Course Learning Outcomes for Unit II

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Describe the nature, development, and consequences of self-esteem.
2. Explain the importance of self-confidence and self-efficacy.
3. Assess methods of enhancing and developing your self-confidence.
4. Explain the basic steps in the communication process.
5. Determine the relationship-building aspect of interpersonal communication.
6. Evaluate nonverbal communication.
7. Identify barriers to communication, including gender differences, and overcoming these differences.
8. Examine ways to improve your listening skills.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 3:
Building Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

Chapter 4:
Interpersonal Communication

Unit Lesson

Unit II begins by focusing on two of the biggest building blocks for more effective human relations: the nature and development of self-esteem and self-confidence. Understanding the self is important. A particularly important role is played by self-esteem, the overall evaluation people make about themselves whether positive or negative. Our self-concept is what we think about ourselves whereas self-esteem is what we feel about ourselves.

Self-esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives based on interactions with people, events, and things. Early-life experiences have a major impact on self-esteem. People who were encouraged to feel good about themselves and their accomplishments by others are more likely to enjoy high self-esteem. Praise alone does not build self-esteem. Instead, it results from accomplishing worthwhile activities, and then feeling proud of these accomplishments. To develop self-esteem, people need to improve their skills for dealing with the world.

Self-esteem is important for career success. High self-esteem leads to good mental health. One reason is that high self-esteem helps some situations from being too stressful, such as being insulted. Yet people with high self-esteem profit from negative feedback. Self-esteem is a critical source of competitive advantage in an information society because it is associated with such behaviors as being creative and innovative, and taking the initiative to solve problems. Workers with high self-esteem are more likely to be able to cope with new challenges regularly because they are confident they can master their environment. The unit points out high self-esteem can have some negative consequences.

Five approaches to enhancing self-esteem that relate to how self-esteem develops are covered in this unit. The importance of self-confidence and self-efficacy are explored. Self-confidence is almost the equivalent of self-esteem.

Self-efficacy is confidence in your ability to carry out a specific task, in contrast to generalized self-confidence. Self-efficacy relates to job performance, and self-confidence is associated with leadership. Feelings of self-confidence stem from five sources of information which are discussed in this unit. The unit further discusses that overcoming setbacks builds self-confidence.
The unit continues with material covering communication. Communication is the sending, receiving, and understanding of messages. It is also the basic process by which managers, customer-contact workers, and professionals accomplish their work. Communication skills are a success factor for workers in a wide variety of jobs. Communication is a vehicle for building relationships.

Nonverbal communication refers to the transmission of message through means other than words. These messages accompany verbal communication and sometimes stand alone. The unit addresses seven categories of nonverbal messages: (1) environment, (2) interpersonal distance, (3) posture, (4) hand gestures, (5) facial expressions and eye contact, (6) voice quality, (7) personal appearance, and (8) attention paid to other person. Overcoming communication problems and barriers are discussed. Most messages are likely to be distorted when they are complex, emotionally arousing, or clash with a receiver's mental set. Understanding the receiver involves developing empathy, or placing yourself in the other person's shoes. New research suggests that mirror neurons help us empathize. Understanding the receiver also involves recognizing the receiver's motivational state, which includes any active needs and interests operating at the time. Furthermore, it is important to understand the person's frame of reference, the fact that people perceive words and concepts differently because their vantage points and perspectives differ.

The unit includes a discussion to minimize defensive communication. Defensive communication is the tendency to receive messages in such a way that our self-esteem is protected. Such communication is also responsible for people sending messages to make them look good. Overcoming these barriers is difficult because of denial, the suppression of information we find to be uncomfortable.

Verbal and nonverbal feedback is discussed. Feedback tells us if the message has been received as intended. Action, of course, is even more conclusive. Feedback is also important because it reinforces the sender. Check for feelings after you have received a message. When you send a message, it is helpful to express your feelings.

Active listening is covered in the unit. Improving one's receiving of messages is another part of developing better communication skills. The active listener listens intently with the goal of empathizing with the speaker. As a result of listening actively, the listener can feedback to the speaker what he or she thinks the speaker meant. Active listening also involves summarization, the process of pulling together, condensing, and thereby clarifying the main points communicated by the sender. Observing nonverbal communication is another important part of active listening. The unit concludes with discussion on communication barriers, metacommunications, and recognizing gender differences in communication style.

Suggested Reading

Click here to access the Unit II Presentation in PowerPoint form. (Click here to access a PDF version.)

Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

For a review of the Key Terms of the unit, click here to access the interactive Unit II Flashcards in PowerPoint form. (Click here to access a PDF version.)

To further develop your understanding of the concepts presented in Unit II, it is suggested that you complete the Case Studies for Chapters 3 and 4, located on pages 62-63 and 85-86 of your textbook.

To further explore the interpersonal skills discussed in Unit II, it is suggested that you complete the Self-Assessment Quizzes on pages 46-47, 55, 71, and 79 of your textbook.

These are non-graded activities, so you do not need to submit them.

Key Terms

1. Active listener
2. Communication
3. Consensus
4. Crew
5. Cross-functional team
6. Defensive communication
7. Empathy
8. Feedback
9. Groupthink
10. Message
11. Metacommunication
12. Mirroring
13. Noise
14. Social loafing
15. Synergy
16. Team