



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

BMBS4004 – Managing People and Teams

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

Recap of Week 3

- Explored the difference between groups and teams and examined the characteristics that contribute to successful team performance, including communication, trust, shared goals and leadership.
- Applied Tuckman's Five Stages of Team Development (Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning) to understand how teams develop and perform over time.
- Investigated Belbin's Team Roles, recognising how different behavioural contributions and self-awareness can improve team effectiveness.
- Evaluated the importance of psychological safety, effective communication and collaboration, while preparing to apply teamwork and leadership theories to the upcoming assessment scenario.

Research Action Plan

Last week, you were asked to each:

Find 2 academic sources.

Read the case study.

Prepare one possible recommendation.

Bring one theory relevant to our role.

Learning outcomes – By the end of this session you should be able to:

Explain	Explain how communication models, verbal and non-verbal cues, and common barriers influence the effectiveness of workplace communication.
Demonstrate	Demonstrate active listening and appropriate questioning techniques in a workplace conversation.
Apply	Apply effective communication skills to difficult conversations and the assessed crisis-management role play.

What do we know about communication:

It is shaped by
the environment

People see things
differently

People are weird!

Conflict is inevitable

Continually
changing/adapting

We often do it poorly!

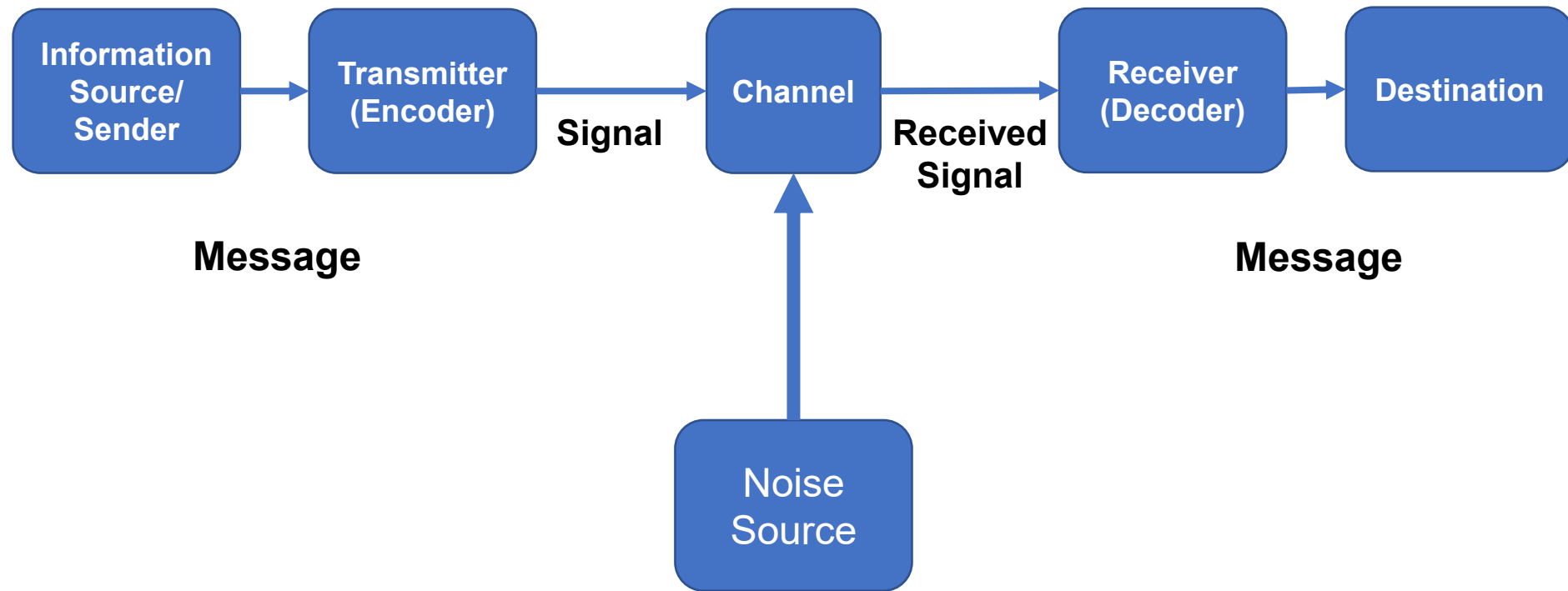
Effective Communication

- What does it involve?
 - Clarity and conciseness
 - Active listening
 - Choosing the appropriate medium
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Feedback and engagement
 - Nonverbal communication

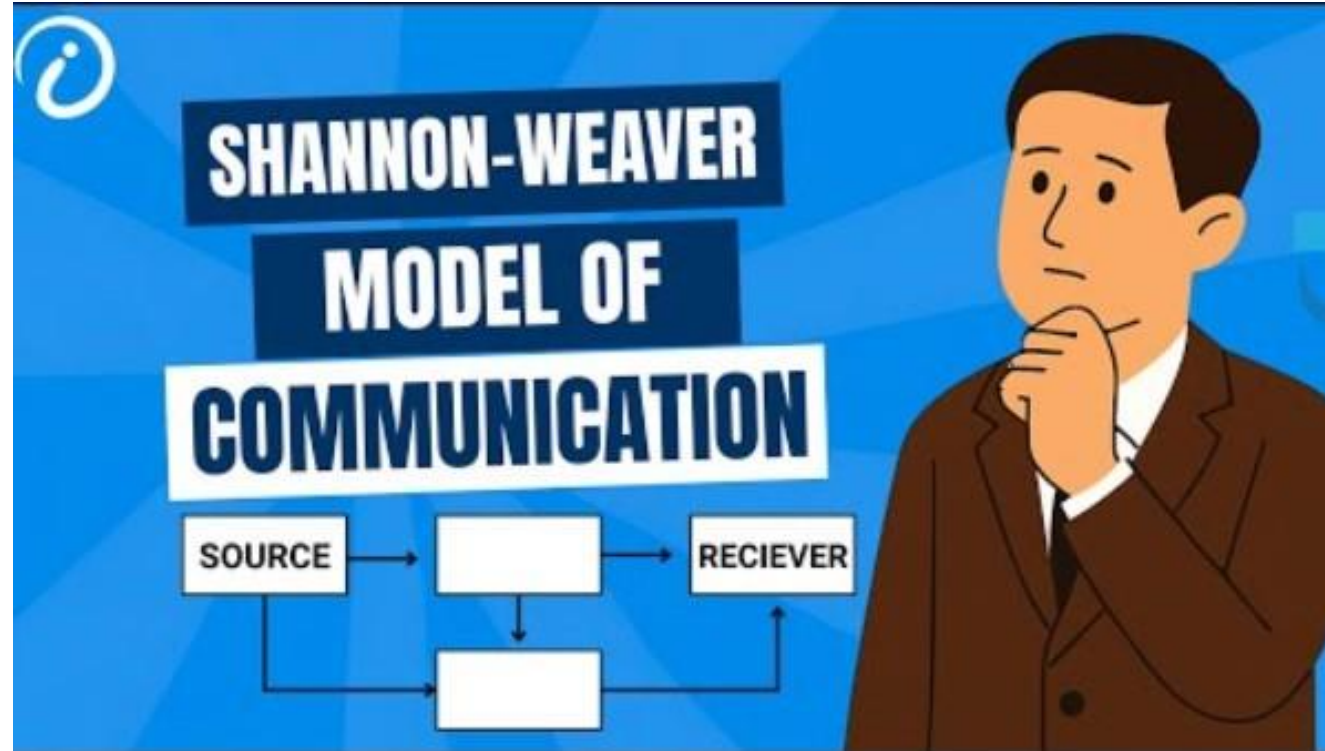
Why is effective communication important?

- Research consistently links strong communication to higher engagement and better team outcomes. For example, 64% of business leaders and 55% of knowledge workers report that effective communication increases team productivity, and teams with strong communication habits can lift productivity by up to 25%. Conversely, poor communication is associated with disengagement, duplicated effort, and costly mistakes; large organisations can lose tens of millions annually due to communication breakdowns (Jenkins, 2025).
- Why else is it important?

The Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model (1949)



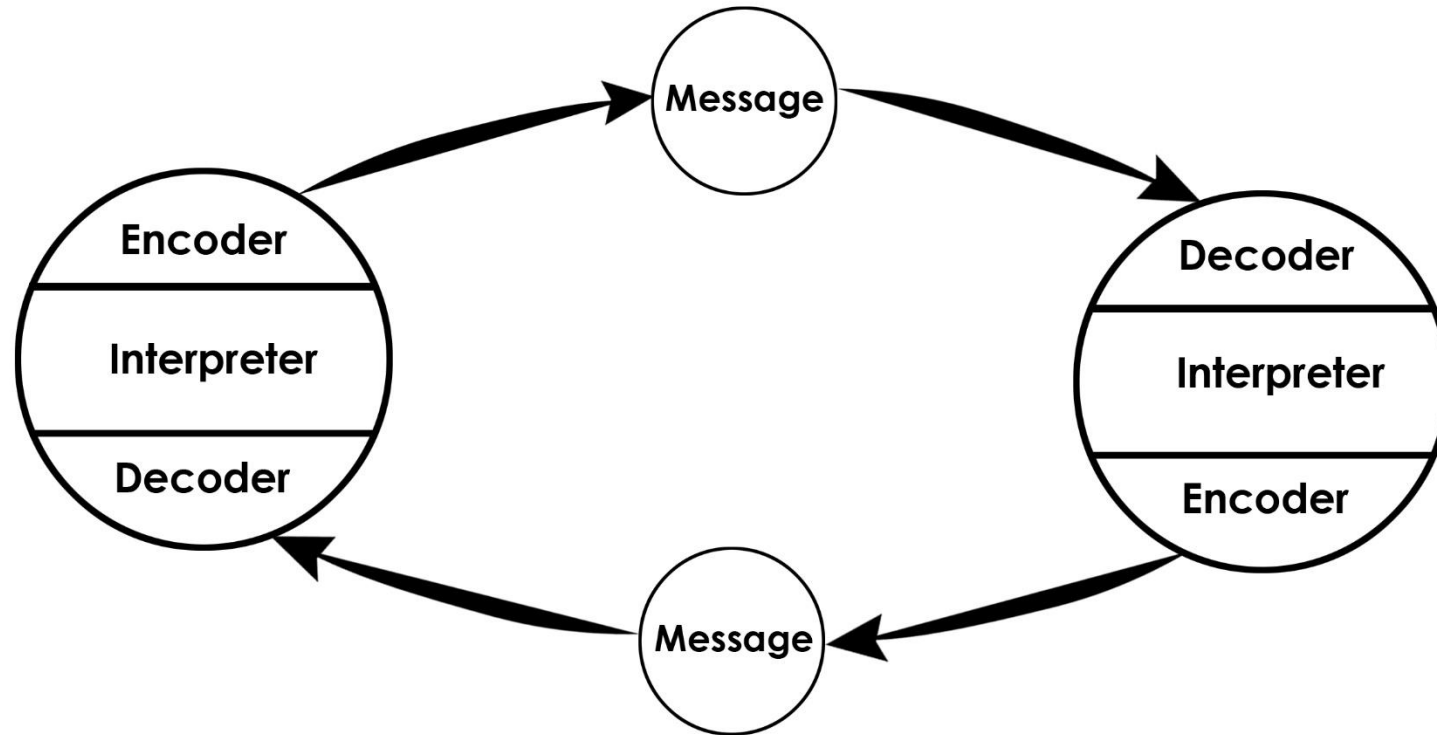
Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication explained - YouTube



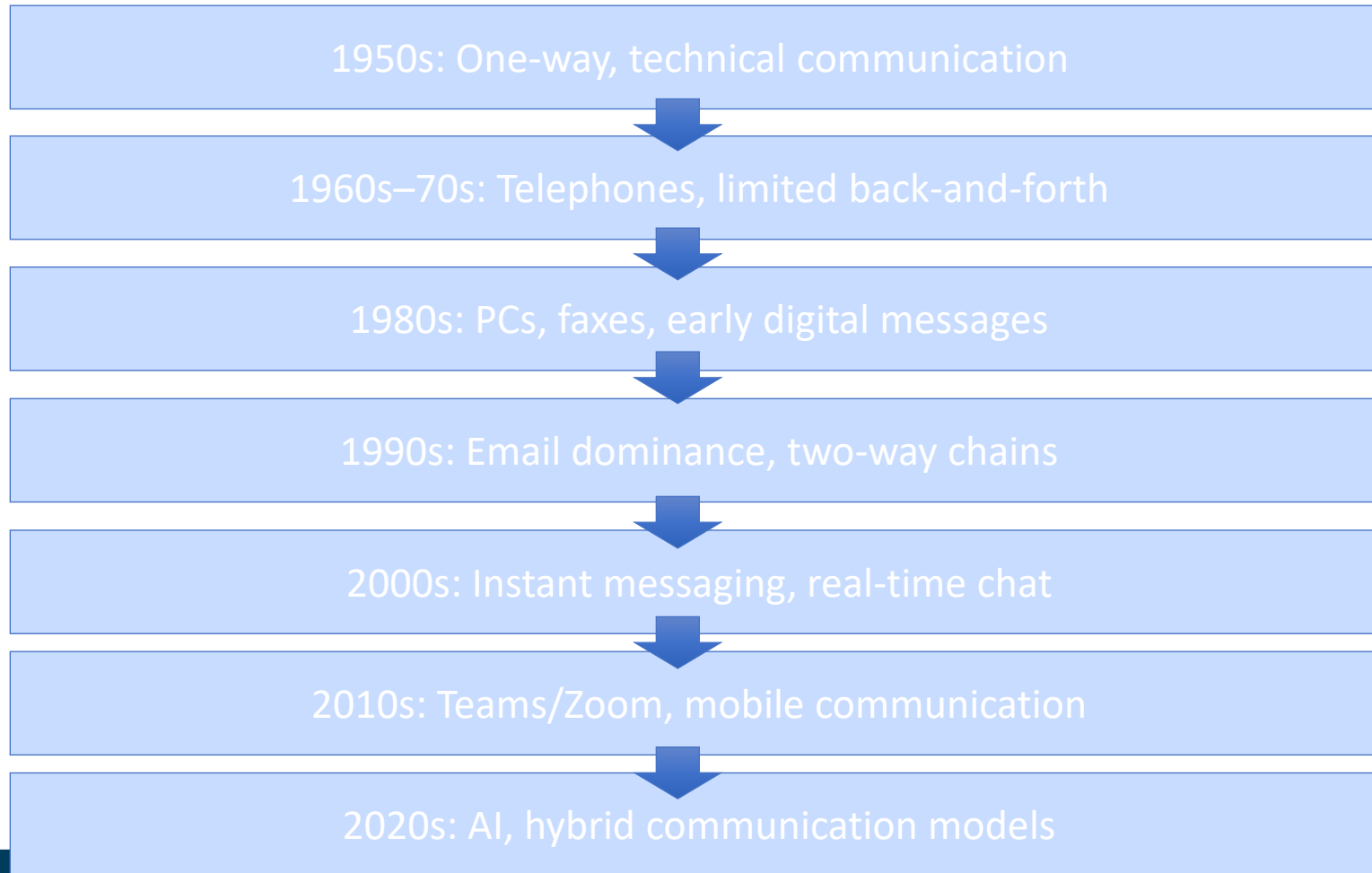
Activity

- Consider the communication breakdown scenarios on the handout and identify the following:
 - Source
 - Encoder (how the message was packaged)
 - Channel
 - Types of noise (physical, technical, semantic, psychological)
 - Decoder
 - Receiver
 - Evidence (or absence) of feedback
- Once you have done this, redesign the scenario to make communication more effective.

Schramm's Model of Communication (1954)



Communication timeline



Group discussion

- What barriers to communication have you experienced in the modern workplace?
- How have you/could you overcome these?
- Do you think technological advancements have improved communication? Justify your answer.



Break



Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

- **Verbal communication:** meaning conveyed through spoken or written words.
- **Non-verbal communication:** meaning conveyed through facial expressions, eye contact, posture, gestures, physical distance and other non-word cues.
- Both are important and can say different things.
- It is important we are aware of our own and others verbal and non-verbal communication.

The Elements of Communication

1. Vocal



**The
Voice**

This includes the vocal variety, quality, rate and vocalised pauses

2. Visual



**The
look**

This includes eye contact, posture, gestures & facial expression

3. Verbal



**The
Words**

This is what the person says

Mehrabian (1967)

When words, tone and facial expressions conflict, people may rely more heavily on tone and facial expressions when judging feelings and attitudes.

The findings do not apply to all communication.

Words remain critically important when sharing information, instructions and knowledge.

Communication Exercise



Split into pairs and await instructions



Start by facing away from each other



One member of the pair to give instructions, the other has to draw a specific route on the map following these instructions



Reflect on how you found the exercise, what were the challenges?



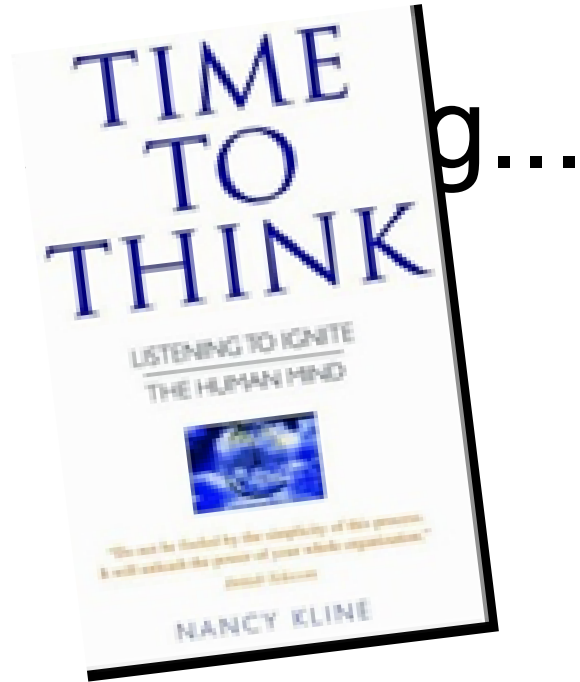
Components of Communication

- Paralinguistic cues
- Non-verbal behaviour
- Our words and language:
 - language function: instructions, suggestions, directions, statements, questions
 - confidence, communication and power-behaviour
 - using language and communicating tactfully in difficult conversations

Active listening

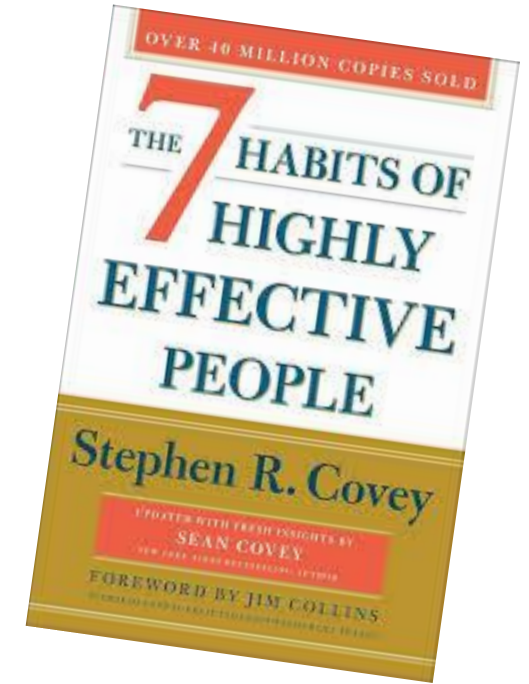
“It means that the listener explores what lies behind the words, joining the speaker in the search for clarity, meaning and effective communication” (Burt, 2019)

How can you tell if someone is actively listening to you?



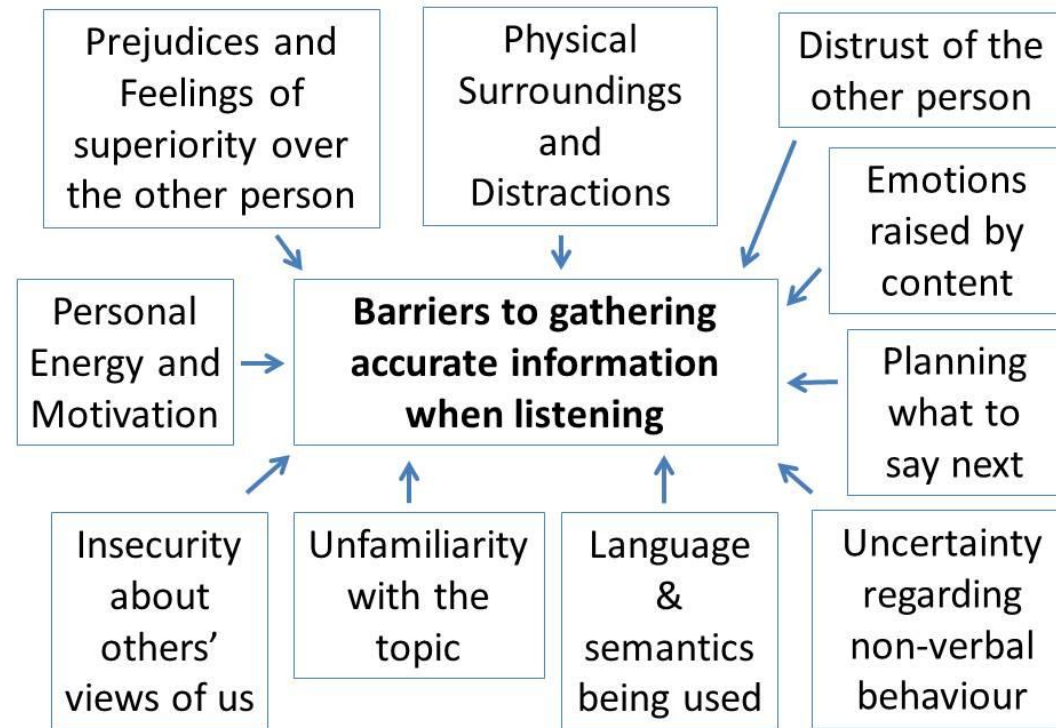
*Listen with
Fascination*

*The single most dignifying
thing you can do is just listen
to someone*



*Seek first to understand
before being understood*

Active Listening: being aware of barriers



Active Listening in Practice (1)



You will work in groups of three:

Speaker
Listener
Observer



Each round lasts 5 minutes.



After each round, rotate roles until everyone has had a turn.



Active Listening in Practice (2)

The speaker chooses ONE of the following prompts:

Option A

Describe a time when you worked in a team that functioned particularly well.

Option B

Describe a communication problem you have experienced at university or work.

Option C

Describe a manager, leader, teacher or coach who communicated effectively.

The speaker should talk continuously for approximately 2 minutes.

Active Listening in Practice (3)

Debrief:

What made you feel listened to?

What was difficult about listening without interrupting or offering a solution?

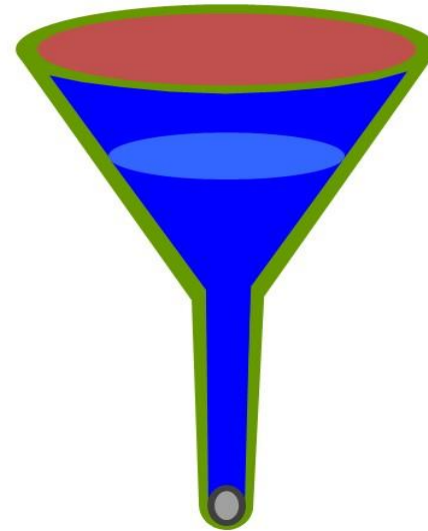
Which question helped the speaker elaborate?

What could an observer record as evidence of active listening?

Using questions to build relationships

- Questions in conversation...

The Funnel Technique



Open Question

"Tell me about..."

Probing Question

"How did you... ?"

Closed Question

"When was this?"

Reflective Question

"So you... ?"

Examples in practice (1)

Open questions
(top of funnel –
build rapport)

“What brought
you to this role
and our
organisation?”

“How have your
first few days been
so far?”

Probing questions
(narrowing – show
empathy and
curiosity)

“What’s gone well
in meeting the
team?”

“What parts of the
work or culture
have surprised you
so far?”

“How does this
role compare to
your previous
experience?”



Examples in practice (2)

Clarifying questions
(deeper connection
– personalise
support)

“Which team
members have you
connected with
most?”

“What one thing
would make your
start here even
smoother?”

“Are there any skills
or knowledge areas
where you’d like
early support?”

Closed/confirming
questions (bottom –
affirm and commit)

“So, connecting
with Sarah on
project processes
would help most?”

“Shall we schedule
a quick intro
meeting with her
this week?”

“Does Friday
morning work for
our first one-to-one
check-in?”

Break



Communicating Tactfully (1)

1

Check any assumptions.

2

Reframe and purpose of the conversation.

3

Use the 'passive voice' and 'active voice' appropriately.

4

Use a 'praise sandwich'.

5

Watch your language.

6

Be clear about consequences.



Communicating Tactfully (2)



Assume good intentions.



Avoid emotion during a conversation.



Ensure there are no surprises.



Leave the conversation on a positive note.



Listen well – avoid interrupting.





Difficult Conversations in Practice (1)

Why do managers avoid difficult conversations?

CIPD (2024) found that managers fear conflict, but delaying conversations can allow issues to grow and become harder to resolve.

In pairs, discuss:

- What makes difficult conversations uncomfortable?
- What might happen if a manager avoids the conversation?
- Which communication skills are most important in these situations?

Difficult Conversations in Practice (2)



In pairs, take turns being the **Manager** and **Employee**.



Your task is not to solve the problem.



Your task is to practise the **first minute** of a difficult conversation using the communication skills covered today.



You will be provided with scenarios to work through.



Scenarios

Scenario 1: Team Contribution

A student team member has attended meetings but is contributing very little to the project.

Scenario 2: Missed Deadlines

An employee has submitted work late several times.

Scenario 3: Communication Issues

A team member frequently interrupts others during meetings.

Scenario 4: New Starter Struggling

A new employee appears uncertain and withdrawn during team meetings.

What should the manager do next?

Follow up is not optional.

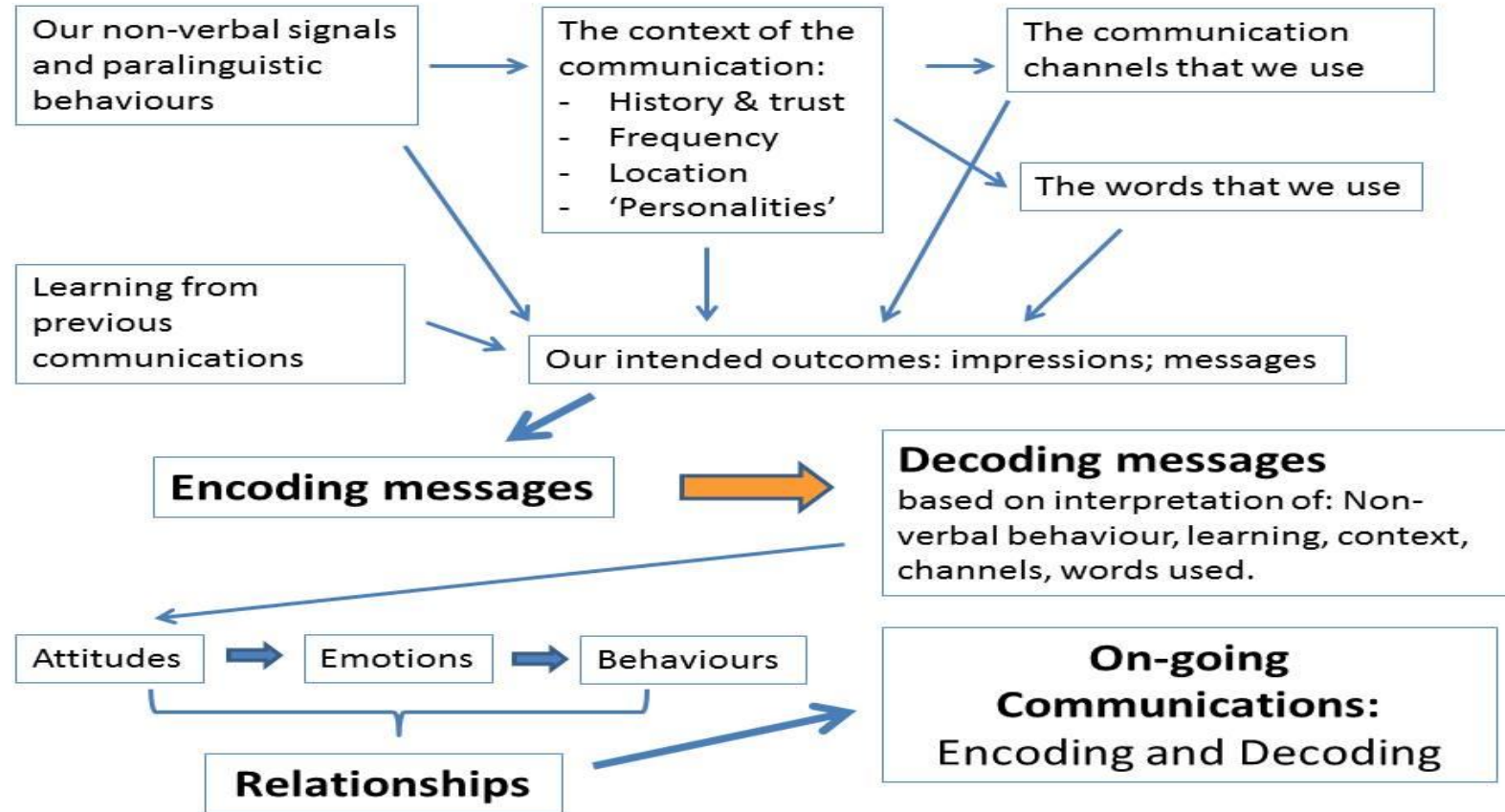
Confirm and record (short written summary).

Check progress early and consistently.

Provide support.

Close the loop (review and confirm further actions).

In Conclusion – Communication is Complicated!



Assessment preparation



So how does this link to Assessment 1?

Effective contribution is not just about presenting your own viewpoint.

In the role play, you will need to demonstrate that you can:

- **Listen actively** to the other professional roles.
- **Ask open and probing questions** to explore different viewpoints.
- **Summarise and clarify** key information.
- **Communicate your role's priorities** clearly and professionally.
- **Respond constructively** when others disagree.
- **Use appropriate tone and non-verbal communication.**
- **Negotiate and build agreement** around a shared action plan.
- **Remain in role** while showing respect for alternative perspectives.

Thinking ahead

What would an observer **see and hear** if your group were communicating effectively?

Identify:

- One communication behaviour that could **strengthen** the crisis meeting.
- One communication behaviour that could **damage** the meeting.
- One behaviour you personally want to demonstrate in the assessment.

Recap – Today we have...

- Explored communication models and identified how barriers, feedback and context can affect shared understanding.
- Examined how words, tone, non-verbal behaviour and paralinguistic cues contribute to communication.
- Practised active listening and used open, probing, clarifying and closed questions to develop conversations.
- Applied communication skills to workplace scenarios and considered how to demonstrate them effectively in the assessed role play.

Any questions?



Reference List

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