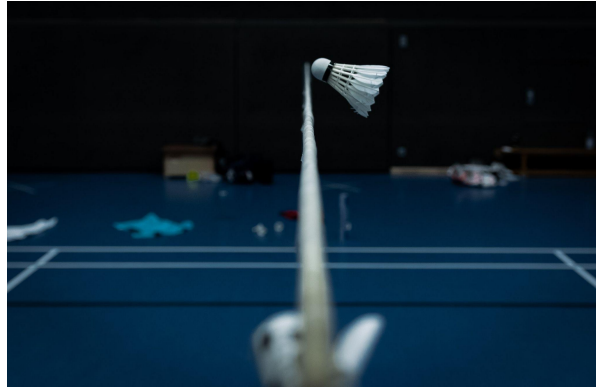


Resource Document

Skills for Listening & Speaking



People communicate their beliefs and experiences and take in information using different modalities—input and output systems. Being knowledgeable about and aware of these modalities when communicating will increase your effectiveness as a mentor.

We will focus on three primary modalities: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic.

How can you tell which one a client uses? The best ways to assess what primary communication modality someone operates in:

- Notice speech patterns: what words and phrases they use to describe their experiences, and how quickly/slowly they speak, and how long they pause.
- **Visual** people tend to use visual words, such as:
 - “I see what you mean.”*
 - “That looks clear to me.”*
 - “Do you focus on how to cope?”*
 - “I’m still not picturing it; can you show me an example?”*

- **Auditory** people tend to use many words to ensure understanding, and words related to sound, such as:

“That sounds alright to me!”

“It’s ringing a bell.”

“I want to tune into my body/my baby.”

“I hear what you’re saying, loud and clear.”

- **Kinesthetic** people tend to use sensory, feeling words, such as:

“Let’s firm up our plans.”

“It’s hard to grasp.”

“That rings a bell.”

“Hold on, I don’t get that impression.”

“Things are falling into place.”

Visual Words

see, reflect, view, vision, look, perspective, picture, observe, image, opaque, scan, murky, hazy, glitter, go, blank, highlight, brilliant, clear/unclear, colorful/dark, show, dim/bright, envision, focus, black-and-white, appear/disappear, glimpse

Auditory Words

hear, listen, say, talk, tell, whisper, announce, mute, loud/quiet/soft, “chime in”, resonate, tune out/tune in, rhythm, “be all ears”, amplify, dialogue, sound, echo, shout

Kinesthetic Words

feel, grab, touch, pull, grasp, impression, sense, rub, hold, pressure, fall, “get a handle on”, firm/ soft, heavy/light, tight/loose, hot/warm/cool/cold, grip, impact, uptight, bounce, concrete, slip, through, catch, sting, stretch, sharp

Speaking Their Language

Once you have ascertained a client’s primary modality, you can adjust the way you speak (pacing, pausing, specific words/phrases) to build and maintain rapport and enhance their learning/integration.

Visual learners tend to process material quickly, so a faster paced rate of speech will appeal to and work for them (in a regular conversation). If you speak too slowly for too long in an ordinary conversation, you may lose them. (Be aware of this if you are naturally Kinesthetic and feel as you speak—you may have to make a conscious effort to increase the pacing of your communication). Use visual phrasing (see previous page), so they can “see” what you mean. Pause, so they can “imagine” what you are saying, especially when you use visual imagery and metaphor. “Paint a picture” with your words. Offer visual aids. Have them take notes as you go.

Auditory learners also can process material fairly quickly. Because they are so “tuned into” sounds, be sure to have variation in your voice, changing speed and pace, and emphasizing key words to keep their interest. Again, the pauses will allow them to access what they hear (in their own mind)—they may not need pauses as long as visual and kinesthetic people do, especially if they are auditory-digital.

Kinesthetic learners are “in touch with” their bodies, their feelings, and emotions. Usually this means they speak, process, and even move more slowly than others. Therefore, speak slowly, especially at first as you build rapport and engage them. Pause to let them feel their response. It may take them longer to respond orally, since they have to translate words into feelings/sensations/emotions and then back to words. They may be used to feeling “left behind” in traditional learning environments, and may even believe they are stupid or slow. Be patient. It can take more repetition to “get the point across.” (If you naturally speak and process quickly, then you will have to intentionally SLOW DOWN!)

When you work with a class or group, you’ll find ways to “speak to” all the modalities. Most people are naturally a mix of modalities; Once you build rapport with each group, you’ll be able to “tie them together,” and move the whole group forward. Continue to use all three kinds of words throughout.

Group rapport is achieved within minutes, as each parent has been drawn in by their primary processing style. Provide a Rollercoaster Ride through all the representational systems: seeing things, hearing things, and feeling things: this creates a rich sensory learning experience for all!