

## Understanding Communication Styles

People communicate in diverse ways, influenced by personality, culture, and context. Adapting to these styles is crucial:

### Common Communication Styles:

1. **Assertive:** Confident, clear, and respectful.
  - *How to respond:* Match their clarity and confidence, and engage respectfully.
2. **Passive:** Hesitant, avoids confrontation, and may struggle to articulate opinions.
  - *How to respond:* Encourage them to share their views by creating a safe, supportive environment.
3. **Overly Enthusiastic:** Direct and forceful, may overlook others' perspectives.
  - *How to respond:* Stay calm, focus on facts, and avoid escalating the situation.

**Tip:** Practice active listening—focus on understanding, not just responding. Observe verbal and non-verbal cues like tone, gestures, and body language.

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## Effective Face-to-Face Communication

In-person communication offers the advantage of immediate feedback and richer non-verbal context. Here's how to make the most of it:

### Before the Meeting:

- Prepare an agenda to keep discussions focused.
- Anticipate questions or concerns your peers might raise.

### During the Interaction:

- **Be approachable:** Use open body language, maintain eye contact, and smile where appropriate.
- **Stay concise:** Avoid overwhelming others with too much detail at once.
- **Encourage engagement:** Invite quieter class mates to share their views.

### Handling Difficult Conversations:

- Focus on solutions rather than problems.
  - If emotions run high, acknowledge them and steer the conversation back to the issue at hand.
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## **Effective Online Communication**

Online interactions, whether via email, messaging apps, or video calls, are a staple of university life. Effective communication in this medium requires a balance of clarity, tone, and digital etiquette:

### **Tips for Online Communication:**

1. **Be professional:** Use appropriate greetings and avoid slang or overly casual language unless the context allows.
  2. **Clarify expectations:** In emails or messages, specify what actions are required, and set deadlines if needed.
  3. **Utilise Online tools effectively:** Make use of features like screen sharing in video calls or polls in group chats to enhance discussions.
  4. **Mind the tone:** Without non-verbal cues, ensure your words convey the intended emotion—use polite language and emojis sparingly to prevent misinterpretation.
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## **The 4 A's of Communication: Ask, Answer, Acknowledge, Add**

This framework helps structure your interactions to improve clarity and engagement:

### **1. Ask:**

- Pose open-ended questions to gather insights.
- Example: “What challenges have you faced with this module?”

### **2. Answer:**

- Respond clearly and directly to questions or concerns.
- If you don't have an answer immediately, promise to follow up—and ensure you do.

### **3. Acknowledge:**

- Show understanding of others' perspectives.
- Example: Paraphrase what somebody has said back to them.

### **4. Add:**

- Contribute value by sharing information, suggestions, or solutions.
- Example: “We could propose extending the deadline to the lecturer during the next meeting.”