

# Why oral communications are effective in helping people toward changing their world-view

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(The author carries the full responsibility for the views expressed.)

This discussion focuses particularly on person-to-person speech-exchanges, but it applies equally to the simulations presented in audio recordings, radio programs, videos, television and mobile applications.

## **Oral communication is effective because the receiver is comfortable in his or her natural learning mode—listening.**

All people learn by listening.

- A baby being carried in the womb begins early to learn to distinguish between “good” sounds that comfort and “bad” sounds that cause discomfort. The child associates tranquility with the mother’s slow steady heartbeat, but the mother’s increased heartbeat is accompanied by surges of her adrenalin that causes discomfort. He or she learns “good” and “bad.” Someone’s mistreating the mother will cause the child to associate loud sounds and sudden movement as “bad,” because of the surges of adrenalin.

The child in the womb learns to associate “good” with the mother’s voice, and even the father’s.

- A new-born child, after recovering from the frightening trauma of birth, soon extends his or her learning of “good” and “bad” sounds in the environment, along with visuals (though visual perception will normally develop at a slower pace)
- The developing child mimics those around him or her and adults take time to instruct the child orally in those aspects in which they perceive he or she is having difficulty. (The child is not usually conscious of any difficulty.)
- The adolescent widens his or her environment to other groups within the culture and sometimes outside the home culture. He or she learns more about “correct” or “proper” speech and about dialects and idiolects.
- The adult continues to learn, particularly the skills of persuasion and diplomacy.

## **Oral communication is effective because the listener/learner hears from a fellow human of his or her culture group.**

All people need other people. Even hermits need someone for interaction, so they talk to themselves. Some even go so far as to answer themselves, sometimes with counterproposals. We humans are habitual communicators and habitual learners.

## **Oral communication is effective because the information can come in small increments, which the learner is able to internalize with some ease.**

It is important that new information be presented in small increments. Too often, we in the west attempt to overload the learning circuits of the people we want to teach. This practice arises from our being literate. We can cram a lot of information into a written document, because we assume that a reader can reread the text if he or she does not understand. (I am doing that now, as I write this document.) We assume that a speaker can communicate new information at the same rate as a written document might do. Effective speakers recognize the fallacy of that assumption. They give the information in small

increments, maintaining a steady flow and avoiding ambiguities. Effective communication facilitates the learners' internalizing the message. Changes of world-view happen only internally in the learners.

## **Oral communication is effective because the speaker is able to utilize many means of supporting his or her verbal communication.**

Over the centuries, the developers of print media have done well in inventing devices that support the written message.

- Initial capitals to mark the beginning of each sentence.
- Full stop (a period) to indicate the end of each sentence.
- Commas to disambiguate complicated sentences.
- Quotation marks to indicate words, phrase or clauses in someone's oral speech.
- Parentheses to indicate a remark or comment.
- Titles and section headings that indicate generically the content that follows.
- Footnotes for explaining ambiguities and related information.

The oral communicator presents the message in the most desirable mode possible in each circumstance. The effectiveness of the message will be in direct proportion to the desirability of the message and its mode. The oral communicator has a vast array of equipment available to him or her to support the message. The print-media devices are paltry in comparison:

- Natural inflection of the voice. For example:  
The natural conversational styles help the listener feel comfortable, since it resembles past happy experiences.  
Even in a teaching style, the increase in volume of the voice communicates urgency or importance.  
Singing is very important in some cultures. The patterns of song and conversation communicate mood.
- Using appropriate pauses that help the listener to focus.
- Using purposeful pauses for giving the listeners time to internalize a new idea.
- Naturally moving the head, hands, arms and the whole body.  
Drama and pantomime are strong supports for the spoken message in many cultures.
- Communicating emotions through facial expressions.
- Using tools or instruments in a demonstration.  
Musical instruments, even rhythm devices, support a message.

We commit a grave error if we assume that it is fitting to apply the print-media devices to oral communications. Everyone recognizes that someone reading out loud a written text is less effective than the author speaking directly to a person. The probable reason why a person reading a text has poor effectiveness is due to the "distancing" of the listener from the original author. The element of a human speaking to a fellow human is lost. God's speaking through the author to a listener is even more distant (if 'more distant' is measurable).