

DRI Retreat - Round Table

Effective Communication

UKRI Priority Aim:

*“We aim to **break down silos** and **promote collaboration** within the DRI landscape by creating a more **interconnected, open, inclusive, and user-friendly infrastructure**. This involves fostering community engagement, promoting the creation of federated infrastructure, and ensuring that DRI funding addresses the technical challenges of operating across disciplines.”*

Workshop Goal: Goal: Understanding communication hurdles between DRI professionals and researchers and how to break the silo mentality

Overarching Discussion Points:

- We have discussed the value of connecting DRI professions, but how do we improve communication between our silos? Are there any vocabulary barriers?
- How do we “sell” ourselves collectively to academics and project leads? Are there opportunities to do this with and without authority?
- Identify some common pitfalls to communication between technical professionals and researchers and the impact that has had.
- Discuss where successful communication has been an enabler for project success.
- Discuss the current landscape for methods of team and cross-team communication.

Activity Brief:

Background (10 mins):

Table leader briefly runs through the 'Background notes' and then splits table up into groups of 3, with a mix of professions in each trio.

Exercise 1 (20 mins): The Jargon Swap (working in threes)

- **Step 1:** First person: pick a real finding from your last project and explain it in 3 mins to the 2nd person. The 2nd person is a dRTP of similar level to you - a peer - but in a different group. The 3rd person acts as observer who should note every time you use jargon or advanced technical language.
- **Step 2:** Now repeat but remove every word that wouldn't make sense to a 10-year-old. Max 2 mins!
- **Rotate roles and repeat until each person has had each role.**

Exercise 2 (5 mins): Reflection

You have just been talking to a peer (inner circle). Reflect on how your comms would be different if the 2nd person had been your project manager (middle circle - see notes). Or if they had been the Director / member of Senior Executive Group etc (outer circle).

Exercise 3 (15 mins): Round-table feedback

How easy was it to describe your work without using jargon? Are there vocabulary barriers that exist between the different professions? How easy is it to describe your work in-person?

How much harder would it be to communicate this in a text-only mode? How would it have been different if talking to your line manager? Or to a senior executive? Did you think about Accuracy Brevity and Clarity?

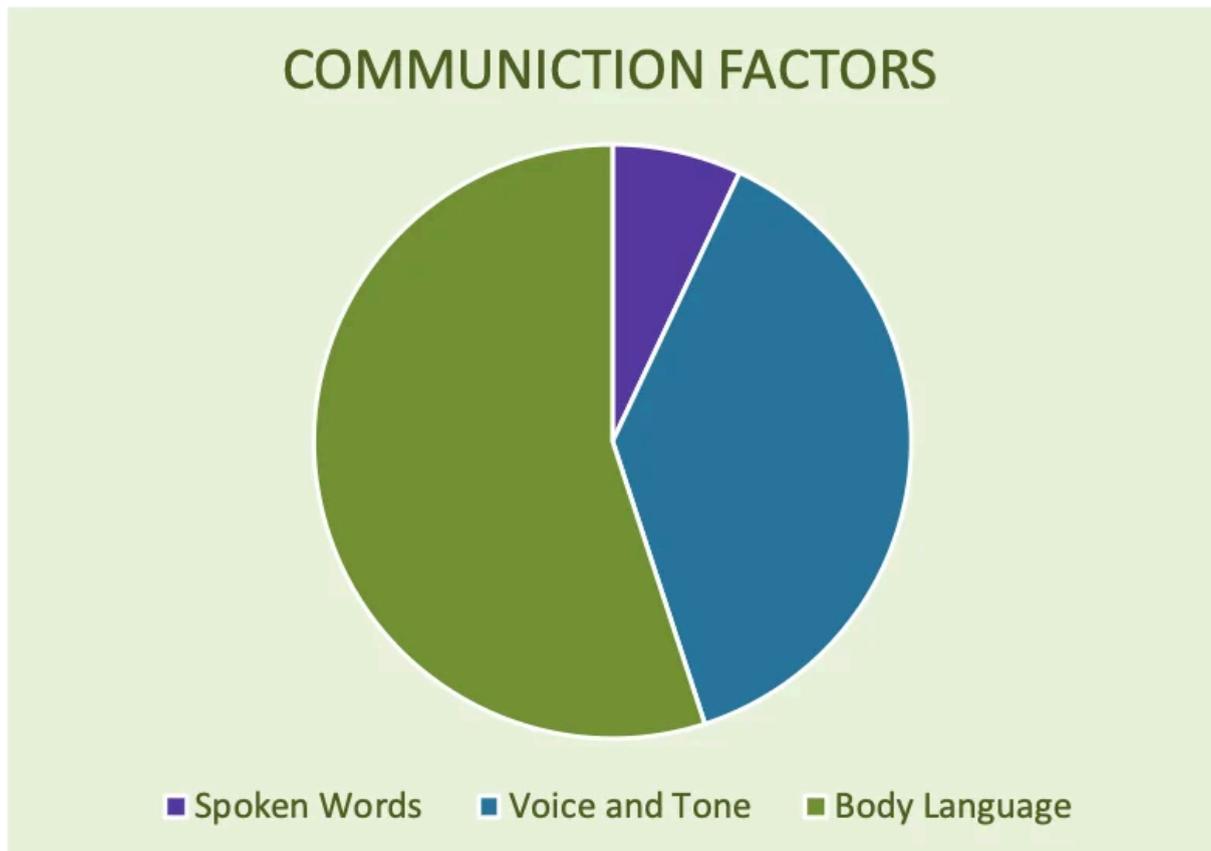
Final Discussion (10 mins):

Share feedback with the whole room.

Background Notes

Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Communication Model

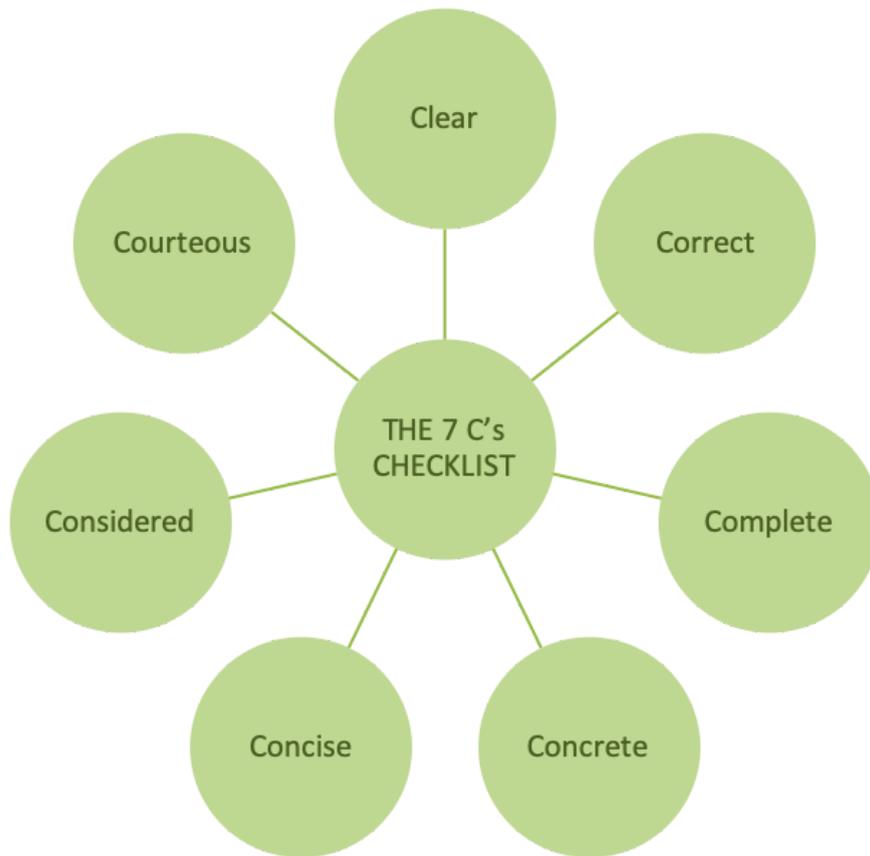
Based on research, Albert Mehrabian has concluded that only 7% of feelings and attitudes takes place through the words we use in spoken communications, while 38% takes place through tone and voice and the remaining 55% take place through body language. How does that work for dRTPs? When most of our communication is through email / Slack etc?



The 7C's of communication

The seven C's of communication is a list of principles that you should ensure all of your communications adhere to. Their purpose is to help ensure that the person you're communicating with hears what you're trying to say. The seven C's are: clear, correct, complete, concrete, concise, considered and courteous.

And the **ABC of communication**: good communications ensure accuracy, brevity and clarity



The 3 Circles of Communication

1. The Core (Technical Peers): The "How"

1. **Content:** Methodology, code snippets, raw datasets, specific cases.
2. **Audience:** Other researchers, developers, data scientists.
3. **Goal:** Accuracy, peer review, and reproducibility.

2. The Middle (Project Managers/Product Owners): The "What"

1. **Content:** Project status, blockers, resource needs, high-level findings.
2. **Audience:** Those managing the workflow.
3. **Goal:** Coordination, timeline management, and removing obstacles.

3. The Outer (Executive Stakeholders): The "So What?"

1. **Content:** Business impact, ROI, user satisfaction, "The Bottom Line."
2. **Audience:** CEOs, Marketing Leads, Investors.
3. **Goal:** Decision-making and strategic alignment.