

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

LEAD WITH YOUR VOICE



INTRODUCTION

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19 YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

11 YEARS AS A DEPARTMENT LEADER

4 YEARS TEACHING PUBLIC SPEAKING: EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

MOM TO THREE BOYS: AGES 12, 10 AND 7

TABLE INTRODUCTIONS:

1. FIRST NAME

2. SCHOOL DISTRICT

3. POSITION IN DISTRICT

The Pillars of Effective Departmental Leadership Communication

The Relational Pillar: Building Trust



Authenticity & Active Listening

Being "real" and listening genuinely ensures a leader's own voice is better heard by the team.



Consistent Responsiveness

Acknowledging messages immediately, even before a full answer is ready, maintains open communication lines.



Foundation of Flexibility

Regular check-ins and trust-based leadership create an environment where staff feel comfortable asking questions.

The Structural Pillar: Streamlined Delivery



Proactive Preparation

Providing meeting agendas in advance and thinking one step ahead reduces team anxiety.



Visual Information Design

Using bulleted lists in presentations presents the audience from feeling overwhelmed by information density.



Ruthless Prioritization

Highlighting points that need immediate address ensures the team stays focused on essential tasks first.

FOSTERING
TRUST AND CLARITY
WITHIN A
PROFESSIONAL
TEACHING TEAM

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

- THE PROCESS OF EXCHANGING INFORMATION, IDEAS, THOUGHTS, OR FEELINGS
- INVOLVES A SENDER, MESSAGE, MEDIUM, RECEIVER, AND FEEDBACK
- BOTH VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL**



VERBAL VS. NON-VERBAL

VERBAL
SPOKEN OR WRITTEN WORDS

NON-VERBAL
TONE, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS,
GESTURES, POSTURE, EYE
CONTACT



WHY IT MATTERS?

- BUILDS TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING
- HELPS PREVENT CONFLICTS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS
- ESSENTIAL IN LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK, RELATIONSHIPS, EDUCATION, AND DAILY LIFE



NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

THINK OF IT AS A SILENT LANGUAGE THAT PROVIDES CONTEXT AND EMOTIONAL WEIGHT TO OUR MESSAGE.

WHEN YOU'RE SPEAKING, YOUR NON-VERBAL CUES CAN EITHER SUPPORT OR CONTRADICT YOUR WORDS.

ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS: (CLICK "ACTIVITY" FOR THE LINK)

LET'S TRY! SELECT A PARTNER FROM YOUR TABLE WHOSE NAME YOU CAN RECALL FROM EARLIER



SINCE YOU COULDN'T USE WORDS, DISCUSS HOW FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, GESTURES, POSTURE, AND EYE CONTACT CAME INTO PLAY AND HOW THEY ARE IMPORTANT WHILE COMMUNICATING.

NEXT, LET'S ADD TONE:

WHY IS TONE CONSIDERED NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?



TONE ENCOMPASSES HOW SOMETHING IS EXPRESSED—CONSIDER ASPECTS LIKE PITCH, VOLUME, SPEED, AND INFLECTION—RATHER THAN SOLELY FOCUSING ON THE WORDS USED. IT COMMUNICATES ATTITUDES, EMOTIONS (SUCH AS SARCASM OR ANGER), AND INTENTIONS.

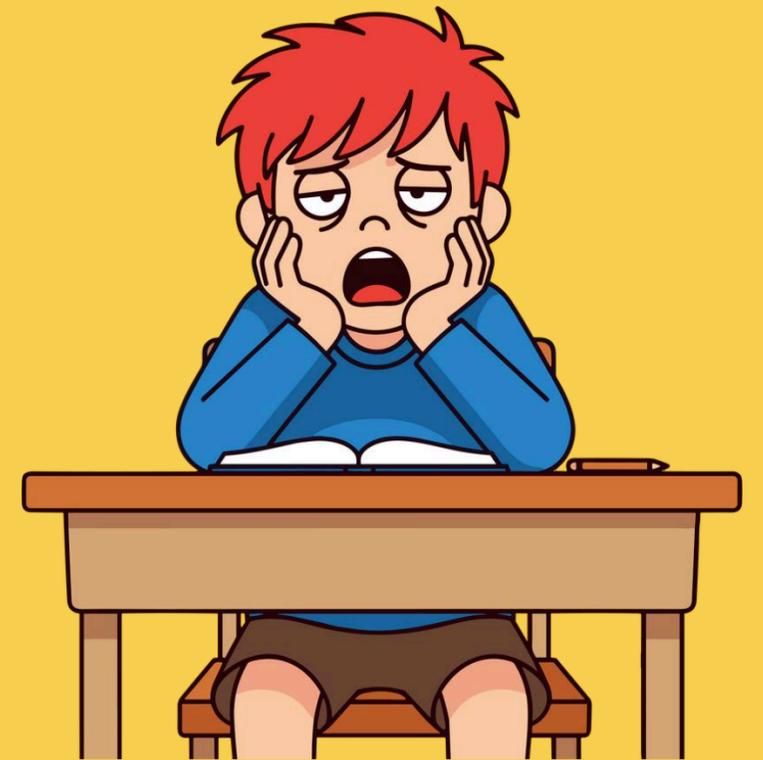
WHO HAS A DOG?

WITH YOUR PARTNER, LABEL YOURSELF NUMBER 1.
THE OTHER PARTNER WILL BE NUMBER 2.

PARTNER 1: CLOSE YOUR EYES AND KEEP THEM
CLOSED UNTIL I SAY OPEN

PARTNER 2: YOUR DIRECTIONS WILL APPEAR WHEN I
CHANGE TO THE NEXT SLIDE

DISCUSS HOW YOU ARE EXCITED ABOUT SOMETHING
BUT SOUND/ACT BORED



PARTNER 2: YOUR TURN TO CLOSE YOUR EYES

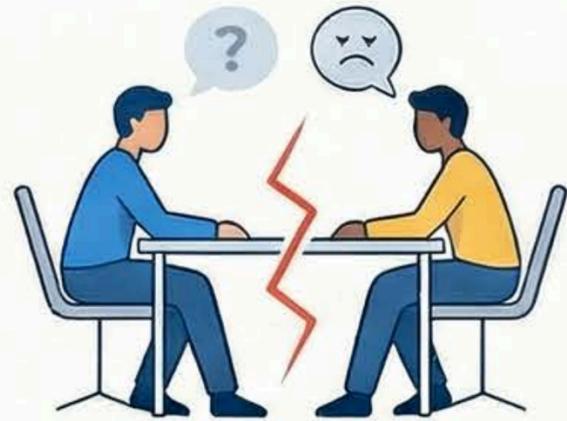
YOU ARE SAD ABOUT SOMETHING BUT SOUND/ACT
UPLIFTED/HAPPY



The Silent Architecture: Non-Verbal De-escalation Strategies

Actionable cues to lower tension and foster collaboration.

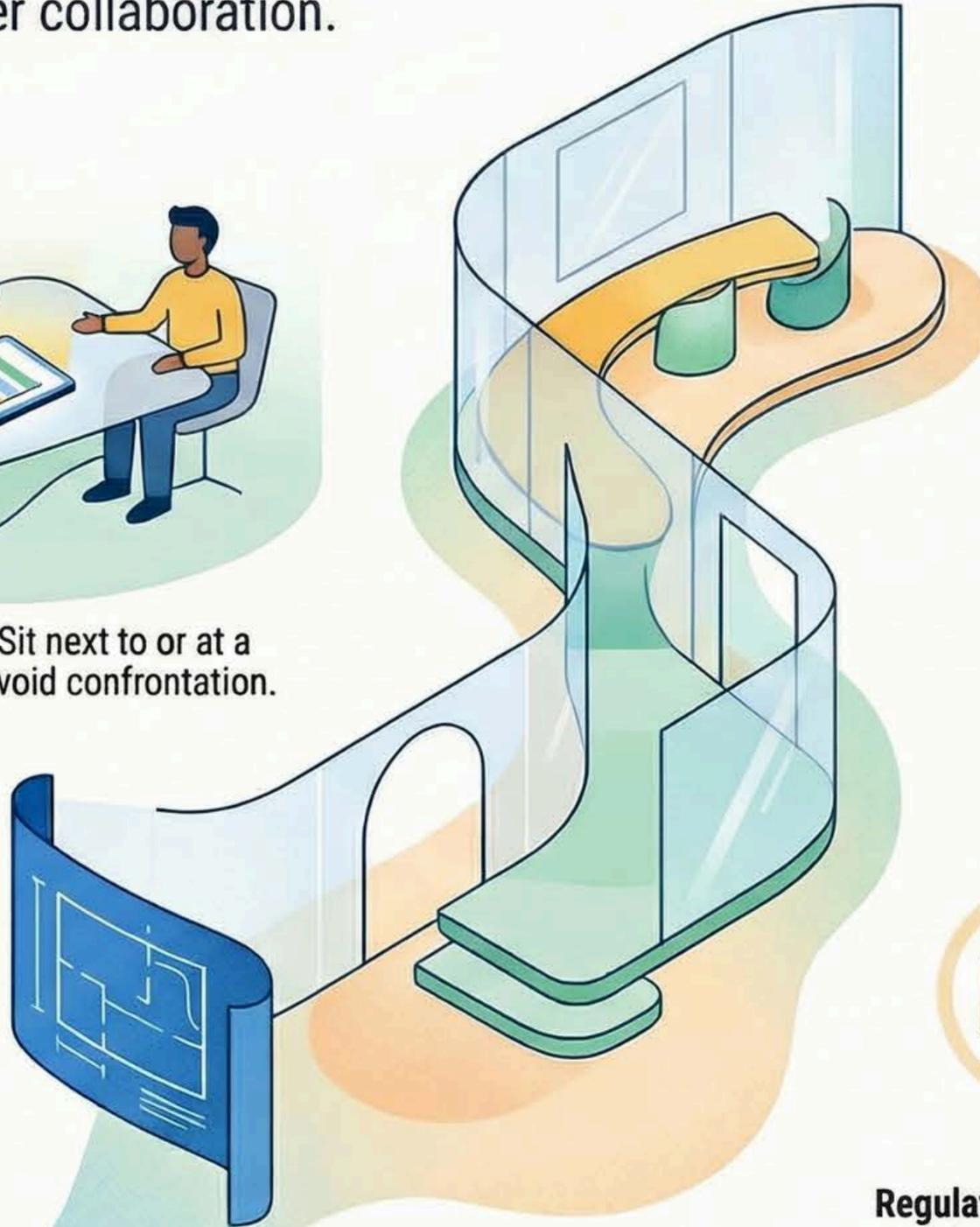
SPATIAL & VISUAL ANCHORS



Strategic Seating: Sit next to or at a 90-degree angle to avoid confrontation.



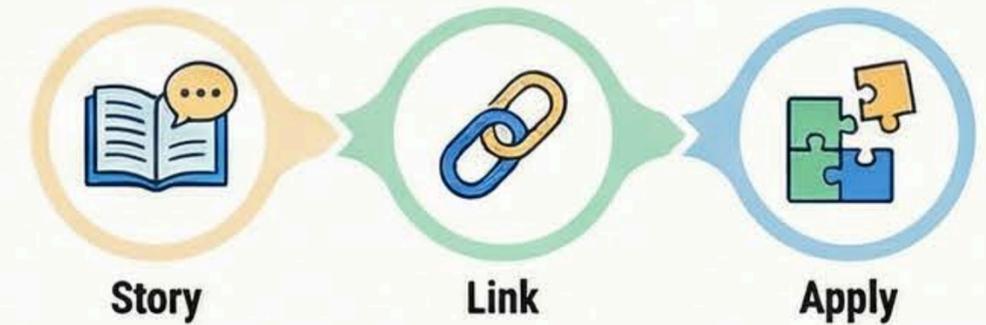
Shared Visual Focus: Point to data or slide hard-copy documents to the center to ground the discussion.



BEHAVIORAL & VERBAL CUES



Visible Engagement: Actively write notes and use nodding to show you are listening and valuing input.



Regulated Communication: Use deep breaths, "We" language, and the "Story-Link-Apply" framework to remain collaborative.

TABLE TALK: WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU USE
VERBAL COMMUNICATION AT YOUR JOB?



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Communication Ecosystem: School-Wide vs. Departmental

Contrast between broad, public-facing school communication and streamlined, culture-focused departmental practices.

AT MY SCHOOL (Broad Outreach & Recognition)



Digital & Broadcast Outreach

Utilizes ParentSquare and Spartan News broadcasts to reach the entire student body and community.



Systematic Recognition

Combines written teacher-to-teacher shout-outs with admin-led "Spartan Shout-out" phone calls.



Positive Home Connections

Prioritizes making intentional **positive phone calls** to families to build external rapport.

IN MY DEPARTMENT (Efficiency & Team Culture)



Optimized Meeting Flow

Share **agendas** in advance, use **bolded bullet points**, and avoid reading directly to the team.

Tactical Support & Feedback

Implements **5-minute observations** with **email follow-ups** and **shares tasks** to lessen individual loads.



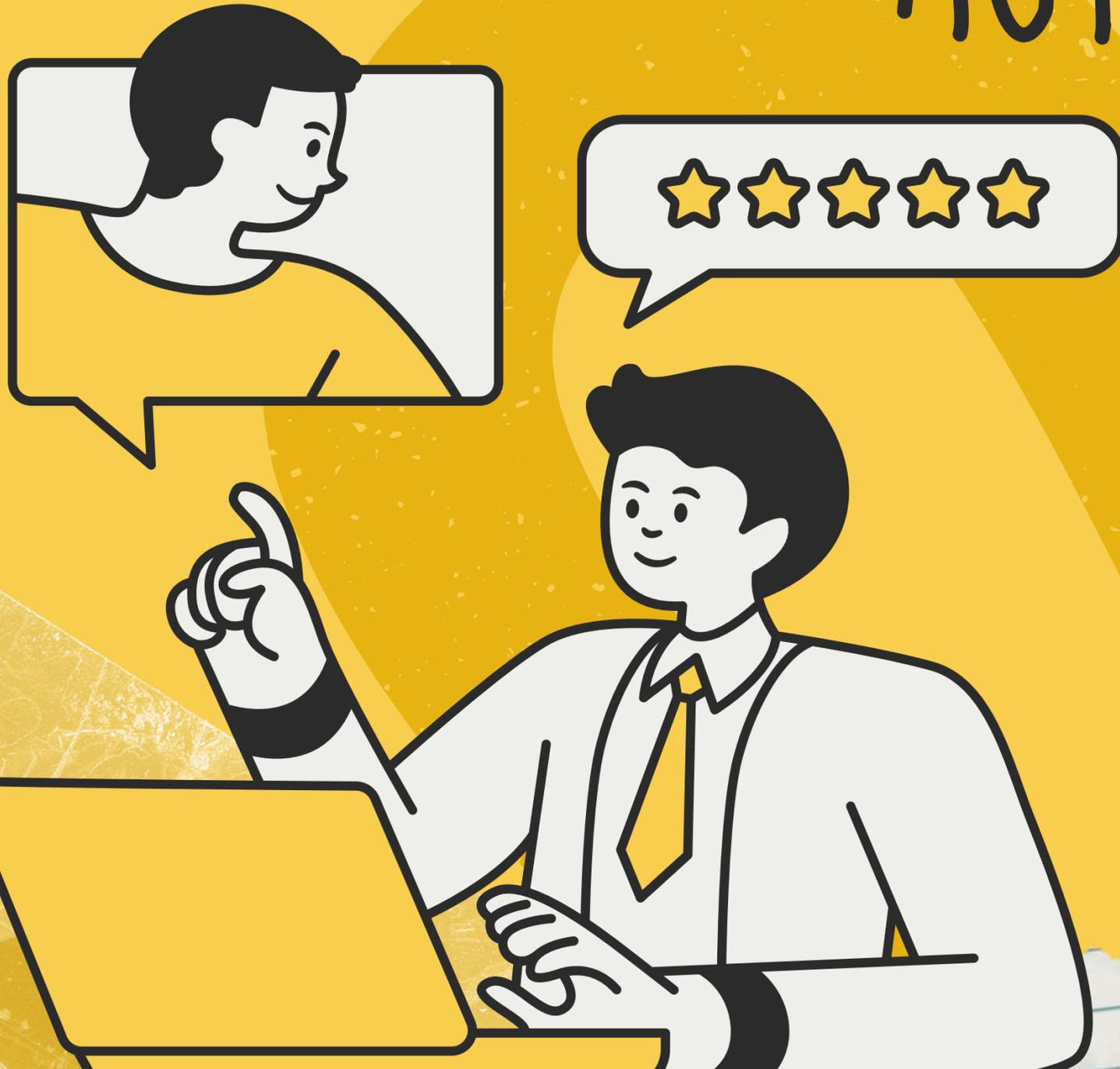
Peer Mentorship & Culture

Uses **mock podcasts** for new teacher onboarding and celebrates personal milestones like birthdays.

TABLE TALK: HOW CAN COMMUNICATION BE IMPROVED IN YOUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT?

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AS A LEADER: ACTIVE LISTENING IS KEY



- LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND, NOT JUST TO REPLY
- SHOW YOU'RE LISTENING (NODDING, EYE CONTACT, VERBAL AFFIRMATIONS)
- DON'T INTERRUPT; ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS
- REFLECT AND PARAPHRASE TO CONFIRM UNDERSTANDING

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

PHYSICAL



NOISE, DISTANCE

PSYCHOLOGICAL



STRESS, BIASES

SEMANTICS



LANGUAGE/JARGON
DIFFERENCES

CULTURAL



NORMS, TRADITIONS,
CONTEXT

TECHNOLOGICAL



POOR CONNECTIVITY,
OVER-RELIANCE ON
DIGITAL TOOLS

COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURES

- BE MINDFUL OF CULTURAL NORMS
- AVOID SLANG OR IDIOMS THAT MAY NOT TRANSLATE
- SHOW RESPECT AND PATIENCE



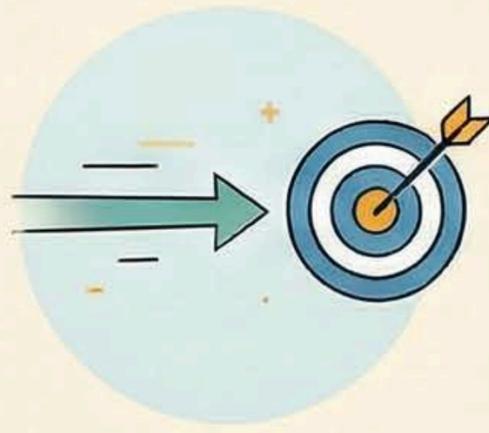
Effective Communication with Multilingual Parents

CULTURAL INSIGHTS & COMMUNICATION STYLES



High-Context

High-Context cultures value relationship building and small talk first.



Low-Context

Low-Context cultures prefer getting straight to the point.



Silence can signify respect for authority.

In many cultures, teachers are viewed as ultimate authorities; parents may stay silent out of respect, so you must explicitly invite their opinions.



Distinguish Passion from Aggression.

Be mindful of stereotypes; for example, "loud" communication in some cultures signifies passion rather than anger or disrespect.

AUDITING THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



Use Multilingual Signage.

Ensure "Main Office" and "Restroom" signs are available in the primary languages spoken by your student population.

Provide "I Speak..." Cards.

Keep cards at the front office counter so parents can easily point to their preferred language without the stress of explaining it.



Learn Basic Phrases.

Use simple phrases like "Un momento, por favor" or "entiendes ingles?" to show effort and build immediate rapport.

LANGUAGE TOOLS & CLARITY

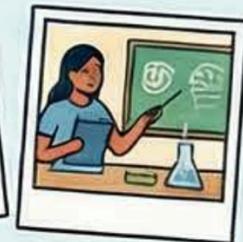


Avoid Educational Jargon & Acronyms.

Terms like IEP, 504 plan, or rubric often don't have direct translations; explain the concept instead of using the acronym.

Balance Technology with Nuance.

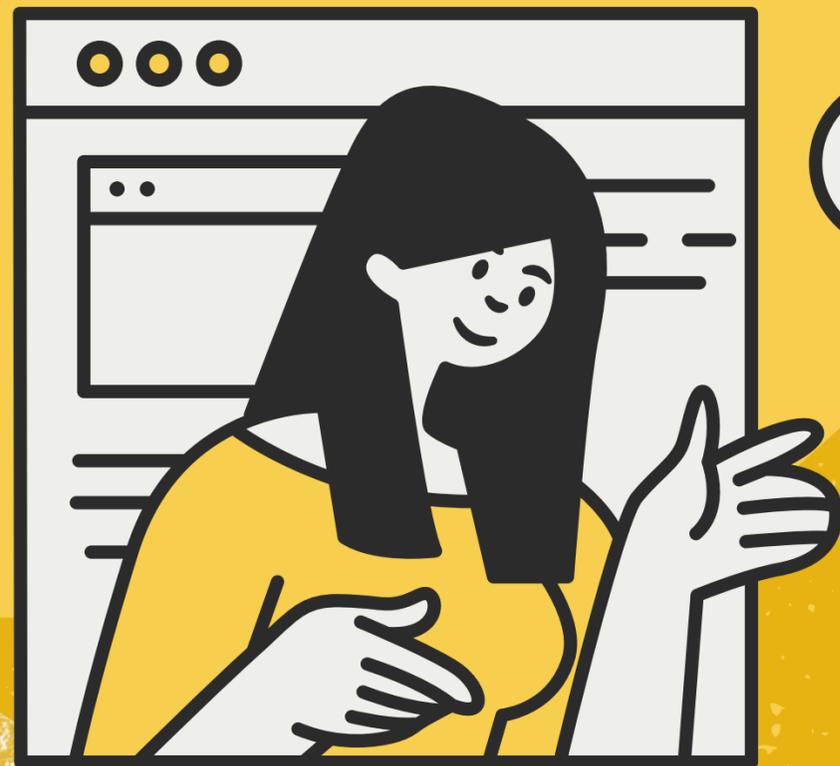
While tools like Google Translate or Language Line are great starting points, they may miss specific cultural tones and nuances.



Prioritize Universal Icons & Photos.

Use icons like a clock (🕒) for time/locations and use photo tutorials instead of long, text-heavy emails.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE (FOR US AND THEM): COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS



- BE CLEAR AND CONCISE
- THINK BEFORE YOU HIT "SEND"
- USE PROPER GRAMMAR AND TONE (NO ALL-CAPS UNLESS YOU'RE SHOUTING)
- KNOW WHEN TO SWITCH TO A CALL OR FACE-TO-FACE MEETING
- USE "REPLY-ALL" SPARINGLY



WHAT NOW?

PRACTICE EMPATHY AND
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

ASK FOR FEEDBACK ON HOW
YOU COMMUNICATE

JOIN DISCUSSIONS,
SPEAK IN PUBLIC



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- COMMUNICATION IS MORE THAN JUST TALKING—IT'S CONNECTION
- LISTENING IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS SPEAKING
- BE CLEAR, RESPECTFUL, AND EARN THEIR TRUST—CHASE YOUR TALENTS
- GOOD COMMUNICATION IS A LIFELONG SKILL



THANK YOU!

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