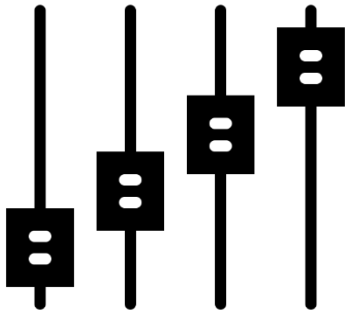


Competent Communicator Characteristics

There are 5 characteristics of a competent communicator. These characteristics are used to help students increase their interpersonal communication skills. Review each of the characteristics of a competent communicator below. As you are reviewing the information, consider how/if each characteristic aligns with the learning outcomes of the NSE course.

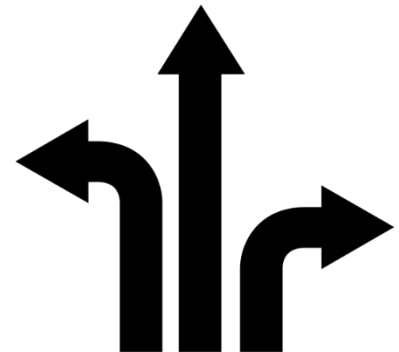


Adaptability

Competent communicators are able to assess what is going to be appropriate and effective in a given context and then modify their behaviors accordingly. That ability is important because what works in one situation might be ineffective in another. Part of delivering a good speech, for instance, is being aware of the audience and adapting your behavior to your listeners. A competent communicator would speak differently to a group of senior executives than to a group of new hires, because what works with one audience would probably not work with the other.

Cognitive Complexity

The ability to consider a variety of explanations and to understand a given situation in multiple ways is called cognitive complexity. Cognitive complexity is a valuable skill because it keeps people from jumping to the wrong conclusion and responding inappropriately. Someone with little cognitive complexity might feel slighted during a conversation and might therefore ignore a person the next time they meet. In contrast, someone with more cognitive complexity would remember that behaviors do not always mean when we think they mean. That person would be more open-minded, considering several possible interpretations of another person's actions.



Empathy

Good communicators practice empathy, the ability to be “other-oriented” and understand other people's thoughts and feelings. When people say “Put yourself in my shoes,” they are asking you to consider a situation from their perspective rather than your own. Empathy is an important skill because people often think and feel differently than you do about the same situation. People who don't practice empathy tend to assume everyone thinks and feels the same way they do, and they risk creating problems when that assumption isn't accurate.

Ethics

Competent communicators are ethical communicators. Ethics guides us in judging whether something is morally right or wrong. Ethical communication, then, generally dictates treating people fairly, communicating honestly, and avoiding immoral or unethical behavior. That can be easier said than done, because people often have very different ideas about right and wrong. What may be morally justified to one person or one culture may be considered unethical to another. Competent communicators are aware of their own ethical beliefs, and they communicate in ways that are consistent with those beliefs.



Self-Awareness

Good communicators are aware of their own behavior and its effect on others. Researchers call this awareness self-monitoring. People who are high self-monitors pay close attention to the way they look, sound, and act in social situations. In contrast, people who are low self-monitors often seem oblivious to both their own behaviors and other people's reactions to them. Self-monitoring usually makes people more competent communicators because it enables them to see how their behavior fit or doesn't fit in a given social setting. In addition, high self-monitors often have high levels of social and emotional intelligence, qualities that allow them to understand people's social behaviors and emotions accurately.

Alignment with SLS 1122

After reviewing the five characteristics, rank order each based on its alignment with the current curriculum of SLS 1122 in the column below. Number 1 is the most aligned with the current curriculum and number 5 is the least aligned with the current curriculum.

Be prepared to discuss your rationale with your group.

Characteristic	Alignment with SLS 1122
Adaptability	
Cognitive Complexity	
Empathy	
Ethics	
Self-Awareness	