

Lesson Plan 11: Presentation Skills



1 hr 25 min total

Lesson Description



In this lesson, participants practice using effective word choice, gestures, posture, facial expression, tone, speed, and clarity of speech to communicate clearly during training sessions.

Learning Outcomes



At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Explain how a trainer's presentation style affects participants' ability to learn.
2. Demonstrate effective word choice, gestures, posture, facial expression, tone, speed, and clarity of speech.
3. Use body language to clarify meaning.

Materials



- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- 3 Pile Sort Card Game* – (See WASH Resources for regional variations <http://resources.cawst.org/>)
- Charades Words* (See end of lesson)
- Small sweets/candy/chocolate (at least one per participant)
- Hat or small container
- "Tongue twister" (a phrase that is difficult to say quickly) in the local language
- Pictures of "Honest vs Dishonest" facial expressions (See end of lesson)

Preparation



- Read and prepare lesson plan
- Write learning outcomes on the flip chart
- Print and cut out *Charades Words*
- Print 4-5 copies of the "*Honest vs Dishonest*" facial expression pictures
- Download and print *3 Pile Sort Card Game*
- Write the "tongue twister" below on the flip chart – If you are doing this in another language, ask in advance for a local tongue twister.
 - o 'She sells seashells on the sea shore'

Introduction**10 minutes**

1. Explain to participants that they are going to play a game that is often known as charades. Participants will take turns coming to the front, choosing a word from the hat/container and then acting it out for other participants without using any words or sounds. Ask the rest of the participants to guess what the word is by yelling out their answers. If someone guesses the answer before 10 seconds, both the guesser and the actor get a prize (sweets/candy/chocolate).
2. Ask for a volunteer from the group and let them pick a word. Repeat until at least 5 volunteers have acted out their words.
3. Ask participants: "How can you relate this game to presentation skills?" *Using body language is very important in communication to help get your message across.*
4. Present the learning outcomes or lesson description.

Types of Communication**10 minutes**

1. Explain that communication falls into three categories: Verbal, Non-verbal, and Para-verbal. Write the three categories on the flip chart.



- Trainer Note:** If “Verbal,” “Non-verbal,” and “Para-verbal” terms will be difficult for your audience to understand, you may instead use these categories: “words,” “body,” and “voice.”
2. Ask the participants: "What is the difference between each of these types of communication?"
 - **Verbal communication** is what we communicate through the words we use.
 - **Non-verbal communication** is what we communicate through body language and position, physical appearance, gestures, and facial expression.
 - **Para-verbal communication** is what we communicate through the way we deliver our words (tone, speed, clarity of speech).
 3. Ask participants: "What conveys more meaning - verbal or non-verbal communication?"
 4. Explain to participants that while the words you use are important, non-verbal and para-verbal communication also have a significant impact on how well people understand you and what they think you are trying to communicate.
 5. Share the following example: Children can learn sign language, understand body language, and detect the tone in your voice before they learn how to speak words. The way we give information can be just as important as the information itself. Ask participants to keep this in mind as they practice their facilitation skills.
 6. Show the following list to the group and explain that these are some of the specific communication skills that we will be working on today.

- Verbal:
 - Word Choice
 - Non-verbal:
 - Gestures and movements
 - Posture
 - Facial expression and eye contact
 - Para-verbal
 - Tone
 - Speed
 - Clarity of Speech
7. Explain that you will demonstrate each skill one at a time and give them an opportunity to practice with each.

Practicing Verbal Communication

10 minutes

1. Word Choice

- a) Ask participants: "When you are choosing words to describe a concept (such as sanitation), what are some things you need to consider about your participants?" Record their answer on the flip chart.

Examples of possible responses:

- **The level of your participants:** Do not use words that are too technical if the participants has limited experience in the subject. Your words should draw them in to the subject by using ideas or explanations that they can relate to.
 - **The attention span of your participants:** You can talk to participants for a maximum of ten minutes before you need to do something to regain their attention (Medina, 2008). To ensure that people retain the information you are sharing, keep your message concise, deliver it in small chunks, and build in at least a short activity every 10 minutes.
 - **The preconceptions of your participants:** Know your participants and be conscious of their preconceptions. Avoid using examples or descriptions that may offend them, make them less likely to view you as a credible source, or cause them to stop listening openly to what you have to say.
- b) Ask the participants to find a partner and practice choosing the right words to describe a particular topic to a particular audience. Tell them they will have 2 minutes to silently think about how they will explain the topic (they can write down their ideas if they want), and then each partner will have 1 minute to give a short explanation to their partner.
- Partner A should explain why it is important to use a latrine (pretend they are explaining to children).
 - Partner B should explain the features of a safe storage container (pretend they are speaking to a group of community elders).
- c) Debrief in the large group by asking for one or two volunteers to share their reflections about the exercise..

Practicing Non-verbal Communication**15 minutes****1. Gestures and Movements**

- a) Ask participants: "What are gestures?" *Gestures are a movement of your body (especially of your hands or arms) that represent or emphasize an idea or message.*
- b) Explain to participants that gestures can add or detract from the message you are trying to convey. Ask participants to share examples of common gestures they use in daily life. *Ex: pointing, thumbs up/down, waving, beckoning, number gestures, etc.*
- c) Explain that when we speak, we often unconsciously or spontaneously use certain gestures to emphasize specific words or phrases. If we speak about digging a latrine pit, we may simultaneously use a gesture to depict the act of digging or using a shovel. If we say there is a five minute break, we may physically indicate 5 using our fingers. In many cases, gestures can help reinforce the message we are communicating through a mix of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- d) Explain to participants that you are going to divide them into four groups, and you would like each group to come up with a gesture to represent a specific instruction.
- e) Divide participants into 4 groups and assign each group one of the following:
 - i. Work in pairs
 - ii. Divide into small groups
 - iii. Return to the full group
 - iv. Attention please
- f) Give each group 1-2 minutes to come up with a gesture for their instruction.
- g) Ask each group to present their action to the rest of the participants and have the others guess what the action represents.
- h) Explain to participants that in addition to gestures, there are other movements we may use that can be helpful—or harmful—for improving our communication.
- i) Ask participants: "What is an example of a movement that may be helpful for communicating?" *Moving forward or stepping to the side can signify that the speaker is transitioning to a new topic. Moving closer to participants to hear what they have to say can communicate that the trainer is actively listening.*
- j) Ask participants: "What is an example of a movement that may make your communication less effective?" *Ex: Playing with rings or jewelry, playing with marker cover, pacing back and forth too much, rustling papers...these movements can make the speaker appear nervous or unfocused and may make the audience less open to listening.*

2. Posture

- a) Ask participants: "What is posture?" *The way in which your body is positioned when you are sitting or standing.*



- b) Ask participants: "How does posture affect the message you are communicating?" *When you have good posture people will be more likely to pay attention and take you seriously. Your posture sets the tone in the room.*
- c) Ask the participants to demonstrate good and bad training posture in both a seated and standing position.

3. Facial Expression and Eye Contact

- a) Tell participants that facial expressions convey the emotions behind words. How much people trust what you are saying is affected by facial expression. For example, if you smile and are genuine they will trust you. Facial expressions can also influence the sound of your voice. For example, when you smile, your voice will sound friendly; when you're serious, your voice sounds serious.
- b) **Optional:** Share the following fun fact with participants: A study on facial expression was done in the USA by asking people to choose who they thought was the most competent by comparing two pictures of people. The pictures they were comparing were actually politicians who previously ran against each other in Senate elections. The subjects of the test were shown pictures of the candidates for one second, and correctly chose the election winner 70% of the time. When asked why they chose one person over the other, most answers were about the way that the person smiled and whether or not it was genuine¹.
- c) Show participants the three images – one of a trustworthy-looking person, one more neutral, and the other dishonest-looking – by distributing copies of the picture for participants to examine in small groups.
- d) Ask participants to consider which of the three appears more trust-worthy and honest, and what elements of the person contribute to this. *Highlight characteristics such as a downturned mouth, raised or furrowed eyebrows, smile versus frown, etc.*
- e) Ask the participants: "Why is appropriate eye contact also important, in addition to your facial expression, when you are training?"



In most cultures, making regular eye contact for 1-3 seconds with individual audience members helps them to feel acknowledged and engaged, and allows you to check for non-verbal signs that they understand what you are talking about.

Practicing Para-verbal Communication

15 minutes

1. Tone

- a) Ask participants:
 - "What is tone?"
Tone is a combination of pitch, quality and strength (projection) of voice. It is the overall sound of your voice.
 - "How does tone affect communication?"

If your tone is pleasant, people will want to listen. If people find your tone uncomfortable for their ears, i.e., too high, or too quiet, they will not want to listen to what you have to say.

Tone communicates emotion. The tone you use should match the message you are trying to communicate.



- b) **Optional:** Share the following fun fact with participants. Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister of England from 1979-1990, received criticism for the "shrill pitch" of her voice. She had voice training to lower her pitch to increase her appeal with the public.
- c) Write this sentence on the flip chart: "Tone is a combination of pitch, quality and strength of voice."
- d) Ask participants to practice 2 different tones (loud and low, high and quiet) while saying the sentence out loud.
- e) Note: Depending on context, you may need to discuss with participants the possible implications of working with tonal languages, where different pitch is used to convey specific meaning.

2. Speed

- a) Explain that many people have a tendency to speak too fast when they are presenting in public, because they get nervous or are worried about managing their time.
- b) In pairs:
 - Ask the participants to practice speed of voice while telling each other what they have learned so far in this lesson. Ask one person to speak too quickly and the other to speak too slowly.
 - Ask the participants to explain to each other the impact of speed of voice on communication. What happens if a trainer speaks too fast? Too slow?
 - Summarize the pair discussions in the large group.

3. Clarity of Speech

- a) Ask the participants:
 - "What do we mean by clarity of speech?" *Clarity of speech is a combination of articulation (how your tongue, lips, and jaw move to make specific sounds) and enunciation (the act of pronouncing words clearly).*
 - "Why is it important to have good clarity of speech?" *It is important to ensure that you are being correctly understood. Clarity of speech can also help in displaying confidence.*
- b) Show participants the flip chart titled "Tongue twister."
- c) In pairs, ask participants to say the tongue twister as quickly as possible while articulating and pronouncing their words carefully. For fun, you can begin slowly and repeat the exercise at increasing speeds.

Practicing Presentation Skills**20 minutes**

1. Lay out the *Three Pile Sort* cards.
2. Explain that participants are going to tell each other short stories based on one of these cards. They should focus on their presentation skills.
3. Divide participants into groups of four.
4. Ask participants to choose a card that appeals to them and then return to their group.
5. Ask each participant to create a short story about the card they selected and share the story with their small group. There is no need for them to write down the story – the activity should be done with minimal preparation.
6. Ask the small groups to give feedback to each other on their verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal communication skills.

Review**5 minutes**

1. In their groups of 4, ask the participants to:
 - Discuss why the way we explain information can be just as important as the information itself.
 - Discuss which presentation skills they are confident in, and which ones they would like to improve.

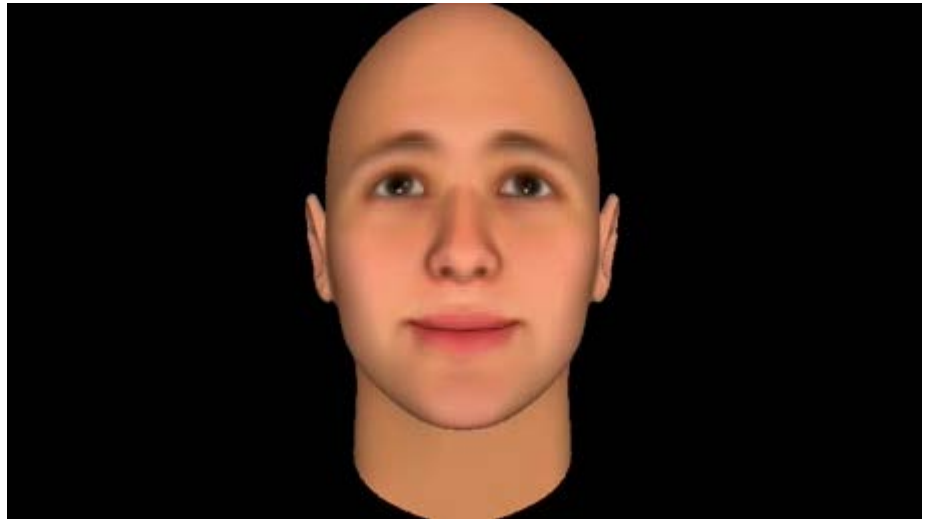
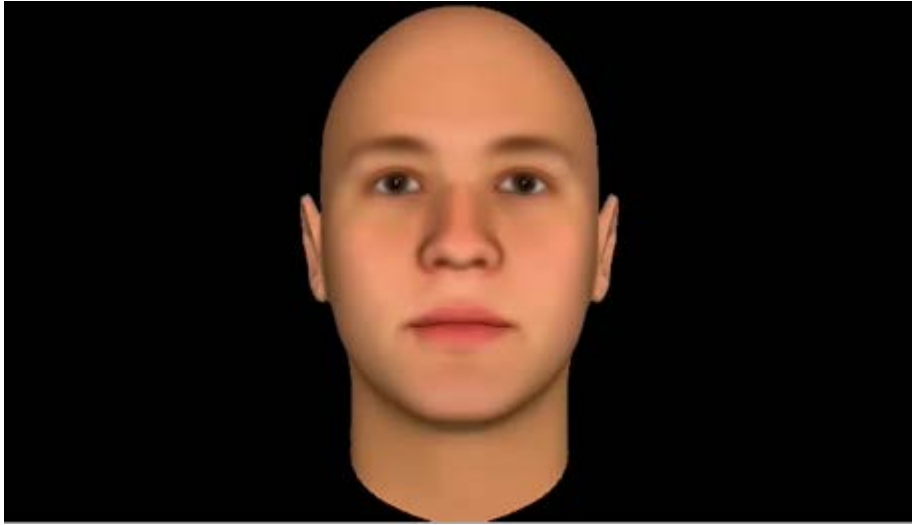
Reflections on Lesson

¹ (Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall, Inferences of Competence from Faces Predict Election Outcomes, 2005)

Charades Words

Elephant	Making Tea
Driving a car	Reading newspaper
Smelling a flower	Washing hands
Lion	Umbrella
Bicycling	Driving motorcycle
Butterfly	Snake

Honest vs Dishonest



(Princeton University, 2008)

