

NVLAP Assessor Training

Assessor Communication Skills

Characteristics of an Assessor

- **Confidential**
- Unbiased and impartial
- Independent
- Observant, good listener
- Knowledgeable

Assessor Attributes

- Open minded: willing to consider other points of view
- Sound judgment and good analytical skills
- Discerning: what's most important and how does it fit?
- Tenacity: persistent and focused on achieving results
- Ethical: fair, truthful, sincere, discrete
- Diplomatic
- Decisive
- Self-reliant

Abilities of the Ideal Assessor

- Highly functional communicator – excellent listening, speaking, and written skills
- Focused
- Collaborative
- Observant
- Systematic and organized
- Prepared
- Good time management
- Flexibility within the assessment
- Adaptable to changing work assignments & conditions

First Impressions

- Professional appearance
- Alert and focused
- Positive and balanced attitude: open-minded, curious, and respectful
- Obviously prepared and organized
- Open and communicative
- Able to establish rapport and set the tone for an effective assessment

Communication Skills



How well do you communicate?

- What is said may not be what is heard
 - Choose your words carefully
 - Observe how they are received
- What is heard may not be understood
 - Engage in discussion to ensure understanding
- What is understood may not be accepted
 - The assessee may be defensive

National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program



**I know you believe you understand what you
think I said, but I am not sure you realized that
what you heard is not what I meant**

Communicating During the Assessment: Things to remember

- Assesseees are under stress
- No one is a mind reader
- Don't assume
- Ask open-ended questions
- LISTEN to the responses

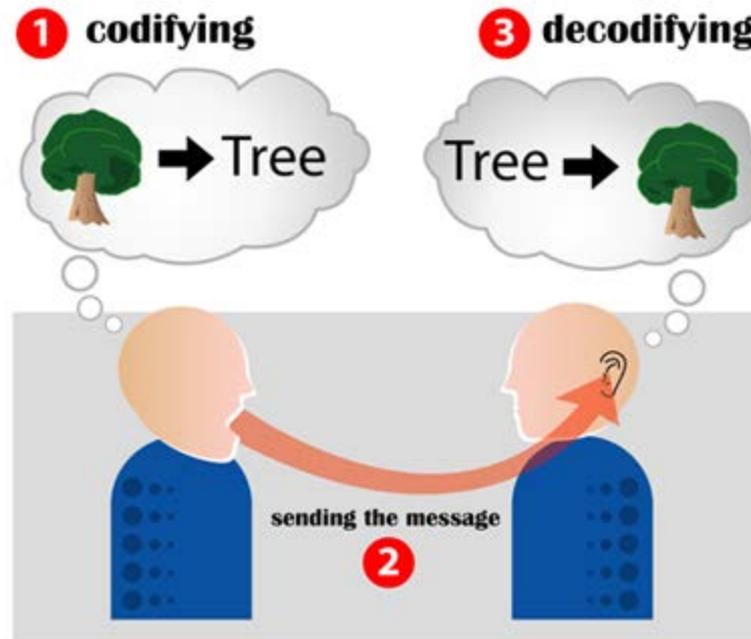
Listening Skills

- An assessor needs to be
 - Active and in the moment
 - Focused, perceptive
 - Respectful
- An assessor needs to
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Request a description
 - Take notes

Communication Styles

- Down to business
 - All work and no play
 - Efficiency above all
- Chummy
- Collegial

Communication is Simple ...



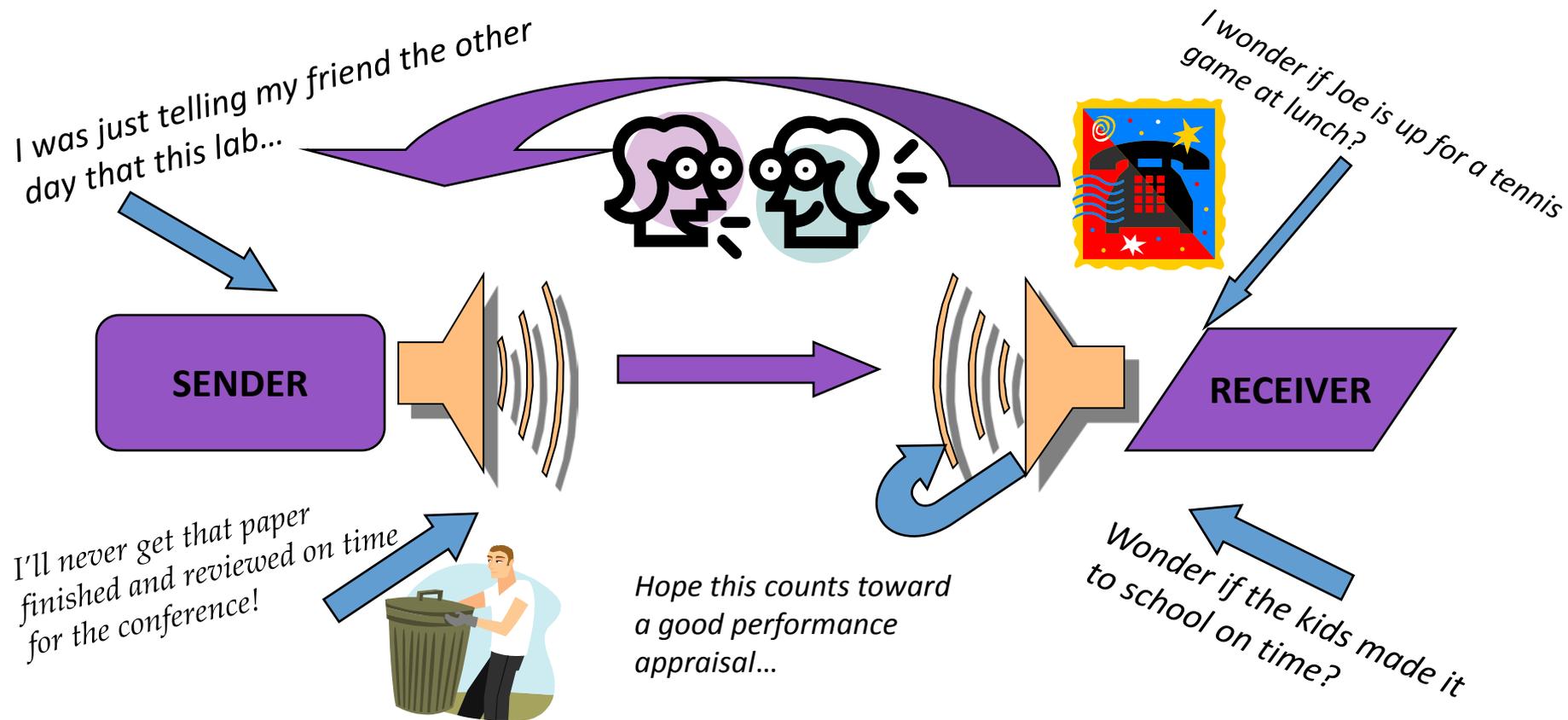
Communication is Simple ...

- Message is ENCODED by the sender
- Transmitted to the receiver
- DECODED by the receiver
- Feedback is ENCODED by the receiver
- Transmitted back to the sender
- DECODED by the sender

Communication is Complex ...

- Environment of competing messages
- Differing levels of experience/knowledge
- Overt distractions, such as
 - Conversations
 - Equipment noise
- Covert distractions
 - Underlying health issues
 - Family issues
 - “Discussions” with other staff/boss/family
 - Spinach stuck in the assessor’s teeth

Communication is Complex!



80% of Communication Is Non-Verbal

- Body Language
 - Posture
 - Eye contact
 - Arm position
- Facial Expression
 - Eyes
 - Mouth
- Overall attentiveness
- Communication is give and take ... what non-verbals are *YOU* sending?

Don't forget

- Preparation is the key
- Take notes
- Breathe
- Use your imagination
- Smile
- Maintain your sense of humor
- Thank your hosts, thank your team