Importance of Nonverbals

Communication Skills

Research shows that the single most powerful form of communication is nonverbal, which includes eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and paralanguage.

People will most often remember how we portray ourselves during a presentation rather than what we actually say.

The cliché, “Actions speak louder than words” has proved to be true.

REMEMBER:
Never underestimate the power of body language in your speech!

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.”

~Peter F. Drucker~

CONTACT US
For additional information, check out the Communication Center website: www.uccs.edu/commcenter

To speak with a trained CEC Peer Mentor or Graduate Associate, contact us at (719)255-4770 to schedule an appointment.

NON-VERBALS IN PRESENTATIONS
Developed by: Britney DeLaughter
Revised by: Jesse Perez
### Paralanguage

**Paralanguage** has to do with the way you use your voice.

**Tone:** refers to the quality of your voice.

Make sure to vary your tone at the appropriate times in your speech in order to avoid being labeled “monotone”.

**Volume:** you generally want to speak fairly loud rather than soft.

A somewhat loud voice conveys confidence and authority, but if it is appropriate to speak softly during a particular point in your speech, do so.

**Pitch:** determined by the rate of vibration of the vocal cords.

It is an indication of lack of mental poise if you habitually speak in a voice pitched too high. If you are subject to anger and nerves and their consequent injury to your voice, learn to control the breath and relax.

**Tempo:** refers to your rate of speaking.

It is natural to talk faster when you are nervous, but if you practice your speech at least a few times before presenting, it will help you feel confident and enable you to manage your time effectively.

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### Gestures

**Gestures** help to support or reinforce a particular thought or emotion.

The time to begin using effective body movements is when you walk to your position in front of the room:

**Stand tall and walk with a confident posture.**

In every day talks with family and friends, we gesture without even realizing it. Practice incorporating those kinds of conversational gestures into your speech.

**Gestures should be a natural extension of who you are, and great presenters are professional yet true to themselves.**

Create opportunities for making gestures during a speech by using phrases such as “On the one hand ... on the other hand,” or by numbering your points, etc.

**Be aware** of very distracting movements with your hands, especially things like playing with your jewelry, watch, hair, etc.

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### Eyes & Face

**Eye contact:** Proper eye contact is one of the most effective tactics you can use to connect with your audience.

When you do not look at your audience, you communicate disinterest, lack of confidence, and a variety of other negative impressions.

Your audience is able to trust you when you establish eye contact with them.

Make it a point to look at each person—even if it is at their forehead instead of their eyes—for a few seconds. Be familiar with your speech so you are NOT reading from your notes. Make an outline of your important points so that you can occasionally glance down.

**Facial expressions:** Mirror your facial expressions to the mood of your speech.

If your speech involves humor, smile and even laugh along with your audience! This will help you become more relaxed.

If your topic is a very serious one, then be sure to still maintain a sense of warmth but also make the expressions on your face more solemn.

*“What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say.”*  
~Ralph Waldo Emerson~