



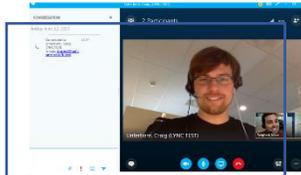
Communication: The Method Matters

All forms of communication are not created equal. When it comes to communicating clearly and effectively with other people, the method you choose can make a big difference in the way your message is received. Certainly, your choice of words is important to consider if you hope to be understood. However, the medium and process through which you communicate also affect the success of the communication.

When you are choosing how to send a message, what are your options?



Face-to-face discussion



Skype or Facetime



Email



Post on social media



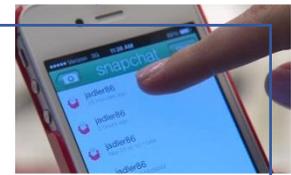
Telephone call



Write a letter



Text



Direct message

Some things to consider when making your choice:

1. How much time do you have?
2. How soon do you want or need a response?
3. How complicated is the topic?
4. What might you be risking if your message were to be misunderstood?
5. Have you taken the time to proofread your message before sending it?
6. If you choose a convenient option now, will you really save time in the long run?
7. How many people are you trying to communicate with at once?
8. How long would you like a record of your communication to last, if any time at all?
9. How well do you know the intended recipient(s)?
10. Do you really have a message worth sending, or are you just bored?
11. If someone you admire were watching you, would they support your choice of words or manner by which you are presenting yourself?
12. If you plan to use humor, will it come across clearly and as intended, or could it be offensive or misunderstood?
13. Are you tempted to use an alternative form of communication just because the most appropriate choice might be uncomfortable?

There are pros and cons associated with each form of communication:

- Real time communication requires you to think on your feet and be alert in the here-and-now.
- When others can observe *both* your verbal content (i.e., the words of your message) and the nonverbal content (e.g., your tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, posture, tone, intensity, etc.), they can have a more complete picture of the message you are sending.
- It may be tempting for you to be indirect when conversation is not happening in real time – that may make it more difficult to get what you want or need following the conversation.
- If you do not have to communicate in real time, you can edit and adjust messages over and over until you are confident in the final draft.
- Communication that happens in real time may come and go without any permanent record of it; usually communication that is not in real time is recorded and could be recalled, for better or worse, in the future.
- If you have a large audience to reach, some forms of communication are more efficient than others.
- Some forms of communication are more professional than others; it is important to match the right form of communication for the right audience.
- Clearing up a misunderstanding can be time-consuming and involve a lot of work; it may be better to take some extra time and be as clear as possible from the start.
- It is easier to use humor in real time and when others can observe both your verbal and nonverbal behavior.
- Simple messages can be conveyed easily by text; however, the more complicated the message is, the more important it is to consider other options.



Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS)

3 Garrison Avenue, Smith Hall - 3rd Floor, Durham, NH 03824

Tel: 603-862-2090 Website: www.unh.edu/pacs