



Language Support & Coaching



CHEMICAL STORAGE

FOOD PREPARATION ONLY

Table of Contents

- 4. Introduction
- 5. Create an Inclusive Work Environment
- 6. The 4M Model of Language
- 7. The First M: Man
 - 8. 7 Tips for Connective Communication
 - 15. Service Recovery Model
- 17. The Second M: Motivation
- 20. The Third M: Method
- 22. The Fourth M: Means
 - 23. Deliberate Use. Is This Message Clear?
 - 24. Use Concrete Images
 - 24. Ready-Made Pictograms
 - 25. Writing Tips
 - 26. Writing Form
- 28. Summary
 - 29. M - Motivation and Man
 - 30. M - Method and Means
- 32. Helpful Websites
- 33. Acknowledgements

Introduction

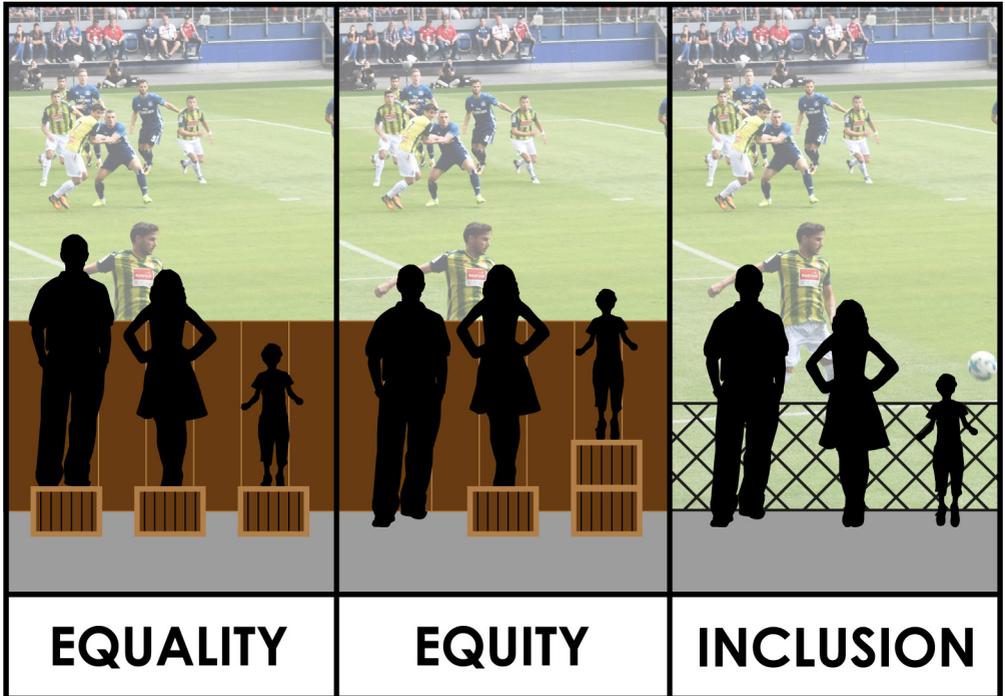
Language is essential to how we communicate, but everyone has different language skills. We often find that when working with people who have been out of work for a while, many will not be native speakers, or will have a low literacy level or may have a language difficulty or disability such as dyslexia. This can mean, that sometimes, communication between team members can be difficult and instructions may be misunderstood.

Language coaching support people to develop their language skills while carrying out work tasks. Here we share a model for language coaching developed by Parlangi, a cooperative enterprise with a mission to build bridges between people from people from different generations, cultures, nationalities and background in order to improve their quality of learning and quality of life.



Create an Inclusive Work Environment

It is important to create an inclusive work environment, This is when everybody feels welcome, everybody can perform tasks without extra help, and everybody understands our communications.



What can you do to make your environment more inclusive?

Answer here...

The 4M Model of Language

The 4M model of language suggests 4 M's we can look at. By looking at each one, we can improve how we communicate with others.

1. MAN

- How do I connect?
- How do I communicate?

2. MOTIVATION

- How can I motivate others?

3. METHOD

- How do I communicate with foreign language speaking colleagues?

4. MEANS

- Which means can I use to get my question across?



The First M: Man

Everyone has different skills and needs when it comes to learning a new language or communicating. Consider how you can adapt your communication to build a relationship and meet the needs of each person.

How do I communicate?

Answer here...

How do I create connection?

Answer here...

7 Tips for Connective Communication

Here are 7 tips to consider when thinking about how you communicate.

1. Listen

We are often more inclined to talk more than we listen or observe. Yet listening is the key to communicating well. Therefore: postpone your 'talking reflex' and try to listen truly to people.

- Take time to think about the words someone uses.
- Consider other ways someone may want to communicate – offer a pen and paper, or see how they gesticulate.
- Look at what their body language is saying – do they look nervous, worried or excited?
- By saying 'Oh' when someone approaches you with a problem. By saying 'Oh' in response to problems or criticism displays empathy. It's a reaction that invites people to explain themselves. It shows you are willing to listen.
- First take time to listen, to analyse what is being said, to ask questions so that you get a good impression of the issue. Only then you can take the next step and look for a solution.

2. Make use of body language

- Consider what you are saying through your body language.





What is being said in these six different pictures?

Answer here...



Be aware of positions of power. If someone is sitting down and we stand so that we are looking down on them, we are saying that we are more powerful than them. A good coach or leader stands between the people, not above them. Consider what you are feeling in that moment.

How could you find a way so that your faces are at the same level?

Answer here...

How can you create a sense of ease and calm? How would that show in your body language?

Answer here...

3. Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback is often perceived as criticism. Try not to look at it that way, try to see it as a present, which can help you to grow and learn. When you receive it:

- Say 'thank you'.
- Perhaps ask a few questions to find out more .
- Resist the temptation to go into defence or counter attack.
- Use it if it is useful feedback. If it's not useful, then let it go.

Here are some tips when giving feedback to others:

- Consider what your goal is when sharing feedback.
- Present only the facts, rather than your judgement. For example, "I noticed that you placed the apples on the meat shelf," instead of, "how could you place the apples on the meat shelf? I've told you about that already."
- Share what you would like to be different. Such as, "from now on could you place the apples over here with the fruit."
- Ask the person what support they need to do this. For example, "what could we do to help you remember where the apples go?"



How do you respond when you receive feedback? How could you use feedback to grow and learn?

Answer here...

What could you do differently next time you need to give feedback?

Answer here...

4. Give sincere compliments

Compliments are motivating. Use them regularly. However, don't exaggerate!

5. Say thank you!

Everyone wants to be respected, treated as an equal and to feel competent. Saying 'thank you' can reinforce that. Receiving a 'thank you' increases people's self-esteem and a sense of being useful.

6. Be clear - Clarify your expectations.

Sometimes when we communicate with others, we end up with different understandings of what is expected.

To do this, be specific in what you want done – for example instead of saying, "Karim could you tidy up the workspace?" say, "Karim, can you throw all the garbage in the trash before you finish? Thank you!"

Then check the other person has understood by asking them to repeat back what you've said. Often, people will understand your request in a slightly different way to how you say it. It's up to you to cross check and support their understanding.

7. Fix errors or conflict

Every so often when we are communicating with someone, we or they may become annoyed, frustrated or we may be in conflict with each other. The Service Recovery Model shown opposite, gives you five steps to follow to move from conflict to a solution.



Service Recovery Model

FACTS

“What happened?”

EMOTIONS

“How do you feel?”

INFLUENCE AND DAMAGE

“What are the consequences?”

RECOVERY

“How do we make it right?”

FUTURE

“How do we treat each other from now on?”

Tips when using the service recovery model:

- Try to stay objective and don't choose a side - focus on the facts.
- Take time to listen to everyone involved.
- It's okay to ask about how people feel and to hear what they have to say.
- Focus on how to find a solution that will work for everyone.
- Be clear on what you need to achieve.
- Remember: conflict is normal, so is recovery!

Consider a situation where this model would be useful. What type of things would you say?

Answer here...

The Second M: Motivation

To support people with language, finding out what motivates them is key. Autonomy supportive coaching is one model you can use to help discover what motivates people. If you want to motivate others or be motivated yourself, follow these three aspects:

1. Autonomy

Make sure people can decide for themselves how to do things. This doesn't mean that they get to decide everything. Instead, it means people should have a choice and a say in how things happen.

For example: If a staff member doesn't want to empty the rubbish bins as you've asked:

- Ask them what their reason is for not wanting to do it? How would they like to do the task?
- Consider if there is a way they could do the task with other people from the team.
- Give them options on when to perform the task.
- Give the person autonomy in when, how, with whom the task can be done.

2. Belonging

People want to belong and feel like part of something. When they are involved and have a good relation with their colleagues they are more motivated. When there is a good connection between you and your staff or volunteers there is more willingness to complete the required task. When you are kind to people they are most likely to



be kind to you. Invest in compliments, a regular thank you, don't take people's investment for granted.

3. Competence

Make learning visible (as John Hattie has vividly explained in his book 'Visible learning for Teachers'). Recognise and talk about the progress someone is making - Point out what is going well!

An Example

Mony and Amir only talk to each other in Arabic during work hours. How can we motivate them to talk in English when they are at work?

- Talk to them. Listen to why they don't speak English. Don't judge. Don't preach. Look for a common ground.
- Autonomy: Give them the chance to decide when and where they speak English and/or Arabic. Let them come up with ideas to learn English (and teach some Arabic to their colleagues).
- Belonging: Listen to them and take the time to get to know them and build a connection. Find out what they are interested in and what do they like or don't like.
- Competence: Give compliments when they talk English, even if they make mistakes. Make visible what they have learned. Make learning from each other fun: e.g. Hang up a 'translation board' with often used words in the work place (and/or funny words) in different languages.



Think of an example where you could try out the ABC of motivation. What would you say and what would you do?

Answer here...



The Third M: Method

There are different things we can do and try when supporting people to learn a new language or to improve their language skills. Parlangi, a Dutch enterprise, calls these the 5 golden rules. These rules are based on the theory of second language acquisition by Stephen Krashen, a linguist and educational researcher. Check the 5 rules in the following video: <https://parlangi.net/mission/>

RULE ONE: ENJOY

People learn better when they feel relaxed and comfortable. Be kind. Be polite. Give compliments. And enjoy listening and talking to each other. Invest in:

- A safe environment.
- A nice atmosphere.
- Sufficient time!

This may sound easy but sometimes it can be hard as we may get frustrated when people don't understand us. If you begin to feel frustrated, consider how you can be calm and accept that it will take time.

RULE TWO: FIND DIFFERENT WAYS TO EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MEAN

- It can be hard to learn new words and how sentences are formed in different languages. To make it easier consider how you can use pictures or gestures to help explain the words. This helps provide context for the words and makes them more memorable.
- Check if people understood what you said. When you ask to deliver food parcels at 9.30 pm, check whether colleague knows what they're doing and when they're doing it.





Language learning happens in context, not by studying long lists of vocabulary. In work contexts people often speak some form of dialect or speak with a regional accent. Don't avoid it. Embrace dialects and be aware that the same rules apply here: work with understandable input, try to be calm and relaxed.

RULE 3: MAKING MISTAKES IS ALLOWED AND IS A MUST

Making mistakes is normal in a language learning process. Try. Fail. Try again... Until you get it right.

- Use correct language yourself.
- Ask people if they want you to correct them
- Trying = learning.
- Avoid pinpointing mistakes but rephrase them correctly. For instance: 'He did fixed the door.' 'Oh, did he fix the door?'

RULE 4: BE PATIENT

Learning a language takes time. Take it step by step. Listening comes before speaking. Reading before writing. Learning a language requires immersion and practice, far more than learning a set of rules. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Knowledge can be a curse if you work with people who are not on the same level as you are. Accept that language learning is a bumpy and long process.

"If you know something, it's hard to imagine how it was not knowing."

RULE 5: LEARNING BY DOING

Practice is key. Read, listen, speak and write as much as you can.

The Fourth M: Means

There are lots of different tools and ideas on how to support non native speakers or people with limited language skills, here are a few examples.

PICTOGRAMS

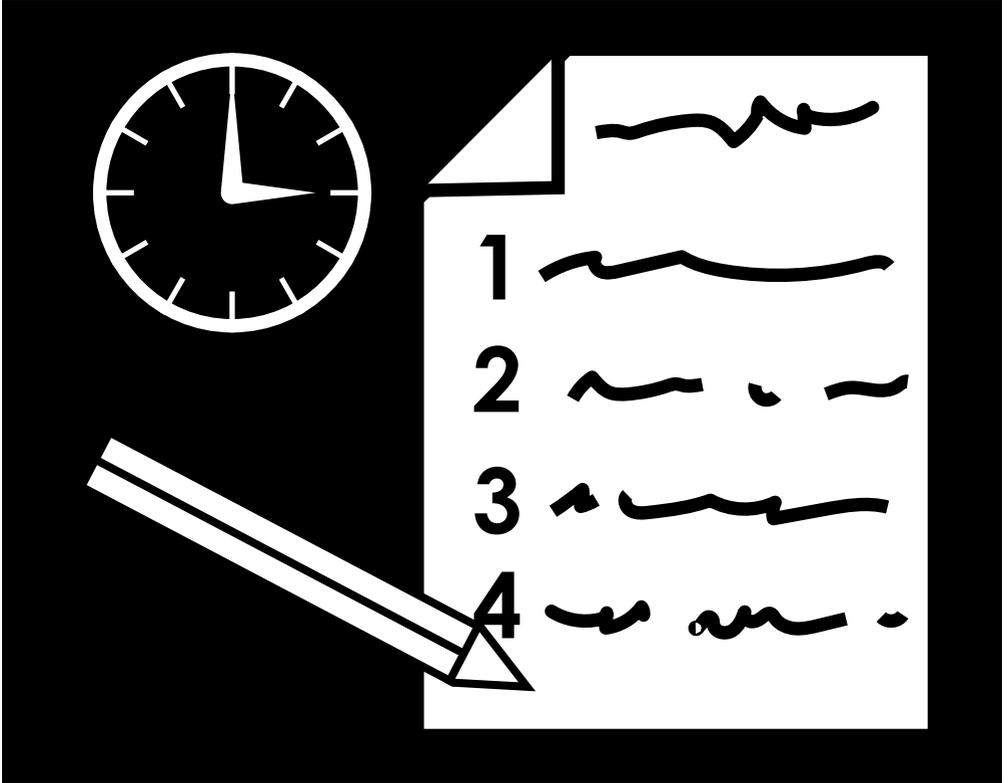
Pictograms are popular visual tools. Pictograms should be used to support text, they should not be used alone. There are some things to consider when working with pictograms.

- Deliberate use. Is the message clear?
- Use concrete images. Photos work better than drawings.
- Don't invent the wheel. Multiple organisations offer ready-made pictograms.



Deliberate Use. Is This Message Clear?

Sometimes drawings can be unclear in what they mean. So when using drawings think about which picture best represents what you are trying to say.



What does the above pictogram mean?

Answer here...

Use Concrete Images

1. Want to introduce products?
2. Want to explain a route? Show a map.
3. Is it about money?
4. Is there a contact for questions?



Ready-made Pictograms

Many organisations offer ready-made pictograms, so you don't have to reinvent the wheel. The following websites offer millions of pictograms:

- www.flaticon.com
- www.findicons.com

Writing Tips

When writing messages for people, consider these handy tips.

STEP ONE: THE READER

- Who is going to be reading this ?
- What do I want the reader to know or do?
- What questions might my reader have?
- What are my answers to those questions?

STEP TWO: STRUCTURE

- Work with a clear subject.
- Use short and clear titles and subtitles.
- Use bullet points.
- Use blank lines between sentences or paragraphs.
- Be concise.
- Use short sentences.

STEP THREE: CONTENT

- Be as personal as possible. "Dear staff member," or even better, "Dear Rob," or, "Dear Omar."
- Only include necessary information. Don't include lots of information in one message. If there is a lot of information, consider splitting it into different messages.
- Repeat important information.
- Include contact details.

STEP FOUR: FORM

- See next page.

STEP FIVE: SYNTAX

- Use active sentences. Not, "the food will be delivered at the warehouse by our suppliers," but, "our suppliers deliver the food at the warehouse."
- Avoid compound sentences, instead turn them into single phrases. See the example on the next page.

Writing Form

- Use a clear typeface. Sans serif typefaces work much better for people with dyslexia and are much easier to read. Some good examples are Helvetica, Arial, Futura, and Century Gothic.
- Consider the size of font – anything under size 12 is harder to read.
- Don't use lots of colours, it can get confusing. And some people are colour blind.
- Use bold for important and/or new information.
- Use enough line spacing.

Below is an example of good writing form.

Dear, Omar,

Avoid compound sentences. Instead turn them into single phrases.

- **WRONG:** For the safety of the food and the health of the customers, it is important to keep the temperature of the fridge always on 3 or 4 degrees.
- **CORRECT:** The temperature of the fridge should always be 3 or 4 degrees. That's important for the safety of the food and the health of the customers.

You can find more on syntax here:

- <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>

Thanks,
Rob

What are the means you can use to get your message across?

Answer here...

What are the means you can use to support language learning amongst your employees?

Answer here...



Summary

Supporting language learning can be difficult. There are no quick fixes nor standardised approaches. Keep the 4 M's in mind and always remain flexible and positive.



In Practice

4 coaches from Foodsavers, an organisation giving new life to food surplus, discussed how they work towards a more inclusive work environment using the Parlangi model. Interested in what they came up with? Take a look on the next page.

M - Motivation and Man

Adapt the planning of the tasks to the employee, not vice versa.

- Work one-on-one if necessary.
- Provide a verbal explanation and a short, simply written text.

Ask employees about their experience. Does it work for them? Work out solutions together.

- Employees can have valuable suggestions. If employees can have a say in how the work is performed, it stimulates a sense of autonomy and with that their motivation.

Try to speak less and listen more.

- Work floor coaches stress the importance of keeping your talking reflex under control. Careful listening and asking to repeat is important.

Create space for different levels of language proficiency and capabilities for learning.

- Check what the needs or thresholds are and be open to adapt your work process accordingly – this is a continuous process as employees come and go. This requires flexibility on behalf of the mentor/coach.

Always look for new ways to motivate people to learn

Show your staff you want to invest time and energy in them.

- This way your staff will be more motivated to return the favour.

Be aware of the tension between productivity and support.

- The reality of a food (surplus) distribution platform can be quite stressful. With food needing to be collected and delivered on time, the focus can easily shift to efficiency and productivity and less of offering opportunities for learning. For instance, it can be tempting to address the person with better language skills to perform a more challenging task. However, when this happens a lot, other staff members are less stimulated to improve their language skills.

M - Method and Means

Language courses during or outside working hours: think about feasible and effective solutions.

- Sometimes people (have to) follow language classes outside working hours. After a long day of physical work this can create a lot of strain on people. If possible opt for language courses during working hours or even better, on the work floor. It will be much more effective and rewarding.

One-on-one language coaching

- One-on-one coaching is more effective than general courses. It allows for the employee to build upon the vocabulary and language skills needed in a specific moment and context.

Language support on the work floor

- Install learning moments working with products or processes relevant to the job.
- Work with names of vegetables, product groups (dairy, meat, vegetables, prepared meals, ...), infrastructure, communication with suppliers or customers.
- For instance, visit suppliers and show all the different product categories

Organise a clear and effective briefing moment

- Avoid noise in the background (radio playing, ...)
- Work with a clear visual overview
- Ask questions
- Show what you mean

15 -minute language learning session

- Create a short moment for explicit language learning: topics can be: new words learned that day/week, working sheets, pictograms used in the work place

The 'word of the week'.

- Emphasis on words that came across as challenging or just new to the employees. Repetition and explicit attention can help to expand their vocabulary.

Work with images and pictograms. However, in order to support language learning try to complement your images with words.

- Don't exaggerate the pictograms, it can be overwhelming or create more confusion.

Organise conversation tables

When working together with your staff member always look for learning opportunities.

IT-tools can support your employees.

- Some organisations have a laptop available on which employees can train their language skills

A well-organised work place makes it easier for your staff to work in. Scan your workplace from the perspective of a good workflow for a diverse group of employees. Avoid putting too much information on one place.



Helpful Websites

Easy-to-read rules and short checklist on easy-to-read texts developed by Inclusion Europe.

- <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read/>
- https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/EN_Information_for_all.pdf
- <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Easy-to-read-checklist-Inclusion-Europe.pdf>

Plain English campaigns for access for clear and concise information for all. You can contact them with specific questions and they offer free guides on multiple topics.

- <https://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>

If you are writing documents with work protocols, or work regulations for your staff check 'How to write in plain English'.

If you thought words like 'alleviate', 'allocate' or 'attend' are clear to all, have a look at 'A to Z of alternative words'.

- <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/alternative.pdf>

Other useful sites include:

- <https://translate.google.be/>
- <https://lens.google.com/>
- <https://www.smartcat.ai/>
- <https://www.deepl.com/>



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