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Skills for the Workplace Outreach Program

Interpersonal Communication

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Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

What is Interpersonal Communication?

It is:

- **The process** by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages
- **Face-to-face communication**
- **Not just about what is actually said** - the language used - but **how** it is said and the non-verbal messages sent through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body language

Further information: [skillsyouneed.com](https://www.skillsyouneed.com)

What is Interpersonal Communication?

- ❖ When two or more people are in the same place and are aware of each other's presence, then communication is taking place, no matter how subtle or unintentional.
- ❖ Without speech, an observer may be using cues of posture, facial expression, and dress to form an impression of the other's role, emotional state, personality and/or intentions.
- ❖ Although no communication may be intended, people receive messages through such forms of non-verbal behaviour.

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is inescapable

- We can't **not** communicate. Through words, tone of voice, gestures, posture, facial expression etc, we constantly communicate and receive communication from others.
- Remember a basic principle of communication in general: people are not mind readers. Another way to put this is: people judge you by your behaviour, not your intent.

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is irreversible

- You can't really take back something once it has been said. The effect must inevitably remain.

A Russian proverb says, "*Once a word goes out of your mouth, you can never swallow it again.*"

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is complicated

- No form of communication is simple. Because of the number of variables involved, even simple requests are extremely complex.
- Osmo Wiio* gives us some communication maxims similar to Murphy's law
- *If communication can fail, it will!*

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is complicated

- If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be understood in just that way which does the most harm.
- There is always somebody who knows better than you what you meant by your message.
- The more communication there is, the more difficult it is for communication to succeed

**Osmo Wiio, Wiio's Laws--and Some Others (Espoo, Finland: Welin-Goos, 1978):*

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is contextual

- In other words, communication does not happen in isolation.

There is:

- *Psychological context*: who you are and what you bring to the interaction.
- *Relational context*: your reactions to the other person - the "mix."
- *Situational context*: An interaction that takes place in a classroom will be very different from one that takes place in a bar.

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is contextual

- *Environmental context:*

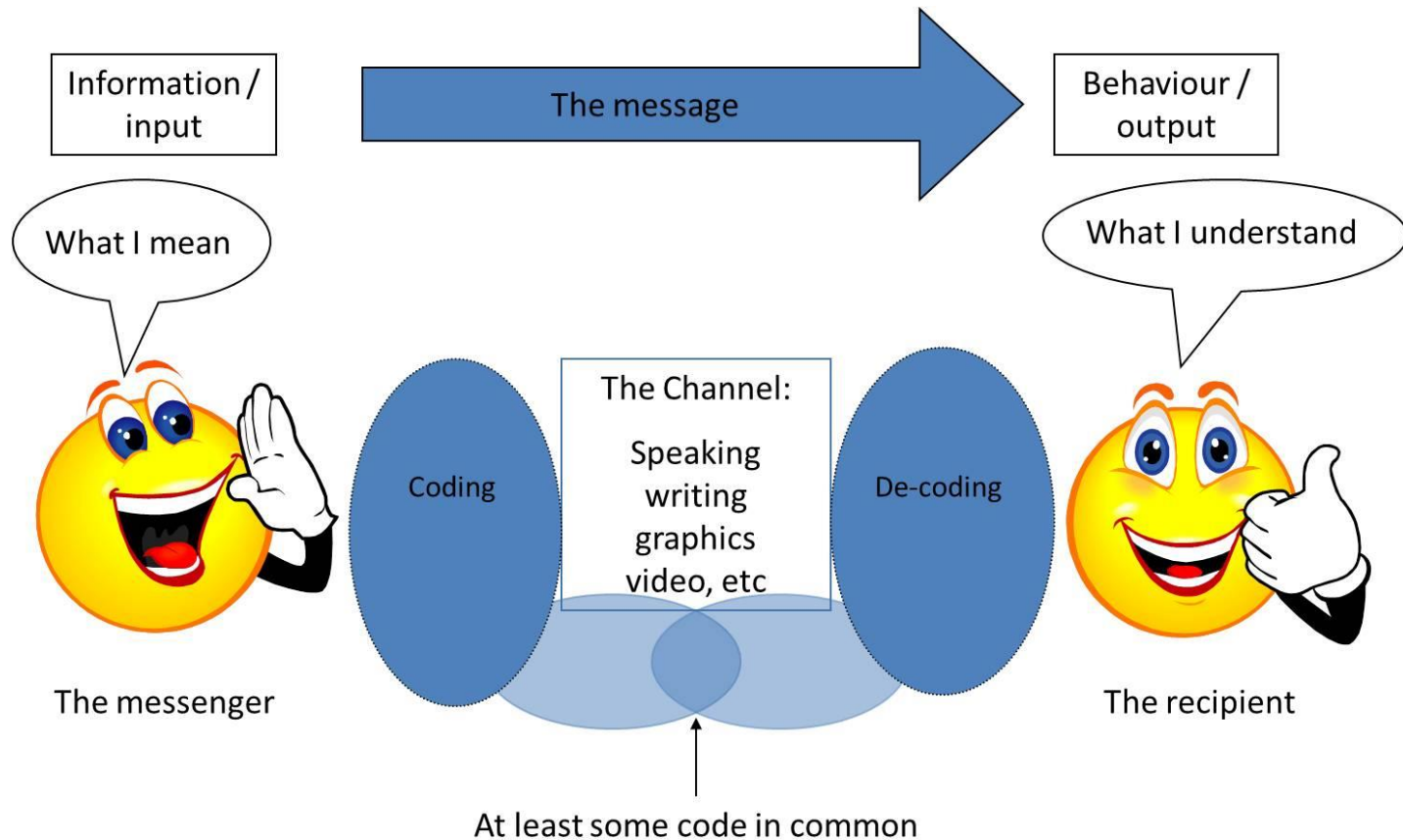
Location, noise level, temperature, season, time of day are all examples of factors in the environmental context.

- *Cultural context*

includes all the learned behaviours and rules that affect the interaction. If you and the other person come from different cultures for example, there is a possible basis for misunderstanding in the cultural context .

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Remember the Communication Cycle!



Developing your interpersonal skills

- As we have seen in the previous slides, interpersonal communication can be a something of a minefield for the unprepared.
- The most effective way to avoid the mines is to work on your own interpersonal skills which will help you recognise and defuse difficult situations - hopefully before they arise.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Empathise

- [Empathy](#) is trying to see things from the point-of-view of others.

When communicating with others, try not to be judgemental or biased by preconceived ideas or beliefs – try and view situations and responses from the other person's perspective instead.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Learn to Listen

Listening is not the same as hearing; learn to listen not only to the words being spoken, but how they are being spoken and the non-verbal messages sent with them.

Use the techniques of [clarification and reflection](#) to confirm what the other person has said and avoid any confusion.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Learn to Listen

Try not to think about what to say next whilst listening; clear your mind and focus on the message being received instead.

Your friends, colleagues and other acquaintances will appreciate good [listening skills](#).

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Communicate Effectively

- Do not say the first thing that comes into your mind but instead take a moment and pay close attention to what you say and how you say it.
- Focus on the meaning of what you want to communicate.
- Aim to increase understanding by considering how your message might be received by the other person.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Communicate Effectively

- Aim to increase understanding by considering how your message might be received by the other person.
- Present information in a way that its meaning can be clearly understood.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Communicate Effectively

- Avoid jargon and over-complicated language.
- Explain things as simply as possible.
- Request clarification if unclear about a message.
- Make eye contact and avoid defensive body language.

Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Use Humour

- Laughing releases endorphins that can help relieve stress and anxiety; most people like to laugh and will feel drawn to somebody who can make them laugh.
- Do ensure your humour is appropriate to the situation!



Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Use Humour

- Use your sense of humour to break the ice, to lower barriers and gain the affection of others.
- By using appropriate humour, you will be perceived as more [charismatic](#).



Further information: skillsyouneed.com

Developing your interpersonal skills

Maintain a Positive Attitude and Smile

- Do your best to be friendly, upbeat and positive with other people.
- When things do not go to plan, stay optimistic and learn from your mistakes.
- If you smile often and stay cheerful, people are more likely to respond positively to you.



Exercises

- [Temperament Quiz](#)
- [Interactive Johari window \(positives\)](#)
- [Interactive Nohari window \(negatives\)](#)