

## Chapter 4 Communication Skills



Mary Shier

**Student Success**  
An Invaluable Resource for  
College and University Students



This resource is a chapter from the book, *Student Success: An Invaluable Resource for College and University Students* by Mary Shier, published by BCcampus Open Education, illustrated by Gordon Shier.

Note that page numbers reflect the page numbers in the full textbook.

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## Introduction

Communication is one of the most basic skills; often we are doing it without even noticing or thinking about it. Yet it also turns out to be one of the most complicated skills – one that requires continual honing. Communication involves both a sender and a receiver. Sometimes the communication is one-way (e.g. the TV) or two-way (e.g. a conversation). Sometimes the receiver is a group (e.g. a lecture) and sometimes the roles of senders and receivers are fluid (e.g. a group conversation where different people become the senders at different times). Any time the message is misinterpreted, there is a breakdown in the communication process, and this serves as the impetus of conflict. Good communication skills may be the most important skills for success in life!

No one is a perfect communicator; even the most skilled communicators can have issues with clarity and struggle in different scenarios. Even areas that are strengths for people in one context may not be in another. Being aware of and strengthening communication skills will be an asset in many areas of your life. It is important that you remember that making small changes in your communication skills can make a big difference in your work, home and school.

In this chapter you will learn about styles of communication, barriers to communication, and several aspects of good communication skills. As you learn about them, try to apply them in your real life circumstances.

### Learning Objectives

In this chapter on “Communication Skills,” students will:

- Demonstrate active listening skills.
- Ask effective questions to facilitate understanding.
- Apply communication strategies in educational settings.
- Demonstrate the value and strengths of team and group work.

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## 4.1 Active Listening

Being a good communicator involves not only being good at speaking. Listening is an essential part of communication and is often the weakest link in the communication process. People usually love to be heard but are often not as excited about listening. Active listening is being engaged as a listener, not just hearing the words.

Are you a good listener? Most of us like to think we are, but when we really think about it, we recognize that we are often only half-listening. We're distracted, thinking about other things, or formulating what we are going to say in reaction to what we are hearing before the speaker has even finished. Effective listening is one of the most important learning tools you can have in college or university. And it is a skill that will benefit you on the job and help your relationships with others. Listening is nothing more than purposefully focusing on what a speaker is saying with the objective of understanding.



*Active listening requires focus and attention.*

This definition is straightforward, but there are some important concepts that deserve a closer look. “Purposefully focusing” implies that you are actively processing what the speaker is saying, not just letting the sounds of their voice register in your senses. “With the objective of understanding” means that you will learn enough about what the speaker is saying to be able to form your own thoughts about the speaker’s message. Listening is an active process, as opposed to hearing, which is passive.

Being an active listener takes concentration and work. The principles of active listening are not hard to understand, but they are hard to implement and require practice to use them effectively.

### Principles of Active Listening

1. Focus on what is being said. Give the speaker your undivided attention. Clear your mind of anything else. Don't prejudge. You want to understand what the person is saying; you don't need to agree with it.
2. Repeat what you just heard. Confirm with the speaker that what you heard is what they said.
3. Ask the speaker to expand or clarify. If you are unsure whether or not you understand, ask questions; don't assume.
4. Look for nonverbal signals as well as the words used. Nonverbal messages come from facial expressions, body positioning, arm gestures, and tone of voice. Confirm these body language messages just as you would verbal messages by saying, for example, "You seem very excited about this idea."
5. Listen for requests. A speaker will often hide a request as a statement of a problem. If a friend says, "I hate math!" this may mean, "Can you help me figure out a solution to this problem?"

### Exercise: Listening with Your Whole Body

Make two lists.

Think of a person you consider an excellent listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what they do, not what they are saying. Describe what actions and postures they use to show they are listening. Use these items to create your first list.

Think of a person you consider a poor listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what they do, not what they are saying. Describe what actions and postures they use to show they are not listening. Use these items to create your second list.

Now compare these lists with your own behaviour. How many of the body language signals from each side do you think you exhibit? How can you add more of the attitudes and actions in the first list to your own behaviours? How can you control those behaviours you recognize in yourself from the second list?

Active listening should accomplish two things:

1. Listening for understanding (i.e. the listener fully understands the speaker.)
2. Conveying to the speaker that you are really listening (i.e. the speaker feels understood.)

Active listening involves the following:

- Waiting for the speaker to finish speaking before responding; don't interrupt.
- Asking questions and asking for clarification about what the speaker is saying.

- Reiterating in your own words what you think they meant in order to clarify meaning and understand intentions.
- Paying attention to body language, gestures, and tone of voice.
- Focusing and giving undivided attention; avoid distractions.
- Showing sensitivity to the speaker's point of view.
- Being attentive to the speaker, which is demonstrated through eye contact, body language, and facial expressions.

For example, leaning in toward a speaker shows interest in what the speaker is saying, as opposed to leaning away and crossing arms. Crossing arms can be interpreted as rejection of the message (though this can be confusing as sometimes it may just mean the listener is feeling cold). Smiling and nodding indicates that you are following what the speaker is saying and that you are interested to hear more.



*Active listening is so much more than hearing words.  
Who would you rather be talking to?*

Even if the listener doesn't agree with the speaker, it is important to acknowledge that the speaker has a right to their point of view, their ideas and their feelings. Be respectful of others' opinions, and keep in mind that cultural differences can impact beliefs, values, and communication styles. Signs of distraction include looking away, humming, doodling, checking your phone, texting, or surfing the web. This communicates that you are uninterested in what the speaker is saying.

Meaningful conversations can't happen if one side is not listening effectively. The following are some examples of responses that stimulate meaningful understanding.

- **Show interest** to encourage further discussion. Use expressions like:
  - I haven't looked at it like that before...
  - That's a great point...
  - Can you tell me more about...?
- **Show empathy** by being sensitive to the speaker's feelings. Use expressions like:
  - It appears that you...
  - I get the feeling that you...

- I can see you feel quite strongly about this...
- I can imagine how upsetting (frustrating/hard/emotional) that must have been...
- **Demonstrate understanding** of what has been said by rephrasing the message in your own words. Use expressions like:
  - So what I think you're saying is...
  - Tell me if I'm understanding what you mean. I think you're ultimately saying that...
  - So you mean that...
- **Avoid evaluating** the message unless you are asked for your opinion. Avoid expressions like:
  - Well that seems a bit over the top.
  - That's ridiculous.
  - I think you are over-reacting.
  - That seems pretty judge-y.

Comments like these put the speaker in a defensive mode. They can be insulting and can inhibit further discussion.

In general, you want to encourage speakers to be able to openly share their message. The more strategies that you use for active listening, the more the speaker will be able to freely share the message, and the more likely you are to be able to truly understand the message. After all, isn't that the making of good communication?

These strategies are not only useful in one-on-one conversations; they are also useful in educational settings such as listening to lectures in class, listening to lab assistants and fellow students in lab activities, and listening in group work projects. Even in a lecture, if you are busy playing with your phone, or checking your email, you not only convey to the speaker that you are not interested, but you are also distracted from clearly hearing the message. People think that they can multi-task, but in reality they are missing a lot of the message when they are busy doing other things. Furthermore, if you try to look interested, you likely will be more interested. If you sit attentively, you likely will be more attentive. Practice active listening skills in your various classes and educational activities.

Listening in a classroom or lecture hall to learn can be challenging because you are limited by how—and how much—you can interact with an instructor during the class. The following strategies help make listening at lectures more effective and learning more fun.

1. **Get your mind in the right space.** Prepare yourself mentally to receive the information the speaker is presenting by following the previous prep questions and by doing your assignments (instructors build upon work presented earlier). Being prepared for class will help you listen more actively.
2. **Get yourself in the right space.** Sit toward the front of the room where you can make eye contact with the instructor easily. It will also help to have less distractions to focus on active listening. As an added bonus, instructors often believe students who sit near the front of the room take their subject more seriously and consequently they are more willing to give these

students help when needed or to give them the benefit of the doubt when making a judgment call while assigning grades.

3. **Focus on what is being said.** Eliminate distractions. Turn your cell phone off and pack it away in your backpack. If you are using your laptop for notes, close all applications except the one that you use to take notes. Clear your mind and keep quiet. Listen for new ideas. Think like an investigative reporter: you don't just want to accept what is being said passively—you want to question the material and be convinced that it makes sense.
4. **Look for signals.** Each instructor has a different way of telling you what is important. Some will repeat or paraphrase an idea; others will raise (or lower) their voices; still others will write related words on the board. Learn what signals your instructors tend to use and be on the lookout for them. When they use that tactic, the idea they are presenting needs to go in your notes and in your mind—and don't be surprised if it appears on a test or quiz!
5. **Listen for what is not being said.** If an instructor doesn't cover a subject, or covers it only minimally, this signals that that material is not as important as other ideas covered in greater length.

**A note about recording lectures:** You may want to record a lecture to double-check what you heard in class, but do it with caution. If you know you are recording the lecture, it may lead you to listen less effectively and think less actively. Additionally, some instructors do not allow students to record their lectures. At any rate, if you record lectures, listen actively the first time, and then use the recording for review, further clarification, and deeper understanding.

## Dealing with Special Listening Challenges

What to do if...

- **Your instructor speaks too fast.** Crank up your preparation. The more you know about the subject, the more you'll be able to pick up from the instructor. Exchange class notes with other students to fill in gaps in notes. Visit the instructor during office hours to clarify areas you may have missed. You might ask the instructor—very politely, of course—to slow down, but habits like speaking fast are hard to break!
- **Your instructor has a heavy accent.** Sit as close to the instructor as possible. Make connections between what the instructor seems to be saying and what they are presenting on the board or screen. Ask questions when you don't understand. Visit the instructor during office hours; the more you speak with the instructor the more likely you will learn to understand the accent.
- **Your instructor speaks softly or mumbles.** Sit as close to the instructor as possible, and try to hold eye contact as much as possible. Check with other students if they are having problems listening, too; if so, you may want to bring the issue up with the instructor. It may be that the instructor is not used to the lecture hall your class is held in and can easily make adjustments.

## Exercise: Active Listening Responses

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Active listening involves:
  1. interrupting the speaker to find out more information
  2. giving the speaker undivided attention
  3. making occasional eye contact with the speaker while you are multi-tasking
  4. lounging back to stay comfortable while listening
2. Which statement is an effective way to initiate a response?
  1. I strongly disagree...
  2. I understand why you might feel that way, but have you considered...
  3. Wow, that reminds me of the time that...
  4. I don't get it.

## Exercise: Listening Treasures

Watch this TED Talks video clip and use your active listening skills to truly hear his message. Then answer the following questions.

1. What 3 types of listening does the speaker discuss?
2. How and why have we been “losing our ability to listen,” as the speaker suggests? He cites 5 ways.
3. What are the 5 tools we can use to listen better?

**Video:** “5 ways to listen better | Julian Treasure” (length 7:42)



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<https://opentextbc.ca/studentsuccess/?p=105#oembed-1> (#oembed-1)

### Exercise: Active Listening Practise and Analysis

Practise your active listening skills this week. Then report on a situation that happened. Briefly describe the situation, and then describe which active listening skills you used and how effective they were. In hindsight, were there any others which maybe should have been used as well? Did you resort to using ineffective communication skills from habit? Note you will be marked on your ability to recognize and analyze the use of active listening skills (not on how well you did in the situation).

Your assignment should be approximately half to a full typed page double-spaced.

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## 4.2 Effective Questions



*A questioning mind contributes to student success.*

Part of learning is being an active learner. Learning which only involves being fed information is merely surface learning. To really understand, a learner has to be actively engaged in the learning process. That means reviewing, practising, summarizing, and yes, asking effective questions. Asking questions requires thinking about the information and trying to understand it at a deeper level. By forming questions, you will understand things more fully. When you are learning new information or a new process, imagine that you are having to describe it to someone else. What parts of the information or process aren't entirely clear to you? These are the things to ask questions about.

Remembering the 5 Ws and H is a good place to start. If you have a handle on these then you'll be on your way to understanding the important information. If you aren't familiar with the 5 Ws and H, then it's time to add it to your repertoire: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How!

- **Who** – Who was involved? Who does it affect? Who is it addressed to?
- **What** – What is involved? What happened? What needs to happen?
- **When** – When did it happen? When will I need to do something about it?
- **Where** – Where did it occur? Where will it take place?
- **Why** – Why is it happening? Is there a reason?
- **How** – How should it be dealt with?

Start using this in your everyday life. Whenever you send out any kind of communication, it's a great tool to make sure you haven't left out any information. For example, it's common that just after the invites for a party are sent out, the host realizes they left off a critical piece of information such as the date. Those who get in the habit of checking the 5 Ws and H rarely make this critical mistake. In the party invitation, if the host makes sure to include them all then the pertinent info is covered:

- **Who** – Who is invited? Who is the party for?
- **What** – What is it? – It's a birthday party.
- **When** – Give the date.

- Where – Give the address.
- Why – it’s a birthday!
- How – Bring an appy, bring an expensive gift, don’t be late – it’s a surprise.

When you make a habit of using them, you’ll notice you start thinking about them in class as well. You’ll think about them when you’re reading your texts and research articles, and you’ll naturally start to have a questioning mind. Asking effective questions leads to further clarification and greater understanding. Asking effective questions helps you to analyze and think critically. These are important processes in learning.

#### Exercise: Effective Questioning Using 5 Ws and H

Choose a topic you are learning about. It can be a topic you are learning in a course, or it can be something you are interested in learning more about, such as a health issue, an activity you would like to take up, or an environmental issue. Once you have chosen the topic, use the 5 Ws and H model to formulate questions that pertain to the topic. Note that all 6 may not be pertinent for every topic, but if one or more of them don’t apply, just make a note of that so you know you’ve thought it through. These questions may evoke further questions you have about the topic; note them as well if applicable.

## Effective Questioning Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

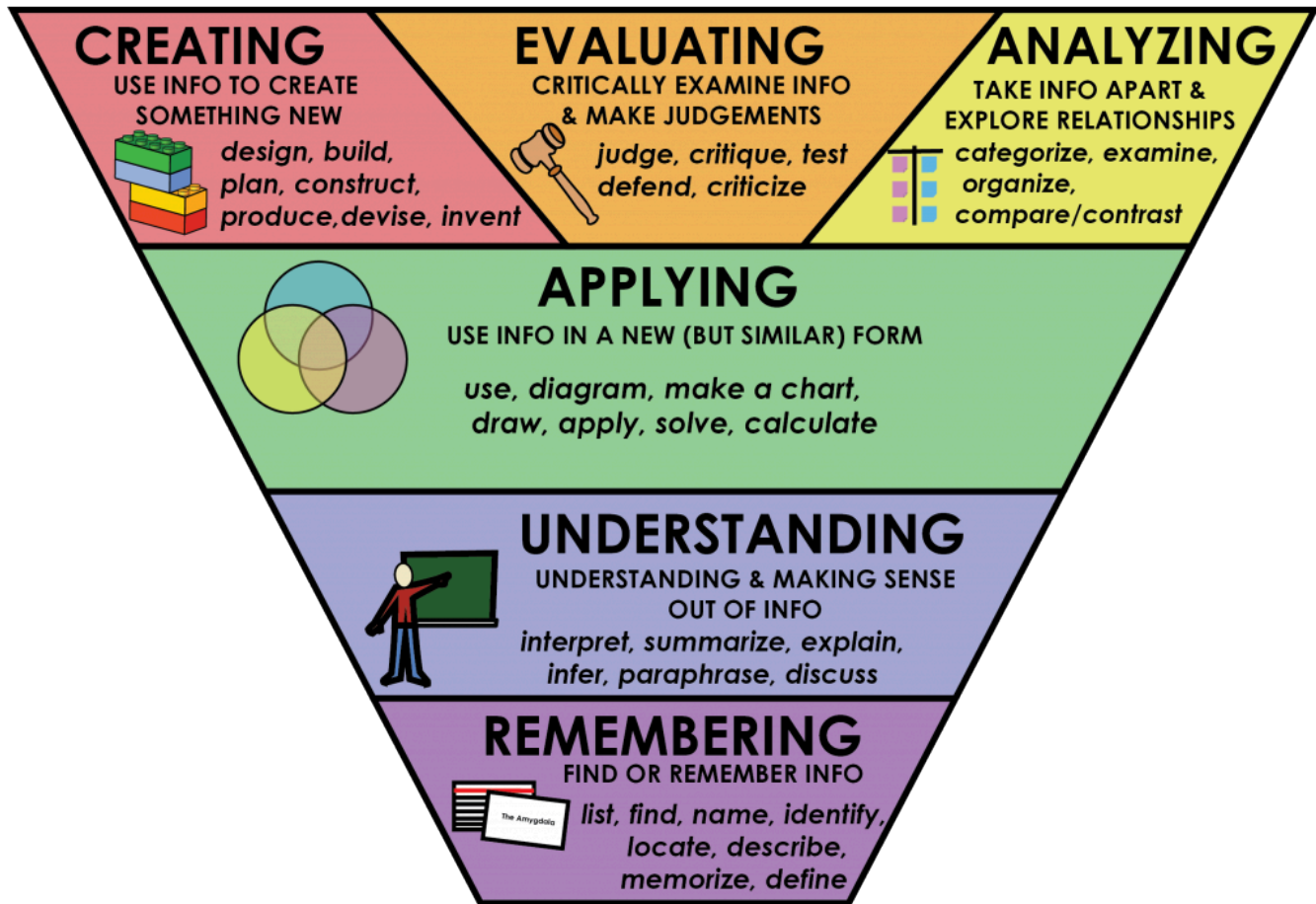
Self-testing is one of the most powerful study strategies. Creating good questions requires you to think critically about what you need to learn (planning). Testing whether you can answer questions without referring to a text or notes, as you would in an exam, allows you to effectively monitor your progress. The trick to effective self-testing is asking the right questions.

One way of picturing these levels of depth in learning is Bloom’s Taxonomy. In high school level courses, you are usually asked questions from near the bottom of Bloom’s Taxonomy scale, while at college or university, you are required to move beyond recalling basic facts and details, and must learn to apply and analyze material in depth moving to the higher levels on Bloom’s scale. The categories in the cognitive taxonomy developed by Bloom (from lowest to highest) include:

1. **Remember** (knowledge recall) – retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory
2. **Understand** (comprehension) – interpreting the meaning of information; being able to “translate” knowledge into one’s own words; linking new information to what you already know
3. **Apply** – using what you know to do required tasks
4. **Analyze** – taking things apart; dissecting; asking “why?”; seeing relationships and how things work
5. **Evaluate** – appraising, judging and critiquing the outcomes of any of the other levels
6. **Create** (synthesis) – putting things together; building on what you know to create something

new; seeing new relationships or making new connections.<sup>1 2</sup>

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY



One method for creating study questions or planning active learning activities is to move step-by-step through each level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Begin with a few questions at the *Remembering* level. If you don't yet know the technical language of the subject and what it means, it will be difficult for you to apply, evaluate, analyze, or be creative. Then, go deeper into your subject as you move through the levels.

Exercise: Create Study Questions Using Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy

Download the Bloom's Taxonomy Printable Worksheet [PDF] to complete this activity or use the table below.

1. Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Longman.
2. Bloom, B., Englehart, M. Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain*. New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green.

Pick a subject area in which you are working. For each level of Bloom's Taxonomy on this page:

- Develop a question and answer it to show that you can think about the material at that level.
- Then, working with a partner and using the chart below, explain the questions at each level of Bloom's taxonomy for this subject area to a partner and listen to them do the same.
- Discuss how your questions would allow you to assess how much you know and what level you are working at.

**Create study questions using Bloom's Taxonomy**

Level	Question
Remembering	Remembering and recalling information My question(s):
Understanding	Understanding and explaining ideas or concepts My question(s):
Applying	Applying information in a familiar situation My question(s):
Analyzing	Analyzing by breaking information into parts to explore relationships My question(s):
Evaluating	Justifying a decision or course of action My question(s):
Creating	Generating new ideas, products, or ways of viewing things My question(s):

You will notice that depending on the content and level of the course, the kinds of questions that are relevant and the complexity of the questions will differ. At any rate, it is a mark of an active learner to be questioning material, and to ask questions when needed.

**Now that's a good question...**

Are you shy about asking questions? Do you think that others in the class will ridicule you for asking a dumb question? Students sometimes feel this way because they have never been taught how to ask questions. Practise these steps, and soon you will be on your way to customizing each course to meet *your* needs and letting the instructor know you value the course.

- **Be prepared.** Doing your assignments for a class or lecture will give you a good idea about the areas you are having trouble with, and will help you frame some questions ahead of time.
- **Position yourself for success.** Sit near the front of the class. It will be easier for you to make eye contact with the instructor as you ask the question. Also, you won't be intimidated by a class full of heads turning to stare at you as you ask your question.
- **Don't wait.** Ask your questions as soon as the instructor has finished a thought. Being one of the first students to ask a question also will ensure that your question is given the time it deserves and won't be cut short by the end of class.
- **In a lecture class, write your questions down.** Make sure you jot your questions down as they occur to you. Some may be answered in the course of the lecture, but if the instructor asks you to hold your questions until the end of class, you'll be glad you have a list of the items you need the instructor to clarify or expand on.
- **Ask specific questions.** "I don't understand" is a statement, not a question. Give the instructor guidance about what you are having trouble with. "Can you clarify the use of the formula for determining velocity?" is a better way of asking for help. If you ask your question at the end of class, give the instructor some context for your question by referring to the part of the lecture that triggered the question. For example, "Professor, you said the Union troops were emboldened by Lincoln's leadership. Was this throughout the Civil War, or only after Gettysburg?"
- **Don't ask questions for the sake of asking questions.** If your question is not thought out, or if it appears that you are asking the question to try to look smart, instructors will see right through you!

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### Text Attributions

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## 4.3 Communication Strategies in Educational Settings

There are numerous instances in educational settings that communication strategies are needed. Some include:

- Listening and learning from lectures.
- Communicating understanding of topics through written assignments and tests.
- Working with lab partners.
- Working on group projects.
- Reading textbooks, academic journals, and other resource material, and having the ability to paraphrase, communicate key points, summarize, and explain concepts to others.
- Making presentations.
- Communicating on practicums.
- Showing discernment in what, when, where, and how it is appropriate to communicate specific things.



Communicating in educational settings involves both receiving information and conveying information. Receiving information involves skills such as active listening and note-taking. Conveying information involves skills such as academic writing and presentation skills.



Most of the situations listed above are dealt with in detail in other parts of this textbook. For example, listening and learning from lectures is dealt with previously in this chapter in Chapter 4.1 Active Listening, and note-taking is dealt with in Chapter 5.6 Note Taking. Making presentations is dealt with in Chapter 11 Presentation Skills. Strategies for receiving information through reading textbooks, academic journals, and other resource material are described in Chapter 5.3 Navigate Textbooks. Communication strategies are embedded throughout this textbook. Use the Table of Contents to find appropriate strategies for communication strategies in varying educational settings.

#### Exercise: Communications Strategies in Educational Settings

Choose a topic from the above list and describe some communications strategies that would be important to use in this setting.



## 4.4 Team and Group Work

Working in groups is a necessary and important skill. We will find ourselves having to work in groups in various situations—at home, at work, at play, and at school. When we find ourselves working in groups—whether in a formal or informal situation—certain things tend to happen. Often the natural leaders will emerge to provide guidance and direction, and those who are natural followers will act accordingly. Conflicts will inevitably occur, as people have different visions for the outcome.

Working in groups in educational settings is a common occurrence. Instructors often require group work because it is such an important skill, particularly moving forward into the workplace. Working on labs together, group project work, group assignments, even online group work with classmates who are all over the world, are all standard situations. Getting along is important, but working effectively together can make a better project when each team member contributes according to their strengths, resulting in a better project than each could have done on their own.



*Working together brings fresh ideas.*

Working in groups has advantages and disadvantages and works better in some situations than others. Here are some reasons why you might choose to work alone or in a group:

### Working alone versus working in groups

Working Alone	Working in Groups
Free to make all the decisions	Can collaborate
Can use your own methods	Can share responsibility
Can be creative	Can share ideas and talents
Can do things on own time schedule	Can spread the workload

No disagreements	A more sociable way to work
No compromising – can do everything your way	Able to do something bigger and better
Can take all the credit	Can demonstrate ability to work in teams

## Effective Working Groups



*Mountain Adventure Skills Training students working on a project together at College of the Rockies*

Groups that work effectively have the following characteristics:

- The atmosphere is relaxed, engaged, open, comfortable and non-threatening.
- Group members share a sense of purpose or common goals that each member is willing to work toward. The tasks or objectives are understood and accepted by everyone. There is free discussion leading to group commitment and no hidden agendas.
- The group is concerned not only with the task, but also with its own processes and operating procedures. The group periodically evaluates its performance.
- The group members use one another as a resource. Roles are balanced and shared to ensure that the tasks are accomplished and that group cohesion and morale are enhanced. The group comes up with clear assigned tasks for people in the group.
- Communication is clear, direct, open and honest. Group members continually try to listen to and clarify what is being said, and show interest in what others say and feel. They feel freedom to build on each other's ideas. Differences of opinion are encouraged and freely expressed.

- The group focuses on problem solving rather than expending energy on competitive struggles or interpersonal issues. The group is willing to deal with conflict, and focus on it until it is resolved or managed in a way that does not reduce the effectiveness of the group and its members. Confrontation is accepted as a challenge to examine one's behaviour or ideas. It is not viewed as an uncaring personal attack.
- Mistakes are seen as sources of learning rather than reasons for punishment. This encourages creativity and risk taking.
- Conflict is seen as natural, even helpful. People work through problems together.
- The group has a clear set of expectations and standards for the behaviour of group members.
- The group that understands developing a climate of trust is important. In order to trust one another, individuals in a group must understand and get to know one another.



*Effective, comfortable groups can accomplish a lot.*

## Stages in Group Formation

Groups that form to accomplish a certain goal go through stages in getting to that goal. It's not a bad thing that conflict happens along the way. In fact, it's almost inevitable. How people handle the conflict will determine whether or not the process is a positive and successful one.

In the video *Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing*, the narrator describes Bruce Tuckman's simple model to explain the stages of team formation. Watch the video below to learn about the stages for group process:

**Video:** "Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing: Bruce Tuckman's Team Stages Model Explained" (length 1:58)



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### Exercise: Groups

Think about some of the groups that you are involved in. What qualities do you have that helps in the group process? Is the group effective? What qualities of an effective team does your group have?

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## 4.5 Chapter Review and Activities

The importance of good communication skills cannot be over-emphasized. They are relevant in all situations whether educational, personal, or work situations. Think about practising good strategies for communication and keep checking yourself. It is not uncommon to start thinking you are finally getting good at it, and then make a huge faux pas. Reviewing strategies for active listening, asking effective questions, and implementing effective teamwork are needed regularly.

### Exercise: Communication Skills

1. List two things you should do before the class to prepare yourself for active listening.
2. Where should you sit in the classroom? Why?
3. What are some of the ways instructors signal important material?
4. Name the 5 Ws and H.
5. List two characteristics of effective teamwork that you could improve upon and integrate into your next group assignment.

### Key Takeaways

- In all interactive learning situations, apply the basic principles of active listening.
- Focus on what is being said, confirm that you heard the right message, ask for any clarification you need, watch for nonverbal messages, listen for requests, and demonstrate non-verbal listening.
- Specific strategies are helpful for listening well in a lecture hall.
- Be ready to compensate if your instructor speaks too fast, has a heavy accent that makes understanding difficult for you, or speaks too softly.
- Active listening involves understanding (receiving) and communicating understanding (conveying.) The listener understands the speaker and the speaker feels understood.
- Don't be shy about asking questions. Asking questions is easier when you are prepared and positioned for success.
- Using the 5 Ws and H (who, what, when, where, why, and how?) is always a good springboard for asking questions and testing understanding.
- Bloom's Taxonomy describes an increasingly complex level of understanding of concepts.

Questions can require higher levels of critical thinking as they move up the levels on the pyramid of Bloom's scale.

- There are distinct characteristics of efficient teams that make group work productive.
- Look for opportunities to work in teams and practice good teamwork skills.

#### Text Attributions

- Many of the key takeaways and exercise questions were adapted from “Are you really listening?” in *University Success* by N. Mahoney, B. Klassen, and M. D'Eon. Adapted by Mary Shier. CC BY-NC-SA.