

# Verbal/nonverbal communication in sport assessment

Due to Brightspace no later than 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15

*Please use a Word Doc or a Google Doc with the settings set so I can edit. No PDFs as I typically can't write suggestions or comments back! Thank you.*

**CONTEXT & RESOURCES:** For this assignment, please read Chapter 6 of Pedersen et al.'s book and refer to the [slides for Chap. 6 on Oct. 10](#) for further exploration.

In the chapter, the authors describe functions of nonverbal communication and nine, specific forms (p. 161-164) of it. Further, it also describes how we interact through verbal messages and the levels of meaning ("word," "sentence" and "speech act").

**ASSIGNMENT:** For this short assignment, I ask you to spend some time experiencing some form of mediated (televised, audio broadcasted, published/aired) sport and taking note of THREE, SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION EVENTS – two nonverbal and one verbal. Write out what you witnessed including its context), what kind of communication event it was and describe the function, form and/or levels of meaning.

**EXAMPLE** (no, you can't use this one!):

Last night on ESPN, I watched Game 1 of the WNBA Finals between the New York Liberty, the star-laden, favored home team, and the Minnesota Lynx.

**NONVERBAL EVENTS:** The first nonverbal communication event about which I write was a moment after Minnesota guard Courtney Williams hit a late-game, 4-point play that drove the Lynx's massive comeback to win Game 1. Williams hit the 3-pointer and the official called a foul. Williams turned around to face the Lynx bench and flexed with her fists at her bellybutton. Her face was expressionless but her muscles were tensed. It was a nonverbal communication through body motion called – *kinesic*. The physical movement is recognizable in the context as Williams felt dependable and strong she made the key shot.

The other nonverbal event I witnessed was *silence*. After New York Liberty forward Breanna Stewart missed a key free throw at the end of regulation, she did not speak words to her teammates. Rather, the powerful emotion of disappointment and possibly even regret that she didn't make the shot was displayed simply as the camera followed her from the free throw line back the bench to her teammates. She did not even open her mouth, but cringed in silence.

**VERBAL EVENT:** Immediately after the game, Williams talked to Scott Van Pelt live on SportCenter. Van Pelt opened the interview by saying that he came down to the studio thinking he was going to be talking to the Liberty because they were up big. Williams interrupted him and said, "Y'all talking to us now." The statement is an example of verbal communication in

sport. At the second level, Williams has uttered a clear sentence in the context of the interview. At the third-level, the speech act of Williams' total response to Van Pelt may well violate some grammatical rules, but Williams' intentions and perceptions of others are clear. Through that one sentence (and with more context of the overall interview), Williams makes the points that, yes, her team was the underdog, but that the startling 18-point comeback to win in overtime was consistent with the belief her team's players have in for each other and for her.