

BONUS ACTIVITY (ONLINE ONLY)



The Communication Methodology

Learning skills: reading, using induction (going from specific to general), and making connections

WHY



The Communication Methodology is a tool for you to use to help you improve your use of the communication process. Skills and proficiency with a process can be greatly enhanced through study, practice, and assessment of the use of that process—in this case, transmitting a message to an audience. Strong communication skills make your dealings with people in all contexts more rewarding, enjoyable, and productive.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



1. Gain a better understanding of the Communication Methodology and how it can be used to develop proficiency with the process of communicating.
2. Learn to apply the Communication Methodology by analyzing it in the context of the given example.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA



CRITERION #1: your team's discoveries about the Communication Methodology

Attributes:

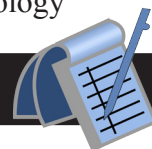
- a. demonstrates application; something more than statements of a fact
- b. unique from other teams' discoveries

CRITERION #2: the connections made between the case study and the Communication Methodology

Attributes:

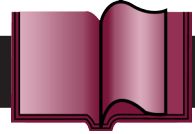
- a. complete, all the steps are accounted for
- b. accurate, the parts of the scenario are correctly linked to the steps in the methodology

PLAN



1. Read the case study describing a communication scenario.
2. Answer the Discussion Questions. Write three discoveries about the Communication Methodology made by your team as a result of answering these questions.
3. Demonstrate your understanding of the Communication Methodology by linking various parts of the case study to the components of the methodology.
4. Create an outline with all the steps of the Communication Methodology. Describe which parts of the case study correspond to each part of the methodology.

CASE STUDY



Dr. Murphy, a researcher, has been asked by her Alma Mater to give a guest lecture in Professor Farook's introductory physics class. She has been asked to lecture on the concept of mass.

Dr. Murphy has been told by Professor Farook that of the 200 students in the class, approximately half have had physics in high school and half have not. She assumes that most students will not have an avid interest in physics since the class is made up of students who are pursuing medicine as a discipline. She also knows that this is probably the only time the students will be exposed to the topic of her lecture, the concept of mass. Therefore, she would like to make the lecture as interesting and effective as possible.

Dr. Murphy knows that the topic of her lecture is the concept of mass. The purpose is to help the students understand the concept and build on it as the course progresses. The scope is a fifty-minute class period during which the concept must be presented (as the instructor of the class will be moving to a different topic at the beginning of the next class period).

Dr. Murphy, after discussion with Professor Farook, decides she will measure the understanding of the students by looking at their scores on an essay question about mass that will be posed on the next test the students take. Her objective is that 90 percent of the students get the essay question at least three quarters (75%) correct. She also plans to have the students fill out an evaluation at the end of the fifty minutes asking them if their attitude towards physics has changed by hearing her lecture. Her objective is for 15 percent of the students to say that their attitude has improved while the remaining 85 percent say it remains unchanged.

In addition to information in the textbook, Dr. Murphy gathers information from an article she has recently written about the different definitions of mass throughout history. The article discusses how different people discovered that the apparently different definitions of mass were actually defining the same concept. She feels comfortable that the class will readily accept her expertise in the area. She is, however, not sure of the dates that some of the definitive experiments took place, so she goes to the library to collect this information.

Dr. Murphy has been told by Professor Farook that she will be lecturing in a classroom that holds up to 400 students. The classroom has an overhead projector, microphone, and blackboard. Dr. Murphy decides she will use the blackboard and microphone to deliver the lecture.

Dr. Murphy wants to make sure her lecture is not a rehashing of what is already in the students' textbook. She decides to use material from her article, first explaining historically what has been meant by mass in physics. She will then describe the three apparently distinct mathematical definitions to describe mass. Finally, she will explain modern experiments that have been done to unify the three apparently different definitions. In order to see if there has been closure, she will allow time for the students to ask questions about the lecture, and then answer any questions posed.

Dr. Murphy asks Professor Farook to assign appropriate readings from the textbook before the lecture date, so that the students will have a basic understanding of the topic when they enter the classroom for her lecture. Dr. Murphy also asks Professor Farook to inform the class that she will be guest lecturing on the specified date, so that the students will be prepared and on time.

Before presenting the lecture to the students, Dr. Murphy borrows a camcorder and records herself giving the lecture to a phantom audience in the classroom where she will give the lecture. In doing this she finds that her writing on the blackboard is much too small to read in the back of the room. She also finds that the lecture, without any interruptions, runs 42 minutes long. She is satisfied with the length since she is sure there will be some questions. She decides however, to use overhead transparencies rather than the blackboard since she can make the projection of the transparencies larger than she can write on the blackboard.

Dr. Murphy begins her lecture while at the same time watching the reactions of the students. For the first 15 minutes of the lecture, the students, by their expressions and body language, seem to be understanding what she is discussing. After fifteen minutes, however, she notices that some of the students are losing interest, and several of the students in the very back of the room are talking to each other. She stops to ask if there are any questions before she continues. Three students have some questions that she answers, and then she continues with her lecture.

As the end of the class period draws near, Dr. Murphy assesses that many of the students are not paying attention and only a few are following the lecture as she is presenting it. She decides it is better to cover a little less of the modern history and leave some time at the end for clarifying and reiterating discussions so that more students will reach closure. She modifies her lecture in the last 20 minutes to make sure more students will have an understanding of what she has presented.

After having presented the lecture, Dr. Murphy receives the answers to the essay question along with the end-of-class surveys about the enthusiasm towards physics. She finds that fewer than half the students wrote a better than 75 percent essay on the concept of mass. The average value of the essay for the class was 60 percent. Of the 184 students who turned in the survey, twelve said they had more enthusiasm towards physics because of the lecture, 160 stated their attitude had not changed, ten stated they didn't know one way or another, and two stated that his/her enthusiasm went down because of the lecture.

Knowing these results, Dr. Murphy decides that the next time she needs to present this material, she will give the students detailed notes on the subject ahead of time, which they will be assigned to read. During the fifty minutes, she will pose questions about the readings that the students will answer. This way she can take more of the allotted time in-class to do a different type of communication that could work more effectively.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS



1. Why should a person collect information about the audience before proceeding any further with the Communication Methodology?

