

Destination L1: A Thematic Unit

Can We Talk?

STUDENT ACTIVITY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This language arts communication activity accompanies the Student Text “Capturing a Whisper.” The warm-up activity focuses on the importance of clear communication and how a message can be altered if it passes through a good deal of space. Communication isn’t always verbal. Exercises in this activity deal with external effects of non-verbal communication.

PROCEDURE

Warm-up activity

1. Read the Student Text, “[Capturing a Whisper.](#)”
2. Create a distance communication string. Your teacher will provide you with a message. Whisper that message to the next student in the row.
3. The last person conveys the message aloud to the class.
4. The first person reads the original message.
5. Compare messages, noting changes. How do messages change in time and space?

Non-verbal communication effects

Now that you have engaged in a verbal communication activity, let’s look at non-verbal communication and how it can impact a verbal communication effort. A good way to find out how this works is to engage in distance activities.

Horizontal:

1. Pair up with another student and begin a conversation while standing two feet apart. At one minute intervals, take a small step forward (approximately six inches each time) until you are standing and conversing six inches apart.
2. After a minute of conversation at a six-inch distance, curtail the conversation. How did distance affect your comfort?
3. What effect did horizontal distance have on your conversation? Did distance influence the outcome of your conversation?

Vertical: (Adult Supervision Recommended)

1. Again pair up with another student. Role-play a disagreement between the two of you, with one being a teacher and the other a student, or a police officer and a driver, a waitperson and a restaurant diner, or a similar situation. Begin the argument while seated across from one another.
2. After a minute has passed, the person playing the teacher, police officer, etc., should stand and continue the conversation while the other member remains seated.
3. After another minute, the person who is standing should stand on a stool while the other person remains seated.



4. Discuss the activity, the effects of height on communication, and how non-verbal strategies can affect the outcome of a conversation.
5. Can you provide illustrations where this is clearly a strategy to achieve an effect?

External Effects:

There are a multitude of external effects that can impact communication. Environment is a big factor. Choose one of the following environmental impactors and write a paragraph on how this factor can affect communication.

- Room color
- Room shape
- Furniture style
- Furniture location
- Lighting
- Temperature
- Windows
- Doors
- Floor covering

1. When you have completed your paragraph, share with the class.
2. What is the importance of creating a satisfactory communication environment in an area in which verbal communication is important?