

## IMPROVING TEACHER/STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Purpose of handout:

To help you to understand the importance of communication between teachers and students.

To help you identify your communication patterns in your class.

To provide tools to help you develop or improve your communication skills in your classes.

- I. Importance of communication between instructors and students.
  - A. Helps to clarify the class requirements along with the expectations of the teachers and the needs of the students.
  - B. Increases satisfaction of learning by the student and satisfaction of teaching by the instructor.
  - C. Builds confidence in communication skills of students and instructors, and creates a positive learning atmosphere.
  - D. Can help develop relationships between individual students and instructors which may lead to letters of recommendation for future education or employment.
  
- II. Identifying your communication skills
  - A. In participating in class discussions.
  - B. In talking to your instructor on a one-to-one basis.

Take into account that your participation and communication in class will vary depending on a number of factors, such as: number of students, subject matter, instructor, seating arrangement, size of room, your interest in the subject, amount of participation required, time of day, and how you are feeling.

Complete the following exercise.

Where do you fit on these scales?

I am silent in class; I ask no questions.	I have asked 1 or 2 questions in class.	I actively show I am interested in learning. I regularly ask questions.	I ask many irrelevant questions & I am aggressive & challenge the authority of my instructor.
I have no contact with my instructor.	I can talk to my instructor to set up an appointment or ask a specific question before/after class.	I have met with my instructor in their office for specific question.	I stop by to see my instructor every day & have been a "pest" or "bugging" my instructor.

- III. To improve class participation and communication with your instructor.
- A. Sit in a seat in the front of the class (perhaps in a set near the side).
  - B. Look interested, watch the instructor, turn and show interest about other student's questions.
  - C. Respond to questions if called upon.
  - D. Prepare ahead of time and write down questions to ask in class or to your instructor.
    - a. Questions you can ask of your instructor to develop or improve communication:
      - i. I need to make an appointment to see you because I can't come during your office hours.
      - ii. I need help in studying for an exam.
      - iii. I need a copy of the course syllabus/outline and to find out about the grading system.
      - iv. I need feedback on classroom and exam performance.
      - v. I need to have a topic in the lecture explained or clarified.
      - vi. I need advising on classes for a certificate or degree program in the instructor's area.
  - E. Practice stating questions out loud, to yourself, in front of a mirror, or to a friend.
  - F. Visualize yourself asking questions in class or talking to your instructor. Picture the room, the furniture, smells, what you're wearing. See your-self as confident and communicating clearly.
  - G. Say Affirmations to yourself and out loud in front of a mirror, such as:
    - a. "I can ask good questions."
    - b. "I can see myself being relaxed and calm while asking any questions I have."
    - c. "I can contribute good comments to the discussion."
    - d. "I can talk to my instructor and make an appointment."
  - H. Set goals for yourself to begin improving your communication.
    - a. Prepare ahead of time by reviewing your notes and doing the reading; write down each question you have.
    - b. Ask one question a week of the person who sits next to you.
    - c. Ask one question a week of your instructor.
    - d. For lecture classes, whenever you have questions listen carefully in case the instructor has already answered it.

For discussion classes, make a comment whenever you feel you have an important contribution; it may be more than one a day.