

Teaching Guide for a Communication Activity

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Overview

The Teaching Guide is a handout to guide academics in the implementation of a communication activity. This activity is based on the children's game, Chinese whispers. The purpose of this activity is that students experience different ways of communication such as active listening, verbal description of images, asking and answering questions, and drawing. And, moreover, that they experience the importance of an effective flow of communication within team members.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Communicate effectively (listen, describe images, ask and answer questions, and draw)
- Analyse, interpret, and transmit information provided in different means (verbal and visual)
- Reflect on self and peer communication performance

Organization and Structure

Time: 1 hour

Teaching Materials:

- The module setup
- The PowerPoint presentation
- An A4 paper and a pen/pencil per student
- A handout per student (p. 6)
- A case of colour pencils per group
- A questionnaire per student (p. 5)

Minimum number of students: 3

Maximum number of students: no limit, but more students require larger/different rooms or more observers

Observations: It is recommended large rooms or even different rooms for each group to avoid interaction and information spreading among groups; and the use of an observer per group to make sure that the rules of the activity are kept and to understand where communication does not properly work.

Teaching Method

The module is set in a student-centred way. It starts with a brief introduction to the importance of communication when working in teams. Afterwards, students are divided in teams of 5/6 people and participate in an interactive communication activity. This activity ends with students' reflections on their own and team communication performance during the activity.

Module Setup

Communication is the process of self-expression of feelings, information, and ideas, of active listening or showing understanding, and of giving and receiving feedback. In engineering education, communication is mostly restricted to oral presentation and written communication. However, communication is speaking, listening, writing, questioning, answering, and observing. So in this activity students will have the opportunity to experience this way of communication.

Communication is a key competence to engineers. Engineers spend most of their time communicating with technical and non-technical audiences. For example, engineers, who develop new leading edge products, need to communicate effectively to transmit their ideas, to involve the necessary staff and to recruit the necessary materials and investments. Engineers, who work on product optimization, must be able to clearly communicate with technical and non-technical colleagues as their work affects other departments within the company. Furthermore, engineers communicate constantly with customers to understand and fulfil their needs. Finally, engineers work in teams where effective communication is essential.

Body of the module:

Introduce the importance of communication when working in teams. Then describe the activity (slide 3 in the ppt material can help you to describe the roles and students to understand the steps involved in the activity):

- Role A: students have access to an image (*Figure 1*) for 10 minutes, and after that have 2 minutes to describe it verbally to role B;
- Role B: students receive the verbal description of 2 minutes from role A (cannot ask questions to role A), and will only verbally reply to questions from role C for 10 minutes;
- Role C: students have to draw the initial image given to role A and to do that they have 10 minutes to ask questions to role B.



Figure 1 - Image given to role A.

After that, divide students in equal or nearly equal groups and ask each group to split in 3 roles (A, B, and C).

Example: 21 students in class.

	Role A	Role B	Role C
Group 1	2 students	2 students	1 students
Group 2	2 students	2 students	1 students
Group 3	2 students	2 students	1 students
Group 4	2 students	2 students	2 students

Or

Group 1	3 students	2 students	2 students
Group 2	3 students	2 students	2 students
Group 3	3 students	2 students	2 students

At this moment, provide the materials to students: give to each student a handout (p.6), an A4 and a pen/pencil, and a case of colour pencils to each group (for role C).

After making groups and giving the materials, ask students from role B and C to leave the room. After 10 minutes, call students from role B to come in and after 2 minutes call role C.

At the end of the activity, lecturers show the original picture and the drawings to the whole class, and quickly compare the drawings with the original image by answering these questions:

- Are all the objects depicted in the drawing?
- Are the directions, dimensions, shapes, colours of the objects correct?
- What about the details, are they there?

Then, ask students to share for 10 minutes in their groups their experiences during the activity, and ask one student to share the group findings (give 10-15 minutes for sharing). You can give students the following questions to guide their discussion:

- How did you experience the activity?

- How was your communication within the role and from one role to the other?
- How was the performance of the group in general?
- Did you have a plan/strategy to describe image, to reply to questions, to make questions or to draw the image?
- Did the group manage the time?
- Did you all participate actively?

At the end of the activity a small questionnaire of 5 minutes can be delivered to students as formative assessment.

Assessment

Students can be assessed in terms of their drawings. The assessment criteria is present in the following table. Students receive 1 point for each fulfilled criteria.

Objects	Amount	Colour	Position	Details
<input type="checkbox"/> Tree	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle	<input type="checkbox"/> The tree on the left is the biggest (at the front) <input type="checkbox"/> The tree in the middle is the smallest (at the back) <input type="checkbox"/> The tree on the right is medium size (compared to the other two) <input type="checkbox"/> The trees on the left and middle have triangular tree tops <input type="checkbox"/> The tree on the right is circular
<input type="checkbox"/> Bull/cow	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom right	<input type="checkbox"/> Tail <input type="checkbox"/> Horns <input type="checkbox"/> Hair <input type="checkbox"/> Head to the right
<input type="checkbox"/> Fence	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom left	<input type="checkbox"/> Horizontal alignment <input type="checkbox"/> 4 horizontal wooden sticks <input type="checkbox"/> 2 vertical wooden sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> Grass	-	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Bottom	<input type="checkbox"/> ¼ of the image
<input type="checkbox"/> Ears of wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 bunches	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 bunch between the 2 trees on the left <input type="checkbox"/> 1 bunch on the right	<input type="checkbox"/> Each bunch has 3 ears of wheat
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Orange and yellow	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle	<input type="checkbox"/> Rounded mountains <input type="checkbox"/> Orange on the top and yellow on the bottom
<input type="checkbox"/> Sky	-	<input type="checkbox"/> Orange and yellow	-	<input type="checkbox"/> Orange on the top and yellow on the bottom

Another way to assess students is through a self-assessment questionnaire which should be delivered at the end of the activity.

Self- assessment questionnaire

Student Number: _____ Team: _____ Role (A, B, C): _____

1. Please indicate how was your communication skills in this activity?

- Very bad Bad Neither good nor bad Good Very Good

1.1. Explain briefly why.

2. What do you feel you can improve? (you can select more than one option)

- Pay attention to details
 Listen to others
 Ask questions
 Reply to questions
 Describe information
 Write down information
 Other. What? _____

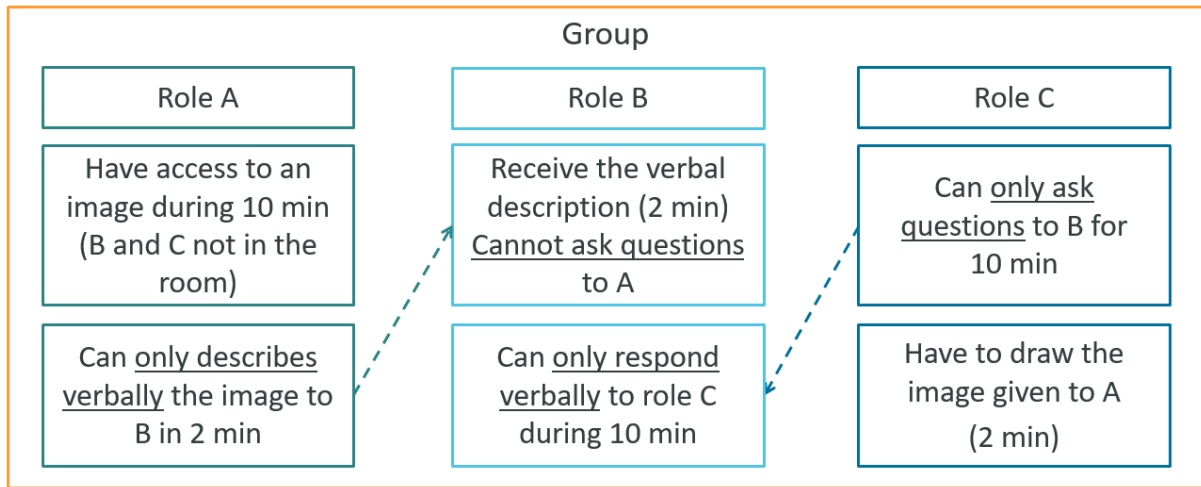
3. Do you feel that this activity helped you to understand the importance of communication?

- Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3.1. Explain briefly why.

Student Handout

Rules of the activity:



- All students can have a A4 white paper, a pen or pencil, and this handout
- Students of role C can have a case of coloured pencils (one per group)
- No passing notes are allowed
- Only one drawing is expected from each group

Note:

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