Non Verbal Communication – more than just words

What is non verbal communication?

- "Ways in which communication is effected between persons when in each other’s presence other than words” (Kendon, 1981)
- "... the deliberate or unintentional use of objects, actions, sounds, time or space so as to arouse meanings in others.” (Fleur et al, 1993, 69)
- It is difficult to neatly distinguish between verbal and non verbal messages because people do not just use one mode or another but shift back and forth.

Why is non verbal communication important?

What you wear, how you stand, your facial expressions, your tone of voice – all have an effect on the listener
How much communication is non verbal?

According to a famous 1981 study by Dr Albert Mehrabian from UCLA, the influence of non verbal messages was as follows:

*Face-to-Face Communication*
- 55% body language
- 38% tone of voice
- 7% words used

*Telephone Communication*
- 82% tone of voice
- 18% words used

Non Verbal Communication can be conveyed through...

- Time or "chronemics"
- Vocal qualities or "paralanguage" (pitch, rhythm, volume, resonance)
- Use of space or "proxemics"
- Body motion or "kinesics" (posture, gestures, eye behaviour, facial expressions)
- Touching behaviours or "haptics" (greeting gestures, hitting, stroking, guiding)
- Characteristics of the physical environment (furniture, architectural style, use of colour, music, décor)
- Choice & use of artefacts (Rolex watches, brand name clothes)
- Characteristics of the physical environment (furniture, architectural style, use of colour, music, décor)

Julia Gillard has faced more than her share of scrutiny over her appearance. This is from a recent newspaper article.
**Eye behaviour**

- The "window to the soul"
- Intensity of gaze signals nature of emotions
- Pupils dilate or enlarge to reflect emotions such as arousal
- Cultural rules about eye gaze
- Eye avoidance perceived as dishonesty

Source: Pease, 1981, 134-136

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**Facial expressions**

- Human face capable of approx 250,000 different expressions that are subtle indicators of emotion
- Women more attuned than men?
- Importance of smiling in social acceptability
- Poker face?
- Research (eg Ekman) argues that there are six basic expressions universally recognised

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**Six ‘innate affects’**

- Anger → → → Rage
- Distress → → → anguish
- Shame → → → Humiliation
- Enjoyment → → → Joy
- Interest → → → Excitement
- Surprise → → → Startle
- Disgust → → → Contempt
- Fear → → → Terror

adapted from Tomkins Affect, Imagery, Consciousness
Some facts about touching behaviours

- What is acceptable or not acceptable touching behaviour is very much culturally determined
- In general, touching of same sex friends is confined to the shoulders, arms and hands
- How close the relationship is can be seen by the use of either a second hand on the arm, shoulder etc. in a handshake

More facts about touching behaviour

- In Western cultures, males are reluctant to touch or be touched by other males
- Compare this to some cultures where greeting gestures include hugging and kissing between men
- The frequency with which people touch is a reliable indicator of their perceived power. The more powerful person is likely to be the toucher and vice versa

Handshakes & greeting gestures

Your relationship with the other person will determine how close you stand when shaking hands and whether you use one hand or two.

Source: Pease, 1981, 53-54
Handshakes & greeting gestures

In Western cultures handshakes are an important form of greeting (especially for men) but not all handshakes communicate the same thing.

The infamous Latham handshake

The handshake that probably lost then-Labor leader Mark Latham the 2004 election.

What happens if we get it wrong?

- Most cultures have unique greeting rituals
- Nose touching – Alaska
- Cheek kissing – Europe
- Bowing – Japan
- Testicle clutching – PNG
Vocal Qualities

- **Tone** – expresses feeling or emotion
- **Inflection** – emphasising words and syllables to enhance a message
- **Pitch** – how high or deep a voice sounds
- **Rate** – how many words spoken per minute
- **Volume** – how loud or soft a voice sounds

Proxemics

- **Named** by anthropologist Edward T Hall (think “proximity”)
- **Refers** to the way people use “space” to communicate and to enforce status
- **Highly culturally specific**

Communication Zones

- **Invisible**
  - Reserved for people you don’t know well
- **Personal**
  - The distance at which you would stand when talking
- **Social**
  - The distance at which you would stand with people you don’t know well
- **Public**
  - The distance at which you feel comfortable when addressing a big group
Q: What indicators are there that the woman may feel uncomfortable?

A: Leaning backwards, raising of coffee mug as a potential barrier.
Kinesics or body positioning

- How we use our bodies may subconsciously communicate how we feel.
- Body language needs to be interpreted in context and in clusters.
- Need to be conscious of how it may be read to avoid sending the wrong message.

Arm & hand positions

Different hand and arm positions can communicate different messages.

How this body language is interpreted also relies on the cluster of other gestures and facial expressions.

Source: Pease, 1981, 92-95

Labor’s Love Lost

Not much love lost here.
**Body language in action**

Q: What indicators are there that the man on the right is left out? How does he feel?
A: His crossed arms are a signal of frustration and displeasure. His feet are pointing away from the other two. Their knees and bodies are pointed towards each other signalling attention.

*Source: Pease, 1981, 183*

**Body language in action**

What are these two men communicating?

Q: The caption says “thinking alike”. How do you know?
A: They are “mirroring” each other’s body positions indicating that they agree with each other.

*Source: Pease, 1981, 170*

**Relationship between the non verbal & the spoken message**

According to researcher Mark Knapp (1978), non verbal cues modify or change the spoken words in any of the following ways:

- Reinforce or complement – using hands to emphasise “how big?”
- Contradict – crossing your fingers to symbolise lying or wish fulfilment
- Regulate or repeat – holding up your hands to stop someone else from talking
- Substitute – head nodding substitutes for “I agree with you.”

*Source: Knapp, 1978*
Non-verbal communication in the news – find your own examples

And some more ...

Etcetera etcetera
More pollies in action

I hear nothing!!!

Egypt 2011