



## LESSON 4.2 Communication Styles

### Module #4: Who Am I?

It is important for ninth grade students to develop an understanding of themselves, what they believe in, and how they relate with everyone else in the school building. Understanding oneself is an important bridge to understanding others. Being able to answer the question, "Who Am I?" makes appreciating others' similarities and differences easier to accept.

### Enduring Understandings

- I. **Truly knowing oneself means knowing one's values, culture, communication style, beliefs, and mission and how they influence everyday life and relationships.**
- II. Identity is not just defined by how a person looks; rather identity is a complex web that includes values, behaviors, traditions, and beliefs.

### Essential Questions

- I. **What is my communication style and why is it important that I know it? (I)**
- II. How do I define my identity? (II)
- III. What beliefs and values define my personal mission in life? (II)

### Lesson Objective(s)

Students will complete a communication styles inventory and develop an understanding of different communication styles.

Lesson 3.18

Lesson 4.1

**Lesson 4.2**

Lesson 4.3

Lesson 4.4

### Directions:

1. Lesson 4.1 set the stage for a discussion today of communication styles and the many different ways we communicate. In today's lesson, the teacher should lead students in a more formal discussion of "Communication Styles" using the enclosed "Diversity and Communication Styles" content and the "Communication Styles" handout.  
**Note: Only distribute the one-page handout to students. Use the three pages of "Content" as a basis for your discussion; DO NOT distribute it to the students.**
2. Before conducting the lesson, write the four communication styles on the chalkboard.
3. Referring to the handout on "Communication Styles, read the list of behaviors under each style and ask student to guess which behavior goes with a particular style. Continue the activity until you have gone over all behaviors and styles.
4. Ask students to think of people they know or even celebrities that fall into each communication style category; lead a discussion to have students identify the communication styles of each of the people.
5. As a culminating activity, divide the class into small groups (one group for each student leader); have each group identify the communication style of the teacher and student leaders; then, have each student identify his/her own communication style and explain his/her choice.
6. As a conclusion to the lesson, stress to the students that people's communication styles are all different. Because of that, we often misunderstand one another. We may need to change our own communication styles in order to fit into a group or to complete work in a group.

### Materials & Supplies

- Copies of "Communication Styles" Handout

FOCUS  
POINT

The goal of module #4 is for students to get to know themselves better, and obviously, how we communicate is a big part of who we are. It's important that we are aware of this and how it impacts our relationships with the people around us.

- Consider finding video clips of television shows or movies that feature characters "illustrating" the different types of communication styles. Have students try to identify the communication style of each character in the clips.

resources  
&  
extension

## **Diversity and Communication Styles**

A diversity of communication styles exists within all cultures. While people may model communication styles of other people, our personal dominant styles more often reflect individual developmental differences than they reflect culture. Failure to recognize and understand these differences often lead to misinterpretation of the speaker's feelings and intent, which may prevent us from ever engaging in constructive dialogue about important issues because we may be "put off" by the style.

To illustrate these points, let us examine four common "dominant" styles of communication. (Distribute the "Communication Styles" handout.)

### **Emotive Style**

People whose dominant style is emotive often engage in action-oriented behavior as they talk. They may talk rapidly, appear to be constantly "on the go," and use vigorous hand gestures to express their views. Emotive individuals often prefer informality and like to be on a first-name basis. The emotive person tends to share personal views openly. Emotive communicators possess a natural persuasiveness and can be dramatic and forceful when trying to convince others of their views. They may also communicate in colorful, highly individual ways, using words and analogies in an idiosyncratic, poetic, and artistic manner.

To others, they may appear flighty, unfocused, or illogical. To more reserved thinkers, the open expression of affect, particularly anger, may feel overly forceful and uncomfortable.

### **Reflective Style**

The term "reflective" describes one who fully and thoughtfully considers all information before expressing an opinion or coming to a decision. They seemed unhurried and they often exhibit emotional control. Reflective communicators tend to express their opinions in a formal and deliberate manner. They prefer orderliness and often show other traits of compulsiveness, such as preferring elaborate detail and organization. They appreciate agendas and tend to review and fully consider details prior to making decisions.

To others, they may appear preoccupied and, at times, unresponsive. Others may see them as withdrawn, stalling, unwilling or unable to act, or resistant to a dialogue.

## Director Style

People using the director style often project a serious attitude and an all-business, no-nonsense approach when communicating. They tend to express strong opinions, use firm gestures, and speak in determined voice tones. They often project the image of someone who wants to control a given situation. They are task oriented and they tend to communicate logically and cognitively, often without considering the interpersonal and social needs in an interaction. They also feel uncomfortable being informal with co-workers.

Others may perceive them as autocratic, dictatorial, and devoid of personal caring or concern. They are often accused of not having much fun. They may be perceived as indifferent because they often do not project warmth or interpersonal consideration. They may be accused of not hearing the feelings or needs of other people.

## Supportive Style

Supporters tend to listen attentively, which is a unique advantage in many work situations. They often will avoid the use of power and rely on “friendly persuasion” to convince people of their views. They prefer to display warmth and cooperation in their communications. Supporters often express opinions in a thoughtful and deliberate manner, with considerable attention to the manner in which they are expressing them. They also appear to others to be low key in a decision making role because the supporter will often prefer and encourage consensus or group decisions.

Others may see them as “wishy-washy,” unable or unwilling to take a stand or express a firm opinion. Because they are relationship oriented, they may not express their personal views or opinions in a firm, unequivocal manner.

Psychologists say that if we place 100 randomly chosen people in a room, 80 of them will display one of these styles as their dominant style. However, many people will use different styles in different situations.

If we are to prevent miscommunication because of conflicts in styles, we must first understand our own preferred styles, and how these may be interpreted by persons who have different styles.

CONCLUSION:

- Most people have one dominant communication style.
- Some people have two or more styles.
- There are no “right” or “wrong” styles. People communicate their interests and needs with considerable diversity.
- People tend to work best with those whose communication styles lie diagonally across the quadrant from their own style. These styles are complementary.
- On the other hand, diagonally opposite styles possess opposing traits which can lead to conflict. For example, an emotive style person may act without considering the consequences of the action. A reflective style person may encourage the emotive person to think through the consequences. Likewise, a reflective person may tend to deliberate too long before making a decision. An emotive person may help speed up the process.



## Communication Styles

