



Systems Coaching: A Model for Building Capacity

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<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/coachescorner.cfm>

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Interpersonal Communication Skills (Pages 9 – 11)

- 1. Active and Attentive Listening:** A process of searching for and understanding a speaker's message. This is a complex activity that is more than just passively hearing another talk, but is the acquisition, processing, and retention of information delivered within the interpersonal context (Bostrom, 2007). The key to active, attentive listening is that it often results in a response by the listener to the speaker's message (Rosenfield, 1987, 2008). Such responses can range from the use of skilled techniques such as summarizing, questioning, and paraphrasing to the use of facial expressions, eye contact, and responses such as "yes" and "uh---huh."
- 2. Summarizing:** A process that occurs when the listener stops to pull together the key points of the speaker's vast amount of information that has been shared into a brief and concise restatement of the information. Summarizing also provides opportunities to reflect and to confirm or modify the points in the conversation. Summarizing helps the listener to check perceptions and keep track of the information. Summarizing may also provide assistance to the speaker who may not be aware of the patterns, or the relatedness, of the information being communicated.
- 3. Questioning:** This process, in the broadest sense, can be described as any statement or nonverbal act that invites an answer. Efficient and effective coaches ask more questions than they make statements. Questioning methods include open and close ended questions, as well as clarifying and information gathering questions.
- 4. Paraphrasing:** A process of repetition of the essence of the speaker's feelings by the listener (coach) in the coach's own words. Paraphrasing is a useful technique to evaluate understanding of what is being said, and is a restatement of the speaker's message, and not just a repeating of the speaker's words. If paraphrasing is done correctly, it will enhance the meaning and, in turn, contribute to the effectiveness of the communication. Both the speaker and the listener benefit from paraphrasing. The listener has the opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the message, and avoid false assumptions, errors, and misinterpretations. The speaker also benefits because the listener is demonstrating interest

in the topic and support of the speaker by caring enough to check the accuracy of perceptions.

5. **Delivering:** The process of modeling effective interpersonal communication skills and behavior while working within a collaborative relationship with others. Coaches understand that their relationships with those they are coaching should be collegial and cooperative, rather than hierarchical or coercive (regardless of one's title, position or areas of discipline within the educational system). The coach is viewed as the facilitator that offers ideas or strategies, rather than an expert who provides answers.
6. **Integrating:** The process of reviewing and synthesizing data and other information shared from different sources into a coherent, comprehensive picture.
7. **Empathizing:** The act of perceiving the internal frame of reference of another while maintaining one's objectivity (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011). Empathy conveys an understanding of the individual(s) seeking assistance, but does not necessarily convey agreement of what is being said.