

Verbal Communication 17-5.01-K

KNOW the principles of effective verbal communication, as presented in the E-PME Study Guide.

Effective Verbal Communication Effective verbal communication requires you to be able to present subjects clearly and concisely to individuals and groups.

A good verbal communicator has the following traits:

- Good posture
- Good voice control
- Uses proper enunciation
- Makes good eye contact
- Presents information so ideas are clear
- Natural in delivery style

Good Posture To be accepted as a communicator, you need the respect of the audience. When you're communicating verbally:

- Stand or sit straight - but in a natural position
- Avoid leaning on tables or podiums

Good Voice Control When most people are nervous, the clarity, sound, and rate of speech changes.

- **Voice Interaction.** Variation in rate, pitch, loudness, and quality of the voice can give different meanings to any simple sentence. In other words, the way something is said can totally change its meaning.

Good Voice
Control (continued)

For example, read each of the following statements with a strong emphasis on the italicized words. Notice how the meaning changes based on the delivery.

- ▶ Example 1 (*Sarcastic Voice*):

THAT small boat crew really knew what *THEY* were doing.

- ▶ Example 2 (*Enthusiastic about crew ability; emphasis on “really”*):

That small boat crew *REALLY KNEW* what they were doing.

- ▶ Example 3 (*Enthusiastic about ability of a small crew; emphasis on “small”*):

That *SMALL* boat crew really knew what they were doing.

- **Voice Level.** The speaker’s voice must project appropriately so everyone can hear comfortably. Improper voice level is a result of:
 - ▶ Improper breathing
 - ▶ Fear
 - ▶ Excitement

The speaker should always ask the audience if he or she can be clearly heard.

- **Rate of Speech.** When people become nervous, such as during a presentation, their rate of speech normally increases. If the speaker talks too rapidly, people may miss important information. They may be unable to take sufficient notes, as too much information to absorb at one time is being presented.

Presenters can control the rate of speech by following these rules:

- ▶ Breathe normally
 - ▶ Move the upper and lower body slightly to remove tension
 - ▶ If stumbling over words, slow down the speaking pace
 - ▶ Pause after each sentence
 - ▶ When giving technical presentations, speak slower
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***Use Proper
Enunciation***

Good speakers enunciate clearly. Enunciation is defined as how well the speaker pronounces words and how clearly his/her diction comes across to other people. If the speaker:

- Talks rapidly, words can become jumbled.
- Talks quietly, words can be missed.
- Uses words he/she doesn't know how to pronounce, the audience may get lost or lose respect for the presenter.

The bottom line is that listeners have to clearly understand each word that is said.

***Eye Contact
Guidelines***

The eyes are very important in the communication process because they create a link for nonverbal communication between people. Regardless of audience size, eye contact is the single most important aspect of personalizing the presentation.

Presenters who follow these guidelines will be more likely to be effective speakers:

- Make eye contact for 1–3 seconds when looking at someone.
 - Avoid “darting” eyes around the room.
 - If addressing a large group, focus on different people around the room, so that persons sitting in those general areas feel as if they're being addressed.
 - Try to make every person feel that the speaker is talking to him or her personally.
 - Avoid staring at one area (fixating on one person or thing).
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***Make Sure Ideas
are Clear***

The presenter's words are ideas that are transmitted to the listener. As ideas, they can elicit a different response from everyone in the audience if they are not specific.

The speaker should consider:

- The experience level of the audience in relation with the content
- How the audience will interpret the words

Consider your audience and, if necessary, avoid the use of:

- Technical jargon
- Acronyms
- Professional language

***Make Sure Ideas
are Clear
(continued)***

Acronyms should be spelled out the first time they are used; technical and professional terms should be defined. A presentation cannot be effective unless the listeners understand the meaning of the words.

***Natural Delivery
Style***

Nonverbal gestures, such as hand gestures, create body language and can communicate your level of poise and confidence as an instructor.

- When used properly, nonverbal gestures can reinforce what is said.
 - When used in excess, nonverbal gestures can be distracting.
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***Some Presentation
“Do’s”***

Some nonverbal gestures to incorporate in your presentation are to:

- Use your hands to illustrate and intensify your points.
 - Use your hands just the way you would in normal conversation.
 - Use your whole body to illustrate a point if necessary.
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***Some Presentation
“Don’ts”***

Some nonverbal gestures to avoid are to:

- Keep your arms crossed.
 - Keep your hands in your pocket.
 - Keep your hands behind your back.
 - Use any personal distracting gestures (e.g. wringing your hands nervously).
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