



COM 3401

Business and Professional Communication

DAVID LEE, PHD

COM 3401 Business and Professional Communication



Welcome to Business and Professional Communication!



Welcome to Business and Professional Communication.

My goal in teaching this course is to help you succeed.

This semester we will focus on resumes, cover letters, interviews, working in groups, and professional presentations.



First a question...

What is communication?

I want to start with a basic, but big question.
There are so many clichés out there, such as:

"It's all about good communication."

"Communication skills are so important."

"I've got great communication skills."

But we often use the word 'communication' taking for granted that it has a straightforward meaning.

Actually, there are a lot of definitions of the word out there, and sometimes two people in a conversation can use the word but have two different, unstated definitions for it.

So, I'll put this question to the class: What is communication? What pops into your head when you think of the word? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

[write words on the board]



What is communication?



Good job. This list shows us that we already have diverse, working definitions for the word 'communication.'

Is it mobile telephones? The internet? TV? Movies? Advertising? Public Relations? What about speeches, or having a conversation?

Communication is these things, and more.

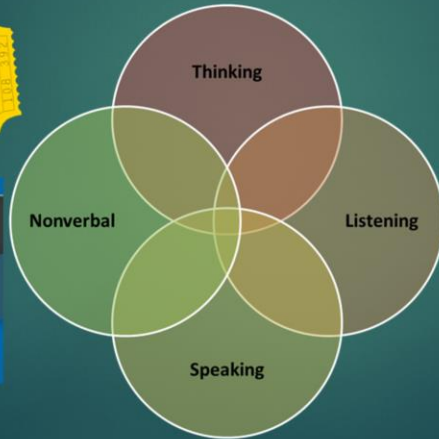
What is the purpose of communication?

Yes, perhaps primarily, communication gives us information. But sometimes people just 'shoot the breeze,' with no particular information to pass along, right?

So communication also means sharing, self-expression, building and maintaining relationships, among other things.



What are communication skills?



What do we mean when we talk about communication skills?

Communication is something we do all the time, right? Communication is something 'pre-linguistic'—that is to say, even dogs and cats, that have no language, can communicate to each other using barks, meows, and movements.

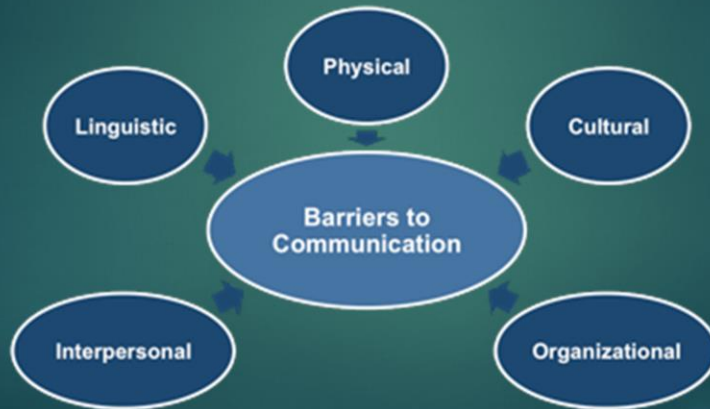
When we talk about communication skills, we are talking about going beyond the basic level of grunting and gesturing to get our point across.

Humans are a linguistic animal that has language. We use speech and writing. But you need to be able to think in order to speak. And if there was no listening, there would be no communication.

Business and Professional Communication goes beyond the everyday human level of communication. It explicitly conforms to social norms such as being polite.



Barriers to communication?



In this course we will talk about things that get in the way of successful communication, represented here.

Interpersonal barriers are things like personal biases and conflict

Linguistic barriers are when two people in conversation speak different languages

Physical barriers are things like geographic distance that inhibit communication

Cultural barriers are when people from different groups have different ways of doing things.

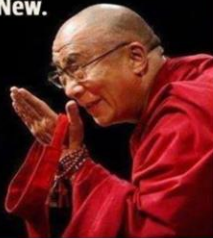
And organizational barriers are the ways that institutions can inhibit communication, such as hierarchy.



Is communication the same as messaging?

**When You Talk, You Are Only
Repeating What You Already Know.
But If You Listen, You May
Learn Something New.**

— Dalai Lama



**Every good
conversation
starts with
good listening.**

In this course, I want to emphasize communication as a back-and-forth process. Not just me speaking and you listening, but us taking turns in a conversational back and forth.



Hierarchy



This means we need to imagine different models of organization.

Yes, I am the teacher. I give you assignments and I assign grades. That part is not negotiable.

In a hierarchical system, the teacher is the leader, and you the students, do what I say. In a heterarchical system, there is still a leader, but the leader plays the role of a servant. For our purposes, I want to lean more towards a hierarchy. But I want to make you aware of different models of organizing.



**WE'RE A TEAM.
WE LEARN FROM
EACH OTHER.**

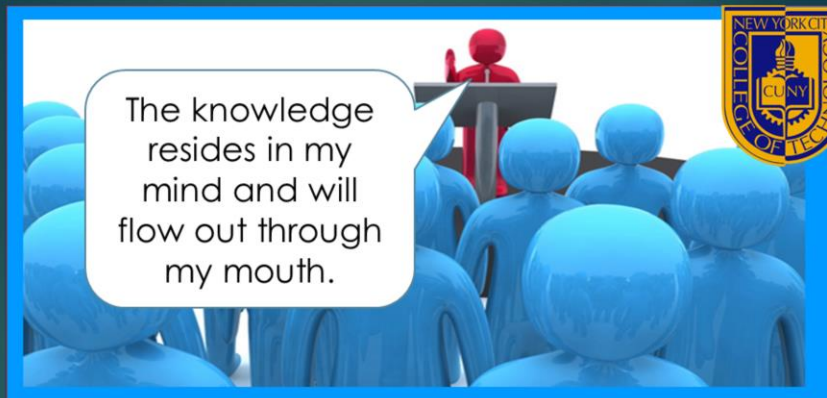


I know I learn a lot from my students, and one of the ways that this class may be different is that I expect you to teach me things. Everyone in this room is totally one of a kind, and you all have experiences I have never had. That's why we will take turns being the teacher, and by the end of the semester, you will be up here, teaching me something intriguing that I didn't know.



Old fashioned communication model

Just to make my point more clearly, to suggest two different ways of looking at the classroom. In a way I am old-fashioned, because I want to reserve the right to take back the reigns of the course if things get out of hand.



Old fashioned communication model

I have worked a wide variety of jobs and I have studied communication from a bunch of different angles. I do believe that I have a lot to give, especially in terms of carefully reading your work and making suggestions to clarify, simplify and strengthen arguments. In terms of organizational structure, I have learned a format for communicating ideas that will benefit you throughout college and in your professional life.

With that said, on a great many other subjects, I am probably not the authority. You have had many unique experiences in jobs, in education and in life that I haven't.

So, while I am the default authority in the class, all the knowledge doesn't reside in my head. Communication skills mean I am going to call on you to teach me about things that you know about.



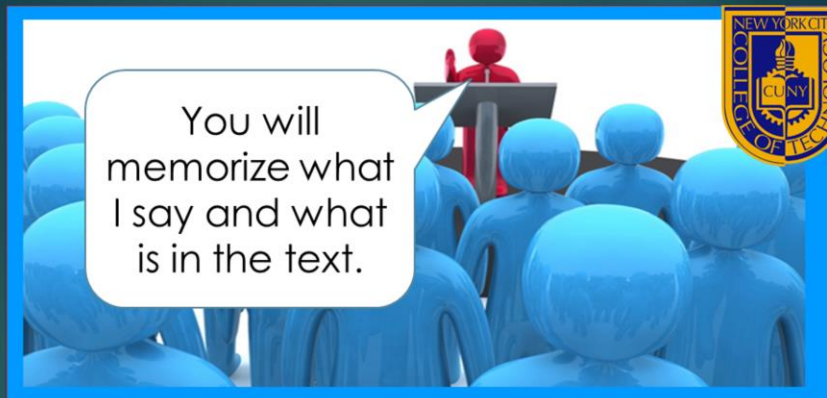
Old fashioned communication model

There are many classes where you are expected to sit passively and receive information. That works well for a lot of subjects, but not as well for communication. Communication is something that gets better with practice. So I want to give you the opportunity to practice speaking and writing in a supportive environment.



Old fashioned communication model

Here is something about the “old fashioned” model that I reject. In order to get better at communicating, I need you to be active and not passive.



Old fashioned communication model

Yes, we have a text in this class. Yes, every week you need to write a response to the chapter. There are quizzes on blackboard for this material. But the final presentations are not entirely about the course material, as such. You have to take an interest in your career and your future and teach me something new that I never knew before.



Old fashioned communication model ?

So are we going off of the old-fashioned communication model? The answer is, in some ways yes, in other ways no. I want you to be more active participants in the class than you are used to, and I want to learn new things from you. But you also need to follow my assignments closely if you want to succeed in this class. And yes, ultimately it is me who assesses your work and gives out the grades.

Monologue



Co-generative model of learning

Lets talk about learning from each other. What I call the co-generative model of learning.

Monologue



**Co-generative model
of learning**

Instead of a monologue (just me talking)

Monologue
Dialogue



**Co-generative model
of learning**

I am looking for a conversational back-and-forth—a dialogue.

This course depends
upon
your active
participation



**Co-generative model
of learning**

So to sum up what I have said...

You need to be an active participant in this class rather than a passive recipient of knowledge.

You need to show
up in class and join in
on the discussion.



Co-generative model of learning

“Showing up”—its so much of what success is about. Be consistent in your behavior. Show up for class. Complete the assignments. No late assignments allowed.



The participation
component is
not negotiable

Co-generative model of learning

What if you have one of the following excuses?

I'm just a shy person.

I'm not used to interacting.

I'm just quiet.

I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing.

Well, I'm going to respectfully deconstruct these excuses, and gently nudge you out into the open.



But that's not all...

**Co-generative model
of learning**

I want you to share
your own
life experiences



Co-generative model of learning

What does it mean to be an active participant?

I want you to speak during class, answer questions, etc. In a sense we are all experts on the subject of our own lives and experiences. We have all accomplished things. We have all done work, even if its chores around the house. We know what we like and dislike about organizations and jobs, etc. This is a class that invites you to share specifically about your own memories and experiences.

Bring it along...
Your culture
Your identity
Your values



Co-generative model of learning

I love learning about new professions. Amazing cultures. The amazing diversity here at City Tech. In some classes you may be expected to “check your identity at the door” and devote yourself to the course materials. This is a class that celebrates difference and diversity. You never have to sacrifice your culture and identity to become a more professional communicator.

Bring it along...
Your respect
Your sensitivity



Co-generative model of learning

I want you to join me in celebrating diversity. Therefore we need to be extra aware and extra sensitive in this class. Remember we are all in the same boat here. We are trying to develop our communication skills. Therefore don't be quick to judge people because you never know what they are dealing with.

Put to the side
Intolerance,
prejudice



**Co-generative model
of learning**

Part of becoming a better communicator means respecting the attitudes and cultures of those different than our own. In this class we celebrate living in a democratic society that expects the right to free speech.



No doubt you have questions, and questions will surely arise over the course of the semester. Not only are questions encouraged, they are mandated! Always ask questions because every question is an opening for communication.

