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COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNIT 3

TOPIC :

- **Effective Written Communication :** Introduction, When and When Not to Use Written Communication- Complexity of the Topic, Amount of Discussion' Required, Shades of Meaning, Formal Communication



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Effective Written Communication

- Written communication refers to any message that is conveyed through written symbols and documents, enabling the sender to record, share, and store information for future reference.
- Written communication is the process of conveying a message using written symbols, such as letters, reports, emails, memos, and notices. It is one of the most formal and permanent forms of communication used in personal, academic, and professional settings.

Characteristics of Effective Written Communication

1. **Clarity** – Ideas must be clear and understandable.
2. **Conciseness** – Avoid unnecessary words; stay direct.
3. **Coherence** – Logical structure and flow of ideas.
4. **Correctness** – Free from grammatical and factual errors.
5. **Completeness** – All necessary details should be included.
6. **Tone** – Should match the purpose and audience.

When to Use Written Communication

Written communication is **preferred** in the following situations:

1. *Complexity of the Topic*

- ❖ When the subject is technical, legal, or detailed, written communication helps record everything clearly.
- ❖ Example: Writing a standard operating procedure (SOP) or a legal contract.

2. *Amount of Discussion Required*

- ❖ If the message requires a lot of information or data (statistics, charts, evidence), it is better written so the receiver can read and analyze it carefully.

- ❖ Example: Sending a project report or business proposal.

3. *Shades of Meaning*

- ❖ In sensitive cases, where a message must be carefully crafted to avoid misunderstandings or emotional misinterpretations, writing allows you to revise and adjust tone and words.
- ❖ Example: Writing performance feedback to an employee or drafting a resignation letter.

4. *Formal Communication*

- ❖ For formal communication like policies, instructions, or notices, written format ensures uniformity, accountability, and legal value.
- ❖ Example: Company circulars, appointment letters, official notices.

When Not to Use Written Communication

There are situations where written communication may be **ineffective or inappropriate**, such as:

1. **Urgency** – In emergencies, oral communication is faster.
2. **Personal or Emotional Topics** – In-person conversations allow tone, body language, and empathy.
3. **Two-way Dialogue Needed** – For brainstorming or problem-solving, spoken interaction is more dynamic.
4. **Low Literacy Levels** – If the audience may struggle with reading, verbal or visual communication is better.

Complexity of the Topic in Written Communication

→ Complexity of the topic refers to the degree of difficulty or depth involved in understanding or explaining a subject. Some topics are technical, detailed, or sensitive, and require clear, structured, and well-documented explanation—making written communication the most effective method.

Why Use Written Communication for Complex Topics

1. Detailed Explanation:

- ▲ Complex subjects often need step-by-step clarification, which is easier to structure in written form.
- ▲ Readers can re-read the content multiple times to understand it properly.

2. Accuracy and Clarity:

- ▲ Writing allows the sender to choose precise words, organize thoughts, and avoid ambiguity.
- ▲ Reduces the chances of misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

3. Reference and Record:

- ▲ Complex information may need to be referred to again later. Written documents serve as a permanent reference.
- ▲ Examples include scientific reports, legal contracts, and technical manuals.

4. Time for Review:

- ▲ Both the sender and receiver can review and revise the content.
- ▲ This is especially useful in subjects like law, engineering, or medicine.

Benefits of Using Written Communication for Complex Topics

- Ensures **clarity** and **completeness**
- Helps **standardize** complex procedures
- **Reduces errors**
- Allows time to **think, plan, and structure**
- Maintains a **professional tone** and image

Amount of Discussion Required in Written Communication

➤ The "amount of discussion required" refers to how much back-and-forth interaction, clarification, or elaboration a topic needs. Some topics can be fully explained in one go, while others need continuous feedback, adjustment, or dialogue between two or more people.

When to Use Written Communication Based on Amount of Discussion

Written communication is most effective when:

- The topic is informational, not interactive.
- The message can be clearly explained in one attempt.
- Minimal or no immediate response is expected.
- The communication is directive, factual, or formal.

Shades of Meaning

→ "Shades of meaning" refers to the slight differences in meaning, tone, emotion, or intensity between similar words, phrases, or sentences. It reflects the subtle emotional or implied message beyond the literal meaning of the words used.

→ "Shades of meaning" are the subtle emotional or implied differences in words that can strongly influence how a written message is understood. Written communication is ideal when the tone, word choice, and emotional sensitivity of the message matter—because it

allows time for careful selection of language to ensure the message is clear, respectful, and well-received.

Formal Communication

- Formal communication is the official, structured, and professionally recognized exchange of information that follows the organization's hierarchy, rules, or procedures. It usually flows through predefined channels and is often documented for record-keeping.
- Formal communication refers to communication that follows a specific format or structure and flows through official channels. In written form, it includes:
 - Memos
 - Letters
 - Reports
 - Circulars
 - Policies and Procedures

Importance

- ▲ It creates an official record.
- ▲ Helps in organizational control and coordination.
- ▲ Ensures messages are clear, uniform, and professional.
- ▲ Used for accountability and reference in future.

Advantages of Formal Communication

- **Clarity and Order** – Messages are structured and organized.
- **Accountability** – Everyone knows who said what and when.
- **Consistency** – Reduces the chance of confusion or contradiction.
- **Documentation** – Useful for future reference or legal purposes.
- **Professional Image** – Projects discipline and seriousness.