Interpersonal Communication and Teams

GAC006-aligned practice; follow the centre's current assessment brief.

Communication: Understanding Yourself, Others and Teams

- Practise in a **role play** and a **group role play** .
- Keep a **logbook** of dated events, evidence and next steps.
- Understand a **personality trait** , **self-awareness** and **empathy** .

Communication: Understanding Yourself, Others and Teams (2)

- Use **active listening** , good questions and useful **feedback** .
- Describe how teams develop, and work across differences of **culture** .

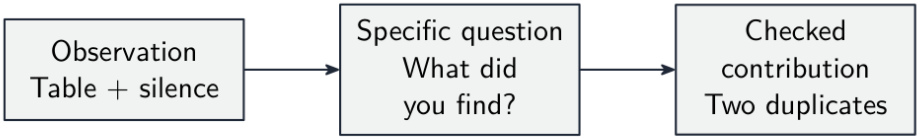
Understanding self and relationships with others

- A **personality trait** is a fairly lasting tendency in how a person thinks, feels or behaves. One quiet meeting does not show a trait.
- **Introversion and extraversion** describe a range: some people turn more inwards, others more towards social contact. Neither decides what role a person must take in a team.
- **Self-awareness** means noticing your own reactions and habits. Write observations, not verdicts: "I interrupted twice when the discussion was fast; next time I will note my point and wait."

Understanding self and relationships with others (2)

- **Values** are what a person considers important. In a task, ask which priorities matter: speed, accuracy, fairness.
- **Empathy** means trying to understand another person's view. It does not mean you must agree.

Figure: Understanding self and relationships with others



Reason for silence remains unknown
One checked finding does not prove every future answer

- A specific question invites a contribution that can be checked, without inventing a reason for silence.
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

The skills of effective communication

- **Active listening** means following the message and checking you understood it: summarise the point and invite correction, or ask a related question.
- **Non-verbal communication** includes gesture, posture, expression and distance. Its meaning depends on the person and the **culture**, so do not read intentions from one gesture.
- **Open questions** invite a longer answer: "What is blocking the draft?" **Closed questions** ask for a short, fixed answer: "Can you send the file by 16:00?" Choose the kind that gets the information you need.

The skills of effective communication (2)

- **Assertiveness** means stating your need clearly while respecting others. A **passive** response leaves the need unsaid; an **aggressive** one attacks the person.
- Useful **feedback** names specific work and a change that can be checked: "The graph's vertical axis needs a unit."

Understanding groups and teams

- In Tuckman's model, a team moves through **forming** (getting to know the task), **storming** (disagreement), **norming** (agreeing how to work) and **performing** (working smoothly). Teams can move back a stage when something changes.
- **Team roles** are contributions such as generating ideas, recording decisions, checking evidence and coordinating. People can share or change roles.
- **Leadership styles** : **autocratic** (the leader decides), **democratic** (members share decisions), **laissez-faire** (members have wide freedom). The best style depends on the task, time and expertise.

Understanding groups and teams (2)

- **Ground rules** set practical arrangements early: meeting times, how decisions are recorded, and how to report a delay.
- **Conflict** about the task can be useful if it stays specific, respectful and based on evidence.

Life skills: culture, and working with difference

- **Culture** includes shared practices and expectations, but individuals within any culture differ.
- **Cultural diversity** can bring new experience and questions to a team.
- A **stereotype** applies a belief about a group to one person. It tells you nothing reliable about that person.

Life skills: culture, and working with difference (2)

- **Directness** varies. "That could be difficult" may mean a real obstacle or polite refusal, so ask what makes it difficult.
- **Adapting** means agreeing a shared way of working: turns to speak, time to prepare, how decisions are recorded.

Worked example: raising a missing handover

- Event: "The checked file was due at 16:00."
- Effect: "The analysis cannot start without it."
- Request: "What is ready, and when can we receive it?"
- The message is assertive but not **aggressive**: it says nothing about the person's character, and it asks for a plan instead of blaming.

Worked example: changing how a group speaks

- The group agrees to share out question areas and to pause before each answer.
- In the next rehearsal, all four students answer at least one question: participation has improved.
- One answer still contains a wrong figure, so accuracy needs checking. The group corrects it and reviews again. Speaking loudly did not prove expertise, and quietness did not prove a lack of it.

Common errors

- Turning one observation into a personality label.
- Reading intentions from a single gesture.
- Using a closed question when you need an explanation.

Common errors (2)

- Giving **feedback** about the person rather than the work.
- Treating Tuckman's stages as a timetable.
- Explaining a teammate's behaviour by a **stereotype**.

Key terms

- **personality trait**: A fairly lasting tendency in thought, feeling or behaviour.
- **self-awareness**: Noticing your own reactions, habits and limits.
- **empathy**: Trying to understand another person's view and feelings.
- **active listening**: Following a message closely and checking you understood it.

Check yourself

- Rewrite "You never send anything on time!" as an assertive message.
- Is "Did you finish?" an open or a closed question? Give an open version.
- A team argues about its method in week 2 and agrees a plan in week 3. Which Tuckman stages does this show?