

Course: ECEM-112 (Communication Skills and Research Techniques)

Basics of Communication and Communication Skills

"A blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword"

Robert Burton

Definition of Communication

Communication, the buzz word in today's world, originates from the Latin word *communico* or *communicare*, which means 'to share' or 'to be in relation with'. It can be briefly summed up that 'communication essentially means the transfer of ideas, feelings, plans, messages, or information from one person to another'.

According to BusinessDictionary.com communication is

Two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode - decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or place . In business , it is a key function of management--an organization cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees.

The National Communication Association of America sees communication study as a discipline focusing on

How humans use verbal and nonverbal messages to create meaning in various contexts (from two person groups to mass audiences) across cultures using a variety of channels and media. The discipline is especially interested in the impact of those messages on human behaviour. Communication as a discipline includes the study of communication in interpersonal relationships, groups, organizations, and across cultures; the rhetorical theory and criticism; performance studies; argumentation and persuasion' technology mediated communication; and popular culture. Obviously however, communication is considered effective only when it gets the desired action or response.

What is communication?

Communication is the life blood of any organization and its main purposes are the following:

1. Communication is sharing of ideas
2. A process that allow people to exchange information by several methods
3. The exchange of information between members of a group that enables survival or improved living conditions for the sender or receiver of the message or both effective communication occurs only if receivers understand the exact message the sender intended to transmit and feel the information at the end of exchange is clear. The ultimate goal of communication is to convey information and understanding of information from one person of group to another person or group.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication process consists of a non-verbal or verbal message being sent and received with effective feedback to ensure the message is clear and understood.

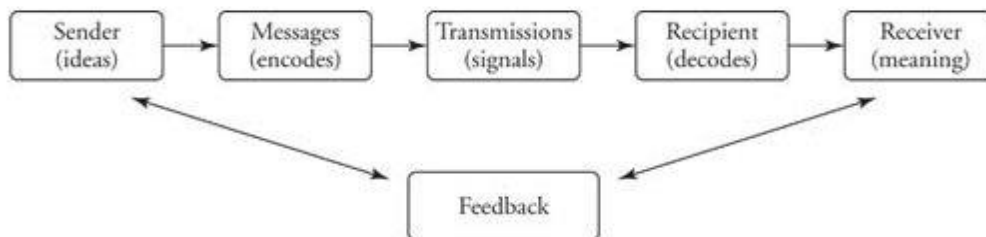


Figure 1 Communication model.

1. Source – where the message comes from
2. Message-ideas, thoughts, information to be communicated
3. Encode-formulate words to transmit message
4. Channel-mode used to transmit message-written or verbal-such as email, or phone
5. Decode-receiver listens or reads message clearly

6. Receive – person processes and reacts to message
7. Feedback – receiver responds to sender showing understanding

The goal of communication is to convey information—and the understanding of that information—from one person or group to another person or group. This communication process is divided into three basic components: A sender transmits a message through a channel to the receiver. (Figure 1 shows a more elaborate model.) The sender first develops an idea, which is composed into a message and then transmitted to the other party, who interprets the message and receives meaning. Information theorists have added somewhat more complicated language. Developing a message is known as encoding. Interpreting the message is referred to as decoding. Communication is a process whereby information is encoded, channeled, and sent by a sender to a receiver via a medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback. All forms of communication require a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, and the feedback that effectively winds up the process. Communication requires both the sender and the receiver to have an area of communicative commonality.

Types of Communication

Communication in general is the process sending and receiving message that that enables humans to share knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Although we usually identify communication with speech, communication is composed of two dimensions-verbal and non-verbal. An individual's communication skills are a basis for an effective dialogue, and involve both verbal communication skills.

While verbal communication helps to express oneself, nonverbal enhances spoken ideas by means of bodily, voice, and eye behavior, facial expression, etc. it reinforces the effect of spoken words. In addition, nonverbal communication can be viewed as a reliable indicator of real feelings of the speaker. Observed and paid attention to, it can help a person to understand another one better.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication thus stands both for the spoken and the written word used in the communication process. It can further be divided into oral and written communication. A face-to-face interaction between the sender and the receiver is

called oral communication. In this type of communication, the sender uses the written mode to transmit his/her message.

- Speech
- Face to face conversation
- Telephonic conversation

Non –Verbal Communication

When a message is communicated without using a word, the process requires non-verbal cues to be transmitted and received non-verbal communication forms an important part in the world of professional communication. It can be further categorized into two parts – body language and paralinguistic features.

- Body Language
- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Tone of the voice
- Hand/body movements/gestures
- Posture
- Personal space

Body language

Man has been using since times immemorial. In fact, man has been using body language even before he learned to use language as a communication tool.

Body language during interview and Group Discussion

In the first place, a business-like appearance is important. Hence, body postures are important . Slouching in the chair during the interview will not do; since it would suggest that the candidate is not alert. That does not mean you should sit on the edge of the chair, for this may convey nervousness. So, sit upright but do not be stiff.

Again , you have to look at the interviewer when he/she speaks to you,. In some interviews , the interviewer may shake hands with you. a warm and firm grip of the hand suggests confidence and friendliness. Eye- contact is necessary at the interview. Fiddling with your pen or shaking your legs may suggest nervousness, so it is better to put your hands on your lap, or place them quietly on the table and use appropriate and movements when necessary. Do not exhibit any nervous gestures like licking of the lips. shaking of the legs, and tapping of the foot during interview or Group discussion.

You must be aware of the fact that a person's voice is important because the accent, stress , pitch, and volume help the audience to judge a person's confidence level, educational and social-cultural background.

Barriers to Effective Communication

There are many reasons why interpersonal communications may fail. In many communications, the message (what is said) may not be received exactly the way the sender intended. It is, therefore, important that the communicator seeks feedback to check that their message is clearly understood.

The skills of Active Listening, Clarification and Reflection may help but the skilled communicator also needs to be aware of the barriers to effective communication and how to avoid or overcome them.

There are many barriers to communication and these may occur at any stage in the communication process. Barriers may lead to your message becoming distorted and you therefore risk wasting both time and/or money by causing confusion and misunderstanding. Effective communication involves overcoming these barriers and conveying a clear and concise message.

Common Barriers to Effective Communication:

- The use of jargon. Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms.
- Emotional barriers and taboos. Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo.

- Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver. Differences in perception and viewpoint.
- Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.
- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication. Not being able to see the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language can make communication less effective.
- Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.

Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping. People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions.

Cultural differences. The norms of social interaction vary greatly in different cultures, as do the way in which emotions are expressed. For example, the concept of personal space varies between cultures and between different social settings. A skilled communicator must be aware of these barriers and try to reduce their impact by continually checking understanding and by offering appropriate feedback.

Language Barriers

Language and linguistic ability may act as a barrier to communication. However, even when communicating in the same language, the terminology used in a message may act as a barrier if it is not fully understood by the receiver(s). For example, a message that includes a lot of specialist jargon and abbreviations will not be understood by a receiver who is not familiar with the terminology used. Regional colloquialisms and expressions may be misinterpreted or even considered offensive.

Psychological Barriers

The psychological state of the communicators will influence how the message is sent, received and perceived. For example, if someone is stressed they may be preoccupied by personal concerns and not as receptive to the message as if they were not stressed. Stress management is an important personal skill that affects our interpersonal relationships.

Anger is another example of a psychological barrier to communication, when we are angry it is easy to say things that we may later regret and also to misinterpret what others are saying.

More generally people with low self-esteem may be less assertive and therefore may not feel comfortable communicating - they may feel shy about saying how they really feel or read negative sub-texts into messages they hear.

Physiological Barriers

Physiological barriers may result from the receiver's physical state. For example, a receiver with reduced hearing may not grasp to entirety of a spoken conversation especially if there is significant background noise.

Physical Barriers

An example of a physical barrier to communication is geographic distance between the sender and receiver(s). Communication is generally easier over shorter distances as more communication channels are available and less technology is required. Although modern technology often serves to reduce the impact of physical barriers, the advantages and disadvantages of each communication channel should be understood so that an appropriate channel can be used to overcome the physical barriers.

Systematic Barriers

Systematic barriers to communication may exist in structures and organisations where there are inefficient or inappropriate information systems and communication channels, or where there is a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities for communication. In such organisations, individuals may be unclear of their role in the communication process and therefore not know what is expected of them.

Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are behaviours or perceptions that prevent people from communicating effectively. Attitudinal barriers to communication may result from

personality conflicts, poor management, resistance to change or a lack of motivation. Effective receivers of messages should attempt to overcome their own attitudinal barriers to facilitate effective communication.

Verbal barriers

One should be able to listen effectively, speak fluently and clearly, write well, and read in the language(s) others are familiar with. Thus, there are some verbal barriers such as verbal attack, speaking loudly unnecessarily, and using complex words and phrases. Whenever one interrogates, criticizes, or blames the other, verbal barriers are created.

Variation in language

Sometimes certain words and idiomatic expressions are culture specific. If we do not use them appropriately in the respective cultural context, it might lead to miscommunication or non-communication. For instance, what is called sidewalk in the US, in Britain it is called pavement, whereas in India, it is called platform.

Listening Barriers

Poor listening results in incomplete, incorrect, and inconsistent responses.

Public Speaking

Public Speaking - An Overview

Public Speaking is defined as the process of communicating with a large group of audience.

Let us understand the meaning of public speaking with the help of a very simple example:

Tim was the managing director of XYZ industries. Tim wanted to circulate the company policies to all his employees and everyone directly or indirectly associated with his firm. Neither he wanted to send an email nor he had the time to call all his employees and explain the rules and regulations individually. He finally decided to call all his employees on a common platform and address them. The impact was definitely much more as Tim could personally meet all his employees

and yes even the staff members were really happy as the message came straight from their top Boss. Queries were addressed and nobody could blame each other later on. This act of speaking to a large group of people with an intention of informing them about something is called as public speaking. Public speaking helps you communicate directly with your target audience at a single time.

The most important thing in public speaking is selecting the right topic. The agenda needs to be very clear. Do not just call people for the sake of it unless and until you are absolutely clear as to what you intend to communicate. Personal issues need not to be discussed on a public forum. If John has a personal problem with any of his team members, then does he need to call all the employees for a public meeting? Absolutely NOT. Remember, public speaking plays an important role only when the topic is related to all and everybody needs to be informed of the same. Make sure you choose the right words while addressing people. One wrong word and you are gone. No one would believe you in future.

Be very confident while addressing people. Do not forget to make an eye contact with your audience. It helps you establish a relationship with them. There are people who look here and there while speaking. Such a practice needs to be avoided at all cost. Be precise and crisp. It is foolish to play with words on an open forum. Do not unnecessarily cook stories but come to the point immediately. No one really has the time to listen to your stories. A public speaker needs to be smart and intelligent enough to understand the reactions as well as moods of his audience. Dragging the session unnecessarily is of no use.

Maintain a smile on your face. There is no need to be nervous if you know what you have to speak. Remember, public speaking is an art. Not everyone is born with public speaking skills. It comes with time. Be extremely careful of your pitch. Be neither too loud nor too soft. There are people who speak only for the people sitting in the first row. Speak clearly and make sure you are audible even to the people sitting on the last bench.

Dress appropriately. You just can't afford to wear a tattered jeans and a T shirt while addressing your office people. They will never take you seriously.

Make the session interesting and interactive. Ask questions in between and do give time to your audience to ask questions and clear their doubts.

The venue, sound system, dais, lights also are important aspects of public speaking. Make sure you have a proper auditorium or a conference hall for addressing people where they can sit comfortably. Stand on an elevated platform where everyone can see you clearly. It helps. The microphone and other sound system must be in proper working condition.

Role of Communication in Effective Public Speaking

Communication plays an essential role in public speaking. There is a difference between speaking to someone in private and connecting to a large audience. Remember that you fail as a speaker even if one individual in the audience goes back with the slightest doubt in his/her mind. Your job as a speaker is incomplete unless and until individuals return with a smile on their face. Effective communication in fact is the backbone of public speaking.

Effective communication ensures the message reaches the audience in its correct and desired form. Communication is incomplete if the recipients are not aware as to what the sender intends to speak. Speak clearly and make sure your content is relevant and makes sense. You may speak in any language but your audience needs to understand your thoughts and ideas. Choose the correct words in your speech. Avoid using jargons and slangs in official communication.

Speak with confidence. Your communication needs to motivate your audience to follow what has been discussed in the seminar or conference. Support your content with practical examples so that people can relate it with their daily lives.

Two way communication is of utmost importance. A scenario where only the speaker speaks and others either sleep or fiddle with their cell phones is not the ideal one. People sitting in first two rows are generally attentive but what about those who are on the last benches? In most of the cases, they are lost somewhere else. An individual is considered to be a good and effective speaker only when questions and queries come from even the last benchers. Motivate your audience to ask questions in between. It is always better to revert later if you are not clear on something rather than lying.

Style of communication also plays an important role in public speaking. There are very few individuals who really bother about their pitch and tone. What is the

use of an excellent presentation if it is not communicated well? Speak loudly but clearly. You do not have to shout but make sure you are audible to everyone. Check with your audience whether they can hear you clearly or not? Do not forget that you are not speaking for yourself but for everyone sitting in the room.

Do not try to copy others. Inspiration is alright but problem arises when people try to blindly follow their colleagues or bosses. Every individual has his/her own style and it is always better to stick to it. Speaking with a fake accent is a strict no no in public speaking.

Allow people to express their ideas and opinions. Do not expect a yes in everything you say. A session is effective only when every individual sitting in the forum agrees to the terms, conditions, policies and so on discussed in the session. Forcing your ideas on your audience does not make sense in today's business scenario.

One needs to prepare well before a session but you just can't predict everything your audience might ask. It is practically impossible to jot down everything you intend to speak. Fluency is of utmost importance and it comes with thorough practice. No one is born with effective communication skills, it comes with hard work, time, dedication and of course practice.

Use the right tenses. Take extreme care of your grammar. Take care of punctuation marks. Give pauses in between. For effective communication it is important to develop eye contact with your audience. Enrich your vocabulary. It helps in public speaking. Take care of your body language as well.

The art of connecting to a large audience refers to public speaking. In today's fast paced world where everybody is so busy chasing targets, it is really not feasible for the employers to discuss each and every issue with their employees in private. Public speaking helps people touch base with a large number of individuals at a single time.

Public speaking is not that easy as it sounds. One needs to practice really well for the same.

The first and the foremost step towards preparing for public speaking is to be very clear about the agenda. Ask yourself as to why do you need to address people? Do

not call people just for the sake of it. Once you are clear with the topic, do as much research as you can. Remember, your audience can ask you anything under the sky. You can't skip every question.

Thorough knowledge about the topic to be discussed is in fact the key to an effective session. There are speakers who prefer taking notes/bullet points to the session. This is not a wrong practice but reading only from the notes is certainly not acceptable and expected out of a good and professional speaker. Why are you the chosen one to represent your company in front of all the employees in case you just have to read out notes? In fact anyone can do the same. Understand that eye contact is a crucial aspect in public speaking. It helps you connect with your audience instantly and more over people also take you seriously. Remember, one needs to be spontaneous and it comes only when you yourself are clear as to what you intend to speak. You can take few points just in case you have a bad memory but always try to make your session an interactive one for better results. Be prepared for the worst questions. Surf various informative websites, read related books, articles, notes and gather as much relevant information as you can. Support your content with live case studies, practical examples and authentic data. You can also make a nice presentation to share with your audience but make sure your presentation highlights only the key points. Presentation is always in bullets and you just do not have to include paragraphs and stories in it.

Practicing well is another step towards preparing for public speaking. Never be over confident. Give your presentation in front of either a friend or colleague whom you trust and who is capable of giving you honest and correct feedback. Incorporate the changes as suggested .If you cannot find someone, stand in front of the mirror and speak. It works! It helps you realize your mistakes and shortcomings.

Dressing appropriately helps you carve a niche of your own and leave an everlasting impression. You really do not have to wear your bridal outfit but yes wear something you yourself are sure of. Wear comfortable clothes and no casual clothing to formal presentations. Dress decently and most importantly neatly.

Divide your speech in parts and be very careful about your time limit. There is no point in unnecessarily dragging a presentation. If your time limit is two hours,

make sure you assign some time for your own and company's introduction, the actual content and also for question answer round in the end. Be very confident and believe in yourself.

The Importance of Public Speaking

Over the years, public speaking has played a major role in education, government, and business. Words have the power to inform, persuade, educate, and even entertain. And the spoken word can be even more powerful than the written word in the hands of the right speaker.

Whether you're a small business owner, a student, or just someone who's passionate about something—you'll benefit if you improve your public speaking skills, both personally and professionally. Some benefits to public speaking include:

- Improves confidence
- Better research skills
- Stronger deductive skills
- Ability to advocate for causes
- And more

Different Effective Methods of Communication

“If you just communicate, you can get by, but if you communicate skilfully, you can work miracles”

Jim Rohn

A connected team and a connected organization in today's world is the only way we can achieve greater things. Connections and relations are built with exchange of thoughts and information. Communication serves as a valuable mechanism in building these connections and engagement between people.

Communication is a very important skill and art. There are four different ways we communicate with others. No matter what form of communication we choose, it is important to have the right intention to connect with the other person.

1. Written

It refers to printed or recorded materials such as plans, contracts, memos, minutes of the meeting, requirement analysis document, design documents risk registers and other related written materials. It is used to provide well-thought and well-planned details, thus easily to be reviewed than verbal communication because everything that has been written cannot be altered right away. More so, it can be used for future reference.

Written communication can be time consuming, but is extremely essential for formal scenarios which require approvals and having legal implications as well. Emails have ushered in a revolution in making written communication very fast and thus have become a preferred mechanism for sharing detailed information in fraction of a second.

2. Oral/Verbal

It involves the exchange of message or information by using words verbally through face to face or telephone conversations. It is the most common type of conversation as it paves way to get feedback right after receiving the message. It is known to be spontaneous as well. In verbal communication, the ability to listen and think carefully before speaking is critical.

A person must be careful of the words or expressions to be said. Any word that has been spoken cannot be taken back, so it is important to formulate expressions or sentences carefully.

3. Non-Verbal

Non-verbal communication is sending information without the use of words. It is mostly through one's body language, gestures, eye-contacts, appearance, pitch and tone of one's voice etc. one can communicate huge amount of feelings and emotions.

They say, "It is important to understand what has not been said explicitly".

Non-verbal communication includes, body-language, paralanguage (pitch and tone of voice), appearance etc. Research has shown that nonverbal cues or body language along with facial expressions, tone of voice and body stance account for almost 55% of all the communication that takes place.

4. Visual Communication

"A picture is worth a thousand words". Visual aids such as animation, colour, illustration, graphs & charts, drawing, signs and logos immensely enhance written communication. Visual communication is also used in the right balance for making information sharing more effective and efficient.

Communication is an art. The above are different methods of exchanging information to communicate. All the methods are used for specific expected outcomes and purpose of communication.

<https://youtu.be/p4vvgTFXMGA> [This you tube link is suggested for a better understanding of the topic “Media and Modes of Communication”}

Learning through internet

Internet, the most useful technology of modern times which helps us not only in our daily lives but also in professional lives. For educational purposes, it is widely used to gather information and to do research or add to the knowledge of various subjects. The Internet has taken the world by a storm and changed the way we look at things. A network of billions of computers and the usage of the internet has seeped into all aspects of our life, including education. *Internet* plays a very vital role in *education*. It is no doubt that in this modern era everyone prefers Google for their queries, problems or doubts. Popular search engines like Google, Yahoo, etc. are the topmost choice of people as they offer an easy and instant reach to the vast amount of information in just a few seconds. It contains a wealth of knowledge that can be searched at any time. The internet has introduced improvements in technology, communication, and online entertainment.

Today, it has become more important as well as a powerful tool in the world which is preferred by everyone. **Importance of internet in education** to the students’ means that it makes easier for them to research things, and relearn the content taught in the school. People use it according to their needs and interests. we will try to understand how helpful it is by delving into some of its features.

Information 24/7

The internet provides students with a platform to learn anything, anytime. Even students who cannot afford books can connect with the internet and educate themselves. The web provides free e-books and other material which can be accessed by students anytime of the day or night and on any day.

Audiovisual learning

The Internet also provides students with various tools that make learning more appealing and fun. For example, lessons through animated videos and audio

lectures of famous educators increase the students' interest in learning something, compared to the traditional methods of learning through reading.

Cost Effective and Affordable Education

One of the largest barriers to education is **high cost**. The **Internet** improves the *quality of education*, which is one of the pillars of sustainable development of a nation. It provides education through Videos (like youtube tutorial videos) and web tutorials which is affordable to everyone and cost-effective.

Student – Teacher and Peer Interaction

The internet allows the students to be in constant touch with their teachers or with other fellow classmates with the help of social media, messaging apps and chat forums. Parents can interact as well as communicate with teachers and school authorities about their kid's performance in the school. Interaction with the like minded people on forums can help students to explore new ideas and enrich their knowledge.

Effective Teaching and Learning Tool

The **Internet** has become a major tool for effective teaching as well as a learning tool. Teachers can use it as a teaching tool by posting their teaching materials (notes and videos) on school website or forum . The learning process becomes interesting and diverse with the use of tutorial videos and notes. Teachers can teach with the use of animation, powerpoint slides, and images to capture the students' attention.

Easy Access to Quality Education

Students can easily access quality education materials like tutorial videos on youtube for free or pay fees online for more quality study materials. Teachers can also make use of the internet by providing the students with extra study material and resources such as interactive lessons, educational quiz as well as tutorials. Teachers can record their lectures and provide it to the students for revisions which is better than reading from notes.

Keeping you updated with Latest Information

Information is the biggest advantage which the **internet** is offering. There is a huge amount of information available for every subject. It keeps us up to date with the latest information regarding the subjects in which we are interested.

Learning with Multimedia

It helps the students with the learning process as it helps to simplify the knowledge. Also, it helps to visualize what is being taught by the teachers in school. If you want **to prepare for final exams**, you can access Video Tutorials and other resources online through the Internet.

The **Internet** is a boon to the people, which is used all over the world. Hence, it should be used for good purpose. It has had a great impact on imparting education to the students.

Multimedia Presentation

A multimedia presentation differs from a normal presentation in that it contains some form of animation or media. Typically a multimedia presentation contains at least one of the following elements:

- Video or movie clip
- Animation
- Sound (this could be a voice-over, background music or sound clips)
- Navigation structure

Why Use Multimedia in Your Presentation?

If we were bound to using only text and shapes, it would be much harder to hold audience's attention during a presentation.

Multimedia exists to help reinforce our key speaking points. Here are a few ideas for working with images, audio, and video to make your presentation more interesting:

- **Images** - These could be used for everything from simple stock photos that add slide variety, to logos and icons that showcase your brand.
- **Audio** - Audio is a great way to add narrations to your slides if you can't present directly to your audience or to add music and sound effects.
- **Video** - You can add video clips from your computer or sites like YouTube. Videos could be used for showing instructional walkthroughs from YouTube, TED talks, or a recorded screencast of your own.

Choice of multimedia presentation technology

- The first – and hardest – part is to choose the technology for your presentation. The choice comes down to two main contenders, Adobe Flash or Microsoft PowerPoint.

Adobe Flash

- Flash allows you to create presentations where you can build in powerful animation. It also has very good video compression technology.
- The best part of Flash is that it also allows you to put presentations directly onto your web site.

Microsoft PowerPoint

- The easiest way to create a multimedia presentation is in Microsoft PowerPoint. You can add in video, a soundtrack and also a reasonable degree of animation.
- By far the the biggest advantage of making multimedia presentations in PowerPoint is that it is easy for anyone to be able to edit the presentation.

<https://youtu.be/8xaMalJfOhY>

In this video, all the steps for creating a multimedia power point presentation have been explained in a simple manner.

Planning Effective Meetings

and

Structuring

People attend meetings for a wide variety of reasons, including work, personal interests and leisure activities. Most people will have to participate in meetings at some point in their lives, and many people do so on a regular basis. Meetings can take place at work, within an organisation, a sports group, a Parent Teachers Association, church group or one of a myriad of other committees.

What is a Meeting?

A meeting is the coming together of three or more people who share common aims and objectives, and who through the use of verbal and written communication contribute to the objectives being achieved.

The Purpose of Meetings

Meetings are an important organisational tool as they can be used to:

- Pool and develop ideas
- Plan
- Solve problems
- Make decisions
- Create and develop understanding
- Encourage enthusiasm and initiative
- Provide a sense of direction
- Create a common purpose

While meetings may differ in size, content and approach, effective meetings all have the following three elements in common:

1. A distinctive purpose or aim
2. Use of effective communication
3. A controlled situation

Components of Meetings

A meeting can be divided into the following three main components:

- **Content** is the knowledge, information, experience, expertise, opinions, ideas, attitudes and expectations that each individual brings to a meeting.
- **Interaction** is the way in which the participants work together to deal with the content of a meeting. This includes the feelings, attitudes and expectations of the participants which have a direct bearing on co-operation, listening, participation and trust.
- **Structure** is the way in which both the information and the participants are organised to achieve the purpose/objectives of the meeting.

Types of Meetings

There are many different types of meetings; here we focus on those used to:

- Inform
- Consult
- Solve problems
- Make decisions

Informational Meetings

These are the most straightforward meetings where one member, usually the chairperson, has factual information or a decision which affects all those present, which he/she wishes to communicate. Such meetings tend to be formal as their

aims are to give the members a real understanding and to discuss any implications or how to put such information to best use.

Consulting Meetings

These are meetings used to discuss a specific policy or innovation and can be used to get participants' views of such a policy or idea. An example could be:

- Review a current policy
- State its deficiencies
- Suggest change
- Stress the advantages of such change
- Admit any weaknesses
- Invite comments

Problem Solving Meetings

These meetings are dependent upon the chairperson describing the problem as clearly as possible. Members should be selected according to their experience, expertise or interest and then given as much information as possible to enable them to generate ideas, offer advice and reach conclusions.

Decision Making Meetings

These types of meetings tend to follow an established method of procedure:

- Description of the problem
- Analysis of the problem
- Draw out ideas
- Decide which is best
- Reach conclusions

Many organisations, clubs and societies hold regular meetings to enable members to report and discuss progress and work in hand, to deliberate current and future planning. Such meetings can contain elements of each of the four above examples.

Planning and Preparation for a Meeting

Of prime importance for the success of any meeting is the attitude and leadership of the **chairperson**. In a meeting, the chairperson is the leader and, as such, has to perform the same function as the leader of any working group.

For a meeting to be effective, the chairperson has to:

- Plan, organise and control the discussion of subjects on the agenda.
- Maintain the group by encouraging and developing harmonious relationships.
- Motivate the individuals by encouraging all to contribute, rewarding their efforts and supporting them in any difficulties.

Before any meeting, the chairperson should ask and resolve the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Is a meeting appropriate?
- How should the meeting be planned?
- Who should attend the meeting?
- What preparation is required for the meeting?

What is the Purpose of the Meeting?

All meetings must have a purpose or aim and the chairperson must ask questions, questions as:

- What is to be achieved by this meeting?
- Is advice required on a particular issue?

- Has a problem arisen that needs prompt discussion?
- Is this a regular meeting to keep members 'in touch'?

Is a Meeting Appropriate?

The chairperson should always consider whether a meeting is necessary or if some other means of communication is more appropriate, for example memos or emails targeted to individuals inviting comment. Unnecessary meetings may waste time, lead to frustration and negativity and may lower motivation to participate in future meetings.

How Should the Meeting be Planned?

This will very much depend on the type of meeting to be held. There should be some rationale behind every meeting, no matter how low-level or informal, and this will largely dictate the content and indicate how planning should proceed.

Who Will Attend the Meeting?

This is often decided by the nature of the meeting itself. In a small organisation, a meeting could well include all members of staff, whereas a working party or committee meeting will already have its members pre-determined. In a large organisation or department, staff attending might well be representing others. It is important that the full implications of such representation are realised by the individuals concerned as they are not merely speaking for themselves. Meetings outside the workplace may include members of the board of directors or other interested parties.

What Preparations are Needed for the Meeting?

If maximum contribution is to be forthcoming from all participants, the purpose of the meeting should be recognised by all. The most tangible expression of this is the agenda which should be circulated beforehand to all those invited to the meeting. The agenda should:

- Give the time and place of the meeting.
- List the topics to be covered, indicating who will introduce them.

- Have any relevant papers attached.
- Give the time the meeting will close.

The Agenda: This is the outline plan for the meeting. In most formal meetings it is drawn up by the **secretary** in consultation with the **chairperson**. The secretary must circulate the agenda well in advance of the meeting, including any accompanying papers. The secretary also requests items for inclusion in the agenda.

Regular meetings often start with the minutes from the last meeting followed by '**matters arising**' which forms a link with what has happened in the previous meeting. Most meetings conclude with 'any other business' (AOB) which gives everyone the opportunity for any genuine last minute items to be raised; though more formal meetings may have AOB items listed on the agenda.

An example of an agenda might be:

- **Apologies for absence.**
- **Minutes of last meeting.**
- **Matters arising (from minutes of last meeting).**
- **Item 1 -Training & Development.**
- **Item 2 - Report on Funding.**
- **Item 3 - Finance & Equipment.**
- **A.O.B. (Any Other Business).**
- **Time and date of next meeting.**

Conducting a Meeting

If appropriate preparations have been made, then the scene is set for an effective meeting. Agendas will have been produced and circulated. Participants will arrive

knowing what is to be discussed and with sufficient background information to make relevant contributions. If appropriate, they will have consulted with people they represent and discussed any pertinent issues.

The Role of the Chairperson

In a more formal meeting, the chairperson will outline the purpose of the meeting and remind members why they are there. The chairperson should *pace* the meeting, ensuring it runs to time. If the planning has been properly executed, this should not prove to be a problem.

At the end of a meeting, the chairperson should remind members what they have achieved and thank them for their contributions. Finally, the time and date of the next meeting should be arranged. Again this is one common model for effective meetings, successful outcomes can be achieved in different ways with different strategies for different purposes, so adapt as appropriate to specific situations.

The Role of the Members

While it is the role of the chairperson to run the meeting, the participation of all members is also fundamental to the success of the meeting.

To ensure an effective meeting, all participants should:

- Undertake any necessary preparation prior to the meeting.
- Arrive on time.
- Keep an open mind.
- Listen to the opinions of others.
- Participate.
- Avoid dominating the proceedings.
- Avoid conflict situations.
- Avoid side conversations which distract others.
- Ask questions to clarify understanding.

- Note down any action agreed upon.
- After the meeting, undertake any agreed action and brief others as appropriate.

Why Meetings May be Ineffective

There are many reasons why meetings are not effective, some of these include:

- The meeting is unnecessary and revolves around discussion of trivial issues, thus wasting members' valuable time.
- The meeting lacks a clarity of purpose, i.e., the aims and objectives are not clearly defined.
- Inappropriate style of leadership, i.e., the chairperson dominates and closes down or disregards other contributions.
- The chairperson exercises little control and allows one or two members to dominate the proceedings.
- The meeting is too large thereby limiting the flow of discussion and preventing all members being able to contribute.
- Decisions emerge that are not truly representative.
- Problems are talked about rather than being talked through.
- Decisions are delayed or not acted upon.
- No clear-cut decisions are made.
- Minutes are inaccurate or seen as being manipulated by the chairperson or secretary for his/her own purposes.
- The wrong people are present, thus preventing the meeting proceeding effectively, e.g., those present have to refer back to another person and are therefore unable to comment effectively.

For meetings to be effective, participation is required from all those present. The key skills of interpersonal communication and listening are important.

To ensure the success of a meeting, good preparation is essential and the role of the chairperson is paramount. If these conditions are met, then all participants should leave the meeting feeling a sense of accomplishment, not as if their time has been wasted.

Professional care of your voice

While speech is how you use words, voice is how you create sound. To your listeners, your voice is a part of who you are and what you believe.

Use your voice for maximum impact.
From the sound of your voice, your listeners will make judgments about your attitude toward them and the ideas you're presenting. They'll judge your sincerity and credibility in part by your voice. And in turn that will affect how they respond to you and your message.

It follows that to be a good presenter, you must take care of your voice and learn to use it effectively. The proper use of your voice can emphasize and strengthen every message you deliver.

Vary the elements of sound for emphasis.
If the pitch, volume, rhythm, and timbre of your voice never fluctuate, you'll be speaking in a monotone. And you'll risk losing your audience as a result.

"They'll judge your sincerity and credibility in part by your voice."

A monotone suggests to your listeners that you have little invested in them or in your message. It suggests you don't really care much whether or how your listeners respond. A monotone provides too few points of emphasis, the kind that helps your audience comprehend your message. But you can supply those points of emphasis by making your voice more expressive. An expressive voice pauses and quickens ... changes pace ... lowers and raises both volume and pitch. It carries emotion ranging from certainty to doubt ... surprise to assurance ... delight to disgust.

Work expression into your voice by varying the elements of sound: volume, pitch, rhythm, and timbre.

Refine the pitch.

Pitch is the frequency of the sound waves you produce. It is about hitting high or low notes with your voice.

Become aware of pitch and learn to refine it, phrase-by-phrase. Questions, for example, should end on a higher note. Conversely, affirmative statements should end in a level or slightly lower pitch. The ending of statements on a high pitch can create doubt in your listeners. Vary your pitch throughout your presentation to establish and reinforce your message.

Alter the rhythm and tempo.

Rhythm is the pattern of the sounds you produce. Tempo is the pace of your voice. Use rhythm to carry meaning. Slow the pace to emphasize certain ideas. Quicken the pace to show excitement or humor. Pause to underscore major points or to give listeners time to absorb a complex idea. Pause also when you're about to transition to another idea.

Control the timbre.

Timbre is the emotional quality of your voice. It's the attitude behind a word or a phrase. Listeners perceive a speaker's attitude and use their perception to build comprehension.

Use timbre to enhance your meaning or express the emotion or attitude you want to create. Choose words and phrases that support that attitude. Vary your emotional expression to support and signify meaning. Your voice is one of the many tools with which you communicate. Practice managing your voice. Become adept at using it to clarify your message and to carry its significance to your listeners.

Group Discussions

Discussions of any sort are supposed to help us develop a better perspective on issues by bringing out diverse view points. Whenever we exchange differing views on an issue, we get a clearer picture of the problem and are able to understand it. The understanding makes us better equipped to deal with the problem. This is precisely the main purpose of a discussion. The dictionary meaning of the word

Group Discussion is to talk about a subject in detail. So, group discussion may refer to a communicative situation that allows its participants to express views and opinions and share with other participants. It is a systematic oral exchange of information, views and opinions about a topic, issue, problem or situation among members of a group who share certain common objectives.

G D is essentially an interactive oral process. The group members need to listen to each other and use voice and gesture effectively, use clear language and persuasive style.

GD is structured: the exchange of ideas in a GD takes place in a systematic and structured way. Each of the participants gets an opportunity to express his/her views and comments on the views expressed by other members of the group.

GD involves a lot of group dynamics, that is, it involves both -person to person as well as group to group interactions. Every group member has to develop a goal oriented or group oriented interaction. A participant needs to be aware of needs of other group members and overall objectives of the discussion.

Definition: Group discussion may be defined as – a form of systematic and purposeful oral process characterized by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem or situation for developing information and understanding essential for decision making or problem solving.

Group Discussion and oral communication There are several types of oral group communication. In Public Speaking, the speaker is evaluated by the audience; however there is not much interaction between audience and speaker. Audience, for the most part would only listen to the speaker. In the interview, a panel of members would assess the candidate for the requirement of selection or promotion etc. In meetings, there are discussions on issues mentioned in the agenda. Meetings may have multiple agenda. A chairperson conducts the meeting and controls and concludes the deliberations. Group Discussion differs from debate in nature, approach and procedure. Debates include representation of two contrasting viewpoints while GD can include multiple views. A GD may help achieve group goals as well as individual needs. The examiner observes the personality traits of several candidates who participate in the G.D.

Importance of Group Discussion skills: A Group Discussion helps problem solving , decision making and personality assessment. Whether one is a student, a job seeker ,a professional engineer or a company executive one needs effective GD skills. Students need to participate in academic discussions, meetings, classroom sessions or selection GDs for admission to professional courses. A job-seeker may be required to face selection GDs as part of the selection process. Professionals have to participate in different meetings at the workplace. In all these situations, an ability to make a significant contribution to group deliberation and helping the group in the process of decision making is required. The importance of GD has increased in recent times due to its increasing role as an effective tool in a)problem solving b)decision making c)personality assessment. In any situation of problem, the perceptions of different people are discussed, possible solutions are suggested. The best option is chosen by the group. While taking a decision, the matter is discussed, analysed, interpreted and evaluated.

While using GD as a tool for personality assessment, a topic-a problem, an opinion or a case - is given to the group consisting of eight to ten members seated in a circle. The total time given for discussion is usually 30 minutes. Each candidate is expected to voice his opinion and offer counter arguments. The selection committee evaluates the candidates on the basis of their personality, knowledge, communication skills and leadership skills. Hence it is important to be able to take part in the GD effectively and confidently. Participants should know how to persuade their group members, how to reflect leadership qualities and how to make the group achieve its goal.

Characteristics Of Successful Group Discussion. For any group discussion to be successful, achieving group goal is essential. Following characteristics are necessary:

Having a clear objective: The participants need to know the purpose of group discussion so that they can concentrate during the discussion and contribute to achieving the group goal. An effective GD typically begins with a purpose stated by the initiator.

Motivated Interaction: When there is a good level of motivation among the members, they learn to subordinate the personal interests to the group interest and the discussions are more fruitful.

Logical Presentation: Participants decide how they will organise the presentation of individual views, how an exchange of the views will take place, and how they will reach a group consensus. If the mode of interaction is not decided, few of the members in the group may dominate the discussion and thus will make the entire process meaningless.

Cordial Atmosphere: Development of a cooperative, friendly, and cordial atmosphere avoid the confrontation between the group members.

Effective Communication skills: The success of a GD depends on an effective use of communication techniques. Like any other oral communication, clear pronunciation, simple language, right pitch are the pre-requisites of a GD. Non-verbal communication has to be paid attention to since means like body language convey a lot in any communication.

Participation by all candidates: When all the members participate, the GD becomes effective. Members need to encourage each other in the GD.

Leadership Skills: Qualities like initiation, logical presentation, encouraging all the group members to participate, summarizing the discussion reflect the leadership qualities.

Evaluation in a GD

In any kind of GD, the aim is to judge the participants based on personality, knowledge, communicative ability to present the knowledge and leadership skills. Today team players are considered more important than individual contributors. Hence the potential to be a leader is evaluated and also ability to work in a team is tested. The evaluators generally assess the oral competence of a candidate in terms of team listening, appropriate language, clarity of expression, positive speech attitudes and adjustments, clear articulation, and effective non-verbal communication.

Personality

Even before one starts communicating, impression is created by the appearance, the body language, eye-contact, mannerisms used etc. The attire of a participant creates an impression, hence it is essential to be dressed appropriately. The hairstyle also needs to suit the occasion. Other accessories also have to be suitable for the occasion. The facial expression helps to convey attitudes like optimism, self-confidence and friendliness. The body language, a non-verbal communication skill gives important clues to personality assessment. It includes the posture of a person, the eye-contact and overall manner in which one moves and acts. In the entire participation in the GD, the body language has an important role in the impact created. As non-verbal cues such as eye contact, body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and so on can speak louder than words, examiners closely watch the non-verbal behaviour of candidates. They generally evaluate the body language cues of candidates to determine personality factors such as nervousness, cooperation, frustration, weakness, insecurity, self-confidence, defensiveness, and so forth. So, it is important to be careful while using non-verbal messages. However, one should recognise the power of non-verbal messages and use them effectively.

Content

Content is a combination of knowledge and ability to create coherent, logical arguments on the basis of that knowledge. Also a balanced response is what is expected and not an emotional response. In a group discussion, greater the knowledge of the subject more confident and enthusiastic would be the participation. Participants need to have a fair amount of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. The discussion of the subject must be relevant, rational, convincing and appealing to the listeners. One needs to keep abreast with national and international news, political, scientific, economic, cultural events, key newsmakers etc. This has to be supplemented by one's own personal reasoning and analysis. People with depth and range of knowledge are always preferred by dynamic companies and organisations. The topics for GD tests may include interesting and relevant ideas pertaining to social, economic, political or

environmental problems; controversial issues, innovations or case studies. To read daily newspapers, relevant magazines and periodicals, to watch news bulletins and informative programmes on television are a simple ways to gather the general knowledge. One can use the Internet to improve one's knowledge about recent developments in different areas. Internet is a valuable source to acquire information along with multimedia form. Subject knowledge also includes the ability to analyse facts or information in a systematic way and to place them in the context of the framework of one's personal experiences. For the expertise in the GD, the only way is to practice wherever one can. The other members can evaluate the performance and give suggestions.

Communication Skills

First and foremost feature of communication skills is that it is a two way process. Hence the communicator has to keep in mind the listeners and their expectations. The participants need to observe the group dynamics. Since GD tests one's behavior as well as one's influence on the group, formal language and mutual respect are obvious requirements. One may not take strong views in the beginning itself but wait and analyse the pros and cons of any situation. If one needs to disagree, learn to do so politely. One can directly put forward the personal viewpoint also. One may appreciate the good points made by others; can make a positive contribution by agreeing to and expanding an argument made by another participant. An idea can be appreciated only when expressed effectively. A leader or an administrator has the ability to put across the idea in an influential manner. Hence the participants in a group discussion must possess not only subject knowledge but also the ability to present that knowledge in an effective way. Since oral skills are used to put across the ideas, the ability to speak confidently and convincingly makes a participant an impressive speaker. The members of the selection committee closely evaluate the oral communication skills of the candidates. The effective communication would imply use of correct grammar and vocabulary, using the right pitch, good voice quality, clear articulation, logical presentation of the ideas and above all, a positive attitude. It is expected that there are no errors of grammar or usage and that appropriate words, phrases etc. are used. One should try to use simple and specific language. One should avoid ornamental language. Clarity of expression is one of the important criteria of communication. When there is clarity of thinking, there is clarity in usage of

language. Positive Speech Attitudes is another criterion of evaluation in the GD whereby the participant's attitude towards listeners including other group members is judged. The temperament of the participant is also evaluated through the speech pattern.

Listening Skills

Lack of active listening is often a reason for failure of communication. In the GD, participants often forget that it is a group activity and not a solo performance as in elocution. By participating as an active listener, he/she may be able to contribute significantly to the group deliberations. The listening skills are closely linked to the leadership skills as well.

Leadership Skills

The success of any group depends to a large extent upon the leader. One of the common misconceptions about leadership is that the leader is the one who controls the group. There are different approaches to the concept of leadership. By studying the personality traits of great leaders or actual dimensions of behavior to identify leadership one can learn to cultivate essential traits of leaders. In a GD, a participant with more knowledge, one who is confident, one who can find some solution to the problem and display initiative and responsibility will be identified as the leader. A candidate's success in a GD test will depend not only on his/her subject knowledge and oral skills but also on his/her ability to provide leadership to the group. Adaptability, analysis, assertiveness, composure, self-confidence, decision making, discretion, initiative, objectivity, patience, and persuasiveness are some of the leadership skills that are useful in proving oneself as a natural leader in a GD. The leader in a group discussion should be able to manage the group despite differences of opinion and steer the discussion to a logical conclusion within the fixed time limit. The examiners will assess whether each participant is a team player who can get along with people or an individualist who is always fighting to save his/her ego. Employers today look for candidates who can work in a team-oriented environment. GD participants need a number of team management skills in order to function effectively in a team. Some of the skills needed to manage a group effectively include adaptability, positive attitude, cooperation, and coordination.

In a selection GD, the group, which may consist of six to ten persons, is given a topic to discuss within 30 to 45 minutes. After announcing the topic, the total GD

time, and explaining the general guidelines and procedures governing the GD, the examiner withdraws to the background leaving the group completely free to carry on with the discussion on its own without any outside interference. In the absence of a designated leader to initiate the proceedings of the discussion, the group is likely to waste time in cross talks, low-key conversations, cross-consultations, asides, and so on. The confusion may last until someone in the group takes an assertive position and restores the chaos into order. It could be any candidate. In order to get the GD started, the assertive, natural leader will have to remind the group of its goal and request them to start the discussion without wasting time. A few examples of the opening lines are given below:

- Well friends, may I request your kind attention? I am sure all of us are keen to begin the GD and complete it within the allotted time. Let me remind you that we have only thirty minutes to complete the task. So, let us get started.
- My dear friends, may I have your attention please? As you all know, we have to complete the discussion in 45 minutes and we have already used up five minutes. I think we should start the discussion now. Hello everybody. I am sorry to interrupt but I have something very important to say. We are here to discuss the topic — " Human cloning should be banned."—and the time given to us is just 30 minutes. Let us begin, shall we?

Leadership functions during a GD include initiative, analysis, assertiveness and so on. GD does not have a formal leader, hence one of the participants is expected to take the initiative. The leader will promote positive group interactions; point out areas of agreement and disagreement; help keep the discussion on the right track and lead the discussion to a positive and successful conclusion within the stipulated time. The ability to analyse a situation is a quality of leadership. Analytical skills and objectivity in expressing opinions are absolute requirements for leadership. With patience and composure one can develop the analytical skills. Reaching consensus by considering the group opinion will make the GD successful. Assertiveness is an ability to bring order to the group by handling the conflict is another desirable quality of leadership. Self confidence is a quality which helps win the agreement from other participants. In GD, participants can make a favourable and forceful impact on the group by being persuasive and convincing. In order to be persuasive, one has to advance strong, convincing, and logical arguments properly supported by factual data and forceful illustrations. A

firm tone and a sober voice would also help in establishing oneself. A leader's ability to convince others and make them accept his/her views and suggestions will establish his/her credentials for leadership. Leaders are characterized by a high level of motivation and can motivate others too. A person with motivation can work hard to do the best job possible and can achieve targets. Team Management skills are important for a leader to manage the members of varied interests. Some of the skills needed to manage a group effectively include adaptability, positive attitude, cooperation, and coordination.

Interview

The word 'interview' is derived from the French word 'entrevoir' which means 'glimpse'. It is a form of dyadic communication. The purpose of an interview is to create an opportunity for people to meet and converse with each other on a matter of mutual benefit. An interview situation may consist of one interviewee and several interviewers and vice versa.

Types of Interviews

In the business world one may be involved in various kinds of interviews:

Selection Interview: The kind when you consider someone for a job.

Promotion Interviews: This takes place when one wishes to be considered for a job at a higher grade within one's organisation.

Appraisal Interviews: This generally takes place annually to review progress and discuss the future.

Counseling Interviews: This may be held to find out what has been troubling an employee or someone has not been working to their usual high standard.

Disciplinary Interviews: This is carried out when an employee has been accused of breaching company procedures.

Grievance Interviews: This is carried out when an employee feels that he/she has been treated badly by another member of staff.

<https://youtu.be/rlxojCT-cUM> (Kindly go through this you tube link)

Meaning of Research and Literature Review

Meaning of Research: Word 'Research' comprises of two words = Re+Search. It means to search again. So research means a systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts. Research is an intellectual activity. It is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge. Research is also considered as the application of scientific method in solving the problems. It is a systematic, formal and intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. There are many ways of obtaining knowledge. They are intuition, revelation, and authority, logical manipulation of basic assumptions, informed guesses, observation, and reasoning by analogy. One of the branches of research known as empirical research is highly goal-oriented technique.

Definitions of Research: The following are the important definitions of research: "Research is an endeavor / attempt to discover, develop and verify knowledge. It is an intellectual process that has developed over hundreds of years ever changing in purpose and form and always researching to truth." J. Francis Rummel

"Research is an honest, exhaustive, intelligent searching for facts and their meanings or implications with reference to a given problem. The product or findings of a given piece of research should be an authentic, verifiable contribution to knowledge in the field studied." P.M. Cook

"Research may be defined as a method of studying problems whose solutions are to be derived partly or wholly from facts." W.S. Monroes

"Research is considered to be the more formal, systematic intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis. It involves a 9 more systematic structure of investigation, usually resulting in some sort of formal record of procedures and a report of results or conclusion." John W. Best

A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research.

Conducting a literature review involves collecting, evaluating and analyzing publications (such as books and journal articles) that relate to your research question. There are five main steps in the process of writing a literature review:

1. **Search** for relevant literature
2. **Evaluate** sources
3. **Identify** themes, debates and gaps
4. **Outline** the structure
5. **Write** your literature review

A good literature review doesn't just summarize sources – it analyzes, synthesizes, and critically evaluates to give a clear picture of the state of knowledge on the subject.

Why write a literature review?

When you write a dissertation, or research paper, you will have to conduct a literature review to situate your research within existing knowledge. The literature review gives you a chance to:

- Demonstrate your familiarity with the topic and scholarly context
- Develop a theoretical framework and methodology for your research
- Position yourself in relation to other researchers and theorists
- Show how your research addresses a gap or contributes to a debate

You might also have to write a literature review as a stand-alone assignment. In this case, the purpose is to evaluate the current state of research and demonstrate your knowledge of scholarly debates around a topic.

The content will look slightly different in each case, but the process of conducting a literature review follows the same steps.

Step 1: Search for relevant literature

Before you begin searching for literature, you need a clearly defined topic.

If you are writing the literature review section of a dissertation or research paper, you will search for literature related to your research problem and questions.

If you are writing a literature review as a stand-alone assignment, you will have to choose a focus and develop a central question to direct your search. Unlike a dissertation research question, this question has to be answerable without collecting original data. You should be able to answer it based only on a review of existing publications.

Search for literature using keywords and citations

Start by creating a list of keywords related to your research topic and question. Some useful databases to search for journals and articles include:

- Your university's library catalogue
- Google Scholar
- JSTOR
- EBSCO
- Project Muse (humanities and social sciences)
- Medline (life sciences and biomedicine)
- EconLit (economics)
- Inspec (physics, engineering and computer science)

Read the abstract to find out whether an article is relevant to your question. When you find a useful book or article, you can check the bibliography to find other relevant sources.

To identify the most important publications on your topic, take note of recurring citations. If the same authors, books or articles keep appearing in your reading, make sure to seek them out.

You can find out how many times an article has been cited on Google Scholar – a high citation count means the article has been influential in the field, and should certainly be included in your literature review.

Step 2: Evaluate and select sources

You probably won't be able to read absolutely everything that has been written on the topic – you'll have to evaluate which sources are most relevant to your questions.

For each publication, ask yourself:

- What question or problem is the author addressing?
- What are the key concepts and how are they defined?
- What are the key theories, models and methods? Does the research use established frameworks or take an innovative approach?
- What are the results and conclusions of the study?
- How does the publication relate to other literature in the field? Does it confirm, add to, or challenge established knowledge?
- How does the publication contribute to your understanding of the topic? What are its key insights and arguments?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research?

Make sure the sources you use are credible, and make sure you read any landmark studies and major theories in your field of research.

The scope of your review will depend on your topic and discipline: in the sciences you usually only review recent literature, but in the humanities you might take a long historical perspective (for example, to trace how a concept has changed in meaning over time).

Take notes and cite your sources

As you read, you should also begin the writing process. Take notes that you can later incorporate into the text of your literature review.

It is important to keep track of your sources with citations to avoid plagiarism. It can be helpful to make an annotated bibliography, where you compile full citation information and write a paragraph of summary and analysis for each source. This helps you remember what you read and saves time later in the process.

Step 3: Identify themes, debates, and gaps

To begin organizing your literature review's argument and structure, you need to understand the connections and relationships between the sources you've read. Based on your reading and notes, you can look for:

- Trends and patterns (in theory, method or results): do certain approaches become more or less popular over time?
- Themes: what questions or concepts recur across the literature?
- Debates, conflicts and contradictions: where do sources disagree?
- Pivotal publications: are there any influential theories or studies that changed the direction of the field?
- Gaps: what is missing from the literature? Are there weaknesses that need to be addressed?

This step will help you work out the structure of your literature review and (if applicable) show how your own research will contribute to existing knowledge.

Step 4: Outline your literature review's structure

There are various approaches to organizing the body of a literature review. You should have a rough idea of your strategy before you start writing.

Depending on the length of your literature review, you can combine several of these strategies (for example, your overall structure might be thematic, but each theme is discussed chronologically).

Chronological

The simplest approach is to trace the development of the topic over time. However, if you choose this strategy, be careful to avoid simply listing and summarizing sources in order.

Try to analyze patterns, turning points and key debates that have shaped the direction of the field. Give your interpretation of how and why certain developments occurred.

Thematic

If you have found some recurring central themes, you can organize your literature review into subsections that address different aspects of the topic.

For example, if you are reviewing literature about inequalities in migrant health outcomes, key themes might include healthcare policy, language barriers, cultural attitudes, legal status, and economic access.

Methodological

If you draw your sources from different disciplines or fields that use a variety of research methods, you might want to compare the results and conclusions that emerge from different approaches. For example:

- Look at what results have emerged in qualitative versus quantitative research
- Discuss how the topic has been approached by empirical versus theoretical scholarship
- Divide the literature into sociological, historical, and cultural sources

Theoretical

A literature review is often the foundation for a theoretical framework. You can use it to discuss various theories, models, and definitions of key concepts.

You might argue for the relevance of a specific theoretical approach, or combine various theoretical concepts to create a framework for your research.

Step 5: Write your literature review

Like any other academic text, your literature review should have an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. What you include in each depends on the objective of your literature review.

Introduction

The introduction should clearly establish the focus and purpose of the literature review.

Body

Depending on the length of your literature review, you might want to divide the body into subsections. You can use a subheading for each theme, time period, or methodological approach.

As you write, you can follow these tips:

- Summarize and synthesize: give an overview of the main points of each source and combine them into a coherent whole
- Analyze and interpret: don't just paraphrase other researchers—add your own interpretations where possible, discussing the significance of findings in relation to the literature as a whole
- Critically evaluate: mention the strengths and weaknesses of your sources
- Write in well-structured paragraphs: use transition words and topic sentences to draw connections, comparisons and contrasts

Conclusion

In the conclusion, you should summarize the key findings you have taken from the literature and emphasize their significance.

Dissertation literature review If the literature review is part of your thesis or dissertation, show how your research addresses gaps and contributes new knowledge, or discuss how you have drawn on existing theories and methods to build a framework for your research.

Stand-alone literature review If you are writing a stand-alone paper, you can discuss the overall implications of the literature or make suggestions for future research based on the gaps you have identified.

When you've finished writing and revising your literature review, don't forget to proofread thoroughly before submitting.

Research Methods

Research methods are the techniques and procedures used for conducting research. Choosing the right research method for your writing is an important aspect of the research process.

You need to either collect data or talk to the people while conducting any kind of research. The research methods can be classified based on this distinction.

Types of Research Methods

Research methods are broadly divided into six main categories.

Experimental Research Methods

Experimental research includes the experiments conducted in the laboratory or observation under controlled conditions. Researchers try to study human behaviour by performing various experiments. Experiments can vary from personal and informal natural comparisons. It includes three types of variables;

- Independent variable
- Dependent variable
- Controlled variable

Types of Experimental Methods

Laboratory experiments

The experiments conducted in the laboratory. Researchers have control over the variables of the experiment.

Field experiment

The experiments conducted in the open field and environment of the participants by incorporating a few artificial changes. Researchers do not have control over variables under measurement. Participants know that they are taking part in the experiment.

Natural experiments

The experiment is conducted in the natural environment of the participants. The participants are generally not informed about the experiment being conducted on them.

Example: Estimating the health condition of the population.

Quasi-experiments

The quasi-experiment is an experiment that takes advantage of natural occurrences. Researchers cannot assign random participants to groups.

Example: Comparing the academic performance of the two schools.

1. Methods of data collection

1. Surveys
2. Observations
3. Case Study
4. Questionnaires
5. Interviews
6. Experiments

Methods of analyzing data

1. Statistical analysis

Descriptive Research Methods

Descriptive research aims at collecting the information to answer the current affairs. It follows the Ex post facto research, which predicts the possible reasons behind the situation that has already occurred. It aims at answering the questions like how, what, when, where, and what rather than 'why.'

1. Methods of data collection	2. Methods of analysing data
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surveys 2. Observations 3. Case Study 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Table of Means It studies the tables containing the means of the groups to compare and know the difference between the categorized and independent variables. 2. Cross Tabulation It includes the tables containing the data of the participant groups and sub-groups of survey respondents. 3. Audit Studies It is also known as paired testing, where two people are assigned specific identities and qualifications to compare and study types of discrimination.

Historical Research Methods

In historical research, an investigator collects, analyzes the information to understand, describe, and explain the events that occurred in the past. Researchers try to find out what happened exactly during a certain period of time as accurately and as closely as possible. It does not allow any manipulation or control of variables.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary sources of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theoretical model Researchers use multiple theories to explain a specific phenomenon,
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents • Literature review • Numerical records • Oral statements • Artifacts • Remains • Relics <p>2. Secondary sources of information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks • Encyclopedia • Newspapers • Periodicals 	<p>situations, and types of behavior.</p> <p>2. Thematic analysis</p> <p>3. Coding System It takes a long to go through the textual data. Coding is a way of tagging the data and organizing it into a sequence of symbols, numbers, and letters to highlight the relevant points.</p> <p>4. Quantitative data to validate interpretations Quantitative data is used to validate interpretations of historical events or incidents.</p>
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Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research is associated with numerical data or data that can be measured. It is used to study a large group of population. The information is gathered by performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques.

Quantitative research isn't simply based on statistical analysis or quantitative techniques but rather use a certain approach to theory to address research hypothesis or research questions, establish an appropriate research methodology and draw findings & conclusions.

Some most commonly employed quantitative research strategies include data-driven dissertations, theory-driven studies, and reflection driven research. Regardless of the chosen approach, there are some common quantitative research features as listed below.

- Quantitative research is based on testing or building on existing theories proposed by other researchers whilst taking a route that is reflective or extensive in nature.
- Quantitative research aims to test the research hypothesis or answer established research questions.

- It is primarily justified by positivist or post-positivist research paradigms.
- The research design can be relationship-based, quasi-experimental, experimental or descriptive.
- It draws on a small sample to make generalisations to a wider population using probability sampling techniques.
- Quantitative data is gathered according to the established research questions and using research vehicles such as structured observation, structured interviews, surveys, questionnaires and laboratory results.
- The researcher uses statistical analysis tools and techniques to measure variables and gather inferential or descriptive data. In some cases, your tutor or members of the dissertation committee might find it easier to verify the results of your study with numbers and statistical analysis.
- The accuracy of the results of the study are based on external and internal validity and authenticity of the data used.
- Quantitative research answers research questions or tests the hypothesis with the use of charts, graphs, tables, data, and statements.
- It underpins research questions or hypotheses and findings to make conclusions.
- The researcher is able to provide recommendations for future research and expand or test existing theories.

1. Methods of data collection	2. Methods of analysing data
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surveys with close-ended questions 2. Online surveys 3. Online polls 4. Mobile surveys 5. Telephone interviews 6. Questionnaires 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statistical data analysis It is a method of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting an ample amount of data to discover underlying patterns and details. Statistics are used in every field to make better decisions. 2. Correlational analysis The correlational analysis is carried out to discover the interrelationship between the two or more aspects of a situation 3. Dispersion It distributes values around some central value, such an average. Example: the distance separating

	<p>the highest from the lowest value.</p> <p>4. Distribution It counts the maximum and a minimum number of responses to a question or the occurrence of a specific phenomenon.</p> <p>5. Sociological diagnostics It determines the nature of social problems, such as ethnic or gender discrimination.</p> <p>6. Logistic regression It explains the relationship between one dependent binary variable and one or more independent variables.</p> <p>7. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) This parametric technique is used while comparing two populations or samples.</p>
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Qualitative Research Methods

It is a type of scientific research where a researcher collects evidence to seek answers to a question. It is associated with studying human behaviour from an informative perspective. It aims at obtaining in-depth details of the problem.

As the term suggests qualitative research is based on qualitative methods of research which include participants' observations, focus groups, and unstructured interviews.

Qualitative research is very different in nature when compared to quantitative research. It takes an established path towards the research process, how research questions are set up, how existing theories are built upon, what methods of research are employed, and how the findings are unveiled to the readers.

Conventional methods that you may adopt include phenomenological research, narrative-based research, grounded theory research, ethnographies, case studies, and auto-ethnographies.

Again, regardless of the chosen approach to qualitative research, your dissertation will have unique key features as listed below.

- The research questions that you aim to answer will expand or even change as the dissertation writing process goes on. This aspect of the research is typically known as an emergent design where the objectives of the research evolve with time.
- Qualitative research may use existing theories to cultivate new theoretical understandings or fall back on existing theories to support the research process. However, the original goal of testing a certain theoretical understanding remains the same.
- It can be based on one of the various research models such as critical theory, constructivism, and interpretivism.
- Analysis and discussion of results, as well as the choices you make, are largely influenced by the chosen research design. Research design itself depends on the adopted research path that can be phenomenological research, narrative-based research, grounded theory-based research, ethnography, case study based research or auto-ethnography.
- Qualitative research answers research questions with the help of theoretical sampling where data gathered from an organisation or people are studied.
- It involves various research methods to gather qualitative data from participants belonging to the field of study. As indicated previously, some of the most notable qualitative research methods include participant observation, focus groups, and unstructured interviews.
- It incorporates an inductive process where the researcher analyses and understands the data through his own eyes and judgments to identify concepts and themes which paints a comprehensive depiction of the material being researched.
- The key quality characteristics of qualitative research are transferability, conformity, confirmability, and reliability.
- Results and discussions are largely based on narratives, case study and personal experiences which help to detect inconsistencies, observations, processes, and ideas.
- Qualitative research discusses theoretical concepts as obtained from the results whilst taking research questions and/or hypotheses into consideration to draw general conclusions.

Types of Qualitative Research methods

Action research

Action research aims at finding an immediate solution to a problem. The researchers can also act as the participants of the research. It is used in the educational field.

Case study

A case study includes data collection from multiple sources over time. It is widely used in social sciences to study the underlying information of an individual, organization, community, or event. It does not provide any solution to the problem. Researchers cannot act as the participants of the research.

Ethnography

In this type of research, the researcher examines the people in their natural environment. Ethnographers spend time with people to study people and their culture closely. They can consult literature before conducting the study.

1. Methods of data collection	2. Methods of analysing data
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Focus groups2. Individual interviews3. Surveys with open-ended questions4. Participant observation5. Document analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contentanalysis It is a method of studying and retrieving meaningful information from documents2. Thematic analysis It aims at identifying patterns of themes in the collected information, such as face-to-face interviews, texts, and transcripts.3. Narrative description It focuses on the oral stories shared by the people, including surveys, field observations, and interviews.4. Discourse analysis It is a study of how language is used in texts and contexts.5. Grounded theory The researchers analyze the available data and develop a theory. They do not need to

	consult literature before conducting the study.
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Mixed Methods of Research

When you combine quantitative and qualitative methods of research, the resulting approach becomes mixed methods of research. Over the last few decades, much of the research in the world of academia has been conducted using mixed methods because of the greater legitimacy this particular technique has gained for a number of reasons including the feeling that combining the two types of research can provide holistic and more dependable results.

Here is what mix methods of research involve.

- Interpreting and investigating the information gathered through quantitative and qualitative techniques.
- There could be more than one stage of research. Depending on the topic of research, occasionally it would be more appropriate to perform qualitative research in the first stage to figure out and investigate a problem to unveil key themes; and conduct quantitative research in stage two of the process for measuring relationships between the themes.

Educational Television (ETV)

Educational television or Learning show is the use of television programs in the field of distance education. It may be in the form of individual television programs or dedicated specialty channels that is often associated with cable television in the United States as Public, educational, and government access (PEG) channel providers. There are also adult education programs for an older audience; many of these are instructional television or "telecourse" services that can be taken for college credit. Examples of these include Open University programs on BBC television in the UK. Many children's television series are educational, ranging from dedicated learning programs to those that indirectly teach the viewers. Some series are written to have a specific moral behind every episode, often explained at the end by the character that learned the lesson. In the social aspects of television, several studies have found that educational television has many advantages. The Media Awareness Network, explains in its article, The Good Things about

Television, that television can be a very powerful and effective learning tool for children if used wisely. The article states that television can help young people discover where they fit into society, develop closer relationships with peers and family, and teach them to understand complex social aspects of communication. Mexican TV producer Miguel Sabido pioneered in the 1970s the use of telenovela to disseminate the government's policy views to mass audiences. The "Sabido Method" has been adopted by a number of countries, including India, Kenya, Peru, and China. Some television programs are designed with primarily educational purposes in mind, although they might rely heavily on entertainment to communicate their educational messages. In children's programming, edutainment becomes fun and interesting for the child but can still be educational. Other television programs are designed to raise social awareness. One form of edutainment popular in Latin America is the educational telenovela. Miguel Sabido, a producer of telenovelas from the 1970s on, has combined communication theory with pro-health/education messages to educate audiences throughout Latin America about family planning, literacy, and other topics. He developed a model which incorporated the work of Albert Bandura and other theorists, as well as research to determine whether programs impacted audience behavior. The first ever television series produced in the Pacific Island country of Vanuatu, entitled Love Patrol and launched in 2007, was praised as an edutainment series, as it aimed to educate viewers on the issue of AIDS, while simultaneously providing an entertaining story. The Hulu Original TV series East Los High, is backed by a health initiative to teach healthy sexual behaviors (e.g. using protection during sexual intercourse, getting checked for sexually transmitted diseases).

What Is Distance Education?

What does distance education mean? The distance education definition states that this is a process in which the education of a student is conducted by using correspondence systems instead of having the same student physically presentation at a school or some other educational institution. This alternative for learning and attaining degrees came about through the work of several educational pioneers back in the 19th century and grew further over the next 200 years. During this period, the same educational process took place with the aid of the post offices and correspondence that was in the form of physical letters. However, in the late 20th

century, with the appearance of the Internet, distance education ascended to a whole new level. Now, millions of students in every corner of the world are getting university degrees and learning new skills and abilities by using distance education.

What Are the Advantages of Distance Education?

Actually, there are many advantages to the modern distance education way of taking classes and courses.

Firstly, there is a huge amount of flexibility that any student possesses with their education. This means that they can organize their days according to their schedule, which can aid them if they have a regular job or some other previous arrangement that would make traditional school very problematic for them.

Also, distance education is a lot more nimble when it comes to the choice of topics a student can listen to and learn about. At the same time, being that the courses are completely online, they often come with interactive and multimedia content that covers video lessons, animations, interactive quizzes and many other features that make learning more effective. Finally, a big practical advantage of distance education is the fact that it is regularly substantially more affordable than classic alternatives.