

Nonverbal Cues

Unit: Communication Skills

Problem Area: Distinguish Verbal/Nonverbal Cues

Lesson: Nonverbal Cues

■ **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Explain the fundamentals of nonverbal communication.**
- 2 Explain the elements of paralanguage.**
- 3 Provide examples of nonverbal cues.**
- 4 Describe the best practices for nonverbal communication during business presentations.**

■ **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

“Communication: Non-Verbal Communication,” *Select, Assess, & Train*. Accessed March 5, 2012. <http://www.selectassesstrain.com/hint6.asp#Body%20Language%20of%20Leaders>.

Drew, Bettina. “Benefits of Nonverbal Communication in Business,” *Chron.com*. Accessed March 5, 2012. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/benefit-nonverbal-communication-business-2831.html>.

“How Intonation Changes Meaning,” *English, Baby!* Accessed March 5, 2012. http://www.englishbaby.com/lessons/4771/member_submitted/how_intonation_changes_meaning.

Van Fleet, James K. *Lifetime Conversation Guide: The Key to Success with People*. Pearson / Prentice Hall, 1984.



Wang, Jennifer. "Seven Non-Verbal Cues and What They (Probably) Mean," *Entrepreneur*. Accessed March 5, 2012. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201202>.

■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ emphasis
- ▶ hand gestures
- ▶ inflection
- ▶ nonverbal communication (NVC)
- ▶ orientation
- ▶ paralanguage
- ▶ pauses
- ▶ posture
- ▶ proximity
- ▶ volume

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

Act out a scene where you are returning papers to three different students who are sitting at their desks. Incorporate different emotions and facial expressions as you return each paper. When you are done, have students guess your emotion and how they think you liked or disliked each student's assignment.

Scenario #1: Place the paper calmly on the desk, shaking your head up and down (the nonverbal cue for yes) and smile.

Scenario #2: Place the paper on the desk, look puzzled, and scratch the back of your neck.

Scenario #3: Slam the paper on the desk, shake your head back and forth (the nonverbal use for no), and frown.

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Explain the fundamentals of nonverbal communication.

Anticipated Problem: What are the fundamentals of nonverbal communication?

- I. **Nonverbal communication (NVC)** is the process of sending meaningful interpersonal messages through methods other than spoken words. Studies indicate that 7 percent of interpersonal communication is verbal, and 93 percent is nonverbal (Select, Assess, & Train, 2011). Since NVC behaviors are innate and learned, people use such behaviors subconsciously and consciously. Therefore, NVC practices can be improved. The fundamentals of NVC are cultural context, body language, and facial expressions.
 - A. NVC can take on different meanings in various cultural contexts. For example, the “O.K.” hand gesture has a positive and affirming meaning in the United States, but it has a derogatory and insulting meaning in the United Kingdom.
 - B. Proximity, orientation, posture, and hand gestures are examples of physical bodily expressions.
 1. **Proximity** is how close a person’s body is positioned to another person.
 - a. Within an arm’s length is considered “personal space.”
 - b. Being too far away could potentially be considered rude.
 2. **Orientation** is the direction or angle of a person’s body in relation to another person’s body.
 - a. Standing straight in front of someone, shoulders squared and looking face-to-face is considered aggressive and confrontational.
 - b. Standing off to the side at a slight angle is considered more passive and non-confrontational.
 3. **Posture** is the “shape” a body takes at any given moment.
 - a. A slumped and droopy body indicates a lack of confidence.
 - b. Standing upright and leaning forward indicate confidence.
 4. **Hand gestures** are the activity of the hands during communication.
 - a. Wringing hands, biting nails, and fidgeting indicate a lack of confidence or possibly nervousness.
 - b. Expressive hand gestures generally indicate confidence.
 - c. Shaking hands, clapping, and pointing are typical hand gestures related to business activities.

- C. Facial NVC elements include eye contact and facial expressions.
1. Eye contact is the amount of time a person looks (or does not look) directly into another person's eyes. Typically, 5 to 7 seconds of concentrated eye contact is considered maximum.
 - a. Too much eye contact can be considered aggressive.
 - b. Too little eye contact can be considered passive.
 - c. A mix of direct eye contact with looking away is best. Direct eye contact should be used by the listener when the speaker is making an important point or when he or she is addressing the listener specifically.
 2. Facial expressions are messages conveyed by a person's eyebrows, forehead, mouth, and gaze.
 - a. Smiling is considered positive.
 - b. Frowning and a wrinkled nose are considered negative.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–A through VM–E. Have students visit <http://www.selectassesstrain.com/hint6.asp#Body%20Language%20of%20Leaders> to find one fact that intrigues them. Have students write down their example and hold group discussions about what they have selected.

Objective 2: Explain the elements of paralanguage.

Anticipated Problem: What are the elements of paralanguage?

- II. **Paralanguage** is how words or sounds are spoken and includes inflection, emphasis, volume, and pauses.
- A. **Inflection** is the change of pitch or tone that adds an emotional dimension to the statement.
 1. Leadership and confidence use inflection to sound assertive without sounding angry.
 2. A sarcastic inflection can be perceived as unprofessional.
 - B. **Emphasis** is stressing particular words to affect the meaning of a sentence.
 1. Emphasis can be used to point out what is more important for listeners.
 2. Monotone speech with lack of emphasis should be avoided.
 - C. **Volume** is how loudly or softly words are spoken.
 1. Volume can be used to get attention and command the room. It is important not to speak too softly.
 2. People with leadership skills and confidence use a volume of medium to loud, without getting so loud as to be yelling inappropriately.
 - D. **Pauses** are moments of silence in a dialogue or presentation.
 1. Pauses can be used to think.

2. Pauses can be interpreted as avoidance or confusion. When pausing, it is necessary to use a nonverbal cue to show thinking is taking place.
- E. Non-lingual sounds (e.g., a sigh) give hints about the sender's message. For instance, a sigh could convey exhaustion, fatigue, exasperation, frustration, or relief. It may convey impatience based on the context in which it is uttered.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–F through VM–J. Have students visit http://www.englishbaby.com/lessons/4771/member_submitted/how_intonation_changes_meaning. Then have student groups create sentences in which the meaning changes when the emphasis is on different words. Have students share their sentences with the class.

Objective 3: Provide examples of nonverbal cues.

Anticipated Problem: What are some examples of nonverbal cues?

- III. Nonverbal cues are actions that send a message.
 - A. Crossed arms indicate being closed to others, defensive, or resistant.
 - B. Barriers (e.g., holding a purse or briefcase between the listener and speaker) indicate that a person is feeling uncomfortable or attacked or that the other person is standing too close.
 - C. A hand under the chin indicates that the person is thinking or making a decision.
 - D. If a person's feet are pointing toward the door, it indicates that he or she wants to leave the room or is not interested in being there.
 - E. Scratching or rubbing the back of the neck indicates an individual is confused or has questions.
 - F. Counter-cultural or "norm-offending" cues will put a person at a disadvantage for succeeding in business settings.
 1. Wearing unprofessional clothes that deviate too much from what business associates are wearing will send the wrong message.
 2. Tattoos, especially controversial material on easily seen areas, are considered unprofessional.
 3. Poor hygiene (e.g., unkempt clothing, "bed head," and poor oral hygiene) is considered unprofessional.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–K and VM–L to aid in a class discussion. Have students visit <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201202> to read more examples of nonverbal cues. Have students write a journal about an experience they had with another person recently who exhibited a noticeable nonverbal cue during an interaction.

Objective 4: Describe the best practices for nonverbal communication during business presentations.

Anticipated problem: What are the best practices for nonverbal communication during business presentations?

IV. Presenters must consciously monitor NVC during a presentation to avoid giving mixed messages, such as speaking confidently and acting apprehensively. The nonverbal communication of presenters should convey leadership and confidence.

A. Guidelines for using NVC during presentations

1. Proximity

- a. It is best to avoid entering an individual's personal space.
- b. It is important to avoid drifting too far from the audience.

2. Orientation

- a. It is best to face the audience most of the time.
- b. It is important to avoid power struggles with an audience member.
- c. To defuse an escalating confrontation, it is best to stand at an angle to the agitated person rather than facing the person directly.
- d. It is best to lean slightly toward an audience or an individual.
- e. A presenter should stand in one place initially and then move around once the presentation is underway.
- f. Excessive movement should be avoided because it may convey restlessness or nervousness.
- g. Standing too rigidly or in too stationary a position should be avoided because it may communicate that the speaker is intimidated.
- h. Sitting with legs crossed or creating any barrier (with feet or legs) between the presenter and the audience should be avoided. Foot and leg "wagging" when seated is unacceptable for presenters.
- i. Folding arms or turning one's back after a question is asked is not polite because these movements may convey defensiveness or rejection of a message.

3. Posture

- a. It is best to sit or stand tall with slightly flexed knees, the rib cage pulled up, shoulders squared, and the head held up.
- b. It is important to relax and not to slouch, slump, or sit/stand too rigidly. Some studies indicate that relaxed postures (e.g., leaning back in a chair) communicate leadership qualities, but this is usually the norm after a person has already established a leadership presence within the group. As a leader, being relaxed conveys the message of being in control and not anxious.

4. Hand gestures
 - a. Hand gestures should be smooth; they should not compete for attention with what the speaker is saying.
 - b. Excessive hand movement can communicate nervousness, jitters, and a sense of uneasiness. However, some studies state that occasional broad and sweeping hand gestures convey leadership power.
 - c. Letting hands hang to one's side or rest on a table or podium is adequate.
 - d. Conveying negative emotions (e.g., wringing the hands or clenching fists) is not acceptable. Pointing fingers directly at people, especially in a defensive mode when rebuking an objection, is best avoided. In addition, picking or biting hands conveys nervousness and should be avoided.
 - e. If a speaker places his or her hands in a "steeple" or in a "thinker" position, it tends to convey the message that the speaker is thoughtful or is considering options.
 5. Eye contact
 - a. The presenter should look into the eyes of the audience and avoid staring at the mouths or sides of faces, as this conveys distraction. When faced with a situation involving unusually long eye contact (when listening to a long question), the presenter may focus on one point on the person's eyebrow rather than focusing on the eye, as this may be more comfortable and is still perceived as maintaining eye contact.
 - b. When speaking to a large audience, it is best to avoid excessive scanning (as if trying to look at every person individually) because it conveys nervousness. Instead, a "bowling" approach should be used. If good eye contact with people in the front is maintained, people in the back of the group will feel as if the speaker is looking at them all as one set of people.
 - c. The presenter should look at people as they ask questions and while answering questions.
 6. Facial expressions
 - a. The presenter should keep mostly a neutral facial expression, smiling at times.
 - b. The presenter should maintain pleasant and genuine emotions through a relaxed face, not conveying negative emotions (e.g., frowning or furrowing the eyebrow).
 - c. The presenter should stay alert and avoid conveying boredom through yawning or closing his or her eyes.
- B. Guidelines for the effective use of paralanguage during presentations
1. Inflection
 - a. It is necessary to maintain a steady tone of voice.
 - b. The speaker should avoid ending sentences with a higher pitch, as if turning a statement into a question.

2. Emphasis
 - a. Prior to the presentation, the speaker should identify which concepts or facts to emphasize.
 - b. Prior to the presentation, the speaker should practice the emphasis and tones aloud.
3. Volume
 - a. The presenter should speak slightly louder than normal to ensure that all can hear.
 - b. The presenter should avoid speaking too softly, as that action may convey uncertainty.
4. Pauses and other sounds
 - a. It is necessary to use silence (a pause) to signal transitioning from one topic or concept to another.
 - b. It is important to use a pause in conjunction with thoughtful hand gestures to convey thinking.
 - c. It is essential to avoid sighing, groaning, or any other sound that may convey negative emotions or a loss of control.
 - d. Verbal filler pauses (e.g., “aaaa” and “ummm”) should be avoided.

Teaching Strategy: *Distribute VM–M to students as a handbook of recommendations for presenting in a business environment. Have students visit <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/benefit-nonverbal-communication-business-2831.html> to read about benefits of nonverbal communication in a business setting.*

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may also be used in the Review/Summary.
- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Matching

1. g
2. j
3. a

4. c
5. f
6. b
7. h
8. e
9. i
10. d

Part Two: Completion

1. cultural
2. arm's
3. confidence
4. Direct
5. sarcastic
6. neck
7. disadvantage

Part Three: True/False

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. F

Nonverbal Cues

► Part One: Matching

Instructions: Match the term with the correct definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. emphasis | f. paralanguage |
| b. hand gestures | g. pauses |
| c. inflection | h. posture |
| d. nonverbal communication (NVC) | i. proximity |
| e. orientation | j. volume |

- ____ 1. Moments of silence in a dialogue or presentation
- ____ 2. How loudly or softly words are spoken
- ____ 3. Stressing particular words to affect the meaning of a sentence
- ____ 4. The change of pitch or tone that adds an emotional dimension to the statement
- ____ 5. How words or sounds are spoken and includes inflection, emphasis, volume, and pauses
- ____ 6. The activity of the hands during communication
- ____ 7. The “shape” a body takes at any given moment
- ____ 8. The direction or angle of a person’s body in relation to another person’s body
- ____ 9. How close a person’s body is positioned to another person
- ____ 10. The process of sending meaningful interpersonal messages through methods other than spoken words



► Part Two: Completion

Instructions: Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. NVC can take on different meanings in various _____ contexts.
2. Within a/an _____ length is considered “personal space.”
3. Slumped and droopy posture indicates a lack of _____.
4. _____ eye contact should be used by the listener when the speaker is making an important point or when the speaker is addressing the listener specifically.
5. Avoid using a _____ inflection, as this is perceived as unprofessional.
6. If a person scratches or rubs the back of his or her _____, it often indicates that he or she is confused or has questions.
7. Counter-cultural or “norm-offending” cues will put a person at a _____ for succeeding in business settings.

► Part Three: True/False

Instructions: Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- ____ 1. Studies indicate that 7 percent of interpersonal communication is verbal, and 93 percent is nonverbal.
- ____ 2. Since NVC behaviors are innate and learned, people use NVC behaviors subconsciously and consciously.
- ____ 3. Standing straight in front of someone, shoulders squared and looking face-to-face is considered aggressive and confrontational.
- ____ 4. Expressive hand gestures indicate confidence.
- ____ 5. Five to 20 seconds of concentrated eye contact is considered maximum.
- ____ 6. When pausing, use a nonverbal cue such as a hand under your chin to show you are thinking.
- ____ 7. Presenters do not need to consciously monitor NVC during a presentation to avoid giving mixed messages, such as speaking confidently and acting apprehensively.
- ____ 8. Prior to the presentation, the speaker should not practice the speech at all, because it is good to be surprised.

FUNDAMENTALS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- ◆ **Nonverbal communication (NVC)** is the process of sending meaningful interpersonal messages through methods other than spoken words.
- ◆ Studies indicate that 7 percent of interpersonal communication is verbal, and 93 percent is nonverbal (Select, Assess, & Train, 2011).
- ◆ Since NVC behaviors are innate and learned, people use NVC behaviors subconsciously and consciously. Therefore, NVC practices can be improved.



CULTURAL CONTEXT

NVC can take on different meanings in various cultural contexts. For example, the “O.K.” hand gesture has a positive and affirming meaning in the United States, but it has a derogatory and insulting meaning in the United Kingdom.



BODY LANGUAGE: PROXIMITY AND ORIENTATION

- ◆ **Proximity** is how close a person's body is positioned to another person.
 - Within an arm's length is considered "personal space."
 - Too far away could potentially be considered rude.

- ◆ **Orientation** is the direction or angle of a person's body in relation to another person's body.
 - Standing straight in front of someone, shoulders squared and looking face-to-face is considered aggressive and confrontational.
 - Standing off to the side at a slight angle is considered more passive and non-confrontational.



BODY LANGUAGE: POSTURE AND HAND GESTURES

- ◆ **Posture** is the “shape” a body takes at any given moment.
 - A slumped and droopy body indicates a lack of confidence.
 - Standing upright and leaning forward indicate confidence.

- ◆ **Hand gestures** are the activity of the hands during communication.
 - Wringing, biting nails, and fidgeting indicate a lack of confidence or possibly nervousness.
 - Expressive hand gestures indicate confidence.
 - Shaking hands, clapping, and pointing are typical hand gestures related to business activities.



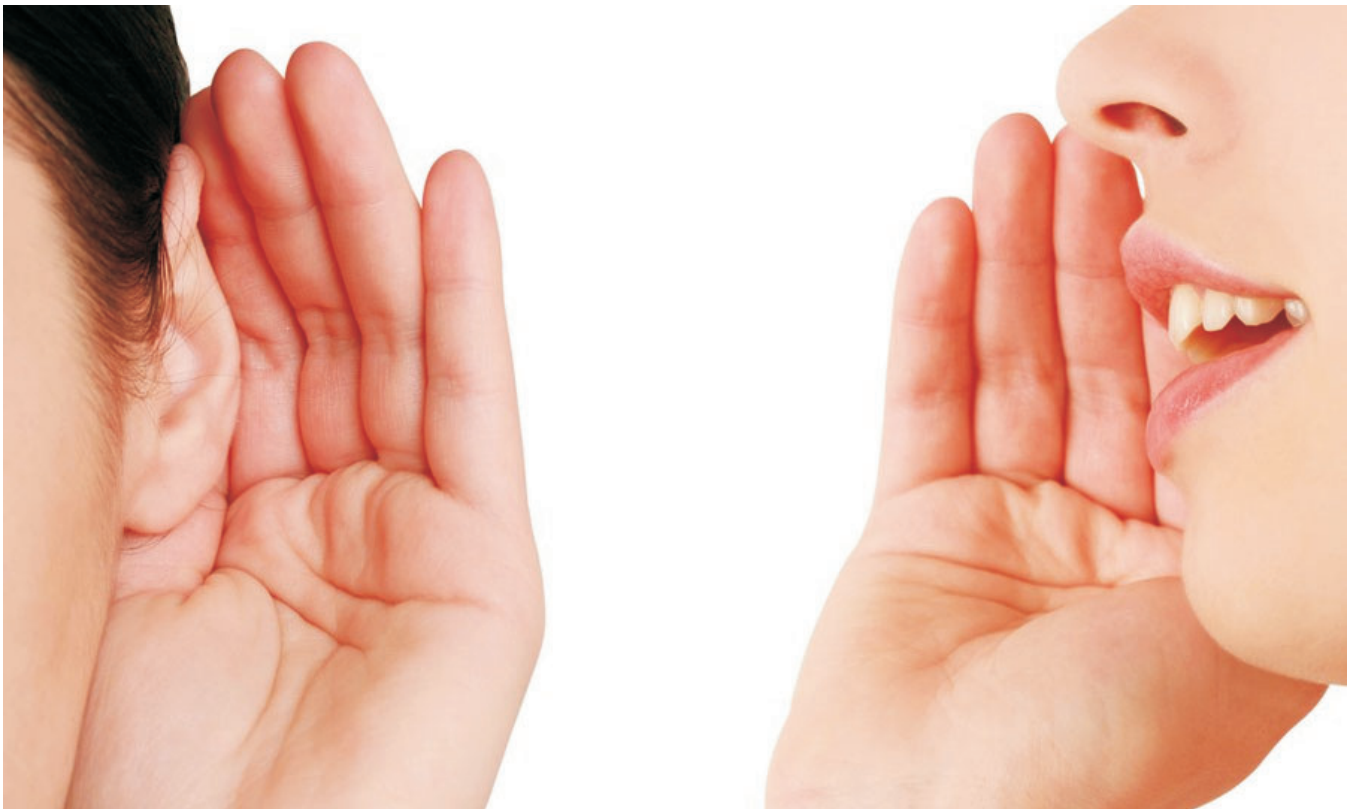
EYE CONTACT AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

- ◆ Eye contact is the amount of time a person looks (or does not look) directly into another person's eyes. Generally, five to seven seconds of concentrated eye contact is considered maximum.
 - Too much eye contact can be considered aggressive.
 - Too little eye contact can be considered passive.
- ◆ A mix of direct eye contact with looking away is best. Direct eye contact should be used by the listener when the speaker is making an important point or when he or she is addressing the listener specifically.
- ◆ Facial expressions are messages conveyed by a person's eyebrows, forehead, mouth, and gaze.
 - Smiling is considered positive.
 - Frowning and a wrinkled nose are considered negative.



PARALANGUAGE

Paralanguage is how words or sounds are spoken; paralanguage includes inflection, emphasis, volume, and pauses.



INFLECTION

Inflection is the change of pitch or tone that adds an emotional dimension to the statement.

- ◆ Leadership and confidence use inflection to sound assertive without sounding angry.
- ◆ Avoid using a sarcastic inflection, as this is perceived as unprofessional.



EMPHASIS

Emphasis is stressing particular words to affect the meaning of a sentence.

- ◆ Use emphasis to point out what is more important for listeners.
- ◆ Avoid monotone speech with a lack of emphasis.



VOLUME

Volume is how loudly or softly words are spoken.

- ◆ Use volume to get attention and command the room. Avoid speaking too softly.
- ◆ Leadership and confidence use a volume of medium to loud, without getting so loud as to be yelling inappropriately.



PAUSES AND NON-LINGUAL SOUNDS

- ◆ **Pauses** are moments of silence in a dialogue or presentation.
 - Pauses can be used when thinking.
 - Pauses can be interpreted as avoidance or confusion. When pausing, use a nonverbal cue such as your hand under your chin to show you are thinking.
- ◆ Non-lingual sounds (e.g., a sigh) give hints about the sender's message. For instance, a sigh could convey exhaustion, fatigue, exasperation, frustration, or relief; it may convey impatience based on the context in which it is uttered.



EXAMPLES OF NONVERBAL CUES

Nonverbal cues are actions that send a message.

- ◆ Crossed arms indicate being closed to others, defensive, or resistant.
- ◆ Barriers (e.g., holding a purse or briefcase between the listener and speaker) indicate that a person is feeling uncomfortable or attacked or that the other person is standing too close.
- ◆ A hand under the chin indicates that the person is thinking or making a decision.
- ◆ Feet pointing toward the door indicate that the person wants to leave the room or is not interested in being there.
- ◆ Scratching or rubbing the back of the neck indicates that a person is confused or has questions.



COUNTER-CULTURE/ NORM-OFFENDING CUES

Counter-cultural or “norm-offending” cues will put a person at a disadvantage for succeeding in business settings.

- ◆ Wearing unprofessional clothes that deviate too much from what business associates are wearing is not acceptable.
- ◆ Tattoos, especially controversial material on easily seen areas, can prevent an individual from succeeding in business.
- ◆ Poor hygiene (e.g., unkempt clothing, “bed head,” and poor oral hygiene) can be detrimental in a business setting or interaction.



GUIDELINES FOR USING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION DURING BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS

Presenters must consciously monitor NVC during a presentation to avoid giving mixed messages, such as speaking confidently and acting apprehensively. The nonverbal communication of presenters should convey leadership and confidence.

The following are guidelines for using NVC during presentations:

◆ Proximity

- Avoid entering another individual's personal space.
- Avoid drifting too far from the audience.



◆ Orientation

- Face the audience most of the time.
- Avoid power struggles with an audience member.
- To defuse an escalating confrontation, it is best to stand at an angle to the agitated person rather than facing the person directly.
- Lean slightly toward an audience or an individual.
- A presenter should stand in one place initially and then move around once the presentation is underway.
- Excessive movement should be avoided because it may convey restlessness or nervousness.
- Standing too rigidly or in too stationary a position should be avoided because it may communicate that the speaker is intimidated.
- Sitting with legs crossed or creating any barrier (with feet or legs) between the presenter and the audience should be avoided. Foot or leg “wagging” when seated is also unacceptable for presenters.
- Folding arms or turning one’s back after a question is asked is not polite because these movements may convey defensiveness or rejection of a message.

◆ Posture

- Sit or stand tall with slightly flexed knees, the rib cage pulled up, shoulders squared, and your head held up.
- Relax. Do not slouch, slump, or sit or stand too rigidly. Some studies indicate that relaxed postures (e.g., leaning back in a chair) communicate leadership qualities, but this is usually the norm after a person has already established a leadership presence within the group. As a leader, being relaxed conveys the message of being in control and not anxious.

◆ Hand Gestures

- Hand gestures should be smooth; they should not compete for attention with what the speaker is saying.
- Excessive hand movement can communicate nervousness, jitters, and a sense of uneasiness. However, some studies state that occasional broad, sweeping hand gestures convey leadership power.
- Letting hands hang to one's side or rest on a table or podium is adequate.
- Conveying negative emotions (e.g., wringing the hands or clenching fists) is not acceptable. Pointing fingers directly at people, especially in a defensive mode when rebuking an objection, is also best avoided. Picking or biting hands conveys nervousness and should be avoided.
- If a speaker places his or her hands in a “steeple” or in a “thinker” position, it tends to convey the message that the speaker is thoughtful or is considering options.

◆ Eye Contact

- The presenter should look into the eyes of the audience and avoid staring at the mouths or sides of faces, as this conveys distraction. When faced with a situation involving unusually long eye contact (when listening to a long question), the presenter may focus on one point on the person's eyebrow rather than focusing on the eye, as this may be more comfortable and is still perceived as maintaining eye contact.
- When speaking to a large audience, it is best to avoid excessive scanning (as if trying to look at every person individually) because this conveys nervousness. Instead, a “bowling” approach should be used. If good eye contact with people in the front is maintained, people in the back of the group will feel as if the speaker is looking at them all as one set of people.
- The presenter should look at people as they ask questions and while answering questions.

◆ Facial Expressions

- The presenter should keep mostly a neutral facial expression, smiling at times.
- The presenter should maintain pleasant and genuine emotions through a relaxed face, not conveying negative emotions (e.g., frowning or furrowing the eyebrow).
- The presenter should stay alert and avoid conveying boredom through yawning or closing his or her eyes.

Guidelines for Effective Use of Paralanguage During Presentations

◆ Inflection

- Maintain a steady tone of voice.
- The speaker should avoid ending sentences with a higher pitch, as if turning a statement into a question.

◆ Emphasis

- Prior to the presentation, the speaker should identify which concepts or facts to emphasize.
- Prior to the presentation, the speaker should practice the emphasis and tones out loud.

◆ Volume

- The presenter should speak slightly louder than normal to ensure that all can hear.
- The presenter should avoid speaking too softly, as that action may convey uncertainty.

◆ Pauses and Other Sounds

- Use silence (a pause) to signal transitioning from one topic or concept to another.
- Use a pause in conjunction with thoughtful hand gestures to convey thinking.
- Avoid sighing, groaning, or any other sound that may convey negative emotions or a loss of control.
- Avoid using verbal filler pauses (e.g., “aaa” or “ummm”).

Practicing Nonverbal Communication

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to practice using nonverbal communication during a presentation and to give feedback to others about their use of nonverbal communication as they present.

Objectives

1. Give a short presentation to the class.
2. Demonstrate nonverbal communication elements during the presentation.
3. Observe other presenters, and give feedback on their use of nonverbal communication elements.

Materials

- ◆ copies of the Presentation Feedback Form
- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ paper

Procedure

1. Think of a new idea you would like to see used at school.
2. On your paper, list two or three steps your school could take to begin using your idea.
3. Create a three-minute presentation that has the following elements in it:
 - a. A description of your idea and why it is important
 - b. The list of steps you think your school should take to use your idea



4. Present your idea to your classmates and teacher.
5. The audience observing the presentation will complete the “Presentation Feedback Form” (provided with this lab), giving you feedback on how you used nonverbal communication elements during your presentation.
6. While you are observing classmates’ presentations, complete the “Presentation Feedback Form.” You will need one copy for each student in the class (minus yourself).
7. Keep the feedback anonymous. Do not write extra comments on the feedback sheet. Be as honest as possible with your feedback.

Presentation Feedback Sheet

Feedback Sheet Instructions: Write the name of the presenter, and choose one feedback box.

Name of Presenter _____

Circle one choice in each category: posture, hand gestures, facial expression, volume, and emphasis.

Posture	Great posture showing confidence	Good posture, but could have been more confident	Posture needs work; did not convey confidence
Hand gestures	Used hand gestures very effectively	Used some hand gestures	Did not use hand gestures at all
Facial expressions	Facial expressions were enthusiastic and added to the confidence of the presentation	Facial expressions added somewhat to the confidence of the presentation	Facial expressions were absent and did not really impact the confidence of the presentation
Volume	Loud enough, but not too loud	Too loud	Too soft
Emphasis	Certain key words were emphasized and added to the effectiveness of the presentation	Some emphasis was used; could have been more effective	Emphasis was not noticeable during the presentation