



Communication is Key!

Today's Discussion

Effective communication is key when working together as a team. It begins with shared expectations and trust.

Today we will cover:

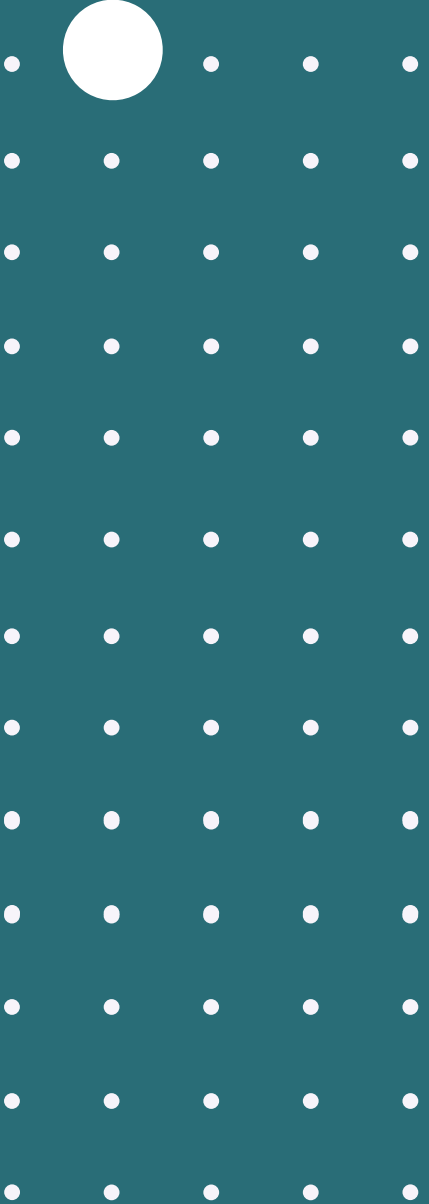
- Communication Basics
- Communication Protocols & Agreements for Boards



Definition:

The process of message transaction between two people to create and sustain shared meaning.





How much time do you spend communicating with others?

Communicating includes:

- Reading
 - Writing
 - Talking
 - Listening
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Answer: 70%



Reading: 16%



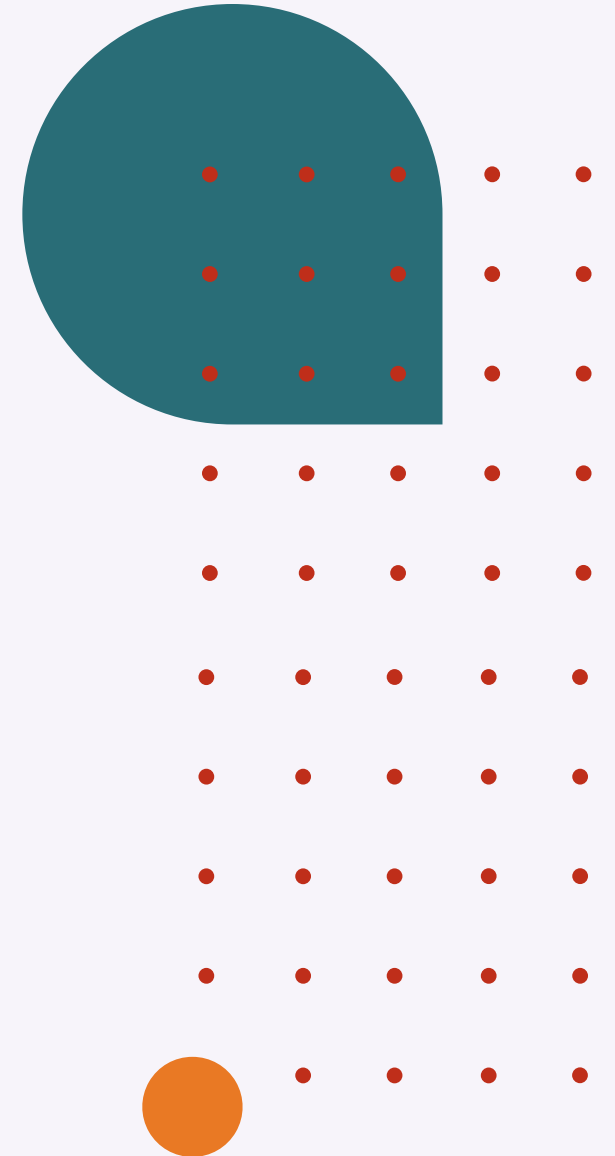
Writing: 9%



Talking: 30%



Listening: 45%



50 Communications Activities, Icebreakers, and Exercises, by Peter R. Garber. Amherst, MA, HRD Press, 2008.

Communication Maxims (Like Murphy's Law!)

- If communication can fail, it will.
- If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be understood in just that way which does the most harm.
- There is always somebody who knows better than you what you meant by your message.
- The more communication there is, the more difficult it is for communication to succeed.



These tongue-in-cheek maxims are not real principles; they simply humorously remind us of the difficulty of accurate communication.

(Osmo Wiio, Wiio's Laws--and Some Others (Espoo, Finland: Welin-Goos, 1978)



“I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant”

-Quote from a U.S. Government Official

Communicate More Effectively



Listen



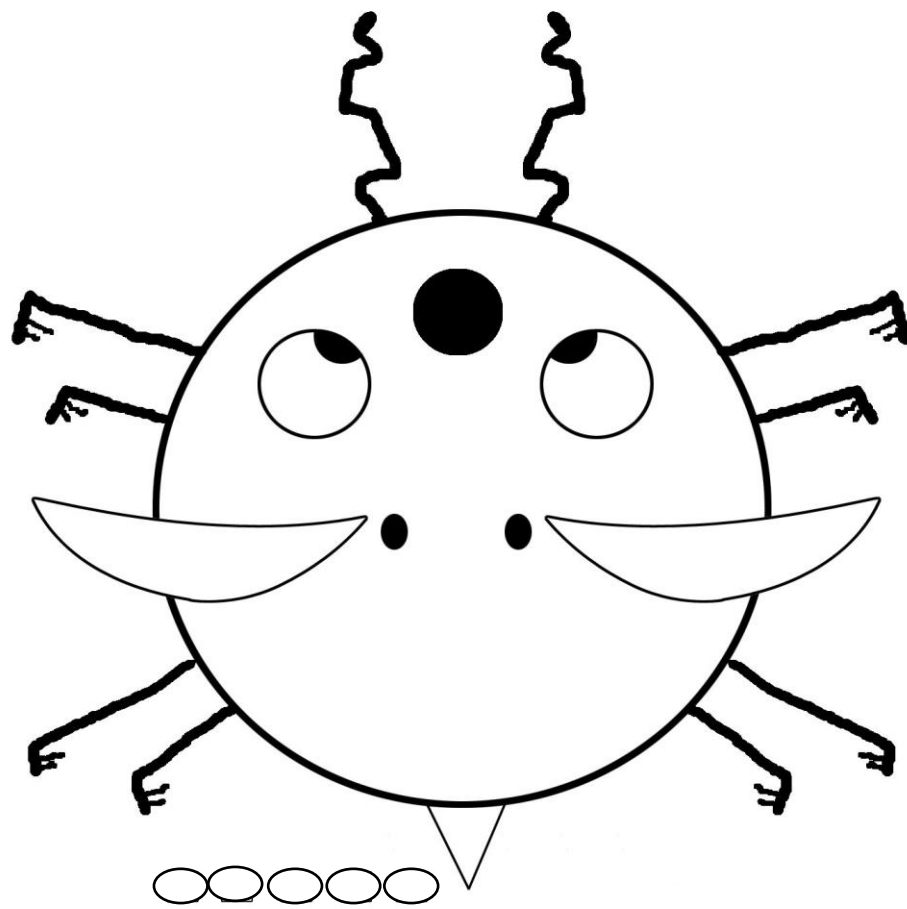
Reflect



Project



Discuss



BUG

Listen



Listening Pitfalls

Initial Listening

Hear the first bit and assume you know the rest

Selective Listening

Hear what you want, disregard the rest

Biased Listening

Prejudge the topic, source or speaker. Hear with opinion already made

Defensive Listening

Listening for anything that could be an attack, criticism or hostile.

Ambush Listening

Listening for anything that could be used against another person



Reflect

What are they trying to say?

- What concerns do they have? What do they want to see happen?
- Try summarizing (e.g. What I heard you saying is... Is that correct?)
- Avoid speaking on behalf of someone (e.g. What Joyce is trying to say is....)

How do you feel about what was said?

- Are you angry, annoyed, confused, offended, indifferent?
 - Try summarizing (see above) and, if needed, share your feeling (e.g. I am confused by what you just said because...)
 - Avoid making accusation about or minimizing the thoughts of others. (e.g. "What is wrong with you?" or "That's ridiculous".)
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Project



Body Language

Does your face and body project listening?

Tone of Voice

Does your tone demonstrated a desire to understand or to blame/shame?

Discuss

All members are equally entitled to an opportunity to share their thoughts and be heard.

Create opportunities to discuss views, come to consensus and document agreements.
Where agreements can't be made, even after discussion, document but move forward.



Communication Protocols





**“ The art of
effective listening is
essential to clear
communication, and
clear communication
is necessary to
management. ”**

James Cash Penney



Documented & Agreed Upon

When the practices and protocols of the group are documented and agreed upon, they are more likely to be known and followed. This is a result of clear communication.

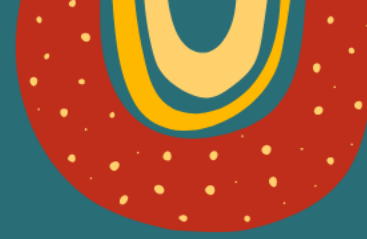
Clear communication allows us to:

- Build trust
 - Maintain consistency
 - Promote mutual understanding
 - Reduce non-productive conflict
 - Foster Collaboration
 - Improve efficacy and effectiveness of the board
- 



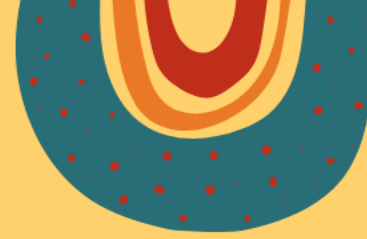
Board/Superintendent

- What information can the board expect from the superintendent and how often?
- How quickly will the superintendent respond to board member questions? Will answers to individual questions be sent to the board?
- What constitutes an "emergency" and how will information be shared in such cases?
- What is the process for when an individual member makes a request of the superintendent?
- Understanding the board supervises the superintendent, not individual members, what is the process for requests that may require significant time or effort to be redirected?
- What agreements are in place for how the board and superintendent will interact with each other?



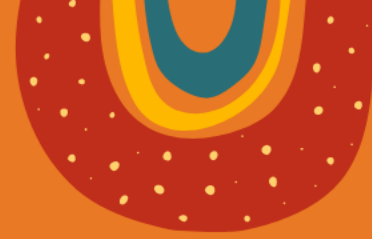
Agenda

- When will the board President and Superintendent meet to discuss the Agenda?
- When will the agenda be made available to the board?
- To whom should board members direct their questions about the agenda? By when?
- How do board members get items placed on the agenda? How will request be tracked?
- Will consent agenda be used? If so, how will consent agenda items be pulled or addressed?
- What agreements exist for how agenda items will be prioritized?



Meetings

- What agreements exist around board meetings?
 - Who will address the public?
 - Who will questions be directed to?
 - What rules or protocols are used to ensure all members get an opportunity to speak?
 - What are your rules of order?
 - What other expectations exist in terms of etiquette or process?



Site Visits

- What is the protocol for when board members attend district or campus events?
- How should board members go about arranging site visits?
 - What expectations are in place for when board members visit sites?
- What is the expectation of board members who visit schools where they have a family member who is a student/staff?
- What should board members do if they observe something that is concerning or they have questions about?



Families, Staff & Community

- What are your policies for communicating with the public?
- What is the chain of command?
- Who should respond to communication addressed to the entire board?
 - How will the rest of the board know a response was made?
- Who can speak on behalf of the board and when?
- Where should questions or concerns be directed?



Social Media

- What agreements exist regarding social media?
- When and what district information should board members share on their personal pages?
- Do individual members understand potential OML issues with regards to social media?
- What agreements exist about participation or engagement with community message boards and pages?

ASBA Resources

Team Member Style

Learn more about the communication style of yourself and your fellow board members to improve interactions.

Communication Protocols

Participate in a facilitated conversation to established agreed upon protocols for your district.

Virtual Boundaries: Use of Social Media in School Board Service

Learn about social media best practices, the dos and don'ts of social media usage and discuss social media etiquette and protocols.

