

Unit II – Communication Skills

Communication skills for Engineering	Introduction, process, barriers, Types of Communication
	Talk on Emerging trends and importance of communication skills
	Overview of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills (LSRW)
	The techniques and usage of the interrelated LSRW skills
	The practical execution of LSRW Skills in Classroom and Lab

Emerging trends in communication

With the advancement of information & technology, there has been a lot of revolution in communication. Communication is one of the fundamental elements of the business. Customers, partners, remote employees are exactly the people you should be able to stay in touch with in 24/7 mode. So, what are the current trends in business communication in the digital world? ***Let's take a closer look at them.***

- 1) Internet of Things:
- 2) 5G Mobile Internet
- 3) Cloud services
- 4) Visible Light Communication
- 5) Augmented and Virtual Reality
- 6) Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In spite of the diverse technology advancement, the significance of good communication skills will always prevail in the industries. Developing communication skills can help many aspects of your life, from your professional career, to social gatherings, to your family life. In today's hectic world, we rely heavily on sharing information, resulting in greater emphasis being placed on having good communication skills.

Good verbal and written communication skills are essential in order to deliver and understand information quickly and accurately. Being able to

communicate effectively is a vital life skill and should not be overlooked. On the other hand, poor communication skills can have a negative impact - a poorly delivered message may result in misunderstanding, frustration and in some cases disaster.

Communication can be defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning. To communicate well is to understand, and be understood. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- **Verbally** - your voice
- **Visually** - e.g., images, graphs, maps, infographics
- **Non-verbally** - e.g., body language, eye contact, gestures
- **Written** – e.g. books, websites, emails

Importance of communication skills

1) Valued at workplace:

Communication skills are needed to speak appropriately with a wide variety of people whilst maintaining good eye contact, demonstrate a varied vocabulary and tailor your language to your audience, listen effectively, present your ideas appropriately, write clearly and concisely, and work well in a group. Many of these are essential business skills that employers seek.

2) In demand by businesses:

Oral and written communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer. The 5 most expected skills by the industry are communication skills with proficiency in oral & written skills, team work, critical thinking, analytical thinking and organising abilities. Hence, *Communication skills are among the most in-demand skills for employers.*

3) Helps your career progression:

You will need to request information, discuss problems, give instructions, work in teams, interact with colleagues and clients. If you are to achieve co-operation and effective teamwork, good human relations skills are essential. Also, as the workplace is also becoming more global, there are many factors to consider if you are to communicate well in such a diverse environment.

4) Allows you to speak concisely:

It is natural to feel nervous while speaking to clients, customers or to your superiors. Communication skills training will help you learn how best to communicate effectively in a wide range of situations, and how to be direct in order to get the most out of your dealings with others.

5) Builds better rapport with customers & colleagues:

Customers desire nothing more than to be understood by a company and they wish to feel like they are being heard and listened to. This is a particularly important point if your business involves a large amount of contact with customers, either face-to-face or over the phone. Similarly, interaction with colleagues and peers equally holds immense importance in order to have cordial team working environment in the organisation / at work place. Good communication skills helps to establish mutual understanding among colleagues & management.

6) Enhances your professional image:

In your career, you will represent your business or company in spoken and written form. Your professionalism and attention to detail will reflect positively on you and set you up for success.

Communication Process:

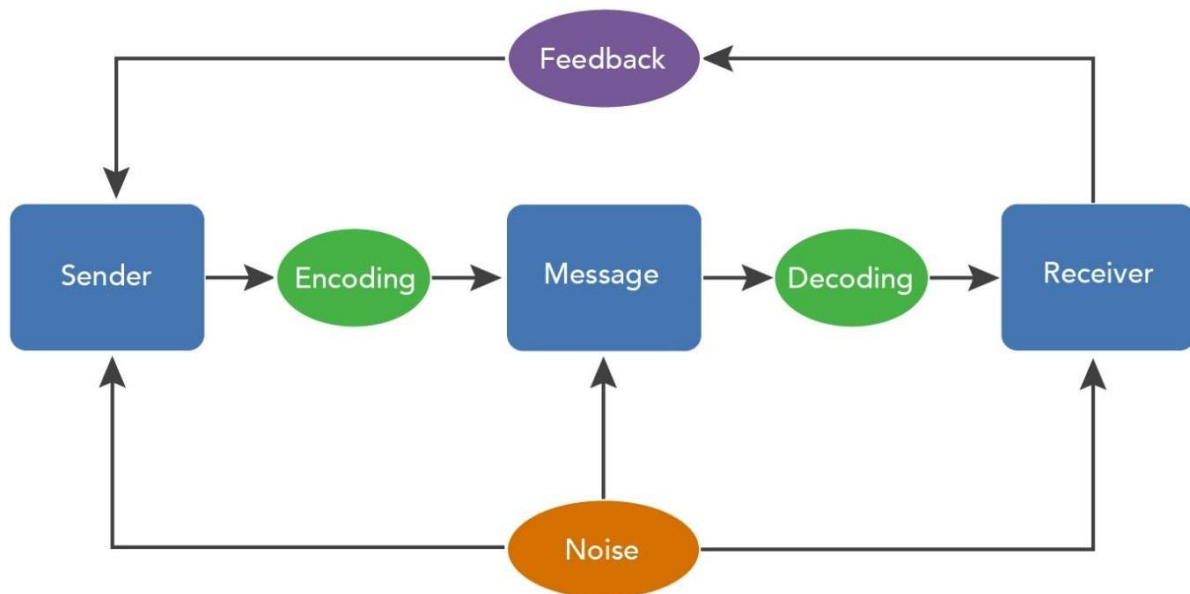
The elements involved in the communication process are explained below in detail:

- 1) **Sender:** The sender or the communicator generates the message and conveys it to the receiver. He is the source and the one who starts the communication
- 2) **Message:** It is the idea, information, view, fact, feeling, etc. that is generated by the sender and is then intended to be communicated further.
- 3) **Encoding:** The message generated by the sender is encoded symbolically such as in the form of words, pictures, gestures, etc. before it is being conveyed.
- 4) **Media:** It is the manner in which the encoded message is transmitted. The message may be transmitted orally or in writing. The medium of communication includes telephone, internet, post, fax, e-mail, etc. The choice of medium is decided by the sender.
- 5) **Decoding:** It is the process of converting the symbols encoded by the sender. After decoding the message is received by the receiver.
- 6) **Receiver:** He is the person who is last in the chain and for whom the message was sent by the sender. Once the receiver receives the

message and understands it in proper perspective and acts according to the message, only then the purpose of communication is successful.

- 7) **Feedback:** Once the receiver confirms to the sender that he has received the message and understood it, the process of communication is complete.

During the process of communication, it is quite possible to experience certain barriers for eg; Noise.



Barriers to Communication

1) Semantic Barriers

These are concerned with the problems and obstructions in the process of encoding and decoding of a message into words or impressions. Normally, such barriers result due to use of wrong words, faulty translations, different interpretations, etc.

- 2) **Psychological Barriers:** There are various mental and psychological issues that may be barriers to effective communication. Some people have stage fear, speech disorders, phobia, depression etc. All of these conditions are very difficult to manage sometimes and will most certainly limit the ease of communication.

- 3) **Physical Barriers to Communication:** They are the most obvious barriers to effective communication. These barriers are mostly easily removable in

principle at least. They include barriers like noise, closed doors, faulty equipment used for communication, closed cabins, etc.

4) Cultural Barriers of Communication: As the world is getting more and more globalized, any large office may have people from several parts of the world. Different cultures have a different meaning for several basic values of society. Hence it is a must that we must take these different cultures into account while communication. This is what we call being culturally appropriate.

5) Organizational Barriers: Rigid rules and regulations and cumbersome procedures may also become a hurdle to communication. Organizational structure, rules and regulations authority relationships, etc. may sometimes act as barriers to effective communication.

Measures to improve communication effectiveness:

1. Communication of Clarification of the idea.
2. Communication should be according to the needs of the receiver.
3. Consulting others before communication.
4. Awareness about the language, tone and body postures and gestures.
5. Convey information useful to the receiver.
6. Ensure proper feedback.
7. Follow up communications.
8. Be a good listener.

What is LSRW?

L-S-R-W is the **four skills of language learning**, a set of four capabilities that allow an individual to comprehend and produce spoken language for proper and effective interpersonal communication. These skills are **Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing**.

Why LSRW is necessary for students?

1. English is the dominant business language and it has become almost a necessity for people to speak English if they are to enter a global workforce or Higher education.
2. Mainly, in present market **placement patterns** are changed with the latest trends by including writing **assessments like Email writing**. To crack the latest placement students must be perfect in reading and writing assessments.
3. Currently, students who are very good in technical skills are lagging in communication. As communication plays very important role in workforce and higher education, students must be perfect in communication.
4. This LSRW skills platform provides a complete assistance for the students to get perfect in four skills of Language learning.

Why do engineers need to work on communication?

Engineers are known as problem solvers. But what they are not known for is the ability to communicate effectively. Engineers who can combine their technical skills with the ability to speak well are the ones who have higher earning potential. Engineering graduates require an ever-increasing range of skills to maintain relevance in the industry. Strong language & communication skills have become imperative as the engineering industry continues to evolve. Hence it is required that we maintain the standards of communication skills. An engineer's role is complex & technical.

When it comes to 21st-century skills, most organizations are looking for employees who can handle challenges, navigate conflicts, and communicate with impact. Communication is one of the most sought-after skills in the modern workplace. So, it makes sense to invest your time and effort into building these four skills. Whether you're a fresh graduate looking for your first job or a seasoned professional who wants to switch careers, LSRW abilities will help you transition smoothly.

Listening can be broadly classified into Active & Passive listening.

The main difference between active and passive listening is that active listening is listening and responding, but passive listening is listening without responding.

Listening is an essential component of any communication. If you don't listen well, you probably won't completely understand what is being communicated. **Active listening and passive listening are two ways we listen to people.** In active listening, the listener has to concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what was communicated. **In passive listening, on the other hand, the listener has to sit back quietly and absorb information.**

For eg; Active listening is used in counselling and solving conflicts and disputes.

Active listening is basically a two-way communication, and it requires a lot of attention, empathy and effort.

What is Passive Listening

Passive listening is basically hearing something without responding to it. When you are listening passively, you'll sit quietly without giving any response or reaction. For example, listening to music, watching the news, listening to a lecture, etc. In passive listening, there is a tendency of our mind moving to other topics from time to time; although you think that you are listening to something, you are not actually understanding what is being said. Therefore, passive listening is one-way communication.

Types of listening are further categorised

1. Casual listening
2. Focused listening
3. Critical listening
4. Appreciative listening
5. Empathetic listening
6. Selective listening
7. Assertive listening

How to develop effective listening skills?

1. Face the speaker & maintain eye contact
2. Be attentive, be relaxed
3. Keep an open mind
4. Ask questions to ensure understanding
5. Learn to summarise
6. Avoid multi tasking while listening to the speaker
7. Show care & empathy

Benefits of effective listening

1. Removes barriers between inter personal communication
2. Builds up trust & generates mutual respect
3. Develops confidence & self esteem
4. Facilitates accuracy & productivity
5. Makes you in much demand in personal or professional environment
6. Gives job satisfaction

Reading skills

What reading can do for your career? Reading is beneficial for your career. The benefits are plentiful. The more you read the more words you gain exposure to & these words can make your way into your everyday vocabulary. Being articulate & well-spoken will help you in any profession & knowing this, can be an enormous boost to your self-confidence & self-esteem.

While you read it is important that you have the ability to interpret the content; in short decode the message. Reading is another receptive skill like listening.

Let us understand the techniques of reading

Skimming: Skimming is sometimes referred to as gist reading where you're trying to glance over the material to grasp the main idea.

The way you do this is to read the first and last paragraph and check for any dark headings. Skimming can save you hours of hard reading. Skimming can help you to understand the general idea & tone of the material. Such type of reading can help you learn certain key words or terminologies, etc.

However, it is not always the most appropriate way to read. Because when you skim, you may miss important points or overlook the finer meanings of the message.

Scanning: The goal of scanning is to locate down on particular facts or precise information. So, this kind of reading is like you run your eyes over a text/message. Scanning requires higher understanding of word recognition compared to skimming.

Intensive: This involves reading the content in detail with specific learning aims. For eg; contracts, legal papers, project report, instruction manual. Hence, intensive reading requires complete concentration & focus. Intensive reading helps to strengthen vocabulary & language skills. It also helps to retain the information for a longer time.

Speaking skills: It is a common desire for all of us to speak the business language with ease. To do this we need to know **what skills are required to become a good speaker.**



Fluency: Fluency is all about how comfortably & confidently you are in speaking. If you can speak for an extended period of time, that will be an indicator of strong fluency skills. It also shows that a listener can follow what you are saying & does not get lost while listening.

Vocabulary: If you don't have words to say, then you cannot say it at all. Being a good speaker means constantly growing your vocabulary. The best way to grow your vocabulary is to read more.

Grammar: The fewer mistakes you make the better your speaking skills will be. A good speaker does not have to use perfect grammar. But it is a good idea to make sure that you have mastered your major tenses.

Pronunciation: Pronunciation is a complex area with a lot of sub skills that can be practical. The basic thumb rule is that a listener is able to understand you. Sub skills are words, sentence stress, intonation, rhythm & use of phonetics (sound of words)

To make your speaking impressive & impactful one must practice using more phrases. Eg; it's not a cakewalk, action speaks louder than words, not my cup of tea, best of both worlds, etc.

Writing skills: In today's information-overloaded world it is vital to communicate clearly, concisely & effectively. People don't have time to read lengthy & patience to read a badly constructed email. Good writing skills create professionalism & a sense of reliability among colleagues & employers. The ability to clearly communicate ideas through writing is in high demand for employers in any industry.

Why are writing skills important?

Writing skills are important because they allow people to get a point across without being physically present. Many employers get their first impression of future employees through the writing skills they display in their resume, cover letter, and email communications. Writing skills influence the quality of your work and how others perceive your professionalism, which can have a direct effect on your ability to get an interview and excel at work. Writing skills are transferrable, so developing a strong understanding of writing processes allows you to maintain clear communication and accurate documentation in any workplace.

Professional writing is a complex process that involves different skills for planning, drafting, and editing.

Tips on improving writing skills

1. **Audience & format:** The first step to writing clearly is choosing the appropriate format, depending on your audience (reader) for eg; do you need to send an informal email or write a detailed report to your seniors. The format as well as your audience will define your writing voice, ie; how formal or how relaxed the tone should be. Start by identifying who will read your email /message. For eg; if you write an email to a prospective client, should it have the same tone as an email to a friend? Definitely not.
2. **Composition & style:** Once you know what you are writing & to whom you are writing one can follow these guidelines.
 - a) Start with your audience
 - b) Create an outline of the content
 - c) Identify the main theme or purpose of the content
 - d) Structure – make it more reader-friendly by using headings & subheadings & bullet points

- e) Avoid grammatical mistakes otherwise you may look unprofessional.
- f) Proofread your content before you send the email.

Writing skills can be classified as formal & informal writing.

Formal writing is one that must be clear, properly framed and well organized. On the other hand, **Informal Writing** is often understood as casual writing, which uses colloquial language.

Both formal and informal writing is used in our day-to-day life but in different situations. We just need to think about the reader and the topic of your discussion, before choosing the writing style. When the topic is quite serious and objective, the formal writing style is suitable. It is also used when the write-up is addressed to some respectable person or institution.

On the other hand, informal writing is best suited when you are communicating with your family, friends, and acquaintances. Further, if the matter of discussion is not very serious, then also informal writing can be used,

Few words in formal & informal writing

Informal	Formal
Ask for	Request
Come after	Follow
Come up to	Reach, attain
Deal with	Manage
Look for	Seek
Think about	Consider
Lively	Energetic
Whole	Entire
Bring in	Introduce
Give up	Quit
Link up	Connect
Throw away	Discard

Techniques and usage of the interrelated LSRW skills

Listening: Listening is the primary learning skill. It is known as receptive or responsive ability, as it expects us to utilize our ears & mind to understand. Without the ability to listen adequately, the understanding will essentially fail.

Speaking: Speaking is the communication of learning orally. Speaking is the 2nd expertise form of learning. Speaking / talking means to communicate & express one's thoughts or perspective in spoken language.

Reading: Reading involves strategies that helps build our cognitive capacity. (learning)

Writing: Writing is the 4th language expertise we gain in our learning. The art to compose, arrange & organise thoughts on a given topic or reason. The significance of sequencing the idea & thought process is therefore necessary to acquire completeness & accuratness in writing.

Hence, this is how LSRW are inter-related skills.