Checklist: verbal, listening, non-verbal and written communication skills

Verbal communication skills include:

☐ allowing time for questions (by you and from your learners) but not getting too side-tracked by these

☐ asking if everyone can hear you (and see you if they are hard of hearing or will be lip reading)

☐ asking questions regularly to check that learners are listening and understanding

☐ avoiding ambiguity and misunderstandings by explaining things well

☐ backing up explanations with handouts and/or visuals images

☐ being aware of your body language so that you are not appearing negative when speaking, i.e. by folding your arms

☐ being aware of your posture and gestures

☐ emphasising key words, repeating things, and summarising key points regularly

☐ ensuring you have the required subject knowledge, introducing and conveying this confidently, convincingly, passionately and enthusiastically

☐ explaining new or unusual words, jargon and acronyms

☐ giving constructive and positive feedback when applicable

☐ introducing points in a logical and progressive order

☐ not complicating your speech by including too much too soon

☐ not speaking too quickly

☐ not losing the point of what you are trying to convey

☐ recognising group dynamics, encouraging shy learners to get involved and managing over-confident ones

☐ remaining focused

☐ speaking a little more slowly and loudly than normal

☐ trying not to say *erm, yeah, okay, you know,* or saying *does that make sense?* (the latter may only gain a *yes* response as learners feel that is what you want to hear, ask open questions instead)

☐ trying not to say *obviously*, as things are only obvious to you

☐ using active listening skills

☐ using learners' names

☐ watching and listening to your learners for their reactions to what you are saying

Listening skills include:

☐ avoiding interrupting

☐ avoiding reaching conclusions or hasty judgments

- ☐ leaving your emotions, arguments and thoughts behind
- ☐ limiting distractions if possible
- ☐ listening for a key word which will help you clarify what is being said
- ☐ stopping talking
- ☐ using body language such as nodding and smiling to convey you are listening
- ☐ using eye contact, but not in a threatening way
- ☐ watching your learners' body language for signs they don't understand something

Non-verbal communication skills include:

- ☐ acting genuinely
- ☐ acting professionally
- ☐ being aware of gestures and facial expressions
- ☐ conveying a genuine interest in others by smiling and nodding
- ☐ demonstrating good posture and movement
- ☐ having a warm confident manner
- ☐ limiting internal and external distractions
- ☐ looking sincerely at people
- ☐ moving naturally and easily
- ☐ positioning yourself so that others can see and hear you
- ☐ projecting positive body language
- ☐ taking care of your appearance
- ☐ using active listening skills
- ☐ using good eye contact (not too short or too long)
- ☐ wearing appropriate dress

Written communication skills include:

- ☐ asking a colleague to proofread your work
- ☐ avoiding too many slang words, abbreviations, acronyms or jargon
- ☐ checking to see if anything could be misinterpreted – remember that the tone of how you write it might not be the same as how someone else reads it
- ☐ considering who will read your text, for example, if they have any visual disabilities

- ☐ ensuring your text covers equality, differentiation and inclusiveness
- ☐ expressing numbers in a certain way when including them in sentences. For example *five days later,* rather than *5 days later.* This applies when the number is less than 10 or it begins a sentence. The number 10, or anything greater than 10, should be written as a number not a word, for example, *there were 15 in the group.*
- ☐ issuing a reading list, website list and/or a way to guide learners where they can obtain further information
- ☐ keeping sentences short and to the point, in a suitable font and size
- ☐ keeping your text logical and progressive
- ☐ not cutting out vowels in words
- ☐ not including too many facts or dates
- ☐ not mixing terms, for example, learner, student and candidate; just choose one and keep to it
- ☐ not putting too much on one page, i.e. spread things out and use spacing accordingly
- ☐ not raising any questions which are left unanswered
- ☐ not using a lot of exclamation marks (!) or needles emoticons (☺)
- ☐ not using too many CAPITAL LETTERS as it might appear you are shouting
- ☐ proofreading your work for spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence construction errors
- ☐ reading what you have written as though a learner is reading it, to check it won't be misinterpreted or that the tone is not coming across as negative
- ☐ standardising documents and email signatures in accordance with the organisation's identity and branding
- ☐ using correct referencing if you are citing from books
- ☐ using visuals to back up your text i.e. illustrations, pictures, graphs and diagrams when possible
- ☐ using language that suits the reader and is appropriate to the level of learning (please see Chapter 7 regarding checking the readability of text)
- ☐ using subject headings, underlining, bullets, italics or emboldening to emphasise points and break up large sections of text