BS (LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCES)

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS

Course Code: 9215   **Units: 1-9**

Department of Library and Information Sciences
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

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i

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Department of Library and Information Sciences was established in 1985 under the flagship of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities intending to produce trained professional manpower. The department is currently offering seven programs from certificate course to PhD level for fresh and/or continuing students. The department is supporting the mission of AIOU keeping in view the philosophies of distance and online education. The primary focus of its programs is to provide quality education through targeting the educational needs of the masses at their doorstep across the country.

BS 4-year in Library and Information Sciences (LIS) is a competency-based learning program. The primary aim of this program is to produce knowledgeable and ICT-based skilled professionals. The scheme of study for this program is specially designed on the foundational and advanced courses to provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of the areas of specialization in librarianship. It also focuses on general subjects and theories, principles, and methodologies of related LIS and relevant domains.

This new program has a well-defined level of LIS knowledge and includes courses of general education. The students are expected to advance beyond their higher secondary level and mature and deepen their competencies in communication, mathematics, languages, ICT, general science, and array of topics social science through analytical and intellectual scholarship. Moreover, the salient features of this program include practice-based learning to provide students with a platform of practical knowledge of the environment and context, they will face in their professional life.

This program intends to enhance students' abilities in planning and controlling library functions. The program will also produce highly skilled professional human resources to serve libraries, resource access centers, documentation centers, archives, museums, information centers, and LIS schools. Further, it will also help students to improve their knowledge and skills of management, research, technology, advocacy, problem-solving, and decision-making relevant to information work in a rapidly changing environment along with integrity and social responsibility. I welcome you all and wish you good luck for your academic exploration at AIOU!

Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum
Vice-Chancellor

PREFACE

The primary mission of an information professional is to serve the community by linking potential users with resources that meet their diverse and ever-changing information needs. More importantly, communication skills are central to performing jobs well. Accordingly, the course on communication skills for information professionals is designed to explain what communication skills are, and how these skills play a critical role to communicate information and knowledge both in professional and social settings. This study guide (9215) consists of nine units. Every unit is structured in such a way that students can comprehend the topics covered in this study guide. Each unit starts with a brief introduction, objectives, followed by discussion of topics. At the end of each unit, activities and self-assessment questions designed for the self-learning of students are discussed.

Unit 1 explains non-verbal communication. Most of the time we listen for multiple reasons, for information, advice, enjoyment, helping others, etc. Unit 2 discusses the goals of effective listening, key elements of good listening, barriers to effective listening, improving listening skills. In contrast, unit 3 concentrates on speaking skills and how to improve the skills. Since written communication is more important than ever, therefore, unit 4 aims to provide information regarding different types of writing and analyzing the audience, choosing an appropriate style, organizing information, avoiding common grammatical errors, and use of appropriate graphics also impact positively. On the whole, unit 5 discusses how to integrate nonverbal behavior, listening, speaking, and writing skills.

Keeping in mind that speaking and listening are the communication skills people use most and that if people had a choice, they would rather talk to each other than write to each other. Unit 6 explains the application of speaking skills in commonly occurring situations involving two people. Moreover, unit 7 talks about group work in the life of an individual, its application during family functions, at school, during community or religious events. It also provides information about the characteristics of groups, patterns of communication, and group dynamics.

Presentations are speeches that are usually given in a business, technical, professional, or scientific environment. An individual whose job involves introducing a speaker, doing a book talk, giving a library tour, providing bibliographic instruction to groups, providing staff training, he/she should possess presentation skills. Unit 8 sheds light on planning a presentation, analyzing the audience, organizing content, delivering a presentation, and managing question-answer sessions. Finally, unit 9 focuses on the teaching of communication skills that is appropriate at all stages of education and provides a discussion on keeping in mind its significance, what is training, adult training, planning a training program, using the micro-skills training model, modeling good behavior, and evaluation and follow-up of a training program.

Prof. Dr. Syed Hassan Raza

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

After studying this course, skills for information professionals, the students should be able to comprehend the following concepts:

- Nonverbal behavior
- Listening skills
- Speaking skills
- Writing skills
- Integration: putting it all together (non-verbal and verbal communication)
- Application: speaking one-to-one
- Applications: working in groups, and writing
- Making presentations
- Training others in communication skills

Unit-1

Non-verbal Behaviour

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1

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

Nonverbal communication is the process of sending and receiving information without using language. So, to improve nonverbal communication, some key individual skills such as eye contact, smiling and nodding, pausing, posture, physical appearance, and vocal qualities, are discussed in this unit. Further, activities are designed in such a way so that students could improve their learning by performing actions in real-life settings. At the end of this unit, students can evaluate their learning by answering self-assessment questions.

1.1 Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit students would be able to:

- explain nonverbal communication.
- explain common skills require to improve nonverbal communication.

1.2 Nonverbal Behaviour

The word communication is derived from the Latin word communis, which means 'common'. Precisely, it implies a common ground of understanding (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012). In our routine life, we communicate with people through different modes. The major part of this communication is made through nonverbal modes (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Manusov, 2016). Nonverbal signals play an important role in communication because they can strengthen or repeat a verbal message (when the nonverbal signals match the spoken words), weaken or contradict a verbal message (when nonverbal signals don't match the words), or replace words entirely (Bovee, Thill, & Schatzman, 2010).

Nonverbal messages are conveyed by behavior such as eye contact, tone of voice, facial expression, posture, gestures, positioning of arms and legs, style of dress, and distance between people. Following are key dimensions of nonverbal behavior:

(a). Kinesics is the way we use our bodies, head, arms, and legs, as well as facial expression, posture, and movement.
(b). Proxemics means the way we use interpersonal space; the distance we stand from another person; body orientation.
(c). Paralanguage is referred to how we say something: the pitch, rate, loudness, and inflection of our speech.
(d). Chronemics is the way we time our verbal exchanges; waiting for time and punctuality; duration and urgency.
(e). Physical appearance is the way we look: body type; clothing; hair and skin color; grooming; accessories and cosmetics.
(f). Gesture is the way we use our body to express meaning: hand and arm movement; head and eye movements (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

The aspects of nonverbal behavior thought to contribute to the accurate exchange of social information, however, are highly dependent on scholars' individual orientations toward the importance or role of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication skill is typically described (either explicitly or tacitly) as individual differences in sending (i.e., encoding) and/or receiving (i.e., decoding) abilities. Unlike the tendency in other writings about communication skill, in which skill is typically equated with the production but not the reception of messages, nonverbal scholars tend to take a broader perspective by also acknowledging the importance of receptive sensitivity to nonverbal cues. However, there also is often a narrowing of perspective by focusing on skills as they relate to the affective features of interpersonal interactions (Burgoon & Bacue, 2003).

Students also need to understand that a major part of nonverbal behavior is culture-specific. We learn what is appropriate within our own culture and interpret variations. For example, at an early age, we begin to learn how far away to stand from another person, how much physical touching is acceptable, what kind of eye contact is appropriate, and how long to look. These lessons are never taught formally, but they are learned. For instance, a scolding parent or teacher might say to a child, "stand up straight and look at me when I am talking to you. From the middle-class perspective, this looking is understood as an appropriate and respectful listening pose. It implies that children who would not look us in the eye are shifty, guilty, or otherwise lacking in openness and integrity. In contrast, direct eye contact may be inappropriate for many African Americans, Native Americans, or Hispanic Americans, or Asian, who are taught that lowering the eyes is a sign of respect. So it is not a simple matter of learning the 'right' cultural behaviour but rather adjusting ourselves to these factors in any given situation with any given individual. We may not always be communicating what we think we are communicating to a person whose culture is different from ours (Ross & Dewdney, 1998; Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

The following sections on individual skills describe some of the common meanings of nonverbal behavior:

1.2.1 Eye contact

Making eye contact is one of a cluster of skills known as attending skills. By using attending skills, many of which are nonverbal, we show our interest by paying attention (Ross & Nilsen, 2013). Engaging in eye contact with someone, for instance, might communicate interest or anger, while failing to make eye contact may explain submissive, respect, or shame (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Manusov, 2016).

Here students need to understand what is appropriate eye contact? Too much can be as bad as too little. Appropriate eye contact involves neither staring nor avoiding. While talking with people, your eyes will move from eyes to chin, hairline, mouth, and back to the eyes. So in a conversation listeners and speakers tend to adopt an alternate pattern of looking and looking away (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

1.2.2 Smiling and nodding

Like eye behaviour smiling has received considerable attention as an indicator of intimacy and linking. Smiling typically reflects friendliness, social politeness and/or positive emotional feelings such as liking. Basically frequency and intensity of the smile help in appreciating how much intimacy people feel towards one another (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Manusov, 2016).

Smiling and occasional nodding function as 'minimal encouragers' in conversation, reassuring the other person that you are friendly, interested, and listening. Smiling is a sign of warmth in most cultures, but in some cultures, a head nod means that the other person is listening politely or following what you are saying, not necessarily agreeing with it. While in some cultures the side to side nodding means agreement and vertical nodding mean disagreement. If you usually listen impassively, try nodding occasionally. Do not overdo it. An occasional single nod of the head encourages people to say more; successive nods get them to stop (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

1.2.3 Pausing

The effective use of pauses, or silence, is a kind of nonverbal behavior, although it is often combined with speaking and listening skills. A well-placed pause can substitute for a conversational turn. Pausing is defined as intentional silence in place of a statement or question. For example, when it is your turn to speak, you wait before speaking, or say nothing until the other person speaks again (Knapp & Horgan, 2013).

A pause may also function as an encourager or a probe. It says to the interviewee, "I'm listening" and "go on." Because the interviewer relinquishes her turn at the conversation, the interviewee is likely to expand on what he has previously said.

Take this example:

Librarian: Tell me about your research. User: Well, this is in the area of applied microbiology. Librarian: . . . (pause, combined with encouraging body language) User: I am studying the action of lactic acid bacteria in cheese. Pauses are also important as a listening skill when they follow the speaker's statements or questions (Ross & Nilsen, 2013). In this example, the pause by the librarian gives encouragement to the user to speak more.

1.2.4 Posture

Posture is perhaps the best index of the body's part action and makes possible the prediction of future bodily performance (Ruesch & Kees, 1974). Posture, or the way one hold body, signals mood and attitude to others, including users. Slumping signals fatigue, boredom, or discouragement. Closed postures, such as crossed arms or orienting yourself away from the person with whom you are speaking, often convey detachment or disagreement, regardless of your actual words. When you give out mixed messages like this, others tend to trust your nonverbal signals more than what you say (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

1.2.5 Physical appearance

People respond to others based on their physical appearance, sometimes fairly and other times unfairly. Although an individual's body type and facial features impose limitations, most people can control their appearance to some degree through grooming, clothing, accessories, piercings, and hairstyle. Many employers also have guidelines concerning attire, body art, and other issues, so make sure you understand and follow them (Bovee, Thill, & Schatzman, 2010; Burgoon, Guerrero, & Manusov, 2016).)

The standards for an acceptable appearance vary according to the immediate task, our status in the organization, and whether or not we work with the public. For example, when you are giving a public presentation, you are generally expected to be dressed more formally than you might be for your everyday activities. For an event such as a media interview, you want to appear professional and to avoid distracting elements such as noisy jewelry. In special libraries, you may be explicitly or implicitly encouraged to fit in with the corporate image. In the absence of clear-cut dress regulations, you need to be aware of possible interpretations that people make from various aspects of your appearance so that you minimize unintended interpretations relating to social and organizational status. Some of these interpretations are determined culturally by the expectations and assumptions of the interpreter, which means that your physical appearance may create unintended meanings related to your social and organizational status. For example, clothing chosen to express individuality may not be perceived as professionally appropriate by people whose culture does not place a high value on individuality (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

1.2.6 Vocal qualities

Vocal qualities, sometimes called paralanguage, are what get lost between the tape recording of a voice and the transcript of the words. These vocal cues include volume (loud or soft), pitch (high or low), rate of speech (fast or slow), rhythm, emphasis, and fluency. After you have become accustomed to hearing your own voice played back on a tape recorder, evaluate your speaking style using the following checklist of questions. Be objective as you listen to your voice. Ask yourself whether there are any features of your speaking style that prevent you from sounding as effective as you would like (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

1.2.6.1 Vocal qualities: a checklist

(a). Does every word and every sentence sound like every other? Or do you vary the pitch and emphasis depending on the sense?

(b). Do you sound tired and bored? Or energetic and interested? Is your tone tight? Nasal? Breathy?

(c). Do you mumble? Or can your consonants be distinctly heard? Do you speak so softly that people often can't hear you?

(d). Do you have a machine-gun delivery so rapid that people sometimes miss what you say?

(e). Do you speak so slowly that people have trouble waiting for you to finish your sentences?

(f). Do all your sentences, even declarative ones, have an upward intonation as if you are asking a question? Do you sound hesitant and unsure? Or do you sound confident in what you are saying? (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

The way you speak sends a message to your audience. Is it the message you intend? If not, you may want to work on correcting problems that you have identified (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

1.3 Activities

1. Tape-record yourself in an informal conversation. Then tape-record yourself reading aloud. Your first thought as you review the tape maybe, "but that does not sound like me." However, the voice that you hear recorded on tape by a good tape recorder is the voice that other people hear. Do you think this practice helps to improve your non-verbal communication?
2. Find a partner with whom you can role-play a conversation. Ask your partner to talk about a topic in which he or she is personally interested. Your role is to listen and to encourage your partner to say more by using the attending skills of eye contact, smiling, and nodding. Which of these skills do you feel comfortable doing? Which ones need more practice? Change roles. How does your partner's use of attending skills affect your role as a speaker?
3. Observe your behavior. Under which circumstances do you normally pause? Under which circumstances do you not pause, but perhaps should.
4. While having a dialogue with your class fellow on how to improve non-verbal communication, practice the techniques that help to improve vocal qualities. Write down the successful techniques in your case and present your tutor for feedback.

1.4 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Why nonverbal communication is important in social and professional lives?
2. Explain different skills for nonverbal communication and why they are important for LIS students?

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Unit-2

Listening Skills

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9

CONTENTS

2   Introduction

Most of the time we listen while communicating with others. We listen for multiple reasons, for example, for seeking information, advice, enjoyment, helping others, culture understanding, giving meaning to interpreting particular information, responding to what we hear, and so on. Thus, listening skills are vital for LIS students to perform both professional and social responsibilities. Accordingly, the objectives of this unit support students to improve listening skills.

2.1   Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit you would be able to:

- why effective listening is important?
- learn key elements of good listening.
- know barriers to effective listening.
- know key listening skills.
- know key listening activities.

2.2   Goals of Effective Listening

Listening is an essential life skill. Popular phrases such as "look at me while I am talking to you!" and "are you listening?" as well as the need to "be heard" by "a listening ear" suggest a universal recognition of the importance of listening (Bodie, 2012). Speaking is only one side of the oral communication story. You spend over half your communication time listening. Generally, miscommunications stem from a failure to listen to and understand the needs of others (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012).

Good listeners are rare these days. Studies reveal that most listeners retain less than 50% of what they hear. Imagine what that means when it comes to a conversation that you might have with your boss, a colleague, or a customer. If you speak for ten minutes, chances are that you have only heard about half of that conversation. No wonder miscommunications happen so frequently! Yet listening is one of the most vital skills that you need if you want to communicate effectively. Listening allows you to 'decode' the messages that you are receiving, but it also allows you to help others communicate better. When you are not certain of the message that you have heard the first time, listening well allows you to ask the questions that will clarify the message (Wood, 2011).

A good listener, who is listening (as opposed to just pretending to listen), has the goal of understanding the other person's point of view. Good listening helps you on the job in these ways:

- Finding out what someone wants so that you can satisfy needs (reference librarians do this, as do sales people and lawyers.).

- Understanding someone's point of view, attitude, feelings, or concerns so that, as a supervisor, you have the information you need to plan effectively, anticipate problems, and resolve conflicts.
- Receiving information to form an opinion or reach a decision.
- Maximizing your learning during training sessions.
- Get feedback about your performance so that you can correct problems before they become crises (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

In addition to on the job listening, we listen for multiple reasons to:

(a). build relationships to understand others.
(b). be entertained.
(c). learn.
(d). show empathy, and
(e). gather information (Wood, 2011).

2.2.1 Four key elements of good listening

The following four key elements of the listening process describe what good listeners do to listen well in any situation:

2.2.1.1 Hear the message

Hearing is the beginning of the listening process. You might hear a door slam, a truck driving by, or a familiar voice. The brain recognizes the sound as it enters the ear. Then the other "listening channels," such as our eyes and our emotions, kick in. All channels seek consistency or inconsistency and confirmation of the spoken message from the speaker's nonverbal feedback, such as body language and tone of voice (Romero, 2009).

2.2.1.2 Interpret the message

It is the second step to effective listening. Interpretation of the message depends on your knowledge, vocabulary, attitude, experience, culture, and background. You must also be able to interpret the speaker's body language. Interpreting a speaker's message means coming to a mutual understanding of the speaker's meaning (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012).

2.2.1.3 Evaluate the message

Good listeners make sure they have all of the key information before forming an opinion. They do not jump to conclusions based on bias or incomplete information. They may agree with the speaker, or they may disagree. Good listening does not mean automatic compliance. A good listener weighs and analyzes all of the evidence before reaching a decision or making a judgment (Romero, 2009).

2.2.1.4 Respond to the message

Although a response may be considered a speaking rather than a listening role, it is still critical to clear communication. The listener must let the speaker know, by verbal and/or nonverbal feedback, what was heard and how it was heard. Good listeners accept responsibility to provide feedback for the speaker to complete the communication process. Good listeners have a strong desire to reach a common understanding (Romero, 2009). Figure 2.1 illustrates four key elements of the listening process.
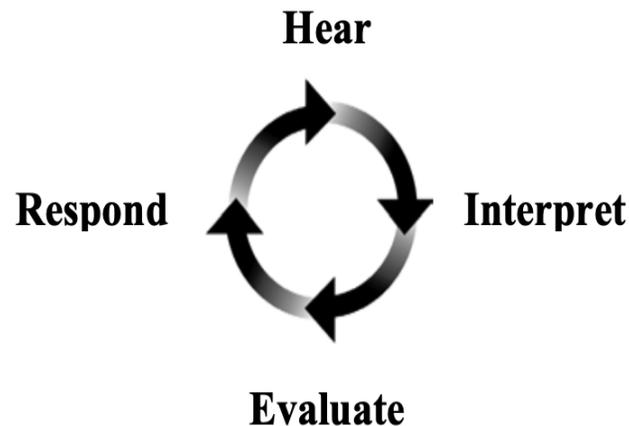
Hear

Respond   **Interpret**

Evaluate

Figure 2.1: Key elements of listening (Romero, 2009)

2.2.2 Barriers to listening

For effective communication, there is a need to pay attention to the hindrances to listening. The following are key barriers to good listening:

2.2.2.1 Perceiving selectively

We may hear only those messages that fit into our model of the world and filter out other contradictory messages.

2.2.2.2 Making assumptions

Instead of listening, people often assume. But it is dangerous to assume we know what other people feel or may mean in a given situation. One person may feel quite different from the way another would feel in the same situation. Instead of assuming, ask.

2.2.2.3 Giving unsolicited advice

Advice given before we have listened carefully to the problem is usually inappropriate. Moreover, people are unprepared to accept unasked advice.

2.2.2.4 Being judgmental or critical

When we are judgmental, we are not trying to understand another person's point of view; we are distancing ourselves from that point of view, often to reject it. We are saying, in effect, "you are wrong (silly, selfish, short-sighted) to think or feel that way."

2.2.2.5 Being defensive or arguing

If we feel threatened by the other person's point of view, we tend to defend our own positions instead of listening in order to understand.

2.2.2.6 Failing to understand cultural differences

We may allow ourselves to be unnecessarily distracted by differences in language patterns, such as the dialect of the speaker. More important, we sometimes miscommunicate if we do not understand the role that silence plays in cross-cultural communication, or we may misinterpret people because we do not have the same sense of timing in speech (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

2.3 **Improving Listening Skills**

There are several bad listening practices that we should avoid, as they do not facilitate effective listening:

2.3.1 Avoid bad listening

Students need to avoid the following practices during listening:

(a). Interruptions that are unintentional or serve an important or useful purpose are not considered bad listening. When interrupting becomes a habit or is used in an attempt to dominate a conversation, then it is a barrier to effective listening.
(b). Distorted listening occurs when we incorrectly recall information, skew information to fit our expectations or existing schemata or add material to embellish or change information.
(c). Eavesdropping is a planned attempt to secretly listen to a conversation, which is a violation of the speakers' privacy.
(d). Aggressive listening is a bad listening practice in which people pay attention to a speaker to attack something they say.
(e). Narcissistic listening is self-centered and self-absorbed listening in which listeners try to make the interaction about them by interrupting, changing the subject, or drawing attention away from others.
(f). Pseudo-listening is fake listening, in that people behave like they are paying attention and listening when they are not (Schmitz, 2012).

2.3.2 Improve listening

There are some specific tips that an individual can do to improve listening skills, by really paying attention to what the other person is saying. While listening students must follow the instructions:

(a). Do not interrupt.

(b). Do not do all the talking yourself.

(c). Describing own similar experience.

(d). Wait for an answer.

(e). Do not change the topic.

(f). Listen for the whole message.

(g). Listen between the words.

(h). Use eye contact.

(i). Use minimal encouragers.

(j). Check your understanding.

(k). Ask questions (Romero, 2009).

In addition to the above-stated instructions, specifically it is said to be a good listener, use your DISC (desire, interest, self-discipline, concentration) drive.

2.3.2.1 Desire

From a desire to listen comes a commitment. A committed athlete does not play half of each game. A committed gardener does not water just half of the garden. We must have a strong desire to listen in order to be effective communicators. Listening is not a halfway process.

2.3.2.2 Interest

There is no such thing as an uninteresting topic; there are just uninterested people. We must develop an interest in the person and/or in the topic to be good listeners.

2.3.2.3 Self-discipline

We must learn self-discipline to eliminate distractions, understand the speaker's key points, overcome boredom, interpret voice inflections and tone, understand nonverbal cues, and comprehend the main idea. Next time you are in a listening situation, pay attention to how well you control your negative listening habits.

2.3.2.4 Concentration

Concentration requires greater effort than does merely paying attention. You pay attention when you juggle balls, and you concentrate when you juggle eggs. Concentration is focused on mental energy, and it is a limited commodity. How long can you concentrate intently in a meeting or on your cell phone (especially if you are driving)? Why can some people concentrate for hours, while others grow restless in minutes? Think of concentration as money in the bank. For most of us, money is a limited resource. You must discipline yourself to spend it carefully. You must choose how to spend your concentration energy as well (Romero, 2009).

2.3.2.5   Listening-related activities

Successful organizations rely heavily upon listening as an important productivity tool. They seek to hire people who have good listening and communication skills. Countless hours of listening are related to education and work. Following is a partial list of business-related activities that involve listening.

(a). Attending meetings, briefings, or lectures.
(b). Personal counseling (one-on-one).
(c). Receiving instructions.
(d). Taking notes.
(e). Interviewing others.
(f). Making decisions based on verbal information.
(g). Selling or marketing a product or service.
(h). Managing others.
(i). Servicing other groups or departments.
(j). Answering telephones, cell phones, or beepers.

Employees who listen effectively in the above-mentioned listening activities help their employers by:

(a). Understanding problems.
(b). Sustaining attention.
(c). Retaining information.
(d). Clarifying procedures.
(e). Building relationships (Romero, 2009).

2.4   **Activities**

1. Visit a university library reference section. Interview a reference librarian on how does he/she perceives the effectiveness of good listening. Transcribe the discussion and present it in your class for feedback from your class tutor.
2. Bad speakers and messages are a common barrier to effective listening. Describe a time recently when your ability to listen was impaired by the poor delivery and/or content of another person.
3. Of the bad listening practices listed above, which do you use the most? Why do you think you use this one more than the others? What can you do to help prevent or lessen this barrier?
4. Attend student presentation sessions and observe what types of mistakes students do during a presentation using the tips mentioned in your course material. Discuss the mistakes with your course tutor for better learning.

5. To what extent DISC (desire, interest, self-discipline, and concentration) framework is helpful to improve listening. Attend a guest lecture and discuss your learning with your class tutor.
6. Review the related literature on the characteristics of a good listener. Prepare a presentation, based on the findings of the literature reviewed, and deliver in your class. To what extent do the identified characteristics of good listening are fit in your environment?

2.5 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Why should we pay attention to effective listening?
2. What are the key elements of listening?
3. Which barriers do create hindrances to effective listening?
4. How can we improve our listening?

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Unit-3

Speaking Skills

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CONTENTS

3   Introduction

The ability to deliver an effective talk is one of the most valuable skills LIS students should possess. If a student wants to be a leader in university, public speaking skills are essential for them. As a class representative, head of the student council, or group leader for any collective academic assignment, students are often called on to stand up and speak to a group (Worth, 2004). So, speaking is a lifelong skill that requires the serious attention of LIS students. This unit explains how to improve listening skills. At the end of this unit, activities and self-assessment questions also support students' self-learning.

3.1   Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit you would be able to learn the following speaking skills:

- acknowledgment
- minimal encouragers
- open questions vs. closed questions
- avoiding premature diagnosis
- sense-making questions
- follow-up questions
- reflecting content
- reflecting feeling
- closure
- giving instructions and directions
- inclusion
- confrontation
- giving feedback
- receiving feedback
- offering opinions and suggestions

3.2   Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment is a skill that involves restating or playing back the content of what the other person has just said. Acknowledge and minimal encourages are both attending behaviour skills. They show that you are paying attention (Ross & Nilsen, 2013). The following example helps to comprehend how to acknowledge and minimal encourages support effective speaking:

Example:

User: I am doing a paper on the effects of stress on heart disease. I need to find out the kinds of stress tests that can be used with people with heart condition. I am also interested in the recent articles on the Jenkins Activity Survey and whether it has any validity.

Librarian: Uh-Huh. You are doing a paper on the effects of stress on heart disease and you want to find out ...? (with complicated statements, the librarian may catch only part of what's been said . that's okay. The procedure is to repeat what you can and ask for repetition on what you missed: " you wanted articles on --- what was that again?)

Restatement is an excellent quick way to indicate that you have been listening. In acknowledgement, students are required to be brief and avoid responding with an upwards intonation that may convey disapproval or even incredulity about what has just been said. Most people already use acknowledge in certain situations such as repeating a phone number (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.3 Minimal Encouragers

Minimal encouragers are key factors to improve speaking. Examples of useful minimal encouragers are short phrases such as:

- uh-huh
- I see
- Go on
- That is interesting
- Tell me more
- Anything else?
- Can you give me an example?

These phrases, which encourage the other person to say more, are nonjudgmental and free of content. There is a tacit rule in conversation that people should take turns speaking, but a very brief remark will count as a turn. You do not need to respond at length to every statement made. Let the other person describe the problem, and use encouragers, along with appropriate body language, to indicate that you are interested and are listening (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.4 Open Questions Versus Closed Questions

People can ask open and/or closed questions. One closed question fired right after another can make a conversation feel more like a shallow, stilted interview. In contrast, open questions cause the responders to reflect and reveal a little more about themselves, which people generally enjoy doing. And because they demonstrate the asker's curiosity and interest in the other person, the other person reciprocally becomes more interested in the asker. Plus, open-ended questions take the conversation deeper, which makes it a more satisfying experience for both parties. Open and closed questions tend to begin with different respective words. A closed question requires a Yes/No, This/That response. For example, "which do you want on this topic - an article or a book?" is an example of a closed question. In contrast, open-ended questions may start with How?, Why, and In what way? So, open and closed questions differ in both function and effect. Moreover,

closed questions usually involve making assumptions while open questions make no assumptions. Open-ended questions are useful in the following situations:

- To find out what a person wants to supply the need
- To get a description of a problem or event
- To encourage the person to elaborate
- To get clarification (Garner, 1997; Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

3.5   Avoiding Premature Diagnosis

Premature diagnosis is another term for jumping to conclusions. These are some examples of premature diagnosis: (1) A young adult, who is wearing running shoes, jeans, and a tee-shirt, asks for some material on bees. The librarian asks, "Is this for a school project?". (2) An elderly man asks for entomology books. The librarian asks, "Are you trying to get rid of ants?"

In each case, the librarian assumed something about the user's situation and asked a closed question that made the assumption explicit to the user. Sometimes the librarian is right (the elderly man did want to get rid of carpenter ants), but that's just good luck. When the librarian is wrong, the user may find the explicit assumptions offensive. Premature diagnosis is one of the most common causes of communication issues in libraries and librarians should try to avoid it (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.6   Sense-Making Questions

Sense-making is most often needed when our understanding of the world becomes unintelligible in some way. In a world that is growing "smaller" but ever more complex, where unpredictable events and shifting political, economic, environmental, and social conditions challenge us at every turn, we all need to make better sense of what is going on. We should all explore the wider system, create maps that are plausible representations of what is happening, and act in the system to improve our understanding of reality. We will never capture it all, and never know how close we are. The best we can do is to make sense-making a core individual, team, and organizational capability so that we can break through our fears of the unknown and lead in the face of complexity and uncertainty (Ancona, 2011).

Here are some examples of good sense-making questions to ask when you want to help someone but must first determine the precise nature of what would help. For example, to encourage the person to describe the situation:

(a). What are you working on?
(b). How did this question arise?
(c). What happened that you need to know this?

To find out how the person sees higher situation:

(a). What problem are you having in this situation?

(b). Where would you like to begin?

(c). Where do you see yourself going with this?

To assess the gaps:

(a). What kind of help would you like?

(b). What are you trying to understand?

(c). What would you like to know about X?

(d). Where did you get stuck in this project? (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.7 Follow-up Questions

Follow-up questions are designed to pursue the answers given to primary questions. Although some follow-up questions are planned ahead of time before the planned conversation (Verderber, Verderber, & Sellnow, 2011). There are two kinds of follow-up questions: (1) those that allow users to tell you whether you gave the kind of help they were hoping to get, and (2) those that invite the user to ask for additional help if needed. To invite the user to ask for additional help:

(a). If you do not find what you are looking for, please come back and ask again.

(b). Is there anything else I can help you with today?

To discover if the need has been met:

(a). Does this completely answer your question?

(b). Is that the kind of help (information, material, direction) you were hoping to get?

(c). Will this help you? (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.8 Reflecting Content

Reflecting content (or "reflecting meaning") is a way of communicating that you have been listening and have understood. Moreover, like acknowledgment, this skill gives you a chance to check that your understanding is accurate. When you reflect on the content, you focus on the cognitive aspects of what has been said. Use this skill in situations when it matters that you have heard and understood correctly. When you reflect on the content, you are not supplying any new information of your own. You are mirroring back to the speaker what you have understood from his or her verbal and nonverbal behavior. Paraphrasing and summarizing are two major ways to reflect content (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.9 Reflecting Feeling

A statement may have cognitive content as well as emotional content. If the content is primarily cognitive, an appropriate response is to reflect content. But if the content is primarily emotional, it is important to acknowledge that you have heard and understood the feelings that have been expressed. An appropriate response is to use the skill of reflecting feeling. Reflecting on feeling is

like reflecting content except that you are focusing on the emotions expressed rather than on the informational content (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.10 **Closure**

Closure in speech is just like closure in our relationship or other aspects of our lives helps to provide us a sense of completion and perhaps satisfaction or renewed purpose. To give signals to your listeners that you are nearing the end of your speech, you can review with them what you have explored during your time together (Fassett & Nainby, 2013).

3.11 **Giving Instructions and Directions**

People who work in libraries increasingly are called on to give instructions or directions. For example, you may need to instruct a library user in the use of the automated catalog or teach someone how to use a research repository. You may need to give someone directions for finding a book or for going to another library. How to use a library and search information involve complex sequences of instructions. Instructions and directions are descriptions of procedures or steps that another person must take. Giving effective instructions and directions is a skill that can be learned and improved. Both instructions and directions are often misinterpreted or ignored because they are too complicated or detailed or because they are not understood (Ross & Dewdney, 1998). Following are some tips for giving instructions or directions.

(a). Use appropriate body language

Show that you are attentive through eye contact, posture, gestures, and voice. To ensure that the person is ready to hear your instructions, be assertive: use more eye contact, make your voice stronger (but not louder), and lean forward.

(b). Be clear and specific

Give explicit directions. Avoid general statements or requests. For example, "Ask the fiction librarian" is too vague. Instead, say "Go over to that desk (gesturing) where the sign says Fiction. Tell the person sitting there that you want help in finding books by George Orwell."

(c). Avoid jargon and abbreviations

It is okay to use ILL, OPAC, and URL among staff, but users frequently find these abbreviations confusing and may hesitate to ask what they mean. Use plain language.

(d). Check to make sure that your instructions were heard and understood

Remember that cultural differences may affect the response. Some users may feel that you would be offended if they admit not understanding what you said. Observe the user's reaction - a puzzled look may tell you that your directions were not clear, even though they seemed clear enough to you. Verify that the user has seen the sign you pointed to or knows where the stairs are. For example, "Go over to that desk where the sign says Fiction. Do you see it?"

(e). Ensure that the person can carry out the direction

Watch where the user goes and intervene if necessary. In the case of using a tool or machine, watch while the user carries out each step. It is not enough for the user to watch the librarian demonstrate. What looks simple often turns out to be hard for a first-time user. You could say: "Now, you look for the first article while I watch." "Show me how you are going to combine these two terms." "Find an example of a subject heading for Shakespeare" (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.12 **Inclusion**

Inclusion is an attending skill; it maintains the communication process between two people when one person must perform a task that does not, in itself, require interpersonal communication or when one person must do something that might otherwise signal an interruption or termination of the conversation. Inclusion helps to answer un-spoken questions: Are you still there? Are you still working on my problem? Why are you doing something that does not seem related to my problem? Inclusion reassures the person you are helping, for example, "I am going to check the shelves for you and will return in a minute." In addition, inclusion often has an instructive function. Describing and explaining your behavior helps the observer learn how to replicate that behavior. For example, when the librarian says, "What I am doing now is looking for other headings we could use," the user learns that an index may include alternate terms (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

3.13 **Confrontation**

Confrontation comprises an important cluster of skills derived from assertiveness training. The two main kinds of assertiveness skills are positive (which helps people to express themselves confidently in situations such as giving or accepting a compliment) and negative (which helps people to deal constructively and honestly with conflict) (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

3.14 **Giving Feedback**

You may be called upon to provide feedback in many situations that arise in libraries. For example: you are a supervisor doing a performance appraisal you are teaching a skill in a staff training session and have to evaluate a learner's performance your colleague has asked you to listen to her book talk and offer suggestions for improvement your friend has asked you to criticize the design of his WWW page. Following are some tips need to consider while giving feedback in a situation:

(a). Start with one or two positive comments
(b). Leave the other person in control
(c). Be specific
(d). Be descriptive rather than simply evaluative
(e). Be realistic
(f). Limit your suggestions to two or three
(g). Suggest rather than prescribe
(h). Consider the needs of the receiver of your feedback

(i). Seek out opportunities to offer sincere praise
(j). Remember the key to giving feedback (Ross & Dewdney, 1998)

3.15 Receiving Feedback

Receiving feedback is a skill, just as much as giving feedback, so we need to learn how to listen to feedback and use it constructively (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

3.16 Offering Opinions and Suggestions

Librarians are often asked to offer their opinions and suggestions: recommendations for reference sources or search procedures, feelings about an issue, opinions about preferred options. Even when opinions or suggestions are not requested, the librarian may find it helpful to bring new facts, skills, or points of view to the discussion (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

3.17 Activities

1. Do you think the above-explained speaking skills techniques can improve LIS students speaking skills? If yes how? Secondly, what other techniques could help to improve LIS students speaking skills in the Pakistani context.
2. Try this exercise in pairs. One person plays the role of the user and is given one of the scenarios below. The other person is a librarian who asks sense-making questions to find out what the user wants to know. The librarian should keep asking sense-making questions until the user is satisfied that the question is understood.

Scenario 1: User is a student who has to write an English essay, which is to be "a close analysis of the text" of some colonial American poem. He does not have a fixed topic in mind, and his first problem is that he does not know what is meant by "a close analysis of the text." He asks: "Where is the section on American poetry?"

Scenario 2: User is worried that the bright light on the photocopier at work may be harmful to her health. She wants to find articles that will tell her whether this light can ever be harmful. She says: "I am having trouble with this catalog."

Scenario 3: User has a neighbour who is building an addition to his house right up to the property line. She wants to find out whether there are any building codes that would prevent this building from going up. She asks: "Where is your law section?"

3.18 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Which techniques do help to improve your speaking skills?
2. Can you critically analyze the above-stated speaking techniques from a university library context?

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Unit-4

Writing Skills

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CONTENTS

4   Introduction

Unit 3 explains the importance of speaking skills for students. In contrast to speaking skills, this unit discusses the significance of writing skills for university students. In today's world of fast communication, we prefer voice messages or making a phone call instead of writing. In academic life, students perform different academic tasks, for example, writing assignments, writing e-mails to teachers, supervisors, writing term papers, final thesis/report, and appearing in written exams. So, it is critically important for a university student to learn and improve writing skills. Written communication is more important than ever, yet very few people know when writing is the right – or wrong - form of communication, and fewer still can write well. Of course, like all other communication skills, good writing skills can be learned (Training, 2012). Moreover, activities and self-assessment questions are designed to improve writing skills.

4.1   Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit you would be able to:

- explain the types of writing
- analyzing the audience
- choosing an appropriate style
- writing with impact
- writing briefly
- organizing information
- using inclusive and nondiscriminatory language
- checking spelling
- avoiding common grammatical errors
- how to use tables, charts, and graphs
- formatting of documents
- explain postscript: keeping your reader in mind

4.2   Types of Writing

We know the basic elements of writing as a communication skill, let us look at the types of writing that we use to communicate through writing. Through its tone, writing can be sub-divided as (1) formal and (2) informal. Formal writing refers to communication used in official contexts, especially when you are addressing colleagues, rank-wise higher than you in the hierarchy. Informal writing, on the contrary, is in the personal domain and is used while communicating with decoders you are close to or with decoders who are your age. Rarely used in the official context, it could be used, if at all, while communicating with colleagues you are close to. Writing can also be sub-divided as (1) fictional and (2) non-fictional. Fictional writing refers to the writing of novels, short stories, and poems. Non-fictional writing is what most communicators need. It consists for example of CVs, letters of application, reports, brochures, schedules, articles, or

advertisements (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012).Whichever may be the type of writing you use, writing is a special communication skill. Let us now understand the unique qualities of writing as a communication skill.

4.2.1   Analyzing the audience

When you are writing a communication, you need to be able to identify to whom you are writing. Sure, you could be writing to the 'world' of your organization or the 'world' of all of your customers, but you need to know what it is that they will gain from your communication. Is it just information for everyone, or are there particular unidentified members of the audience who need to receive your communication, recognize the information that is important to them, and then take a specific action? Another aspect of knowing your audience is being aware of what they do not know. Most of us have a lingo that we use in the day to day operations of our work. They might be technical terms, references to internal structures or teams, or acronyms that are shared among peers. However, you need to be certain that every member of your audience would understand that lingo or acronym before using it. When in doubt, add a brief explanation or spell it out (Training, 2012). The following tips may be helpful to analyze intended audience:

(a). Identify your primary audience

For some messages, certain audience members might be more important than others. Do not ignore the needs of less influential members, but make sure you address the concerns of the key decision makers.

(b). Determine audience size and geographic distribution

A message aimed at 10,000 people spread around the globe will likely require a different approach than one aimed at a dozen people down the hall.

(c). Determine audience composition

Look for similarities and differences in culture, language, age, education, organizational rank and status, attitudes, experience, motivations, biases, beliefs, and any other factors that might affect the success of your message.

(d). Gauge audience members' level of understanding

If audience members share your general background, they will probably understand your material without difficulty. If not, your message may need an element of education to help people understand it.

(e). Understand audience expectations and preferences

For example, will members of your audience expect complete details or just a summary of the main points? (Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman, 2010).

4.2.2 Choosing an appropriate style

A good writer does not use the same style all the time but suits the style to the occasion. Students are required to use formal language while writing. Moreover the basic rule of good professional writing is to adopt a courteous tone that respects the feelings of your readers. In addition, the text should be easy to readable. If the text is harder then it will attract less readers to read (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

4.2.3 Writing with impact

When you write your communication, you need to know exactly what, why, and to whom you are writing. Are you simply giving information, asking for information, or requesting the other person to take an action? If you cannot narrow down the point, you either are not ready to write or writing is not the right choice of communication formats to use. Once you know what the main point of your email is, you should put that first in the communication. We all tend to scan written communication to save time, focusing more at the top of the information than the bottom. Putting your main information at the top of the communication pulls the reader's attention to the main topic, request or instruction. You can follow with background information after you have stated the reason for writing. But if you start with the background information, you risk your reader missing the point of the communication (Training, 2012).

4.2.4 Writing briefly

If you can leave out a word or phrase without changing the meaning, then cut out the unnecessary words. Go through your text after you have written it, looking for clutter. Replace wordy constructions. For example you may use following word (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

Change	To
Due to the fact that	Because
In the event that	If
At this point in time	Now
It is clear that	Clearly
There are some librarian who	Some librarian
In the majority of cases	Usually

4.2.5 Organizing

Students might have situations where they have several requests or several important facts for the reader. In that case, you need to organize the information in a way that increases the chance that the reader will give you all of the information or take all of the actions that you request. You can do this by using topic headings that still put the main topic of the communication at the top such as: Response Needed, Background, Concerns. Or RSVP Requested, Instructions, Directions, FAQs. You could also use bullets or numbers for each subtopic. Or consider using bold or colored font to highlight requested actions. One word of caution – avoid using all capital letters, which can be interpreted as 'yelling'. Your job is to make it easy and fool-proof for your reader to get your message. Use whatever tools you can employ to ensure that the message is delivered fully, as long as they are still professional and appropriate for your audience (Training, 2012).

4.2.6 Using inclusive and nondiscriminatory language

Avoid language that excludes people or shows a lack of understanding of cultural differences arising from racial, ethnic, or national background, and also from gender, sexual orientation, belief system, or age. Because language is dynamic, there is no universally accepted practice for referring to particular racial or ethnic groups (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

4.2.7 Checking spelling and grammar

Good written communication is marked by an abundance of such simple sentences in all their varieties (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012). Simple, complex, and compound are the three varieties of sentence construction in English. The basic sentence construction in English, also known in the grammar books as the simple sentence, is a very defined and rigid structure. Most word processors now have writing tools that will help you check your grammar and style (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

4.2.8 Avoiding common grammatical errors

Hundreds of excellent books are available on grammar and correct usage. Use them by all means. However, since 20 percent of writing errors account for 80 percent of actual problems, you should pay most attention to the 20 percent (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

4.2.9 Using tables, charts, and graphs

A writing task often involves the summarizing of quantitative data. You may present quantitative data in words, tables, charts, graphs, and each method has its advantages. A presentation in words can explain, interpret, and evaluate. But a sentence is a poor way to show the relationships among a lot of numbers. Consider this sentence: "Nearly 61 percent of Group A did such-and-such, as compared with 15 percent of Group B and 5 percent of Group C." The comparison is much clearer when the data is presented in a table. Charts and graphs can present a mass of numeric data in a visual form that readers can take in at a glance. Appropriately used, charts and graphs:

- Show the data in a way that clarifies relationships.

- Present many numbers in a small space.
- Make the data easier to understand.
- Provide visual impact.
- Save the reader's time (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

4.2.10 Formatting the page

Writing (in both electronic and print form) conveys nonverbal messages too. Consider the messages that are conveyed by the following: spelling mistakes, a letter crowded onto the top half of the page, poor quality paper, and inconsistency from page to page in the width of the margins, the placement of the page numbers, or the capitalization of headings. So, appearance counts (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

4.2.11 Postscript: keeping your reader in mind

Consider the three elements that enter into any piece of writing: (1) writer, (2) text, and (3) reader. Try to make your writing reader-centered rather than writer-centered. Writer-centered texts are organized in ways that are convenient for the writer and contain information that the writer wants to convey. Reader-centered texts are organized in ways that help the reader make sense of the text and that contain information that answers questions in the reader's mind (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

4.3 **Activities**

1. After having a brainstorming session with your class fellows, write a brief article, at least 2000 words, on the use of social media technologies and its impact on writing styles from university students' perspectives. To get feedback, present the writing to your tutor.
2. Write a detailed essay on student university life and discuss the issues of formatting and organizing you have experienced with your course tutor for writing with impact.
3. You have been given an assignment 'how to improve writing skills'. Prepare relevant guidelines and present them in your class for getting feedback from your tutor for the final draft of the guidelines.
4. Search for a good video of an English teacher on writing skills from YouTube, listen to the video with your class-fellows, and share your learning with the course tutor for feedback.
5. Explore the relevant literature and also watch YouTube videos to extract information on the challenges for effective writing from a non-native English-speaking person perspective.
6. Explain a research problem in 500 words. Cut it down to 100 words and then finally state a research topic of the research problem not more than 30 words.
7. Urdu medium education background students lack in English writing skills. Devise some practical strategies to improve the writing skills of the students.
8. Do you think writing styles help students to write well? Enlist the pros and cons of at least two writing style manuals.

4.4 Self-Assessment Questions

1. To what extent have you developed writing skills after reading this unit?
2. Which techniques do support you to improve your writing skills?
3. If you do not concentrate on writing skills what types of issues will you face during student and professional lives?

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Unit-5

Integration: Putting It All Together

(Nonverbal Behavior, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Skills)

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CONTENTS

5   Introduction

You have already learned about different skills, for example, nonverbal behavior (Unit1), listening (Unit 2), speaking (Unit 3), and writing (Unit 4). Individually, these skills have a lot of benefits. However, the benefits can be maximized if the individual skills are integrated with an effective way to solve a problem in a particular situation. Communication skills are learned individually, but together they form a stock of skills from which students can draw spontaneously, selecting one skill in a certain situation, adapting another skill to supplement, trying yet another skill if the first one does not work. So, this Unit would support LIS students to learn some advanced concepts of communication.

5.1   Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit students would be able to comprehend about:

- theory and paradigms
- sense-making
- microcounseling and micro training
- intentionality
- the problem of manipulation versus genuineness
- skills integration

5.2   Theory and Paradigms

So far, much of the pieces of advice have been explained for effective communication through one-to-one and one-to-many modes. Predominantly, there are two paradigms, known as objective and subjective, in a fashion that helps to comprehend how reality exists. So, a source of unity is our theoretical orientation (or paradigm or set of mental maps about the world). Anyone writing about communication or reading or information has some mental model, however unexamined, of what is involved in these processes. One model, let us call it Paradigm A, is based on the following assumptions (Ross & Dewdney, 1998):

- (a). Knowledge is objective. The way to know about the world is to stand outside it somehow and observe it objectively.
- (b). Information consists of objective observations about the world.
- (c). Information is a commodity, valuable in itself, regardless of its use. Information is made up of a lot of separate little bits. The more bits of information one has, the better.
- (d). Communication is a one-way process of sources sending messages to receivers.
- (e). Giving information requires the creation of structures in which messages travel top-down, from expert to layperson (e.g., doctor-to-patient or advertiser-to-television viewer).
- (f). The receiver of messages is passive, expected to hear or read the message accurately and in its entirety, and to incorporate its content in unaltered form.

(g). Meaning is in the message itself, fixed in the text.

(h). Evaluating information service consists of counting up the frequency with which the information is exchanged and measuring the extent to which people receive messages accurately and completely.

(i). Information is context-free.

In contrast to Paradigm A, Paradigm B addresses information from a subjective perspective that is a reality that cannot be detached from the relevant context. Paradigm B is based on the following assumptions (Ross & Dewdney, 1998):

(a). We are part of the reality that we study. We cannot stand outside the world to view it as it is because our instruments, experiments, culture, language, and worldview affect what we perceive. Where we stand and look affects what we see. Knowledge depends on perspective.

(b). Information consists of observations about the world that are affected by the contexts in which the observations are made.

(c). Information is valuable only in relation to the context in which it is used.

(d). Communication is an interactive process between speakers and listeners, writers and readers.

(e). The receiver of the message participates actively in making meaning.

(f). The meaning that is created depends on previously learned cultural codes, previous life experience, the present situation, and individual perspectives.

(g). The ultimate test of the value of an information service is the helpfulness of the information to the user in terms of what he or she is trying to do or know at a particular time and place.

(h). Information is situationally based and changes meaning according to context.

5.3   Sense-Making: a Theory of Information as Communication

Sense-making/sensemaking are terms commonly understood as the processes through which people interpret and give meaning to their experiences. The three different spelling variations (i.e., 'sense-making', 'sensemaking', 'sense making' are used deliberately by the authors included here, in different academic discourse communities that share some common thrusts. The terms originally focused on the five senses but have expanded in meaning to cover physical, emotional, spiritual, and intuitional responses posited as involved in human sense-making of their worlds, both internal and external. Since the 1970s, sense-making/sensemaking has been used by researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, with significant applications in the fields of human-computer interaction (HCI), cognitive systems engineering, knowledge management, communication studies, and library/information science (human information behavior). There are five major research approaches labeled as sense-making or sensemaking: (1) Dervin's sense-making in user studies, human information behavior; (2) Weick's sensemaking in organizational communication; (3) Snowden's organizational sense-making in knowledge management; (4) Russell's

sensemaking in HCI; and (5) Klein's sensemaking in cognitive systems engineering (Lam, Urquhart, & Brenda (2016).

Many books on communication for librarians and others begin with a theory of the communication of information derived from electrical engineering-a model developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver and usually presented something like this: source → signal → receiver. This model is useful for solving the problem for which it was originally developed: determining the most economical way to send and receive electronic signals along channels that are noisy with random electrical interference. The original theory was concerned not with meaning but with electronic pulses. It does not matter what you send over the wires, including nonsense, because the information is anything that reduces uncertainty for the decoder (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

Dr. Brenda Dervin is a communication researcher who works from within Paradigm B. We have found her work especially fruitful for the field of librarianship because it focuses on what she calls "the human side of information." Dervin argues that most prevailing models of communication, including the Shannon-Weaver model, assume that information is a commodity that can be generated, stored, accessed, and transferred. That is, information is understood to be an autonomous object with meaning and value in itself, apart from any user. Following others who have argued for the social construction of reality, Dervin maintains that information is a construct of the user. In her theory of information, human beings are not seen as passive receptacles, but as actively involved in constructing their own reality. This theory allows us to explain some of the puzzling problems of research into information-seeking behavior: why the same message means different things to different people at different times; why people do not always follow directions or seem to understand what they are told; and why they sometimes reject as useless so-called high quality information (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

Dervin and her colleagues developed alternative theory of information in the course of extensive research, and address the following questions:

- (a). The kinds of situations that people see as problematic,
- (b). The kinds of questions they have in these situations,
- (c). Where they go for help,
- (d). The kinds of answers they get to their questions, and,
- (e). How the answers help them cope with their situations (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

The sense-making approach also offers a vantage point from which to think about writing and working in groups. Readers receiving written texts and participants at group meetings are each sense-makers, valuing information to the extent that it helps them fill in gaps in their understanding and make progress toward their goals. Therefore, a writer drafting memos, reports, or public service announcements may do a better job by remembering that readers are in unique situations, have gaps in their understanding, and want certain kinds of help. The writing should address these situations, gaps, and sorts of help wanted (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

5.4　Microcounseling and Micro Training

5.4.1　Microcounseling

Microcounseling is a video method of training counselors in the basic skills of counseling within a short period (Ivey, Normington, Miller, Morrill, & Haase, 1968). Allen E. Ivey's theory of micro counseling and micro training has been extremely influential in the communication discourse. Ivey developed the micro-skills approach in the early 1960s, as a way of teaching new counselors to use the basic communication skills necessary in an interview. He identified the smallest components of effective interviews as "micro-skills" beginning with the basic listening sequence that includes attending behavior such as eye contact, body language, and verbal tracking skills like acknowledgment. These formed the basis of his hierarchy of micro-skills, from the basic listening sequence through influencing skills toward skill integration (Figure 5.1).
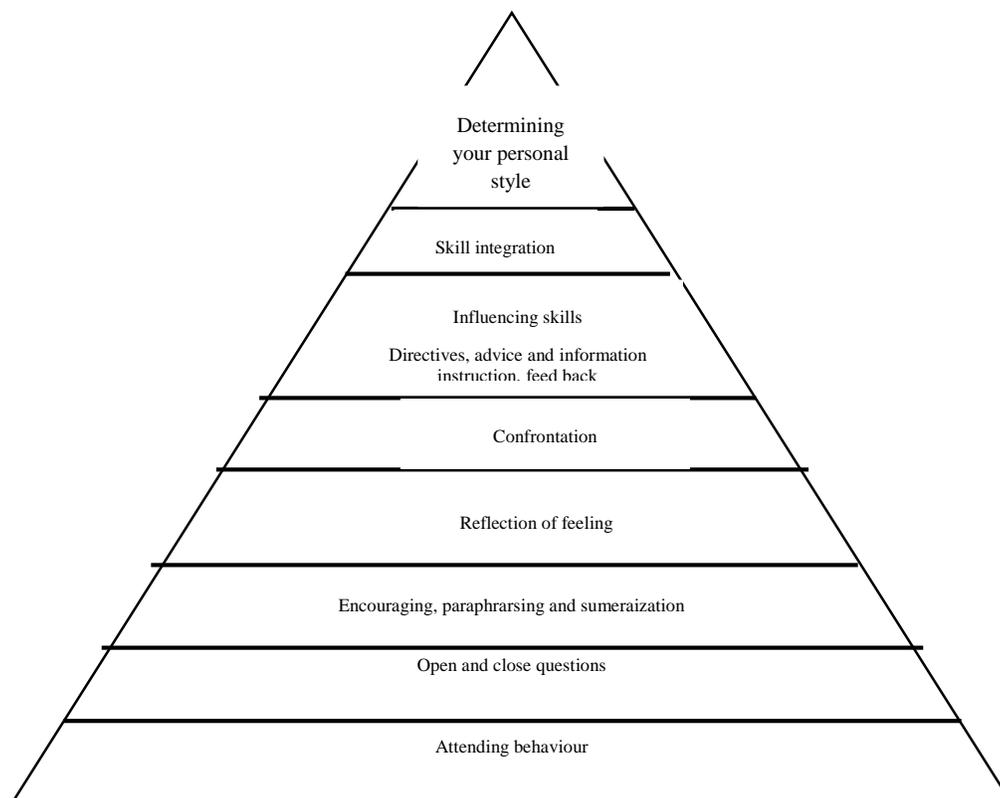
Figure 5.1: The Micro skills Hierarchy (Ivey, 1994)

5.4.2 The microcounseling training model

The micro counseling training model is based on five essential propositions (Ivey, 1971).

(a). The first principle is that it is possible to lessen the complexity of the counseling or interviewing process by focusing on single skills. The goal of the person experiencing the training is to master one skill at a time rather than to demonstrate competence in several skills simultaneously.

(b). Second, the micro counseling training model provides important opportunities for self-observation and confrontation.

(c). Third, interviewers can learn from observing video models demonstrating the skills they are attempting to develop.

(d). Fourth, the micro counseling training method can be used to teach interviewing skills from a diverse and practical perspective.

(e). Fifth, micro counseling training sessions are real interviewing sessions.

5.4.3 Micro training

Briefly, micro training is based on the idea that complex communication behavior can be broken down into its constituent parts or small (micro) skills, and that these skills can be taught, one at a time, in a systematic way that involves the following steps:

(a). Defining the skill and identifying its function.

(b). Observing the skill modeled.

(c). Reading about the skill and the concepts behind it.

(d). Practicing the skill in a context that provides feedback (e.g., audiotaping or videotaping).

(e). Using the skill in a "real world" context and observing the consequences.

(f). Teaching the skill to others (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

The micro training approach refers to how micro-skills are taught. Skills are introduced one at a time (Ross & Dewdney, 1998). There are four levels of skill mastery: (1) identification, (2) basic mastery, (3) active mastery, and (4) teaching mastery (Ivey, 1994). For each skill, the student first learns to identify or recognize the skill by observing others' behavior or picking the skill out in a transcript, videotape, or some other exercise. At the second level of training, students are given exercises in which they demonstrate the skill, for example, by asking both closed and open questions in a mock interview. Third, students learn active mastery of the skill by deliberately using the skill in a real-life situation, which in our context might mean recognizing the need to encourage a library user to talk about the information problem and using some open questions to elicit the problem statement. The final level of skill mastery is the ability to teach a skill to someone else perhaps a colleague or a library user (Ross & Dewdney, 1998). Moreover, there are twelve basic micro counseling skills around which the reading trainee would focus his initial training in interviewing are:

(a). Attending behavior

(b). Open invitation to talk

(c). Minimal encourages to talk

(d). Reflection of feeling

(e). Paraphrasing

(f). Summarization of feeling

(g). Summarization of content

(h). Learning client's attitudes toward tests: a specialized skill

(i). Expression of feeling

(j). Sharing behavior

(k). Direct mutual communication

(l). Interpretation (Ivey, 1971).

Researchers emphasize listening and questioning skills for communicating with library users. Following the essential steps in the micro training method, we focus on one skill at a time, defining the skill, modeling it, and involving students in roleplaying interviews. Our experience suggests that the most effective method for teaching the skills involves the learner in a combination of activities: hearing short presentations in lecture format; reading independently relevant materials; getting experience practicing the skill in roleplayed or real-life situations; receiving feedback; and discussing the experience afterward in a small group setting. Moreover, whether we use a typewriter, ride a bicycle or play the piano, we first learn to 'master' the basic movements without attending to them all the time, so that our conscious mind is left free to plan and direct the over-arching structures. There is no craft that does not demand this breakdown of the skill into elements that are steered by the larger movement; mastery of plaiting, weaving, stitching, or carving demands this structure of routines collectively guided by the conscious mind. When students encounter normal problems in learning these skills, we find it is essential to emphasize two things: the concept of intentionality or choice, and the difference between learning the skill in the first place and using it with mastery later (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

5.5   Intentionality

Intentionality is acting with a sense of capability and deciding from among a range of alternative actions. The intentional individual has more than one action, thought or behavior to choose from in responding to changing life situations. The intentional individual can generate alternatives in a given situation and approach a problem from different vantage points, using a variety of skills and personal qualities, adapting styles to suit different individuals and cultures (Ivey, 1994). We found it useful to keep reminding ourselves of Ivey's concept of intentionality (Ivey, 1994), possibly the most important concept in micro training. Intentionality means flexibility-the ability to use a range of skills and to improvise. Intentionality has to do with choice: once the trainee has acquired the ability to use individual skills and to integrate them, he or she needs to be able to judge when these skills are appropriate, what effect they are likely to have, and what is the range of potentially helpful responses to a particular situation (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

5.6 The Problem of Manipulation Versus Genuineness

Manipulation is often characterized as a form of influence that is neither coercion nor rational persuasion (Zalta, Nodelman, Allen, & Anderson, 2005). However, in the service of shared goals, these skills facilitate communication and allow you to be more helpful. To communicate more effectively with others, we may need to change our behavior to learn new skills such as different ways of asking questions or of organizing a report (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

The issue of genuineness is not simply a matter of motivation. When we first learn a new skill, it may seem awkward and alien to our normal behavior-not genuine, we say. However, the skill becomes more natural with practice. When we find that we can make the skill work for us in a variety of situations, it becomes part of our normal behavior. Then it is perceived as genuine. In the meantime, our genuineness consists of our sincere desire to help, even if helping more effectively means behaving a little awkwardly at first (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

5.7 Practicing Verbal Skills

Changing your communication behavior is hard work. It is not easy to break old patterns of response. But unless you practice your new skills, you will lose them. Here are ten tips to help you through the learning process.

(a). Make a commitment
(b). Start immediately to practice a specific skill right away
(c). Practice one skill at a time
(d). Use support groups
(e). Learn from missed opportunities
(f). Develop your own style
(g). Learn from communication accidents
(h). Practice off the job needed skills
(i). Observe others
(j). Teach someone else specific skills (Ross & Dewdney, 1998)

5.8 Practicing Writing Skills

Improving writing skills requires a conscious choice to pay attention to the "how" as well as to the "what" of writing. Here are some tips to help you practice new writing skills.

(a). Make a commitment
(b). Analyze recently written work (choosing an appropriate style, writing with impact, writing briefly, and so on.)
(c). Focus on one skill at a time
(d). Leave enough time
(e). Revise
(f). Read your piece of writing out loud

(g). Ask for feedback

(h). Sharpen your critical awareness (Ross & Dewdney, 1998)

5.9   Skill Integration

To be a competent communicator requires mastery of both nonverbal and verbal streams of communication (Burgoon & Bacue, 2003). In any communication process, the participants have certain goals. In some situations (for example, giving information to the public about a new service), the goals are explicit, limited, and planned in advance. In other situations, such as reference transactions, the goals may be developed right in the situation, hidden goals may become apparent, and goals may change (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

Achieving a goal usually requires the use and combination of several skills, for example, listening, speaking, and writing. Although the process of learning a new skill requires you to focus on one skill at a time, the effective use of new skills depends on your ability to draw on a range of skills for the purpose of achieving a specific goal. You may even overlap skills. Let us say the user has asked for "information on solar energy." One of your goals is to obtain a more complete description of the information need. At the same time, you want to establish a good communication climate by showing the user you are attentive. Two goals, and at least two possible skills, come into play here: restatement and open questions (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

5.10   Activities

1. In the course of communicating professionally, your course tutor has given a group (five students) assignment on the topic, "manipulation vs. genuineness". In your group, ask each person to identify a skill or behavior that he/she feels is both manipulative and alien to her/his normal behavior. List the skills mentioned for discussion. To what extent does everyone share this feeling? Also, share the outcome in writing with your course tutor.

2. Observe a reference librarian how he/she conducts a reference interview to help a user in finding literature on models and theories of information system usage. Note down the communication explanation, both verbal and non-verbal, between the two actors. After observing the experience, prepare a document that explains how the reference librarian solves the issue of the library user. Share with your course tutor for feedback.

3. As a reference librarian, you have to conduct a reference interview with a Ph.D. scholar researching 'knowledge sharing among postgraduate scholars'. Which skills will you use to meet the information needs of the researchers? Prepare a powerpoint presentation based on your experience and deliver it in your class for feedback from the course tutor.

5.11   Self-Assessment Questions

1. How paradigms do support comprehending the different perspectives on information and its use?

2. What is sense-making? How the theory is helpful to solve a problem in real settings?

3. What do you understand by micro counseling and micro training? How the micro counseling and micro training tips are helpful for students and novice professionals to learn and improve different skills in the digital age.

4. How can we leverage the concepts of manipulation and genuineness in verbal and non-verbal skills?

5. How skill integration technique is helpful to improve communication in social and professional settings?

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Unit-6

Applications: Speaking One-To-One

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CONTENTS

6   Introduction

Most of the time students use speaking and listening skills during communication. If students have a choice, they would rather talk than write to each other. Talking requires less time and needs no composing, keyboarding, rewriting, duplicating, or distributing. In speaking, people have far less opportunity to revise spoken words than to revise written words. If you let your attention wander while someone else is speaking, you miss the point. You either have to get along without knowing what the other person said, or admit that you were daydreaming and ask the person to repeat the comment. Another problem is that students tend to confuse your spoken message with you as an individual. They are likely to judge the content of what you say, by your appearance and style of delivery (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012). So, this unit explains how to learn and improve speaking skills. Activities and self-assessment questions also support one-to-one communication.

6.1   Objectives

After reading this unit you would be able to:

- learn speaking skills in commonly occurring situations
- conducting an interview.
- coping with special situations; helping special users, cross-cultural communication, language, and speech barriers.

6.2   Speaking

Speaking and listening are the communication skills people use most. If people have a choice, they would rather talk to each other than write to each other. Talking requires less time and needs no composing, keyboarding, rewriting, duplicating, or distributing. In speaking, people have far less opportunity to revise spoken words than to revise written words. If you let your attention wander while someone else is speaking, you miss the point. You either have to get along without knowing what the other person said, or admit that you were daydreaming and ask the person to repeat the comment. Another problem is that people tend to confuse your spoken message with you as an individual. They are likely to judge the content of what you say, by your appearance and style of delivery (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012).

This unit explains the application of speaking skills in commonly occurring situations involving two people: using the telephone and voicemail; initiating the helping process; conducting an interview; coping with special situations, and dealing with problem behaviors.

6.3   Using the Telephone and Voicemail

In common life, a person needs to call his friends and family and it could be a casual call. But in the case of professional conversations, a person needs to be prepared because time is precious in today's fast-paced world and most people do not have enough hours in their day or patience to

listen to someone's 'um and ah' at the other end of the line while you gather your thoughts. So, it is advisable that when you get through phone calls, before that, write down an outline of what you want to say and keep it close by while you speak. Tick off the points as you make them sure that you cover everything you want to say. If you want to make an appointment, have some convenient times in mind. If your call goes to voice mail, repeat your name and number twice, speaking slowly and distinctly. You can also leave an email address as an alternative to a phone number (Kuhnke, 2012).

While making a business call, students must consider the following instructions.

(a). Managing the opening efficiently

Always identify yourself when making a business phone call. Leaping into the conversation, saying 'Guess who?' or 'It's me' is annoying, unprofessional, and sounds silly. State your full name and the company you are calling from. If the call goes to voice mail, add your phone number so that the receiver can return your call.

(b). Getting to your point

Time is money and although you want to be polite, you do not need to get involved in long, personal conversations. When you know the people you are calling, of course you may ask how they are, but then get to the point of your call. Becoming involved in a lengthy personal conversation or office gossip is inappropriate and a waste of your time and theirs.

(c). Speaking clearly

If you are going to speak, speak clearly. Enunciate, talk directly into the mouth piece and avoid mumbling. Speak loudly enough to be heard by the person you are calling and not so loudly that everyone within earshot is privy to your private conversation.

(d). Asking for what you want

Instead of beating around the bush and spending time on small talk, let the person you are calling know the reason upfront and ask for what you want. Do not keep people guessing.

(e). Dealing professionally with received calls

How you receive a call reflects the organization you work for as well as your style. Because you may be the first and only contact the caller has with your company, aim to make a good impression. So you need to pick up promptly and always identify yourself and the name of the organization; doing so confirms to callers that they have the right number. Later always ask how you can help callers. Doing so makes them feel that you care about them and helps to keep people focused. Sometimes callers reach the wrong number or department. When that happens, be courteous. Ask what they are calling about and do your best to get them to the right person or department. Listen

to callers and what they have to say. When you take a message, repeat back the information to confirm that you heard and took down the message correctly (Kuhnke, 2012).

6.4 Helping Library Users: the First 60 Seconds

How can you tell if a library user needs help? Here are four signs describing the body language of users who want help but do not ask:

(a). They are standing at the OPAC, maybe standing back from it, and not writing anything down.
(b). They walk aimlessly in the area of the CD-ROM towers looking lost or confused.
(c). They look frustrated or even disgusted as they go through an index.
(d). As they are looking at materials, they often stop and make eye contact with you, even though they do not come and ask (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

American Library Association (ALA) guidelines for behavioral performance of reference and information services professionals suggest that the librarian who wishes to communicate approachability adopt the following seven behaviors. The librarian:

(a). is poised and ready to engage approaching patrons and is not engrossed in reading, filing, chatting with colleagues, or other activities;
(b). establishes initial eye contact with the patron;
(c). acknowledges the presence of the patron through smiling and/or open body language;
(d). acknowledges the patron through the use of a friendly greeting to initiate conversation and/or by standing up, moving forward, or moving closer to the patron;
(e). acknowledges others waiting for service;
(f). remains visible to patrons as much as possible;
(g). roves through the reference area offering assistance whenever possible (ALA, 1996).

6.5 Interviewing

6.5.1 What is an interview?

Interviewing is a process where a person demonstrates effective communication skills to obtain employment or promotion. Why do we cover interviewing in an oral communication textbook? The answer is quite simple. Interviewing (both the oral process and the written resume) is the most important piece of persuasion in which you will engage when you complete school. Without a persuasive resume, you will not get to the interview. And many job applicants who look terrific on paper do not make a good first impression during the interview. Your oral and written skills need to be outstanding (Young & Travis, 2017).

There are no absolutes in the world of interviewing. The most up-to-date interviewing information changes constantly. Tips for effective resume writing and interviewing vary from profession to profession. Therefore, in addition to the general tips we provide, it is strongly recommended you

do a thorough Internet search for interviewing tips in your field before you embark on the interview adventure. A knowledgeable faculty advisor is also a valuable resource (Young & Travis, 2017).

Phone interviews add an interesting dimension to the interview process. This is a good news/bad news situation. The good news is you do not have to worry about your attire or posture. You can use interview notes with answers to potential questions and lists of skills or qualities that you do not want to forget. The bad news is your vocal technique, vocabulary, and verbal style are all an interviewer hears. Therefore, you must concentrate on your grammar and the completeness of your thoughts. Stand up while you talk so you have the best breath support for energy and vocal quality. You can tape your notes and resume on the wall. Above all else, make sure you have good cell phone service. There is nothing worse than having difficulty with your phone connection. Also, remember you will have no nonverbal feedback. You cannot tell whether the interviewer is smiling and nodding or looking disgusted. Think positive thoughts. A positive image of the interviewer will help you remain calm (Young & Travis, 2017).

6.5.2   Skype interviews

Companies have begun using the Internet to conduct preliminary interviews through services like Skype. The tool allows the employer to see you through a webcam in addition to hearing you react to their questions. This technical platform is extremely useful to an employer when they wish to fill a position quickly and can screen a candidate as though they are sitting in the same room. Do not forget however that you are being seen by a total stranger, so your appearance is important, as is the background seen by the camera. Therefore, it is useful to practice setting up your computer a few times to check your image, to become comfortable talking into the camera, and to check what is visible by the camera. Make sure the lighting is good and nothing is distracting in your picture. You want to try to have a good facial shot, not too close and not too far away. If you have a Skype account, place the address on your resume and business card along with your home address, phone number, and e-mail address (Young & Travis, 2017).

6.5.3   Dimensions of the interview

Interviews can differ greatly, one from another, in terms of the five dimensions: (1) control, (2) trust, (3) duration, (4) structure, and (5) environment. An interviewer who is aware of the range of possible variation can select the style of interview that best suits the occasion and purpose (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.4   All-purpose interviewing skills

Certain basic skills are useful in every type of interview, including those conducted in settings as varied as social work, medicine, health services, management, journalism, vocational counseling, and information services. In libraries and information centers, the most useful skills for any kind of interview are those in the basic listening sequence such as acknowledging, encouraging, avoiding premature diagnosis, sense-making questions, follow-up questions, paraphrasing and

summarization, reflecting feeling, and closure. Moreover, the basic attending skills of culturally appropriate eye contact and body language enhance most kinds of interviews (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.5 The generic reference interview

The term reference interview suggests to most librarians a short interview conducted for the purpose of finding out what the user really wants to know. However, variations on this basic form often occur. For example, the interview tends to be longer when the user asks the librarian to do an online search with complicated subject parameters (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.6 The pre-search interview

The skills that work for the generic reference interview also work for the pre-search interview, where the librarian needs to find out what the user wants to know before going online.

There are some useful questions for the pre-search interview, for example:

6.5.7 Defining the problem

(a). Please tell me about the problem you are working on.
(b). What would you like to find out about X, e.g., social media technologies?
(c). What are some other things that X might be called, e.g., Web 2.0 technologies?
(d). If you could find the perfect journal article, what would its title be?

6.5.8 Helps and uses

(a). What do you hope to find out as a result of this search?
(b). What will the search results help you do?
(c). How are you going to use this information?

6.5.9 Identifying barriers

(a). What have you done so far?
(b). What happened when you did that?
(c). What has helped you the most so far? (Ross & Dewdney, 1998)

6.5.10 The end-user interview

This is a conversation between the librarian or search consultant and the person who is going to do his own searching online, on CD-ROM, on the Internet, or through some other medium. Consequently, much of the interview will focus on what the user knows or does not know about the system, what help is needed, and how the user can get the best results. But it should also include some element of query negotiation since the consultant needs to know enough about the query to give useful instructions or advice. The end-user interview therefore has two levels and purposes:

(a). The query level, where the consultant's purpose is to find out about the problem that initiated the search.

(b). The system level, where the consultant's purpose is to help the user with the searching procedures (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.11 The remote reference interview

In some situations, you cannot communicate directly or immediately with the user. You may be expected to do an online search from a written request or search form. Or you have received an interlibrary loan request by mail or telephone through an intermediary. Or you have just a second-hand account ("Marge, I'm leaving now. Would you get some stuff on transportation for Mr. Schmidt? He will pick it up at six."). If you provide an electronic reference service, the question will arrive by e-mail (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.12 The readers' advisory interview

The readers' advisory interview has the characteristics of the generic reference interview, to which are added some further characteristics related to the activity of reading. Recent research has uncovered the variables that are important to readers as they search for "a good Book" (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.13 Integrating reference interview skills

When librarians first attempt to apply new interviewing skills in an intentional, integrated way, they often wonder about the appropriateness of some skills and the effect the skill will have on the user. They are especially concerned about whether they will ever be able to use the skill without awkwardness (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.5.14 Types of interview by purpose

Interviews are held for reasons other than just selection for employment. Based on the purpose for which they are held, interviews can be classified as:

(a). Promotion interview

This type of interview is held when people are due for their promotion. It is an informal one and introduces the candidate to the new responsibilities and persons he/she would have to interact with. Clarifications about the job title, nature of duties, responsibilities and expectations are made clear during a promotion interview. This type of interview is held whether there is a competition or not.

(b). Assessment Interview

It is a method of assessing the employee at regular intervals of time. This interview is more a discussion than a question-answer session. Here attention is paid to the career development of the

employee. Strengths and weaknesses, shortcomings and improvement strategies are generally discussed here.

(c). Exit Interview

Such an interview is conducted at the time of resignation. Here the employer gets a chance to find out the reason for the employee's decision to leave, to get feedback from the employee about the organization, check all information regarding personal files, cheques, payments and other benefits.

(d). Problem Interview

This type of interview is conducted to alleviate the problems that are either being created by or being faced by an employee. This interview suggests solutions after a discussion with the employee about the problems.

(e). Employment Interview

This is the most conventional type of interview where people are assessed on their employability skills. Both the interviewer and the interviewee have to make important decisions (whether to employ and whether to take up the employment) (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012).

6.5.15 Coping with special situations

In public service, special communication problems are often due to a barrier between you and the user. Such barriers may involve a physical disability, where the user is unable to speak, hear, or move normally, or they may involve differences in language, speech, or culture. Special communication problems also arise when there is a conflict between the user's expectations and yours, as in situations where the user has a complaint that seems reasonable to him but unreasonable to you. And then, in an entirely different category, there is behavior that not only seems unreasonable but may also be disruptive or even dangerous (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

6.6   **Activities**

1. Review the relevant literature and watch YouTube videos and then prepare an interview guide to research the topic, "how BS library and information science students share information using WhatsApp".
2. You are a reference librarian and you have to help a Chinese student in her BS thesis, titled, "cultural barriers in communication from the Asian perspective". How will you cope with the situation to provide information sources related to her research? Keep in mind she can speak both Urdu and English very well.
3. Interview with a classmate as though you are a human resources person. Critique each other when both interviews are completed.

6.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the importance of one-to-one communication in social and professional settings?
2. To what extent social media technologies are helpful in one-to-one communication?
3. How librarian does conduct a reference interview with a user?
4. What are an interview and their different types?
5. Which skills are needed to conduct an effective interview?
6. Why special situations are needed concertation while conducting a one-to-one interview?

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Unit-7

Applications: Working in Groups, and Writing

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CONTENTS

7   Introduction

A university student performs several academic and administrative roles. So, students should possess skills to work in groups either face-to-face or virtually. Moreover, learning about group work is important for a student. Everyone meets in groups during family functions, at university, during community or religious events, as well as in professional life. Groups consist of individuals with similar ideas or goals coming together to complete a task or to solve a problem for a common good. There are many task groups both at university and in the workplace (Young & Travis, 2011). Keeping in view the aim of this unit, i.e., how to prepare students for working in groups, and writing, the objectives are framed accordingly. Finally, activities and self-assessment to augment learning about working in groups.

7.1   Objectives

After reading this unit you would be able to explain:

- why work in groups?
- characteristics of groups.
- patterns of communication
- group dynamics.
- group work in libraries: four types of face-to-face communication,
- group work in libraries: three types of virtual groups.
- issues in group discussion.

7.2   Working in Groups

The groups of individuals tend to accomplish more creative thinking than individuals who are isolated. Individuals work in groups due to:

(a). Generate ideas or alternatives.
(b). Get to know each other better.
(c). Solve joint problems.
(d). Explore issues of common interest.
(e). Give or receive information.
(f). Make decisions.
(g). Use the resources of more than two people.
(h). Explore a complex issue or solve a complex problem
(i). Share responsibility for a decision.
(j). Get the group's commitment to implementing the decision
(k). Develop motivation and leadership ability.
(l). Gather information or opinions from people who have varying perspectives.
(m). Allow people to share ideas or opinions about a film, book, or presentation that has been made.

(n). Obtain feedback on decisions, instructions, or directions (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

7.3 **Characteristics of Groups, Group Dynamics, and Patterns of Ccommunication**

The importance of group communication in group dynamics cannot be underestimated due to the fact that the individuals who participate in a group come from diverse backgrounds with a variety of traits and interests. Group performance and effectiveness can be seen as the interplay of three main sets of needs and behaviours, each of which gives rise to a series of formal and informal roles as shown in Figure 7.2.
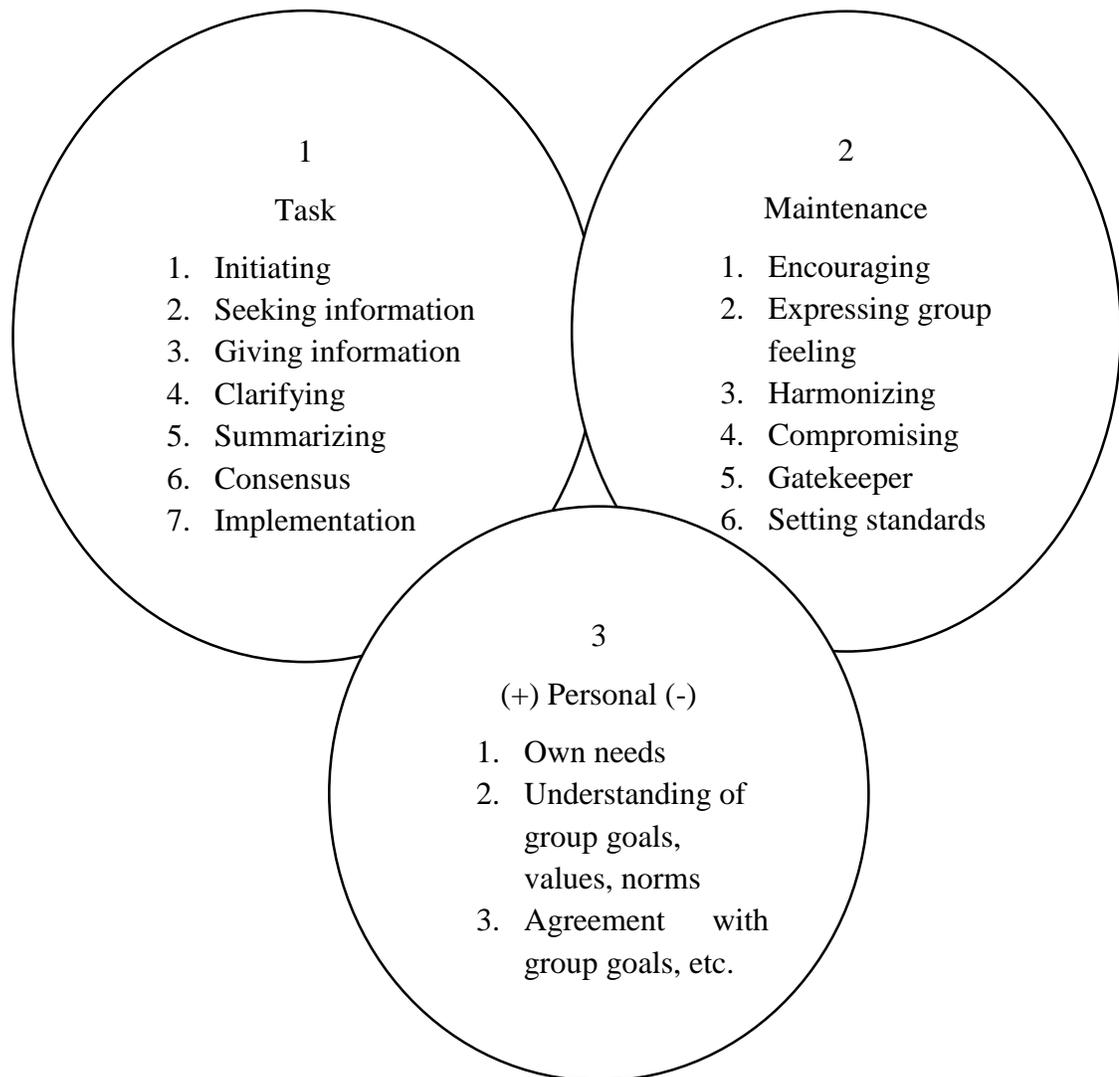

Figure 7.2: Task, maintenance, and personal functions in the group (Benson, 2018)

7.3.1   Task functions

The first circle in Figure 7.2 refers to those needs, behaviours, and roles that are required to help the group achieve its goals (Benson, 2018). Without a task, a group need not exist. Often considered the purpose behind a group, a task is defined as an activity in which no externally correct decision exists and whose completion depends on member acceptance (Myers & Anderson, 2008).

7.3.2   Maintenance functions

The second circle in Figure 7.2 encompasses those behaviours and roles that help the group look after its emotional and interpersonal well-being (Benson, 2018). The expression of feelings is crucial to the health and maintenance of the group. Many groups avoid expressing any emotion. They incorrectly believe such disclosure is inappropriate to the group process or a sign of weakness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without some gauge to measure the social dimension of the members, the group will not know when to devote attention to resolving an interpersonal conflict, celebrate a task success, or merely take a much-needed five-minute break. Do what you can to encourage the expression of feelings within the group (Fujishin, 2007).

7.3.3   Personal

The third circle in Figure 7.2 is concerned with the purely personal motives of each individual. The circles overlap because some behaviours are task and maintenance oriented at the same time, and because all task and maintenance behaviours are mediated by personal motivations which can result in positive or anti-group behaviours and roles. We can begin to identify members' behaviours, and the roles with which they are associated over time, in terms of whether they impede or facilitate the group (Benson, 2018).

Different types of communication patterns are used in groups, for exam, (1) formal or hierarchical communication (2) semiformal group, (3) all-channel communication and, and (4) monopolization (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

7.4   **Group work in Libraries: Four Types of Face-to-Face Communication**

When people talk in a group, patterns of communication develop. In most situations, evenly distributed communication patterns where everyone participates are better for the teams (Levi, & Askay, 2020). The following section will explain the different types of face-to-face communication.

7.4.1   The book discussion

A book discussion is successful when it allows members to share their responses to the book, compare their differing interpretations, and ask each other questions. Something has gone wrong if the discussion turns into a lecture. The book discussion is one of the best ways to learn group leadership skills and to teach them to others, including library users. A volunteer leadership

training program should include an introduction to group dynamics, basic listening and questioning skills, and a great deal of practice within the training group (Ross & Nilsen, 2013). The following tips are helpful for book discussion:

(a). Outline questions and issues of the book discussion.
(b). Do not try to cover the whole book.
(c). Ask relevant questions only.
(d). Do not ask leading questions.
(e). Keep your questions short.
(f). Do not stop with an agreement - Go on to find out why.
(g). Help the group to express, examine, and evaluate the author's ideas.
(h). Probe the author's ideas to seek clarification.
(i). Encourage the group to apply the author's ideas for discussion.
(j). Use provocative or "devil's advocate" questions to encourage opposing points of view.
(k). Stay on track.
(l). Do not encourage the group to bring in outside information during discussion.
(m). Do not let the group attack the author's character.
(n). Do not dispute facts.
(o). Maintain an open communication climate.
(p). Show patience and use humor.
(q). Do not fear small silences (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

7.4.2   The problem-solving discussion

Basic attending and questioning skills are useful in all groups, including book discussion groups and problem-solving groups. In addition to these basic skills, problem-solving groups also need to use analytic and evaluative skills in a systematic, structured way. The following is a basic outline that a leader might use to prepare for leading a problem-solving group.

(a). Describe the problem.
(b). What solutions are proposed?
(c). What is the group's initial reaction?
(d). Which solution, or combination of solutions, seems best?
(e). How will the chosen solution be implemented and made effective?

7.4.3   The focus group

The focus group method, which is also called group interviewing, is essentially a technique used for gathering information and opinions. It is based on structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews. It allows the researcher/interviewer to question several individuals systematically and simultaneously. A focus group data technique is frequently used in political and market research but for other purposes as well (Babbie, 2011).

Imagine that you're thinking about introducing a new product. Let's suppose that you've invented the new computer that not only does word processing, spreadsheets, data analysis, and the like, but also contains a fax machine, AM/FM/TV tuner, CD player, dual-cassette unit, microwave oven, denture cleaner, and coffeemaker. To highlight its computing and coffee-making features, you're thinking of calling it the "Compulator." You figure the new computer will sell for about $28,000, and you want to know whether people are likely to buy it. Your prospects might be well served by focus groups (Babbie, 2011).

In a focus group, typically 5 to 15 people are brought together in a private, comfortable environment to engage in a guided discussion of some topic—in this case, the acceptability and salability of the Compulator. The subjects are selected based on relevance to the topic under study. Given the likely cost of the Compulator, your focus group participants would probably be limited to upper-income groups, for example. Other, similar considerations might figure into the selection (Babbie, 2011).

Participants in focus groups are not likely to be chosen through rigorous probability-sampling methods. This means that the participants do not statistically represent any meaningful population. However, the purpose of the study is to explore rather than to describe or explain in any definitive sense. Nevertheless, typically more than one focus group is convened in a given study because of the serious danger that a single group of 7 to 12 people will be too atypical to offer any generalizable insights (Babbie, 2011).

The focus group technique has advantages as well as disadvantages (Krueger, 1988). For better understanding, the pros and cons of focus group are as follows:

7.4.1   Advantages

- The technique is helpful to collect real-life data in a social environment.
- It has flexibility.
- It has high face validity.
- It has speedy results.
- No much finance is involved to conduct the focus group activity.

7.4.2   Disadvantages

- Focus groups afford the researcher less control than individual interviews.
- Qualitative data are difficult to analyze.
- Moderators require special skills and domain knowledge.
- Difference between groups can be troublesome.
- It is difficult to identify relevant persons.
- The focus group activity requires a conducive environment (Krueger, 1988).

7.4.3 The formal meeting

Meetings may range from informal discussion groups to very formal meetings governed by specified rules of order. Some examples of formal meetings are the annual Meetings of the national library associations or the regular meetings of a board of governors or trustees (Ross & Dewdney, 1998). Students work in collaboration for group assignments. For better outcome while working in teams student should aware how formal meeting are arranged. For team meetings you should opt for the following tips:

    (a). Have a clear agenda, communicated to the team members before the meeting.

    (b). Be on time.

    (c). Silence mobile phones and only use laptops for meeting purposes, not to work while others are talking.

    (d). Listen actively and respectfully, avoiding interruptions.

    (e). Speak clearly, in a structured manner.

    (f). Appoint someone (different each time) to give a summary of each meeting and its outcome at the end, for a common take-away (Taylor & Lester, 2009).

7.5 Group Work in Libraries: Three Types of Virtual Groups

7.5.1 Teleconferencing and videoconferencing

The technologies such as Internet, e-mail, fax messages, voice mail, instant messaging, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, wireless devices have transformed the way we communicate. People now can work together almost effortlessly whether they are in New York or New Zealand, Singapore or Seattle, Beijing or Bangkok; in a car, an office, a hotel or at home; even in an airport or an aeroplane. With every phone call or e-mail, your communication skills are revealed for everyone to see (Taylor & Lester, 2009). Teleconferencing still satisfies our face-to-face criterion, although most of the nonverbal communication occurring in such interactions is lost. Nonverbal communication is all communication that is neither spoken nor written; it includes such variables as body movement, paralanguage (or the way we speak), clothing, punctuality, gestures, distancing or proxemics, facial expressions, use of time, and seating arrangements. Research has consistently reminded us that nonverbal communication has more impact on the receiver of a message than words themselves (Fujishin, 2007).

7.5.2 Electronic discussion groups

Belonging to an electronic discussion group on the Internet is partly like being in a face-to-face group and partly like writing letters. As a participant, you can post messages that many people will read and some will answer. The communication is interactive in the sense that people can respond to you, but the interaction is asynchronous-time delays occur between responses. Unlike a face-to-face group, you do not get as many social context clues about the other participants; instead, you build images of what people are like based on what they write. Interactive electronic media tend

to democratize communication, bringing all kinds of people together from great distances, and encouraging people who might not otherwise speak up in a group, but that does not mean "anything goes" (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

Being responsible group member, it is important to consider the following principles for better communication in an electronic discussion group:

(a). Stick to the topic.
(b). Avoid "flaming" or hostile remarks.
(c). Do not use objectionable language or make racist or sexist remarks.
(d). Be concise. A message that fills more than one or two screens is too long.
(e). Do not clutter your responses up with the complete text of the message to which you are replying.
(f). If someone has requested personal assistance, send the message to that person, not to the whole list.
(g). Know the difference between sending a command (e.g., to unsubscribe) to the listserv moderator/owner/server and the listserv participants. You might not want 3,000 people to know that you are going on holiday (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

7.6   Issues in Group Discussion

In both virtual and face-to-face groups, problem behavior may occur because individuals have not yet learned how groups work or are unaware of the need for people to participate equally and constructively. People who are not used to working in groups often think, for example, that the person who has the most subject expertise or experience should do the most talking and, conversely, that people who have no expertise or experience have nothing to contribute. At other times, problem behavior occurs because participants do not yet have the skills for group work; they are not sure how to ask the right questions or how to express their feelings. The third reason for problem behavior is that some members of the group may have a hidden agenda that involves self-aggrandizement or perpetuating the problem that the group is trying to solve (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

In your small group work, you and the other members will occasionally experience conflict. A struggle over the placement of an item on the agenda. An argument over the merits of a proposed solution. Or feuding between two members of the group. These and other situations can reduce the group's task effectiveness and strain the relationships of its members (Fujishin, 2007).

Group members can ignore or deny conflict. They can address it indirectly through dialogue. They can be more direct and blame and punish. They can even expel the member causing conflict. They, like the mother of the two boys, have many methods at their disposal for dealing with conflict (Fujishin, 2007).

Problem-solving groups often employ counterproductive approaches in dealing with conflict. Members close their eyes. They blame. They hit. And they hurt. Yet such approaches do very little

to resolve conflict. And in many instances, they serve to escalate differences, increase tension, and sever relationships within the group (Fujishin, 2007).

7.7   Activities

1. Your course tutor has created a group (consisting of 5 students) assignment on "use of Zoom for online collaboration among university students". Being the group leader, identify the characteristics of your group members. Also, enlist the different patterns of communication followed during the discussion by the group members.
2. Select a good book on "soft communication skills" and identify 15 students and a course tutor to arrange a session of the book discussion. Being a moderator explains the aim and objectives of the discussion.
3. List the main issues you face in verbal English communication. To find better solutions to the problem, arrange a focus to consist of 20 students and one English teacher. Present the findings in a presentation in front of your class.
4. The government of Pakistan suddenly announced two-month holidays due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Arrange a formal meeting through Skype with your class tutor and class fellows to reschedule the mid-term and final-term exams of the communication course. Note down the minutes of the meeting and share them with your tutor and class fellows to convey the decisions of the meeting.
5. You have to initiate an online platform for professional discussion among BS library and information science students of AIOU residing in the different cities of Pakistan. Being moderator, prepare guidelines for group communication to create Yahoo group.

7.8   Self-Assessment Questions

1. Why is it important to know the characteristics and dynamics of a group? What are different patterns of communication?
2. What are the key benefits of book discussion activity?
3. What are the key benefits of problem-solving discussion from university students' perspectives?
4. Why group meetings are conducted? What are the pros and cons of a group meeting?
5. What are the aims/objectives of an electronic discussion group? In the digital age, how online groups are helpful to share information and knowledge among students?
6. What are the issues in group discussion? How can the issues be addressed effectively?

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Unit-8

Making Presentations

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CONTENTS

8   Introduction

During academic life, a university student has to deliver several presentations either in front of a teacher and their class-fellows or at a conference. To be a successful individual, a university student should learn presentation skills. These life-long skills are important to survive and compete with others in this global village. So, LIS distance education students should learn the skills they have to present their academic works during online classes while staying at home or their workplaces. At the end of this, activities and self-assessment questions support students to improve their presentation skills.

The following sections explain how to develop and deliver a presentation professionally.

8.1   Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit you would be able to explain:

- general considerations
- aim of presentation.
- planning a presentation.
- analyzing the audience.
- organizing content and preparing an outline.
- delivering presentation.
- managing the question-answer session of a presentation.
- making a longer presentation.
- providing bibliographic instruction.

8.2   General Considerations

Presentations are speeches that are usually given in a business, technical, professional, or scientific environment. The audience is likely to be more specialized than those attending a typical speech in a political/social gathering (Mandel, 2000). An individual whose job involves introducing or thanking a speaker, doing a book talk, giving a library tour, providing bibliographic instruction to groups, speaking about the library to outside groups, providing staff training, he/she should possess presentation skills (Ross & Dewdney, 1998). Moreover, it is a potentially effective means of bringing people together to plan, raise issues, present problems, monitor, and review the progress of any project on hand. In many ways, they are like reports, except that they are delivered in person rather than on paper (Bhatnagar& Bhatnagar, 2012). Presentation can be done by:

- Reading a speech from the script, for example, a leader addressing a rally.
- Giving a talk using cue cards, for example, a professor delivering a talk on 'importance of innovation in library'.
- Delivering a presentation using powerpoint presentation/projector/flowchart, etc., for example, a library manager discussing circulation record of library.

- Memorizing the content and delivering it in front of the audience, for example, a student participating in a debate at a youth festival.
- Offering a formal welcome to a guest or a new employee in library (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

The first and foremost step is to assess yourself before delivering a presentation. To be a more effective presenter, it is useful to examine your present skills. Moreover, anxiety is a natural state that exists any time we are placed under stress. Giving a presentation will normally cause some stress. When this type of stress occurs, physiological changes take place that may cause a nervous stomach, sweating, tremors in the hands and legs, accelerating breathing, and/or increased heart rate. So, it is critical important to understand anxiety that you feel before a presentation and learn how to use it constructively during your presentation. Following are tips that may help you to reduce anxiety (Mandel, 2000).

(a). Organize your thoughts
(b). Use visualization skills
(c). Do practice
(d). Control breathing
(e). Focus on relaxing
(f). Release tension
(g). Move your body to stay relax and natural
(h). Maintain good eye contact with the audience

8.3   Planning a Presentation

The prior proper planning and preparation prevent poor performance. Initially, you need to get into the proper frame of mind. The next preliminary step is to understand the purpose of giving a speech (Young & Travis, 2017).

Specifically, effective planning requires two things:

(a). Analyzing audience and locale (who, why, where)
(b). Organizing content and preparing outline (when, what) (Popat & Kotadia, 2015)

8.4   Analyzing the Audience

The first and foremost thing needed to deliver an effective presentation is the complete knowledge about the audience and the location. To analyze the audience and to know about the place where the presentation is to be delivered, the presenter needs to have the answer to the questions: (1) who are your audience? (2) Why is your audience there? and (3) Where is the presentation to be delivered? Who answers every basic detail about the audience? It familiarizes a speaker with the listeners (Popat & Kotadia, 2015). Who is referred as look at the age, sex, socio- economic status, educational level, and professional experience of the audience (Young & Travis, 2017). Specifically presenter needs to collect the information about following aspects:

(a). The size of the group or audience expected

(b). The field/discipline of the group

(c). The age range

(d). Their experience in terms of the topic to be discussed end of the talk.

(e). The values they believe in

(f). The gender: male, female or both

(g). Awareness and knowledge of audience about topic

(h). The role/advantages of presentation in their life.

The above-mentioned information will help plan the technique of interaction, choosing different types of illustration, type, and depth of content of the presentation (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

The second main consideration is to know why is your audience there. Why are you there? Why clarifies the purposes of presentation from the point of view of the audience as well as the presenter. Specifically, the answer of following questions would help answer why:

(a). Why have you been asked to speak to a group of people?

(b). What outcome(s) is/are expected?

(c). Write down the reason (s) for which you have been asked to deliver a presentation and use them as a reminder during a presentation (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Answers and information about this will help the presenter to decide the content and style of the presentation and help in devising appropriate strategy as well. This, in turn, aids in conveying message successfully and impressively (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Third important point is where is the presentation to be delivered? Speakers should always be familiar with the physical setting of the situation. The arrangement of a room is important. Presenters need to know where the audience is seated. This allow presenters to develop a mental picture of how to make eye contact with each section of the audience. For example, if an audience is seated in rows, members of the audience are less likely to interact with each other during a speech. If the audience is in a circle or in small seating groups, they may talk to each other more easily while presenter is delivering speech. These more intimate settings can be challenging for a speaker (Young & Travis, 2017). In sum, a presenter needs to get answer of following questions:

(a). Will setting be formal, less formal or social?

(b). What is the size of the room/hall?

(c). Will you use a microphone?

(d). How is the surrounding?

(e). How is the seating arrangement?

(f). Do the electrical outlets and lights work? How are they controlled?

(g). Which audio visual equipment will be available?

(h). Will you need a projection screen or multimedia?

(i). Will you be in need of a helping hand while using audio/visual equipment?

(j). What are the possible distractions, for example, noise, time, tiredness, serious information, etc.?

8.5 Organizing Content and Preparing Outline

After analyzing audience, next step is to organize the content and prepare outline of the presentation. For organizing the content, the information about the time of presentation is important as it will help you anticipate the mood and mindset of your audience. If it is in the morning, the audience will be in a good mood, but if it is just before lunch break or immediately after lunch break or at the end of the day, the audience would be a bit tired, likely to be inattentive or in a mood to leave for home. Thus, morning or mid-afternoon would be the best time to speak as people are most alert. Moreover, the knowledge about time helps you in deciding your content, i.e., loaded with information, infused with humour, etc. In addition to this, one should find out how much time is given to him/her for the talk. It should also be confirmed if this is inclusive/exclusive of question-answer session. Apart from this, one should see that a session does not exceed 45 minutes, as the attention rate is likely to go down. If it is of more than 45 min, the presenter has to think about the ways to keep the audience engaged and their interest sustained (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

After getting the information about time of presentation, next step is to identify what to be included in the content and steps to prepare the outline. Presenters should create of the framework for talk. Presenters need to think about the aspects and depth of the topic they wish to cover in the presentation. The supporting material help to prepare and organize contents may include the following: (1) your professional expertise, your memory of examples and stories (this is the most important source), (2) your own research, (3) talking with other people, (4) reading other people's material and research (in most cases, you should use this one only as a supplement). Once the outline is ready, presenters should start thinking about developing the points enlisted by considering three main sections: introduction, body and conclusion. In addition, well-presented audiovisual aids support key arguments and create interest in the presentation. A good preparation, not only assures careful thinking about content that presenter wishes to communicate, but also boosts up confidence (Ross & Dewdney, 1998; Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Using software to prepare presentation, and formatting add value to the effective presentation. Also, concentrate the following tips for effective presentation:

(a). Make slides pictorial
(b). Present one key point per slide
(c). Make text and number readable
(d). Use color carefully
(e). Make visuals big enough to see
(f). Graph data
(g). Make pictures and diagrams easy to see

(h). Avoid unnecessary slides

(i). Edit your presentation

(j). Prepare handouts for the audience prepare your own speaker's notes, including the graphics (in a reduced format) at appropriate places in your outline

(k). Transfer your completed presentation to a laptop computer for your talk (Mandel, 2000; Ross & Dewdney, 1998)

8.6 Delivering Presentation

After having complete information about the audience, their needs, the place to deliver the presentation and organizing the content well, the presenter chooses the method of delivery. Presentation can be done through reading a manuscript or delivered through power point slides. In manuscript technique, entire speech is written verbatim. The speaker then reads from the text during presentation. This technique is preferred when the accuracy of the content is extremely important. Presenters need to careful about grammar check of the manuscript and ensure that the manuscript is clear and easily readable (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Power point presentation, today, is the most preferred style of presentation for various advantages. It is of great help when one chooses to be extempore (spoken or done without preparation) in delivering presentation and has good command over the topic of the presentation. It gives you an advantage of the latest technology. Presenters should be vigilant while presenting and try to avoid too much text, colouring or animations on the slides. Moreover, the text of the slides should be readable for the audience. Presenters can add more pictures/graphs/charts to make presentation interesting. Presenters should check the spelling and grammar errors as well as verify the content for factual errors. An important tip is never read the presentation. Even the audience can do that. The text should only be the cue to the audience. Presentation is all about elaborating the points. Plan your content keeping in mind the time given to you. It is better to speak less than more to sustain audience's interest (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Apart from the message itself, a number of other factors have to be taken care of for a perfect delivery. They are: (1) facial expression (2) eye contact (3) gestures, (4) posture and (5) voice (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012). Specifically, stage fright is a normal part of making presentations in public. All speakers experience it. But good speakers are able to use their nervousness to charge their talk with energy; they don't let it cripple their performance. A good strategy for dealing with anxiety is to ask yourself: what is the worst thing that could happen? Your secret phobia may be:

(a). Tripping on your way up to the podium; falling over; falling off the stage

(b). Dropping your notes and having them get out of order

(c). Shaking uncontrollably

(d). Losing your voice; not being able to get out even the first sentence

(e). Stuttering or mispronouncing words

(f). Going blank and forgetting your whole speech

(g). Making some horrible mistake that the audience will all laugh at and remember with merriment for the rest of their lives

(h). Discovering in the middle of your speech that your fly is undone (or even that you have on no clothes at all).

Before you give the talk, you should answer the following question yourself:

(a). Do you clearly understand what kind of speech you are being asked to give?

(b). Have you analyzed your audience? Have you geared your speech to your expected audience?

(c). Have you rehearsed your presentation, including your visual aids, ahead of time?

(d). Is your clothing appropriate for your intended audience? Is it consistent with a professional image?

(e). Can you operate the equipment (including the microphone) that you plan to use?

(f). Have you checked to make sure your notes and audiovisual materials are in the right order?

(g). Did you come to the room early enough to correct for problems with seating or audiovisual equipment? (Set up the overhead projector; focus the slide projector; test the microphone; rearrange the chairs if necessary; get a glass of water.) (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

8.7 Managing Question-Answer Session

The last stage of presentation can be called presentation after presentation. It is known as the question-answer session. This is more interactive and is equally important. This is an opportunity to:

(a). Verify if the message conveyed is received in its true sense or not

(b). Reinforce your ideas

(c). Clarify the doubts, if any (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

Presenters should encourage the audience to ask questions by using phrases such as that is a good question', 'I am happy that you asked this question', etc. and if they don't know the answer do not lie. Tell them that you will research and get back to them with the answer. After answering the question, confirm if audience is satisfied with your answer. You can do this by asking questions like, 'Is this what you wanted to know?', 'Have I answered your query?' etc. Presenters should remember that quality of questions decides the effectiveness of your presentation (Popat & Kotadia, 2015).

8.8 Making a Longer Presentation

For longer presentation, the most important thing to remember is that the presentation is, the more energy you need to put into keeping your audience interested, comfortable, awake, and involved. Such presentation involves specific agenda, publicity and promotion campaign so these presentations are harder and requires more confidence and expertise (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

8.9   Accepting the invitation

First of all, you should consider that are you capable to deliver longer presentation that is expected? If not, do not be afraid to say "No" when you are first invited. Later on, it will be too late to back out. Once you have decided to accept the invitation, confirm your acceptance in a letter to the organizers. Your letter should include:

   (a). A confirmation of the terms agreed upon.
   (b). A list of the equipment and supplies you will need.
   (c). Specifications for the set-up of the room.
   (d). A statement of any other special arrangements as applicable (for example, that you will send them presentation and related material if any for handouts that they should print on colored paper and assemble into a kit for participants) (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

8.10   Publicity and Promotion

Often longer presentations are advertised ahead of time in posters, flyers, etc. It is safest if you supply the organizers with your own copy that they can adapt for their advertising. Include the following:

   (a). Your name in the form in which you wish it to appear.
   (b). The exact title of your talk.
   (c). Biographical details of relevance, including your qualifications for giving this talk (you have been responsible for the design and implementation of the system you plan to talk about).
   (d). What your audience can expect as a result of hearing your talk (they will learn x or will be able to do y or will experience z).
   (e). The format (workshop involving mini-lectures, role-plays, and group exercises; slide-presentation followed by group discussion; straight lecture, etc.).

8.11   Getting the Audience Involved

We know from experience that there are definite limits to how many facts we can absorb from a lecturer who stands at the front and talks at us. People learn best when they are actively involved. So try interspersing your lecture presentation with opportunities for your audience to participate. The following ways of involving the audience are popular techniques used by trainers: (1) introduce participants, (2) ask your audience questions, (3) invite structured discussion, (4) use case studies, (5) do an exercise (6) involve the audience in simple role-plays, (7) get your audience to ask you questions. Here are some suggestions for handling the question period at the end of a presentation:

   (a). Do your homework. Prepare answers in advance for questions that you can anticipate being asked.

(b). Provide a positive climate by treating each questioner with respect and each question as valuable. You can say, "That's an interesting point to raise, because . . ." or "I'm glad you asked that because it is a question a lot of people may wonder about."

(c). Repeat the question to make sure everyone has heard it before you begin your answer.

(d). If you do not know the answer, say so and promise to find out. Do not waffle.

In addition to the above-mentioned tips, to prepare longer presentation, it is suggested that you should consider the tips already discussed such as planning a presentation, analyzing the audience, organizing content and preparing outline, delivering presentation, and managing the question-answer session of presentation at the end.

8.12 Providing Bibliographic Instruction

Increasingly, librarians are being called on to provide bibliographic instruction or user education to teach people how to use library resources. Bibliographic instruction is now a larger part of staff duties even in public libraries, mostly because of new electronic resources. Bibliographic instruction may take place in the classroom, in a lab, on a tour of the library, or on a one-to-one basis. Effective bibliographic instructions requires the instructor to master, in addition to subject expertise, three types of teaching skills: (1) organizing skills, including the ability to assess needs, set objectives, and design the curriculum or program, (2) writing skills and skills of graphic presentation, and (3) interpersonal skills for communicating effectively with individuals and groups. Much of the library literature on bibliographic instruction concerns the first two categories of skills (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

8.13 Activities

1. As a BS LIS student, you have to assign a topic, "the role of social media technologies in information and knowledge sharing among university students", for class presentation and final written assignment. Review the relevant literature and watch YouTube videos for the conceptualization of social media technologies and to explain 'knowledge taxonomies' in your context. Based on the knowledge gained through the activity and discussion with your course tutor, prepare a powerpoint presentation and deliver it in your class. To capture your experience with this activity, share your experience in your final written assignment.

2. As an internee reference librarian, you have to deliver a lecture on "how to use e-scholarly databases for undergraduate students". For preparing a powerpoint presentation, you are required to know about different e-scholarly databases, online searching techniques, and related videos. After the lecture, share your experience with the course tutor to improve the deficiencies related to presentation and technology skills, and domain knowledge.

8.14 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the strategies that should generally be considered while planning a presentation?

2. What are the steps involved in planning and delivering an effective presentation? Who, why, and where question words are needed to be answered while organizing content for the presentation?

3. Why is it important to define the purpose of a presentation? Why is important to know about 'audience' and 'locale' while making a presentation.

4. What is bibliographic instruction? What is the role of bibliographic instructions in the digital age?

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Unit-9

Training Others in Communication Skills

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CONTENTS

9 Introduction

The ultimate goal of a university student is to be an expert of theoretical and practical knowledge as well as the skills that support being a successful individual both in professional and social lives. After university life, a student should be able to handle diverse situations at workplaces in different settings. So, it is essential for LIS students to learn how to arrange training programs and develop training materials, for example, handouts, reading lists, powerpoint presentation slides, and so on. Which models of training are available for training in face-to-face and technology mediating training? At the end of this unit, activities, and self-assessment questions are designed to support students in reviewing their learning and refining their concepts on how to teach others communication skills.

9.1 Objectives

Specifically, after reading this unit students would be able to explain:

- the importance of training.
- why adult training?
- planning a training program.
- using the micro-skills training model.
- modeling good behavior.
- evaluation and follow-up of a training program.

9.2 The Importance of Training

The terms training and education are sometimes used interchangeably, education usually refers to a more broadly based process that includes general principles while training is focused on specific skills appropriate for a particular situation or a particular job. The teaching of communication skills is appropriate at all stages of the education/training spectrum: preprofessional education; continuing education; in-service training; conferences and workshops; and informal learning opportunities that occur on the job. We cannot assume that most people naturally pick up these skills on their own without a systematic program any more than we would assume that most people naturally pick up how to play the piano. Library schools and paraprofessional programs should certainly teach communication skills as part of the preparation for library and information work. Moreover, Researchers have explored the following about how people learn:

(a). People learn when they are ready to learn.
(b). Learning is active, not passive.
(c). Learning occurs through trial and error and through association.
(d). Learning is multisensory.
(e). People usually learn one thing at a time.
(f). Learning occurs from practice.
(g). Positive feedback is necessary for learning.

(h). The rate of forgetting tends to be rapid immediately after learning (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

The micro counseling model for interpersonal skills training has identified four levels of skill mastery: (1) identification, where the learner can recognize both the skill and its effect; (2) basic mastery, where the learner can use the skill in a training setting; (3) active mastery, where the learner can use the skill on the job, and (4) teaching mastery, where the learner can teach the skill to others (Ivey, 1994).

How do you know when people need training in communication skills? In the area of continuing education, the need for training in communication skills often appears as an interest in conference sessions on, for example, "Handling problem patrons" or "How to present your budget." In libraries and information centers, training needs often arise as a result of changes, small or large, for example, the arrival of a new staff member, the introduction of a new telephone system, or major organizational change such as the development of a new public service or the restructuring of the lines of authority. Sometimes in-service training programs are designed in response to problems such as complaints from the public or evidence of poor staff morale. The first clue to unmet training needs is usually a gap between the expected and actual performance of an employee. So, it is critically important to assess the need for training. If training is needed, you should strive to understand how the need arose, how your staff or students perceive the need, and how training can help meet it. If training is needed then the next steps in planning training are:

(a). Identification of the focus: the skills that should be taught
(b). Selection of appropriate training methods
(c). development of the training programs or formats
(d). Development of the means of evaluation of the success of the training (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.3   Teaching Adults

Adults learn differently from how children learn. Therefore trainers should know the method and practice of teaching adult learners, known as andragogy. Adults learn best when they are involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning experiences. They want to be able to apply what they have learned immediately. Following are the key characteristics of learning situations that suit the way adults learn:

(a). They are problem-centered rather than content-centered.
(b). They permit and encourage the learner's active participation.
(c). They encourage the learner to introduce past experiences as a way of re-examining that experience.
(d). They foster a collaborative learning climate rather than one that is based on authority.
(e). They emphasize experiential activities.
(f). Planning is a mutual activity between learner and instructor.

(g). Evaluation is a mutual activity between learner and instructor (Ross & Nilsen, 2013).

Adults are characterized by maturity, self-confidence, autonomy, solid decision-making, and are generally more practical, multi-tasking, purposeful, self-directed, experienced, and less open-minded and receptive to change. All these traits affect their motivation, as well as their ability to learn. Following are adult learners' characteristics:

(a). Self-direction.
(b). Practical and results-oriented.
(c). Less open-minded.
(d). Slower learning, yet more integrative knowledge.
(e). Use personal experience as a resource.
(f). Motivation --improve job skills and achieve professional growth.
(g). Multi-level responsibilities.
(h). High expectations (Pappas, 2013).

9.4   **Planning a Training Program**

Training people in communication skills involves two basic activities: (1) setting objectives and (2) deciding on the appropriate format.

9.4.1   Setting training objectives

To ensure that your training program is systematic and not hit and miss, you will want to set objectives. Your objectives should be: (1) concrete, (2) realistic, (3) time-bound and (4) measurable. Some examples of manageable program objectives for communication skills training are:

(a). To conduct a two-hour orientation session for each new staff member in the circulation department within that person's first month of service.
(b). To provide each permanent staff member on the information desk with three hours of continuing education annually.
(c). To conduct a session on WhatsApp answering procedures for switchboard staff before December 31 (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

For each program, it is critically important to write specific learning objectives. For example, by the end of this program on effective questioning, participants will be able to:

(a). Recognize the difference between an open and closed question.
(b). Demonstrate use of open questions in a role-played interview.
(c). Use open questions on the job.
(d). Teach another staff member how to use open questions (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.5 Formats for Training

Training programs vary in format according to the needs of participants and according to program objectives. Even within one session, you can use several training formats. You might want to start with: (1) a short lecture to explain a skill, (2) go on to role-playing or a demonstration, (2) follow with a group discussion, and (3) finally recommend some reading for independent study. Lectures during a training program may opt for the following forms:

- (a). Mini lectures.
- (b). Demonstrations, modeling.
- (c). Role-plays.
- (d). Simulation exercises.
- (e). Field trips combined with structured observation.
- (f). Programmed instruction.
- (g). Panel discussions.
- (h). Small group discussions.
- (i). Case studies.
- (j). Group exercises such as fishbowls, buzz groups, games.
- (k). Assigned readings.
- (l). Computer-mediated conferencing (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.6 Using the Microskills Training Model (micro counseling)

Using microskills training techniques, BS LIS students learn how to change their behavior. For this you need to concentrate the microskills hierarchy: (1) attending behavior (culturally and individually appropriate eye contact, body language, vocal qualities, and verbal tracking skills), (2) open and closed questions, (3) encouraging, paraphrasing and summarization (4) reflecting content, (5) confrontation (6) influencing skills, (directives, advice and information instruction, feedback) (7) skills integration, and (8) determining your personal style. The basic rule of thumb is to teach one skill at a time (Ivey, 1994). For each of these skills, the basic microskills teaching model involves five steps: (1) definition, (2) recognition, (3) reading, (4) practice, and (5) feedback. Here are the five steps that you can use in your own training sessions for teaching microskills (Ross & Dewdney, 1998):

- (a). Warmup and definition of the skill

Discuss the value of the skill with examples of library situations in which it could be used, define the skill, and explain how it functions.

- (a). Recognition: examples and modeling

A trainer may consider the following three key suggestions:

-- Firstly, experts like Allen E. Ivey recommends video, audio, or live demonstrations of the skill. The modeling might involve two trainers role-playing the skill.

-- Secondly, you could ask two volunteers to read the transcript of a conversation between a librarian and a user, following which other trainees identify the skill modeled and discuss its effect.

-- Finally, another suggestion is to make a pair of prepared tapes or transcripts in which the first example is an exaggerated model of the failure to use the skill well and the second example involves a clearly effective use of the skill. Model only one skill at a time.

(b). Reading

Ask trainees to read the relevant sections in this book or some other reading that summarizes and provides examples of the skill. Putting relevant readings on handouts to be read either before or after the training session can be effective. The handouts give the trainee time to think about the skill and work as aids to the memory.

(c). Practice

The key component in microskills training is practice the – do part of "learn, do, and teach." Trainees should be given an opportunity to demonstrate use of the skill in the training session through supervised exercises or role-plays.

(d). Self-assessment, feedback, and generalization

Using the tips for practice, encourage trainees to practice one skill outside the training session, preferably on the job. Trainees can demonstrate mastery through practice in teaching the skill to someone else. Group discussion or exercises will help the trainee assess the level to which the skill has been mastered. Feedback of what worked and what did not will help you assess the need for further training.

9.7 Modeling Good Behavior

One way in which trainees learn communication skills is by watching the trainer's behavior and consciously or unconsciously imitating it. Therefore the trainer must model the effective use of communication skills in a consistent, intentional, and spontaneous way. Trainees notice how the trainer talks, moves, looks, and behaves in informal contacts as well as in formal training sessions. Following are some important tips for modeling good behavior (Ross & Dewdney, 1998):

(a). Examine your own communication behavior

-- How well are you able to integrate the skills that you are teaching into your communication with trainees?

-- When you are having lunch with trainees, how does your communication behavior differ from when you are leading a session?

-- How often do you use open questions in small talk?

(b). Consciously practice your skills

Focus especially on those skills that are hardest or newest for you. You can overcome your own awkwardness by making this explicit: "Now I am going to ask an open question!" Do not be afraid of communication accidents, but do let trainees see your efforts to repair them: "I just interrupted you, which means I was not listening -- exactly what I said not to do -- so tell me again."

(c). Ask your colleagues for feedback

Other trainers can practice giving feedback by telling you how you are doing. The structured criticism exercise is a good way to learn from each other. Make sure you get positive feedback as well as negative feedback. Modeling good behavior Evaluation and follow-up.

9.8 Evaluation and Follow-up

When we conduct workshop on communication skills, for example, interview skills, listening skills, writing skills, etc., chief librarian/director can ask question, "how does he/she know that staff have learned anything from those workshops?" To answer the question, we use a brief evaluation form that ask participants to rate the workshop as excellent, good, fair, or poor on two dimensions: (1) content and (2) presentation. The findings of the post evaluation reveals the truth about that workshop. If the workshop is highly rated the director can further acquire how will he/she knows the trainees are doing a better job as a result of the workshop.' Of course he was absolutely right. From an administrative viewpoint, performance changes as a result of training are a prime concern. So evaluation and follow-up are two key indicators to judge the effectiveness of a training program (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.9 Evaluation

Evaluative has as its primary goal, not the discovery of knowledge, but rather testing of the application of knowledge within a specific program or project. There are two types of evaluation, namely, (1) summative and (2) formative. Summative, or outcome, evaluation is concerned with the effects of a program. It tends to be quantitative and often is used as the basis for deciding whether a program will be continued. Formative, or process, evaluation, which is done during a program, not following its completion, examines how well the program is working (Connaway & Powell, 2010). It is important to develop practical methods of evaluating the outcome of training for library workers. Recently, several good guides have appeared, and we refer you directly to these for detailed accounts of evaluation methods and tools. Some basic ideas are summarized here.

(a). What's the difference between measurement and evaluation?

Measurement is the process of gathering data; evaluation is the process of making judgments about those data. It is not necessary to measure to evaluate, but measurement provides concrete evidence (usually in the form of numbers) to reduce disagreement about judgments and to enable pretraining and posttraining comparisons.

(b). What do you want to measure or evaluate?

Are you going to measure or evaluate knowledge? skills? ability? job performance? attitudes? beliefs? Be clear about your goal. The evaluation of staff training provides a clear guide to five different levels of evaluation: (1) reactions, (2) learning, (3) job behavior, (4) organizational value, and (5) ultimate value.

(c). What are the methods of measuring?

Depending on what you want to evaluate, there are usually two basic methods of measuring: observation and questioning.

(d). Why evaluate?

Evaluation benefits the trainer, the trainee, and, in the case of in-service training, the library administration. Evaluation helps to place in context the training program as a long-term rather than a hit-and-miss project. For a successful evaluation, it is important for the trainee to have a full understanding of the reasons for evaluation and to participate fully in designing and implementing the evaluation process (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.10 Follow-up

Research into the effects of training counselors suggests that training effects are very short-lived-that skills can be lost within 24 hours of the training session-but that trainees are more likely to maintain their new skills if they can integrate these skills immediately into their everyday communication behavior. What this means is that the trainer must help trainees follow up on their training experience. Following are some key tips for follow-up of a training program:

(a). Explain to trainees the importance of practicing immediately.
(b). Ask trainees to report on results of practicing the new skills and to collect specific examples of their efforts.
(c). Encourage trainees to share these examples with the group at a follow-up session or clinic or through an electronic discussion group set up for this purpose.
(d). Make handouts that trainees can tape to their desks to remind themselves to practice.
(e). Provide time in staff meetings or subsequent training sessions to review the skills previously learned.
(f). Announce follow-up clinics at the three-week, eight-week, and six-month point. Review skills, analyze examples, and set new objectives.
(g). Distribute evaluation forms after trainees have had a chance to practice their skills, not at the training session itself.
(h). Encourage trainees to teach others. Create opportunities for practice teaching of one skill to two or three other people (Ross & Dewdney, 1998).

9.11 **Activities**

1. Using modeling behavior techniques, apply the micro-skills hierarchy model to your professional communication and identify what communication accidents you face. Enlist the accidents/challenges/problems confronting your effective communication and discuss with your course tutor for developing the practical strategies to improve your communication skills.

2. Being a master trainer, you have to design a training module on 'how to improve communication skills from BS LIS students' perspective'. For this purpose, you have to prepare training materials-handouts, reading lists, and powerpoint presentation slides. What strategies will you adopt to finalize the module? Prepare the module, discuss with your course tutor, and present in your class for constructive feedback.

3. Your course tutor has assigned a task to prepare a short video (30 minutes) explaining how can we use social technologies for synchronous and asynchronous communication among BS LIS students. Prepare the video by using state-of-the-art technologies keeping in view the ease of use and usefulness factors in mind.

9.12 **Self-Assessment Questions**

1. What do you understand about the term training and why is it important especially for adult learners to become lifelong learners?
2. Do you think a training program for communication skills is important other than what you learned from your course on "communication skills for information professionals" as a BS LIS student?
3. Do you think adult training programs are essential for novice and experienced i-professionals?
4. How can we leverage the micro counseling model for interpersonal skills training in the library and information science domain?
5. What are the key characteristics of adult learners?
6. How can we engage adults in learning?
7. What are key considerations to develop objectives for adult learners' training programs?
8. To what extent does training format has an impact on an adult learners training program?
9. What problems do you think you might have in using integration skills?
10. What is the micro-skills hierarchy model? How can we use it in a library setting?
11. Compared to other skills in micro-skills hierarchy model, which specific skill do you consider the most critical for you to improve communication?
12. What is modeling good behavior? How the technique is helpful for effective training?
13. What is the role of feedback and self-assessment during training to inculcate communication skills among BS LIS students?

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