Unit - 4
INTERVIEW SKILLS

An interview is a procedure designed to obtain information from a person through oral responses to oral inquiries. An interview is a face-to-face conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, where the interviewer seeks replies from the interviewee for choosing a potential <u>human resource</u>.

Definition:

According to Gary Dessler, "Interview is a selection process designed to predict future job performance based on applicants' oral responses to oral inquiries."

According to Scott and others, "an interview is a purposeful exchange of ideas, the answering of questions and communication between two or more persons". Bingham and others define an interview as a 'conversation with a purpose".

Importance of interview:

Interview serves the following purposes: -
- Interview helps in selecting the candidate most suitable for the job.
- It provides the candidate information about the organisation and the job for which he applied.
- Interview helps in knowing details about the candidate's personality.
- It is a method of direct contact between the employer and the candidate. Employers can observe physical characteristics of the candidates. It helps managers to check authenticity of details in the application form.
- It helps the interviewer and the interviewee know each other in detail. Complete information about the company can be given to the candidate and negotiations on salary and other terms can be made.

Characteristics of an interview:
- Interviews always have a purpose.
- It has two parties - interviewer and the interviewee
- Every interview has a predefined structure or pattern.
- Every interview has an open communication environment for better end results.
- It is face to face communication.
- It has oral responses to oral enquiries.

Purposes of interview

Interviews are conducted for various purposes. Some are given below-
- For employment: Generally, interviews are done for job purposes.
- For Orientation: Interviews are also conducted to introduce a new worker or entrants to the company or the institute.
- For Counselling: If a problem persists then the purpose of the interview is counselling to solve the problem.
- For Appraisal: One of the purposes of the interview is to give appraisal to someone.
- For making Complaints:
- For making Modification:

- Exit: If someone wants to leave a job or an institute then exit interview help him to state his reason for exiting.
- Information collection: One of the main purposes of an interview is to collect information about someone.

Types of Interview
There are several types of the interview;
- **Unstructured (Nondirective) Interview:** In unstructured interviews, there is generally no set format to follow hence the interview can take various directions. In this interview, follow-up questions, Probing, open-ended questions are asked. It involves a procedure where different questions may be asked to different applicants.
- **Structured (Directive) Interview:** In structured interviews, the interviewer asked pre-decided questions and may even rate and score possible answers for appropriateness. Generally, a series of job-related questions are asked consistently from each applicant for a particular job is known as a structured interview. A structured interview typically contains four types of questions.
  - ➢ Situational questions:
  - ➢ Job knowledge questions:
  - ➢ Job-sample simulation questions:
  - ➢ Worker requirements questions:
- **Situational Interview:** In a situational interview, you ask the candidate what his or her behaviour would be in a given situation. Candidates are interviewed about what actions they would take in various job-related situations.
- **Behavioural Interview:** In a behavioural interview, applicants are asked to describe how they reacted to actual situations in the past. Candidates are asked what actions they have taken in prior job situations similar to situations they may encounter on the job.
- **Job-related Interview:** In a job-related interview, the interviewer asks applicants questions about past experiences. It is a series of job-related questions that focus on relevant past jobs.
- **Stress Interview:** In a stress interview, the interviewer makes the applicant uncomfortable with rude questions. The aim is to spot sensitive applicants and those with low or high stress tolerance. Stress interviews may help to reject hypersensitive applicants who might overreact to mild criticism with anger and abuse. It intentionally creates anxiety to determine how an applicant will react to stress on the job.
- **Panel Interview (Board Interview):** A panel interview, also known as a board interview, is an interview conducted by a team of interviewers, who interview each candidate and then combine their ratings into a final score. Each panel member then rates each interviewee on such dimensions as work history, motivation, creative thinking, and presentation.
- **One-On-One Interview:** In a one-on-one interview, one interviewer meets one candidate. In a typical employment interview, the applicant meets one-on-one with an interviewer.
- **Mass Interview (Group Interview):** Many interviewees are grouped and a question is thrown to discuss. It is a procedure for the discovery of leadership. Several job applicants are placed in a leaderless discussion, and interviewers sit in the background to observe and evaluate the performance of the candidates.

Preparation for interview:

Giving an interview needs a lot of preparation. Preparation is started before an interview. We should be well organised and proactive to clear an interview.

1. **Before the interview**
   - **Company information:** The most important step is to read and research the company from all the sources like company website, blog, and social media pages to assess its products, services, and client-base. Review the organisation's background, mission statement, revenue, strength, offices, etc.
   - **About the interviewer:** If you know the interviewer's name already, research about him/her. It may help you to understand the environment of an interview.
   - **Evaluate job description:** Sincerely go through the job description so that you are aware of the expectations the company has for the position.
   - **Fit in skills and qualities:** While you analyse the job description, outline the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the post. It will help you to prepare questions related to your job profile.
   - **Mock interview:** For preparing questions, create mock interviews and ask your friend or family member to play the role of an interviewer. Practice answering all the questions on the list.
   - **Organise documents:** Keep two copies of all the important documents such as your resume, cover letter, degrees, mark sheets, identity proofs, photographs, etc., ready. Organise all the documents neatly in a folder.
   - **Check your social presence:** In the current environment internet recruiters may check your social status; hence update your status.
   - **Interview dress:** Choose a neat and wrinkle-free formal outfit for the interview. If you are not sure about the colour, wear black formal trousers and a crisp shirt (preferably in white, blue, pastel etc.) a pair of black formal shoes, clean socks, and a black belt.
   - **Check directions:** Distance and directions should be checked so that you can plan accordingly.
   - **Be stress free:** Don't look tired, fussy, unsystematic and puzzled. Eat, sleep and rest. Don't hurry, be calm and cool.
   - **Inform your references:** Inform your references that they might receive a call from the company you interviewed for. Speak to them about the position and emphasise the points that you would like to be recommended for.

2. **During the interview**
   - **Timing:** Reach 20-25 minutes prior to the interview time. It will give you time to relax and prepare.
   - **Interview body language:** While waiting, remember to sit properly, maintain a good body posture, be polite to the guards, receptionists, and other candidates. Be natural. In the interview room, sit and answer questions confidently. Be firm, yet polite. In case you do not know an answer, be honest about it and pass on to the question.
   - **Questions for interviewer:** If the interviewer asks - 'Do you have any questions for me?'. Ask smart questions regarding work-culture, company profile or job profile etc.

- **Ending the interview:** At the end of the interview, thank and greet your interviewer, shake hands if possible.

3. **After the interview**
   - **Analyse the interview:** It is one of the most important exercises to do after an interview. Sit down for a few minutes and write down the questions that you were asked during the interview. Review your answer and think how you can make your answers better. This will help you prepare better for future interviews.
   - **Inform your references:** Inform your references about the interview.
   - **Follow up:** If you do not hear from the interviewer within the expected number of days, do not hesitate to drop an email and ask for an update.

Some don'ts of interview preparation
- Do not arrive late for the interview.
- Do not arrive for the interview without a copy of the resume.
- Do not speak loudly on the phone while waiting for your turn.
- Do not laze around or hunch while sitting in the waiting area.
- Do not ask the interviewer any personal questions.
- Do not use bad words about your previous or current company/employer in your social media posts.

Top skills to be mentioned in an interview (with examples)
- Communication
- Business acumen
- Collaboration or teamwork
- Adaptability
- Problem solving
- Positivity
- Organisation
- Leadership
- Negotiation
- Confidence
- Perseverance
- Self-motivated
- Ability to work under pressure
- IT skills

Importance of non-verbal aspects:

In the interview process, the panel of experts tries to derive a lot of information about you. You have covered many things in your resume or CV. You have to really prove that it is your resume. Sometimes a resume is prepared by a professional and it speaks in superlative terms about the candidate which may not be true. So, validation and verification of the resume is also done during the interview process.

When you face the interview, nonverbal aspects convey a lot of information about you. Sometimes it may be an unintentional natural phenomenon but, if you are conscious about it, you can manage the aspects and use them in your favour. Your entry, your greeting style, your sitting posture, facial expressions during communication, your eyes, hands, feet and body movement, everything is noticed by the interviewers. Do not change the chair or body position frequently and unnecessarily.

Be conscious and carefully control your posture during the interview. Good posture may create positive effects and bad posture may create negative effects. Sit properly and use the hands during explanation if necessary. Playing with a tie or other part of the clothes, playing with hair, dramatic gestures, resting your hands-on other chair, etc. create a bad impression about yourself. While leaving, collect your files, papers and other accessories, thank the panel members, rearrange your chair, leave the place with a smiling face at normal pace, without making noise with your shoes. During the interview, your face should be free of tension.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Group discussion may refer to a communicative situation that allows its participants to express views and opinions to other participants. It is a systematic oral exchange of information, views, and opinions about a topic, issue, problem, or situation among members of a group who share certain common objectives.

Group discussion (Group Discussion) is basically an interactive oral process. Here, the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings takes place through oral communication. Each member of the group listens to other members as well as gives his or her views orally. He or she has to use clear language, persuasive style, and has to use voice and gesture effectively. This means that participants need to be proficient in oral communication in order to take effective part in a group discussion.

Group Discussion is a group process, i.e., it involves both person-to-person as well as person-to-group interactions. Every group member has to develop goal-oriented or group-oriented interaction. Effective interactions in discussion should lead to unification between the activities of individuals as a work team, and towards the achievement of common group goals. A participant should be concerned with the ego needs of other participants, unity of the group, and the overall objectives of the discussion.

Group Discussion is systematic. Each participant knows the topic in advance and has the opportunity to use his/her experience and knowledge to understand and analyse the topic. The exchange of ideas in Group Discussion takes place in a systematic and structured way. The

participants are seated face-to-face and each participant gets an opportunity to express his/her views and comment on the views expressed by other members of the group. A formal speech making or group procedure may follow in order to ensure optimal participation.

Group Discussion is a purposeful goal-oriented activity. The goals or objectives of a discussion are generally decided before the discussion takes place. This means that each participant is usually aware of the purpose or purposes of the discussion in advance. A Group Discussion may help achieve group goals as well as individual needs. Group goals are common and shared by each participant whereas individual needs may be the personal goals of the members of the group.

Here we provide guidelines that would help one to speak effectively in a Group Discussion.

- Seize the first opportunity to speak if you have a good understanding of the topic of discussion.
- Listen patiently to others and then react to their viewpoints.
- Speak clearly and audibly so that everyone hears and understands.
- Be concise in your expressions. Do not repeat ideas just for the sake of speaking something.
- Ask for clarification, if necessary.
- Facilitate contribution from others.
- Use statistics and examples to justify a view point.
- Avoid talking to only one or two persons in the group.
- Assume an impersonal tone. Treat all members as fellow participants; none in the group is either a friend or a foe.
- Be assertive without being aggressive; be humble without being submissive.
- Raise your voice (just enough to be heard) and speak out a strong point in case of a fishmarket-like situation in a Group Discussion.

Objectives of group discussion:

In any kind of Group Discussion, the aim is to judge the participants based on personality, knowledge, communicative ability to present the knowledge and leadership skills. Today team players are considered more important than individual contributors. Hence the potential to be a leader is evaluated and also ability to work in a team is tested.

The evaluators generally assess the oral competence of a candidate in terms of team listening, appropriate language, clarity of expression, positive speech attitudes and adjustments, clear articulation, and effective non-verbal communication.

Personality:

Even before one starts communicating, an impression is created by the appearance, the body language, eye-contact, mannerisms used etc. Body language, a non-verbal communication skill, gives important cues to personality assessment. It includes the posture of a person, the eye-contact and overall manner in which one moves and acts. In the entire participation in the GD, the body language has an important role in the impact created.

Content:

Content is a combination of knowledge and ability to create coherent, logical arguments on the basis of that knowledge. Also, a balanced response is what is expected and not an emotional response. In a group discussion, greater knowledge of the subject, more confidence and enthusiasm would be the participation. Participants need to have a fair amount of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. The discussion of the subject must be relevant, rational, convincing and appealing to the listeners.

Communication Skills:

First and foremost, the feature of communication skills is that it is a two-way process. Hence the communicator has to keep in mind the listeners and their expectations. The participants need to observe the group dynamics. Since Group Discussion tests one's behaviour as well as one's influence on the group, formal language and mutual respect are obvious requirements. One may not take strong views in the beginning itself but wait and analyse the pros and cons of any situation. Hence the participants in a group discussion must possess not only subject knowledge but also the ability to present that knowledge in an effective way. One should avoid ornamental language.

- Listening skills
- Appropriateness of language
- Clarity of expression
- Positive speech attitude
- Clear articulation
- Non-verbal cues

Leadership Skills:

The success of any group depends to a large extent upon the leader. One of the common misconceptions about leadership is that the leader is the one who controls the group. There are different approaches to the concept of leadership. By studying the personality traits of great leaders or actual dimensions of behaviour to identify leadership one can learn to cultivate essential traits of leaders. In a Group Discussion, a participant with more knowledge, one who is confident, one who can find some solution to the problem and display initiative and responsibility will be identified as the leader.

A candidate's success in a Group Discussion test will depend not only on his/her subject knowledge and oral skills but also on his/her ability to provide leadership to the group.

Adaptability, analysis, assertiveness, composure, self-confidence, decision making, discretion, initiative, objectivity, patience, and persuasiveness are some of the leadership skills that are useful in proving oneself as a natural leader in a Group Discussion. The leader in a group discussion should be able to manage the group despite differences of opinion and steer the discussion to a logical conclusion within the fixed time limit.

- Initiative
- Analysis
- Assertiveness
- Self confidence
- Objectivity (quality of being impartial, rational, and factual)
- Patience and Composure
- Persuasiveness
- Motivation

Team behaviour:

Your group behaviour is reflected in your ability to interact with the other members of the group. You must be mature enough to not lose your temper even if you are proved wrong. You must be patient and balanced. Your success in a Group Discussion depends on how well you play the role of initiator, information seeker, information giver, procedure facilitator, opinion seeker, opinion giver, clarifier, summarizer, social-supporter, tension reliever, compromiser, attacker, humourist and dominator. The selection panel notes the differences in the amount of participation of the members. They observe the silent spectators, the ever dominating but not contributing much, member who participates actively exhibiting his knowledge and the moderate ones. Your ability lies in analysing the problem well and making others endorse your view. Finally, while appreciating others point of view, you should effectively present yours without contradicting other's opinions. Your ability in convincing the team is your success.

- Adaptability
- Positive Attitude
- Cooperation
- Coordination

Methods/Strategies:

Getting the Group Discussion Started: In the absence of a designated leader to initiate the proceedings of the discussion, the group is likely to waste time in cross talks, low-key conversations, cross-consultations, asides, and so on. The confusion may last until someone in the group takes an assertive position and restores the chaos into order. It could be you.

In order to get the Group Discussion started, the assertive, natural leader will have to remind the group of its goal and request them to start the discussion without wasting time. A few examples of the opening lines are given below:

- Well friends, may I request your kind attention? I am sure all of us are keen to begin the Group Discussion and complete it within the allotted time. Let me remind you that we have only thirty minutes to complete the task. So, let us get started.
- My dear friends, may I have your attention please? As you all know, we have to complete the discussion in 45 minutes and we have already used up five minutes. I think we should start the discussion now.
- Hello everybody. I am sorry to interrupt but I have something very important to say. We are here to discuss the topic — "Reduction of IIM fees is a retrograde step"—and the time given to us is just 30 minutes. Let us begin, shall we?
- Hello friends! May I have your kind attention for a few seconds, please? I am sure you will agree that we are here to exchange our views on the reservation policy of the government and we have to complete the discussion within 35 minutes. As we have already used up more than five minutes, we should begin the discussion now. Shall we start?

Contributing Systematically: The success of a group discussion depends on systematic contribution by each member of the group. In order to make systematic contributions to the group deliberations, all the group members should understand the process of reflective thinking. They should be able to identify the stage of the discussion and contribute accordingly.

Creating a Friendly Cooperative Atmosphere: Creating an atmosphere conducive to positive discussion is the responsibility of each member of the group. A friendly, cooperative atmosphere encourages effective and positive deliberations that lead to successful conclusions. Although a Group Discussion is a serious and formal occasion, there is no need to make it too serious and boring.

Moving the Discussion Along: A leader should ensure that the Group Discussion moves along the right direction so that it is able to complete the task within the fixed time limit. He/she should make sure that every member of the group gets some time to present his/her views and no one member monopolises the discussion. No one should be allowed to do all the talking because the purpose of a Group Discussion is to exchange views, and not to hear just one person. If someone tries to take too much time, the leader may politely thank the aggressive member but firmly ask him/ her to give the next person a chance to speak.

Promoting Optimal Participation: As the success of a Group Discussion largely depends on the involvement of each member of the group, the leader should promote optimal participation. As every member has a resource potential that can be used to make the discussion successful, the leader should encourage non-participants to speak. With patience, restraint, and proper motivation, he/she can inspire even the shy and reluctant members to give their views on the given subject. It will not only reflect his/her leadership qualities but also lead the discussion to a successful conclusion.

Handling Conflict: One important aspect of participating in any group discussion is dealing with conflict. As a group always tends to be heterogeneous, conflict is natural in any group activity and may sometimes be desirable for the success of a group process. Expect differences

of opinions during a Group Discussion but do not let these conflicting opinions go against the basic purpose of a Group Discussion. Do not be a silent spectator when two or more people are in conflict. Although conflict resolution is a complex art, a leader needs to remember just a few simple tips in order to handle conflict during a Group Discussion.

Effecting Closure In the absence of a designated leader to close the discussion formally, the group is likely to continue until the examiner announces that the time is over. Every member has to see that the Group Discussion ends with positive conclusions within the given time limit. In order to complete the Group Discussion within the allotted time, the leader has to remind the group of its goal and request them to reach a group consensus. He/she should do the following himself/herself or get them done by other group members in order to develop group consensus:

- Summarise the progress made by the group.
- Put forward the common points of agreement.
- Indicate the differences that need to be resolved.
- Review decisions/suggestions/views already decided.

The following is a list of tips for handling a Group Discussion successfully.

- Be thorough with current issues.
- Always enter the room with a piece of paper and a pen.
- Listen to the topic carefully.
- Jot down as many ideas as possible in the first few minutes.
- Try to dissect the topic and explore the underlying causes or consequences.
- Organise the ideas before speaking.
- Speaking first is a high-risk, high-return strategy. Hence, speak first only if there is something sensible and substantial to say.
- Try to contribute meaningfully and significantly every time you speak. Do not speak just for the sake of saying something.
- Identify supporters and opponents and allow the supporters to augment your ideas.
- Keep track of time and share time fairly.
- Have an open mind.

SEMINARS, CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATION SKILLS

Presentations are great opportunities to network and gain valuable feedback. To benefit fully from presentations at conferences and seminars, you must plan your trip if the event is out of town, prepare and rehearse your presentation, and track feedback from your audience. You can

then reflect on the design and/or interpretation of the project based on the feedback and informal responses noted during networking.

There are many benefits of attending conferences, including:

1. The opportunity to communicate your research to a larger audience.

2. The feedback from local and international students and faculty that can help improve your work.

3. The expansion of your academic network, such as interacting with researchers that you have cited.

4. The improvement of your CV through listing the presentation, publications in conference proceedings, and journal articles resulting from the presentation.

Stages of a presentation:

Conference or seminar presentations are compact speeches that require the presenters to deliver ideas within a fixed time period. Try the suggestions below to optimise this time.

Planning the presentation:

- Defining the Purpose
- Analysing the Audience
- Analysing the Occasion
- Choosing a Suitable Title

Preparing the Presentation:

- Developing the Central Idea
- Gathering Supporting Material
- Planning Visual Aids

Using appropriate visual aids will increase the effectiveness of presentations. Good visuals may serve the following purposes.

1. They Serve as Speech Notes: Visual aids may be used as notes to emphasise and clarify the main points of the presentation. Each visual aid may contain a main idea. Effective titles may be used to convey the main message of the visual aid.
2. They Give Confidence: Using good visuals might increase the presenter's self-confidence because they refresh his/her memory, establish his/her credibility, and show that he/she has planned, is well prepared, and is professional.
3. They Help Focus on the Theme of the Presentation: Visuals help the presenter to focus on the theme of the presentation and concentrate on the objectives of his/her presentation. He/she may use effective visuals to highlight the central idea of his/her presentation.
4. They Increase Audience Interest: Interesting and relevant visual aids make the audience more interested in what is being said. They may force even a hostile and demotivated audience to pay attention.
5. They Give Clarity and Precision: Visuals make the presentation easy to understand and remember.

Organising the Presentation:

- Introduction
- Get Audience Attention:
    A. Introduce the Subject
    B. Give the Audience a Reason to Listen.
    C. Establish the Credibility
    D. Preview the Main Ideas
- Body:

    As the body of the presentation is structured, the speaker should choose the sequence he/she will follow from among any of the following organisational patterns:

    A. Sequential
    B. General to specific
    C. Specific to general
    D. More important to less important
    E. Less important to more important
    F. Categorical
    G. Problem and solution
    H. Contrast and comparison
- Conclusion:

    The conclusion of your presentation should accomplish the following five specific objectives:

    A. Summarise the presentation
    B. Re-emphasise the central idea

C. Focus on a goal
D. Motivate the audience to respond
E. Provide closure

Checklist for Making a Presentation

- Start With Confidence: A startling statement/quotation/anecdote/question/joke are good options for starting a presentation. The speaker must make sure that the technique used to start the presentation helps emphasise or support his/her point. It must match his/her message. Examples from personal and professional life can be used to stress points. The speaker must be willing to give of himself/herself by sharing his/her experiences and insights with the audience. It is useful to practise the opening of one's speech and plan exactly how it should be said.
- Be Organised: Presentations should be organised properly with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should provide an overview of the main points of the presentation. The speaker should make the purpose of the presentation clear, use transitions and signposts to clarify its organisation, and incorporate credible and interesting supporting material.
- Stay Relaxed: Advance planning and preparation help in staying relaxed and tension-free during the presentation. Focussing on the message rather than the audience also helps in staying calm and confident.
- Pay Attention to Body Language: Effective gestures, body movements, and walking patterns make an impression on the audience. The speaker should, at all times, maintain eye contact with the audience. These aspects should be borne in mind while rehearsing the presentation.
- Use Appropriate Visual Aids: Visuals should be chosen with a view to creating maximum effect. They should focus on the main points of the presentation and help in retaining audience attention.
- Pay Attention to all Details: The speaker should pay attention to even the smallest details, making sure to organise all his/her papers, speaking notes, handouts, and visual aids, before starting the presentation.
- Close in a Memorable Way: The presentation should be concluded in a memorable way, with a summary of the keypoints. The audience should leave with a positive impression of the speaker and his/her presentation.

ARGUMENTATION SKILLS

According to Damer, here's the formal definition of an argument:

"An argument is constituted by two or more explicit (clear- without confusion) and/or implicit (hidden or suggested) claims, one or more of which supports or provides evidence for the truth or merit of another claim, the conclusion."

So how do you craft a good argument? Damer shares the five principles for developing a good argument:

1. Structure 2. Relevance 3. Acceptability 4. Sufficiency 5. Rebuttal

Let's look at each of these principles in more detail: -

1. Structure

A good argument must meet the fundamental structural requirements of a well-formed argument.

"Such an argument does not use reasons that contradict each other, that contradict the conclusion, or that explicitly or implicitly assumes the truth of the conclusion."

To evaluate any argument for whether it violates the principle of Structure, ask the following questions:

● Does the communication include at least one reason to support the conclusion as being true? If it doesn't, then it's not an argument — it's merely an opinion. An unsupported conclusion is an opinion; a conclusion supported by reasons is an argument.

● Could any of the key premises be interpreted as making the same claim as the conclusion? If so, then it's a "circular argument" — there's no independent reason given to support the conclusion. "Since A, therefore A." No one is likely to use the exact same words in both the premise and the conclusion, so you need to ask yourself if a premise can be interpreted as making the same claim as the conclusion. "Joe is nuts," Gary says. "Why do you say that?" I ask. "Because he's so crazy," Gary replies. Since A, therefore A.

● Do any of the premises contradict another premise, or does the conclusion contradict any of the premises?

2. Relevance

The reasons that a communicator provides as part of his or her argument must be relevant for the truth or merit of the conclusion. What makes a premise relevant?

"A premise is relevant if its acceptance provides some reason to believe, counts in favour of, or has some bearing on the truth or merit of the conclusion. A premise is irrelevant if its acceptance has no bearing on, provides no evidence for, or has no connection to the truth or the merit of the conclusion."

To assess whether an argument violates the principle of Relevance, ask these two questions:

● If the premise were true, does it make you more likely to believe that the conclusion is true? If yes, the premise is probably relevant. If no, then the premise is probably not relevant.

● Even if the premise were true, should it be a consideration for accepting the truth of the conclusion? If no, then the premise is probably not relevant. "Jerry is over 6 ft. tall. So he must be good at basketball." "Avatar is an artistic masterpiece. After all, it was the highest grossing film of the year."

3. Acceptability

The reasons that a communicator provides in his or her argument should be likely to be accepted by a mature, rational adult. As Damer writes, a premise should be acceptable to a mature, rational adult if it meets the following standards of premise acceptability:

- "A claim that is a matter of undisputed common knowledge."
- "A claim that is confirmed by one's own personal experience or observation."
- An "uncontroverted eyewitness testimony," or an "uncontroverted claim from a relevant authority."
- "A relatively minor claim that seems to be a reasonable assumption in the context of the argument." By contrast, a premise should be rejected by a mature, rational adult if it meets the following conditions of premise unacceptability:
- "A claim that contradicts credible evidence, a well-established claim, or a legitimate authority."
- "A claim that is inconsistent with one's own experiences or observations."
- "A claim that is based on another unstated but highly questionable assumption."

An argument meets the acceptability principle when each of its premises conforms to at least one of the standards of acceptability and none of its premises conforms to the conditions of unacceptability.

To assess whether an argument violates the principle of Acceptability, ask the following questions:

- Is the premise provided one that a mature, rational adult would likely accept?
- What evidence is provided as part of the claim, and does it conform to the standards of acceptability or the conditions of unacceptability?
- Is the premise based on an unstated assumption that a mature, rational adult is not willing to accept?

4. Sufficiency

A communicator making an argument should provide reasons that are sufficient to justify the acceptance of his or her conclusion.

"There must be a sufficient number of relevant and acceptable premises of the appropriate kind and weight in order for an argument to be good enough for us to accept its conclusion."

This principle is one of the most difficult to apply, because it's a judgement call. There are no black-and-white guidelines for what constitutes a "sufficient" number and weight of reasons to accept a conclusion. Often, it's a disagreement about the weight or sufficiency of the premises in an argument that prevents two intelligent and well-meaning people from reaching the same conclusion based on the same available evidence.

To evaluate whether an argument violates the principle of Sufficiency, ask the following questions:

- Are the reasons provided enough to drive to the arguer's conclusion? If not, the argument violates the sufficiency principle.
- Is the premise based on insufficient evidence or faulty causal analysis? Some premises provide evidence that is based on too small a sample or unrepresentative data. Or the evidence is based on the personal experience of the arguer, or of a small set of acquaintances that the arguer knows. The premise may be based on faulty causal analysis — assuming A caused B, even though the two events were unrelated.
- Is some key or crucial evidence missing that must be provided in order to accept the argument?

5. Rebuttal:

A good argument includes an effective rebuttal to all anticipated serious criticisms of the argument.

"An argument cannot be a good one if it does not anticipate and effectively rebut or blunt the force of the most serious criticisms against it and the position that it supports... A good arguer should be constantly mindful of the fact that an argument is not finished until one has 'finished off' the criticisms and counter arguments."

There are multiple ways that an argument can violate the Rebuttal principle. Arguers often use diversionary tactics instead of making effective rebuttals.

"For example, arguments that misrepresent the criticism, bring up trivial objections as a side issue, or resort to humour or ridicule are using devices that clearly fail to make effective responses. The same can be said of those arguments that ignore or deny the counterevidence against the position defended. Finally, some arguers try to avoid responding to a criticism by attacking the critic instead of the criticism."

To assess whether an argument fails to meet the Rebuttal principle, ask the following questions:

- Does the argument provided address the strongest counter arguments effectively?
- Does the arguer anticipate and address serious weaknesses in the argument?
- Does the argument show why alternative positions are flawed?

Making your own argument stronger

We can use the five principles above to evaluate arguments that others present to us. But how do we strengthen our own arguments when we craft them?

Using each principle, Damer provides some suggestions for how to improve our arguments.

- Structure: Explicitly call out your conclusion and the supporting reasons, so that they are easy to recognize and follow. Ensure that your premises (1) do not contradict each other or the conclusion, and (2) do not assume the truth of the conclusion. Make explicit any key assumptions that you're using.
- Relevance: Ensure that all materials you're presenting as part of your argument are relevant. Cut out anything that's not relevant. Don't weaken your argument by including irrelevant premises.
- Acceptability: Whenever possible, substitute less controversial claims for more controversial ones. Soften, if possible, any absolute claims to make them more acceptable. (e.g., "most politicians" instead of "all politicians") Don't use highly questionable evidence or assumptions.
- Sufficiency: Continue adding relevant premises if they contribute to the number and weight of the reasons that drive to your conclusion. Put yourself in your audience's place, and ask if the reasons are sufficient to accept your conclusion. If an important premise is controversial, support it with sub-premises and additional evidence.
- Rebuttal: Be as exhaustive as necessary in your rebuttal. Some arguments may need to rebut a single criticism, but more controversial or divisive issues may require multiple rebuttals. Declare up front what the weakest parts of your argument are and proactively address them to blunt the force of your opponent's counterarguments.

Note: - Arguments must conform to a well-formed structure: first, they must contain reasons (or else they're merely opinions); and second, they must contain reasons that don't contradict each other or assume the truth of the conclusion. The reasons provided in an argument must be relevant to the truth or merit of the conclusion. Furthermore, these reasons should be acceptable to a mature, rational adult. The reasons should be sufficient in number and weight to drive to the argument's conclusion. And finally, the argument should anticipate and address any serious criticisms proactively, to rebut the criticisms and blunt the force of any counterattacks.

COHESION, COHERENCE, AND EMPHASIS

Writing a well-written passage requires more than pasting together well-written individual sentences. A good passage also requires an overall sense of organisation and purpose; each

sentence must fit within this organisational framework. Writers can achieve this organisation with three elements: cohesion, coherence, and emphasis.

- Cohesion is the sense of connection and flow as one sentence leads into the next.
- Coherence is the sense of the overall topic of the passage.
- Emphasis is the sense of what is most important among the various elements of each sentence.

Sentences can be weak in any of these elements if they become too long. Long sentences tend to wander on and on, obscuring the overall organisation of the passage. Additionally, long sentences are prone to grammatical errors.

Writers **achieve cohesion** by organising old and new information:

- Place old information at the beginning of sentences (topic position).
- Old information is already known to the reader - whether it is common knowledge or was just presented in the previous sentence.
- Information in the topic position should announce what the sentence will discuss.
- Placing old information in the topic position provides mental anchors for the reader to understand the new information that will follow.
- Place new information at the end of sentences (stress position).
- The end of a sentence is naturally stressed.
- Readers will perceive information in this stress position as more important than the rest of the information in the sentence.

Therefore, effective stress is achieved by:

- Moving new and important information to the end of a sentence.
- Moving unimportant clauses or phrases away from the end of a sentence.
- Break up long sentences to make this organisation more clear.

Writers **achieve coherence** by organising the passage to present the overall message:

- Place the same or similar information in the topic position across sentences.
- Start sentences with references to earlier sentences.
- Use orienteers and transitional devices such as:
    1. First, second, third
    2. Therefore
    3. For example
    4. Similarly

Writers **achieve appropriate emphasis** through structure:

- Use stress positions effectively.
- The end of a sentence is stressed.

- The first and last sentence of a paragraph are stressed.
- Repeat key words and phrases.
- Use coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, or relative pronouns to indicate relationships among clauses.

Note: - Writers often fail to achieve cohesion, coherence, and appropriate emphasis because they construct long, sprawling sentences. Such sentences often introduce common grammatical errors.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas. Critical thinking has been the subject of much debate and thought since the time of early Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates and has continued to be a subject of discussion into the modern age, for example the ability to recognise fake news.

Critical thinking might be described as the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking.

In essence, critical thinking requires you to use your ability to reason. It is about being an active learner rather than a passive recipient of information. Critical thinkers rigorously question ideas and assumptions rather than accepting them at face value. They will always seek to determine whether the ideas, arguments and findings represent the entire picture and are open to finding that they do not.

Critical thinkers will identify, analyse and solve problems systematically rather than by intuition or instinct.

Someone with critical thinking skills can:

- Understand the links between ideas.
- Determine the importance and relevance of arguments and ideas.
- Recognise, build and appraise arguments.
- Identify inconsistencies and errors in reasoning.
- Approach problems in a consistent and systematic way.
- Reflect on the justification of their own assumptions, beliefs and values.

Note: - Critical thinking is thinking about things in certain ways so as to arrive at the best possible solution in the circumstances that the thinker is aware of. In more everyday language, it is a way of thinking about whatever is presently occupying your mind so that you come to the best possible conclusion.

NUANCES: NARRATION, EXPOSITION AND DESCRIPTION

1. **Narration** is storytelling. It involves relating a series of events, usually in a chronological order. Thus, a simple narrative may begin with "Once upon a time . . . " and end with "And they lived happily ever after." The events narrated may be fictional (a made-up story) or nonfictional (the events really occurred). However, we usually reserve the title "story" for fiction. If the events actually happened, we give the writing another name such as biography, autobiography, history, after action report, or newspaper report.
2. **Description** tells what things are like according to the five senses. A descriptive essay, or a descriptive passage in a story, tells how things look, sound, feel, taste, and smell. Nouns and adjectives can show what a person, place, or thing are like in their material aspects. But description often tries to do more than to enable readers to visualise characters, settings, and actions. It may also try to evoke a mood or atmosphere, and this is aided by the use of simile and metaphor.
3. **Exposition** is the kind of writing that is used to inform. The prefix "Ex-" comes from Greek through Latin and means "out, or away from." The root of the word comes from the Latin word ponere which means "to place." So, translated literally, exposition means "to place out," and, of course, the thing that is placed out for us to see and understand is information. This mode of writing has several subtypes, the most common being process analysis, definition, classification and division, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. These are distinguished by purpose, as the names indicate, but also by structure or organisation. For example, an experienced writer understands that an essay that compares and contrasts, or that describes a problem and presents a solution, each has its own conventional pattern of organisation and that once readers recognize the intended mode, they also expect the writer to follow the organisational conventions associated with it.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY

Research has demonstrated the role of various factors in the development of communicative competence in human beings. This leads one to question the reason a human being feels the need to communicate in a competent manner. Hence, in order to understand the effect of different factors on the development of communicative competence, it is necessary to understand the reasons that motivate a human being to become a competent communicator.

Over the last couple of decades, the increasing globalisation of trade has fundamentally changed the requirements for participation on the international arena. With new markets opening up, communication across lingua-cultural boundaries become more common, which in turn

necessitates a different level of communicative competence among people of all trades. As English is the most wide-spread language of the world (Graddol 2006) and has historically dominated in the financially strong countries of the west, it has become a lingua franca in business communication.

Business communication is how you communicate in your line of work. It is also a matter of human relationships. Good business communication is a must to meet the demands of the business environment. Most of us spend a lot of time communicating our knowledge, thoughts, and ideas to others. Your communication at the workplace can make all the difference between success and failure. Communication is described by many as the single most important factor in choosing managerial level staff, yet despite this fact many people are unable to convey their thoughts and they are struggling to communicate effectively.

Effective business communication is a two-way process of listening and speaking, and it's of foremost importance in all phases of daily business life at your middle market company. Ask one hundred employees whether they're good communicators, and one hundred will say yes.

In reality, though, all of us need to improve our communication skills. Here are eight ways to do so:

1.) Eliminate assumptions: Many business relationships have unspoken rules with assumptions at their core. This might work for a while, but it's better for all sides to openly communicate needs and expectations. Assumptions often cause misunderstandings, which can escalate into troublesome situations. Similarly, talk about the present and the future, but don't assume that what happened before is what will always happen. Effective business communication can bring positive change, even if things have been bad. You need to be forward-looking and believe that change can happen. Never assume that history will repeat itself.

2.) Find a convenient place and time to talk: Communication won't work when one party is distracted. Find a quiet place and, if the communication is difficult, make sure you have privacy. Have regular structures such as weekly or monthly meetings to support communication, and make time to talk when there's a problem to solve.

3.) Listen first: You never want to begin by imposing a solution. If there's a problem, simply describe it and how it is impacting your business. Then, ask in an open way,

"What can we do to resolve this situation?" Stop and listen. The biggest business communication killer is the failure to listen. Be open-minded enough to hear the other side's feedback, absorb it and develop a solution that combines what you want and what they want. To listen and then impose your preferred solution is not listening. Do not think about how to answer while the other is talking, and don't interrupt until you know the person has finished. Listening sends the best message of all: We're working to find a mutually acceptable solution.

4.) Ask questions: These help you get feedback, show that you're listening, confirm understanding and give respect. Questions are wonderful tools and should be used often. If you're not sure about a detail, ask for confirmation. If you want to hear feedback from the other

person, just ask. When you combine listening with asking relevant questions, you've opened up powerful two-way business communication.

5.) Expressing emotion is important, but always be respectful: It's perfectly acceptable to tell someone, "When you don't pitch in to help the team, it frustrates me." But you should also expect your co-worker to say something like, "It upsets me when I have too much work." That's fine. What you need to do is find a way to solve the problem. You might begin by mutually clarifying work-related expectations. Emotion is part of that communication, but it shouldn't be the end of it.

6.) Pay attention to nonverbal messages: It's hard to have open communication if both sides fold their arms, clench their jaws and refuse to look each other in the eye. Here, the nonverbal signals are shouting angrily even if the words aren't. Be careful about your tone of voice, too.

If nonverbal messages are overwhelming the conversation, it might be better to wait until things settle. Nod your head and maintain an open posture to show you're absorbing what the other person is saying.

7.) Recognize and reinforce positive behaviours: Effective communication is a constant activity, and you should thank the other person for accommodating you. This is a win-win, and it will keep the channels of communication open.

8.) Be patient and don't expect miracles: Communication is so important — and so hard. It doesn't eliminate differences, but it does allow for them. Ultimately, good business communication is not about winning; it's about strengthening relationships. Change doesn't happen overnight.

Note:- The process of effective communication is the best way to engage with people in a way that accomplishes your business goals. There's no doubt that following these eight steps will enhance the quality of your business relationships.

Communicative competence is divided into four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-linguistic competence and strategic competence according to the classification of communicative competence as given by Canale and Swain (1980).

GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCY

The Common European Framework presents a range of communicative language competences to be present in language teaching, and one of them is 'grammatical competence'. On an introductory note, the Common European Framework announces an action-oriented approach. The Framework divides communicative competence into three components: - linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence.

Grammatical competence is a part of linguistic competence according to the CEF. Grammatical competence is understood as "knowledge of, and ability to use, the grammatical resources of a

language". Simply put, it means to be in the possession of the knowledge which enables the language learner/user to produce and express meaning by utilising the embedded principles of grammatical principles in the target language, as opposed to merely memorising and reproducing grammar. The Framework acknowledges the fact that any language's grammar is highly complex and "defies definitive or exhaustive treatment", but nonetheless draws up a grammatical organisation.

DISCOURSE COMPETENCE

Discourse competence is a component of communicative competence. Discourse competence is an ability to make larger patterns of stretches of discourse into a meaningful whole. Later interpretation of discourse competence implies that discourse competence is also concerned with language use in social context, and in particular with interaction and dialogue between speakers.

Discourse competence is a complement of grammatical competence. Stubbs says, "Discourse competence attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence or above the clause and larger 48 linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written text." (1983:1) It can be considered the complement of grammatical competence.

However, discourse competence can also be viewed as the knowledge of text as well as dialogue. It enables us to use coherent and cohesive text, whether written or oral. Discoursal knowledge clearly involves both cultural conventions and appropriate grammatical choices. Hence, discourse competence is connected with grammatical competence and also overlaps with socio-linguistic competence.

COMBINATION OF EXPRESSION AND CONCLUSION

Expression of Ideas: The Art of Writing Expression of Ideas questions on the Writing and Language Test focus on refining the substance and quality of a writer's message. Specifically, Expression of Ideas questions focus on development, organisation, and effective language use in relation to the writer's purpose. Collectively, these questions address rhetorical aspects of the passages on the test. When you answer the rhetorically oriented Expression of Ideas questions, you're using your knowledge of and skill in writing to make each passage clearer, sharper, richer, and more engaging. Broken down, the Expression of Ideas category consists of these elements:

Development: Refining the content of a passage to achieve the writer's purpose, including: Proposition: Adding, revising, or retaining (leaving unchanged) thesis statements, topic sentences, claims, and the like — the "main ideas" of a passage or paragraph Support: Adding, revising, or retaining material that supports a passage's points or claims

Focus: Adding, revising, retaining, or deleting material on the basis of relevance to the purpose (e.g., deleting an irrelevant sentence)

Quantitative information: Using data from informational graphics (tables, graphs, charts, and the like) to enhance the accuracy, precision, and overall effectiveness of a passage Evidence-Based Reading and Writing.

Organisation: Improving the structure of a passage to enhance logic and cohesion, including:-

- Logical sequence: Ensuring that material is presented in a passage in the most logical place and order.
- Introductions, conclusions, and transitions: Improving the openings and closings of paragraphs and passages and the connections between and among information and ideas in a passage.
- Effective Language Use: Revising text to improve written expression and to achieve the writer's purpose, including:
- Precision: Making word choice more exact or more appropriate for the context.
- Concision: Making word choice more economical by eliminating wordiness and redundancy
- Style and tone: Making word choice consistent with the overall style and tone of a passage or accomplishing some particular rhetorical goal
- Syntax: Combining sentences to improve the flow of language or to accomplish some particular rhetorical goal.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion in a sense is the connective tissue that holds a text together. It helps orient the reader, generates interest, serves as reminders of the purpose and point of a text, and builds conceptual bridges between and among ideas. Questions about introductions, conclusions, and transitions on the Writing and Language Test ask you to think about how to make the reader's movement through a passage smoother and more meaningful. You may, for instance, be asked to add an introduction or conclusion to a passage or paragraph, to revise an existing opening or closing to make it more effective, or to determine which word, phrase, or sentence most successfully creates or clarifies a logical link between sentences or paragraphs.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

A limited view

A traditional approach to sociolinguistic competence is to use and teach language that is appropriate based on the expectations and norms of the inner circle countries, namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. This approach is problematic for two reasons.

Firstly, expectations and norms can differ significantly within an inner circle country. Secondly, this approach neglects the role of English in international communications (Alptekin, 2002).

Although there are attempts to introduce language learners to a variety of norms and cultures, teachers and textbook designers often rely on stereotypes.

A holistic view

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to use language that is appropriate to social contexts. Alptekin (2002, p. 58) explains that social context refers to culture-specific contexts that include the norms, values, beliefs, and behavioural patterns of a culture. For example, thanking a friend in a formal speech is different from how it is done over a meal.

Note: - Sociolinguistic competence also refers to the ability to select topics that are appropriate for a communicative event. For example, expressing strong views about politics and religion over dinner is generally avoided. This rule is also moderated depending on the relationship between the guest and the host. If politics and religion are their favourite topics and if they know each other very well, these topics might well be appropriate.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Instructional materials should reflect how English is used in both international and local contexts. Situations that reflect international communication should be those that learners are likely to encounter, which include asking for directions during an overseas holiday and introducing oneself at a university exchange programme. A local context example would be giving directions to tourists.

It is important for learners to think critically about the notion of politeness (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). As politeness differs across culture and social contexts, it is important to give others the benefit of the doubt. For example, if a person asks you your age, it is worth considering that such a question might be acceptable or even desirable in his or her culture.

Another useful strategy is to help learners become analysts themselves. For example, teachers can play a video clip of a dinner conversation and have learners compare the interaction, such as choice of topic and turn taking, with what they are familiar with. Such a clip should be used as a prompt to promote critical reflection rather than as a stereotype of a particular culture.

The specific ability to use L2 in various ways that may fit in various social settings in which the communication takes place is called sociolinguistic competence, and without this ability, even the most perfectly grammatical utterances can convey a meaning entirely different from what the speaker intended because there are several factors that are to be considered when communicating in L2 such as age, gender, status of the participants and the formality of the setting. Specifically, sociolinguistic competence can be generally divided into two areas. One is appropriateness of form, that is, pragma-linguistics, which signals "the particular resources that a given language

provides for conveying particular illocutions" (Leech, 1983, p. 11); the other is appropriateness of meaning, that is, socio-pragmatics, which defines the ways in which pragmatic performance is subject to specific sociocultural conventions and values (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). For non-native speakers, the misunderstandings they come across in the cross-cultural realisation of communicative acts generally arise from their failure in appropriate use of pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic competence (Yu, 2006).

In addition, Ya (2008) argues that one of the factors that make sociolinguistic competence so hard to acquire is the variance in cultural rules of speaking as well as the social, cultural and pragmatic elements that inherently exist in that competence. To put it differently, what is appropriate in one cultural situation might be entirely inappropriate in another one. The language learner often cannot differentiate between the rules of speaking of his or her native context and those of the target context.

These rules of speaking can be gradually acquired when the learner is immersed in the target culture. This is a time-consuming process though. As for the second or foreign language context, raising learners' awareness about the rules of speaking might help them acquire these skills more efficiently and, in less time.

It is clear that sociolinguistic competence is a multifaceted and multi-layered one that requires knowing how speakers of a language use it to communicate in a way that will not bother one another. Such social, cultural and pragmatic aspects would be hard to acquire without being integrated into the culture, however, it is not impossible. Access to books, listening materials, videos and any materials that reflect the culture of the target language community is available.

There are also more opportunities available that enable people from different cultures and countries to come together whether face-to-face or online. However, how these resources are brought together and how they are implemented and made use of by language teachers in the classrooms are the key issues in the teaching of sociolinguistic competence. This leads to the question of how second or foreign language teachers can develop the sociolinguistic competence of their learners? As Mizne (ibid.) discusses, one of the problematic areas about this issue is that both culture and sociolinguistic features are difficult to teach particularly when the learners are not yet competent in the second or foreign language. Another problem is that these cultural and sociolinguistic aspects of a language are unconsciously ingrained within the learner, which makes it hard for the teachers to integrate them in the language classrooms.

Finally, the cultural elements of a language are generally introduced as an add-on topic through textbooks or supplementary materials, while sociolinguistic features are left for the language learner to learn on his or her own through experience (Mizne, ibid.). In other words, there are not enough materials designed and developed to introduce the cultural and the sociolinguistic aspects of the target language in classrooms. Even if there are, the human resources who should use them in the classroom seem to be lacking. The present study will also elaborate this factor on the basis of the data collected from teachers themselves.

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

Applied linguists have for some time suggested that communicative competence includes a major component, usually termed strategic competence, the development of which largely determines the learner's fluency and conversational skills. Strategic competence concerns the ability to express oneself in the face of difficulties or limited language knowledge. The lack of fluency or conversational skills that students often complain about is, to a considerable extent, due to the underdevelopment of strategic competence. Therefore, we believe that it is important to include strategy training in a communicative syllabus.

The component of communicative competence most neglected by language course books and teachers, however, is strategic competence. This was defined by Canale and Swain (1980: 30) as 'verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence'. In other words, strategic competence refers to the ability to get one's meaning across successfully to communicative partners, especially when problems arise in the communication process.

Strategic competence is relevant to both L1 and L2, since communication breakdowns occur and must be overcome not only in a foreign language but in one's mother tongue as well.

However, since strategic competence involves strategies to be used when communication is difficult, it is of crucial importance for foreign language learners. A lack of strategic competence may account for situations when students with a firm knowledge of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary get stuck and are unable to carry out their communicative intent.

At oral language exams such students may even fail, and their teachers often cannot comprehend how that could happen to their 'best students'. On the other hand, there are learners who can communicate successfully with only one hundred words-they rely almost entirely on their strategic competence.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS WITH VERBAL AND NON - VERBAL MEANS

The word communication has been derived from the Latin word "communis", which means common. Communication, therefore, refers to the sharing of ideas, facts, opinions, information and understanding. It is the transfer or transmission of some information and understanding from one person to another. In general, it is defined as the process by which information is exchanged between individuals. The process uses written messages, spoken words and gestures.

"Communication can be both verbal, and non-verbal."

Why is Non-Verbal Communication Important?

To form a good relationship, one needs to have good communication skills. Non-verbal communication is a powerful tool of connecting oneself with others and it helps in expressing what one feels and means. Sometimes our facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and the tone of voice can convey a louder and better message than our words. Non-verbal communication is a very important aspect in the workplace, it shows how you listen, look and react while interacting with your co-workers; if one's non-verbal communication is poor it can make your co-workers uncomfortable, it may create tension, and confusion. Whereas if one possesses good non-verbal communication; it can help in establishing trust, clarity and a good rapport with your co-workers.

People use the following as a method of non-verbal communication:

● Facial expression: The human face uses a number of expressions on a daily basis to express various feelings and emotions, like happiness, stress, sadness, fear, surprise and so on.

● Body postures: It includes communication through your posture, attitude and delicate movements. People get affected and influenced; by the way one sits, walks, and stands and uses various parts of the body to convey a message.

● Gestures: Gesturing is the way we use our body parts in the communication process, like using the hands at the time of greeting, giving a thumbs up to wish someone luck and so on. Different gestures have different meanings in different cultures; therefore, one has to be careful while using them.

● Eye contact: Eyes can speak a lot, the way one looks at someone in a communication can convey whether one is interested, unreceptive, attentive or confused. It is very important to maintain the flow of the communication.

● Touch: Touch is also an important way of conveying one's messages, like a tight handshake shows warmth and interest; a hug, a light tap on the shoulders convey different messages.

● Space: Space, the distance between two people when they communicate is an important aspect conveying a message of intimacy, affection and domination.

● Tone of voice: The way one speaks, the tone of a person also influences the communication process, it symbolises empathy, anger, frustration and other such emotions.

HOW TO IMPROVE NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AT WORK?

Having good communication skills ensures personal and professional growth. People use a large amount of non-verbal communication in their interpersonal relations and with co-workers. One can do the following to improve their non-verbal communications and make them more effective: -

● Non-verbal signals: One needs to pay attention to the various non-verbal signals like, gestures, eye contact, facial expression and so on. This will give an idea what is in the mind of the communicator, it will also influence the way you communicate further.

● Different behaviour: Sometimes the expressions are different from what the person is saying; one cannot fake one's expressions. Therefore, if you pay attention to the nonverbal behaviour of the person you will be able to tell whether the person is actually speaking the truth or he is putting up a fake conversation. One expression should match what one is saying.

● Tone of voice: When you speak, notice your tone and how it affects other people. Whether your tone is able to convey what your words say, like if you want to show interest in something, is your tone sound enthusiastic and happy. The tones of the voice can convey a lot of emotions and feelings such as happiness, sadness, anger, boredom and so on.

● Eye contact: Eye contact is an important aspect of communication. When one makes eye contact while speaking, it conveys that the person is confident, interested in the communication and on the other hand if one avoids eye contact it means he is trying to hide something, or the a person is not confident or unsure about what he is speaking. It is also important to know that too much eye contact can give messages of confrontation or coerce.

● Ask questions: If one is about the nonverbal signals of the other person, then it is always better to ask questions, to ensure what he is confused about or not understanding or what and then one can reinterpret what is in his mind.

● Use signals: Using signals is a handy tool for communication in presentations and when one is speaking to a large group. The use of body postures, use of hands and tone of voice helps in conveying the message in an easier way.

● Group of signals: While interpreting non-verbal communication, it is very important that one interprets a group of signals rather than just interpreting a signal. All signals taken together will give a clearer view of what exactly one is trying to say.

● Context and situation: It's very important to understand the context and situation in which the communication is held; in some cases, the communication needs to be formal and crisp, like in business meetings, whereas in other cases it can be the opposite, like in an office co- worker party or function. One needs to notice and improve upon the ways to match the non- verbal communication in accordance to the situation and context.

● Misleading signals: While interpreting non-verbal signals, consider a group of signals. Ensure that your non-verbal signals match your words; mismatch will lead to misleading interpretations and meanings. Say when you want your co-workers to follow your instructions, your voice should be loud and forceful with a tone of power.

● Practise: Noticing one's non-verbal signals, and knowing where they lag, is important. One needs to put in effort and practise to improve them. With time and practice and experience one will be able to interpret nonverbal signals in a better way.

● Working on postures: One needs to work on one posture as they convey a lot about the persons communication pattern, like a person sitting with folded hands and crossed legs is an introvert, who does not share one's thought and feelings very easily, A person with drooping shoulders is tired or lacks confidence, or is under stress or depression and so on.

● Read your audience: It is very important to study the nonverbal signals of the audience. It will give you a clear idea whether the audience is listening to you or not; whether they are interested in what you are saying; when you need to repeat things, and end your communication or redesign the way of communicating.

● Relax: When entering into a communication, one should be relaxed and calm. This will also relax the person you are talking to; and they will be able to listen to you more attentively and with interest. If the situation is stressed or perceived as threatening then the audience will not be comfortable and would not be able to concentrate on what one has to say.

● Maintain balance: It is very important to maintain balance in the non-verbal signals one uses. They should be a mixture of serious, humorous, interesting and focused way of communication, which encourages interest, participation and acceptance in the communication process. It should be such that the audience understands what one wants to convey.

● Improve emotional awareness: It is very important for one to understand the reaction of others in the communication process. Therefore, one should be able to read the emotions and body language of others, to improve and modify upon their non-verbal communication skills.

● Management of stress: It is very important to manage one's stress in a communication process. Letting your stress on the communication process will lead to misleading interpretation of what you are saying; it signals anxiousness, worry and tension, which may influence your audience indirectly.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication takes place directly between the superiors and juniors in organisations and between farmers and extension functionaries in the field and is often known as face-to-face communication. It takes the form of talks, a public address, verbal discussions, telephonic talks, telecommunications and other artificial media, such as audio-visual aids speeches and orders, holdings of meetings and conferences, lectures, social get-togethers, training sessions, public address systems, museums, exhibitions, counselling etc.

Verbal communication enjoys certain merits: -

1). It is the least time consuming, is more direct, simple and the least expensive.

2). It is more communicative and effective and aids in avoiding delays, red-tape and formalities.

3). It generates a friendly and cooperative spirit.

4). It provides immediate feedback, as questions can be put and answers obtained about the information transmitted.

5). Since every piece of information cannot be put into writing, most of it is conveyed by means of oral instructions, mutual discussions and telephonic conversations.

However, verbal communication has certain demerits. These are:

1). Lengthy, distant and important information cannot be effectively conveyed verbally.

2). Verbal talks may often be distorted if there is some cause of indifference between the receiver and the sender.

3). It is inadequate where permanency and uniformity of form are required.

4). Due to various communication gaps, as a result of status and other physical or personal barriers communication is incomplete.

5). Spontaneous responses may not be carefully thought.

6). The spoken words can be more easily misunderstood than the written words.

7). It presupposes expertise in the art of effective speaking.

HOW TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION?

• Clarity of Purpose: The message to be delivered must be clear in the mind of the sender. The person to whom it is targeted and the aim of the message should be clear.

• Completeness: The message delivered should be complete. It should be supported by facts and observations. It should be well planned and organised. No assumptions should be made by the receiver.

• Conciseness: The message should be concise. It should not include any unnecessary details. It should be short and complete.

• Feedback: Whether the message sent by the sender is understood in the same terms by the receiver or not can be judged by the feedback received. The feedback should be timely and personal. It should be specific rather than general.

• Empathy: Empathy with the listeners is essential for effective verbal communication. The speaker should step into the shoes of the listener and be sensitive to their needs and emotions. This way he can understand things from their perspective and make communication more effective.

• Modify the message according to the audience: The information requirement by different people in the organisation differs according to their needs. What is relevant to the middle level

management might not be relevant to the top level of management. Use of jargons should be minimised because it might lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretations. The message should be modified according to the needs and requirements of the targeted audience.

• Multiple Channels of communication: For effective communication multiple channels should be used as it increases the chances of clarity of message.