

200336 Business Academic Skills

Assessment Task – Essay (Graded; worth 50% of total marks)

Purpose

The purpose of this graded writing task is to provide you with an opportunity to articulate your ideas using your critical thinking and academic writing skills. It is important, therefore, to develop your work beyond reporting or mere description of what others have said.

Due

In your Week 14 workshop **AND** the BAS vUWS/Turnitin assignment box by 11am on the day of your workshop in Week 14 (that is, the week beginning 31 May 2010).

Length

About 1200 words.

Presentation

For this assessment task you will need to:

- securely assemble together all relevant pages of the template, including the marking guide sheets,
- no use of headings or sub-headings
- entries put into headers and footers where requested and at the top of the marking guide,
- use either Times New Roman or Arial font with a font size of 12, and
- have paragraph text left justified and double spaced with an extra space between paragraphs.

Task Description

You are to present an essay that responds to the following question, shown in the box below. You may use the feedback provided for 'Learning Task: Essay Development' to assist you write this essay, if you submitted this assessment. You must use the background and additional information provided below as well as what is shown for the essay question.

Background

A number of researchers have considered the issues and problems related to effective cross-cultural communication (for example, see Sriussadaporn, 2006; Sebenius, 2002). As one example, Sebenius (2002) has discussed the problems of using (or misusing) cultural stereotypes to assist in effective cross-cultural communication. However communication, either cross-cultural or otherwise, has two quite different components, namely verbal communication and non-verbal communication (Ferraro, 2010). For example, within the context of cross-cultural communication, an important issue to manage with respect to verbal communication is the complete and accurate translation or interpretation of either spoken or written words from one language to another (Nantel & Glaser, 2008). On the other hand, again within the context of cross-cultural communication, an important issue to manage with respect to non-verbal communication is the fact that the same gesture often has different meanings in different cultures (Reisinger, 2009). Where these issues or problems are not managed well, then effective cross-cultural communication may not occur. This may lead to substantial problems in terms of either strengthening existing business relationships or successfully developing new business relationships with overseas firms or customers (Foong & Richardson, 2008).

Essay question

Discuss the relative importance of verbal communication versus non-verbal communication in their contribution to effective cross-cultural communication. Your discussion should ultimately lead to developing an opinion on this issue. That is, to ensure that effective cross-cultural communication occurs, is it more important to address issues and/or problems with respect to verbal communication? Alternatively, is it more important to address issues and/or problems with respect to non-verbal communication?

Additional information

- (a) Your essay should be well researched. In addition to using the lead reference shown below, you must find and use at least five (5) additional scholarly information sources to support your arguments. These additional information sources may be accessed from either the UWS Library catalogue or the UWS Library electronic databases. **You must not use non-scholarly information sources for the essay.**
- (b) Your lead reference for the essay is:

Reisinger, Y 2009, 'Cultural Influences on Intercultural Communication', in *International Tourism: Cultures and Behaviour*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Jordan Hill, Oxford, United Kingdom, Chapter 7, pp. 165-198.
- (c) Your essay must be logically structured. It should follow the conventional essay format. Your discussion must not only relate to and develop your position on the topic, but it should also be supported with evidence, e.g. references to authorities in the field, explanations and examples.
- (d) Your essay must be appropriately expressed; you should use a formal academic style, and ensure grammatical accuracy.
- (e) Your essay must have accurate citations within the body of the essay and a complete and accurate reference list at the end of the essay. Both citations and references must follow the College of Business Harvard system of referencing as set out in Part F, Appendix 1 of your textbook.
- (f) In writing your essay you should also make use of the essay marking criteria shown at the back of the 'Assessment Task' template as well as any relevant BAS workshop materials.

References

- Ferraro, GP 2010, *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*, 6th edn, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
- Foong, YP & Richardson, S 2008, 'The perceptions of Malaysians in a Japanese company', *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 221-243.
- Nantel, J & Glaser, E 2008, 'The impact of language and culture on perceived website usability', *Journal of Engineering Technology Management*, vol. 25, no. 1-2, pp. 112-122.
- Reisinger, Y 2009, 'Cultural Influences on Intercultural Communication', in *International Tourism: Cultures and Behaviour*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Jordan Hill, Oxford, United Kingdom, Chapter 7, pp. 165-198.
- Sebenius, JK 2002, 'The Hidden Challenges of Cross-border Negotiations', *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 80, no. 3, pp. 76-85.
- Sriussadaporn, R 2006, 'Managing international business communication problems at work: a pilot study in foreign companies in Thailand', *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 330-344.

START TO WRITE YOUR ESSAY ON THE NEXT PAGE

DISCUSSION ESSAY

Write an **essay** in response to the essay question outlined above.

Start your ESSAY here

Communication is the basic medium through which people are able to interact with and understand one another. Contemporary literature has come a long way in better defining the term communication and now it refers to the process by which meaning of various symbols, cues and signs is derived and interpreted (Reisinger, 2009). In an environment dealing with various cultures it has to be acknowledged that each symbol or sign will derive its meaning from a cultural context. For example, a person's informal disposition will be judged differently by the audience depending on the culture where such a disposition is displayed. Thus, almost all verbal and nonverbal cues lose their meaning unless they are juxtaposed with the relevant culture. The question this paper is attempting to answer is whether it is more beneficial to focus on the issues and problems pertaining to verbal cross cultural communication or nonverbal cross cultural communication. It is determined that nonverbal communication in a cross cultural context needs more attention and understanding as compared to verbal communication.

Verbal communication is the type of communication involving all written and oral messages to send a message from one to another. In the verbal form, a cue as simple as the word 'please' makes a world of difference as to how the message is received and responded to (Harris, 2002). Verbal messaging allows basic communication between parties and as such should not allow the meaning of the stated message to be misconstrued. However in real life verbal cues – even the written word – leave room for misinterpretation and misrepresentation of thought: West and Turner (2008) explain that verbal symbols in a language can be misused in a number of ways including deriding, misleading, confusing through duality of meaning, targeting established stereotypes and being inaccurate or incomplete in expression. Other problems include being racist, sexist or homophobic in nature (West & Turner). All of these are known issues arising from verbal form of communication, although these do not necessitate or make prerequisite a cross cultural

environment; in fact, these problems can be anticipated in any single language and single culture environment. In the same way, these are expected in a cross-cultural context and therefore, leave room for clearing out any misunderstanding due to unintentional misuse.

Nonverbal communication is described as the transmission of signs by all 'nonlexical, artifactual and environmental' modes contained in a culture, whether individually transmitted or by means of a group (Poyatos, 2002). Poyatos further states that nonverbal communication does not have to generate behaviour or include any interpersonal contact. By this definition, even when a person stands alone in a corner, with a morose expression on his or her face and slumped shoulders, he or she is communicating nonverbally. Many nonverbal cues are assumed to have a universal meaning – such as shaking one's head from side to side as if verbally saying 'no' and nodding one's head as if verbally expressing favour – however this notion of nonverbal communication being universally agreed upon is untrue. Nodding and shaking one's head have almost opposite meanings in different cultures. Similarly, whereas smiling and shaking hands when meeting someone for the first time is expected in some cultures such as in the U.S., it is considered unnecessarily friendly and almost inappropriate in others such as Malaysia (Reisinger, 2009). Nonverbal cues in Western cultures cannot be generalised either: in Europe certain body language is associated with certain level of education and class whereas in the U.S. no such belief exists (Jandt, 2009). Thus, nonverbal cues derive their meaning and effectiveness of expression based on the cultural context.

There are some schools of thought which say that nonverbal behaviour only includes intentionally encoded symbols and messages (for example, see Jandt, 2009), while others include all intentional as well as unintentional nonverbal cues in this form of communication (for example, see Harris 2002; Hamilton 2007). Taking the example of the morose, lonely person previously mentioned - the boy is, perhaps unwittingly, sending out the signal to passers-by that he is dejected about something and perhaps not in the best of moods. If one of the viewers steps up to him asks if

he is alright and the lonely person answers that he is perfectly alright, it is more likely that the viewer will believe there is in fact something wrong but the lonely person does not wish to divulge more information by standing in a remote corner (based on the nonverbal cue) rather than believe that everything is alright (based on the verbal cue). This example shows two things: a) nonverbal communication can be unintentional and b) nonverbal communication is given more weight than verbal communication.

Nonverbal communication plays a driving role in everyday life in developing impressions and deductions about other people. For instance, a somewhat negative first impression is formed when a person being introduced to someone appears distracted and keeps looking around rather than maintain eye contact; this will make the person he is being introduced to believe him to be an arrogant or careless type of person. The beliefs about and understanding of nonverbal cues by a person determine how he or she judges other people and forms an opinion of them (Fielding 2006, p118). Once an impression is formed and judgement is passed, it is very difficult to change it. It proves to be even more difficult in a cross cultural environment where the chances of misunderstandings occurring are high already. A written or spoken expression that is misconstrued has more chances of getting discussed and corrected later on rather than a nonverbal cue, which is almost never discussed.

The tool used for making cross-cultural, multi-lingual verbal communication possible is appropriate translation (Kendrick, 2004). The listener to any translation always leaves room for some wastage of information during the translation process and thus makes allowances for it beforehand. He knows that the translated version that he is reading or listening to is subject to the bias of the translator, his own understanding of the language and the limitedness of the language per se. Nonverbal communication is far more ubiquitous and subtle than verbal communication and does not allow easy translation. This makes it even more important in cross-cultural environments

that people address this mostly neglected form of communication as it can have a disastrous effect on the eventual understanding of a message.

In light of the arguments researched and discussed in this paper, it is purported that correct interpretation and expression of non-verbal communication is of more pressing importance in a cross-cultural context than verbal communication. Problems arising out of verbal communication are easier to remedy as it is more objective or evident in nature. Contrarily, the issues that arise as a result of ineffective nonverbal communication are very hard to undo as they are more ambiguous in nature. For instance, a written word in a memo to a foreign delegate – which will indeed cause confusion and problems – can be corrected with apology but an expression or behaviour that is construed as insulting by the delegate will not likely lead to correction or apology as such issues are very rarely discussed; they are mostly felt and responded to quietly. Therefore, for effective cross-cultural communication, people must pay apt attention to nonverbal communication.

References

- Fielding, Michael 2006. *Effective Communication in Organisations*. Juta & Co, Cape Town
- Hamilton, Cheryl 2007. *Communicating for Results: A Guide for Business and the Professions*, 8th ed. Cengage Learning, CA
- Harris, Thomas E. 2002. *Applied organizational communication: principles and pragmatics for future practice*, 2nd ed. Routledge, New Jersey
- Jandt, Fred E. 2010. *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*. SAGE Publishing, Thousand Oaks, California
- Kendrick, Tom 2004. *The project management tool kit: 100 tips and techniques for getting the job done right*. Amacom Books, New York, NY
- Poyatos, Fernando 2002. *Nonverbal Communication Across Disciplines: Culture, sensory interaction, speech, conversation*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, The Netherlands

Reisinger, Y 2009, 'Cultural Influences on Intercultural Communication', in *International Tourism: Cultures and Behaviour*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Jordan Hill, Oxford, United Kingdom, Chapter 7, pp. 165-198.

West, Richard & Turner, Lynn H. 2008. *Understanding Interpersonal Communication: Making Choices in Changing Times*, 2nd, ed. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston, MA

Business Academic Skills 200336 Essay Marking Guide

Student Number:										Family Name:	First Name:
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Note: Students should be aware that the UWS policy 'Misconduct – Student Academic Misconduct' policy is applicable to this assessment task. This policy can be accessed using the following link: <http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00051>

TOTAL MARK - MARKING GUIDE	/200	MARK FOR ASSESSMENT	/50
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CRITERIA	STANDARDS					COMMENTS
Quality of underlying research	You do not show any evidence of relevant research in terms of the essay question. All of your information sources used are not scholarly OR you have not used the lead reference. 0	You show some evidence of relevant research in terms of the essay question. All information sources are scholarly. You have used the lead reference. 5	You show adequate evidence of relevant research in terms of the essay question. All information sources are scholarly. You have used the lead reference. 10	You show good evidence of relevant research using reliable information sources in terms of the essay question. All information sources are scholarly. You have used the lead reference. 15	You have used an excellent selection of relevant and reliable information sources in terms of the essay question. All information sources are scholarly. You have used the lead reference. 20	
Response to essay question	Your essay is a poor interpretation of the essay question in which most issues discussed have little or no connection to the essay question. 0	Your essay presents some relevance to the essay question but many of the issues discussed and arguments put forward have little or no connection to the essay question. 8	Your essay presents adequate relevance to the essay question in which most issues discussed and arguments put forward have a connection to the essay question. 16	Your essay presents high degree of relevance to the essay question in which most issues discussed and arguments put forward have a connection to the essay question. 24	Your essay presents very high degree of relevance to the essay question in which all issues discussed and arguments put forward have a connection to the essay question. 32	
Use of information sources and evaluation	Your analysis and use of the information sources is very poor either in terms of the issues discussed or the arguments presented. Your essay merely reports what others have said and shows no real evaluation or analysis. 0	Your analysis and use of the information sources is poor in terms of issues discussed or arguments presented. However, your essay has too much emphasis on reporting what others have said and shows little evaluation or analysis. 8	Your analysis and use of the information sources is adequate in terms of issues discussed and arguments presented. However, your essay mainly reports on what others have said although there is some evaluation and analysis. 16	Your analysis and use of the information sources is good in terms of issues and arguments presented. Your essay has little mere reporting of what others have said and there is good evaluation and analysis. 24	Your analysis and use of the information sources is excellent in terms of the issues and arguments presented. Your essay has no mere reporting of what others have said and there is excellent evaluation and analysis. 32	

CRITERIA	STANDARDS					COMMENTS
Effectiveness of critical thinking	Your essay contains predominantly unsubstantiated claims or assertions with no attempt to develop supporting arguments for these claims. 0	Your essay contains many unsubstantiated claims or assertions although there is some attempt to develop supporting arguments for these claims. 6	Your essay contains some unsubstantiated claims or assertions although there is usually an attempt to develop supporting arguments for these claims. 12	Your essay contains very few unsubstantiated claims or assertions and in most cases there is an attempt to develop supporting arguments for these claims. 18	Your essay contains no unsubstantiated claims or assertions and in all cases there is an attempt to develop supporting arguments for these claims. 24	
Overall essay structure	Your essay does not have a definite introduction or conclusion and your paragraph structure is very poor. For example, your paragraphs are often only one or two sentences long and often lack an identifiable topic sentence. 0	You have made an attempt at including an introduction and conclusion but both are poor in terms of stating or re-stating the thesis statement and previewing or summarising your discussion. Many of your paragraphs are not well structured; for example lacking an identifiable topic sentence. 5	You have an identifiable introduction and conclusion which familiarise the reader with your topic as well as provide an overall summary of your discussion. However the thesis statement and re-statement of the thesis statement are not clear. Most of your paragraphs are well structured with identifiable topic sentences. 10	You have both a good introduction and conclusion in which there is a clear thesis statement and re-statement of the thesis statement. Your introduction familiarises the reader with your topic. Your paragraphs are well structured with clearly identifiable topic sentences. 15	Your overall essay structure is very good. Your introduction has a clear thesis statement and your conclusion has a clear re-statement of that thesis statement. You preview the essay effectively in the introduction and provide an effective summary of the discussion in the conclusion. Your paragraphs are well structured with clearly identifiable topic, supporting and concluding sentences. 20	
Essay cohesion	You do not have any logical sequence in your discussion either in terms of alignment with what was outlined in the essay question or what was outlined in your introduction. Your essay lacks flow and often it is difficult to understand the linkages between your ideas and views. 0	You have some logical sequence to your discussion but often it is difficult to understand the progression of your discussion from one paragraph to another. Your discussion often lacks flow and there is some difficulty in understanding the linkages between your ideas and views. 4	You have an adequate logical sequence to your discussion and usually it is not difficult to understand the progression of your discussion from one paragraph to another. However, overall your discussion does not flow well. 8	You have a good logical sequence to your discussion and it is rarely difficult to understand the progression of your discussion. Overall your discussion flows well. 12	You have an excellent logical sequence to your discussion and it is never difficult to understand the progression of your discussion. Overall your discussion flows extremely well. 16	
Written expression	You use inappropriate academic writing style which is mostly informal and personal. 0	You use inappropriate academic writing style which is often informal and personal. 3	You use at times appropriate academic writing style which is formal and impersonal. 6	You use mainly appropriate academic writing style which is mostly formal and impersonal. 9	You use appropriate academic writing style which is always formal and impersonal as well as being cautiously phrased. 12	
Paraphrasing	Your essay contains far too many quotes from information sources with very little attempt to paraphrase your information sources. 0	Your essay often contains quotations and you demonstrate a poor ability to paraphrase your information sources. 4	Your essay contains some quotations and you demonstrate a reasonable ability to paraphrase your information sources. 8	Your essay contains few quotations and you demonstrate a good ability to paraphrase your information sources. 12	Your essay contains very few quotations and you demonstrate an excellent ability to paraphrase your information sources. 16	

CRITERIA	STANDARDS					COMMENTS
Grammar, spelling and punctuation	You have a very high number of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Your essay is difficult to read and you do not demonstrate any evidence of proofreading. <p style="text-align: right;">0</p>	You have many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors but your essay is readable and your work demonstrates some evidence of proofreading. <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	You have some grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Your essay is easy to read and demonstrates good evidence of proofreading. <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	You have few grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Your essay is easy to read and demonstrates evidence of careful proofreading. <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>	You have no grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. Your essay is easy to read and demonstrates a high level of proofreading. <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	
Acknowledgement of information sources	You have very poor acknowledgement of your information sources. In many circumstances in-text citations do not exist and many references are inaccurate and incomplete. <p style="text-align: right;">0</p>	You have poor acknowledgement of your information sources. Some in-text citations do not exist and some references are inaccurate or incomplete. <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	You have reasonable acknowledgement of your information sources. All in-text citations exist and your references are accurate and complete. However, few of your citations or your references follow the College of Business Harvard system. <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	You have good acknowledgement of your information sources. All in-text citations exist and your references are accurate and complete. Most of your citations and references follow the College of Business Harvard system. <p style="text-align: right;">12</p>	You have excellent acknowledgement of your information sources. All in-text citations exist and your references are accurate and complete. All citations and references follow the College of Business Harvard system. <p style="text-align: right;">16</p>	
Presentation	Your assignment is very poorly presented. It does not comply with the presentation requirements set out in this template. <p style="text-align: right;">0</p>	Your assignment is poorly presented and in most cases it does not comply with the presentation requirements set out in this template. <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	Your assignment is adequately presented and only in some cases it does not comply with the presentation requirements set out in this template. <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	Your assignment is well presented and only in a few cases it does not comply with the presentation requirements set out in this template. <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	Your assignment is very well presented and it complies fully with the presentation requirements set out in this template. <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUPPORT:

