

**Communication Skills  
Teacher Work Sample**

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### Contextual Factors

Rockwood South Middle School is located in Fenton, Missouri. A growing suburb of St. Louis County, Fenton, population of more than 4,300 people, is located on the Meramec River. Fenton is a family oriented community, and a growing business community, with such companies as Daimler Chrysler, Maritz, and Fabick Tractor Co., located in the heart of it. A part of the Rockwood School District, Rockwood South Middle is one of six middle schools. Rockwood School District, one of the largest districts in the St. Louis area, covers more than 150 square miles in much of western St. Louis County and Northern Jefferson County, and services approximately 21,894 students. Rockwood school District also includes 18 Elementary Schools and 4 High Schools. 12.21% of students in Rockwood School District receive free or reduced lunches, and about 14% of students participate in the St. Louis desegregation program, which buses inner-city students to the county for education. Four elementary schools combine into the Rockwood South to comprise grades sixth, seventh and eighth.. There are approximately 1100 students that go to Rockwood South Middle School, in which approximately 80% of the students are Caucasian, 15% are African American, and 5% are other minorities.

The classroom for team 7-2 resource is large, and has four rows of five desks each for the students to sit at. There is one small window in the classroom, which provides minimal sunlight, and fresh air into the sometimes stuffy room. There are seven computers in the classroom, which are mainly used for Internet research and word processing. There is a large bookshelf of books for the students' use in the classroom, as

well as daily newspapers for the students. Resource instruction is after lunch, so the students are tired and anxious for school to end during instruction. Each day planners are checked and signed to make sure their homework is complete. Most parents seem cooperative, and actively communicate with their students about the importance of school. Resource instruction is not only for homework completion, but also to teach skills to help the students succeed in school. There is no set curriculum for the teaching of these skills.

Five seventh graders attend eighth hour resource class, two males and three female. They are all diagnosed with learning disabilities or other health impairments and are required to come to resource as stated in their Individualized Education Plan. Students mainly use resource time to do homework and get their assignment notebooks organized. All of my students can benefit from individual attention, and their instruction must be based on their individual learning needs. All of the students are auditory learners, and have attention problems. They cannot complete a worksheet or read a book to learn information; instead, they must be read to or orally taught a subject to ensure understanding. Since most of my students are not strong readers, they will also need a lot of help when reading aloud, and with pronouncing new vocabulary words. Many of them have provisions in their IEP to have text read to them. The students require text to be read to them and they must hear something before they remember it. One of the students needs help staying on task and paying attention, so I will have to implement exciting lessons that she will pay attention to, and I will need to give her more individual attention and reminders to make sure she is following along with the rest of the students.

## Learning Goals

### **Learning Goal 1:**

*The student's -will be able to identify the importance of effective communication, and will list the process of effective communication.*

*This learning goal aligns -with the following state standards:*

PS 1.2: Conduct research to answer questions and evaluate information and ideas

PS 1.5: Comprehend and evaluate written, visual and oral presentation works.

PS 1.8: Organize data, information and ideas into useful forms (including charts, graphs, outlines) for analysis or presentation

CS CA 1: Speaking and writing Standard English

CSCA4: Writing formally and informally.

CS CA 6: Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas.

CS CA 7: Identifying and evaluating relationships between language and culture.

### **Learning Goal 2:**

*The students will be able to identify the importance and demonstrate their skills of listening to directions and giving good directions.*

This learning goal aligns with the following state standards:

PS 1.5: Comprehend and evaluate written, visual and oral presentation works.

PS 1.8: Organize data, information and ideas into useful forms (including charts, graphs, outlines) for analysis or presentation

CS CA 1: Speaking and writing Standard English

CS CA 3: Reading and evaluating nonfiction works and material (such as biographies, newspapers, and technical manuals)

CS CA 4: Writing formally and informally.

CS CA 6: Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas.

### **Learning Goal 3:**

*The students will be able to identify the different types of communication, and learn how to effectively use them.*

This learning goal aligns with the following state standards:

PS 1.5: Comprehend and evaluate written, visual and oral presentation works.

PS 1.8: Organize data, information and ideas into useful forms (including charts, graphs, outlines) for analysis or presentation

CS SS 6: Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

CS CA 1: Speaking and writing Standard English

CS CA 6: Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas.

Assessment Plan

Learning Goals	Assessments	Format of Assessment	Adaptations
<p><b>Learning Goal 1:</b> <i>The students will be able to identify the importance of effective communication, and will list the process of effective communication.</i></p>	Pre-Assessment	Multiple Choice/ Short Answer	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling
	Formative Assessment	Oral question and answer, in-class worksheets	Allow extended time for answers and for completing the worksheets, read the questions on the worksheets
	Post-Assessment	Multiple choice/ short answer	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling
<p><b>Learning Goal 2:</b> <i>The students will be able to identify the importance and demonstrate their skills of listening to directions and giving good directions.</i></p>	Pre-Assessment	Multiple Choice/ Short Answer, Following Directions Worksheet	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling
	Formative Assessment	Oral question and answer, in-class worksheets	Allow extended time for answers and for completing the worksheets, read the questions on the worksheets
	Post-Assessment	Multiple choice/ short answer, Following directions worksheet	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling

<b>Learning Goal 3:</b> <i>The students will be able to identify the different types of communication, and learn how to effectively use them.</i>	Pre-Assessment	Multiple Choice/ Short Answer	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling
	Formative Assessment	Oral question and answer, in-class worksheets	Allow extended time for answers and for completing the worksheets, read the questions on the worksheets
	Post-Assessment	Multiple choice, short answer	Read questions to students, allow extended time, do not count off for spelling

My pre and post assessments are aligned with my learning goals. The multiple choice/ short answer test will be used to pre-assess learning goals 1,2, and 3. The quiz will help me to identify what the students have already learned about communication, its importance, the process, listening and giving directions, types of communication, and how to effectively communicate. I will give the same multiple choice and short answer test at the end of the unit to assess the students' knowledge after the unit is taught. This will test the knowledge they have gained throughout the unit, as well as the students' progress throughout the unit. The quiz will ask the students questions over the material they learned throughout the unit about communication skills.

In addition to the multiple choice/short answer quizzes, I will assess Learning Goal 2 by having the students complete a following directions worksheet during the pre-assessment and post-assessment. The worksheets test the students' ability to follow written directions. The pre-assessment worksheet asks the students to follow directions

to follow a map. The post-assessment worksheet asks the students to follow directions to find a place on a map of the zoo. The following directions worksheets allow me to assess how well the students can follow written directions. The pre-assessment will give me an idea of where to start my instruction on following directions, and the post-assessment will help me to assess how much the students have learned about how to accurately follow directions.

Formative assessments consist of questioning and answering, and worksheets over the topics of the goals. The worksheets are graphic organizers, activities, or questions that inquire about communication, what it is, and why it was important. I will monitor the students' progress on their formative assessments through observation, and by asking questions to the class before, during and after every lesson.

*To view the pre and post assessments see Appendix A (pre and post assessment).*

Design for Instruction

**Results of Pre-Assessment:**

The pre-assessment results of learning goals 1,2, and 3 are interpreted in Graph 1 (Appendix B) and the pre-assessment results of learning goal 2 are interpreted in Graph 2 (Appendix C).

Graph 1 shows that the students as a whole do not have much prior knowledge of what communication is and what communication skills are. All of the students did not know the entire communication process; some of the students understood that it included talking or listening but did not say both. They also did not understand that listening and hearing are two different concepts. As a whole, the students understand basic parts of communication and different communication skills, but have not yet learned many basic skills that could help them throughout the school day. They were able to tell me different ways to communicate, but some answers were very vague. I will use the results of my pre-assessment to place more emphasis on what communication is and why it is so important for the students to learn because my students do not have much prior knowledge concerning what communication is and how it helps them in their everyday lives.

Graph 2 shows that the students can follow written directions, but the majority of students made errors on their maps when following the directions given. This implies that the students have knowledge of how to follow directions, and that I should place more concentration on teaching about more effective ways to read and follow directions given. My pre-assessment reveals that the students have difficulty keeping track of what

direction they are on, and that they easily skip directions. During my instruction I will need to teach my students skills that will help them to follow directions more efficiently.

*To see the student's pre-assessments go to Appendix D.*

**Unit Overview:**

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Topic:	Pre-Assessment	Intro. to Communication	The Communication Process	Good Listening Skills	Following Directions
Learning Goals Addressed	L.G. 1, 2, 3	L.G. 1, 2, 3	L.G. 1	L.G. 1, 2, 3	L.G. 2
	Multiple choice, short answer quiz	Ask students: What is communication	Ask students what they think the communication process is.	Brainstorm on what good listening skills are and what bad listening skills are.	Ask why we need to know how to follow/ give directions.
	following directions worksheet	KWL Chart on what communication is, ways to communicate, the communication process, and the importance of having good communication skills	Direct instruction on what the communication process is.	Instruction on what good listening skills are: pay attention, eyes forward, no side talking, etc.	Listening to directions activity: teacher will give students directions of what to write on their papers, then discuss the difficulty of the activity.
		Following directions/ communication activity: Students will describe to other students how to draw a picture and put together Lego statues.	Students' practice using the communication process correctly. One person talks, the other student listens, roles switch.	Design action plans for developing better listening skills.	Following Picture Directions Activity: Give each student a tie and picture directions of how to tie three different knots.
		Discussion about the activity and journal on what	Journal on what communication skills they need to improve.	Journal on one listening skill they feel they are good at.	Following written directions activity.

		communication is.			Provide students with a map and written directions of how to follow the map.
					Discussion and journal on how each student follows directions the best.

	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Topic	Following Directions	Giving Directions	How do I know if I am communicating what I want to say in a clear manner?	How do I communicate the best?	Post-Assessment
Learning Goals Addressed	L.G. 2	L.G. 2	L.G. 1, 2, 3	L.G. 1, 3	L.G. 1, 2, 3
	Review the importance of following directions correctly.	Ask why it is important to give clear directions.	Give students a story that is not written clearly. Have the students read the story to the best of their ability, and answer questions about the story.	Begin with a discussion on how the students feel they communicate the best. Ask why they feel that way.	Post assessment: Multiple choice, short answer

	Webquest: Students will complete a webquest on China (a country they are studying in World Geography) to give them practice of following directions.	Giving directions activity: Divide the class into pairs. Blindfold one of the students in each pair, have the seeing student direct the non-seeing student to the sixth grade bathrooms. Discuss.	Go over the questions. Re the story to them, putting spaces where they should actually be. Discuss the difficulty of not understanding the story.	Have the students make a journal entry describing the best way they communicate and why, using the best way they communicate. If talking- they will orally give their journal, if written, they will write their journal, etc.	following directions worksheet
	Discussion on what the students learned through the webquest.	Have the students write a how-to paper on how to make their favorite sandwich. Read aloud.	Discussion on how to make sure others understand what the students are trying to communicate. Ask what the students' can do to make sure they are being understood.	Share the journal entries.	

### Three Unit Activities:

On Day 2, I will be doing an introduction to communication activity with the students. In groups, they will be giving/receiving instructions on how to draw a picture of the beach, and how to build a Lego structure. At the beginning of the activity, they will practice by attempting to draw a house that I describe to them. Next, in groups, the students will describe the beach scene to their partner without using key words such as water, beach, fish, etc. After five minutes, the students will share how the picture should look. Then we will discuss if the activity was easy or difficult and why. Then the

partners will switch roles, and the drawer will become the describer of how to build a Lego structure. Afterwards we will discuss if it was easier after they had practiced and what made it easier.

This activity relates to my instructional goals 1,2, and 3. It teaches the students the basic information on what communication is, which will help them focus and learn more about communication throughout the unit. I decided to use this activity with the students because they showed on their pre-assessment that they did not have much knowledge of exactly what communication is, and what the communication process is. This activity actively involves the students in the communication process, and helps them to realize how important proper communication is. I will need Lego structures and pieces for the students to work with during the activity. The students will need their pencils and their communication journal as well. I plan to assess the students learn through our discussions in class and through the improvements of their communication skills during the class activities. I used the Internet to research the different

On Day 5, I will be doing a following directions activity with the students. The students will complete activities that build their direction following skills. The students will first listen to teacher given directions to make marks on their paper. The directions cannot be repeated, so this activity tests the students' ability to listen to oral directions. Then the students will be given a tie and picture directions of how to tie three different knots. This helps the students build skills for following picture directions. Then the students will be asked to follow written directions when given a map and directions of how to move around the map. Afterwards, the students will be asked when in life they

have to follow directions when they are given orally, in pictures, and written. They will then write a journal about which type they prefer and why.

This activity relates to my instructional goal 2. It teaches the students the not only skills of how to follow directions, but also teaches them different ways of following directions. This activity also helps the students to realize their strengths and weakness in regards to following directions. I decided to use this activity with the students because they showed on their pre-assessment that they had some knowledge of how to follow directions, but they had difficulty following directions exactly. I think that by discussing why it is important to follow directions correctly and to know how to follow different types of directions, the students will understand the importance of following directions in their everyday lives. I will need an overhead projector for this activity, so the students will be able to see the pictures for the tie activity. The students will need their copies of the journals, a tie, and a pencil. I plan to assess the students learn through our discussions in class and by their success in the activities during the lesson. I will use an overhead projector during the lesson.

On Day 6, the students will be completing an Internet activity about China. The students will be going on an Internet web quest. They will visit various websites to find answers to questions about China, which they are studying in world geography. The web quest will not only give them review for their geography class, but also gives them practice on following directions in regard to technology. The students will work in a group to complete the activity. After they finish, the class will discuss what they learned from the activity regarding China and communication (following directions).

This activity relates to my instructional goal 2. It teaches the students how to follow directions when using technology. I decided to use this Internet activity with the students because they enjoy working on the computer and it is a good way for the students to construct their own knowledge about China, as well as gives the students practice with following directions. I will need a computer for the students. The students will need their activity sheet and a pencil. I plan to assess the students learn through our discussions in class and through their activity sheets. The entire activity is based around the Internet and having the students research China and construct their learning. In the planning of the activity I used the Internet to set up the worksheet and to find age appropriate sites the students can visit.

Instructional Decision-Making

During Day 2's Lego building activity, I modified the activity because it was too difficult for the students. As the students were describing how to build the Lego structure to their partner, I realized that the students were not being specific enough. One builder had the wrong piece for the base, and another student was building the structure in the opposite direction it was supposed to go. After watching the students' struggle with how to describe which Lego to use next, and which Lego's should be used to build with I decided to help the students by giving them hints. I used formative assessment to make my decision to modify the activity my students were completing. By watching the students interact with each other and seeing them struggle I decided that the activity needed to be modified.

In this activity I modified instruction by giving the students hints of how to build the Lego structures. I told one group that the builder had more than one window in her bag, to help the describer tell her which window the builder needed. I told both groups that the builder could ask questions to the describer, in which they were not allowed to in the beginning. I told another student that his structure had too many pieces on it, so he could make necessary revisions. During the activity, I thought my modifications would help the students to better understand that they needed to be more specific in their instructions. I thought that it would also help the students to relax more during the activity, and not reach a frustration level that they could not return from. By making these modifications, I feel that I was better able to help my students complete the activity,

and that they were able to learn that they needed to be more specific when communicating directions to each other.

During Day 5's activity I made a modification on the tie activity, in which the student's needed to tie the ties according to picture directions given. The students were originally supposed to tie three knots in their ties according to the three sets of picture directions. After they tied one knot, they were supposed to show me the knot and have me initial their worksheet. When the students were tying their first knot I realized that many of the students were having an extreme amount of difficulty tying the knots based on the pictures. Many of the students were becoming very frustrated and wanted to give up. Through observation of the student's and discussing with the students their difficulty, I decided to modify the activity.

I noticed that one student understood the picture directions and was able to tie the knots, so I decided that he should show the other students how to tie their ties. After he tied his first knot I asked the students to gather around so they could see him tie his tie. After they watched him, I had the other students' pair up and work with each other to tie the knots. I thought this would help improve the students' progress because previously the students were hitting their frustration level and quitting. By adapting the lesson to help them succeed I was able to teach the students better ways to communicate their needs, and how to follow directions by watching a demonstration instead of looking at pictures.

Analysis of Learning Results

**Whole Class**

The following table shows pre and post assessment data on every student, on every learning goal. The student's work was rated between a 1 and a 3. If the student receives a rating of one, it means that the student has no knowledge of the learning goal. If the student receives a rating of two, it means the student has some knowledge of the learning goal. If the student receives a rating of the three the student knows the learning goal. The results are based off the students' scores on their pre and post assessments.

Student	Learning Goal 1		Learning Goal 2		Learning Goal 3	
	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment	Pre-Assessment	Post-Assessment
A	1	2	2	3	1.5	3
B	1.5	3	2	3	1	3
C	1	2	2.5	2.5	1.5	3
D	1.5	3	3	3	2	2
E	3	3	2.5	3	1.5	2.5

*To see this chart in graph format, go to Appendix E.*

*To see the results of the post-assessment, go to Appendices F and G.*

Three of the students attained Learning Goal 1. The other students made progress from the pre-assessment, but did not achieve the highest level of mastery during post-assessment. All but one student had little or no knowledge of the Communication Process during the pre-assessment, however, as you can see in Appendix E, all of the students improved their knowledge of the subject throughout the unit, which is evident in their post-assessment results.

For Learning Goal 2, all of the students mastered the goal except one. The one student made progress from the pre-assessment, but did not achieve the highest level of mastery during post-assessment. During the pre-assessment, all of the students, except one, had some knowledge of how to follow instructions. All students, however, improved their knowledge of the subject throughout the unit, which is evident in their post-assessment results.

Three of the students attained Learning Goal 3. Two of the students made progress towards the learning goal, but did not master the learning goal. During the pre-assessment, all of the students had little or no knowledge of the learning goal. As you can see in Appendix E, after post-assessment, each student either mastered the goal of identifying the different types of communication and how to use them or made improvements on it.

### ***Subgroups***

I have selected the subgroup regarding gender, and am comparing the progress of the boys versus the girls according to Learning Goal 2: The students will be able to identify the importance and demonstrate their skills of listening to directions and giving good directions. I choose this subgroup because I thought it would be interesting to see if there is a difference in the ability to follow directions and give directions based on gender. I wanted to find out if the boys in my class are better at following and giving directions or if the girls are. The results of the girls and boys are averaged together below.

	<b>Learning Goal 2</b>	
<b>Student</b>	<b>Pre-Assessment</b>	<b>Post-Assessment</b>

Girls	2.2	3
Boys	2.75	2.75

*To see a graphic representation of the chart above, see Appendix H.*

As shown in the chart above, the girls began the unit with a lower average regarding the learning goal, with a 2.2, than the boys with a 2.75. However, after the post-assessment, the girls made better progress than the boys, who made no progress. The girls went from an average rating of 2.2 to a 3 from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment. This data shows that the girls, as a whole, have better skills at giving and following directions than the boys in the class.

### ***Individuals***

Student C and student D demonstrated different levels of performance throughout the unit. Student C and student D began the unit with little knowledge of communication skills. As the unit progressed, both students were learning, but student D understood the material faster than student C did. This explains why the students' levels of mastery of goals 1 and 2 were different. Student C showed improvement in his learning throughout the unit, but not to the level of mastery of all the topics.

It is important to understand that Student D learns faster and has less problems learning than student C. Student C often has difficulty learning a topic and remembering it. Student C, during class time would answer questions accurately during class discussions, but when it came time to review the previous days topic, he did not remember much about what he had learned.

During the pre-assessment of learning goals 1 and 3, students C and D had little prior knowledge of communication skills. As you can see in the graph in Appendix E,

both students improved their knowledge of the topics, and were able to answer questions about the importance of communication, following and giving instructions, and why communications skills are important.

*To see the students 'post-assessments, go to Appendix I.*

Both students performed to the same level during the formative assessments. Each student answered questions during class discussion, and worked at the same level on their worksheets. The students mainly answered the questions correctly on their worksheets, or they missed only a few. They both participated in class activities equally, and they both worked very hard throughout the unit. The students' formative assessments, especially the classroom discussions, reveal that learning did occur, and that the learning goals were mastered.

*To see examples of the students 'formative assessments, go to Appendix J.*

## **Reflection and Self-Evaluation**

The two strategies/activities that contributed most to student learning was the introduction to communication drawing and Lego's activity, in which the students instructed their peers how to draw a picture and build a Lego's structure, and the following directions activity, in which the students had to follow a set of oral, picture and written directions. I think the communication activity was effective in helping the students learn, because it helped them to understand the why communication is so important in our everyday lives, and how difficult it can be to communicate. I think the following directions activity was effective in helping the students learn, because even though the students had frustration with some of the activities they learned how important it is to follow directions exactly and the importance of giving good directions. They enjoyed working together, which helped them to enjoy what they were learning. The students were more motivated because they were able to work together and had hand on activities, which helped them learn.

The two greatest barriers to learning for the students in this unit were that they have a lot of difficulty reading, and maintaining an attention span. I tried very hard to provide effective reading strategies for the students for reading directions; however, in the future I think I would re-write the directions given in simpler language so there would be less confusion. I think this would have helped the students follow the correct instructions when following directions. The students also had difficulty keeping their attention on the activities. I think that in the future I would divide the lessons up into more, shorter lessons, so that the students would be able to keep their mind focused on the entire lesson, rather than bits and pieces of a big lesson.

I feel that my teaching performance in this unit was very good. I think I did a great job of providing a variety of teaching techniques and strategies for the students, and that I addressed their individual needs as I taught. I took into consideration the abilities of my students as I planned the unit, and set appropriate learning goals according to the students' abilities. I challenged the students to think throughout the unit, and to discuss what they learned each day after every lesson. I evaluated each student after every lesson to see his or her progress on each learning goal. I paid close attention to the students needs, and I was not afraid to modify a lesson or worksheet to fit the needs of each student. I think I could have done a better job of planning the writing activities for the students, because some of the writing was overwhelming for the students. I think that I also could have reinforced the previous days activities more during the introductions to the next lessons. If I had reviewed all of the information more some of the students might have performed better on the post assessment quiz. I think that overall, my performance helped my students to gain knowledge about communication. They did not know much about communication when the unit began, and afterwards they have a solid base of information about how to effectively communicate.

I think that attending a workshop on behavior management would help me to learn how to keep my students attention throughout the entirety of a lesson. This would help me learn strategies to use with my students so they will be able to focus their attention. Another opportunity for professional development would be to learn more about multiple intelligence's, which would help me in instructing the different learning styles of my students. I can learn more about the theory of multiple intelligence's by attending a workshop, reading books, or by researching and reading journal articles.

### References and Credits

To aid in writing my contextual factors, I used information from the following websites:

LocationOne:

[http://www.locationone.com/lois/conimuiuty/view.do?commumty\\_id=1254](http://www.locationone.com/lois/conimuiuty/view.do?commumty_id=1254)

Accessed on April 4,2003.

Rockwood School District: [www.rsd.k-12.state.mo](http://www.rsd.k-12.state.mo)

Accessed on April 4,2003.

