

Agile communicative styles

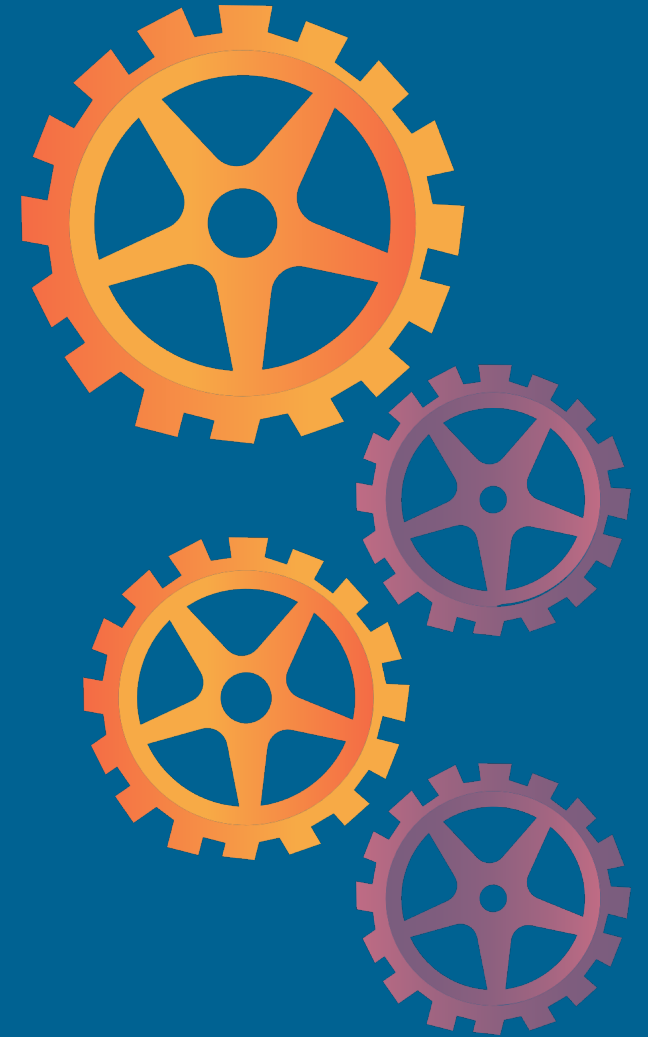
Agile communication strategies

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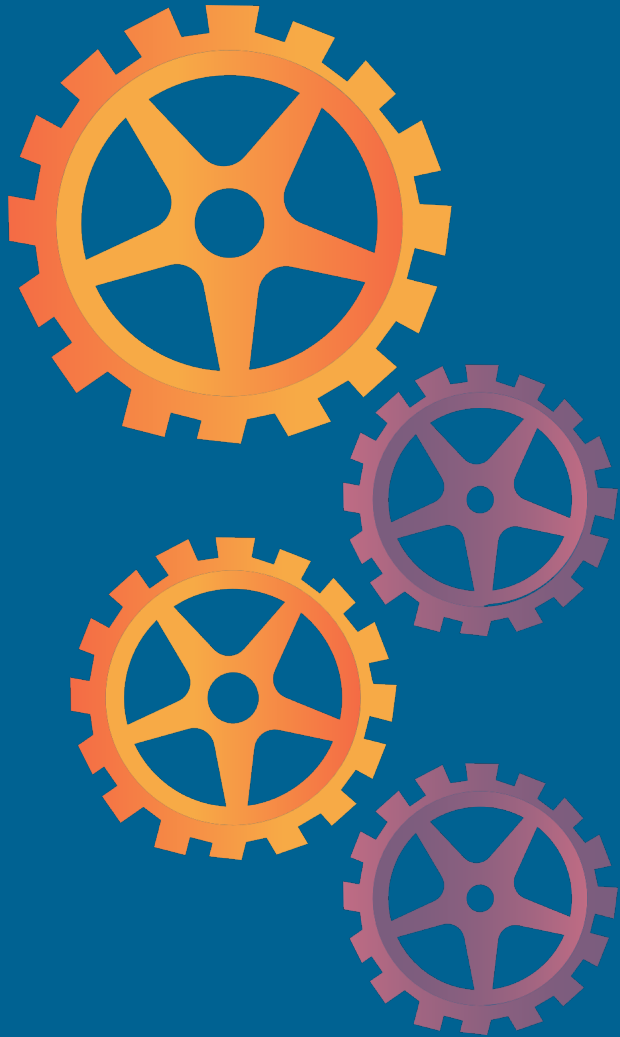


Why agile communication?

The 6th principle of the Agile Manifesto states:

“The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation” (Fowler & Highsmith, 2001)

Agile communication puts less emphasis on detailed and complex documentation in favour of prompt and straightforward face-to-face conversations. In the world of Agile, things move quickly and often unpredictably. That means you can't always plan what conversation you'll need to have. Instead, Agile communication requires high-level planning that facilitates clear information-sharing and productive face-to-face meetings.

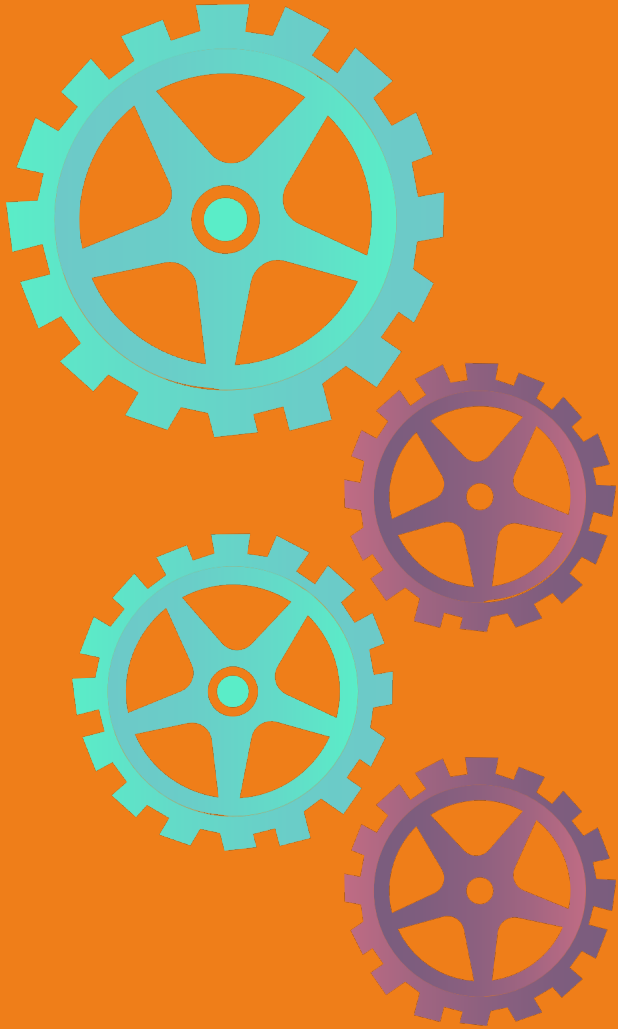


Why agile communication? (2)

Face-to face communication has multiple dimensions with which it can convey meaning. These include **tone of voice**, **body language**, **environmental cues**, and **facial expression**.

Limiting or constraining any of those channels reduces the overall information density of the exchange.

It is not that we are incapable of expressing our meaning through other forms of communication. The point is that face-to-face requires less time and effort to do so.



Features of Agile Communication

1. It shows the thing:

When you need to communicate something to your students, colleagues or stakeholders, always try to show what you want to communicate.

Examples: If you have a relevant idea to present to your headmaster, try to show him/her how the idea will concretely work! You can use a one page document, brief presentations etc...

2. It moves fast:

Responding to the assignment means that agile communication is usually done at a faster pace than traditional communication.

3. It removes barriers between writers and subject matter experts:

Encourages use of pair-writing to make sure that messages that go out from the classroom are both accurate and readable.



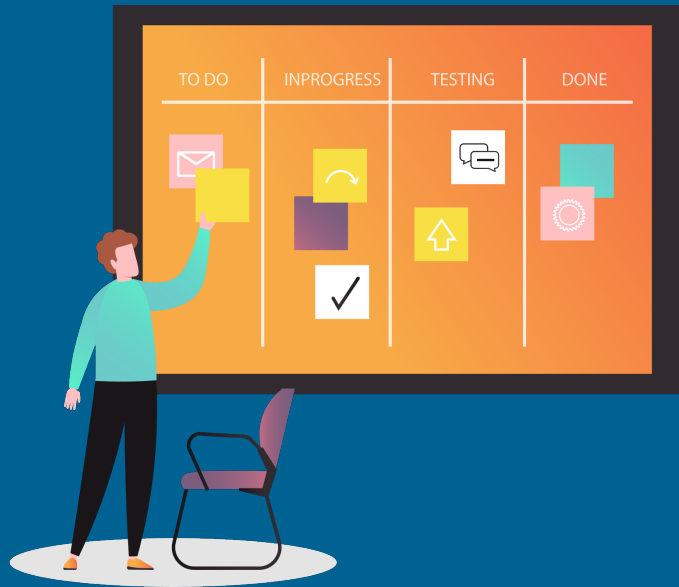
Features of Agile Communication (2)

4. *It communicates simply, clearly and briefly:*

Agile communicators simplify and summarise, helping their readers to understand the basics very easily and very quickly.

5. Everything the team uses to communicate becomes part of this narrative!





*Identify effective
communication
patterns*

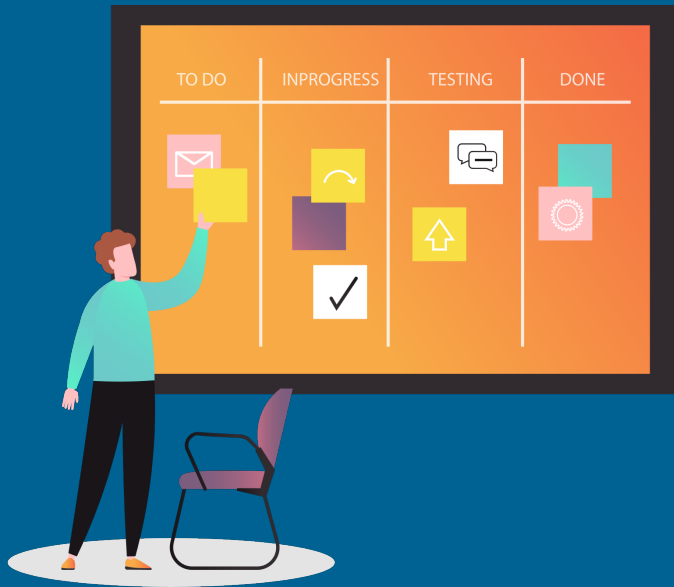
Presentations as main tools of communication

Whether you are presenting assignments or explaining assignment results, presentations are often one of the main channels used.

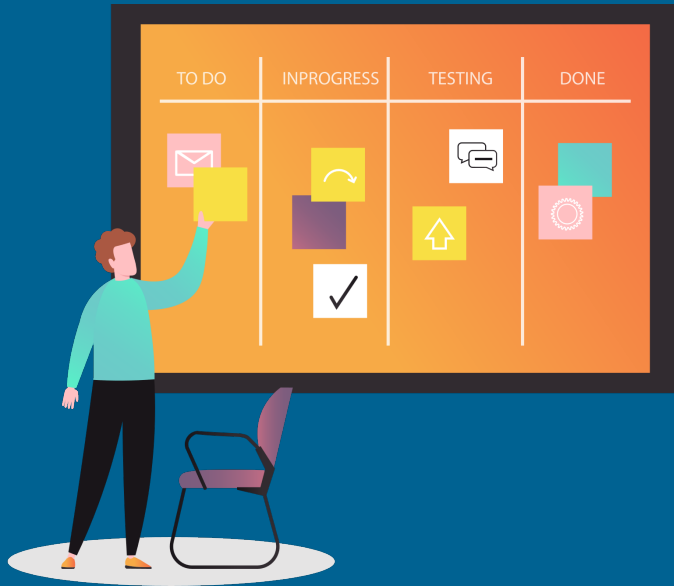
An agile strategy to develop effective presentations is to distinguish those who are presented in the classroom by the teacher from those who are only read by the students at home.

This means:

- **Keep** your slides **simple** (don't treat them as places to copy-and-paste long documents).
- Make sure the words you say out loud compliment the slides, and that the slides illustrate what you're saying out loud.
- Presentations are made of two ingredients: what you say and what you show on screen. The two ingredients are intertwined. Writing a presentation means thinking about both.



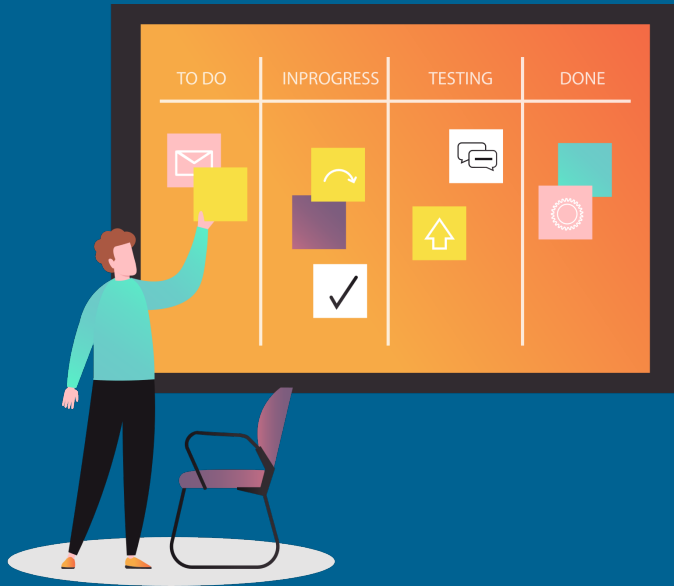
Presentations as main tools of communication (2)

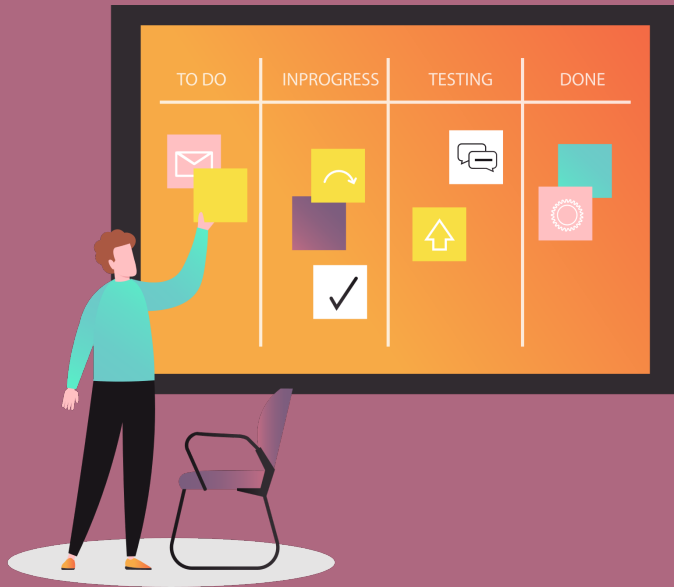


- It's important to consider the **goal** of the presentation.
 - if you want people to listen to what you say, make sure you say something interesting, and illustrate it well with slides that are mostly made of pictures.
 - If you want people to read something, provide them with a readable document (and tell them where they can get hold of it) — don't just put bits of the document on a big screen and expect your audience to take it all in.

Presentations as main tools of communication (3)

- Divide your communication in different sections.
 - **Lure:** this is about the basic information you want to communicate, as well as the exact message you want your recipient to get. It needs to give enough information, thus enabling the reader to decide whether deepen the conversation asking more questions about the topic, or just stop.
 - **Context:** all the surrounding information related to the message.
 - **Details:** once the recipient is interested in your message, He/She can go through all the detailed information you want him/her to know. E.g.: if the Lure is delivered through shared online documents, the details can be linked to it.

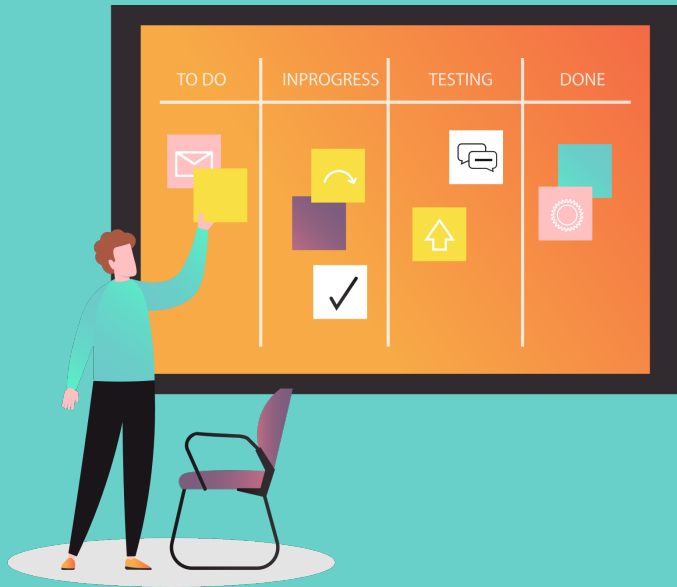




Non-verbal communication

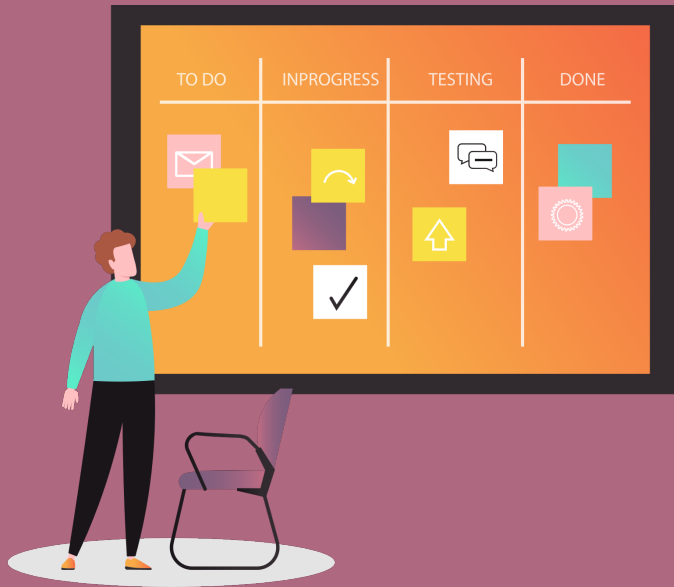
Teams are made up of individuals with different personalities, making it crucial to pay close attention to these **non-verbal** cues. We must observe **patterns** that are effective and those that disrupt collaboration in order to take corrective actions. Teams should be trained to **respect** other people's opinions, show **interest** in conversations, pay attention to **gestures**, and **be mindful** of the way individuals behave in a team setting.

Set clear expectations, goals and deadlines



Each student should have defined **expectations**, **goals** and **timelines** to accomplish their assignment. Having these key factors in place helps to guide their work and prevent ambiguity in responsibilities.

Check-in with students periodically to see how they are doing and address any issues that could be obstacles to their progress. Make them take ownership of their actions, and recognize good work by making it visible to the entire classroom. All these add up to a more productive team.



Establish feedback loops

Communicating timely feedback is crucial to an agile team's success. This can be done in two ways:

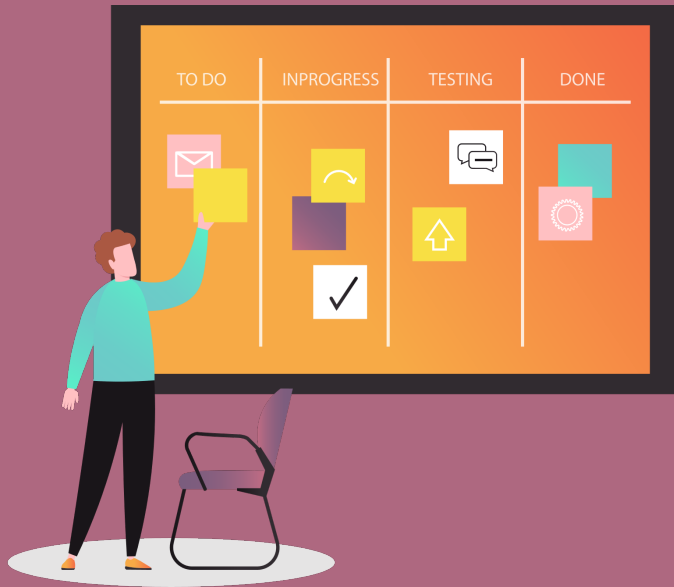
Proactive feedback: *This is when you request feedback from a trusted peer or colleague on how you performed with a particular task. It could be as simple as asking questions such as "Did I do this right?" or "Could I have done something better?"*

In addition, if the tasks require students to work in groups, their work would be facilitated by short and frequent feedback sessions, allowing them to make progress toward achieving their goals.

Establish feedback loops (2)

Reactive feedback: This is when a peer or colleague gives you feedback based on something you did. It could be feedback such as “What you told us was great, but next time we only need to hear X, Y and Z” or “This approach seems to work better. What do you think?”

To improve team feedback, we need to ensure we have retrospective meetings as part of our sprints to discuss what worked and what did not. Problems faced by teams should be discussed openly, and we need to collectively come up with solutions for them. For each solution discussed, an individual from the team needs to be assigned to the task to follow up on it. This helps giving the teams a feeling of empowerment and helps everyone to be in the loop.



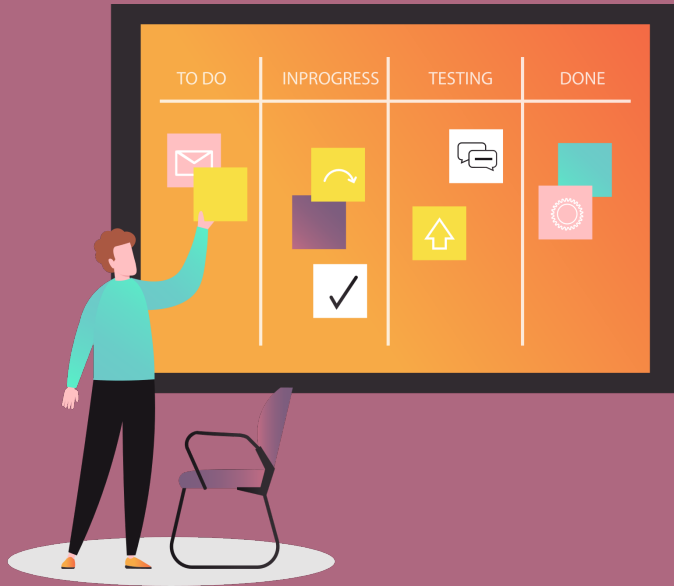
Establish feedback loops (3)

Digital feedback:

- *feedback sessions can be set face-to-face or remotely through digital tools.*

Teachers can involve students in:

- *Surveys*
- *Feedback boxes*
- *Reach out directly*
- *Video Interviews*
- *Screen Recording*
- *Live Documents*





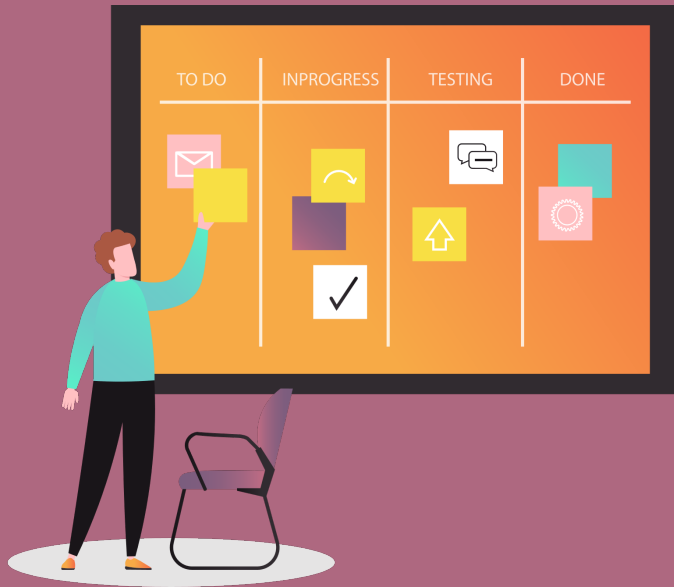
Osmotic communication

When managing or coordinating students teams, teachers should also set up background information where teams can pick and choose when to contribute.

Many tools serve this purpose, like online chats, online shared documents or online whiteboards.

These tools are even more useful if students can collaborate to their assignment remotely, and then discussing their feedback during school lessons.

Shape communication on user needs



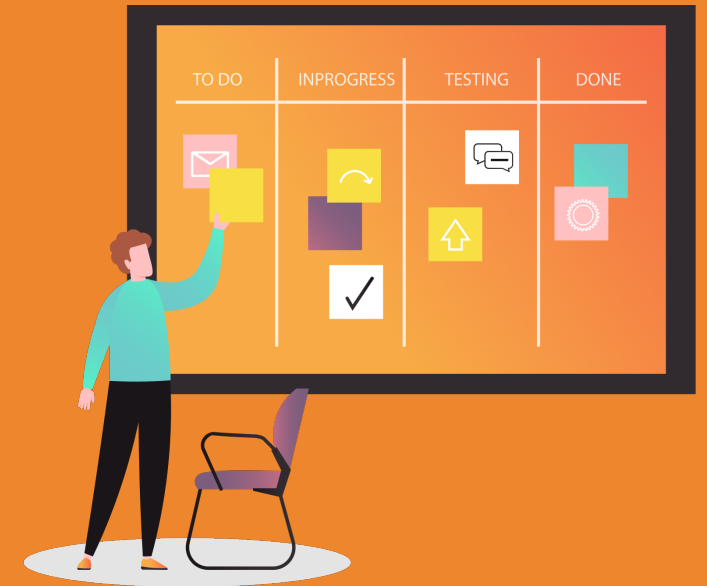
- When communicating, you can choose to do it in a **formal** or **informal** way. It can depend on the recipient of your message or the channel you use but, the important thing is to get your message understood. When teamworking or communicating with **students, informal** communication styles are often more effective!
- Thus, keeping in mind the goals of your communication, the more you can make it as a story, the more the message will be understood and retrieved from memory.

Reference

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- Turnbull G. (2021). In McNichol A., Turcotte S., Turnbull G., *Agile comms Handbook (2021), Use the Human Voice*, ISBN: 978-1-7399422-0-5.

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