- Sexual-benefits

Maintaining a friendship:

Across culture, people agree on friendship rules, the basic principles that underline the maintenance of a successful friendship.

*Friendship rules include showing support, seeking support, respecting privacy, keeping confidences, defending your friends, avoiding public criticism, making your friends happy, managing jealousy, maintaining equity and sharing humor (McCornack, 2013, p. 379).

Activity:

Have each student create a journal entry using the following prompt: Reflect on a time where a friend betrayed you. How did you cope? Did you two remain friends?

Assessment:

Students should write a reflection essay about the relationship they share with their best friend. They should implement each friendship rule in the essay discussing whether or not their friendship met or do not meet the expectations of the rules. Students should create an action plan which will assist them in being a better friend.

References

McCornack, S. (2013). Reflect & relate: an introduction to interpersonal communication (3rd Ed.), *Introducing interpersonal communication* (pp. 1-33). Boston, MA: Bedford