

IO1/A3. TRANSVERSAL SKILLS ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY AND SUPPORTING ACTIONS (TEMPLATE)



SEE FIRST

Communication: Verbal Communication

Author (s):





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IO1 – A3: TRANSVERSAL SKILLS STRATEGY AND SUPPORTING ACTIONS

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT ACRONYM: SEE FIRST

PROJECT TITLE: SEEKING FIRST JOB EQUIPPED WITH PROPER SOFT SKILLS

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1. GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES

- Prepare 6 goal cards per skill subcategory. For example, 6 goal cards for Active listening and 6 for Negotiation.
- Fill in all the fields and maintain the formatting and structure
- Each proposed activity should be in a separate card don't combine 2 activities in one card and don't divide 1 activity into 2 cards.
- To add a new goal card, copy and paste one of the existing goal cards
- At the end of each skill subcategory, prepare 6-8 assessment questions.



1. Communication skills

1.1 Verbal Communication

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This will be shown to all the users when they click on one of the skill subcategories. It will appear on the right side of the wheel.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SKILL

Verbal communication refers to the production of spoken language, the use of words, in order to share information, to pass a message to other people. It can be both spoken and written but many people use it only for spoken communication. Moreover, it is fundamental to keep in mind that is a two-way process, as it is about passing information from one person to another. In other words, sending (by a speaker) and receiving (by a listener) a message is equally important.

Why is it important in the workplace?

- Excellent business relationships not only internally but also with other organizations, customers, etc.
- Effective verbal communication increases job satisfaction level, productivity, efficiency.
- It removes barriers between the management and the employees working.

1.1.2. GOAL CARDS

Activity 1: Put a finger down

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Start the activities for improving your verbal communication skills by challenging yourself. Make a self-reflective activity to understand what your mistakes are and what you need to improve.

Individually:

- Read the following instructions and put a finger down for each statement that it is true for yourself. The game ends when you put all your fingers down.
- Just remember to be honest!

Tasks:

- o Put a finger down if you have ever interrupted someone while they were talking
- Put a finger down if you have never given attention to someone's body language (hand gestures, facial expressions)

- Put a finger down if you don't know the difference between open-ended questions and closed-ended questions
- Put a finger down if you had misunderstandings with someone based on what you said
- Put a finger down if you have never considered cultural or age barriers before having a conversation with someone
- o Put a finger down if you don't know what clutch words are
- Put a finger down if you believe tonality does not play a significant role when having a conversation
- Put a finger down if you had to explain yourself twice because you were not clear enough the first time
- Put a finger down if someone was asking many questions and was maybe making you uncomfortable
- o Put a finger down if you struggle reading long emails or messages

Check your score!

- If 8-10 fingers are up: Congratulations, your verbal communication skills are great!
- **If 4-7 fingers are up:** Good job, however it would be nice to continue improving. Check out the next activities!
- If 0-3 fingers are up: You have a lot of job to do! Check out the next activities

Note: You can do this activity also in a group. One person reads the statements and the other people put a finger down if a statement is true. The person with the more fingers up wins.

After the completion of this activity, read the following tips that will help you improve your verbal communication.

- **Be clear, specific and concise.** You do not need to provide message receivers with a lot of detailed information. This will result to lengthy, repetitive messages and the whole point of your message risks being missed or forgotten (Activity 4).
- **Speak with confidence**. In order for this to happen, it is important be prepared of what you are about to say (for a speech or a presentation, practice many times before, or for a discussion, think before you speak). In addition, use the right vocabulary, use eye contact (be careful on the origin of your audience Activity 6) and avoid using crutch words (Activity 3).
- Change your tonality. Vocal tone changes are really important based on the situation you are in. First of all, speaking in a monotone voice without any rhythm will result to bore your audience and be distracted. Think about the situation you are in and try to adapt your tone accordingly (Activity 5).
- Use open ended questions instead of closed ended questions. This will help you keep the conversation flowing and make the people you are talking to more comfortable. It will also show that you are interested in what they are saying. Careful though! Remember that you don't want to be indiscreet, you just want to have a conversation.

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY



Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

- -Activity 2: The guessing game
- -Activity 3: The use of crutch words
- -Activity 4: Be brief, yet specific
- -Activity 5: Say Hi!
- -Activity 6: Wordless Conversation

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

N/A

TIME REQUIRED

30-40 min

Number of learners

1+

RELEVANT SECTORS

Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture
- Arts
- Culinary arts
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Informatics
- Law
- Management
- Medical and Health Care (including veterinary)
- Military
- Natural sciences
- Office Administration
- Public administration



- Social sciences
- Sports
- Tourism

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

N/A

REFERENCE

Hawkins, E., 2021. 7 Tips to Improve Verbal Communication Skills | Call Tracking and Analytics. [online] CallRail. Available at: https://www.callrail.com/blog/7-tips-to-improve-verbal-communication-skills/ [Accessed 12 February 2021].

IMAGE

https://unsplash.com/photos/qKspdY9XUzs

INTRODUCTION

In this activity you will challenge yourself and see how good your verbal communication skills are. Have a try!

Activity 2: The guessing game

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity is about the introduction of two basic notions and their use in our personal and professional life.

Open-ended questions are the ones that require more than one word answers (yes/no). In order to form them, you need to use interrogative words such as what, which, how, where, who etc. To clarify things, open-ended questions can be short responses and essay questions. Some examples:

- How do you know David?
- What do you like the most about your new car?
- Why are you sad?

Closed-ended questions are the ones that require only one word answers (yes/no) or a specific piece of information. They can be multiple choice questions or yes/no (true/false). Some examples:



- Have you spoken to David?
- Do you like your new car?
- Are you sad?

Note: interrogative words can also be used for closed-ended questions such as e.g. "when is your birthday?" however, the response is specific.

Now, in practice! Try this fun activity concerning open-ended and close-ended questions:

- Divide the group in two equal teams
- One person from each team will think about an object (you can define a category at the beginning of the game e.g. object at an office, object in a bedroom, object used when travel etc.)
- The rest of the team needs to ask them closed-ended questions (yes/no) to find out what the object is.
- Each team has only 3 rounds to go.
- If one team finds the object wins. If not then, both teams can use open-ended questions e.g. where can you find it, what do you use it for, how big is it?

Open-ended questions are easier right? Well, this is applicable for all kinds of situations, not only for guessing something. Therefore, feel free to use open-ended questions in order to have a normal conversation with different points of discussion. However, it is important to know your limits and not to make other people uncomfortable with inappropriate questions. Of course, closed-ended questions can also be inadequate if the content of the question is inappropriate.

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY

Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Put a finger down

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

N/A

TIME REQUIRED

30-40 min

Number of learners

1+

RELEVANT SECTORS

Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Informatics
- Law
- Management
- Medical and Health Care (including veterinary)
- Military
- Natural sciences
- Office Administration
- Public administration
- Tourism

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An interesting article to help you understand when you use crutch words and how to avoid them: https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-to-stop-saying-um-ah-and-you-know

Recommendations on apps that will help you tackle crutch words: https://virtualspeech.com/learn/public-speaking-apps

REFERENCE

Examples.yourdictionary.com. 2021. Examples of Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions. [online] Available at: https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-open-ended-and-closed-ended-questions.html [Accessed 12 February 2021].

Training coursematerial.com. 2021. Guessing game communication skills training activity. [online] Available at: https://www.trainingcoursematerial.com/free-games-activities/communication-skills-activities/the-guessing-game [Accessed 12 February 2021].

IMAGE

https://unsplash.com/photos/tVkdGtEe2C4

INTRODUCTION

Did you know that questions can be divided in two categories? Find out how!

Activity 3: The use of crutch words

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Think about an act of verbal communication. It can be a speech, a debate, a discussion, anything that comes to your mind. Now think about the words and the patterns that people use when they speak. How many times do we use words such as "like", "um", "eh", "ah", "so", in order to fill a silent space?

This is exactly what crutch words are; an annoying habit that we tend to make by using filler words with no actual meaning or added value to our speech when we are nervous, distracted, or unsure of what we are talking about. Why? Well, because we believe that they will fill the silence, in other words help us hold onto the "conversational floor", and eliminate the awkwardness we may feel.

Do you use them? How often? Let's find out!

Individually:

- Choose a simple topic that you would like to talk about for approximately two minutes.
- Record yourself.
- Listen to your recording. Note down how many fillers you used.
- Record yourself once again but this time be aware of the fillers used.
- Listen to your recording. Do you use the same amount of fillers? What do you use instead?
- Continue to practice until you use pauses instead of filler words.

In groups:

- One person decides to speak about a simple topic.
- During their speaking time, the rest of the class will stand up when they hear any of these fillers in the first person's speech.
- Notice if anything changes, maybe they stopped using fillers.
- What does the person that speaks use instead?

If this activity is done correctly, you will notice that filler words are now replaced with pauses. Why are pauses better than filler words? Well, because they make you sound less nervous, more confident and in control. You have time to collect your thoughts, calm down and build suspense. Not using fillers will also result in your audience's full concentration, without distractions or extra effort to understand you.

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY



Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Put a finger down

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

Your phone, a paper and a pen (if this activity is done individually)

TIME REQUIRED

30-40 min

Number of learners

1+

RELEVANT SECTORS

Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Informatics
- Law
- Management
- Medical and Health Care (including veterinary)
- Military
- Natural sciences
- Office Administration
- Public administration
- Tourism

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An interesting article to help you understand when you use crutch words and how to avoid them: https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-to-stop-saying-um-ah-and-you-know



Recommendations on apps that will help you tackle crutch words: https://virtualspeech.com/learn/public-speaking-apps

REFERENCE

Zandan, N., 2018. How to Stop Saying "Um," "Ah," and "You Know". [online] Harvard Business Review. Available at: https://hbr.org/2018/08/how-to-stop-saying-um-ah-and-you-know [Accessed 28 January 2021].

IMAGE

https://unsplash.com/photos/GkWP64trugg

INTRODUCTION

A crutch is a long stick with a piece that fits under your arm for you to lean on if you have difficulty in walking. However, do you know what crutch words are? Click to find out!

Activity 4: Be brief, yet specific

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

In this activity, you just need a paper and a pen.

Individually:

You will read some instructions on what to draw and then, you will compare your results with some examples from other people that have tried the same activity. You are not allowed to see the examples before the end of your drawing neither to ask questions. You just draw based on the instructions below and your instinct.

- Take a paper and a pen
- Draw a circle

- Next to it, draw a house
- Then, draw a car and a bird
- You can now see the other drawings.







It is obvious that each person interpreted the instructions in a different way. Why was that? Because the instructions were not adequate ones. They were simple and brief however not specific. In many occasions where verbal communication is needed, it is vital to be specific in order to avoid misunderstandings. Think about how these instructions could be improved, what elements should be added. Most probably in this case, the sentences here would improve by adding adjectives (small, big) or by giving instructions (e.g. on the right, on the top).

However, adding a lot of information would complicate things, risking to confuse the receiver of your message. Compare the previous instructions with the following ones:

- Take a paper and a pen
- Draw a 360' circle
- On the right, at a distance of 5 cm, draw a square house with a triangle as a roof. The house should be 7 cm for each side.
- On the left side of the circle, at a distance of 4.4 cm, draw a car with 4 wheels, 2 doors and two windows. The colour of the car is light blue.

...

Even if these instructions were more detailed, this does not necessarily mean that they were more adequate. Some instructions were unnecessary, creating more confusion than before. Therefore, is "the more the merrier" actually true?

Note: this activity can also be done in groups (one person reads the instructions aloud and –at least – two others draw. Then, they compare their results).

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY

Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

N/A

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

A paper and a pen

TIME REQUIRED
15-20 min
Number of learners
1+
RELEVANT SECTORS
Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Social sciences

SportsTourism

Office AdministrationPublic administration

N/A

REFERENCE

Ackerman, C., 2020.49 Communication Activities, Exercises, and Games. [online] PositivePsychology.com. Available at: https://positivepsychology.com/communication-games-and-activities/ [Accessed 11 February 2021].

IMAGE

https://unsplash.com/photos/FYS9MaTcR5k

INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows the expression "the more the merrier". However, does it actually count for verbal communication? Click to find out!

Activity 5: Say Hi!

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Many of us know how to say hello in different languages. Can we also say hello in different vocal tones based on our emotions? Can we actually express our feelings by changing our vocal tone?

The main challenge for us is to use our voice so that we connect, build trust, share our concerns, show our enthusiasm, and clearly state our opinions. We tend to not think about it because we may believe that it is not important or make any difference to our conversation. However, many voice tones exist such as:

- 1. Questioning and Command Tonality
- 2. Vocal tone for complimenting someone/something
- 3. Vocal tone when emphasizing on a point
- 4. Vocal tone when speaking to a younger audience (especially children)
- 5. Tonality shared by friends
- 6. Tonality for Business

These are not the only ones, as our voice changes without us noticing it in correspondence with the situation we are in. This makes also the receiver of the message understand our feelings (if we are happy or not), expect a reaction or see where this conversation is going.

Try the next activity and check if your tonality is the right one for each situation.

Individually:

- Write different emotions or situations on pieces of paper (e.g. at a job interview, with friends, sad, frustrated, excited, at a debate with a colleague)
- Record yourself saying "hello" by adapting your voice based on the situation/emotion of each piece of paper
- Listen to the recordings. Did you have the right tonality? Could you improve?
- Then, try with more difficult emotions or situations or you can combine both (excited at a job meeting, sad at a party)

In a group:

- Write different emotions or situations on pieces of paper (e.g. at a job interview, with friends, sad, frustrated, excited, at a debate with a colleague)
- Divide the class into two groups
- Each participant chooses one piece of paper



- One after the other says "hello" by adapting their voice based on the situation/emotion of the piece of paper of their choice
- The rest of the group has to guess the emotion or the situation.
- The group with the most guesses wins.

This activity will make young people aware of their vocal tone and help them understand that the vocal tone can change based on their emotions. We should be aware of this and try and adapt it to the most adequate way based on different situations in life.

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY

Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

N/A

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

A paper and a pen / a phone (if it is done individually)

TIME REQUIRED

20-30 min

Number of learners

1+ (based on the emotions on the pieces of paper)

RELEVANT SECTORS

Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

- Agriculture
- Economics
- Education
- Engineering
- Law
- Management
- Military
- Natural sciences
- Office Administration
- Public administration



- Social sciences
- Tourism

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

N/A

REFERENCE

Ackerman, C., 2020.49 Communication Activities, Exercises, and Games. [online] PositivePsychology.com. Available at: https://positivepsychology.com/communication-games-and-activities/ [Accessed 11 February 2021].

Pellicano, M., 2021. Improve Your Tone of Voice to Communicate More Effectively. [online] The Ladies Coach - Love, Life & Relationship Advice for the Modern Woman. Available at: https://theladiescoach.com/passion-and-purpose/improve-your-tone-of-voice-to-communicate-more-effectively/ [Accessed 11 February 2021].

IMAGE

https://www.pexels.com/photo/cheerful-young-woman-screaming-into-megaphone-3761509/

INTRODUCTION

Hello, hola, salut, yea, ciao, halo is just some of the ways to say in different languages hello. However, can you also do so by changing different vocal tones? Accept the challenge now!

Activity 6: Wordless Conversation

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Even if verbal communication is the key element concerning expressing ideas and having a discussion with someone, there is still another equally important element: body language, in other words, nonverbal communication. It manifests itself in several forms and ways such as:

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions (control of negative emotions, use of smile)
- Physical position (standing or sitting straight)
- Hand gestures

These are just some ways that can replace words but they can also enrich verbal communication and add strength to it by making it more interactive and real and with feelings. However, it is important to take into consideration that body language can be tricky when people who communicate have different cultural backgrounds. For example, nodding in Bulgaria or Turkey does not mean accepting something, or strong eye contact is extremely awkward in Asian and Latin American countries but not in Mediterranean ones, in which it is interpreted as respect, engagement in the conversation and confidence.

Test your body language skills with the following activity:

- Separate the students in groups of three
- Assign each person for one role:
 - Person A (They will read the lines of the script for Partner A)
 - o Person B (They will use body language for the lines of the script for Partner B)
 - o **Person C** (They will note the possible answers of **Partner B**)
- Give Person A and Person B the following script:

Script

- A: Do you know where my wallet is? I've been looking for it everywhere.
- B: Let me think... No, I don't know where it is.
- A: Are you sure?
- B: Yes, I am sure. Why?
- A: Because last time, you took my purse without noticing.
- B: I did not!
- A: Yes, you did!
- **B:** Geez, why so tensed?
- **A:** I am not tensed; I just want to find my wallet.
- **B:** Okay, let's go find it.
- Person A read their lines.
- However, Person B is allowed to **ONLY** use their body language based on their lines.
- Person C is the one who notes down Person B's possible answers.
- After the end of the dialogue, Person C compares their answers with the ones of the script. Have Person C interpreted correctly Person's B reactions? Were Person B's body language the correct one?
- Do the same exercise but this time, Person A and Person B have to use different forms of body language while they speak.
- What are the main conclusions of Person C? Which way do they prefer?

TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY

Simple activity that can be implemented immediately without requiring the completion of another activity

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Put a finger down

TOOLS & RESOURCES NEEDED

A script (for person A and B) and a paper and a pen (for person C)

TIME REQUIRED

20-30 min

Number of learners

3+

RELEVANT SECTORS

Include one or more sectors to which this skill is relevant. Please choose from the sectors below:

- Economics
- Education
- Law
- Management
- Military
- Natural sciences
- Office Administration
- Public administration
- Social sciences

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

N/A

REFERENCE

Ackerman, C., 2020.49 Communication Activities, Exercises, and Games. [online] PositivePsychology.com. Available at: https://positivepsychology.com/communication-games-and-activities/ [Accessed 11 February 2021].



Lynne, D., 2018. How to Avoid Cultural Body Language "Faux Pas" | Life is for Living. [online] Life is for Living. Available at: https://livingandstuff.ca/cultural-body-language-faux-pas/ [Accessed 11 February 2021].

IMAGE

https://www.pexels.com/photo/collage-photo-of-woman-3812743/

INTRODUCTION

Can words be replaced with facial expressions or body movements? Click to try it out!

1.1.3. ASSESSEMENT QUESTIONS

ASSESSMENT

6-8 Assessment questions based on what the user has learnt from the activities

The questions can be true/false or multiple choice

Each question should have only one correct answer

- 1. Verbal Communication is:
- a) The spoken language
- b) The written language
- c) Both
- 2. Open-ended questions are:
- a) Questions that can be answered with yes or no
- b) Questions that can be answered with specific, expected information
- c) Questions that can be answered with short answers
- 3. Filler words:
- a) will make you seem confident and with organized thoughts
- b) will make you seem nervous
- c) will not have an impact on your speech
- 4. Pauses are:
- a) A good addition to your speech with benefits only for the speaker
- b) A good addition to your speech with benefits only for the audience
- c) A good addition to your speech with benefits for both, the speaker and the audience
- 5. More instructions, information or guidelines can:

- a) Clarify things without the risk of confusion
- b) Clarify things with the risk of confusion
- c) Make things confusing without clarifying them
- 6. The wrong tonality may result to misunderstandings.
- a) True
- **b)** False
- 7. Body language can:
- a) harm verbal communication
- b) replace verbal communication
- c) strengthen verbal communication
- 8. Strong eye contact is well-perceived in:
- a) China
- b) Greece
- c) Colombia