



Middle School

National FFA Organization

Lesson MS.44

GETTING YOUR MESSAGE UNDERSTOOD

Unit. Stage Two of Development—WE

Problem Area. How Do I Communicate My Thoughts and Ideas to Others.

Precepts. **A5:** Communicate effectively with others.

National Standards. NL-ENG.K12.12 — Applying Language Skills — Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 Define the term “understanding.”
- 2 Identify barriers to understanding.
- 3 Practice overcoming barriers to understanding.



© 2004 National FFA Organization
It is illegal to reproduce copies of this material
without written permission from the National FFA Organization.
National FFA Organization





Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 100 minutes.



Resources

National FFA Organization's Essential Learnings, 2003.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ MS.44.TM.A
- ✓ MS.44.TM.B
- ✓ MS.44.Assess—one per student
- ✓ MS.44.AS.A—one per student
- ✓ Blank paper and enough markers or crayons for the class



Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- ▶ Understanding
- ▶ Assumptions
- ▶ Jargon
- ▶ Acronym
- ▶ Incomplete information



Interest Approach

Read the following passage filled with computer jargon to the class:



Students, please open your notebooks and pay attention. As there will be a quiz over what I read to you, you may want to take notes.

Wait for students to open their notebooks and get ready. Read the following passage at a moderate to slow pace.



Today you are going to learn about TCP/IP protocols between Central Processing Units over a WAN. The Internet is a prime example of a WAN that utilizes not only TCP/IP, but also IPX/SPX and VPN connections for various users over a WYSIWYG (pronounced whizzy-wig) computer interface. The nice thing is that IT professionals can also deploy a LAN that is 128-bit secured within any physical location. For most active server pages, cookies must be enabled. The cost of Wi-Fi networks has also dropped to sub-\$200 prices. Don't forget the physical cost of hardware and the OS, as well as other software that users may require.



Are you ready for your quiz.

Let the students sweat it out and complain for a few seconds!



 Okay, okay, so we're not going to have a quiz, but did anyone understand what I said.

Let students respond. Congratulate any students who picked up on the topic or any meaning.

 Our topic today is getting your message understood. You all know what communication is, but how do you make sure your audience understands what you are talking about. Today you will find the answer to that question. Please be attentive and thoughtful learners today as you discover what understanding is, what stops people from understanding, and how you can get around those problems.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. Define the term “understanding.”

 The point of communicating is to share understanding with another person. As you know, the definition of communication is how people share ideas and feelings. When we do this, we want to be sure that people are not confused about what we're saying or feeling!

 Please be curious learners as we discover the true meaning of understanding and how that affects communication.

Use a Picasso Moment for students to inventory what they know about understanding. Hand out blank sheets of paper and have markers available for student use.

 Students, please be graphic learners for this first activity. Understanding is a word that is familiar to all of you, but have you really thought about what understanding means. When you hear me say “draw,” use the paper and markers available to represent two things. First, draw what understanding means to you. Second, draw what understanding is not. You can use pictures or words. You have three minutes to complete your masterpieces. Do you have any questions.

Answer students' questions if there are any.

 Draw!

When three minutes are over, have students present their masterpieces. Ask for volunteers. Draw connections between student answers. Celebrate student answers. Relate their meanings to the class definition.

 Students, now that you have visualized understanding, add it to your permanent notes:

Show MS.44.TM.A on the overhead projector or display the following on a writing surface:



I. Define the term understanding:

- A. Understanding is the ability to grasp the meaning and intent of an idea or feeling.
- B. Understanding does not mean:
 - 1. Agreeing with what is communicated
 - 2. Liking what is communicated

Objective 2. Identify barriers to understanding.



Even though understanding sounds simple, it can sometimes escape the best communicators. From children to adults, we all have trouble communicating with others from time to time. We constantly communicate, but we don't always understand one another. There are four main barriers that make understanding difficult. Please transfer these four barriers to your notes.

Show MS.44.TM.B on the overhead projector or display the following on a writing surface:

II. Barriers to understanding

- A. Assumptions: believing your audience knows something without knowing or asking if they know it
- B. Jargon: words used within a certain profession or group of people
- C. Acronym: word formed from initials of other words
- D. Incomplete information: not giving background information or enough information about a topic

Use a Hieroglyphics Moment for students to remember the barriers to understanding. Have each student share the answers with another student to see if the partner can guess the corresponding icons.



Students, take one minute and make hieroglyphics in your notes for the four barriers of communication to help you remember them.

Wait one minute.



Please take 30 seconds and share your hieroglyphics with someone else to see if the other person can identify your icons.

Wait 30 seconds.



Now let's see if you can identify the barriers to understanding from the paragraph I read at the beginning of class. Take 20 seconds to move your desk beside a partner. Go!

Hand out MS.44.AS.A to each group.



When I say "edit," work as a team to see if you can identify all the assumptions, jargon, acronyms, and incomplete information from the paragraph. You have three minutes. Edit!



Let students edit the paragraph. At the end of three minutes, have each group demonstrate the editing of a sentence or whatever fits the number of groups in your class. Celebrate student accomplishments and draw connections between student answers. You may want to make a transparency of the activity sheet and have students edit it on the projector. Have students remain in their groups through Objective 3.



All eyes up here in 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1. Thank you! Raise your hand to share what you found. Each group will share the explanation of one sentence.

Objective 3. Practice overcoming barriers to understanding.

Students will now write a paragraph on a chosen topic and avoid the four barriers to understanding.



Now that you have successfully identified the barriers to understanding, you should be able to break down those barriers and successfully communicate understanding to your audience. As you do this, reflect on what we've talked about and focus on true understanding.



Your mission is to communicate an idea or topic, and to avoid the four barriers of understanding. To achieve this, you will work with a partner and write a paragraph describing how to do one of these activities:

Display on a writing surface:

How to play a certain sport—football, basketball, soccer, etc.

How to play a certain video game

How to perform a particular task at your job



When I say “write,” you and your partner must write a paragraph describing in detail how to play or perform that sport, video game, or task. Know that you must avoid the barriers of understanding, and act as if your audience knows nothing of your topic. Please tear out a sheet of paper from your notebook for this exercise. You will have five minutes to complete this. Ready, set, write!

Walk around the room to help students get started. If they are having trouble starting, suggest that they focus on a specific part of their chosen task. When students are finished, have them trade with a nearby group to see if each other's paragraphs make sense. Have the groups look for any barriers to understanding.



Everyone clap in 3 ... 2 ... 1. Thank you! I am hopeful that everyone has a good paragraph started. Please take ten seconds and trade your paragraph with another team.

Wait ten seconds.





When I say “check it,” look over the other team’s paragraph to see if you understand what they are saying. Also, label any of the four barriers to understanding if you find them. You will have three minutes. Ready, set, check it!

Wait three minutes. Help students check each other’s papers. Let groups revise what was unclear or incomplete in their paragraphs.



Please pass the papers back. Take an additional minute to fix what your group found to be unclear or incomplete.

Wait one minute.



Who will volunteer to read the revised paragraph.

Let students read their paragraphs. Celebrate student accomplishments.



Students, you now know what understanding is! With that, you should be able to identify the four barriers of understanding and, therefore, be able to break those barriers. Please show me what you have learned!



Review/Summary

Orally quiz students over the definition of understanding, the four barriers to understanding, and the ways to break those barriers.



Application

►Extended Classroom Activity:

Have students orally present a topic to the class. Have the class write down what was unclear or the barriers to their understanding.

►FFA Activity:

FFA is full of acronyms and jargon. Have students keep a list or tally of the acronyms and jargon used at the next FFA meeting.

►SAE Activity:

Have students identify assumptions, jargon, and acronyms used in their SAE.



Evaluation

Have students take MS.44.Assess to determine their knowledge of understanding.



Answers to Assessment:

Understanding is the ability to grasp the meaning and intent of an idea or feeling.

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True



GETTING YOUR MESSAGE UNDERSTOOD

►Part One: Fill in the blank

Instructions: Complete the definition of understanding.

Understanding is the ability to grasp the _____ and _____ of an _____ or _____.

►Part Two: True or False

Instructions: Read each statement and decide if it is true or false. Write the word “true” or “false” beside the statement.

- _____ 1. Understanding is always agreeing with what is communicated.
- _____ 2. Understanding can mean not always agreeing with what is communicated.
- _____ 3. Jargon is words formed from the initials of other words.
- _____ 4. It is important to know if your audience understands your message and intent.
- _____ 5. Assumptions are made by believing your audience knows something about the topic without asking them to be sure.



DEFINE UNDERSTANDING

- ◆ **The ability to grasp the meaning and intent of an idea or feeling**

Understanding does not mean:

- ◆ **Agreeing with what is communicated**
- ◆ **Liking what is communicated**



BARRIERS TO UNDERSTANDING

- ◆ **Assumptions:** believing your audience knows something without knowing or asking if they know it
- ◆ **Jargon:** words used within a certain profession or group of people
- ◆ **Acronyms:** words formed from the initials of other words
- ◆ **Incomplete information:** not giving background or enough information about a topic



Name: _____

Instructions: Highlight, circle, or underline and label all assumption, jargon, acronyms, and incomplete information in the following paragraph:

Today you are going to learn about TCP/IP protocols between Central Processing Units over a WAN. The Internet is a prime example of a WAN that utilizes not only TCP/IP, but also IPX/SPX and VPN connections for various users over a WYSIWYG (pronounced whizzy-wig) computer interface. The nice thing is that IT professionals can also deploy a LAN that is 128-bit secured within any physical location. For most active server pages, cookies must be enabled. The cost of Wi-Fi networks has also dropped to sub-\$200 prices. Don't forget the physical cost of hardware and the OS, as well as other software that users may require.

