

## Activity *Nobody's Perfect*

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**Context** Have you ever watched a videotape of yourself teaching a lesson, presenting some information, or accepting an honor? What were the first things you noticed? Your appearance? Your mannerisms? The sound of your voice? Some linguists contend that the words we speak express only about 35 percent of our messages and the rest is conveyed nonverbally by our facial expressions, our body language, the tone, volume, and rate of our voice - even by the clothes we wear! Are you aware of how you communicate with your students, peers, and colleagues? How is it possible to self-assess and evaluate this indispensable teaching skill?

**Purpose** Through this activity you will identify the barriers to effective communication.

### **Directions**

- Read through this list of communication distracters.
- Videotape yourself teaching.
- Now watch the videotape and mark (✓) any of the distracters that you demonstrated during the videotaped lesson. Provide specific examples.
- Remember, nobody's perfect!

1. \_\_\_\_\_ My voice is sometimes too loud, too soft, or too muffled for the situation.  
I did this when \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I overuse a certain expression such "like" or "okay."  
I frequently used the expression \_\_\_\_\_. I said it \_\_\_\_\_ times.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to avoid slang expressions such as "listen up" or "you guys."  
I used these slang expressions: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to use standard English rather than words such as "gonna" or "had went."  
The words I need to work on are: \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I have a physical mannerism that may be annoying because I use it too often.  
I kept doing this: \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to say "please" "thank you" and/ or "excuse me" more often.  
I omitted this when \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to use students' first names more often  
I did not call students by their first names \_\_\_\_\_ times.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to get students' attention without shouting at them.  
I could do this by \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to use facial expressions to show that I am actively listening.  
I could have \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to smile more to show students that I enjoy teaching them and am confident.  
I smiled only in these situations: \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to move around the classroom more.  
My usual movement pattern was \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to develop a "teacher voice" that differs from my more casual conversational style.  
I could have used a "teacher voice" in this situation: \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_ I dress more casually than the teachers in this building.  
I may have given the impression that \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to address students on both sides of the room as well as in the front and back of the room.  
I directed most of my teaching to \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I need to change the pace and inflection of my voice.  
I need to do this especially when \_\_\_\_\_