

Teamwork Training

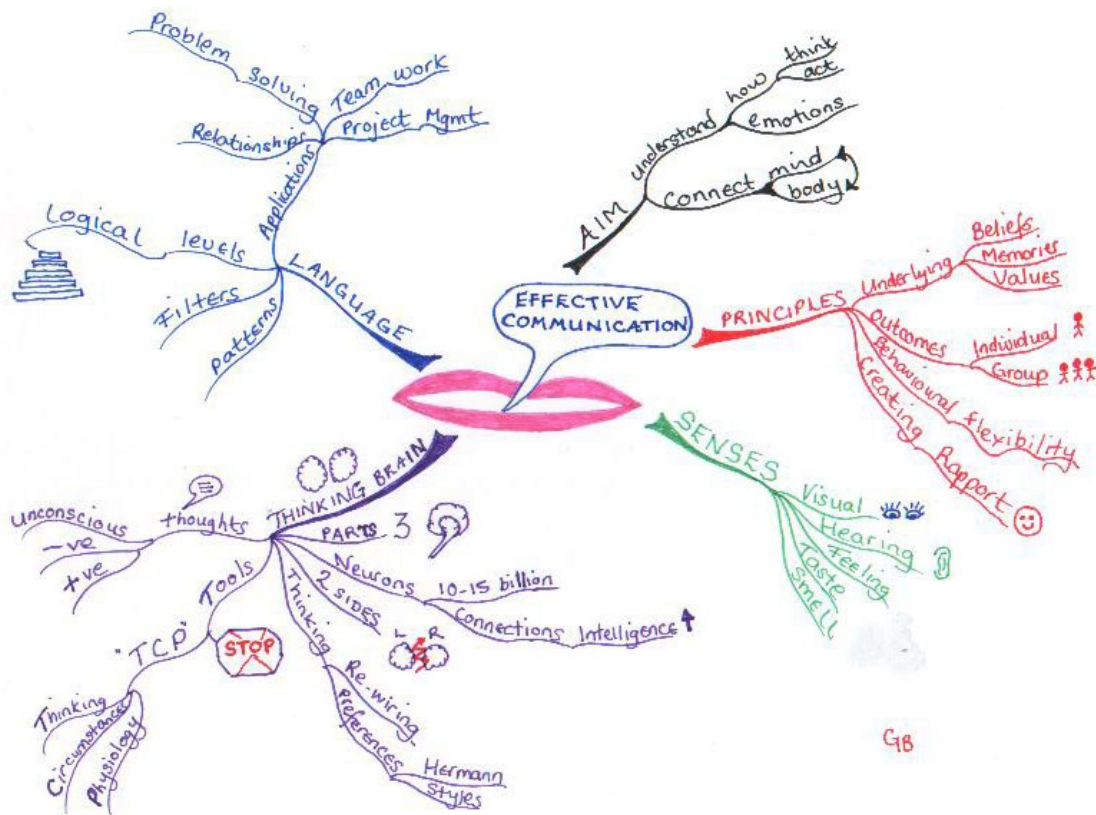
Effective Communication

Effective communication is based on verbal and non-verbal communication. More than voice or even words, nonverbal communication cues you in to what is on another person's mind. The best communicators are sensitive to the power of the emotions and thoughts communicated nonverbally. Personality type affects how you communicate.

Nonverbal communication ranges from facial expression to body language. Gestures, signs, and use of space are also important in nonverbal communication. Multicultural differences in body language, facial expression, use of space, and especially, gestures, are enormous and enormously open to misinterpretation.

Recognize that people communicate on many levels. Watch their facial expressions, eye contact, posture, hand and feet movements, body movement and placement, and appearance and passage as they walk toward you. Every gesture is communicating something if you listen with your eyes. Become accustomed to watching nonverbal communication and your ability to read nonverbal communication will grow with practice.

Look at the mindmap for factors that facilitate effective communication.



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Roles in Groups

Every member of a group plays a certain role within that group. Some roles relate to the task aspect of the group, while others promote social interaction. A third set of roles are self-centered and can be destructive for the group. Read about the roles group members play and then complete the activity.

Task-Oriented Roles

Researchers Benne and Sheats identified several roles which relate to the completion of the group's task:

- Initiator-contributor: Generates new ideas.
- Information-seeker: Asks for information about the task.
- Opinion-seeker: Asks for the input from the group about its values.
- Information-giver: Offers facts or generalization to the group.
- Opinion-giver: States his or her beliefs about a group issue.
- Elaborator: Explains ideas within the group, offers examples to clarify ideas.
- Coordinator: Shows the relationships between ideas.
- Orienter: Shifts the direction of the group's discussion.
- Evaluator-critic: Measures group's actions against some objective standard.
- Energizer: Stimulates the group to a higher level of activity.
- Procedural-technician: Performs logistical functions for the group.
- Recorder: Keeps a record of group actions.

Social Roles

Groups also have members who play certain social roles:

- Encourager: Praises the ideas of others.
- Harmonizer: Mediates differences between group members.
- Compromiser: Moves group to another position that is favored by all group members.
- Gatekeeper/expediter: Keeps communication channels open.
- Standard Setter: Suggests standards or criteria for the group to achieve.
- Group observer: Keeps records of group activities and uses this information to offer feedback to the group.
- Follower: Goes along with the group and accepts the group's ideas.

Individualistic Roles

These roles place the group member above the group and are destructive to the group.

- Aggressor: Attacks other group members, deflates the status of others, and other aggressive behavior.

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- Blocker: Resists movement by the group.
- Recognition seeker: Calls attention to himself or herself.
- Self-confessor: Seeks to disclose nongroup related feelings or opinions.
- Dominator: Asserts control over the group by manipulating the other group members.
- Help seeker: Tries to gain the sympathy of the group.
- Special interest pleader: Uses stereotypes to assert his or her own prejudices.

Class Activity

Use your experience of the last meeting and team activity to answer the following questions:

What task roles were enacted in your group including which roles were used to guide discussion, solve problems, or make decisions?

Which were the most common task roles?

What social roles were used in your on-line group including which roles were used to smooth differences between group members and promote social bonding in the group?

Which were the most common social roles?

What self-centered roles were used in the group?

Did the self-centered roles help or hurt the group? Explain.

Please note that you do not need to use peoples names if you do not want to.

Group Development

Researchers have studied groups to understand how they develop. Several different models have been suggested, but they all tend to follow a similar progression. Listed below are three of the most common models. Another researcher, Poole and his model will be discussed later because he takes a different perspective towards group development.

Linear Models of Group Development

Tubbs's Theory	Fisher's Model	Tuckman's Model
1. Orientation 2. Conflict 3. Consensus 4. Closure	1. Orientation 2. Conflict 3. Emergence 4. Reinforcement	1. Forming 2. Storming 3. Norming 4. Performing 5. Adjourning

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Tubbs's Small Group Development Theory

Orientation

In this stage, group members get to know each other, they start to talk about the problem, and they examine the limitations and opportunities of the project.

Conflict

Conflict is a necessary part of a group's development. Conflict allows the group to evaluate ideas and it helps the group avoid conformity and groupthink

Consensus

Conflict ends in the consensus stage, when group members compromise, select ideas, and agree on alternatives.

Closure

In this stage, the final result is announced and group members reaffirm their support of the decision.

Fisher's Small Group Development Theory

Orientation

During the orientation phase, Fisher says group members get to know each other and they experience primary tension, the awkward feeling people have before communication rules and expectations are established. Groups should take time to learn about each other and feel comfortable communicating around new people.

Conflict

The conflict phase is marked by secondary tension, or tension surrounding the task at hand. Group members will disagree with each other and debate ideas. Remember that conflict is good, because it helps the group achieve positive results.

Emergence

In the emergence phase, says Fisher, the outcome of the group's task and its social structure become apparent.

Reinforcement

In this stage, group members bolster their final decision by using supportive verbal and nonverbal communication.

Tuckman's Small Group Development Theory

Forming

In the forming stage, group members learn about each other and the task at hand.

Storming

As group members become more comfortable with each other, they will engage each other in arguments and vie for status in the group. These activities mark the storming phase.

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Norming

During the norming stage, group members establish implicit or explicit rules about how they will achieve their goal. They address the types of communication that will or will not help with the task.

Performing

In the performing stage, groups reach a conclusion and implement the conclusion.

Adjourning

As the group project ends, the group disbands in the adjournment phase.

Poole's Small Group Development Theory

Task track

Marshall Scott Poole and his colleagues have found that group development is often more complicated than the three previous models indicate. He has argued that groups jump back and forth between three tracks: task, topic, and relation. The three tracks can be compared to the intertwined strands of a rope. The task track concerns the process by which the group accomplishes its goals.

Topic track

The topic track concerns the specific item the group is discussing at the time.

Relation track

The relation track deals with the interpersonal relationships between the group members. At times, the group may stop its work on the task and work instead on its relationships. When the group reaches consensus on all three tracks at once, it can proceed in a more unified manner as the three previous models illustrate.

Breakpoints

Breakpoints occur when a group switches from one track to another. Shifts in the conversation, adjournment, or postponement are examples of breakpoints.