21st Century Employability Skills - Communication: Etiquette

**Etiquette vs. Manners**

Proper etiquette in communication is connected to rules and protocol, which vary in different countries and can be learned.

Good manners in communication involve empathy and compassion in a social context.

TEACHER NOTES:   
[Article: Modern Manners](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/debra-ollivier/etiquette-modern-manners-in-an-impolite-world_b_1175213.html?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social)

Introduce the lesson with the concept that etiquette relates to the rules society establishes versus manners, which are a way to enhance the rules through the use of empathy, respect, compassion, kindness, etc.

Etiquette varies based on countries and cultures. Often these rules are not explicit but rather implicit. For example, someone will be expected to know the rules and yet they often aren’t openly taught or discussed. This can lead to a person being judged, even though he/she has not been given the opportunity within his/her social circle to learn these professional social expectations. This lesson is going to make some of these rules clear.

4 Primary Attributes of Communication  
Lesson Focus: 2 & 3

1. Speaks in a professional manner, uses appropriate content, and says things in a way that others will understand.
2. **Can communicate using technology tools like email, LinkedIn, or PowerPoint slide shows. Knows how to use social media appropriately in work settings.**
3. **Knows how to choose words wisely and use non-verbal communication to make meaning clear. When writing uses correct spelling and grammar to make meaning clear.**
4. Is an attentive listener and asks questions or repeats back what was heard to make sure everything was understood correctly.

# What Not to Do

[Video Scenario](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57mSaugVmI0)

# Workplace Etiquette: Emails

* Use a professional email address
* Include a clear, direct subject line
* Include a salutation when starting an email stream, which can be left out when you are in the middle of a series of emails

Formal: Dear Mr. Smith/Ms. Smith,

Less Formal: Hello John/Jane,

* Use the same sentence structure and paragraphs as in a letter, but you do not need to indent
* Try and stay short and to the point
* Create an email signature with your contact information, title, etc.

**Do Not:**

* use a bunch of exclamation points! all through your email!!
* try and add in humor if it might not translate…people can’t read your tone in an email
* “reply all” unless everyone needs to know your comments
* have a large list of recipients with their email addresses shown, use BCC instead
* forget to speel chaek (make sure to reread your email before sending)

# Practice: Example & Critique

**TEACHER NOTES:**

E-mail example- ‘5 Tips for Effective Construction Communication’ Kendall Jones, LinkedIn

Ask students:

What aspects of this message are not clear, concise and/or professional?

What do you recommend changing?

Visual examples are helpful for learning. Presenting a weak example and allowing others to critique helps them think objectively and deepen their learning without taking things personally.

**Subject**: Reminder

What's up ya'll,

Quick reminder that we have a preconstruciton meeting scheduled for the first of next week on the school construciton project. We'll be meeting at the office here and going over some improtant stuff on the upcoming project. All forms need to be turned in prior to this and everyone needs to show up to the meeting.We're hoping to avoid some the disasters we had to deal with on the last building project, hope none of ya'll were involved on that one it was a nightmare. I'll probably bring some donuts, or is it doughnuts, if I have time after dropping my kids off at school that day. There's a new shop over on Wilshire that;s supposed to be really good.

Thx and see you then,

RHOMANN DEY

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**Teacher Notes:**

E-mail example- ‘5 Tips for Effective Construction Communication’ Kendall Jones, LinkedIn

Ask students:

What are the changes you notice in this email versus the first version?

How does your impression of the writer of the email change based on the language and information included?

**Subject**: Preconstruction Meeting Reminder For Richard M. Nixon HS Addition

**Attached**: PreconstructionMeetinAgenda.docx (58KB)

Good morning,

This is a reminder that we have a preconstruction meeting scheduled for the Richard M. Nixon High School Addition (Contract No. 616) project scheduled for Monday. September 21, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the City of Nova Public Schools Board of Education Office located at 1313 Mockingbird Lane. Nova, NC 12345 in Room 202.

A meeting agenda has been attached. Some of the key points we will be addressing include the project schedule, communications, contractor responsibilities, site access, safety and change orders.

Thank you,

RHOMANN DEY   
Senior Director, Facilities Design & Construction   
City of Nova Public Schools   
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# WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE: Phone Calls

[Teacher Notes:](http://www.businessinsider.com/phone-etiquette-rules-barbara-pachter-2013-10) Remind students to leave their phone number twice on messages. They can do this twice in a row, or once at the start of the message and once at the end. It makes it easy for the listener if the caller’s name and phone number are right at the beginning of the message.

**Before pulling up the next sample**: Ask the class if they think having a quiet conversation between two people while part of a larger group is more disruptive, or if having a quiet cell phone conversation while part of a larger group is more disruptive to others.

* If you use your cell for work calls, choose a normal ring tone and a moderate volume
* Announce your name when answering the phone, you can also announce your organization
* Be aware of your speaking volume and tone
* Ask permission before you put someone on speaker phone
* Don’t leave long voicemails, only your reason for calling and your contact info. Good idea to leave your call back number twice.

# Did you know?

Even a quiet cell phone conversation is disturbing to people around you.

The brain pays attention to a one-sided conversation in a way it doesn’t to a two-sided one. It tries to fill in the other side of the conversation.

So having a private conversation on your cell while in public is bad for people’s brains!

# Cell Phones

Teacher Notes: [Article](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2213456/How-putting-phone-dinner-table-convince-friends-dont-care.html)

Have the class discuss what they think is acceptable/unacceptable use of cell phones in public. Ask them to come up with ways you could show communication etiquette while still needing to have your cell phone out. Examples could include: Before a meeting explain that your phone, tablet, laptop is out in case you need to look up resources during the meeting. You could let others know your cell is out because you are expecting a participant who isn’t present yet, etc.

Did you know?

* Psychologists conducted experiments at Essex University on cell phone use
* Cell phones automatically trigger thoughts about wider social networks, reducing the level of connection in face-to-face conversations
* So, having your phone out at meetings or on a table makes everyone present feel disconnected from you

# Timing is Everything

Teacher Notes: [Cell phone etiquette](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/26/cell-phone-etiquette-15-r_n_514927.html)

Latency is most noticeable if both people talk at roughly the same pace. Apologize if you talk over someone, and you can even reference the latency on the call to explain any delays. Latency is worse for individuals who have auditory deficiencies, so an alternative could be to set up Skype sessions, G-Chats, or Face Time to give visual clues to a spoken conversation. In conference calls, establishing an agenda for specific times when each individual speaks can help prevent overlap.

All phone calls have a delay, cell phones even more so.

Pay attention to your timing so you don’t talk over the other person.

*Acknowledge the delay. All phone calls involve latency, which means there's a delay between when you speak and when the other person hears it.*

# Texting

Teacher Notes:  
Explain that when you text for work, especially when you don’t know the person well, start with being formal. Work hours should be followed in case someone has their phone set to chime when a text comes in, this way you avoid bothering them during non-work hours. Whenever possible, use a texting service that doesn’t cause charges for the receiver, such as WhatsApp.

When texting for work, especially with someone you don’t know well:

* Don’t use abbreviations (C U 2morrow)
* Do include your name at the beginning or end
* Follow the time rules for regular calls: M-F 8/9am-5pm
* Be aware of different time zones
* Be polite, even if it makes your text a little longer

# Presentations

Teacher Notes:

Slow Down- Nervous speakers talk too fast, be aware of pacing and taking pauses

Eye Contact- Scan the entire audience, not just one part of the room

Project Your Voice- Match how loud you are with the size of the room/group

Breath In, Not Out- Instead of “um,” “ah,” “you know, ” space fillers, use pauses to take a breath. Practice presenting and have someone point out each time you use a space filler word.

Don’t Apologize- Don’t draw attention to your nervousness by apologizing

* Think of presentations as a short story with a beginning, middle, and end to help organize info.
* Use slides (PPT, Prezi, Slideshare) with bullet points and font size large enough to see at the back of the room
* Slow Down
* Make Eye Contact
* Project Your Voice
* Breathe In, Not Out
* Don’t Apologize
* [A parody of how to give a presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZBKX-6Gz6A) like a TEDTalk.

# Non-Verbal Communication

## Body Language

Teacher Notes: [Handout](http://www.businessballs.com/body-language.htm)

Demonstrate with your own body movements. You can even demo first and ask the class to interpret the non-verbal message before you pull up the slide. Pay special attention to explaining eye contact. Unbroken eye contact makes people nervous, no eye contact makes them suspicious. To break eye contact, look to the side (around the shoulder height of the person you are talking with). Don’t break eye contact by looking at your watch, phone, an exit, unless you want your nonverbal clues to indicate you need to leave. You can have students get in pairs and practice eye contact while exchanging brief conversation.

Have a student volunteer to come up and practice the different types of handshakes with you. Explain that in many cultures it is considered rude to shake with your left (bathroom) hand. **Fun fact:** the person who has his/her hand outward facing a crowd of observers is considered more dominant. Many pictures of politicians shaking hands reveal who was trying to dominate. President Nixon would only allow his picture to be taken by the press when his hand was in the dominant (outer) position.

**Eyes:**

* Looking Right- creating, fabricating, guessing, lying, storytelling
* Looking Left- recalling, remembering, retrieving facts
* Direct (when speaking)- honesty, or faked honesty
* Direct (when listening)- attentiveness, interest
* Break eye contact appropriately at intervals

**Arms:**

* Crossed- defensiveness, reluctance
* Gripping own upper arms- insecurity
* Open stance, arms to your side- attention, willingness
* Shoulder and arms turned at an angle- secretive, blocking

**Hands:**

* Supporting chin or on side of face- tiredness, boredom
* Chin resting on thumb, index finger pointing up- evaluation

**Handshake:**

* Palm down or overly firm grip- dominance
* Palm up or limp grip- submission, accommodating
* Equal and vertical, medium grip- non-threatening, relaxed
* Shake with your right hand, not left, whenever possible

Teacher Notes: [Non-Verbal Communication](http://humanresources.about.com/od/interpersonalcommunicatio1/qt/nonverbal-communication-in-the-workplace.htm); [Power Poses](http://www.businessinsider.com/body-language-power-poses-2012-11?op=1)

Have a student-volunteer come up to show physical space and when you are invading someone’s personal space. Announce what you are doing ahead of time and make it subtle so you do not run the risk of making the volunteer uncomfortable. Pick someone with a height differential to yours to show how to maintain power dynamics when one person is shorter than the other. With power poses, advise students that they are great to do before job interviews because they decrease cortisol (stress) levels. You can even go into a bathroom stall to do a few power stances before going into an interview.

**Physical Space:**

* In North America, at least 18 inches of space is considered acceptable when standing near someone
* Notice clues when someone wants to exit shared space

**Power stances:**

* If shorter, take one step out at 90 degrees to equalize eye contact with other person
* Arms back behind your head conveys confidence (and arrogance)
* Hands on hips, wide legs stance- assertion
* These poses actually decrease cortisol levels, which increase when stressed

## Attire

Teacher Notes:

Have the class share what types of attire, style, etc. are expected in the types of work environments they want to go into or are currently a part of. This will help illustrate the range of requirements at different jobs. Emphasize that dressing appropriately doesn’t have to be expensive with many options available at thrift stores.

Clean, unwrinkled clothing without holes:

* Shows a level of attention to detail and visual presentation

Clothing that is too tight or revealing:

* Can go against established dress codes at an organization

Shoes:

* If they are not suited to the work site, can be a liability
* In interviews, dress at the level or a bit above those interviewing you
* At the workplace, be aware of any rules: no open toe shoes/ flip flops, no strong perfumes/colognes, business casual vs. outdoor clothing
* Many positions now allow for remote (not in person) work, but you still need to be aware of attire etiquette for in-person meetings

### SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF CLOTHING

*The social psychology of clothing is concerned with how an individual’s clothing affects the interpretation of self as well as the interpretation of others toward the self* (Johnson & Lennon 2014)

Teacher Notes:

[Review the concept of the social psychology of clothing](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40691-014-0020-7) as a way to encourage students to think about attire as a two way street. They might not care how others view them, but it is important for them to understand how they view themselves, and their competence at work, can be influenced by how they dress.

* Our attire is interpreted by others and can create an impression of who we are, even when this impression does not accurately represent us
* Our attire can also affect our own sense of competence in a workplace, without us even realizing it:

In a series of experiments, one group was told to wear white lab coats to keep them protected from paint, while the other group was given the exact same coats but told they were medical coats.

The two groups were given the exact same tasks to do. In every single experiment, the individuals wearing coats they thought were from doctors outperformed those wearing coats they thought were just to keep them clean.

* Have you experienced a time when the way you were dressed made you feel more or less prepared for a job or task?

### Body Piercings and Tattoos

In traditional settings:

* Body embellishments can be seen as counter to the culture of the organization, unacceptable to the clients, etc.

In less traditional workplace environments:

* Seen as an act of self-expression, a means of aligning with a particular group, a marker of personal culture

Some employers will request you to cover tattoos or piercings. This can be contested if it is part of your cultural or religious heritage.