



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Effective Team Working and Communication (BMSK4002)

Student name: Jean Doreen MacIennan

Student number: 2028905

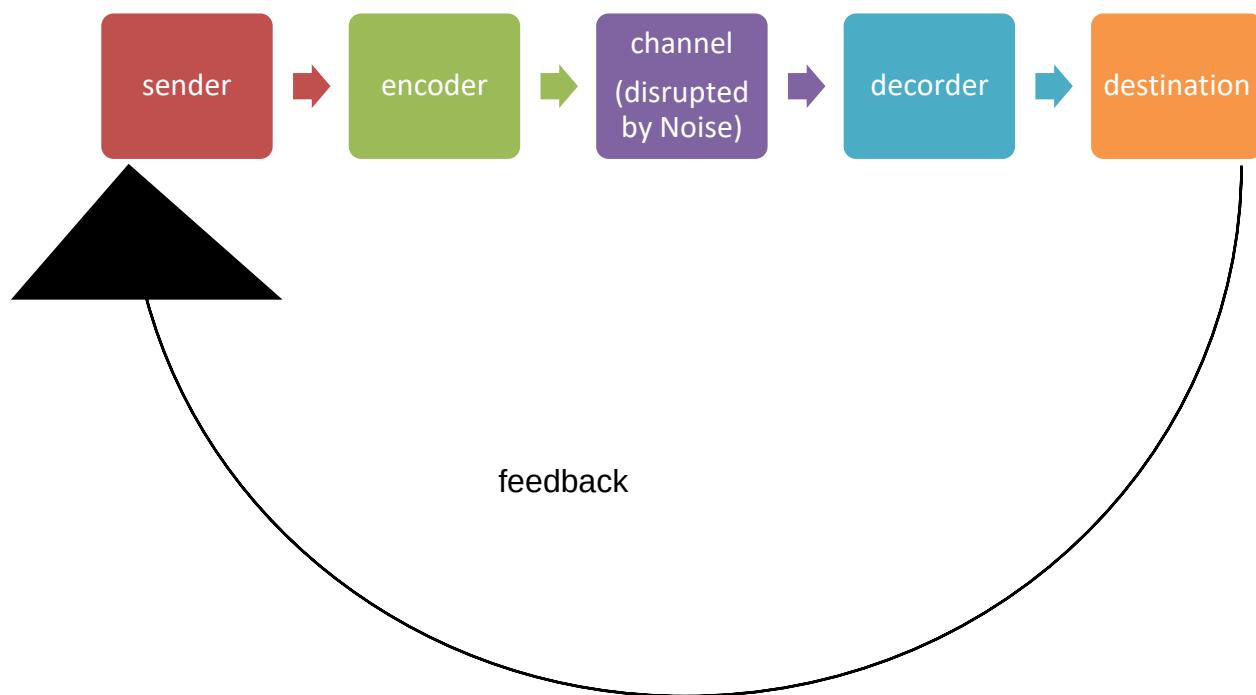
Introduction

Communication is the process by which information is exchanged from the sender to the intended audience (receiver) using a preferred channel. Communication is said to be effective if the message in form of ideas, facts, and feelings is clearly understood by the receiver, but not just receiving the message. (Janse, 2019). Communication is very important in a workplace in various ways including; used as a basis of effective planning and co-ordination, used to establish an effective leadership, and used as a basis of control (Hargie, 2016). In addition, effective communication is important when it comes to public relations of the organization, and for the smooth and effective working since there is an effective flow of information. It is also true that effective communication helps in establishing a democratic management hence increasing management efficiency (Goutam, 2013). However, there are barriers that prevent effective communication like; noise, inability to listen, lack of trust and transparency, language barrier, conflicts in a workplace, and cultural differences. This leads to poor communication which causes conflicts in workplace, mistrust, misinformation, misunderstandings, and missed opportunities.

Models of communication

Shannon and Weaver Model of communication (1948).

According to Al-Fedaghi (2012), Shannon and Weaver of communication is also known as the mother of all models. This model suggests six stages from where the message is made to when the message is received namely; sender, encoder, channel, decoder, destination, and feedback as illustrated below;

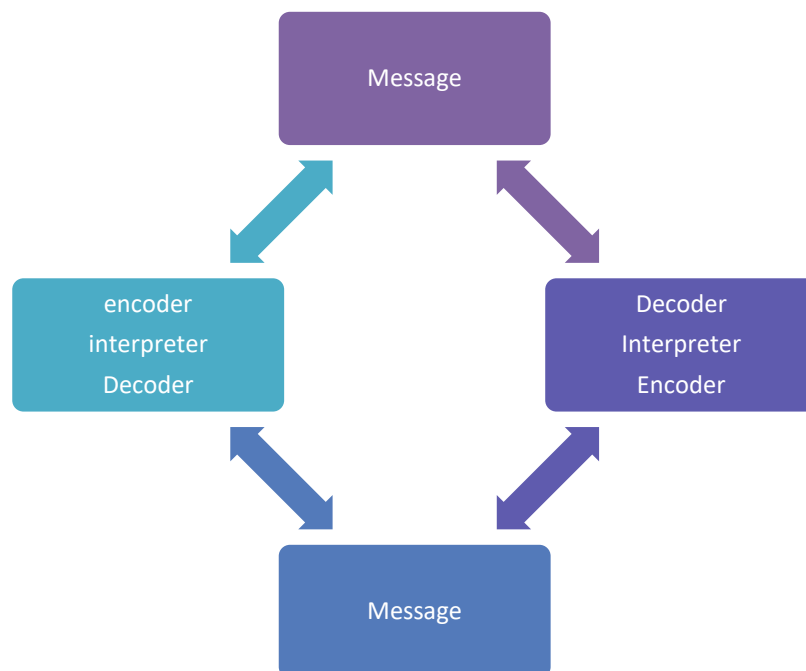


According to Shannon (1948), the process of communication starts with information source (sender) followed by encoder who transmits the message and converts to into signals like waves, and then transmitted through a channel (medium) for example a telephone. Shannon and Weaver (1963) noted that a noise is the factor that limits the effectiveness of the message while choosing the channel like telephone. Noise could be sound waves, thunder among others. After the message has passed through the channel, it is then decoded by converting the signals into the message which then interpreted by the receiver(destination). The process is completed when the receiver gives feedback to the sender of the message. (Shannon, 1948, p.379).

Schramm's Model (1954)

This model is different from Shannon and Weaver model and is also known as Encode-Decode model. It is different because it suggests that Once the message is formed, it is encoded into the message and then decoded for the receiver to understand the message. (Janse, 2019). There is no channel suggested by the model. The interpreter

encodes and decodes the message and that is all, until feedback is given. (Schramm, 1954). As illustrated below;

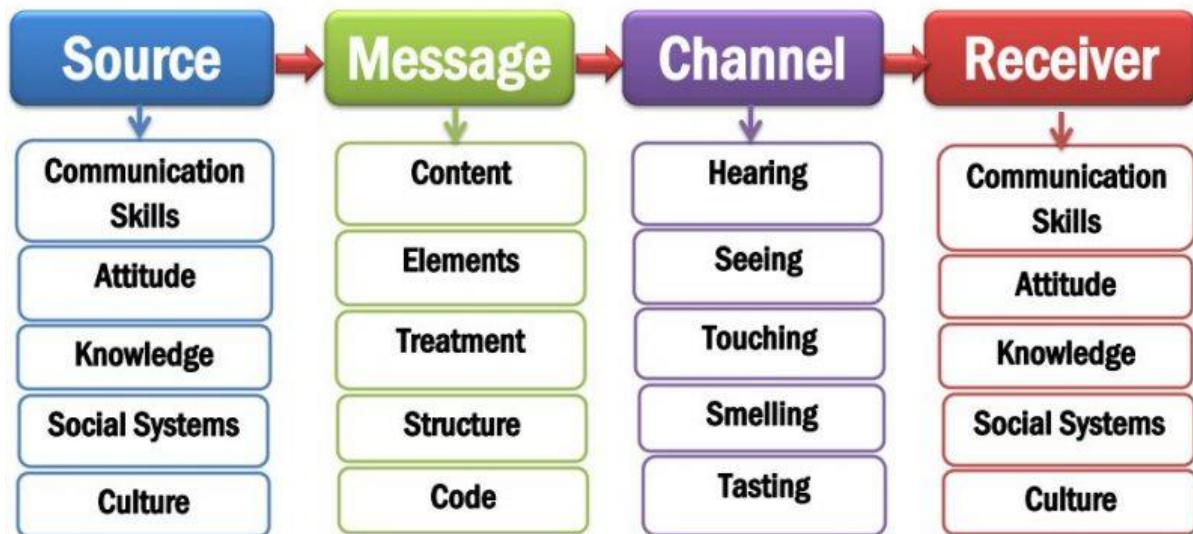


However, Both the Shannon model and Schramm agree that the message must be encoded and decoded before it reaches the final destination. Also, both models noticed that noise is the great hindrance for effective communication. (Shannon, 1948; Schramm 1954)

Berlo's Model of communication

This model is commonly known as the SMCR Model; and suggests only four stages namely; source, message, channel and Receiver unlike the Shannon and Weaver model with 6 stages as mentioned above. Berlo (1960) suggested that process of communication should start with the source who originates the message then passed through a channel like telephone, text, audio among others to the receiver as illustrated below;

Berlo's SMCR Model of Communication



Both the sender and receiver should have good communication skills and similar attitude, considering all the five senses for communication to be effective. (Berlo, 1960). Berlo's model is different from other models because it points out factors for effective communication like; communication skills, attitude, 5 senses, knowledge and culture. **Case study:** For example, in reference to **"The Professor and the village people"** case study, the professor was communicating to his village mates who were actively listening and ready to receive the message but were not knowledgeable of the terms "the edifice is being consumed by a great conflagration", which simply meant that his house was being destroyed by fire. The professor was communicating but the process was not effective because the message was received but not understood by the village mates. This had a great consequence because his property was greatly destroyed by fire.

Therefore, the professor should have used simpler terms to describe the situation instead of using terminologies that people failed to understand because Berlo suggested that communication skills should be backed up by knowledge, attitude and understanding (Berlo, 1960).

Feedback: The village mates should have given feedback to the professor by telling him that they do not understand what he was saying, maybe the professor could have explained the situation in simpler terms hence avoid the negative impact of fire on his

This model also does not suggest that message should be encoded and decoded like other models as mentioned above. However, like other models, the process of communication starts with sender and ends with the receiver. All the models believe that noise can hinder effective communication.

Communication skills

Communication skills refers to the abilities used to give and receive information so that the information is effectively, respectfully and efficiently exchanged between the sender and the receiver (Timmins, 2011). Having good communication skills means that one is able to convey ideas, thoughts, feelings to others combined by the ability to listen well and respond appropriately during the communication process (Jansen, 2019). This involves having the ability to be an active listener where one should listen to understand without giving divided attention to the people speaking. This can be done by putting away all sorts of distractions like social media alerts, and looking for a place with no noise, being a good speaker, and being a good observer throughout the communication process (Ian, 2015).

Verbal communication skill is the ability of the individual to convey the message using a language. It can be written or spoken.

For verbal communication to be effective, the speaker should supplement it with non-verbal cues like maintaining an eye contact. (Gill, 2012). On the hand, Non-Verbal communication involves conveying a message through signals. This requires the messenger to use non-verbal platforms like facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, and any other body language.

Case study: Communication with an elderly dementia patient

Mr. John (not real name) is 77 years with dementia and has following characteristics; hearing impairments, brain damage, mental decline, confusion, personality changes, lack of restraint, forgetfulness, and poor sight among others all which affects the way he gives and receives information. Mr. John has a problem of forgetting whether he has eaten or not, he also forgets whether he has taken his medication, and he often gets confused about what activities to do, what to wear, what to eat, and he also forgets his relatives. He has personality changes like getting moody, getting furious,

getting isolated and sometimes he even cries without being provoked. In addition, Mr. John has disorganized speech.

Communicating with a dementia patient requires one to have good communication skills; active listening, speaking, and observing.

While speaking to a dementia patient, the care giver should use a low tone, and should speak slowly since their brains are usually weak to comprehend too much information. The speaker should also avoid being rude and should not shout at a dementia patient because they have mental issues and this can break them down. (Klimora and Kuca, 2016). They are elderly humans and they deserve respect in all aspects. They are usually depressed and lonely, this means that a care giver should speak to them with empathy, with kindness and with respect as well as comforting them. The message should be clear and concise so that the patient can understand it. (Gill, 2012). To enable them sleep better, a care giver can convey message through written means like reading for John his favourite book, newspaper among others

They have problems with speech and usually have disorganized speech, it requires the care taker to be an active listener by paying attention, respecting their opinions, and avoiding distractions from laptops, cell phones, and colleagues. (Rogers and Farson, 2015)

It is important to supplement verbal communication with non-verbal means like using signs and pictures for example at meal time for them to pick their best meals, showing them activities available like exercise, maintaining an eye contact while speaking to them. This shows that you are serious and confident. (Ian, 2015). The care giver should keep a smiley face, good posture and decent dress code.

Case Study: Poor communication at my friend's work place.

My friend always complains to me that her supervisor is rude while communicating with her subordinate workers. For example, she shouts at them, she is quarrelsome, and she does not respect their opinions. She is fond of shutting the workers down whenever they try responding to her and this gives them low self-esteem. My friend told me that her boss is fond of insulting the employees calling them stupid, jerks, bonehead among others, and above all, she racially segregates them. In addition, she claims that her boss is not open to discussion and her word is always final.

According to Woods (2010), such kind of behaviour by the supervisor eventually causes a discrepancy between what is being communicated and what is being received which leads to misunderstandings and miscommunication.

What should be done?

The supervisor should start creating a friendly working environment with her workmates because it creates a positive attitude which in turn leads to better communication. (Ian, 2015). Instead of rejecting their opinions, the supervisor should encourage open communication in a workplace where everyone's views are heard and respected. This is very important in a workplace because it helps to avoid miscommunications, mistrust, misunderstandings and conflicts. (Timmins, 2011).

The boss should always seek constructive criticisms from her family members, friends, and workers, this will help her to work on her rude character willingly, and this eventually improves communication between her and the colleagues. (Gill, 2012). According to Timmins (2011), seeking positive criticism is encouraged for those in managerial positions because it helps one to identify their weaknesses in regards to character, and becomes easy for them to improve following what is said about them.

The supervisor needs to understand that everyone is entitled to their opinion and she should therefore learn to respect other opinions and this creates an open communication environment which later improves on the process of communication in her workplace. (Ian, 2015). The supervisor should ensure to ask her workers what they think and ask for their opinions and suggestions while making decisions. This will enhance communication and hence increase their morale and motivation at work.

The supervisor is also encouraged to start using interactive leadership style instead of authoritative leadership style where the employees take her word as final. She needs to know that interactive leadership enhances communication in a workplace thereby improving on productivity (Sullivan, 2011).

Conclusion

For any workplace to be regarded as organized, there must be a good communication network that accommodates all the stakeholders both internal and external. Internally, there should be a clear flow of information combined with communication platforms that are well understood and agreed upon by the internal stakeholders like the employees. In a similar way, an organization should have a clear and well established communication channel preferably an email address and website through which it exchanges information with the external stakeholders like customers, general public and the government. This is because everything in organization is run and controlled through communication that is either formal or informal. In conclusion therefore, management in any workplace should ensure that there is effective communication at all times because it is associated with; effective leadership, smooth operations, limited conflicts, effective control, effective public relations, and effective management. However, effective communication is achieved by eliminating communication barriers like; lack of trust, conflicts in a workplace, language barrier, cultural differences, and lack of transparency.

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