

# Communication, Day 1: Non-Verbal Communication

Special Education: Secondary, Lesson # 8

## Student Learning Objectives:

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To be able to...

1. Identify two types of communication (verbal and non-verbal).
2. Using only body language, appropriately express a given emotion.
3. Define the term 'paraphrase' and explain its use.

## Materials Needed:

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- A playground ball
- Emotion flash cards
- One copy of the worksheet for each student

## Agenda:

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1. Define two types of communication
2. Non-verbal communication
3. Body language and eye contact
4. Expressing emotions
5. Active listening
6. Define the term 'paraphrase'
7. Practicing the paraphrase

Effective communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, are extremely important social skills. Communication provides a route for thoughts and feelings to be shared between people.

Non-verbal communication sends powerful messages. For some of your students, it may be their primary means of connection to others. Learning and practicing effective and accurate non-verbal communication skills is critical in order to be heard and understood by others.

This lesson provides an opportunity for non-verbal students to become teachers. Point out creative and uniquely effective non-verbal communication strategies used by other students.

## Activities:

**Demonstrate the concept of the message being passed by using a written message and physically passing it from one person to another. The message could be as simple as a picture of the next activity - lunch, perhaps!**

### 1. Define two types of communication - discussion.

#### A. Start by defining the general concept of “communication” with your students.

Take a playground ball, which you’ve turned into “the message” (by taping a piece of paper with the word “message” onto it, or writing the word “message” in bold pen on masking tape attached to the ball.).

Tell students that this ball is the “message.” Ask for two volunteers (or do this part with a teaching assistant). One volunteer is the “sender” of the message; the other is the “receiver” of the message.

Ask students, “*What do we do when we communicate?*” One good answer is that we “*pass a message from one person to another person*”.

Tell your students, “*there are three parts to communication: the sender, the message and the receiver.*” Point to each volunteer and the ball as you speak.

Tell your students, “*Communication is like a giant ball game, where the ball is the message which must be sent and received in order for the game to continue. If the ball is sent incorrectly, or in a confusing way, the receiver may not be able to receive it and respond. If the receiver is not ready for the ball then that also affects the interaction. Effective communication is like a good rally, with both the sender and the receiver appropriately handling the message and then switching roles to do it again!*”

Have the sender pass the message (ball) to the receiver, who will then receive the message. The receiver can hold the message (ball) for a moment and then become the sender, returning the message to the other person. Have volunteers model both ineffective communication (dropping the ball) and effective communication (smoothly passing the ball) as you speak.

**A modified definition of verbal and non-verbal - “with words” and “without words”.**

**This exercise can be extended and varied (expressing different emotions, etc) if it seems to be effective for some of your students. You can also ask students to role play the steps using body language and no words.**

- B.** Point out to students that there are always at least two people involved in communication - and they both have important jobs to do. The sender of the message must be clear and direct in their job, or the ball may be dropped. The receiver of the message must be prepared and ready to receive the message. This is just as important - listening actively means that the ball will get to its destination without being fumbled or dropped!
- C.** In this lesson, we'll start with the job of the sender of the message - the person who is communicating. Then we'll think about the job of the receiver - to listen actively and paraphrase.
- D.** Non-Verbal Communication. Discuss with your students that in the next few lessons we'll talk about two different ways we can send messages to other people. Non-verbal/body language (using our bodies, our hands, faces, eyes and other parts of the body) and verbal (using our voices).

## **2. Non-Verbal Communication**

- A.** Non-Verbal Communication Hand Exercise.  
(From *Personal Development and Sexuality : A Curriculum Guide for Developmentally Disabled*)
  1. Have students pair up, and sit facing each other, eyes closed, hands held up in front of them.
  2. Students touch - flatly - their partner's hand.
  3. Instruct students to keep their eyes closed and just use their hands to communicate/get their message across.
  4. Have students say “Hello” to their partner's hands. (1 minute)
  5. Have student have an argument - remind them to keep their eyes closed and only use their hands to communicate.
  6. Now have students make-up and say they are sorry - again using only their hands.
  7. Have students say good-bye to their partners, again only using hands.
- B.** Debrief hand exercise  
Ask students to open their eyes and discuss with the class:
  - how it felt to do the exercise
  - what students liked
  - what they didn't like about it
  - questions about the exercise

**“How do we talk with our bodies?”**

### **3. Body language and eye contact**

A. Discuss that there are other parts of our bodies that we can use to communicate non-verbally:

- our eyes can be very expressive - looking away, glaring, beaming
- we can shrug our shoulders,
- we can do different things with our mouths - frowning, smiling, yawning, scowling
- our posture tells a lot about how we feel - slumped, sitting up straight, leaning, legs crossed, fists clenched

As you are describing them, model the body language.

B. Discuss the importance of eye contact as part of total communication.

Have students identify different messages from eye contact you model (i.e. looking away, glaring, looking interested, smiling with your eyes).

Discuss that there are different cultural messages with respect to eye contact. Its meaning is culture-specific. Direct eye contact is a sign of assertiveness in some cultures, but not in all.

Also, point out that overly intense eye contact and always looking away can make communication harder for other people. If this is a problem for any of your students you may wish to work on it privately as well as in the context of the class.

**“How do we talk with our eyes?”**

### **4. Expressing emotions**

A. **Emotion Flash Card Exercise.** Make a copy of each side of the emotion flash cards sheets. Paste them together and cut into cards. Demonstrate for your students how you can show people how you are feeling without using your voice, by modeling body language that effectively expresses one or two of the emotions.

Then have students volunteer to choose a card, and communicate the emotion written on it for the class using only body language. They should not tell the class what the emotion is - the class should be able to guess.

This exercise can be done in teams or as a total class. This can also be a useful exercise using mirrors.

Some other emotions you might role play include sympathy, courage, curiosity, hope, confusion, pride, loneliness, sorry, frustration.

**“Without talking, show me. (sad, happy, mad, glad).” Use alternate emotion cards for some students. Most other emotions are variations of one of these four.**

- B. **Supporting activity:** Ask students to watch television with the sound turned off and identify emotions the characters are feeling based on their body language.
- C. **Supporting activity:** Ask students who typically “talk with their hands” to try to describe a shape with their hands behind their backs or in their pockets.
- D. **Supporting activity:** Ask students to pair up. Ask students to close their eyes while they are listening to their partner describe the shape of an object (desk, book, blackboard, pen, etc.) without giving its name. Switch. Ask the students what the object was. Discuss our usual reliance on gestures and hand movements as non-verbal communication aids.

### 5. Active Listening

- A. Define active listening.  
Tell students, “*When we listen carefully to what another person is saying to us, it shows them that we are interested in what they have to say - that we care about them.*”
- B. **Project transparency.** “*Let’s think about an example. Jimmy came home from school one day in a really bad mood. He had had a bad day - dropped his book in a mud puddle on the way to class, forgot his lunch money, and had a pop quiz in Math class. When he got home, his mother said, ‘Hi Jimmy. How was your day?’ Jimmy started to tell his mom about all the things that had gone wrong that day, but she was busy unloading the dishwasher and he wasn’t sure she was even listening to him. When she said, ‘Oh, that’s nice dear.’ Jimmy was positive that she hadn’t paid any attention at all. He got even madder and stormed out of the room, muttering to himself. Jimmy’s mom wasn’t really paying attention to what Jimmy was saying. It wasn’t that she didn’t care - it was just that she wasn’t actively listening.*”
- C. **There are several non-verbal ways that we can show someone we care about them and what they are saying when we use active listening.**
  - a) **Take time.** Stop what you are doing and really focus on the other person and what they are saying to you.
  - b) **Make eye contact.** Look at the other person.
  - c) **Use open body language.** Be sure your body is communicating that you are ready to listen. Uncross your arms, relax your shoulders, uncross your legs ...don’t shut the other person out through body language.
  - d) **Nod or shake your head** to show that you agree with or acknowledge what the person is saying.

**“What do you do when you listen?”**

- e) **Don't interrupt the other person.** Your job is to listen, not to talk! Your turn to talk may come later.
- D. **Practice active listening. Replay the scene with Jimmy -** teacher taking the role of Jimmy, students taking the role of Mom. This time, though, have mom stop unloading the dishwasher and pay attention, actively listening to what Jimmy is saying. Mom should also respond to Jimmy's non-verbal communication - body language and eye contact.

**“Be sure you understand” or “repeat what was said or “check it out”.**

6. **Defining the term “paraphrase.”** Teacher Note: Paraphrasing is a tricky concept for many students. It is also an essential skill. Activities 6 & 7 are recommended, but should be considered optional.
- A. Explain to students, *“Sometimes messages aren't understood the first time they are communicated. If this happens to you, you should ‘check it out’ - ask the person sending the message what they mean. Or you could try to ‘paraphrase’ their message - say it back to them a different way using your own words. Then ask them if you got it right.*
- B. **There are four main steps to paraphrasing:**
- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying.**
  - Think about what they said.**
  - Say it back to them, using your own words.**
  - Check it out to be sure you understood the original message correctly.**
- C. Hand out the *Paraphrase Worksheet*. Work through the first example with students, matching the appropriate paraphrase word bubble to the original statement. Have students work through the next two paraphrase examples on the worksheet either individually or in pairs. Read the words in the bubbles to the class if necessary.
- D. Debrief the paraphrase worksheet by asking the volunteers to share their selections with the rest of the class. Ask students to come up with other statements that could be used to paraphrase in addition to the ones in the correct paraphrase bubble.

**Roleplay the worksheet with a teaching assistant or puppets.**

7. **Practicing the paraphrase**
- Pairs exercise. Have students divide into partners.
  - Sitting in pairs facing each other, tell one person a simple message (perhaps a comment on the partner's clothing, or about an upcoming school or class event - or have students come up with their own message). That person will communicate the message to their partner in their own words. The partner will practice active listening.

**Have one student speak - either verbally or non-verbally. Have the other person ask the question, "What did \_\_\_\_\_ say?"**

- C. Then the partner will say it back, paraphrasing the message.
- D. You can divide the whole class into partners and have all students do it at once, or have a pair of students do it in front of the class and then receive class feedback after they are finished paraphrasing.

# Dear Trusted Adult,

In class we learned about non-verbal communication. We discussed the importance of being clear when we are trying to express ourselves, and how we can use body language and other forms of non-verbal communication to help us get our message from one person to another.

We also talked about ways we express emotions non-verbally. We used emotion flash cards and tried to show other people how we were feeling without using words.

Activities that will support this learning:

- Watch TV with the sound turned off. Discuss what is going on based on the body language of the characters.
- Using only body language, express being happy, sad, angry, afraid, worried.

If you have any questions or comments, please call me.

Sincerely,

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Teacher, Principal or Nurse

**NOTE: All Trusted Adult Exercises are Optional.**

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**Emotional Flash Cards**


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<p><b>HAPPY</b> To see your best friend after vacation</p>	<p><b>SAD</b> Because your dog died</p>	<p><b>EXCITED</b> Because its almost time for vacation</p>
<p><b>MAD</b> Because your favorite sweater shrunk in the wash</p>	<p><b>WORRIED</b> Because you have a test coming up and you haven't studied yet</p>	<p><b>BORED</b> Because you've heard this joke 10,000 times</p>
<p><b>TIRED</b> Because you stayed up very late last night</p>	<p><b>EXHAUSTED</b> Because you just ran in a race</p>	<p><b>NERVOUS</b> Because you're just about to ask someone for a date</p>
<p><b>GRATEFUL</b> Because you just received a gift you really like</p>	<p><b>SURPRISED</b> Because you just walked into a surprise party for you</p>	<p><b>SCARED</b> Because you just saw a scary movie</p>

**Emotional Flash Cards (alternative version)**

**GLAD**



**SAD**



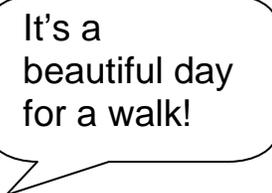
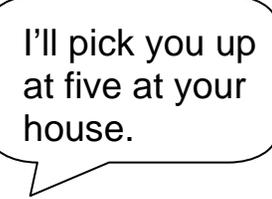
**MAD**



**SCARED**



## Paraphrase Worksheet

<p>Linda said:</p> 		<p><b>What does she mean?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The sun is shining. The sky is blue. Let's go!</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I've got a test tomorrow.</p>
<p>1. Joe said:</p> 		<p><b>What does he mean?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What a lovely day!</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm angry. I'm furious.</p>
<p>2. Anne said:</p> 		<p><b>What does she mean?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Five o'clock. Your place. See you then.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It will be a good movie, I think.</p>