

# Effective Workplace Communication

## Instructor's Guide

Third Edition

By

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## About This Instructor's Guide

This Instructor's Guide is designed to accompany the *Effective Workplace Communication* workbook. Though the exercises and activities are designed for use in a classroom or other group setting, most of them can also be used for individualized instruction or assigned as homework. This content is ideally suited for an instructional setting, though it can be easily modified to be used in a workshop or counseling setting as well.

*Effective Workplace Communication Instructor's Guide* is much more than an answer key for the exercises in the workbook. It also contains

- A **PowerPoint Overview** of each chapter, covering the chapter's main points and offering resources for further exploration.
- Additional **Activities** to expand each chapter's lesson and to provide students with a variety of classroom interaction.
- **Journal Assignments** for students to reflect on, which can be used as prewriting activities or modified to be either in-class or take-home essays.
- **Worksheets** that you can modify, photocopy, and distribute to students for self-practice.
- **Answer Keys** to the "Check It Out" and "Check Your Vocabulary" activities in the workbook as well as the worksheets in this guide.
- An additional **Review Quiz** to help assess students' comprehension of each chapter's main points.

Most of the materials in the Instructor's Guide are text-only documents. This is to allow teachers and administrators the chance to manipulate them and print them as they see fit. Please note that neither the author nor JIST Publishing is responsible for any added or modified content.

### About *Effective Workplace Communication*

*Effective Workplace Communication* introduces readers to the many ways that people interact with each other. It may be used to

- Make students or other users more aware of the importance of communication in both work and social situations.
- Help students or other users understand that communicating is accomplished through a variety of forms and channels.
- Help students or other users understand the evolving role that technology plays in the communication process and learn how to better use that technology to communicate.
- Help students or other users develop their communication skills by practicing them in an informal group situation.
- Make students or other users more aware of the differences in communication among people and show them how to respect those differences.

*Effective Workplace Communication* has been written to encourage readers to improve their communication skills in all aspects of life—at home, in social gatherings, at school, and especially in the workplace. Reading the text is important. Use the text as a basis for group discussion, and strive to provide time for student participation as you progress through each chapter.

## A Note to Teachers

*Effective Workplace Communication* was written for a variety of audiences. When used alongside the other resources in this Instructor's Guide, however, it is ideally suited to a classroom setting. Because it addresses effective communication skills both inside and outside of the workplace, it can be used in a variety of classes and curriculums. Instructors teaching a course on effective communication skills in general will benefit from reading the entire workbook. Those who are strictly focused on effective communication in the workplace may want to consider selecting key chapters or parts of chapters for their students to read and complete.

Regardless of the kind of class or the intended course objectives, the following hints and activities should prove useful to anyone teaching a course on effective communication skills for the first time. These strategies comprise just one way to prepare and introduce a course based around the *Effective Workplace Communication* workbook.

### Preparing to Teach

Begin your preparation by reading *Effective Workplace Communication* and doing each exercise from the student's viewpoint. Some of the answers are very distinctly correct. Others will involve students' opinions or life experiences. Your willingness to share your personal experiences will set an example for your students.

Because *Effective Workplace Communication* provides numerous opportunities for discussion, you may want to write some notes in the margins of your book. One of your students may share an experience that you may want to use in a future class.

Plan a basic schedule for class time. This will allow the class to run smoothly and keep on task. It will help in scheduling audio-visual equipment, special guests, field trips, and other extras. If the schedule is interrupted, do not panic. You can revise the schedule and continue from that point.

Prepare your teaching materials. You will probably have handouts to distribute. Check the resources in this Instructor's Guide for additional exercises and worksheets that you can use with your class. If you expect your students to do work outside of class time, you may prepare that information. Schedule guests, videos, field trips, and any other extra elements that you want to use.

Check out the classroom. Classroom temperature is important. It is difficult to concentrate when you are too hot or too cold. Learn where the thermostat is located in the classroom. Find out how and if you can adjust it. Lighting is also important. Know where the electric switches and outlets are located. If lights are not working, tell someone who is responsible for maintenance. Make sure that no one is facing a window that lets the sun glare into his eyes.

Think about the room arrangement. Be sure that students sit where they can see any visual you are using. Find a space where you feel comfortable. The classroom should focus on this area. You should be able to face the entire class and not have your back to anyone. Think about how you want the desks or tables and chairs arranged. If you plan to use small groups, consider how easily furniture can be moved to form these groups.

Pay attention to the noise level. Keep the classroom as quiet and free of interruptions as possible.

## Set Class Expectations

You need to communicate what you expect of the students. Decide what you will require from each one. Write out these specific requirements and prepare a copy for everyone. Some instructors have students sign this contract on the first class day and keep it on file.

You need to tell students what you expect concerning attendance. This may already be set by the institution, but students may need a reminder. If class begins at a particular time, state what that time is. Define what "being late to class" means. If being "in class" means being seated quietly, say so.

List the materials (book, pencils, pens, paper, and so on) that should be brought to each class meeting. Be specific about due dates for work done outside the classroom.

Set standards for conduct in the classroom. Students should be respectful in their treatment of themselves, fellow students, and you, the instructor. This is an important concept to instill with regards to effective communication.

## Set the Mood

You are the most important element in the class. Your attitude is contagious. Be enthusiastic. Be flexible. Listen to your students to learn their needs.

Be positive. Point out the strengths of individuals and the whole group. Be generous with sincere praise. Use criticism only if it cannot be avoided. If you need to criticize someone, find a way to do it privately. You are the key to the success of this learning experience, and your effective communication skills will be a model reflecting the content of the course itself.

## The First Class Meeting

Briefly introducing yourself is an excellent way to begin the first class session. Sharing the following information will help you develop a positive relationship with your students. The introduction could include

- Your name
- Facts about your personal or work life
- Interests or hobbies you have
- Something about your educational background
- Some humorous or relevant event involving you and your communications with others, especially if it happened in the workplace

Since you will be encouraging your students to participate and communicate throughout this course, set an example from the first moment of the class.

### *Introduce the Course*

A brief description of the purpose and procedures for the course will help the students understand your expectations. Talk about rules. Be specific and clear in explaining what you expect students to do and how they will be held accountable for these responsibilities.

Make sure that each person has a copy of *Effective Workplace Communication*. Read the title of the book. Have students brainstorm words that come to mind when they think about communication. List the words on an overhead or whiteboard.

Read the introduction of *Effective Workplace Communication* together. Discuss the different ways of communicating presented in the introduction. Check the list that the class made. Circle any words that appear both in the introduction and the list. Add any ways that are not already on the list.

Discuss the fact that communication is both sending and receiving messages. In order to communicate effectively, an individual must have the skills to do both.

### Additional Activity: Getting to Know Each Other

This activity will allow students to get to know each other in a small group. It will also help them feel more comfortable in sharing with the whole group later.

Divide the class into groups of four or five people. Ask the members of each group to introduce themselves, using the following information as it is appropriate for your class:

- Name
- Personal, family, or work life
- Special interests/hobbies/sports
- Reason for taking this course
- What you expect to learn in this course

List these topics on an overhead or a board for students to see during this activity. Encourage students to ask questions within their groups.

### *Additional Activity: Journaling*

You may want your class to keep a communications journal throughout the class, or you may use this activity as a one-time assignment. Keeping a journal throughout the course will give your class an opportunity to improve written communication skills.

Each entry should be three to four paragraphs, but never more than a page. You may want to assign a topic that relates to the communication skill being presented at that time. If you do not want to assign a topic, encourage students to write about a topic of their choosing to just express their thoughts. Since journals are personal, no one should be expected to share journal entries with the entire class.

This Instructor's Guide contains two or more ideas for class-related journal assignments for each chapter of *Effective Workplace Communication*. You may choose a journal assignment question from these suggestions or list all the suggestions and let each individual choose what he or she would like to write about.

To introduce journaling in your first class, ask the students to write three or four paragraphs dealing with the following questions. It is not necessary to answer every question. The questions may also be used to get students to think about their personal communication skills.

- Think of someone you find easy to talk with. Why is talking to this person easy?
- When do you find it most difficult to talk to another person? Why?
- How do you communicate at school? Whom do you communicate with? How have your communication skills affected your learning?
- How do you communicate on the job? Whom do you communicate with? How have your communication skills contributed to your success?
- How has technology changed the way you communicate? Do you feel it has made you a more or less effective communicator?

Remember that fostering discussion about journal topics or any other subject in *Effective Workplace Communication* will, in turn, help students improve their communication skills. As often as you can, encourage students to articulate their ideas, to negotiate through problems together, and to introduce questions and concerns for the whole class to work through. These exercises will help students better exercise the effective communication skills discussed in the workbook.

Most importantly, relax, be yourself, and try to have fun.