Key Concepts & Communication Strategies

Communication Skills
1. Know your audience, purpose, and material.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of your writing according to five elements of effective communication.
3. Especially for technical writing, provide sufficient detail and adequate explanation to be clear (and not one word more).
5. Be a constructive critic by thinking of yourself as a coach rather than a judge.
6. When collaborating, establish style guidelines early.
7. Proofread by making multiple passes, moving from larger to smaller issues.
8. Expand your vocabulary (read books and look up words).
9. Improve your skills over time by setting reasonable goals and taking the first step right away.

Persuasion & Managerial Communication
10. Open by creating goodwill; close by affirming relationship.
11. In your opening, appeal to your reader’s interests, concerns, and values.
12. In the last sentence of your opening, offer an organizational statement.
13. In your closing, state a deadline and justify it.
14. In your closing, identify the next step and offer to take it.
15. Following Aristotle’s advice, make a mixed rhetorical appeal (combining logos, pathos, and ethos).
16. Take a direct approach with a sympathetic audience; take an indirect approach with a hostile audience.
17. Know when to use oppositional or classical rhetoric and when to use Rogerian persuasion.

Rules of language
18. Look; don’t guess (when you’re unsure of a rule, use your resources).
19. Know your strengths and weaknesses (and do something about your weaknesses).
20. Keep track of your habitual errors.

Written communication
21. Make every word count (“Omit needless words” and 51 additional writing techniques).
22. Beginnings and endings count more than middles (use stress points for emphasis).
24. Write in sentences but think in paragraphs (make the paragraph your strategic unit).
25. Check your organization by making a topic sentence outline.
26. Use a three-step approach to organize your messages (and your paragraphs).
27. Use a five-step approach for apologies, delicate writing situations, and customer relations.

Oral communication
28. Don’t relax; breathe.
29. Project confidence with pauses, eye contact, volume, facial expression, gestures, and movement.
30. Know how to recover.
31. Remember: The audience is on your side.