PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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CHAPTER 1: THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain Communication Study.
- Define Communication.
- Explain the linear and transactional models of communication.
- Discuss the benefits of studying Communication.

You are probably reading this book because you are taking an introductory Communication course at your college or university. Many colleges and universities around the country require students to take some type of communication course in order to graduate. Introductory Communication classes include courses on public speaking, interpersonal communication, or a class that combines both. While these are some of the most common introductory Communication courses, many Communication departments are now offering an introductory course that explains what Communication is, how it is studied as an academic field, and what areas of specialization make up the field of Communication. In other words, these are survey courses similar to courses such as Introduction to Sociology or Introduction to Psychology. Our goal in this text is to introduce you to the field of Communication as an academic discipline of study.

ENGAGING IN CONVERSATION

As professors, we hear a lot of people talk about communication both on and off our campuses. We're often surprised at how few people can actually explain what communication is, or what Communication departments are about. Even our majors sometimes have a hard time explaining to others what it is they study in college. Throughout this book we will provide you with the basics for understanding what communication is, what Communication scholars and students study, and how you can effectively use the study of Communication in your life — whether or not you are a Communication major. We accomplish this by taking you on a journey through time. The material in the text is framed chronologically and is largely presented in context of the events that occurred before the industrial revolution (2500 BCE-1800's), and after the industrial revolution (1800's-Present). In each chapter we include boxes that provide examples on that chapter's topic in context of "then," "now," and "you" to help you grasp how the study of Communication at colleges and universities impacts life in the "real world."

Before we introduce you to verbal and nonverbal communication, history, theories, research methods, and the chronological development of Communication specializations, we want to set

a foundation for you in this chapter by explaining Communication Study, Models of Communication, and Communication at work.

Figure 1.1: Conversation.[1]

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION STUDIES?

When we tell others that we teach Communication, people often ask questions like, “Do you teach radio and television?” “Do you teach public speaking?” “Do you do news broadcasts?” “Do you work with computers?” “Do you study Public Relations?” “Is that Journalism or Mass Communication?” But, the most common question we get is, “What is that?” It’s interesting that most people will tell us they know what communication is, but they do not have a clear understanding of what it is Communication scholars study and teach in our academic discipline. In fact, many professors in other departments on our campus also ask us what it is we study and teach. If you’re a Communication major, you’ve probably been asked the same question, and like us, may have had a hard time answering it succinctly. If you memorize the definition below, you will have a quick and simple answer to those who ask you what you study as a Communication major.

[1] Image by Jessica Da Rosa on Unsplash.

Figure 1.2: Why do we communicate?[2]

Ancient Depiction of Human Communication

Bruce Smith, Harold Lasswell, and Ralph D. Casey provided a good and simple answer to the question, "What is Communication study?" They state that, communication studies is an academic field whose primary focus is *"who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results."*

Figure 1.3: Egyptian antiquities in the Brooklyn Museum.[3]

Although they gave this explanation almost 70 years ago, to this day it succinctly describes the focus of Communication scholars and professionals. As professors and students of Communication, we extensively examine the various forms and outcomes of human

[2] Image by Spaynton is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0
[3] Image by Sailko is licensed under CC BY 3.0

communication. On its website, the National Communication Association (NCA), states that communication studies *"focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels and media. The discipline promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication."* They go on to say, "*Communication is a diverse discipline which includes inquiry by social scientists, humanists, and critical and cultural studies scholars.*" Now, if people ask you what you're studying in a Communication class, you have an answer!

In this course we will use Smith, Lasswell, and Casey's definition to guide how we discuss the content in this book. Part I of this book sets the foundation by explaining the historical development of the Communication discipline, exploring the "what" and "channels" (verbal and nonverbal communication), and presenting the "whom" and "results" (theories and research methods). Before we get into those chapters, it is important for you to know how we define the actual term "communication" to give you context for our discussion of it throughout the book.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

We're guessing it's more difficult than you think. Don't be discouraged. For decades communication professionals have had difficulty coming to any consensus about how to define the term communication (Hovland; Morris; Nilsen; Sapir; Schramm; Stevens). Even today, there is no single agreed-upon definition of communication. In 1970 and 1984 Frank Dance looked at 126 published definitions of communication in our literature and said that the task of trying to develop a single definition of communication that everyone likes is like trying to nail jello to a wall. Thirty years later, defining communication still feels like nailing jello to a wall.

Pin It! Communication Study Then – Aristotle, The Communication Researcher

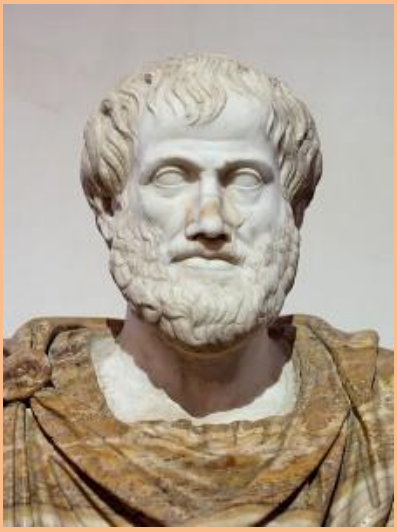

Figure 1.4: Aristotle. Bust of Aristotle, Marble, Roman Copy after a Greek Bronze by Lysippos[4]

Aristotle said, "Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making — speaker, subject, and person addressed — it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object." For Aristotle it was the "to whom" that determined if communication occurred and how effective it was. Aristotle, in his study of "who says what, through what channels, to whom, and what will be the results" focused on persuasion and its effect on the audience. Aristotle thought it was extremely important to focus on the audience in communication exchanges. What is interesting is that when we think of communication we are often, "more concerned about ourselves as the communication's source, about our message, and even the channel we are going to use. Too often, the listener, viewer, reader fails to get any consideration at all (Lee). Aristotle's statement above demonstrates that humans who have been studying communication have had solid ideas about how to communicate effectively for a very long time. Even though people have been formally studying communication for a long time, it is still necessary to continue studying communication in order to improve it.[5]

We recognize that there are countless good definitions of communication, but we feel it's important to provide you with our definition so that you understand how we approach each chapter in this book. We are not arguing that this definition of communication is the only one you should consider viable, but you will understand the content of this text better if you

[4] Image is in the public domain

[5] Lee, Dick. *Developing Effective Communications*. University of Missouri Extension. 31 March 2008. Web. Dec. 2014.

understand how we have come to define communication. For the purpose of this text we define communication as *the process of using symbols to exchange meaning*.

Let's examine two models of communication to help you further grasp this definition. Shannon and Weaver proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (often called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a message from one source to another. Watching YouTube videos serves as an example of this. You act as the receiver when you watch videos, receiving messages from the source (the YouTube video). To better understand this, let's break down each part of this model.

The Linear Model of Communication is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction. The Sender encodes a Message, then uses a certain Channel (verbal/nonverbal communication) to send it to a Receiver who decodes (interprets) the message. Noise is anything that interferes with, or changes, the original encoded message.

A sender is *someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel*. The sender is the initiator of communication. For example, when you text a friend, ask a teacher a question, or wave to someone you are the sender of a message.

A receiver is *the recipient of a message*. Receivers must decode (interpret) messages in ways that are meaningful for them. For example, if you see your friend make eye contact, smile, wave, and say "hello" as you pass, you are receiving a message intended for you. When this happens you must decode the verbal and nonverbal communication in ways that are meaningful to you.

A message is *the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand*. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or nonverbal, or any combination of these. For example, as you walk across campus you may see a friend walking toward you. When you make eye contact, wave, smile, and say "hello," you are offering a message that is intentional, spoken, verbal and nonverbal.

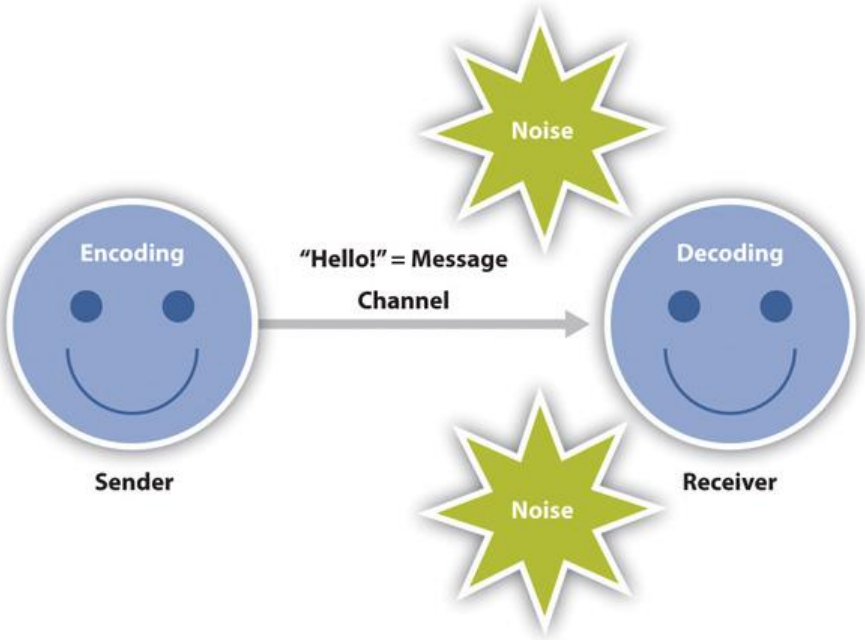

Figure 1.5: Linear Model of Communication[6]

A channel is *the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver*. The most common channels humans use are verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication relies on language and includes speaking, writing, and sign language. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use communication channels that are mediated (such as television or the computer) which may utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication. Using the greeting example above, the channels of communication include both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Noise is *anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message*. Noise is external (a jack hammer outside your apartment window or loud music in a nightclub), and internal (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming test). External and internal noise make encoding and decoding messages more difficult. Using our ongoing example, if you are on your way to lunch and listening to music on your phone when your friend greets you, you may not hear your friend say "hello," and you may not wish to chat because you are hungry. In this case, both internal and external noise influenced the communication exchange. Noise is in every communication context, and therefore, NO message is received exactly as it is transmitted by a sender because noise distorts it in one way or another.

A major criticism of the Linear Model of Communication is that it suggests communication only occurs in one direction. It also does not show how context, or our personal experiences, impact communication. Television serves as a good example of the linear model. Have you ever talked back to your television while you were watching it? Maybe you were watching a sporting event

[6] Image by Andy Schmitz is licensed under CC-BY-SA 3.0

or a dramatic show and you talked at the people in the television. Did they respond to you? We're sure they did not. Television works in one direction. No matter how much you talk to the television it will not respond to you. Now apply this idea to the communication in your relationships. It seems ridiculous to think that this is how we would communicate with each other on a regular basis. This example shows the limits of the linear model for understanding communication, particularly human to human communication.

Given the limitations of the Linear Model, Barnlund adapted the model to more fully represent what occurs in most human communication exchanges. The Transactional Model demonstrates that communication participants act as senders AND receivers simultaneously, creating reality through their interactions. Communication is not a simple one-way transmission of a message: The personal filters and experiences of the participants impact each communication exchange. The Transactional Model demonstrates that we are simultaneously senders and receivers, and that noise and personal filters always influence the outcomes of every communication exchange.

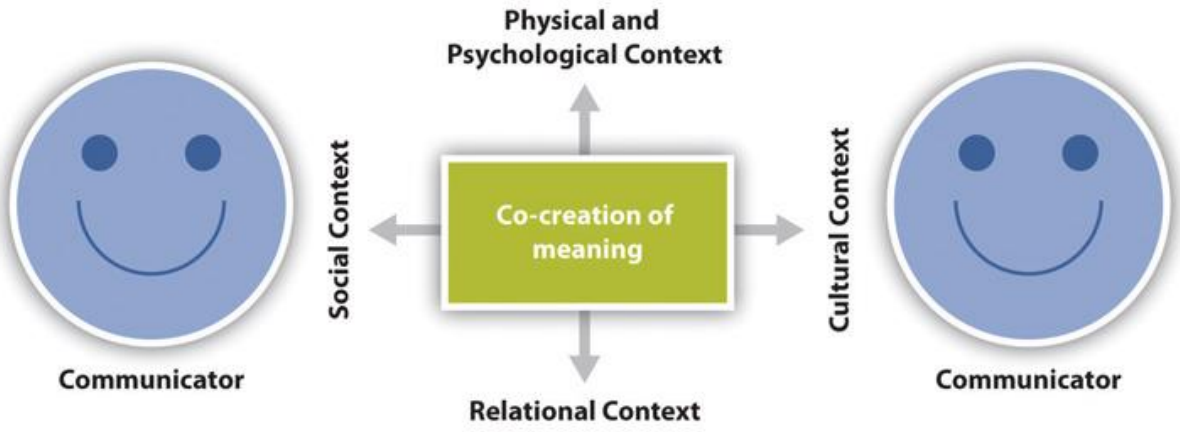

Figure 1.6: Transactional Model of Communication[7]

The Transactional Model of Communication adds to the Linear Model by suggesting that both parties in a communication exchange act as both sender and receiver simultaneously, encoding and decoding messages to and from each other at the same time.

While these models are overly simplistic representations of communication, they illustrate some of the complexities of defining and studying communication. Going back to Smith, Lasswell, and Casey, as Communication scholars we may choose to focus on one, all, or a combination of the following: senders of communication, receivers of communication, channels of communication, messages, noise, context, and/or the outcome of communication. We hope you recognize that studying communication is simultaneously detail-oriented (looking at small parts of human communication), and far-reaching (examining a broad range of communication exchanges).

[7] Image by Andy Schmitz is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

COMMUNICATION STUDY AND YOU

Pin It! Communication Study Now - Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips From Aristotle – (by Justin Tyme)
Does Aristotle's work still apply today outside of college classrooms? Of course it does. In his book "Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips from Aristotle," Tyme takes Aristotle's work and applies it to leadership in organizational contexts

The book description on Amazon.com reads, "Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips from Aristotle" is the third in a series of three short and effective kindle books written for the next generation of leaders (and reminders for current ones) in business and organizations on this important topic. Some advice and quotes are timeless and provide a refreshing spin from a legendary figure. At a very young age of 7, Aristotle started a 20 year journey as a student to Plato the Philosopher. Aristotle learned and contributed to all disciplines within sciences and the arts. Similar to his philosophical lineage, he believed education was valuable and should be sought out to improve one's life. When Aristotle was not crowned as the successor to lead Plato's Academy upon Plato's death, Aristotle did not reject and repute the decision. He reflected on the decision and chose a road to make his mark on society. Aristotle opened his own school and continued to impart the basis of generational and organizational leadership similar to Socrates and Plato with his own great student who went by the name of Alexander the Great.

If you think about Smith, Lasswell, and Casey's statement that those of us who study communication investigate, "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results" you should realize how truly complex a task we perform (121). While we'll explore many examples later in the book, we want to briefly highlight a few examples of what you might study if you are interested in Communication as a field of study.

Studying communication is exciting because there are so many possibilities on which to focus. For example, you might study elements of the history and use of YouTube (Soukup); the use of deception in texting (Wise & Rodriguez); college students' "guilty pleasure" media use (Panek); how sons and daughters communicate disappointment (Miller-Day & Lee); an examination of motherhood in lesbian-headed households (Koenig Kellas & Suter); or daughters' perceptions of communication with their fathers (Dunleavy, Wanzer, Krezmien, Ruppel).

Figure 1.7 Communication Helps with Diplomacy.[8]

The above examples demonstrate just a small taste of what we can examine through the lens of communication. In reality, studying communication has almost limitless possibilities. That's what makes this field so dynamic and exciting! When you think about the infinite number of variables we can study, as well as the infinite number of communication contexts, the task of studying "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results?" is open to countless possibilities. The study of communication has proven helpful to us as social beings as we work to better understand the complexities of our interactions and relationships.

As a student taking an introductory Communication course, you might be thinking, "Why does this matter to me?" One reason it is important for you to study and know communication is that these skills will help you succeed in personal, social, and professional situations. A survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that "College students who wish to separate themselves from the competition during their job search would be wise to develop proficiencies most sought by employers, such as communication, interpersonal, and teamwork skills." Whether you major in Communication or not, the more you understand communication, the greater potential you have to succeed in all aspects of your life. Another important reason for studying communication is that it can lead to a variety of career opportunities.

Careers with a Communication Degree

The kind of skills developed by Communication majors are highly valued by all kinds of employers. Courses and activities in Communication departments both teach and make use of the skills ranked consistently high by employers. Students with a degree in Communication are ready to excel in a wide variety of careers. Forbes listed "The 10 Skills Employers Want in 20-Something Employees." Look to see how many relate directly to what you would learn as a Communication major.

[8] Image by Kremlin.ru is licensed under CC BY 4.0

1. Ability to work in a team
2. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
3. Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work
4. Ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell and influence others"[9]

THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

In this chapter you have learned that the purpose of this book is to introduce you to the academic field of Communication by setting a foundation of communication history and study in the first six chapters, followed by the chronological presentation of some of the major specializations that make up this academic field.

Smith, Laswell, and Casey offer a simple definition of communication study: "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results" (121). Now you can provide an answer to those who ask you what Communication study is about. Our definition of communication, *the process of using symbols to exchange meaning*, allows you to understand how we use this term throughout the book. The linear and transactional models of communication act as a visual representations of both communication study and communication. Finally, you are now aware of the importance of studying communication: that it impacts your personal, social, and professional life.

[9] Adams, Susan. "The 10 Skills Employers Most Want In 20-Something Employees" *Forbes*. 11 Oct. 2013. Web. 15 Dec. 2014.

Discussion Questions

1. According to our definition, what is communication? What do we not consider to be communication?
2. Using our definition of communication study, explain how Communication is different from other majors such as Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, etc?
3. Name three people who you feel use communication effectively in their jobs? In what ways do they communicate effectively using verbal and nonverbal communication?

Key Terms

- Channel
- Communication
- Communication Study
- Linear Model
- Message
- Noise
- Receiver
- Sender
- Transactional Model

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Identify the four early periods of communication studies.
- Explain the major changes in communication studies in the 20th century.
- Identify major scholars who helped shape the field of Communication.
- Discuss how Communication departments and professional organizations formed.

Communication is an increasingly popular major at colleges and universities. In fact, according to The Princeton Review: Guide to College Majors, Communication is the 8th most popular major in the U.S. With increased demands placed on students to have "excellent communication skills" in their careers, many students choose to earn their degree in Communication. Most of us implicitly understand that humans have always communicated, but many do not realize that the intellectual study of communication has taken place for thousands of years.

This chapter is divided by events that preceded the industrial revolution (2500 BCE – 1800's), and those that occurred after the industrial revolution (1850's-Present). Previous to the invention of the printing press, which pre-dated the industrial revolution by a few hundred years to develop, the formal study of communication was relatively slow. However, as a result of the printing press and the rapid expansion of technology that followed during the industrial age that increased the amount of easily shared information, the formal study of communication gained considerable momentum, developing into what you now understand as Communication departments and majors at colleges and universities around the country.

To keep our focus on the two time periods that greatly mark the development of communication study, we have divided this chapter into the Old School and New School. Part I focuses on Old School communication study by highlighting the origins of our field through the works of classical rhetorical scholars in ancient Greece and moving through the enlightenment period that ushered in the industrial age. Part II focuses on the New School of communication study by identifying how the four early periods influenced the development of communication study over the last 100+ years into what it is today.

To fully appreciate the current state of communication study, it's important to have a historical perspective—not only to understand the field itself, but also to know how you ended up in a Communication class or major. Over time, the study of communication has largely been prompted by the current social issues of particular time periods. Knowing this, we'll examine the pertinent questions, topics, and scholars of the Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, and

Enlightenment periods to find out what they learned about communication to help them understand the world around them. Next, we will highlight the rapid growth of contemporary communication.

There is a historical bias that gives the accomplishments of male scholars in Ancient Greece the greatest recognition for the early development of our field. Because society favored and privileged European males, it is often difficult to find written records of the accomplishments of others. We believe it is essential that you understand that many of the earliest influences on communication study also came from feminine and Eastern perspectives, not just the men of ancient Greek society. No doubt you've heard of Aristotle, but ancient Indian literature shows evidence of rhetorical theory pre-dating Aristotle by almost half a century. In fact, Indians were so attuned to the importance of communication, they worshipped the goddess of speech, Vach (Gangal & Hosterman).

The Theosophical Society states:

> *To call Vach 'speech' simply, is deficient in clearness. Vach is the mystic personification of speech, and the female Logos, being one with Brahma….In one sense Vach is 'speech' by which knowledge was taught to man…..she is the subjective Creative Force which…becomes the manifested 'world of speech."*

The Mypurohith Encyclopaedia tells us that:

> *Vach appears to be the personification of speech by whom knowledge was communicated to man….who, "created the waters from the world [in the form] of speech (Vach)."*

Unfortunately, many of our field's histories exclude works other than those of Ancient Greek males. Throughout the book, we try to provide a balanced view of the field by weaving in feminine and Eastern traditions to provide you with a well-rounded perspective of the development of communication study around the world. Let's start by focusing on the earliest period of the Old School—the Classical Period.

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD (500 BCE-400 CE)

In the cult-classic 1989 movie, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, two air-headed teenagers use time-travel to study history for a school project. Along the way they kidnap a group of historical figures, including Socrates. During their encounter with Socrates, Ted tells Bill, "Ah, here it is, So-crates… 'The only true wisdom is in knowing that you know nothing.' That's us, dude!" Unless you are able to time-travel, you will have to read about the early founders of Old School communication, such as Aspasia, Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato. It was at the Lyceum approximately 2,500 years ago that Aristotle and other rhetoricians taught public speaking and persuasion, which marks what we refer to as the Classical Period of communication study.

If you've taken a public-speaking class, you've probably learned and applied principles of public speaking developed during the Classical Period. During this time, people placed high value on

the spoken word and argumentation skills, accentuated emotion and logic to persuade others, and developed guidelines for public presentations. It is largely agreed-upon that the formal study of communication began approximately 2,500 years ago in Greece and Sicily. It is here that we will begin our tour of Ancient Greece with the "fantastic four"—Aspasia of Miletus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—who have come to be regarded as the foremother and forefathers of rhetoric and the field of Communication as a whole. Then, we'll turn to scholars who extended the work of the fantastic four—Corax, Tisias, Cicero, Quintilian, and Pan Chao.

The argument can be made that our field primarily emphasizes the contributions of men because women were routinely excluded from education as well as other public institutions during this time. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that several women actively contributed to this period (Harris), participating in and receiving educational opportunities not afforded to most women. This begs the question, "If some women were receiving advanced education and producing work in philosophy and rhetoric themselves, then it becomes more puzzling to explain the absence of any surviving texts by them" (Bizzell & Herzberg 26). So, who can we look to as an example of a prominent female scholar during this early period?

Figure 2.1: The Debate of Socrates and Aspasia.[10]

Aspasia of Miletus (469 BCE) is an excellent example of an educated woman who is often credited as the "mother of rhetoric" (Glenn). Although relatively little is known about her scholarship because of her disappearance from history circa 401 BCE, Aspasia of Miletus is believed to have taught rhetoric and home economics to Socrates. Her influence extends to Plato as well who argued that belief and truth are not always interchangeable. Even Cicero used Aspasia's lesson on induction as the centerpiece for his argumentation chapter in De Inventione (Glenn). Aspasia's social position was that of a hetaera, or romantic companion, who was "more educated than respectable women, and [was] expected to accompany men on occasions where

[10] Image is in the public domain.

conversation with a woman was appreciated, but wives were not welcome" (Carlson 30). Her specialty was philosophy and politics, and she became the only female member of the elite Periclean circle. In this circle she made both friends and enemies as a result of her political savvy and public speaking ability.

Aspasia was described as one of the most educated women of her era and was determined to be treated as an equal to men (an early feminist to say the least!). She was born into privilege in Miletus, a Greek settlement on the coast of Western Turkey, and did not have many of the same restrictions as other women, working her way to prominence most often granted only to the men of her time. During this period Pericles, the Athenian ruler and Aspasia's partner, treated Aspasia as an equal and allowed her every opportunity to engage in dialogue with the important and educated men of society. Socrates acknowledged Aspasia as having one of the best intellects in the city. With this intellect and the opportunities presented to her, Aspasia was politically progressive, influencing the works of many of the men who are most often credited with founding our field (PBS).

With Aspasia's work influencing his education, Socrates (469-399 BCE) greatly influenced the direction of the Classical Period. Most of what we know about Socrates comes from the writings of his student Plato (429-347 BCE) who wrote about rhetoric in the form of dialogues where the main character was Socrates. This era produced much discussion regarding the best ways to write and deliver speeches, with a great deal of the debate focusing on the importance of truth and ethics in public speaking.

From these writings, the idea of the dialectic was born. While this term has been debated since its inception, Plato conceptualized it as *a process of questions and answers that would lead to ultimate truth and understanding*. Think for a moment about contemporary situations where people use this process. Have you ever had a discussion with a professor where he/she questioned you about your interpretation of a poem? Consider the role that a therapist takes when he/she asks you a series of questions to bring greater clarity in understanding your own thoughts, motives, and behavioral patterns. These are just two examples of dialectic at work. What others can you think of?

While Plato contributed a great deal to classical rhetorical theory he was also very critical of it. In Georgias, Plato argued that because rhetoric does not require a unique body of knowledge it is a false, rather than true, art. Similarly, Socrates was often suspicious of the kind of communication that went on in the courts because he felt it was not concerned with absolute truth. Ultimately, the legal system Socrates held in contempt delivered his fate. He was tried, convicted, and executed on charges of atheism and corrupting Athenian youth with his teachings (Kennedy). This same sentiment applies today when we think about lawyers in our courts. In the famous O.J. Simpson case in the 1990's, Johnnie Cochran became famous for his phrase "If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit." This received great criticism because it didn't really speak to the absolute truth of the facts of the case, while at the same time, this rationale was often credited as the reason O.J. Simpson was found not guilty.

Pin It! Teaching And Learning Communication Then - Sophists: The Original Speech Teachers

Figure 2.2: Libanius the sophist.[11]

Like Corax and Tisias, "Sophists were self-appointed professors of how to succeed in the civic life of the Greek states" (Kennedy 25). The word sophist comes from the root sophos meaning "wise" and is often translated to mean "craftsman." They taught citizens how to communicate to win an argument or gain influence in the courts, as well as governmental assemblies. Sometimes, the motivation of Sophists was in conflict with other rhetoricians like Plato and Aristotle. Plato and Aristotle were committed to using communication to search for absolute truth. When Sophists taught communication in ways that sought anything less than absolute truth, it upset rhetoricians like Plato and Aristotle. Plato even went so far as to label the work of Sophists invalid because it depended upon *kairos*, or the situation, to determine the provisional truth of the issue under contention.

The Classical Period flourished for nearly a millennium in and around Greece as democracy gained prominence in the lives of Greek citizens. As we have stated, social problems have guided the development of communication from the earliest periods. During this time, people found themselves in the courts trying to regain family land that earlier tyrants had seized. Thus, trying to regain family land through the court system became a primary social problem that influenced the focus of those studying communication during this time. Early communication practitioners sought the best methods for speaking and persuading. Although the concept of

lawyers as we know them did not yet exist at this time in ancient Greece (Scallen), people needed effective persuasive speaking skills to get their family land back. Where did they learn these skills? They learned them from *early speech teachers* known as Sophists. Resourceful individuals such as Corax and Tisias (400's BCE) taught effective persuasive speaking to citizens who needed to use these skills in courts to regain land ownership (Kennedy).

Historical records suggest that these two were among the first professional communication teachers that made use of the latest findings in communication for practical purposes. They also formed the basis of what we now recognize as professional lawyers (Scallen). Another Sophist, Isocrates (436-338 BCE), felt it was more important for a speaker to adapt to the individual speaking situation rather than have a single approach designed for all speaking occasions. It is likely that your public speaking teachers explain the importance of adapting to your audience in all communication situations.

Arguably the most famous Greek scholar, Aristotle (384-322 BCE). This is because he believed rhetoric could be used to create community. As we've highlighted, a dialectic approach allows people to share and test ideas with one another. Aristotle entered Plato's Academy when he was 17 and stayed on as a teacher where he taught public speaking and the art of logical discussion until Plato's death in 347 BCE. He then opened his own school where students learned about politics, science, philosophy, and rhetoric (communication). Aristotle taught all of these subjects during his lectures in the Lyceum next to the public gymnasium, or during conversations he had with his students as he strolled along the covered walkway of the peripatos with the Athenian youth.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as the *"faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever"* (Aristotle, trans. 15). We want to highlight two parts of this definition as particularly significant: "the possible means" and "persuasion." "The possible means" indicates that Aristotle believed, like Isocrates, in the importance of context and audience analysis when speaking; a specific situation with a particular audience should influence how we craft our messages for each unique speaking situation.

Say you want to persuade your parents to give you a little extra cash to make it through the month. Chances are you will work through strategies for persuading them why you need the

[11] Image is in the public domain.

money, and why they should give it to you. You'll likely reflect on what has worked in the past, what hasn't worked, and what strategy you used last time. From this analysis, you construct a message that fits the occasion and audience. Now, let's say you want to persuade your roommate to go out with you to Mexican food for dinner. You are not going to use the same message or approach to persuade your roommate as you would your parents. The same logic exists in public speaking situations. Aristotle highlighted the importance of finding the appropriate message and strategy for the audience and occasion in order to persuade. For Aristotle, rhetoric occurs when a person or group of people engage in the process of communicating for the purpose of persuading. Aristotle divided the "means of persuasion" into three parts, or three artistic proofs, necessary to persuade others: logical reason (logos), human character (ethos), and emotional appeal (pathos).

Logos is *the presentation of logical, or seemingly logical, reasons that support a speaker's position*. When you construct the order of your speech and make decisions regarding what to include and exclude, you engage in logos. Ethos occurs when *"The orator persuades by moral character when his speech is delivered in such a manner as to render him worthy of confidence…moral character…constitutes the most effective means of proof"* (Aristotle, trans. Ethos, in short, is the speakers credibility. The final proof, pathos, occurs when *a speaker touches particular emotions from the audience*. Aristotle explains, "the judgments we deliver are not the same when we are influenced by joy or sorrow, love or hate." (Aristotle, trans. 17). In present day, commercials are often judged as effective or ineffective based on their use of pathos. Many times we consider commercials effective when they produce an emotional response from us such as joy, anger, or happiness.

Figure 2.3 Detail from Cicero Denounces Catiline.[12]

[12] Image is in the public domain.

Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Quintilian (c. 35-95 CE) deserve recognition for combining much of what was known from the Greeks and Romans into more complete theoretical ideas. Like Aristotle, Cicero saw the relationship between rhetoric and persuasion and its applicability to politics (Cicero, trans. 15). Think of politicians today. Quintilian extended this line of thinking and argued that public speaking was inherently moral. He stated that the ideal orator is "a good man speaking well" (Barilli). Is your first impression that politicians are good people speaking well? How do Aristotle's notions of ethos, logos, and pathos factor into your perceptions of politicians?

Cicero is most famous in the field of communication for creating what we call the five canons of rhetoric, a five-step process for developing a persuasive speech that we still use to teach public speaking today. Invention is the formulation of arguments based on logos–rational appeal or logic. Arrangement is ordering a speech in the most effective manner for a particular audience. Expression or style means "fitting the proper language to the invented matter" to enhance the enjoyment, and thus acceptability of the argument, by an audience (Cicero, trans. 21). Memory, a vital skill in the Classical Period is less of a requirement in today's public speaking contexts because we now largely believe that memorized speeches often sound too scripted and stale. Notes, cue cards, and teleprompters are all devices that allow speakers to deliver speeches without committing them to memory. Finally, delivery is the use of nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice during a presentation. If you have taken a public speaking class, have you used some or all of these to construct your presentations? If so, you can see the far-reaching effects of the early developments in communication on what we teach today.

We want to round out our discussion of the Classical Period by highlighting the work of Pan Chao (c. 45 CE-115 CE). She was the first female historian in China and served as the imperial historian of the court of emperor Han Hedi. She was a strong believer in the benefits of education, was another of the early female pioneers to argue for the education of girls and women. Writing, in Lessons for Women, on the four qualifications of womanhood (virtue, words, bearing, and work), she said that womanly words, "need be neither clever in debate nor keen in conversation," but women should "…choose words with care; to avoid vulgar language; to speak at appropriate times; and to not weary others (with much conversation), [these] may be called the characteristics of womanly words" (Swann 86).

Even though it began 2500 years ago, the Classical Period was filled with interesting people who made great strides in the formal study of communication to help with the social problems of their day. The Classical Period laid the foundation of our field and continues to impact our modern day practice of studying and performing communication. You have likely learned concepts from the Classical Period in your public speaking classes. Next, let's examine the Medieval Period and its further development of our field.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (400 CE-1400 CE)

In contrast to the Classical Period, which saw tremendous growth and innovation in the study of communication, the Medieval Period might be considered the dark ages of academic study in

our field. During this era, the Greco-Roman culture was dominated by Christian influence after the fall of the Roman Empire. The church felt threatened by secular rhetorical works they considered full of pagan thought. While the church preserved many of the classical teachings of rhetoric, it made them scarce to those not in direct service to the church. A secular education was extremely hard to obtain during the Medieval Period for almost everyone.

Even though Christianity condemned communication study as pagan and corrupt, it embraced several aspects of the Classical Period to serve its specific purposes. The ideas from the Classical Period were too valuable for the church to completely ignore. Thus, they focused on communication study to help them develop better preaching and letter writing skills to persuade people to Christianity. Emphasis was placed on persuasion and developing public presentations, both oral and written. Like the Classical Period, those in power continued to stifle women's participation in communication study, keeping them largely illiterate while men served as the overseers of the church and the direction of academic inquiry.

Figure 2.4: Augustine Lateran.[13]

One of the most recognizable people from this era was Augustine (354 CE-430 CE), a Christian clergyman and renowned rhetorician who actually argued for the continued development of ideas that had originated during the Classical Period. He thought that the study of persuasion, in particular, was a particularly worthwhile pursuit for the church. Augustine was a teacher by trade and used his teaching skills as well as knowledge of communication to move "men" toward truth, which for him was the word of God (Baldwin).

With the exception of Augustine, the formal study of communication took a back seat to a focus on theological issues during the Medieval Period. Fortunately, the study of communication

[13] Image is in the public domain.

managed to survive as one of the seven branches of a liberal education during this period, but it remained focused on developing presentational styles apt for preaching. Boethius and the Archbishop Isidore of Seville made small efforts to preserve classical learning by reviving the works of Cicero and Quintilian to persuade people to be just and good. Nevertheless, aside from Augustine's work, little progress was made during the remaining Medieval years; the formal study of communication literally plunged into the "dark ages" before reemerging during the Renaissance.

THE RENAISSANCE (1400-1600 CE)

Powered by a new intellectual movement during this period, secular institutions and governments started to compete with the church for personal allegiances. As more people felt comfortable challenging the church's approach to education, reinvigorated attention to classical learning and fresh opportunities for scholarly education reemerged. As with the two previous periods we've examined, obtaining education for women was still tough, as many social limitations continued to restrict their access to knowledge.

Pin It! Teaching And Learning Communication Now

The following is an excerpt of a letter by Cereta to Bibulus Sempronius written January 13, 1488. In an earlier correspondence he praised her as a woman of intelligence but insulted her as if she was unique among women. This is part of her impassioned response and defense of the education of women.

Figure 2.4 Laura Cereta.[14]

"All history is full of such examples. My point is that your mouth has grown foul because you keep it sealed so that no arguments can come out of it that might enable you to admit that nature imparts one freedom to all human beings equally – to learn. But the question of my exceptionality remains. And here choice alone, since it is the arbiter of character, is the distinguishing factor. For some women worry about the styling of their hair, the elegance of their clothes, and the pearls and other jewelry they wear on their fingers. Others love to say cute little things, to hide their feelings behind a mask of tranquility, to indulge in dancing, and to lead pet dogs around on a leash. For all I care, other women can long for parties with carefully appointed tables, for the peace of mind of sleep, or they can yearn to deface with paint the pretty face they see reflected in their mirrors. But those women for whom the quest for the good represents a higher value restrain their young spirits and ponder better plans. They harden their bodies with sobriety and toil, they control their tongues, they carefully monitor what they hear, they ready their minds for all-night vigils, and they rouse their minds for the contemplation of probity in the case of harmful literature. For knowledge is not given as a gift but by study. For a mind free,

keen, and unyielding in the face of hard work always rises to the good, and the desire for learning grows in the depth and breadth.

So be it therefore. May we women, then, not be endowed by God the grantor with any giftedness or rare talent through any sanctity of our own. Nature has granted to all enough of her bounty; she opens to all the gates of choice, and through these gates, reason sends legates to the will, for it is through reason that these legates transmit desires. I shall make a bold summary of the matter. Yours is the authority, ours is the inborn ability. But instead of manly strength, we women are naturally endowed with cunning, instead of a sense of security, we are naturally suspicious. Down deep we women are content with our lot. But you, enraged and maddened by the anger of the dog from whom you flee, are like someone who has been frightened by the attack of a pack of wolves. The victor does not look for the fugitive; nor does she who desires a cease-fire with the enemy conceal herself. Nor does she set up camp with courage and arms when the conditions are hopeless. Nor does it give the strong any pleasure to pursue one who is already fleeing" (Robin 78-9).

Despite the continued oppression, several brave women took advantage of the changes brought in by the Renaissance. Christine de Pisan (1365-1429) has been praised as "Europe's first professional woman writer" writing 41 pieces over a 30-year period (Redfern 74). Her most famous work, The Treasure of the Cities of Ladies, provided instruction to women on how they could achieve their potential and create for themselves lives rich in meaning and importance. According to Redfern, while "she neither calls herself a rhetorician nor calls The Treasure a rhetoric, her instruction has the potential to empower women's speech acts in both public and private matters. Her most important lesson is that women's success depends on their ability to manage and mediate by speaking and writing effectively" (Redfern 74).

Italian born Laura Cereta (1469-1499) initiated intellectual debates with her male counterparts through letter writing. Yet, given the difficulties women had earning recognition in the educational arena, many of her letters went unanswered (Rabil). Despite these obstacles, she continued her education with diligence and is considered one of the earliest feminists. Through her letters, she questioned women's traditional roles and attempted to persuade many to alter their beliefs about the role of women and education.

[14] Image is in the public domain

Ideas surrounding issues of style in speaking situations received significant attention during the Renaissance period. Petrus Ramus (1515-1572) paid great attention to the idea of style by actually grouping style and delivery of the five canons together. Ramus also argued that invention and arrangement did not fit the canon and should be the focus of logic, not rhetoric. Ramus, who often questioned the early scholars, believed that being a good man had nothing to do with being a good speaker and didn't think that focusing on truth had much to do with communication at all. Needless to say, he had a way of making a name for himself by challenging much of what early scholars thought of truth, ethics, and morals as they applied to communication.

In contrast to Ramus, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), a contemporary of Shakespeare, believed that the journey to truth was paramount to the study and performance of communication. According to Bacon, reason and morality required speakers to have a high degree of accountability, making it an essential element in oration. Where do you think ethics, truth, and morality fit into communication today? Think about your concept of politicians or car salespersons. How do these notions fit when communicating in these contexts?

Scholars like Cereta, de Pisan, Ramus, and Bacon all furthered the study of communication as they challenged, debated, and scrutinized well established assumptions and "truths" about the field developed during the Classical Period. Their works reflect the dynamic nature of the Renaissance Period and the reemergence of discussion and deliberation regarding the nature and uses of communication. The works of these scholars were a springboard back into a full-blown examination of communication, which continued into The Enlightenment.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT (1600-1800 CE)

A maturing Europe continued to see a lessening of tension between the church and secular institutions, and the transformation of the Communication field was a reflection of broader cultural shifts. Modernizations, such as the printing press, made the written word more readily available to the masses through newspapers and books thus, forever changing the ways people learned and communicated. This era was the precursor to the industrial revolution and began the rapid changes in the development of our field that were to come.

Golden, Berquist, and Colemen point to four prominent trends during The Enlightenment. Neoclassicism revived the classical approach to rhetoric by adapting and applying it to contemporary situations. Second, the eclectic method of belletristic scholars offered standards of style for presenting and critiquing oration, drama, and poetry. Englishman Hugh Blair (1718-1800) advocated the notion of good taste and character in communication encounters, and a book of his lectures was so popular that his publisher stated, "half of the educated English-speaking world was reading Blair" (Covino 80). Third, the psychological/epistemological school of rhetoric applied communication study to basic human nature, knowledge, and thought. The Scottish minister and educator, George Campbell (1719-1796), tried to create convincing arguments using scientific and moral reasoning by seeking to understand how people used speech to persuade others. Finally, the elocutionary approach concentrated on delivery and

style by providing strict rules for a speaker's bodily actions such as gestures, facial expressions, tone, and pronunciation.

Overall, the Enlightenment Period served as a bridge between the past and the present of communication study, the old and the new school. During this period, people used many of the early approaches to further explore communication in ways that would ignite an explosion in the Communication field in the 20th Century. While we've quickly covered 2400 years of communication study, let's look at the 20th century, which witnessed more advances in communication study than the previous 2400 years combined.

NEW SCHOOL: COMMUNICATION STUDY IN THE 20TH & 21ST CENTURY

Topics such as persuasion, public speaking, political debate, preaching, letter writing, and education guided communication study in the early periods as these were the pressing social matters of the day. With the industrial revolution in full effect, major world changes took place that impacted the continuing advancement of communication study. We have seen more changes in the ways humans communicate, and communication study, in the past 100 years than in any other time in history. Rapid advances in technology, and the emergence of a "global village," have provided almost limitless areas to study communication. In this half of the chapter, we examine the development of the modern field of Communication, demonstrating how it has developed into the departments of Communication that you may recognize on your campus today.

The Emergence of a Contemporary Academic Field

Think about the different departments and majors on your campus. What about the department of Communication. How did it get there? You may not know it, but academic departments like Communication are a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. While there is evidence of speech instruction in the U.S. as far back as the colonial period, 100 years ago there were only a few departments of Communication in U.S. colleges and universities (Delia). From 1890 to 1920, "the various aspects of oral communication were drawn together and integrated, under the common rubric of speech" and generally housed in departments of English (Gray 422). Some universities moved to create specific academic departments of communication in the late 1800's, such as De Pauw (1884), Earlham (1887), Cornell (1889), Michigan and Chicago (1892), and Ohio Wesleyan (1894), which led the way for the continued academic development of Communication study (Smith).

The first large-scale demand to create distinct departments of Communication came at the Public Speaking Conference of the New England and North Atlantic States in 1913 (Smith 455). Here, faculty expressed the desire to separate from departments of English. The art and science of oral communication went in different directions than traditional areas of focus in English, and those with these interests wanted the resources and recognition that accompanied this

field of study. Hamilton College was an early pioneer of Speech instruction in the U.S. and had a recognized department of Elocution and Rhetoric as early as 1841. But, it was not until the early 20th century that Communication saw the emergence of seven M.A. programs and the granting of the first Ph.D.'s in the early 1920's. By "1944 the United States Office of Education used its own survey of speech departments to assure the educational world that 'the expressive arts have gained full recognition in college programs of study'" (Smith 448).

Pin It! Case in Point: Communication Study Now - International, National, and Regional Organizations of Communication Study

A variety of professional organizations are devoted to organizing those interested in studying communication, organizing conferences for scholars to communicate about current research, and publishing academic journals highlighting the latest in research from our discipline. To find out more about what these organizations do, you can visit their websites.

The International Communication Association (ICA) was first organized in the 1940's by various speech departments as the National Society for the Study of Communication (NSSC). By 1950 the NSSC had become the ICA and had the express purpose of bringing together academics and professionals around the world interested in the study of human communication. The ICA currently has over 3,400 members with over two-thirds of them working as teachers and researchers in educational settings around the world. International Communication Association (ICA) (http://www.icahdq.org)

A relatively new organization that takes advantage of computer technologies to organize its members is the American Communication Association (ACA). The ACA was founded in 1993 and actually exists as a virtual professional association that includes researchers, teachers, and professionals devoted to communication study in North, Central, and South America as well as in the Caribbean. American Communication Association (ACA) (http://www.americancomm.org)

The largest United States organization devoted to communication is the National Communication Association (NCA). NCA boasts the largest membership of any communication organization in the world. Currently there are approximately 7,100 members from the U.S. and more than 20 foreign countries. The NCA is a scholarly society devoted to "enhancing the research, teaching, and service produced by its members on topics of both intellectual and social significance" (www.natcom.org). National Communication Association (NCA) (http://www.natcom.org)

There are also smaller regional organizations including the Eastern Communication Association (ECA) (http://www.jmu.edu/orgs/eca), the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA) (http://ssca.net), Central States Communication Association (CSCA) (http://www.csca-net.org), and Western States Communication Association (WSCA) (http://www.westcomm.org).

As Communication scholars formed departments of Communication, they also organized themselves into associations that reflected the interests of the field. The first organization of

Communication professionals was the National Association of Elocutionists, established in 1892 (Rarig & Greaves 490), followed by The Eastern Public Speaking Conference formed in 1910. Within a year, over sixty secondary-school teachers of Speech attended a conference at Swarthmore (Smith 423). Our current National Communication Association began during this time in 1914 as the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking, and became the Speech Communication Association in 1970. It wasn't until 1997 that members voted to change it to its current name. As a result of the work of the early founders, a number of organizations are currently devoted to bringing together those interested in studying communication.

After 2400 years of study going in a variety of directions, the beginning of the 20th century showed the desire of communication teachers to formally organize and institutionalize the study of communication. These organizations have played a large part in determining how departments of Communication look and function on college campuses, the Communication curriculum, and the latest in teaching strategies for Communication professors. To better understand the Communication department on your campus today, let's examine some of the important events and people that shaped the study of communication during the 20th century.

1900-1940

From the mid 1800's through the early part of the 20th century, significant changes occurred in politics, social life, education, commercialization, and technology. These changes are reflected in the organizations, universities, colleges, and mass production that we know today. As a result of all this change, new areas of communication research emerged to answer the relevant questions of the day. From 1900–1940, communication study focused on five primary areas that experienced rapid changes and advances: "(1) work on communication and political institutions, (2) research concerned with the role of communication in social life, (3) social-psychological analyses of communication, (4) studies of communication and education, and (5) commercially motivated research" (Delia 25). It's likely that many of these areas are represented in the Communication department at your campus.

This period brought many changes to the political landscape, with new technologies beginning to significantly alter the communication of political messages. When you think about our focus on politics, much of our assessment of the communication in this arena came from the work of scholars in the early 20th century. They focused on propaganda analysis, political themes in public communication (magazines, textbooks, etc.), and public opinion research that explored the opinions of society at large on major political and social issues. If you follow politics, you're obviously familiar with political polls that try to determine people's beliefs and political values. This line of work was influenced by the early works of Walter Lippman who is considered the father of public opinion analysis. Similarly, Harold Lasswell's pioneering work on propaganda set the foundation for studying how mass communication influences the social conscious of large groups of people. All of us have been exposed to a barrage of public opinion polls and political messages in the media.

Understanding these may seem quite daunting to the average person. Yet, through the work of scholars such as Lippman and Lasswell, analysis of public opinion polls and propaganda have been able to provide incredible insight into the impacts of such communication. For example, according to a Gallup poll in 2014, only 15% of Americans approved of the performance of congress. Compare this to the fact that in 2001, 56% of Americans approved of the job performance of congress. Public opinion polls and analysis of propaganda messages allow us to follow the sentiment of large groups of people.

During the early 20th century, society changed through urbanization, industrialization, and continued developments in mass media. As a result, there was a need to understand how these changes impacted human communication. A very influential group of scholars studied communication and social life at the Chicago School of Sociology. Herbert Blumer, Charles H. Cooley, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Robert E. Park committed themselves to "scientific sociology" that focused on the "sensitivity to the interrelation of persons' experiences and the social contexts of their lives" (Delia 31). They focused on how people interacted; examined the effects of urbanization on peoples' social lives; studied film and media institutions and their effects on culture; explored culture, conflict, and consensus; highlighted the effects of marketing and advertising; and researched interpersonal communication. This group of scholars, and their research interests, were pivotal in creating what you know as Communication departments because they moved the field from being solely humanistic (focused on public speaking, performance, and analysis), to social scientific (exploring the social impacts and realities of communication through scientific methods).

The third focus of communication inquiry during this time was the advancement of Social Psychology, which explored individual social behavior in communication contexts. If you have seen the Jacksass movies/show or the show the older show Punk'D, you've witnessed how the characters of these shows violate communication norms to get a reaction from others. Social Psychologists focused on issues such as communication norms and the impact of our communication in social contexts. In other words, where do we get ideas of "normal" communication behaviors and how does our communication impact social situations? Another area of focus in Social Psychology was the study of the effects of media on communication outcomes. A particular focus was movies. Movies developed rapidly as a source of entertainment for youth prior to World War I, and researchers wanted to understand what impact watching movies had on young people. It's likely that you've heard debate and discussion about the potential harm of seeing violence in movies, television, and video games. Much of this research began with the Social Psychologists of the early 20th century and continues today as we discuss the impact of mass media on society, culture, relationships, and individuals.

The study of communication in education was the fourth important development in the field between 1900 and 1940. Do you have good professors? Do you have poor professors? What makes them good or poor? Think about your college classroom today. A great deal of the way it is organized and conducted can be traced back to early research in instructional communication. Early on, the possible impacts of every major new technology (radio, film, and

television) on educational outcomes became a primary focus of this specialization. Many thought that these technologies would completely change how we received an education. Later, many people theorized that the personal computer would revolutionize classroom instruction. Instructional communication research in the early 1900's through the present day seeks to discover the best communicative techniques for teaching.

The fifth important development in communication study during this period focused on commercialism and human communication. With an increase in national brands, marketing, and advertising, commercial organizations were interested in influencing consumer habits. During this period, people began to understand mass media's ability to persuade (think advertising!). There were incredible financial implications for using mass media to sell products. These implications didn't escape those who could profit from mass media, and prompted lines of research that examined the impacts of advertising and marketing on consumer behavior.

Paul Lazarsfeld studied mass communication to understand its commercial implications and was an early pioneer in understanding persuasion and advertising. Examine ads on television or in magazines. What makes them effective or ineffective? What advertising messages are most likely to influence you to purchase a product? These sorts of questions began to be explored in the early part of the 20th century. This line of research is so powerful that Yankelovich Inc. estimates that the average urban American now sees or hears 5,000 advertisements and brand exposures a day. While this number may seem impossible, think of the radio, TV, movie, billboard, and internet advertisements you encounter everyday. In fact, one of your authors was astounded when he went into a public bathroom and there were advertisements above and IN the urinal!

While these early communication research areas actually emerged from other academic disciplines (sociology, psychology, anthropology, and politics), Communication scholars found it necessary to organize themselves to further advance the field. Continued changes in the world, including World War I and World War II, prompted even greater advances in Communication research and the development of the field from the 1940's through the 1960's.

1940-1970

World War II played a major role in shaping the direction of communication study during the 1940s. Two instrumental players in communication research during this era, Kurt Lewin and Carl Hovland et al. studied group dynamics and mass communication. Following World War II, scholars such as Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Hovland, and Schramm wanted to bring more credibility and attention to their research. One approach they used to accomplish this was to call for Communication study to be its own field of research at universities. They began using the terms "mass communication" and "communication research" more frequently in their writings, which helped begin the process of distinguishing Communication research and departments from other fields such as political science, psychology, and sociology (Rogers, 1994). This served as the big push to create departments of Communication that you are familiar with today.

In 1949 Lazarsfeld and Stanton argued that, “the whole field of communications research should be covered simultaneously” (xi), which was an attempt to formalize communication study as a field that included not only the humanities, but the “social science of communication aimed at theory development” (Delia 59). These Communication scholars began forming Communication into its own academic field by creating and adopting a vocabulary specific to the field, writing core subject matter into Communication textbooks, and agreeing to a relatively stable set of communication processes that could be taught in college and university classrooms. Of course, the continued formal organization of Communication scholars we discussed earlier continued to help strengthen this move.

Another notable contributor to the development of the field during this time was Wilbur Schramm. Schramm is often credited as the first person to create university classes with “communication” in the title, author textbooks for Communication-specific courses, be awarded a Ph.D. in Communication, and have the title “Professor of Communication” at the University of Illinois (Rogers 446-447). After World War II, Schramm moved to the University of Illinois and founded the Institute of Communications Research in 1947 and its sister institute at Stanford University in 1956. He is often credited as being the modern father of communication study. As a result of his work, departments and colleges of Communication and Speech began to form around the country, particularly in the mid-west. Schools in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Washington, and North Carolina began to form departments and/or colleges that included “communication” as part of their title. In fact, if you’re planning on getting a Ph.D. in Communication, it is very likely you will attend a school in the mid-west or east because of the early developments of departments in these regions. Now, departments of Speech, Communication, and Speech Communication exist on colleges and universities both nationally and internationally.

The 1950’s saw two areas of research develop that are still a major focus in our field today–research on voting and mass media (Lazarsfeld, Hadley, & Stanton; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet), and experimental studies on persuasion (Hovland). The move from mass media and political communication research in the early 1900’s to a more theoretical approach in the 1940’s and 50’s brought together two areas that make Communication study such an important academic field today–theory and practice. Research in the 1940’s and 1950’s was conducted using experimental and survey methods with an emphasis on generating theories of how and why we communicate. As the field began to grow and emerge, Delia states that it struggled with the following question: “Was the field to be interdisciplinary or autonomous; and if autonomous, on what terms? Communication study in the late 1940’s embraced divergent and contradictory attitudes that leave this question unresolved after [50] years” (72).

Pin It! Teaching And Learning Communication Now
If you are interested in what Communication Scholars do and study, you can always look up Tedx talks that they have given to find out more. Communication scholars are actively presenting their ideas about their work and the discipline around the country and the world. The National Communication Association has compiled a webpage where you can find examples of Tedx talks (link: http://www.natcom.org/commtedx/#.VGKCiw02Id4.gmail) by those in Communication.

Following World War II, Communication research also focused on public speaking, instructional communication, communication anxiety, persuasion, group dynamics, and business communication. While the early 20th century saw major new approaches for studying communication, the 1960's and 1970's saw renewed emphasis and focus on the works of those from the Classical Period. Thus, the 1960's and 1970's worked to bridge together the old and new school of Communication study for the first time. While scholars in the 1960's and 1970's reconsidered classical approaches, others such as Burke (1962; 1966) pushed the boundaries of rhetorical study. Rather than focusing on the speeches of "dead white guys," Burke wanted to analyze a much broader scope of communication events including protest rhetoric, film, television, and radio (Delia 81).

With this bridging of the old and new schools, Communication departments now have professors who study and teach classical rhetoric, contemporary rhetoric, empirical social science, and qualitative social science. As each era generated new research, previous knowledge laid the foundation for the innumerable challenges of studying communication in a rapidly changing technological, postmodern world. Since the 1970s, we have seen more technological and world changes than at any other time in history, guiding the ways in which we now study communication.

1970 to the Present Day

The emergence of the women's, civil-rights, and anti-war movements in the 1960's and 70's reintroduced old social questions and concerns that had gone largely ignored by society. Fortunately, the field of Communication was progressive enough to take on the challenge of responding to these questions and concerns from its own perspective. Thus, the 1970's saw a rise in feminist scholarship that contributed greatly to a field that has seen progressive and consistent development since 400 BCE by those not afraid to tackle the dominate social problems of the day.

Pin It! Teaching And Learning Communication Now

Remember our discussion earlier regarding the overwhelming exclusion of women in education, including communication study. In its report, Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities Summary Report 2013, The National Opinion Research Center Reported that 649 Ph.D.'s were awarded in Communication in 2013. Of those, 403 were awarded to women. This means 63.2% of Ph.D.'s earned in Communication in 2006 were earned by women. We've come a long way from the Classical Period. Now, it's more likely that you will have a female professor than a male professor! While change has been slow, it is happening: http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2013/data/tab15.pdf

Women have, and continue to be, active in the National Communication Association. In fact, NCA has a page devoted to the Women's Leadership Project that details how women have been instrumental in contributing to the advancement of the discipline. Read more here (link: http://www.natcom.org/womensleadership/#.VGJ5s6f0JNI.gmail).

Two pioneering organizations devoted to women's scholarship in Communication are the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG) founded in 1972, and the Organization for Research on Women and Communication (ORWAC) founded in 1977. Over the course of the next decade, women's scholarship gained prominence in the various professional organizations devoted to teaching and researching communication. Feminist researchers like Donna Allen, Sandra A. Purnell, Sally Miller Gearhart, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss and many others have been instrumental in the formation of a well-established and respected body of research that challenged the status quo of many of our theoretical assumptions and research practices established in past eras. (Their research will be discussed in more detail in Part II of the text.)

From the 1980's until the present day, the field of Communication has continued to grow. The field maintains strong teaching and research interests in areas such as rhetoric, mass communication, instructional communication, interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, intercultural communication, gender communication, health communication, visual communication, communication and sport, Latino/Latina Communication Studies, family communication, and many more.

Pin It! Communication Studies Today And Tomorrow

Today, many colleges and universities have Communication as part of their curriculum with departments titled with names like Speech, Speech Communication, and Communication. Likewise, our professional organizations are still active in growing and strengthening the field through teaching and research. Even with the increased recognition, there is still considerable growth, change, and movement taking place in communication studies. Those involved in the field actively and openly debate and discuss various theoretical and methodological approaches for studying human communication. The study of human communication continues to be a wide and diverse field, with each area increasing our understanding of how humans communicate.

Figure 2.5 Telecommunications.[15]

As history explains, changes in the world will continue to guide our approaches for understanding and researching communication. We have moved from an industrial age to an information age and have yet to fully understand the communicative implications of this shift. Advances in communication and information technologies are forever changing the ways we research and teach communication in our colleges and universities. While it is difficult to predict the specific areas and phenomena of study for future communication research, it is safe to assume that continued global and social changes will shape the development of our field.

HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES SUMMARY

Our history tells us that men and women from all cultures have been interested in observing and theorizing about the role of communication in multiple contexts—government, politics,

[15] Image by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

law, religion, technology, and education. The Old School of communication study consisted of four major periods of intellectual development—Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment. The Classical Period (500 BCE-400 CE) gave birth to seminal figures who set the foundation for communication study. Plato (428-348 BCE) introduced the concept and practice of the dialectic. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) defined rhetoric and three necessary proofs for persuasion. Cicero (106-43BCE) contributed the canons of rhetoric—invention, arrangement, expression/style, memory, and delivery.

As the church dominated public life in the Medieval Period (400-1400 CE), there was little intellectual development. St. Augustine is one who stands out for his continued development of rhetorical theory and its relationship to the church.

The Renaissance (1400-1600 CE) was a rebirth of sorts as Christine de Pisan (1365-1429) and Laura Cereta (1469-1499) continued the tradition of Aspasia and Pan Chao in securing educational opportunities for women. Ramus further developed the canons by combining style and delivery while Bacon continued his work following the classical tradition.

The final period, the Enlightenment (1600-1800), is characterized by intellectual trends—neoclassicism, the eclectic method of belletristic scholars, psychological/epistemological study of rhetoric, and the elocutionary approach.

The New School of communication studies brought about more formal academic departments of Communication in the 1800-1900s. Along with these academic placements came the formation of professional organizations such as NCA and ICA that helped foster greater recognition and development of the study of communication on a national and international scale. As the U.S. and world was challenged by changes in technology, politics, and social life, Communication scholars sought to address them by focusing on five areas of research—political institutions, the role of communication in social life, social-psychological analyses of communication, communication and education, and commercially motivated research. Following WWI and WWII scholars continued to be motivated by global and social issues such as the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the anti-war movement. The trend continues as current scholars are driven by the prominent social and technological issues of the day such as technology, health care, social issues, and the environment.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the specializations of the Communication professors at your school?
2. How did your professor get started in the field of Communication?
3. If you wanted to study some type of communication phenomenon, what would it be and why?
4. With the increasing emphasis on communication and information technologies, what kind of communication research do you think will happen in the future?
5. Why is knowing our history valuable for understanding the discipline?

Key Terms and People

- Arrangement
- Aristotle
- Audience Analysis
- Aspasia
- Augustine
- Canons Of Rhetoric
- Cicero
- Classical Period
- Corax
- Delivery
- Dialectic
- Eclectic Method Of Belletristic Scholars
- Enlightenment
- Francis Bacon
- Invention
- Isocrates
- Laura Cereta
- Medieval Period
- Memory
- Neoclassism
- Pan Chao
- Petrus Ramus
- Plato
- Psychological/Epistemological School Of Rhetoric
- Quintilian
- Renaissance
- Rhetoric
- Socrates
- Sophists
- Style
- Tisias
- Vach

CHAPTER 3: PERCEIVING AND UNDERSTANDING

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe communication and perception processes.
- Discuss factors that influence perception of the self and others.
- Describe strategies for improving perception.

COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTION

Think back to the first day of classes. Did you plan ahead for what you were going to wear? Did you get the typical school supplies together? Did you try to find your classrooms ahead of time or look for the syllabus online? Did you look up your professors on an online professor evaluation site? Based on your answers to these questions, I could form an impression of who you are as a student. But would that perception be accurate? Would it match up with how you see yourself as a student? And perception, of course, is a two-way street. You also formed impressions about your professors based on their appearance, dress, organization, intelligence, and approachability. As a professor who teaches others how to teach, I instruct my student-teachers to really take the first day of class seriously. The impressions that both teacher and student make on the first day help set the tone for the rest of the semester.

As we go through our daily lives we perceive all sorts of people and objects, and we often make sense of these perceptions by using previous experiences to help filter and organize the information we take in. Sometimes we encounter new or contradictory information that changes the way we think about a person, group, or object. The perceptions that we make of others and that others make of us affect how we communicate and act. In this chapter, we will learn about the perception process, how we perceive others, how we perceive and present ourselves, and how we can improve our perceptions.

Perception Process

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process includes the perception of select stimuli that pass through our perceptual filters, are organized into our existing structures and patterns, and are then interpreted based on previous experiences. Although perception is a largely cognitive and psychological process, how we perceive the people and objects around us affects our communication. We respond differently to an object or person that we perceive favorably than we do to something we find unfavorable. But how do we filter through the mass amounts of incoming information, organize

it, and make meaning from what makes it through our perceptual filters and into our social realities?

Selecting Information

We take in information through all five of our senses, but our perceptual field (the world around us) includes so many stimuli that it is impossible for our brains to process and make sense of it all. So, as information comes in through our senses, various factors influence what actually continues on through the perception process. Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, Social Cognition, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1991). Selecting is the first part of the perception process, in which we focus our attention on certain incoming sensory information. Think about how, out of many other possible stimuli to pay attention to, you may hear a familiar voice in the hallway, see a pair of shoes you want to buy from across the mall, or smell something cooking for dinner when you get home from work. We quickly cut through and push to the background all kinds of sights, smells, sounds, and other stimuli, but how do we decide what to select and what to leave out?

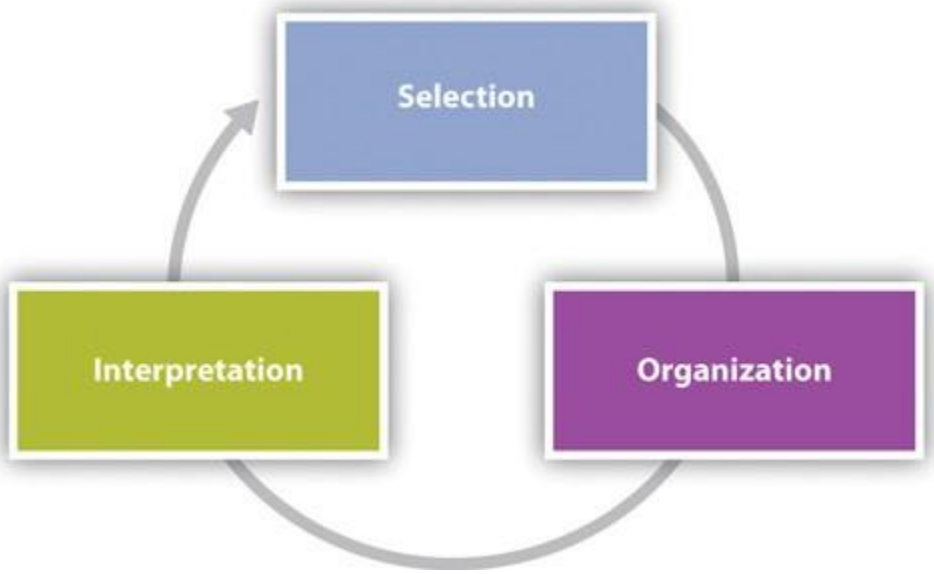

Figure 3.1: The Perception Process[16]

We tend to pay attention to information that is salient. Salience is the degree to which something attracts our attention in a particular context. The thing attracting our attention can be abstract, like a concept, or concrete, like an object. For example, a person's identity as a Native American may become salient when they are protesting at the Columbus Day parade in Denver, Colorado. Or a bright flashlight shining in your face while camping at night is sure to be salient. The degree of salience depends on three features. Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, Social Cognition, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1991), 186. We tend to find salient things

[16] Image by Lumen Learning is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA

that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our needs or interests. Lastly, expectations affect what we find salient.

Organizing Information

Organizing is the second part of the perception process, in which we sort and categorize information that we perceive based on innate and learned cognitive patterns (schemata). Four schemata help us makes sense of experiences: prototypes, personal constructs, stereotypes and scripts.

Constructivism is the idea that we organize and interpret experience by applying cognitive structures called cognitive schemata. There are four types of these schemata, prototypes, personal construct, stereotypes, and scripts which we use to make sense of phenomena. One or all of these tools can be used to organize our perceptions in a meaningful way.

The first of the schemata is known as a prototype. A prototype defines the clearest or most representative examples of some category. It is an ideal or best example, of a particular category. Stating that a particular person would make the ideal friend, or that someone is the perfect worker, are both means of prototyping. We classify people by the category that most represents them. Then we consider how well they measure up.

The second schemata, personal construct, allows us to measure people and situations. We do so usually after we generalize people into their category or stereotype. Then we make judgment in a bipolar manner and our perception may not include non-highlighted qualities. Thus, we are reminded that the process of selecting and organizing interact to affect our perception.

The third schemata known as stereotyping is the process of predicting generalizations of people and situations. It is very widely used and can be negative as well as positive. However, it is rarely a completely accurate form of measure.

Finally, the last schemata which is used as a guide to action is known as a script. A script is a sequence of activities that spells out how we and others are expected to act in a specific situation. We follow these scripts when someone says hello, when we date, at church, and in many other situations. We have been trained by our environment to follow certain paths that can be constructive, destructive or both.

The organization of what we select to interpret has a very large influence on our perception. Our different environments that we have lived in through our lives will always influence our insight. All four cognitive schemata are ever changing based on new environments and how open we are to new ideas. The ability to understand that we cannot possibly have a complete understanding of people in this world is crucial to the interpretation process. Only if we realize that we change with every input of information, with every bite of food, with every breath of air can we understand that cognitive schemata are ever-changing. Therefore, we must revisit

regularly how we organize our perceptions constantly and replace what we have thought to be true with what we have learned to be truth.

Interpreting Information

Although selecting and organizing incoming stimuli happens very quickly, and sometimes without much conscious thought, interpretation can be a much more deliberate and conscious step in the perception process. Interpretation6 is the third part of the perception process, in which we assign meaning to our experiences using mental structures known as schemata. Schemata are like databases of stored, related information that we use to interpret new experiences. We all have fairly complicated schemata that have developed over time as small units of information combine to make more meaningful complexes of information.

We have an overall schema about education and how to interpret experiences with teachers and classmates. This schema started developing before we even went to preschool based on things that parents, peers, and the media told us about school. For example, you learned that certain symbols and objects like an apple, a ruler, a calculator, and a notebook are associated with being a student or teacher. You learned new concepts like grades and recess, and you engaged in new practices like doing homework, studying, and taking tests. You also formed new relationships with teachers, administrators, and classmates. As you progressed through your education, your schema adapted to the changing environment. How smooth or troubling schema reevaluation and revision is varies from situation to situation and person to person. For example, some students adapt their schema relatively easily as they move from elementary, to middle, to high school, and on to college and are faced with new expectations for behavior and academic engagement. Other students don't adapt as easily and holding onto their old schema creates problems as they try to interpret new information through old, incompatible schema. We've all been in a similar situation at some point in our lives, so we know that revising our schemata can be stressful and that such revision takes effort and usually involves some mistakes, disappointments, and frustrations. But being able to adapt our schemata is a sign of cognitive complexity, which is an important part of communication competence. So, even though the process may be challenging, it can also be a time for learning and growth.

It's important to be aware of schemata because our interpretations affect our behavior. For example, if you are doing a group project for class and you perceive a group member to be shy based on your schema of how shy people communicate, you may avoid giving him presentation responsibilities in your group project because you do not think shy people make good public speakers. Schemata also guide our interactions, providing a script for our behaviors. We know, in general, how to act and communicate in a waiting room, in a classroom, on a first date, and on a game show. Even a person who has never been on a game show can develop a schema for how to act in that environment by watching The Price Is Right, for example. People go to great lengths to make shirts with clever sayings or act enthusiastically in hopes of being picked to be a part of the studio audience and hopefully become a contestant on the show.

As we have seen, schemata are used to interpret others' behavior and form impressions about who they are as a person. To help this process along, we often solicit information from people to help us place them into a preexisting schema. In the United States and many other Western cultures, people's identities are often closely tied to what they do for a living. When we introduce others, or ourselves, occupation is usually one of the first things we mention. Think about how your communication with someone might differ if he or she were introduced to you as an artist versus a doctor. We make similar interpretations based on where people are from, their age, their race, and other social and cultural factors. We will learn more about how culture, gender, and other factors influence our perceptions as we continue through the chapter. In summary, we have schemata about individuals, groups, places, and things, and these schemata filter our perceptions before, during, and after interactions. As schemata are retrieved from memory, they are executed, like computer programs or apps on your smartphone, to help us interpret the world around us. Just like computer programs and apps must be regularly updated to improve their functioning, competent communicators update and adapt their schemata as they have new experiences.

Summary of Perception Process

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process affects our communication because we respond to stimuli differently, whether they are objects or persons, based on how we perceive them.

Given the massive amounts of stimuli taken in by our senses, we only select a portion of the incoming information to organize and interpret. We select information based on salience. We tend to find salient things that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our needs and interests. Expectations also influence what information we select.

We organize information that we select into patterns based on proximity, similarity, and difference.

We interpret information using schemata, which allow us to assign meaning to information based on accumulated knowledge and previous experience.

PERCEIVING OTHERS

Are you a good judge of character? How quickly can you "size someone up?" Interestingly, research shows that many people are surprisingly accurate at predicting how an interaction with someone will unfold based on initial impressions. Fascinating research has also been done on the ability of people to make a judgment about a person's competence after as little as 100 milliseconds of exposure to politicians' faces. Even more surprising is that people's judgments of competence, after exposure to two candidates for senate elections, accurately predicted election outcomes. Charles C. Ballew II and Alexander Todorov, "Predicting Political Elections from Rapid and Unreflective Face Judgments," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 104, no. 46 (2007): 17948. In short, after only minimal exposure to a candidate's facial

expressions, people made judgments about the person's competence, and those candidates judged more competent were people who actually won elections! As you read this section, keep in mind that these principles apply to how you perceive others and to how others perceive you. Just as others make impressions on us, we make impressions on others. We have already learned how the perception process works in terms of selecting, organizing, and interpreting. In this section, we will focus on how we perceive others, with specific attention to how we interpret our perceptions of others.

Attribution and Interpretation

I'm sure you have a family member, friend, or coworker with whom you have ideological or political differences. When conversations and inevitable disagreements occur, you may view this person as "pushing your buttons" if you are invested in the issue being debated, or you may view the person as "on their soapbox" if you aren't invested. In either case, your existing perceptions of the other person are probably reinforced after your conversation and you may leave the conversation thinking, "She is never going to wake up and see how ignorant she is! I don't know why I even bother trying to talk to her!" Similar situations occur regularly, and there are some key psychological processes that play into how we perceive others' behaviors. By examining these processes, attribution in particular, we can see how our communication with others is affected by the explanations we create for others' behavior. In addition, we will learn some common errors that we make in the attribution process that regularly lead to conflict and misunderstanding.

Attribution

In most interactions, we are constantly running an attribution script in our minds, which essentially tries to come up with explanations for what is happening. Why did my neighbor slam the door when she saw me walking down the hall? Why is my partner being extra nice to me today? Why did my officemate miss our project team meeting this morning? In general, we seek to attribute the cause of others' behaviors to internal or external factors. Internal attributions connect the cause of behaviors to personal aspects such as personality traits. External attributions connect the cause of behaviors to situational factors. Attributions are important to consider because our reactions to others' behaviors are strongly influenced by the explanations we reach. Imagine that Gloria and Jerry are dating. One day, Jerry gets frustrated and raises his voice to Gloria. She may find that behavior more offensive and even consider breaking up with him if she attributes the cause of the blow up to his personality, since personality traits are usually fairly stable and difficult to control or change.

Conversely, Gloria may be more forgiving if she attributes the cause of his behavior to situational factors beyond Jerry's control, since external factors are usually temporary. If she makes an internal attribution, Gloria may think, "Wow, this person is really a loose cannon. Who knows when he will lose it again?" If she makes an external attribution, she may think, "Jerry has been under a lot of pressure to meet deadlines at work and hasn't been getting much sleep. Once this project is over, I'm sure he'll be more relaxed." This process of attribution is

ongoing, and, as with many aspects of perception, we are sometimes aware of the attributions we make, and sometimes they are automatic and/or unconscious. Attribution has received much scholarly attention because it is in this part of the perception process that some of the most common perceptual errors or biases occur.

Figure 3.2 Angry man driving.[17]

One of the most common perceptual errors is the fundamental attribution error, which refers to our tendency to explain others' behaviors using internal rather than external attributions. Allan L. Sillars, "Attributions and Communication in Roommate Conflicts," Communication Monographs 47, no. 3 (1980): 183. For example, when I worked at an urban college in Denver, Colorado, I often had students come into class irritated, saying, "I got a parking ticket! I can't believe those people. Why don't they get a real job and stop ruining my life!" If you Google some clips from the reality television show Parking Wars, you will see the ire that people often direct at parking enforcement officers. In this case, illegally parked students attribute the cause of their situation to the malevolence of the parking officer, essentially saying they got a ticket because the officer was a mean/bad person, which is an internal attribution. Students were much less likely to acknowledge that the officer was just doing his or her job (an external attribution) and the ticket was a result of the student's decision to park illegally.

Perceptual errors can also be biased, and in the case of the self-serving bias, the error works out in our favor. Just as we tend to attribute others' behaviors to internal rather than external causes, we do the same for ourselves, especially when our behaviors have led to something successful or positive. When our behaviors lead to failure or something negative, we tend to attribute the cause to external factors. Thus, the self-serving bias is a perceptual error through which we attribute the cause of our successes to internal personal factors while attributing our failures to external factors beyond our control. When we look at the fundamental attribution

[17] Image by Mlke Kline is licensed under CC BY 2.0

error and the self-serving bias together, we can see that we are likely to judge ourselves more favorably than another person, or at least less personally.

The professor-student relationship offers a good case example of how these concepts can play out. I have often heard students who earned an unsatisfactory grade on an assignment attribute that grade to the strictness, unfairness, or incompetence of their professor. I have also heard professors attribute a poor grade to the student's laziness, attitude, or intelligence. In both cases, the behavior is explained using an internal attribution and is an example of the fundamental attribution error. Students may further attribute their poor grade to their busy schedule or other external, situational factors rather than their lack of motivation, interest, or preparation (internal attributions). On the other hand, when students get a good grade on a paper, they will likely attribute that cause to their intelligence or hard work rather than an easy assignment or an "easy grading" professor. Both of these examples illustrate the self-serving bias. These psychological processes have implications for our communication because when we attribute causality to another person's personality, we tend to have a stronger emotional reaction and tend to assume that this personality characteristic is stable, which may lead us to avoid communication with the person or to react negatively. Now that you're aware of these common errors, you can monitor them more and engage in perception checking, which we will learn more about later, to verify your attributions.

PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON PERCEPTION

We make first impressions based on a variety of factors, including physical and environmental characteristics. In terms of physical characteristics, style of dress and grooming are important, especially in professional contexts. We have general schema regarding how to dress and groom for various situations ranging from formal, to business casual, to casual, to lounging around the house.

You would likely be able to offer some descriptors of how a person would look and act from the following categories: a goth person, a prep, a jock, a fashionista, a hipster. The schema associated with these various cliques or styles are formed through personal experience and through exposure to media representations of these groups. Different professions also have schema for appearance and dress. Imagine a doctor, mechanic, congressperson, exotic dancer, or mail carrier. Each group has clothing and personal styles that create and fit into general patterns. Of course, the mental picture we have of any of the examples above is not going to be representative of the whole group, meaning that stereotypical thinking often exists within our schema. We will learn more about the negative effects of stereotypical thinking later in the chapter, but it's important to understand how persuasive various physical perceptual influences can be.

Think about the harm that has been done when people pose as police or doctors to commit crimes or other acts of malice. Seeing someone in a white lab coat automatically leads us to see

that person as an authority figure, and we fall into a scripted pattern of deferring to the "doctor" and not asking too many questions. The Milgram experiments offer a startling example of how powerful these influences are. In the experiments, participants followed instructions from a man in a white lab coat (who was actually an actor), who prompted them to deliver electric shocks to a person in another room every time the other person answered a memory question incorrectly. The experiment was actually about how people defer to authority figures instead of acting independently. Although no one was actually being shocked in the other room, many participants continued to "shock," at very high levels of voltage, the other person even after that person supposedly being shocked complained of chest pains and became unresponsive.[18]

Just as clothing and personal style help us form impressions of others, so do physical body features. The degree to which we perceive people to be attractive influences our attitudes about and communication with them. Facial attractiveness and body weight tend to be common features used in the perception of physical attractiveness. In general people find symmetrical faces and non-overweight bodies attractive. People perceived as attractive are generally evaluated more positively and seen as kinder and more competent than people evaluated as less attractive. Additionally, people rated as attractive receive more eye contact, more smiles, and closer proximity to others (people stand closer to them).

Although some physical and environmental features are easier to change than others, it is useful to become aware of how these factors, which aren't necessarily related to personality or verbal and nonverbal communication, shape our perceptions. These early impressions also affect how we interpret and perceive later encounters, which can be further explained through the halo and horn effects.

The Halo and Horn Effects

We have a tendency to adapt information that conflicts with our earlier impressions in order to make it fit within the frame we have established. This is known as selective distortion, and it manifests in the halo and horn effects. The angelic halo and devilish horn are useful metaphors for the lasting effects of positive and negative impressions.

The halo effect occurs when initial positive perceptions lead us to view later interactions as positive. The horn effect occurs when initial negative perceptions lead us to view later interactions as negative. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 281. Since impressions are especially important when a person is navigating the job market, let's imagine how the horn and halo effects could play out for a recent college graduate looking to land her first real job. Nell has recently graduated with her degree in communication studies and is looking to start her career as a corporate trainer. If one of Nell's professors has a relationship with an executive at an area business, his positive

[18] Gregorio Billikopf Encina, "Milgram's Experiment on Obedience to Authority," The Regents of the University of California, 2003, accessed June 6, 2012, http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ ucce50/ag-labor/7article/article35.htm.

verbal recommendation will likely result in a halo effect for Nell. Since the executive thinks highly of his friend the professor, and the professor things highly of Nell, then the executive will start his interaction with Nell with a positive impression and interpret her behaviors more positively than he would otherwise. The halo effect initiated by the professor's recommendation may even lead the executive to dismiss or overlook some negative behaviors. Let's say Nell doesn't have a third party to help make a connection and arrives late for her interview. That negative impression may create a horn effect that carries through the interview. Even if Nell presents as competent and friendly, the negative first impression could lead the executive to minimize or ignore those positive characteristics, and the company may not hire her.

We use attributions to interpret perceptual information, specifically, people's behavior. Internal attributions connect behavior to internal characteristics such as personality traits. External attributions connect behavior to external characteristics such as situational factors.

Two common perceptual errors that occur in the process of attribution are the fundamental attribution error and the self- serving bias.

- The fundamental attribution error refers to our tendency to overattribute other people's behaviors to internal rather than external causes.
- The self-serving bias refers to our tendency to overattribute our successes to internal factors and overattribute our failures to external factors.
- The halo effect describes a perceptual effect that occurs when initial positive impressions lead us to view later interactions as positive. The horn effect describes a perceptual effect that occurs when initial negative impressions lead us to view later interactions as negative

PERCEIVING AND PRESENTING SELF

Just as our perception of others affects how we communicate, so does our perception of ourselves. But what influences our self-perception? How much of our self is a product of our own making and how much of it is constructed based on how others react to us? How do we present ourselves to others in ways that maintain our sense of self or challenge how others see us? We will begin to answer these questions in this section as we explore self-concept, self-esteem, and self-presentation.

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the overall idea of who a person thinks they, she, or he is. If I said, "Tell me who you are," your answers would be clues as to how you see yourself, your self-concept. Each person has an overall self-concept that might be encapsulated in a short list of overarching characteristics that he or she finds important. But each person's self-concept is also influenced by context, meaning we think differently about ourselves depending on the situation we are in. In some situations, personal characteristics, such as our abilities, personality, and other distinguishing features, will best describe who we are. You might consider yourself laid back,

traditional, funny, open minded, or driven, or you might label yourself a leader or a thrill seeker. In other situations, our self-concept may be tied to group or cultural membership. For example, you might consider yourself a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, a Southerner, or a member of the track team.

Our self-concept is also formed through our interactions with others and their reactions to us. The concept of the looking glass self explains that we see ourselves reflected in other people's reactions to us and then form our self-concept based on how we believe other people see us. Charles Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order (New York, NY: Scribner, 1902). This reflective process of building our self-concept is based on what other people have actually said, such as "You're a good listener," and other people's actions, such as coming to you for advice. These thoughts evoke emotional responses that feed into our self-concept. For example, you may think, "I'm glad that people can count on me to listen to their problems."

Figure 3.4[19]

We also develop our self-concept through comparisons. Men are more likely than women to include group memberships in their self-concept descriptions to other people. Social comparison theory states that we describe and evaluate ourselves in terms of how we compare to other people. Social comparisons are based on two dimensions: superiority/inferiority and similarity/difference. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 261. In terms of superiority and inferiority, we evaluate characteristics like attractiveness, intelligence, athletic ability, and so on. For example, you may judge yourself to be more intelligent than your brother or less athletic than your best friend, and these judgments are incorporated into your self-concept. This process of comparison and evaluation isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can have negative consequences if our reference group isn't appropriate. Reference groups are the groups we use for social comparison, and they typically change based on what we are evaluating. In terms of athletic ability, many people choose unreasonable reference groups with which to engage in social comparison. If a man wants to get into better shape and starts an exercise routine, he may be discouraged by his difficulty keeping up with the aerobics instructor or running partner and judge himself as

[19] Image by Serghei Trofimov on Unsplash

inferior, which could negatively affect his self-concept. Using as a reference group people who have only recently started a fitness program but have shown progress could help maintain a more accurate and hopefully positive self-concept.

We also engage in social comparison based on similarity and difference. Since self- concept is context specific, similarity may be desirable in some situations and difference more desirable in others. Factors like age and personality may influence whether or not we want to fit in or stand out. Although we compare ourselves to others throughout our lives, adolescent and teen years usually bring new pressure to be similar to or different from particular reference groups. Think of all the cliques in high school and how people voluntarily and involuntarily broke off into groups based on popularity, interest, culture, or grade level. Some kids in your high school probably wanted to fit in with and be similar to other people in the marching band but be different from the football players. Conversely, athletes were probably more apt to compare themselves, in terms of similar athletic ability, to other athletes rather than kids in show choir. But social comparison can be complicated by perceptual influences. As we learned earlier, we organize information based on similarity and difference, but these patterns don't always hold true. Even though students involved in athletics and students involved in arts may seem very different, a dancer or singer may also be very athletic, perhaps even more so than a member of the football team. As with other aspects of perception, there are positive and negative consequences of social comparison.

We generally want to know where we fall in terms of ability and performance as compared to others, but what people do with this information and how it affects self-concept varies. Not all people feel they need to be at the top of the list, but some won't stop until they get the high score on the video game or set a new school record in a track-and-field event. Some people strive to be first chair in the clarinet section of the orchestra, while another person may be content to be second chair. The education system promotes social comparison through grades and rewards such as honor rolls and dean's lists. Although education and privacy laws prevent me from displaying each student's grade on a test or paper for the whole class to see, I do typically report the aggregate grades, meaning the total number of As, Bs, Cs, and so on. This doesn't violate anyone's privacy rights, but it allows students to see where they fell in the distribution. This type of social comparison can be used as motivation. The student who was one of only three out of twenty-three to get a D on the exam knows that most of her classmates are performing better than she is, which may lead her to think, "If they can do it, I can do it." But social comparison that isn't reasoned can have negative effects and result in negative thoughts like "Look at how bad I did. Man, I'm stupid!" These negative thoughts can lead to negative behaviors, because we try to maintain internal consistency, meaning we act in ways that match up with our self-concept. So, if the student begins to question her academic abilities and then incorporates an assessment of herself as a "bad student" into her self-concept, she may then behave in ways consistent with that, which is only going to worsen her academic performance. Additionally, a student might be comforted to learn that he isn't the only person who got a D and then not feel the need to try to improve, since he has company. You can see in this example that evaluations we place on our self-concept can lead to cycles of

thinking and acting. These cycles relate to self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are components of our self-concept.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the judgments and evaluations we make about our self- concept. While self-concept is a broad description of the self, self-esteem is more specifically an evaluation of the self. Barbara M. Byrne, Measuring Self-Concept across the Life Span: Issues and Instrumentation (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), If I again prompted you to "Tell me who you are," and then asked you to evaluate (label as good/bad, positive/negative, desirable/undesirable) each of the things you listed about yourself, I would get clues about your self- esteem. Like self-concept, self-esteem has general and specific elements. Generally, some people are more likely to evaluate themselves positively while others are more likely to evaluate themselves negatively (Joel Brockner, Self-Esteem at Work; Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988). More specifically, our self-esteem varies across our life span and across contexts.

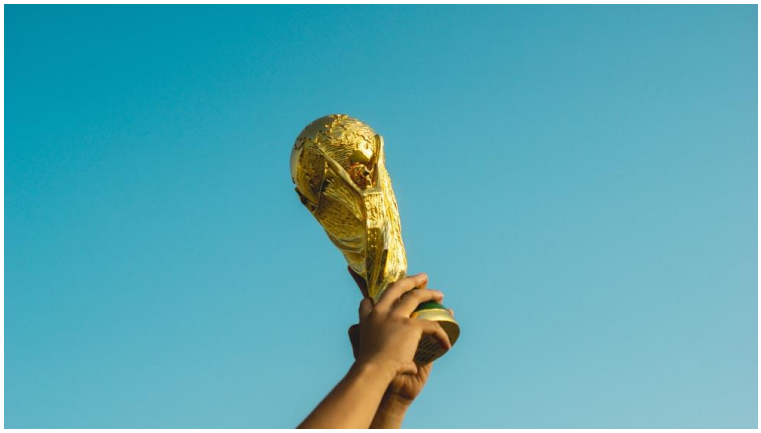

Figure 3.5: Trophy.[20]

How we judge ourselves affects our communication and our behaviors, but not every negative or positive judgment carries the same weight. The negative evaluation of a trait that isn't very important for our self-concept will likely not result in a loss of self-esteem. For example, I am not very good at drawing. While I appreciate drawing as an art form, I don't consider drawing ability to be a very big part of my self-concept. If someone critiqued my drawing ability, my self-esteem wouldn't take a big hit. I do consider myself a good teacher, however, and I have spent and continue to spend considerable time and effort on improving my knowledge of teaching and my teaching skills. If someone critiqued my teaching knowledge and/or abilities, my self-esteem would definitely be hurt. This doesn't mean that we can't be evaluated on something we find important. Even though teaching is very important to my self-concept, I am regularly evaluated on it. Every semester, I am evaluated by my students, and every year, I am evaluated by my dean, department chair, and colleagues. Most of that feedback is in the form of constructive criticism, which can still be difficult to receive, but when taken in the spirit of self-

[20] Image by Fauzan Saari on Unsplash

improvement, it is valuable and may even enhance our self- concept and self-esteem. In fact, in professional contexts, people with higher self- esteem are more likely to work harder based on negative feedback, are less negatively affected by work stress, are able to handle workplace conflict better, and are better able to work independently and solve problems. Joel Brockner, Self-Esteem at Work (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988). Self-esteem isn't the only factor that contributes to our self-concept; perceptions about our competence also play a role in developing our sense of self.

Self-Efficacy refers to the judgments people make about their ability to perform a task within a specific context. Albert Bandura, Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control (New York, NY: W. H. Freeman, 1997). Judgments about our self- efficacy influence our self-esteem, which influences our self-concept. The following example also illustrates these interconnections.

Figure 3.6: Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and Self-Concept[21].

Pedro did a good job on his first college speech. During a meeting with his professor, Pedro indicates that he is confident going into the next speech and thinks he will do well. This skill-based assessment is an indication that Pedro has a high level of self-efficacy related to public speaking.

Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and Self-Concept If he does well on the speech, the praise from his classmates and professor will reinforce his self-efficacy and lead him to positively evaluate his speaking skills, which will contribute to his self- esteem. By the end of the class, Pedro likely thinks of himself as a good public speaker, which may then become an important part of his self-concept. Throughout these points of connection, it's important to remember that self-perception affects how we communicate, behave, and perceive other things. Pedro's increased feeling of self-efficacy may give him more confidence in his delivery,

[21] Image by Andy Schmitz is licensed under CC-NC-SA 3.0

which will likely result in positive feedback that reinforces his self-perception. He may start to perceive his professor more positively since they share an interest in public speaking, and he may begin to notice other people's speaking skills more during class presentations and public lectures. Over time, he may even start to think about changing his major to communication or pursuing career options that incorporate public speaking, which would further integrate being "a good public speaker" into his self-concept. You can hopefully see that these interconnections can create powerful positive or negative cycles. While some of this process is under our control, much of it is also shaped by the people in our lives.

The verbal and nonverbal feedback we get from people affect our feelings of self- efficacy and our self-esteem. As we saw in Pedro's example, being given positive feedback can increase our self-efficacy, which may make us more likely to engage in a similar task in the future.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011). Obviously, negative feedback can lead to decreased self-efficacy and a declining interest in engaging with the activity again. In general, people adjust their expectations about their abilities based on feedback they get from others. Positive feedback tends to make people raise their expectations for themselves and negative feedback does the opposite, which ultimately affects behaviors and creates the cycle. When feedback from others is different from how we view ourselves, additional cycles may develop that impact self-esteem and self-concept.

Self-discrepancy theory states that people have beliefs about and expectations for their actual and potential selves that do not always match up with what they actually experience.E. Tory Higgins, "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," Psychological Review 94, no. 3 (1987): 320–21. To understand this theory, we have to understand the different "selves" that make up our self-concept, which are the actual, ideal, and ought selves. The actual self consists of the attributes that you or someone else believes you actually possess. The ideal self consists of the attributes that you or someone else would like you to possess. The ought self consists of the attributes you or someone else believes you should possess.

These different selves can conflict with each other in various combinations. Discrepancies between the actual and ideal/ought selves can be motivating in some ways and prompt people to act for self-improvement. For example, if your ought self should volunteer more for the local animal shelter, then your actual self may be more inclined to do so. Discrepancies between the ideal and ought selves can be especially stressful. For example, many professional women who are also mothers have an ideal view of self that includes professional success and advancement. They may also have an ought self that includes a sense of duty and obligation to be a full- time mother. The actual self may be someone who does OK at both but doesn't quite live up to the expectations of either. These discrepancies do not just create cognitive unease—they also lead to emotional, behavioral, and communicative changes.

When we compare the actual self to the expectations of ourselves and others, we can see particular patterns of emotional and behavioral effects. When our actual self doesn't match up with our own ideals of self, we are not obtaining our own desires and hopes, which can lead to feelings of dejection including disappointment, dissatisfaction, and frustration. For example, if

your ideal self has no credit card debt and your actual self does, you may be frustrated with your lack of financial discipline and be motivated to stick to your budget and pay off your credit card bills.

When our actual self doesn't match up with other people's ideals for us, we may not be obtaining significant others' desires and hopes, which can lead to feelings of dejection including shame, embarrassment, and concern for losing the affection or approval of others. For example, if a significant other sees you as an "A" student and you get a 2.8 GPA your first year of college, then you may be embarrassed to share your grades with that person.

Figure 3.7 Sense of Self.[22]

When our actual self doesn't match up with what we think other people think we should obtain, we are not living up to the ought self that we think others have constructed for us, which can lead to feelings of agitation, feeling threatened, and fearing potential punishment. For example, if your parents think you should follow in their footsteps and take over the family business, but your actual self wants to go into the military, then you may be unsure of what to do and fear being isolated from the family.

Finally, when our actual self doesn't match up with what we think we should obtain, we are not meeting what we see as our duties or obligations, which can lead to feelings of agitation including guilt, weakness, and a feeling that we have fallen short of our moral standard. E. Tory Higgins, "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," Psychological Review 94, no. 3 (1987): 322–23. For example, if your ought self should volunteer more for the local animal shelter, then your actual self may be more inclined to do so due to the guilt of reading about the increasing number of animals being housed at the facility. The following is a review of the

[22] Image by Kyle Glenn on Unsplash

four potential discrepancies between selves:

- Actual vs. own ideals. We have an overall feeling that we are not obtaining our desires and hopes, which leads to feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction, and frustration.
- Actual vs. others' ideals. We have an overall feeling that we are not obtaining significant others' desires and hopes for us, which leads to feelings of shame and embarrassment.
- Actual vs. others' ought. We have an overall feeling that we are not meeting what others see as our duties and obligations, which leads to feelings of agitation including fear of potential punishment.
- Actual vs. own ought. We have an overall feeling that we are not meeting our duties and obligations, which can lead to a feeling that we have fallen short of our own moral standards.

INFLUENCES ON SELF-PERCEPTION

We have already learned that other people influence our self-concept and self- esteem. While interactions we have with individuals and groups are definitely important to consider, we must also note the influence that larger, more systemic forces have on our self-perception. Social and family influences, culture, and the media all play a role in shaping who we think we are and how we feel about ourselves. Although these are powerful socializing forces, there are ways to maintain some control over our self-perception.

Social and Family Influences

Various forces help socialize us into our respective social and cultural groups and play a powerful role in presenting us with options about who we can be. While we may like to think that our self-perception starts with a blank canvas, our perceptions are limited by our experiences and various social and cultural contexts.

Parents and peers shape our self-perceptions in positive and negative ways. Feedback that we get from significant others, which includes close family, can lead to positive views of self. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 99. In the past few years, however, there has been a public discussion and debate about how much positive reinforcement people should give to others, especially children. The following questions have been raised: Do we have current and upcoming generations that have been overpraised? Is the praise given warranted? What are the positive and negative effects of praise? What is the end goal of the praise? Let's briefly look at this discussion and its connection to self-perception.

Whether praise is warranted or not is very subjective and specific to each person and context, but in general there have been questions raised about the potential negative effects of too much praise. Motivation is the underlying force that drives us to do things. Sometimes we are intrinsically motivated, meaning we want to do something for the love of doing it or the resulting internal satisfaction. Other times we are extrinsically motivated, meaning we do something to receive a reward or avoid punishment. If you put effort into completing a short

documentary for a class because you love filmmaking and editing, you have been largely motivated by intrinsic forces. If you complete the documentary because you want an "A" and know that if you fail your parents will not give you money for your spring break trip, then you are motivated by extrinsic factors. Both can, of course, effectively motivate us. Praise is a form of extrinsic reward, and if there is an actual reward associated with the praise, like money or special recognition, some people speculate that intrinsic motivation will suffer. But what's so good about intrinsic motivation? Intrinsic motivation is more substantial and long-lasting than extrinsic motivation and can lead to the development of a work ethic and sense of pride in one's abilities. Intrinsic motivation can move people to accomplish great things over long periods of time and be happy despite the effort and sacrifices made. Extrinsic motivation dies when the reward stops. Additionally, too much praise can lead people to have a misguided sense of their abilities. College professors who are reluctant to fail students who produce failing work may be setting those students up to be shocked when their supervisor critiques their abilities or output once they get into a professional context. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 105–7.

Figure 3.8 Reaching the Top.[23]

There are cultural differences in the amount of praise and positive feedback that teachers and parents give their children. For example, teachers give less positive reinforcement in Japanese and Taiwanese classrooms than do teachers in US classrooms. Chinese and Kenyan parents do not regularly praise their children because they fear it may make them too individualistic, rude, or arrogant. Anna Wierzbicka, "The English Expressions Good Boy and Good Girl and Cultural Models of Child Rearing," Culture and Psychology 10, no. 3 (2004): 251–78. So, the phenomenon of overpraising isn't universal, and the debate over its potential effects is not resolved.

Research has also found that communication patterns develop between parents and children

[23] Image by Benjamin Davies on Unsplash

that are common to many verbally and physically abusive relationships. Such patterns have negative effects on a child's self-efficacy and self-esteem. Wendy Morgan and Steven R. Wilson, "Explaining Child Abuse as a Lack of Safe Ground," in The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication, eds. Brian H. Spitzberg and William R. Cupach (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007), 341. As you'll recall from our earlier discussion, attributions are links we make to identify the cause of a behavior. In the case of aggressive or abusive parents, they are not as able to distinguish between mistakes and intentional behaviors, often seeing honest mistakes as intended and reacting negatively to the child. Such parents also communicate generally negative evaluations to their child by saying, for example, "You can't do anything right!" or "You're a bad girl." When children do exhibit positive behaviors, abusive parents are more likely to use external attributions that diminish the achievement of the child by saying, for example, "You only won because the other team was off their game." In general, abusive parents have unpredictable reactions to their children's positive and negative behavior, which creates an uncertain and often scary climate for a child that can lead to lower self- esteem and erratic or aggressive behavior. The cycles of praise and blame are just two examples of how the family as a socializing force can influence our self- perceptions. Culture also influences how we see ourselves.

SUMMARY OF PERCEIVING AND THE SELF

Our self-concept is the overall idea of who we think we are. It is developed through our interactions with others and through social comparison that allows us to compare our beliefs and behaviors to others.

Our self-esteem is based on the evaluations and judgments we make about various characteristics of our self-concept. It is developed through an assessment and evaluation of our various skills and abilities, known as self-efficacy, and through a comparison and evaluation of who we are, who we would like to be, and who we should be (self-discrepancy theory).

Social comparison theory and self-discrepancy theory affect our self- concept and self-esteem because through comparison with others and comparison of our actual, ideal, and ought selves we make judgments about who we are and our self-worth. These judgments then affect how we communicate and behave.

IMPROVING PERCEPTION

So far, we have learned about the perception process and how we perceive others and ourselves. Now we will turn to a discussion of how to improve our perception. Our self-perception can be improved by becoming aware of how schema, socializing forces, self-fulfilling prophecies, and negative patterns of thinking can distort our ability to describe and evaluate ourselves. How we perceive others can be improved by developing better listening and empathetic skills, becoming aware of stereotypes and prejudice, developing self-awareness through self-reflection, and engaging in perception checking.

Improving Self-Perception

Our self-perceptions can and do change. Recall that we have an overall self-concept and self-esteem that are relatively stable, and we also have context-specific self- perceptions. Context-specific self-perceptions vary depending on the person with whom we are interacting, our emotional state, and the subject matter being discussed. Becoming aware of the process of self-perception and the various components of our self-concept (which you have already started to do by studying this chapter) will help you understand and improve your self-perceptions.

Avoid Reliance on Rigid Schema

As we learned earlier, schemata are sets of information based on cognitive and experiential knowledge that guide our interaction. We rely on schemata almost constantly to help us make sense of the world around us. Sometimes schemata become so familiar that we use them as scripts, which prompts mindless communication and can lead us to overlook new information that may need to be incorporated into the schema. So, it's important to remain mindful of new or contradictory information that may warrant revision of a schema. Being mindful is difficult, however, especially since we often unconsciously rely on schemata.

Be Critical of Socializing Forces

We learned earlier that family, friends, sociocultural norms, and the media are just some of the socializing forces that influence our thinking and therefore influence our self-perception. These powerful forces serve positive functions but can also set into motion negative patterns of self-perception. Two examples can illustrate the possibility for people to critique and resist socializing forces in order to improve their self-perception. The first deals with physical appearance and notions of health, and the second deals with cultural identities and discrimination.

Beware of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Self-fulfilling prophecies are thought and action patterns in which a person's false belief triggers a behavior that makes the initial false belief actually or seemingly come true. Max Guyll et al., "The Potential Roles of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, Stigma Consciousness, and Stereotype Threat in Linking Latino/a Ethnicity and Educational Outcomes," Social Issues 66, no. 1 (2010): 116. For example, let's say a student's biology lab instructor is a Chinese person who speaks English as a second language. The student falsely believes that the instructor will not be a good teacher because he speaks English with an accent. Because of this belief, the student doesn't attend class regularly and doesn't listen actively when she does attend. Because of these behaviors, the student fails the biology lab, which then reinforces her original belief that the instructor wasn't a good teacher.

Create and Maintain Supporting Interpersonal Relationships

Aside from giving yourself affirming messages to help with self-perception, it is important to

find interpersonal support. Although most people have at least some supportive relationships, many people also have people in their lives who range from negative to toxic. When people find themselves in negative relational cycles, whether it is with friends, family, or romantic partners, it is difficult to break out of those cycles. But we can all make choices to be around people that will help us be who we want to be and not be around people who hinder our self-progress. This notion can also be taken to the extreme, however. It would not be wise to surround yourself with people who only validate you and do not constructively challenge you, because this too could lead to distorted self-perceptions.

Beware of Distorted Patterns of Thinking and Acting

You already know from our discussion of attribution errors that we all have perceptual biases that distort our thinking. Many of these are common, and we often engage in distorted thinking without being conscious of it. Learning about some of the typical negative patterns of thinking and acting may help us acknowledge and intervene in them. One such pattern involves self-esteem and overcompensation.

Overcoming Barriers to Perceiving Others

There are many barriers that prevent us from competently perceiving others. While some are more difficult to overcome than others, they can all be addressed by raising our awareness of the influences around us and committing to monitoring, reflecting on, and changing some of our communication habits. Whether it is our lazy listening skills, lack of empathy, or stereotypes and prejudice, various filters and blinders influence how we perceive and respond to others.

Develop Empathetic Listening Skills

Effective listening is not easy, and most of us do not make a concerted effort to overcome common barriers to listening. Our fast-paced lives and cultural values that emphasize speaking over listening sometimes make listening feel like a chore. But we shouldn't underestimate the power of listening to make someone else feel better and to open our perceptual field to new sources of information. Empathetic listening can also help us expand our self- and social awareness by learning from other people's experiences and taking on different perspectives. Empathetic listening is challenging because it requires cognitive and emotional investment that goes beyond the learning of a skill set.

Beware of Stereotypes and Prejudice

Stereotypes are sets of beliefs that we develop about groups, which we then apply to individuals from that group. Stereotypes are schemata that are taken too far, as they reduce and ignore a person's individuality and the diversity present within a larger group of people. Prejudice is negative feelings or attitudes toward people based on their identity or identities.

Checking Perception

Perception checking is a strategy to help us monitor our reactions to and perceptions about people and communication. There are some internal and external strategies we can use to

engage in perception checking. In terms of internal strategies, review the various influences on perception that we have learned about in this chapter and always be willing to ask yourself, “What is influencing the perceptions I am making right now?” Even being aware of what influences are acting on our perceptions makes us more aware of what is happening in the perception process. In terms of external strategies, we can use other people to help verify our perceptions.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you define yourself as a person? What kinds of definitions do you have for yourself? What do you think would happen if you changed some of your self-definitions?
2. How do advances in technology impact verbal communication? What are some examples?
3. How does popular culture impact our verbal communication? What are some examples?
4. When you use text messages or email, are you formal or informal?
5. In what situations/contexts would it be appropriate to speak formally rather than informally? Why?
6. To what extent do you believe that verbal communication drives thought, or vice versa?

Key Terms

- Selecting
- Salience
- Organizing
- Constructivism
- Prototype
- Personal Construct
- Stereotyping
- Script
- Interpretation
- Schemata
- Attribution (Internal And External)
- Fundamental Attribution Error
- Self-Serving Bias
- Halo Effect
- Self Concept
- Looking Glass Self
- Social Comparison Theory
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Discrepancy Theory
- Actual Self
- Ideal Self
- Ought Self
- Self-Fulfilling Prophecies
- Prejudice
- Stereotypes
- Perception Checking

CHAPTER 4: VERBAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define verbal communication and explain its main characteristics.
- Understand the three qualities of symbols.
- Describe the rules governing verbal communication.
- Explain the differences between written and spoken communication.
- Describe the functions of verbal communication.

"Consciousness can't evolve any faster than language"
-Terence McKenna

Figure 4.1[24]

[24] I Love You by Hannah Wright on Unsplash

Imagine for a moment that you have no language with which to communicate. It's hard to imagine isn't it? It's probably even harder to imagine that with all of the advancements we have at our disposal today, there are people in our world who actually do not have, or cannot use, language to communicate.

Nearly 25 years ago, the Nicaraguan government started bringing deaf children together from all over the country in an attempt to educate them. These children had spent their lives in remote places and had no contact with other deaf people. They had never learned a language and could not understand their teachers or each other. Likewise, their teachers could not understand them. Shortly after bringing these students together, the teachers noticed that the students communicated with each other in what appeared to be an organized fashion: they had literally brought together the individual gestures they used at home and composed them into a new language. Although the teachers still did not understand what the kids were saying, they were astonished at what they were witnessing—the birth of a new language in the late 20th century! This was an unprecedented discovery.

In 1986 American linguist Judy Kegl went to Nicaragua to find out what she could learn from these children without language. She contends that our brains are open to language until the age of 12 or 13, and then language becomes difficult to learn. She quickly discovered approximately 300 people in Nicaragua who did not have language and says, "They are invaluable to research – among the only people on Earth who can provide clues to the beginnings of human communication." To access the full transcript, view the following link: CBS News: Birth of a Language (http://www.cbsnews.com/news/birth-of-a-language/).

Adrien Perez, one of the early deaf students who formed this new language (referred to as Nicaraguan Sign Language), says that without verbal communication, "You can't express your feelings. Your thoughts may be there but you can't get them out. And you can't get new thoughts in." As one of the few people on earth who has experienced life with and without verbal communication, his comments speak to the heart of communication: it is the essence of who we are and how we understand our world. We use it to form our identities, initiate and maintain relationships, express our needs and wants, construct and shape world-views, and achieve personal goals (Pelley).

In this chapter, we want to provide and explain our definition of verbal communication, highlight the differences between written and spoken verbal communication, and demonstrate how verbal communication functions in our lives.

DEFINING VERBAL COMMUNICATION

When people ponder the word communication, they often think about the act of talking. We rely on verbal communication to exchange messages with one another and develop as individuals. The term verbal communication often evokes the idea of spoken communication, but written communication is also part of verbal communication. Reading this book you are decoding the authors' written verbal communication in order to learn more about

communication. Let's explore the various components of our definition of verbal communication and examine how it functions in our lives.

Verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken. In general, verbal communication refers to our use of words while nonverbal communication refers to communication that occurs through means other than words, such as body language, gestures, and silence. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can be spoken and written. Many people mistakenly assume that verbal communication refers only to spoken communication. However, you will learn that this is not the case. Let's say you tell a friend a joke and he or she laughs in response. Is the laughter verbal or nonverbal communication? Why? As laughter is not a word we would consider this vocal act as a form of nonverbal communication. For simplification, the box below highlights the kinds of communication that fall into the various categories. You can find many definitions of verbal communication in our literature, but for this text, we define Verbal Communication as *an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning.* Let's examine each component of this definition in detail.

	Verbal Communication	Nonverbal Communication
Oral	Spoken Language	Laughing, Crying, Coughing, etc.
Non Oral	Written Language/Sign Language	Gestures, Body Language, etc.

Figure 4.2: Types of Oral and Non Oral Communications[25]

A System of Symbols

Symbols are *arbitrary representations of thoughts, ideas, emotions, objects, or actions used to encode and decode meaning* (Nelson & Kessler Shaw). Symbols stand for, or represent, something else. For example, there is nothing inherent about calling a cat a cat.

Rather, English speakers have agreed that these symbols (words), whose components (letters) are used in a particular order each time, stand for both the actual object, as well as our interpretation of that object. This idea is illustrated by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richard's triangle of meaning. The word "cat" is not the actual cat. Nor does it have any direct connection to an actual cat. Instead, it is a symbolic representation of our idea of a cat, as indicated by the line going from the word "cat" to the speaker's idea of "cat" to the actual object.

[25] Image by COC OER is licensed under CC BY 4.0

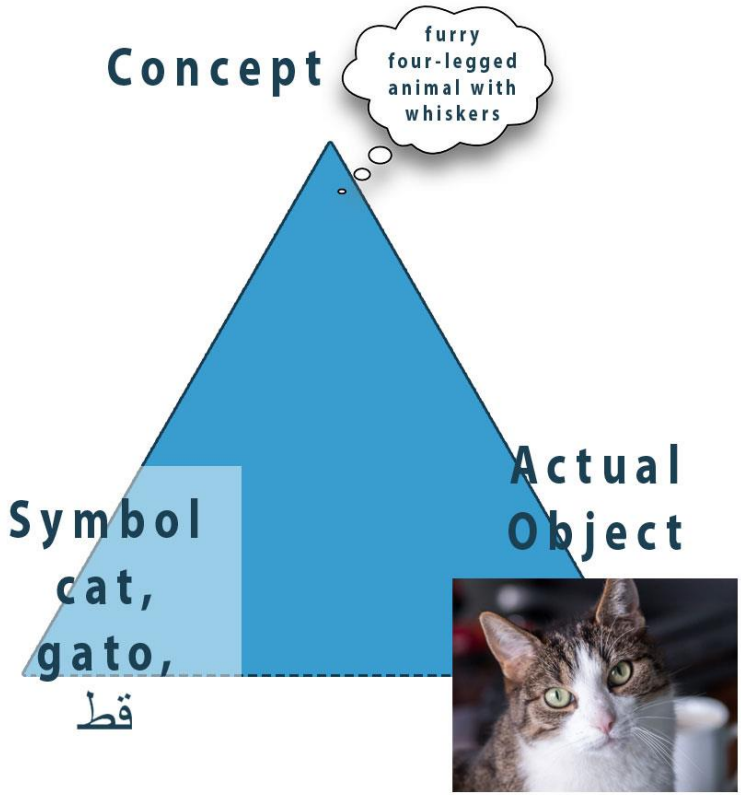

Figure 4.3: Ogden & Richard's Triangle of Meaning[26]

Symbols have three distinct qualities: they are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. Notice that the picture of the cat on the left side of the triangle more closely represents a real cat than the word "cat." However, we do not use pictures as language, or verbal communication. Instead, we use words to represent our ideas. This example demonstrates our agreement that the word "cat" represents or stands for a real cat AND our idea of a cat. The symbols we use are arbitrary and have *no direct relationship to the objects or ideas they represent*. We generally consider communication successful when we reach agreement on the meanings of the symbols we use (Duck).

Not only are symbols arbitrary, they are ambiguous — that is, they have *several possible meanings*. Imagine your friend tells you she has an apple on her desk. Is she referring to a piece of fruit or her computer? If a friend says that a person he met is cool, does he mean that person is cold or awesome? The meanings of symbols change over time due to changes in social norms, values, and advances in technology. You might be asking, "If symbols can have multiple meanings then how do we communicate and understand one another?" We are able to communicate because there are a finite number of possible meanings for our symbols, a range of meanings which the members of a given language system agree upon. Without an agreed-upon system of symbols, we could share relatively little meaning with one another.

[26] Image by Lumen Learning is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

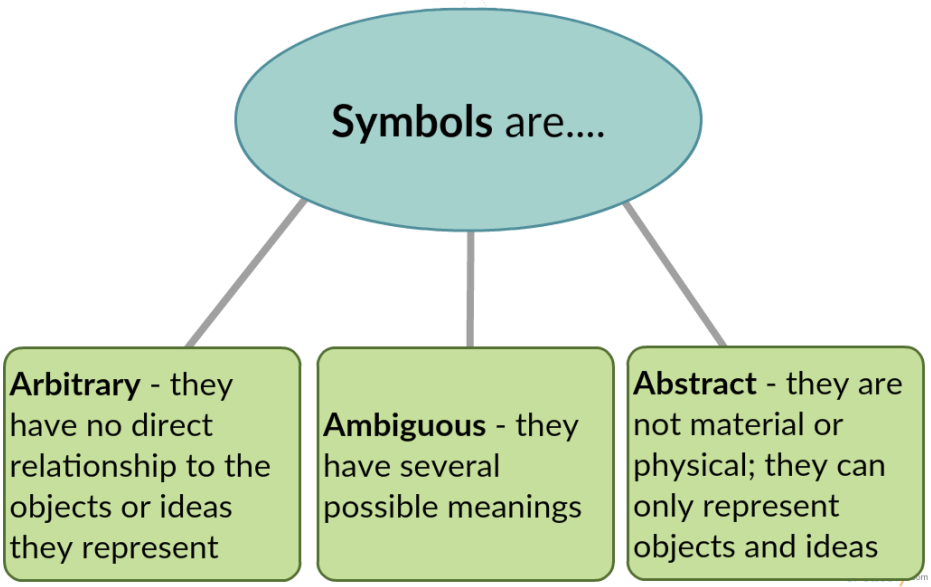

Figure 4.4[27]

A simple example of ambiguity can be represented by one of your classmates asking a simple question to the teacher during a lecture where she is showing PowerPoint slides: "can you go to the last slide please?" The teacher is half- way through the presentation. Is the student asking if the teacher can go back to the previous slide? Or does the student really want the lecture to be over with and is insisting that the teacher jump to the final slide of the presentation? Chances are the student missed a point on the previous slide and would like to see it again to quickly take notes. However, suspense may have overtaken the student and they may have a desire to see the final slide. Even a simple word like "last" can be ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation.

The verbal symbols we use are also abstract, meaning that, *words are not material or physical. A certain level of abstraction is inherent in the fact that symbols can only represent objects and ideas*. This abstraction allows us to use a phrase like "the public" in a broad way to mean all the people in the United States rather than having to distinguish among all the diverse groups that make up the U.S. population. Similarly, in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* book series, wizards and witches call the non-magical population on earth "muggles" rather than having to define all the separate cultures of muggles. Abstraction is helpful when you want to communicate complex concepts in a simple way. However, the more abstract the language, the greater potential there is for confusion.

Rule-Governed

Verbal communication is rule-governed. *We must follow agreed-upon rules to make sense of the symbols we share*. Let's take another look at our example of the word cat. What would happen if there were no rules for using the symbols (letters) that make up this word? If placing

[27] Image by H. Rayl is licensed under CC BY 4.0

these symbols in a proper order was not important, then cta, tac, tca, act, or atc could all mean cat. Even worse, what if you could use any three letters to refer to cat? Or still worse, what if there were no rules and anything could represent cat? Clearly, it's important that we have rules to govern our verbal communication. There are four general rules for verbal communication, involving the sounds, meaning, arrangement, and use of symbols.

Pin It! Case In Point - Sounds And Letters: A Poem For English Students[28]
The following is an excerpt from the poem, "Sounds and Letters":

When in English class we speak,
Why is break not rhymed with freak?
Will you tell me why it's true
That we say sew, but also few?
When a poet writes a verse
Why is horse not rhymed with worse?
Beard sounds not the same as heard
Lord sounds not the same as word
Cow is cow, but low is low
Shoe is never rhymed with toe.

. . .

There's pay and say, but paid and said.
"I will read", but "I have read".
Why say done, but gone and lone –
Is there any reason known?
To summarise, it seems to me
Sounds and letters disagree.

Phonology is *the study of speech sounds*. The pronunciation of the word cat comes from the rules governing how letters sound, especially in relation to one another. The context in which words are spoken may provide answers for how they should be pronounced. When we don't follow phonological rules, confusion results. One way to understand and apply phonological rules is to use syntactic and pragmatic rules to clarify phonological rules.

Semantic rules help us understand *the difference in meaning between the word cat and the word dog*. Instead of each of these words meaning any four-legged domestic pet, we use each word to specify what four-legged domestic pet we are talking about. You've probably used these words to say things like, "I'm a cat person" or "I'm a dog person." Each of these statements provides insight into what the sender is trying to communicate. The Case in Point, "A Poem for English Students," not only illustrates the idea of phonology, but also semantics. Even though many of the words are spelled the same, their meanings vary depending on how

[28] Pronunciation. "Sounds and Letters." Retrieved from http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Ideas/Fun/Wordplay.htm

they are pronounced and in what context they are used. We attach meanings to words; meanings are not inherent in words themselves. As you've been reading, words (symbols) are arbitrary and attain meaning only when people give them meaning. While we can always look to a dictionary to find a *standardized definition of a word*, or its denotative meaning, meanings do not always follow standard, agreed-upon definitions when used in various contexts. For example, think of the word "sick." The denotative definition of the word is ill or unwell. However, connotative meanings, *the meanings we assign based on our experiences and beliefs*, are quite varied. Sick can have a connotative meaning that describes something as good or awesome as opposed to its literal meaning of illness, which usually has a negative association. The denotative and connotative definitions of "sick" are in total contrast of one another which can cause confusion. Think about an instance where a student is asked by their parent about a friend at school. The student replies that the friend is "sick." The parent then asks about the new teacher at school and the student describes the teacher as "sick" as well. The parent must now ask for clarification as they do not know if the teacher is in bad health, or is an excellent teacher, and if the friend of their child is ill or awesome.

Syntactics is *the study of language structure and symbolic arrangement*. Syntactics focuses on the rules we use to combine words into meaningful sentences and statements. We speak and write according to agreed-upon syntactic rules to keep meaning coherent and understandable. Think about this sentence: "The pink and purple elephant flapped its wings and flew out the window." While the content of this sentence is fictitious and unreal, you can understand and visualize it because it follows syntactic rules for language structure.

Pragmatics is *the study of how people actually use verbal communication*. For example, as a student you probably speak more formally to your professors than to your peers. It's likely that you make different word choices when you speak to your parents than you do when you speak to your friends. Think of the words "bowel movements," "poop," "crap," and "shit." While all of these words have essentially the same denotative meaning, people make choices based on context and audience regarding which word they feel comfortable using. These differences illustrate the pragmatics of our verbal communication. Even though you use agreed-upon symbolic systems and follow phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules, you apply these rules differently in different contexts. Each communication context has different rules for "appropriate" communication. We are trained from a young age to communicate "appropriately" in different social contexts.

It is only through an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols that we can exchange verbal communication in an effective manner. Without agreement, rules, and symbols, verbal communication would not work. The reality is, after we learn language in school, we don't spend much time consciously thinking about all of these rules, we simply use them. However, rules keep our verbal communication structured in ways that make it useful for us to communicate more effectively.

Pin It! Communication Now - Look It Up
We all know we can look up words in the dictionary, such as Webster's Dictionary. When we do this, we are looking up the Denotative Meaning of words. However, given that there are so many Connotative Meanings of words, we now have a resource to look up those meanings as well. Urban Dictionary is a resource for people to find out how words that have certain denotative meanings are used connotatively. Go ahead, give it a try!

SPOKEN VERSUS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

What's the Difference?

While both spoken and written communication function as agreed-upon rule-governed systems of symbols used to convey meaning, there are enough differences in pragmatic rules between writing and speaking to justify discussing some of their differences. Imagine for a moment that you're a college student who desperately needs money. Rather than looking for a job you decide that you're going to ask your parents for the money you need to make it through the end of the semester. Now, you have a few choices for using verbal communication to do this. You might choose to call your parents or talk to them in person. You may take a different approach and write them a letter or send them an email. You can probably identify your own list of pros and cons for each of these approaches. But really, what's the difference between writing and talking in these situations? Let's look at four of the major differences between the two: 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.

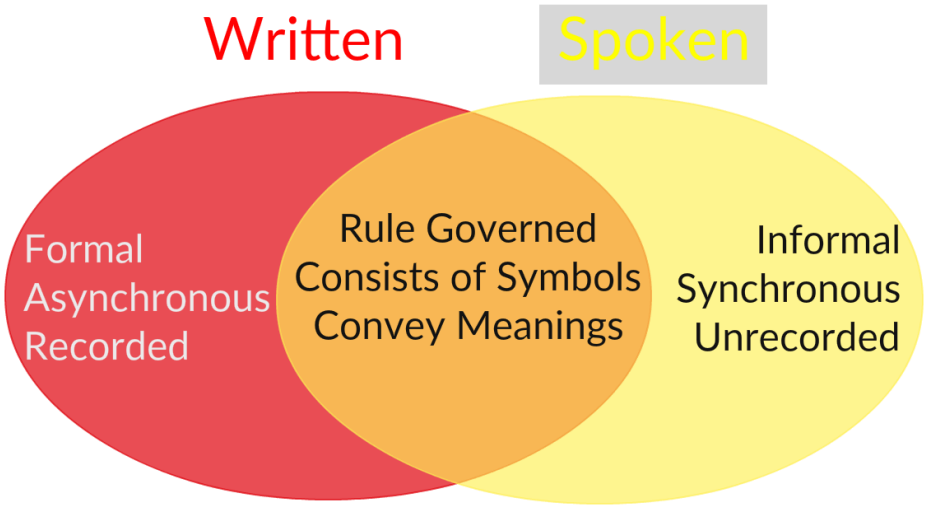

Figure 4.5[29]

[29] Image by H. Rayl is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Pin It! Case In Point - Informal Versus Formal Communication

Figure 4.6[30]

Text Version

FYI… we're meeting on friday. wanna go to the office party after? its byob so bring whtvr you want. Last years was sooo fun. Your dancing made everyone lol! hope to see u there :)

Email Version

Ann,
We are having a meeting on Friday, November 6th. Afterwards, there will be an office party. Let me know if you would like to attend. It will be a Bring Your Own Beverage party, so feel welcome to bring whatever you like. Last year's was great, I'm sure everyone remembers your great dance moves! I hope to see you there,
-Tesia

The first difference between spoken and written communication is that we generally use spoken communication informally while we use written communication formally. Consider how you have been trained to talk versus how you have been trained to write. Have you ever turned in a paper to a professor that "sounds" like how you talk? How was that paper graded compared to one that follows the more formal structures and rules of the English language? In western societies like the U.S., we follow more formal standards for our written communication than our spoken communication. With a few exceptions, we generally tolerate verbal mistakes (e.g. "should of" rather than "should have") and qualifiers (e.g. "uh" "um" "you know," etc.) in our speech, but not our writing. Consider a written statement such as, "I should of, um, gone and done somethin' 'bout it' but, um, I I didn't do nothin'." In most written contexts, this is considered unacceptable written verbal communication. However, most of us would not give much thought to hearing this statement spoken aloud by someone. While we may certainly notice mistakes in another's speech, we are generally not inclined to correct those mistakes as we would in written contexts. Even though most try to speak without qualifiers and verbal

[30] Image by Garry Knight is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

mistakes, there is something to be said about those utterances in our speech while engaging in an interpersonal conversation. According to John Du Bois, the way two people use utterances and structure their sentences during conversation creates an opportunity to find new meaning within the language and develop "parallelism" which can lead to a natural feeling of liking or sympathy in the conversation partner. So, even though it may seem like formal language is valued over informal, this informal language that most of us use when we speak inadvertently contributes to bringing people closer together.

While writing is generally more formal and speech more informal, there are some exceptions to the rule, especially with the growing popularity of new technologies. For the first time in history, we are now seeing exceptions in our uses of speech and writing. Using text messaging and email, people are engaging in forms of writing using more informal rule structures, making their writing "sound" more like conversation. Likewise, this style of writing often attempts to incorporate the use of "nonverbal" communication (known as emoticons) to accent the writing. Consider the two examples in the box. One is an example of written correspondence using text while the other is a roughly equivalent version following the more formal written guidelines of an email or letter.

Notice the informality in the text version. While it is readable, it reads as if Tesia was actually speaking in a conversation rather than writing a document. Have you noticed that when you turn in written work that has been written in email programs, the level of formality of the writing decreases? However, when students use a word processing program like Microsoft Word, the writing tends to follow formal rules more often. As we continue using new technologies to communicate, new rule systems for those mediums will continue altering the rule systems in other forms of communication.

The second difference between spoken and written forms of verbal communication is that spoken communication or speech is almost entirely synchronous while written communication is almost entirely asynchronous. Synchronous communication is *communication that takes place in real time*, such as a conversation with a friend. When we are in conversation and even in public speaking situations, immediate feedback and response from the receiver is the rule. For instance, when you say "hello" to someone, you expect that the person will respond immediately. You do not expect that the person will get back to you sometime later in response to your greeting. In contrast, asynchronous communication is *communication that is not immediate and occurs over longer periods of time*, such as letters, email, or even text messages at times. When someone writes a book, letter, email, or text, there is no expectation from the sender that the receiver will provide an immediate response. Instead, the expectation is that the receiver will receive the message and respond to it when they have time. This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person, because it allows the receiver to respond when they have time rather than "putting them on the spot" to respond right away.

Just as new technologies are changing the rules of formality and informality, they are also creating new situations that break the norms of written communication as asynchronous and

spoken communication as synchronous. Voicemail has turned the telephone and our talk into asynchronous forms of communication. Even though we speak in these contexts, we understand that if we leave a message on voicemail, we will not get an immediate reply. Instead, we understand that the receiver will call us back at their convenience. In this example, even though the channel of communication is speaking, there is no expectation for immediate response to the sent message. Similarly, texting is a form of written communication that follows the rules of spoken conversation in that it functions as synchronous communication. When you type a text to someone you know, the expectation is that they will respond almost immediately. The lines continue to blur when video chats were introduced as communication technologies. These are a form of synchronous communication that mimics face-to-face interaction and in some cases even have an option to send written messages to others. The possible back and forth between written and spoken communication has allowed many questions to arise about rules and meaning behind interactions. Maria Sindoni explains in her article, "Through the Looking Glass" that even though people are having a synchronous conversation and are sharing meaning through their words, they are ultimately in different rooms and communicating through a machine which makes the meaning of their exchanges more ambiguous.

Pin It! Verbal Communication Then[31]

Historians have come up with a number of criteria people should have in order to be considered a civilization. One of these is writing, specifically for the purposes of governing and pleasure. Written verbal communication is used for literature, poetry, religion, instruction, recording history and governing. Influential written verbal communication from history includes:

- The *Ten Commandments* that Jews used as a guide to their faith
- *Law Code of Hammurabi* which was the recorded laws of the Ancient Babylonians.
- The *Quran* which is core to the Islam faith.
- The *Bible* which is followed by Christians.
- The *Declaration of Independence* which declared the U.S. independent from Britain.
- *Mao's Little Red Book* which was used to promote communist rule in China.

The third difference between spoken and written communication is that written communication is generally *archived and recorded for later retrieval*, while spoken communication is generally not recorded. When we talk with friends, we do not tend to take notes or tape record our conversations. Instead, conversations tend to be ongoing and catalogued into our personal memories rather than recorded in an easily retrievable written format. On the other hand, it is quite easy to reference written works such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic sources such as web pages and emails for long periods after the sender has written them. New communication applications like Vine add to the confusion. This app allows users to record themselves and post it to their profile. This would be

[31] Content from Global Virtual Classroom

considered a form of spoken communication, yet it is archived and asynchronous so others can look at the videos years after the original posting. To make the matter more complicated, Snapchat's many functions come into play. On Snapchat you have the option of sending videos or photos that are traditionally not archived since the sender decides how long the receiver has to view them, then they will theoretically disappear forever. Most recently with the addition of My Story, users of the app can post a picture for 24 hours and have their friends view it multiple times. The feeling of technological communication not being archived can lead to a false sense of privacy, which can lead to some negative consequences.

As with the previous rules we've discussed, new technologies are changing many of the dynamics of speech and writing. Just take a look at the "Verbal Communication Then" sidebar and see how far we have come. For example, many people use email and texting informally like spoken conversation, as an informal form of verbal communication. Because of this, they often expect that these operate and function like a spoken conversation with the belief that it is a private conversation between the sender and receiver. However, many people have gotten into trouble because of what they have "spoken" about others through email and text. The corporation Epson (a large computer electronics manufacturer) was at the center of one of the first lawsuits regarding the recording and archiving of employees' use of email correspondence. Employees at Epson assumed their email was private and therefore used it to say negative things about their bosses. What they didn't know was their bosses were saving and printing these email messages, and using the content of these messages to make personnel decisions. When employees sued Epson, the courts ruled in favor of the corporation, stating that they had every right to retain employee email for their records.

While most of us have become accustomed to using technologies such as texting and instant messaging in ways that are similar to our spoken conversations, we must also consider the repercussions of using communication technologies in this fashion because they are often archived and not private. We can see examples of negative outcomes from archived messages in recent years through many highly publicized sexting scandals. One incident that was very pertinent was former congressman and former candidate for Mayor of New York, Anthony Weiner, and a series of inappropriate exchanges with women using communication technologies. Because of his position in power and high media coverage, his privacy was very minimal. Since he had these conversations in a setting that is recorded, he was not able to keep his anonymity or confidentiality in the matter. These acts were seen as inappropriate by the public, so there were both professional and personal repercussions for Weiner. Both the Epson and Anthony Weiner incidents, even though happening in different decades, show the consequences when assumed private information becomes public.

As you can see, there are a number of differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication. Both forms are rule-governed as our definition points out, but the rules are often different for the use of these two types of verbal communication. However, it's apparent that as new technologies provide more ways for us to communicate, many of our traditional rules for using both speech and writing will continue to blur as we try to determine the "most appropriate" uses of these new communication technologies. As Chapter 2 pointed out,

practical problems of the day will continue to guide the directions our field takes as we continue to study the ways technology changes our communication. As more changes continue to occur in the ways we communicate with one another, more avenues of study will continue to open for those interested in being part of the development of how communication is conducted. Now that we have looked in detail at our definition of verbal communication, and the differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication, let's explore what our use of verbal communication accomplishes for us as humans.

Functions of Verbal Communication

Our existence is intimately tied to the communication we use, and verbal communication serves many functions in our daily lives. We use verbal communication to define reality, organize, think, and shape attitudes.

Pin It! Teaching And Learning Communication Now

Being able to communicate effectively through verbal communication is extremely important. No matter what you plan to do as a career, effective verbal communication helps you in all aspects of your life. Former President Bush was often chided (and even chided himself) for the verbal communication mistakes he made. Here is a list of his "Top 10".

1. "Families is where our nation finds hope, where wings take dream." —LaCrosse, Wis., Oct. 18, 2000
2. "I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family." —Greater Nashua, N.H., Jan. 27, 2000
3. "I hear there's rumors on the Internets that we're going to have a draft." —second presidential debate, St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 8, 2004
4. "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully." — Saginaw, Mich., Sept. 29, 2000
5. "You work three jobs? … Uniquely American, isn't it? I mean, that is fantastic that you're doing that." —to a divorced mother of three, Omaha, Nebraska, Feb. 2005
6. "Too many good docs are getting out of the business. Too many OB-GYNs aren't able to practice their love with women all across this country." —Poplar Bluff, Mo., Sept. 6, 2004
7. "They misunderestimated me." —Bentonville, Ark., Nov. 6, 2000
8. "Rarely is the questioned asked: Is our children learning?" — Florence, S.C., Jan. 11, 2000
9. "Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." —Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2004
10. "There's an old saying in Tennessee — I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee — that says, fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — you can't get fooled again." —Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 17, 2002

Verbal communication helps us define reality.

We use verbal communication to define everything from ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people (Blumer). Think about how you define yourself. You may define yourself as a student, employee, son/daughter, parent, advocate, etc. You might also define yourself as moral, ethical, a night-owl, or a procrastinator. Verbal communication is how we label and define what we experience in our lives. These definitions are not only descriptive, but evaluative. Imagine you are at the beach with a few of your friends. The day starts out sunny and beautiful, but the tides quickly turn when rain clouds appear overhead. Because of the unexpected rain, you define the day as disappointing and ugly. Suddenly, your friend comments, "What are you talking about, man? Today is beautiful!" Instead of focusing on the weather, he might be referring to the fact that he was having a good day by spending quality time with his buddies on the beach, rain or shine. This statement reflects that we have choices for how we use verbal communication to define our realities. We make choices about what to focus on and how to define what we experience and its impact on how we understand and live in our world.

Verbal communication helps us organize complex ideas and experiences into meaningful categories. Consider the number of things you experience with your five primary senses every day. It is impossible to comprehend everything we encounter. We use verbal communication to organize seemingly random events into understandable categories to make sense of our experiences. For example, we all organize the people in our lives into categories. We label these people with terms like, friends, acquaintances, romantic partners, family, peers, colleagues, and strangers. We highlight certain qualities, traits, or scripts to organize outwardly haphazard events into meaningful categories to establish meaning for our world.

Verbal communication helps us think. Without verbal communication, we would not function as thinking beings. The ability most often used to distinguish humans from other animals is our ability to reason and communicate. With language, we are able to reflect on the past, consider the present, and ponder the future. We develop our memories using language. Try recalling your first conscious memories. Chances are, your first conscious memories formed around the time you started using verbal communication. The example we used at the beginning of the chapter highlights what a world would be like for humans without language. In the 2011 *Scientific American* article, "How Language Shapes Thought," the author, Lera Boroditsky, claims that people "rely on language even when doing simple things like distinguishing patches of color, counting dots on a screen or orienting in a small room: my colleagues and I have found that limiting people's ability to access their language faculties fluently–by giving them a competing demanding verbal task such as repeating a news report, for instance–impairs their ability to perform these tasks." This may be why it is difficult for some people to multitask – especially when one task involves speaking and the other involves thinking.

Verbal communication helps us shape our attitudes about our world. The way you use language shapes your attitude about the world around you. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to explain that language determines thought. People

who speak different languages, or use language differently, think differently (Whorf; Sapir; Mandelbaum; Maxwell; Perlovsky; Lucy; Simpson; Hussein). The argument suggests that if a native English speaker had the exact same experiences in their life, but grew up speaking Chinese instead of English, their worldview would be different because of the different symbols used to make sense of the world. When you label, describe, or evaluate events in your life, you use the symbols of the language you speak. Your use of these symbols to represent your reality influences your perspective and attitude about the world. So, it makes sense then that the more sophisticated your repertoire of symbols is, the more sophisticated your world view can be for you. While the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is highly respected, there have been many scholarly and philosophical challenges to the viewpoint that language is what shapes our worldview. For example, Agustin Vicente and Fernando Martinez-Manrique did a study regarding the "argument of explicitness," which has two premises. The first premise is that "the instrument of thought must be explicit" in order for thought and language to be connected; the second is that natural languages – languages that humans can learn cognitively as they develop – are not explicit (Vicente and Martinez-Manrique, 384). The authors conclude that thoughts "demand a kind of completeness and stability of meaning that natural language sentences, being remarkably underdetermined, cannot provide" (Vicente and Martinez-Manrique, 397). It makes sense that something as arbitrary and complicated as the connection between thought and language is still being debated today.

While we have overly-simplified the complexities of verbal communication for you in this chapter, when it comes to its actual use—accounting for the infinite possibilities of symbols, rules, contexts, and meanings—studying how humans use verbal communication is daunting. When you consider the complexities of verbal communication, it is a wonder we can communicate effectively at all. But, verbal communication is not the only channel humans use to communicate. In the next chapter we will examine the other most common channel of communication we use: nonverbal communication.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

In this chapter we defined verbal communication as an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning. These symbols are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. The rules that dictate our use and understanding of symbols include phonology, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. As you recall there are distinct differences between written and spoken forms of verbal communication in terms of levels of formality, synchronicity, recording, and privacy. Yet, new technologies are beginning to blur some of these differences. Finally, verbal communication is central to our identity as humans and it allows us to define reality, organize ideas and experiences into categories, help us think, and shape out attitudes about the world.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you define yourself as a person? What kinds of definitions do you have for yourself? What do you think would happen if you changed some of your self-definitions?
2. How do advances in technology impact verbal communication? What are some examples?
3. How does popular culture impact our verbal communication? What are some examples?
4. When you use text messages or email, are you formal or informal?
5. In what situations/contexts would it be appropriate to speak formally rather than informally? Why?
6. To what extent do you believe that verbal communication drives thought, or vice versa?

Key Terms

- Abstract
- Ambiguous
- Arbitrary
- Archived
- Asynchronous
- Connotative Meaning
- Context
- Denotative Meaning
- Formal
- Informal
- Phonology
- Pragmatics
- Reclaim
- Rule-Governed
- Semantics
- Symbols
- Synchronous
- Syntactics
- Verbal Communication

CHAPTER 5: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define nonverbal communication and explain its main characteristics.
- Understand the three qualities of symbols.
- Describe the rules governing nonverbal communication.
- Explain the differences between written and spoken communication.
- Describe the functions of nonverbal communication.

Your brother comes home from school and walks through the door. Without saying a word, he walks to the fridge, gets a drink, and turns to head for the couch in the family room. Once there, he plops down, stares straight ahead, and sighs. You notice that he sits there in silence for the next few minutes. In this time, he never speaks a word. Is he communicating? If your answer is yes, how would you interpret his actions? How do you think he is feeling? What types of nonverbal communication was your brother using? Like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is essential in our everyday interactions. Remember that verbal and nonverbal communication are the two primary channels we study in the field of Communication. While nonverbal and verbal communications have many similar functions, nonverbal communication has its own set of functions for helping us communicate with each other. Before we get into the types and functions of nonverbal communication, let's define nonverbal communication to better understand how it is used in this text.

DEFINING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Like verbal communication, we use nonverbal communication to share meaning with others. Just as there are many definitions for verbal communication, there are also many ways to define nonverbal communication, let's look at a few.

Verbal communication researchers Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall define nonverbal behaviors as "typically sent with intent, are used with regularity among members of a social community, are typically interpreted as intentional, and have consensually recognized interpretations". In our opinion, this sounds too much like verbal communication, and might best be described as symbolic and systematic nonverbal communication.

Mead differentiated between what he termed as "gesture" versus "significant symbol," while Buck and VanLear took Mead's idea and argued that "gestures are not symbolic in that their relationship to their referents is not arbitrary," a fundamental distinction between verbal and nonverbal communication (524). Think of all the ways you unconsciously move your body

throughout the day. For example, you probably do not sit in your classes and think constantly about your nonverbal behaviors. Instead, much of the way you present yourself nonverbally in your classes is done unconsciously. Even so, others can derive meaning from your nonverbal behaviors whether they are intentional or not. For example, professors watch their students' nonverbal communication in class (such as slouching, leaning back in the chair, or looking at their watch) and make assumptions about them (they are bored, tired, or worrying about a test in another class). These assumptions are often based on acts that are typically done unintentionally.

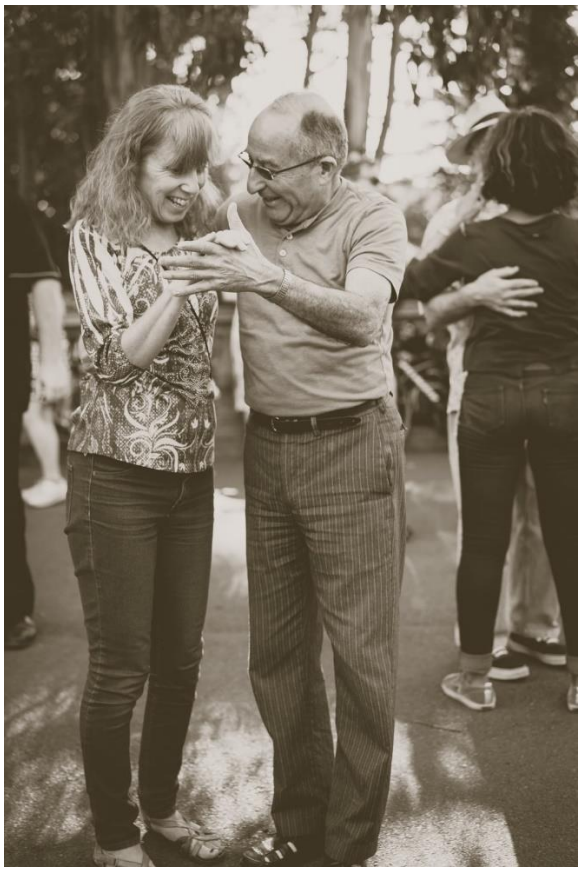

Figure 5.1 Based on this image, would you say this is a happy couple? Why?[32]

While we certainly use nonverbal communication consciously at times to generate and share particular meanings, when examined closely, it should be apparent that this channel of communication is not the same as verbal communication which is "an agreed-upon rule-governed system of symbols." Rather, nonverbal communication is most often spontaneous, unintentional, and may not follow formalized symbolic rule systems.

[32] Image by John Moeses Bauan on Unsplash

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

There are four fundamental differences between verbal and nonverbal communication. The first difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use a single channel (words) when we communicate verbally versus multiple channels when we communicate nonverbally. Try this exercise! Say your first and last name at the same time. You quickly find that this is an impossible task. Now, pat the top of your head with your right hand, wave with your left hand, smile, shrug your shoulders, and chew gum at the same time. While goofy and awkward, our ability to do this demonstrates how we use multiple nonverbal channels simultaneously to communicate.

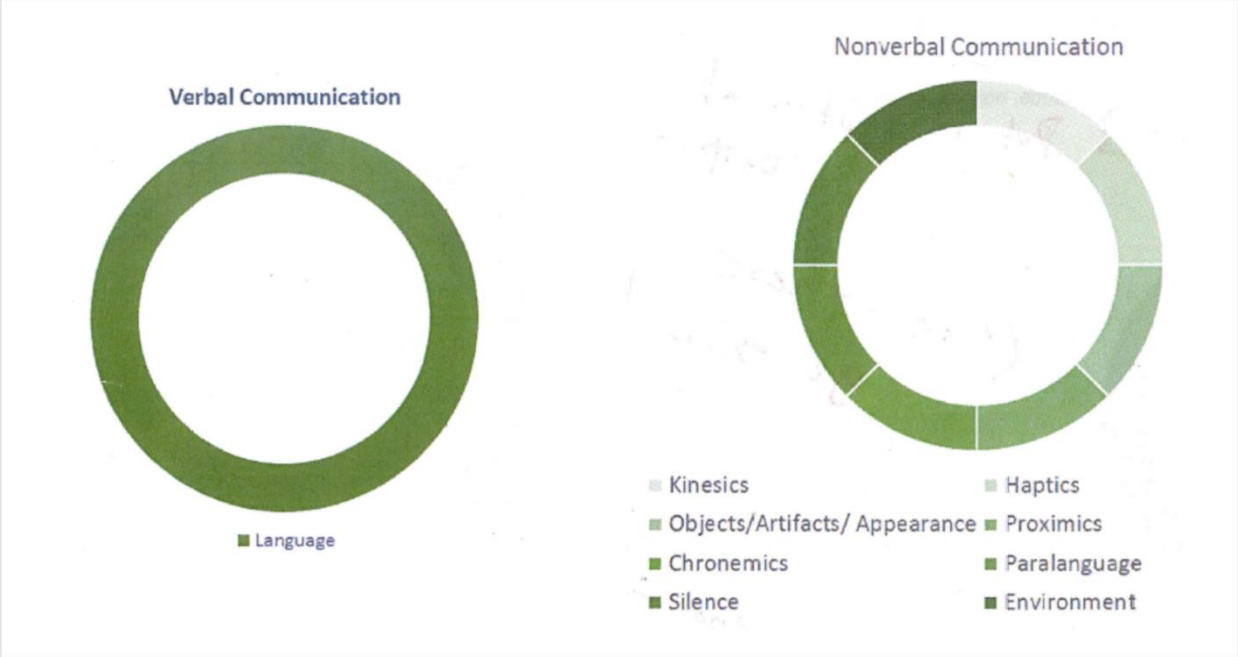

Figure 5.2[33]

It can be difficult to decode a sender's single verbal message due to the arbitrary, abstract, and ambiguous nature of language. But, think how much more difficult it is to decode the even more ambiguous and multiple nonverbal signals we take in like eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, clothing, personal artifacts, and tone of voice all at the same time. Despite this difficulty, Motley found that we learn to decode nonverbal communication as babies. Hall found that women are much better than men at accurately interpreting the many nonverbal cues we send and receive (Gore). How we interpret these nonverbal signals can also be influenced by our gender as the viewer.

[33] Image is under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license

A second difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that verbal communication is distinct (linear) while nonverbal communication is continuous (in constant motion and relative to context). Distinct means that messages have a clear beginning and end, and are expressed in a linear fashion. We begin and end words and sentences in a linear way to make it easier for others to follow and understand. If you pronounce the word "cat" you begin with the letter "C" and proceed to finish with "T." Continuous means that messages are ongoing and work in relation to other nonverbal and verbal cues. Think about the difference between analog and digital clocks. The analog clock represents nonverbal communication in that we generate meaning by considering the relationship of the different arms to each another (context). Also, the clock's arms are in continuous motion. We notice the speed of their movement, their position in the circle and to each other, and their relationship with the environment (is it day or night?).

Nonverbal communication is similar in that we evaluate nonverbal cues in relation to one another and consider the context of the situation. Suppose you see your friend in the distance. She approaches, waves, smiles, and says "hello." To interpret the meaning of this, you focus on the wave, smile, tone of voice, her approaching movement, and the verbal message. You might also consider the time of day, if there is a pressing need to get to class, etc.

Figure 5.3[34]

Now contrast this to a digital clock, which functions like verbal communication. Unlike an analog clock, a digital clock is not in constant motion. Instead, it replaces one number with another to display time (its message). A digital clock uses one distinct channel (numbers) in a linear fashion. When we use verbal communication, we do so like the digital clock. We say one word at a time, in a linear fashion, to express meaning.

A third difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use verbal communication consciously while we generally use nonverbal communication unconsciously.

[34] Image by Spaynton is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Conscious communication means that we think about our verbal communication before we communicate. Unconscious communication means that we do not think about every nonverbal message we communicate. If you ever heard the statement as a child, "Think before you speak" you were being told a fundamental principle of verbal communication. Realistically, it's nearly impossible not to think before we speak. When we speak, we do so consciously and intentionally. In contrast, when something funny happens, you probably do not think, "Okay, I'm going to smile and laugh right now." Instead, you react unconsciously, displaying your emotions through these nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal communication can occur as unconscious reactions to situations. We are not claiming that all nonverbal communication is unconscious. At times we certainly make conscious choices to use or withhold nonverbal communication to share meaning. Angry drivers use many conscious nonverbal expressions to communicate to other drivers! In a job interview you are making conscious decisions about your wardrobe, posture, and eye contact.

Pin It! Case In Point – Body Language

Body language expert and author, Vanessa Van Edwards reveals some interesting facts about body language in western culture in an interview with AM Northwest Today on September 18, 2013. She explains that men are not as good at reading body language cues as women because they use different areas of their brain when decoding. She states, "women might be better at reading body language because … [they] have 14 to 16 active brain areas while evaluating others, whereas men only have 4 to 6 active." Edwards also explains how men and women nonverbally lie differently because they tend to lie for different reasons; "Men lie to appear more powerful, interesting, and successful, … [whereas] women lie … more to protect others feelings." To learn more about differences in female and male body language you can read the full article and watch the video (link: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-to-read-a-mans-body-l_b_4674615).

A fourth difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that some nonverbal communication is universal (Hall, Chia, and Wang; Tracy & Robins). Verbal communication is exclusive to the users of a particular language dialect, whereas some nonverbal communication is recognized across cultures. Although cultures most certainly have particular meanings and uses for nonverbal communication, there are universal nonverbal behaviors that almost everyone recognizes. For instance, people around the world recognize and use expressions such as smiles, frowns, and the pointing of a finger at an object. Note: Not all nonverbal gestures are universal! For example, if you travel to different regions of the world, find out what is appropriate! For example if you go to South Korea don't offer payment with only one hand. For more examples, visit this webpage (link: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/galleries/Rude-hand-gestures-of-the-world/).

Let us sum up the ways in which nonverbal communication is unique:

- Nonverbal communication uses multiple channels simultaneously.
- Nonverbal communication is continuous.
- Nonverbal communication can be both conscious and unconscious.
- Certain nonverbal communication is universally understood.

Now that you have a definition of nonverbal communication, and can identify the primary differences between verbal and nonverbal communication, let's examine what counts as nonverbal communication. In this next section, we show you eight types of nonverbal communication we use regularly: kinesics, haptics, appearance, proxemics, environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence.

TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Kinesics is *the study of how we use body movement and facial expressions*. We interpret a great deal of meaning through body movement, facial expressions, and eye contact. Many people believe they can easily interpret the meanings of body movements and facial expressions in others. The reality is, it is almost impossible to determine an exact meaning for gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. Even so, we rely a great deal on kinesics to interpret and express meaning. We know that kinesics can communicate liking, social status, and even relational responsiveness (Mehrabian). Facial expressions are a primary method of sharing emotions and feelings (Ekman & Friesen; Scherer, Klaus, & Scherer). For example, imagine yourself at a party and you see someone across the room you are attracted to.

Figure 5.4[35]

What sort of nonverbal behaviors do you engage in to let that person know? Likewise, what nonverbal behaviors are you looking for from them to indicate that it's safe to come over and introduce yourself? We are able to go through exchanges like this using only our nonverbal communication.

Haptics is *the study of touch*. Touch is the first type of nonverbal communication we experience as humans and is vital to our development and health (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield; Wilson, et al.). Those who don't have positive touch in their lives are less healthy both mentally and physically than those who experience positive touch. We use touch to share feelings and relational meanings. Hugs, kisses, handshakes, or even playful roughhousing demonstrate relational meanings and indicate relational closeness. In western society, touch is largely reserved for family and romantic relationships. Generally girls and women in same-sex friendships have more liberty to express touch as part of the relationship than men in same-sex friendships. However, despite these unfortunate social taboos, the need for touch is so strong that men are quite sophisticated at finding ways to incorporate this into their friendships in socially acceptable ways. One such example is wrestling among adolescent and young-adult males. Do you ever wonder why you don't see as many women doing this? Perhaps it's because wrestling is socially acceptable for men whereas women are more likely to hug, hold hands, and sit touching one another. In contrast, an exchange student from Brazil recognized the differences in touch between cultures when arriving in the United States. She was surprised when someone hesitated to remove an eyelash from her face and apologized for touching her. In her country, no one would hesitate to do this act. She realized how much more physical

[35] Image by @EYEFOREBONY is licensed under CC0

touch is accepted and even expected in her culture. Cultural norms around touch and gender constructs, and everyone can prevent and limit touching behaviors in ways that are comfortable to them.

Personal Appearance, Objects, and Artifacts are types of *nonverbal communication we use on our bodies and surroundings communicate meaning to others*. Consider your preferences for hair-style, clothing, jewelry, and automobiles, as well as the way you maintain your body. Your choices express meanings to those around you about what you value and the image you wish to put forth. As with most communication, our choices for personal appearance, objects, and artifacts occur within cultural contexts, and are interpreted in light of these contexts. Consider the recent trendiness and popularity of tattoos. While once associated primarily with prison and armed services, tattoos have become mainstream and are used to articulate a variety of personal, political and cultural messages.

Proxemics is *the study of how our use of space influences the ways we relate with others*. It also demonstrates our relational standing with those around us (May). Edward Hall developed four categories of space we use in the U.S. to form and maintain relationships. Intimate space consists of space that ranges from touch to eighteen inches. We use intimate space with those whom we are close (family members, close friends, and intimate partners). Intimate space is also the context for physical fighting and violence. Personal space ranges from eighteen inches to four feet and is reserved for most conversations with non-intimate others (friends and acquaintances). Social space extends from four to twelve feet and is used for small group interactions such as sitting around a dinner table with others or a group meeting. Public space extends beyond twelve feet and is most often used in public speaking situations. We use space to regulate our verbal communication and communicate relational and social meanings. A fun exercise to do is to go to a public space and observe people. Based on their use of the above categories of space, try to determine what type of relationship the people are in: Romantic, Family, or Friends.

Our environments are *nonverbal acts through our use of spaces we occupy* like are homes, rooms, cars, or offices. Think of your home, room, automobile, or office space. What meanings can others perceive about you from these spaces? What meanings are you trying to send by how you keep them? Think about spaces you use frequently and the nonverbal meanings they have for you. Most educational institutions intentionally paint classrooms in dull colors. Why? Dull colors on walls have a calming effect, theoretically keeping students from being distracted by bright colors and excessive stimuli. Contrast the environment of a classroom to that of a fast food restaurant. These establishments have bright colors and hard plastic seats and tables. The bright colors generate an upbeat environment, while the hard plastic seats are just uncomfortable enough to keep patrons from staying too long–remember, it's FAST food (Restaurants See Color As Key Ingredient). People and cultures place different emphasis on the use of space as a way to communicate nonverbally.

Pin It! Case In Point - Feng Shui

Feng Shui, which means wind and water, is the ancient Chinese art of living in harmony with our environment. Feng Shui can be traced as far back as the Banpo dwellings in 4000 BCE. The ideas behind Feng Shui state that how we use our environment and organize our belongings affects the energy flow (chi) of people in that space, and the person/people who created the environment. The inclusion or exclusion, and placement, of various objects in our environments are used to create a positive impact on others. The theory is to use the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth to design a space. Feng Shui is applicable to cities, villages, homes, and public spaces. The Temple of Heaven in Bejing, China is an example of Feng Shui architecture. To keep harmony with the natural world, the Temple houses the Hall of Annual Prayer which is comprised of four inner, 12 middle, and 12 outer pillars representing the four seasons, 12 months, and 12 traditional Chinese hours.

Figure 5.5 Feng Shui[36]

Chronemics is *the study of how people use time*. Are you someone who is always early or on-time? Or, are you someone who arrives late to most events? Levine believes our use of time communicates a variety of meanings to those around us. Think about the person you know who is most frequently late. How do you describe that person based on their use of time? Now, think about someone else who is always on time. How do you describe that person? Is there a difference? If so, these differences are probably based on their use of time. In the U.S., we place high value on being on time, and respond more positively to people who are punctual.

But, in many Arab and Latin American countries, time is used more loosely, and punctuality is not necessarily a goal to achieve. You may have heard the expression, “Indian time” to refer to “the perception of time [that] is circular and flexible” (Harris, Shutiva). This is the belief that activities will commence when everyone is present and ready; not according to an arbitrary schedule based on a clock or calendar. Neither approach is better than the other, but the dissimilar uses of time can create misunderstandings among those from different cultural groups.

Paralanguage is the term we use to describe *vocal qualities such as pitch, volume, inflection, rate of speech, and rhythm*. While the types of nonverbal communication we’ve discussed so far are non-vocal, some nonverbal communication is actually vocal (noise is produced). How we say words often expresses greater meaning than the actual words themselves. Sarcasm and incongruence are two examples of this. The comedian Stephen Wright bases much of his comedy on his use of paralanguage. He talks in a completely monotone voice throughout his act and frequently makes statements such as, “I’m getting really excited” while using a monotone voice, accompanied by a blank facial expression. The humor lies in the in congruency—his paralanguage and facial expression contradict his verbal message. Watch an example of his humor.

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Pin It! Nonverbal Communication Now - Women In Black

An organization of women called Women in Black uses silence as a form of protest and hope for peace; particularly, peace from war and the unfair treatment of women. Women in Black began in Israel in 1988 by women protesting Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Women in Black continues to expand and now functions in the United States, England, Italy, Spain, Azerbaijan and Yugoslavia. Women gather in public spaces, dressed in black, and stand in silence for one hour, once a week. Their mission states, "We are silent because mere words cannot express the tragedy that wars and hatred bring. We refuse to add to the cacophony of empty statements that are spoken with the best intentions yet have failed to bring lasting change and understanding, or to the euphemistic jargon of the politicians which has perpetuated misunderstanding and fear that leads to war….our silence is visible."

Whenever you use sarcasm, your paralanguage is intended to contradict the verbal message you say. As Professors we have found that using sarcasm in the classroom can backfire when students do not pick up our paralinguistic cues and focus primarily on the verbal message. We have learned to use sarcasm sparingly so as not to hurt anyone's feelings.

Finally, silence serves as a type of nonverbal communication when we *do not use words or utterances to convey meaning*s. Have you ever experienced the "silent treatment" from someone? What meanings did you take from that person's silence? Silence is powerful because the person using silence may be refusing to engage in communication with you. Likewise, we can use silence to regulate the flow of our conversations. Silence has a variety of meanings and, as with other types of nonverbal communication; context plays an important role for interpreting the meaning of silence. For example, the Day of Silence protest which has taken place every year since 1996 is a day which students use their silence as a tool to get people to stand up for LGBT rights. Here, like in the Women in Black movement, the participants believe that silence sends a louder message than anything they could say. Do you think they are right? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using silence as a political strategy? If you wish to participate or read further, you can visit this webpage about the GLSEN Day of Silence (link: https://www.glsen.org/day-of-silence).

You should now recognize the infinite combination of verbal and nonverbal messages we can share. When you think about it, it really is astonishing that we can communicate effectively at all. We engage in a continuous dance of communication where we try to stay in step with one another. With an understanding of the definition of nonverbal communication and the types of

nonverbal communication, let's consider the various functions nonverbal communication serves in helping us communicate. (Ekman; Knapp; Malandro & Barker).

Functions of Nonverbal Communication

You learned that we use verbal communication to express ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people. But what functions does nonverbal communication serve as we communicate (Blumer)? Even though it's not through words, nonverbal communication serves many functions to help us communicate meanings with one another more effectively.

We use nonverbal communication to duplicate verbal communication. When we use nonverbal communication to duplicate, we use nonverbal communication that is recognizable to most people within a particular cultural group. Obvious examples include a head-nod or a head-shake to duplicate the verbal messages of "yes" or "no." If someone asks if you want to go to a movie, you might verbally answer "yes" and at the same time nod your head. This accomplishes the goal of duplicating the verbal message with a nonverbal message. Interestingly, the head nod is considered a "nearly universal indication of accord, agreement, and understanding" because the same muscle in the head nod is the same one a baby uses to lower its head to accept milk from its mother's breast (Givens). We witnessed a two year old girl who was learning the duplication function of nonverbal communication, and didn't always get it right. When asked if she wanted something, her "yes" was shaking her head side to side as if she was communicating "no." However, her "no" was the same head-shake but it was accompanied with the verbal response "no." So, when she was two, she thought that the duplication was what made her answer "no."

We use nonverbal communication to replace verbal communication. If someone asks you a question, instead of a verbal reply "yes" and a head-nod, you may choose to simply nod your head without the accompanying verbal message. When we replace verbal communication with nonverbal communication, we use nonverbal behaviors that are easily recognized by others such as a wave, head-nod, or head-shake. This is why it was so confusing for others to understand the young girl in the example above when she simply shook her head in response to a question. This was cleared up when someone asked her if she wanted something to eat and she shook her head. When she didn't get food, she began to cry. This was the first clue that the replacing function of communication still needed to be learned. Consider how universal shaking the head side-to-side is as an indicator of disbelief, disapproval, and negation. This nonverbal act is used by human babies to refuse food or drink; rhesus monkeys, baboons, bonnet macaques and gorillas turn their faces sideways in aversion; and children born deaf/blind head shake to refuse objects or disapprove of touch (Givens).

We use nonverbal cues to complement verbal communication. If a friend tells you that she recently received a promotion and a pay raise, you can show your enthusiasm in a number of verbal and nonverbal ways. If you exclaim, "Wow, that's great! I'm so happy for you!" while at the same time smiling and hugging your friend, you are using nonverbal communication to complement what you are saying. Unlike duplicating or replacing, nonverbal communication

that complements cannot be used alone without the verbal message. If you simply smiled and hugged your friend without saying anything, the interpretation of that nonverbal communication would be more ambiguous than using it to complement your verbal message.

We use nonverbal communication to accent verbal communication. While nonverbal communication complements verbal communication, we also use it to accent verbal communication by emphasizing certain parts of the verbal message. For instance, you may be upset with a family member and state, "I'm very angry with you." To accent this statement nonverbally you might say it, "I'm VERY angry with you," placing your emphasis on the word "very" to demonstrate the magnitude of your anger. In this example, it is your tone of voice (paralanguage) that serves as the nonverbal communication that accents the message. Parents might tell their children to "come here." If they point to the spot in front of them dramatically, they are accenting the "here" part of the verbal message.

Pin It! Nonverbal Communication and You Nonverbal Communication and Romance

If you don't think the things that Communication scholars study (like nonverbal communication) applies to you, think again! A quick search of nonverbal communication on Google will yield a great many sites devoted to translating nonverbal research into practical guides for your personal life. One example on Buzzfeed.com is the article "10 Things You Can Tell About Your Date Through Body Language" written by Reveal Calvin Klein(2014). In the article, Klein outlines 10 nonverbal cues to read to see if someone is interested in you romantically. While we won't vouch for the reliability of these types of pieces, they do show the relevance of studying areas like nonverbal communication has in our personal lives.

We use nonverbal communication to regulate verbal communication. Generally, it is pretty easy for us to enter, maintain, and exit our interactions with others nonverbally. Rarely, if ever, would we approach a person and say, "I'm going to start a conversation with you now. Okay, let's begin." Instead, we might make eye contact, move closer to the person, or face the person directly — all nonverbal behaviors that indicate our desire to interact. Likewise, we do not generally end conversations by stating, "I'm done talking to you now" unless there is a breakdown in the communication process. We are generally proficient enacting nonverbal communication such as looking at our watch, looking in the direction we wish to go, or being silent to indicate an impending end in the conversation. When there is a breakdown in the nonverbal regulation of conversation, we may say something to the effect, "I really need to get going now." In fact, we've seen one example where someone does not seem to pick up on the nonverbal cues about ending a phone conversation. Because of this inability to pick up on the nonverbal regulation cues, others have literally had to resort to saying, "Okay, I'm hanging up the phone right now" followed by actually hanging up the phone. In these instances, there was a breakdown in the use of nonverbal communication to regulate conversation.

We use nonverbal communication to contradict verbal communication. Imagine that you visit your boss's office and she asks you how you're enjoying a new work assignment. You may feel obligated to respond positively because it is your boss asking the question, even though you may not truly feel this way. However, your nonverbal communication may contradict your verbal message, indicating to your boss that you really do not enjoy the new work assignment. In this example, your nonverbal communication contradicts your verbal message and sends a mixed message to your boss. Research suggests that when verbal and nonverbal messages contradict one another, receivers often place greater value on the nonverbal communication as the more accurate message (Argyle, Alkema & Gilmour). One place this occurs frequently is in greeting sequences. You might say to your friend in passing, "How are you?" She might say, "Fine" but have a sad tone to her voice. In this case, her nonverbal behaviors go against her verbal response. We are more likely to interpret the nonverbal communication in this situation than the verbal response.

Pin It! Nonverbal Communication and You - Nonverbal Communication and Getting A Job

You may be thinking that getting the right degree at the right college is the way to get a job. Think again! It may be a good way to get an interview, but once at the interview, what matters? College Journal reports that, "Body language comprises 55% of the force of any response, whereas the verbal content only provides 7%, and paralanguage, or the intonation — pauses and sighs given when answering — represents 38% of the emphasis." If you show up to an interview smelling of cigarette smoke, chewing gum, dressed inappropriately, and listening to music on your phone, you're probably in trouble.

About.Com states that these are some effective nonverbal practices during interviews:

- Make eye contact with the interviewer for a few seconds at a time.
- Smile and nod (at appropriate times) when the interviewer is talking, but, don't overdo it. Don't laugh unless the interviewer does first.
- Be polite and keep an even tone to your speech. Don't be too loud or too quiet.
- Don't slouch.
- Do relax and lean forward a little towards the interviewer so you appear interested and engaged.
- Don't lean back. You will look too casual and relaxed.
- Keep your feet on the floor and your back against the lower back of the chair.
- Pay attention, be attentive and interested.
- Listen.
- Don't interrupt.
- Stay calm. Even if you had a bad experience at a previous position or were fired, keep your emotions to yourself and do not show anger or frown.

Not sure what to do with your hands? Hold a pen and your notepad or rest an arm on the chair or on your lap, so you look comfortable. Don't let your arms fly around the room when you're making a point.

We use nonverbal communication to mislead others. We can also use nonverbal communication to deceive, and often, focus on a person's nonverbal communication when trying to detect deception. Recall a time when someone asked your opinion of a new haircut. If you did not like it, you may have stated verbally that you liked the haircut and provided nonverbal communication to further mislead the person about how you really felt. Conversely, when we try to determine if someone is misleading us, we generally focus on the nonverbal

communication of the other person. One study suggests that when we only use nonverbal communication to detect deception in others, 78% of lies and truths can be detected (Vrij, Edward, Roberts, & Bull). However, other studies indicate that we are really not very effective at determining deceit in other people (Levine, Feeley & McCornack), and that we are only accurate 45 to 70 percent of the time when trying to determine if someone is misleading us (Kalbfleisch; Burgoon, et al.; Horchak, Giger, Pochwatko). When trying to detect deception, it is more effective to examine both verbal and nonverbal communication to see if they are consistent (Vrij, Akehurst, Soukara, & Bull). Even further than this, Park, Levine, McCornack, Morrison, & Ferrara argue that people usually go beyond verbal and nonverbal communication and consider what outsiders say, physical evidence, and the relationship over a longer period of time. Read further in this body language article if you want to learn more about body language and how to detect lies (link: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body_Language.htm).

Pin It! Case In Point - Eat Like A Lady

In Japan it is considered improper for women to be shown with their mouths open in public. Not surprisingly, this makes it difficult to eat particular foods, such as hamburgers. So, in 2013, the Japanese Burge chain, Freshness Burger, developed a solution: the liberation wrapper. The wrapper, or mask, hides women's mouths as they eat thus allowing them to maintain the expected gendered nonverbal behavior for the culture. To learn and see more about this, read this article (link: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2487859/Japans-Freshness-Burger-restaurant-invents-eating-mask-hide-womens-faces.html).

We use nonverbal communication to indicate relational standing(Mehrabian; Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & deTurck; Le Poire, Duggan, Shepard, & Burgoon; Sallinen-Kuparinen; Floyd & Erbert). Take a few moments today to observe the nonverbal communication of people you see in public areas. What can you determine about their relational standing from their nonverbal communication? For example, romantic partners tend to stand close to one another and touch one another frequently. On the other hand, acquaintances generally maintain greater distances and touch less than romantic partners. Those who hold higher social status often use more space when they interact with others. In the United States, it is generally acceptable for women in platonic relationships to embrace and be physically close while males are often discouraged from doing so. Contrast this to many other nations where it is custom for males to greet each other with a kiss or a hug and hold hands as a symbol of friendship. We make many inferences about relational standing based on the nonverbal communication of those with whom we interact and observe. Imagine seeing a couple talking to each other across a small table. They both have faces that look upset, red eyes from crying, closed body positions, are leaning into each other, and are whispering emphatically. Upon seeing this, would you think they were having a "Breakup conversation"?

We use nonverbal communication to demonstrate and maintain cultural norms. We've already shown that some nonverbal communication is universal, but the majority of nonverbal

communication is culturally specific. For example, in United States culture, people typically place high value on their personal space. In the United States people maintain far greater personal space than those in many other cultures. If you go to New York City, you might observe that any time someone accidentally touches you on the subway he/she might apologize profusely for the violation of personal space. Cultural norms of anxiety and fear surrounding issues of crime and terrorism appear to cause people to be more sensitive to others in public spaces, highlighting the importance of culture and context.

If you go grocery shopping in China as a westerner, you might be shocked that shoppers would ram their shopping carts into others' carts when they wanted to move around them in the aisle. This is not an indication of rudeness, but a cultural difference in the negotiation of space. You would need to adapt to using this new approach to personal space, even though it carries a much different meaning in the U.S. Nonverbal cues such as touch, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are culturally specific and reflect and maintain the values and norms of the cultures in which they are used.

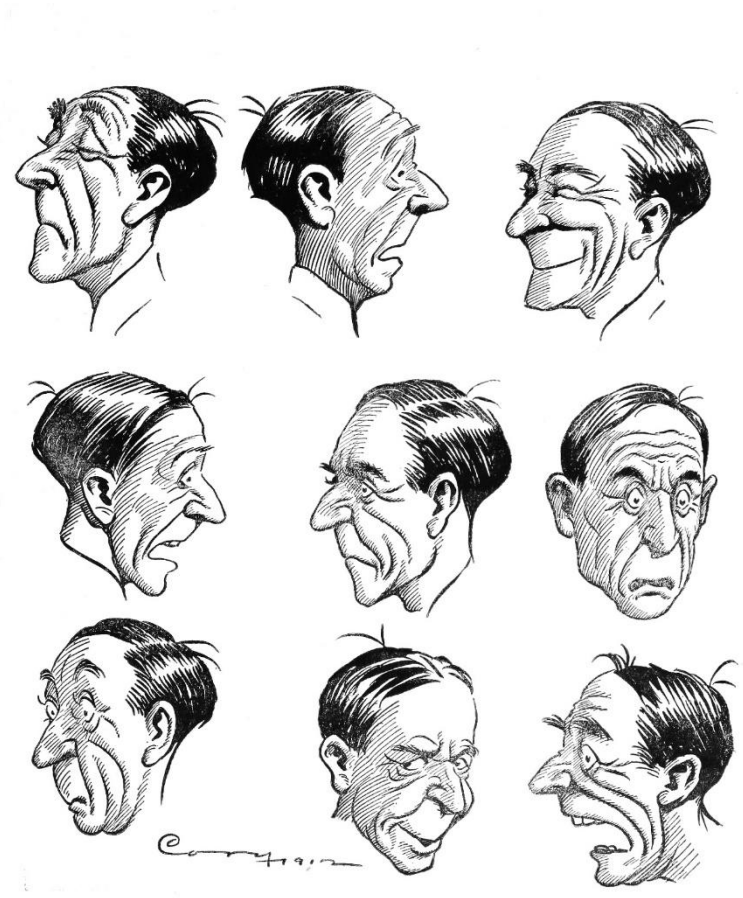


Figure 5.6: This 1920's comic artist was practicing facial expressions, what do you think each one means?[37]

[37] Image is in the public domain

We use nonverbal communication to communicate emotions. While we can certainly tell people how we feel, we more frequently use nonverbal communication to express our emotions. Conversely, we tend to interpret emotions by examining nonverbal communication. For example, a friend may be feeling sad one day and it is probably easy to tell this by her nonverbal communication. Not only may she be less talkative but her shoulders may be slumped and she may not smile. One study suggests that it is important to use and interpret nonverbal communication for emotional expression, and ultimately relational attachment and satisfaction (Schachner, Shaver, & Mikulincer). Research also underscores the fact that people in close relationships have an easier time reading the nonverbal communication of emotion of their relational partners than those who aren't close. Likewise, those in close relationships can more often detect concealed emotions (Sternglanz & Depaulo).

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

In this chapter, you have learned that we define nonverbal communication as any meaning shared through sounds, behaviors, and artifacts other than words. Some of the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication include the fact that verbal communication uses one channel while nonverbal communication occurs through multiple channels simultaneously. As a result, verbal communication is distinct while nonverbal communication is continuous. For the most part, nonverbal communication is enacted at an unconscious level while we are almost always conscious of our verbal communication. Finally, some nonverbal communication is considered universal and recognizable by people all over the world, while verbal communication is exclusive to particular languages.

There are many types of nonverbal communication including kinesics, haptics, appearance, objects, artifacts, proxemics, our environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence. These types of nonverbal communication help us share meanings in our interactions. Now that you have a basic understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication as a primary focus of study in our field, let's look at how theory helps us understand our world.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever communicated with someone outside of your culture? How were their nonverbals similar to your own, or different?
2. Have you ever had your nonverbal cues misinterpreted? For example, someone thought you liked them because your proxemics suggested an intimate relationship. How did you correct the misinterpretation?
3. What kind of nonverbal communication do you use every day? What does it accomplish for you?
4. Which do you consider has greater weight when interpreting a message from someone else, verbal or nonverbal communication? Why?

Key Terms

- Chronemics
- Conscious
- Context
- Continuous
- Distinct
- Environment
- Haptics
- Kinesics
- Nonverbal Communication
- Paralanguage
- Personal Appearance
- Proxemics
- Silence
- Unconscious

CHAPTER 6: LISTENING

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe the stages of the listening process.
- Discuss the four main types of listening.
- Compare and contrast the four main listening styles.

In our sender-oriented society, listening is often overlooked as an important part of the communication process. Yet research shows that adults spend about 45 percent of their time listening, which is more than any other communicative activity. In some contexts, we spend even more time listening than that. On average, workers spend 55 percent of their workday listening, and managers spend about 63 percent of their day listening.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 177.

Listening is a primary means through which we learn new information, which can help us meet instrumental needs as we learn things that help us complete certain tasks at work or school and get things done in general. The act of listening to our relational partners provides support, which is an important part of relational maintenance and helps us meet our relational needs. Listening to what others say about us helps us develop an accurate self-concept, which can help us more strategically communicate for identity needs in order to project to others our desired self. Overall, improving our listening skills can help us be better students, better relational partners, and more successful professionals.

UNDERSTANDING HOW AND WHY WE LISTEN

Listening is the learned process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. We begin to engage with the listening process long before we engage in any recognizable verbal or nonverbal communication. It is only after listening for months as infants that we begin to consciously practice our own forms of expression. In this section we will learn more about each stage of the listening process, the main types of listening, and the main listening styles.

The Listening Process

Listening is a process and as such doesn't have a defined start and finish. Like the communication process, listening has cognitive, behavioral, and relational elements and doesn't unfold in a linear, step-by-step fashion. Models of processes are informative in that they help us visualize specific components, but keep in mind that they do not capture the speed, overlapping nature, or overall complexity of the actual process in action. The stages of the listening process are receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding.

Receiving

Before we can engage other steps in the listening process, we must take in stimuli through our senses. In any given communication encounter, it is likely that we will return to the receiving stage many times as we process incoming feedback and new messages. This part of the listening process is more physiological than other parts, which include cognitive and relational elements. We primarily take in information needed for listening through auditory and visual channels. Although we don't often think about visual cues as a part of listening, they influence how we interpret messages. For example, seeing a person's face when we hear their voice allows us to take in nonverbal cues from facial expressions and eye contact. The fact that these visual cues are missing in e-mail, text, and phone interactions presents some difficulties for reading contextual clues into meaning received through only auditory channels.

Figure 6.1[38]

Our chapter on perception discusses some of the ways in which incoming stimuli are filtered. These perceptual filters also play a role in listening. Some stimuli never make it in, some are filtered into sub consciousness, and others are filtered into various levels of consciousness based on their salience. Recall that salience is the degree to which something attracts our attention in a particular context and that we tend to find salient things that are visually or audibly stimulating and things that meet our needs or interests. Think about how it's much easier to listen to a lecture on a subject that you find very interesting.

It is important to consider noise as a factor that influences how we receive messages. Some

[38] Image by Mohammad Metri on Unsplash

noise interferes primarily with hearing, which is the physical process of receiving stimuli through internal and external components of the ears and eyes, and some interferes with listening, which is the cognitive process of processing the stimuli taken in during hearing. While hearing leads to listening, they are not the same thing. Environmental noise such as other people talking, the sounds of traffic, and music interfere with the physiological aspects of hearing. Psychological noise like stress and anger interfere primarily with the cognitive processes of listening. We can enhance our ability to receive, and in turn listen, by trying to minimize noise.

Interpreting

During the interpreting stage of listening, we combine the visual and auditory information we receive and try to make meaning out of that information using schemata. The interpreting stage engages cognitive and relational processing as we take in informational, contextual, and relational cues and try to connect them in meaningful ways to previous experiences. It is through the interpreting stage that we may begin to understand the stimuli we have received. When we understand something, we are able to attach meaning by connecting information to previous experiences. Through the process of comparing new information with old information, we may also update or revise particular schemata if we find the new information relevant and credible. If we have difficulty interpreting information, meaning we don't have previous experience or information in our existing schemata to make sense of it, then it is difficult to transfer the information into our long-term memory for later recall. In situations where understanding the information we receive isn't important or isn't a goal, this stage may be fairly short or even skipped. After all, we can move something to our long-term memory by repetition and then later recall it without ever having understood it. I remember earning perfect scores on exams in my anatomy class in college because I was able to memorize and recall, for example, all the organs in the digestive system. In fact, I might still be able to do that now over a decade later. But neither then nor now could I tell you the significance or function of most of those organs, meaning I didn't really get to a level of understanding but simply stored the information for later recall.

Recalling

Our ability to recall information is dependent on some of the physiological limits of how memory works. Overall, our memories are known to be fallible. We forget about half of what we hear immediately after hearing it, recall 35 percent after eight hours, and recall 20 percent after a day. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 189–99. Our memory consists of multiple "storage units," including sensory storage, short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 184.

Our sensory storage is very large in terms of capacity but limited in terms of length of storage. We can hold large amounts of unsorted visual information but only for about a tenth of a second. By comparison, we can hold large amounts of unsorted auditory information for

longer—up to four seconds. This initial memory storage unit doesn't provide much use for our study of communication, as these large but quickly expiring chunks of sensory data are primarily used in reactionary and instinctual ways.

As stimuli are organized and interpreted, they make their way to short-term memory where they either expire and are forgotten or are transferred to long-term memory. Short-term memory is a mental storage capability that can retain stimuli for twenty seconds to one minute. Long-term memory is a mental storage capability to which stimuli in short-term memory can be transferred if they are connected to existing schema and in which information can be stored indefinitely.Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 184. Working memory is a temporarily accessed memory storage space that is activated during times of high cognitive demand. When using working memory, we can temporarily store information and process and use it at the same time. This is different from our typical memory function in that information usually has to make it to long-term memory before we can call it back up to apply to a current situation. People with good working memories are able to keep recent information in mind and process it and apply it to other incoming information. This can be very useful during high-stress situations. A person in control of a command center like the White House Situation Room should have a good working memory in order to take in, organize, evaluate, and then immediately use new information instead of having to wait for that information to make it to long-term memory and then be retrieved and used.

Although recall is an important part of the listening process, there isn't a direct correlation between being good at recalling information and being a good listener. Some people have excellent memories and recall abilities and can tell you a very accurate story from many years earlier during a situation in which they should actually be listening and not showing off their recall abilities. Recall is an important part of the listening process because it is most often used to assess listening abilities and effectiveness. Many quizzes and tests in school are based on recall and are often used to assess how well students comprehended information presented in class, which is seen as an indication of how well they listened. When recall is our only goal, we excel at it. Experiments have found that people can memorize and later recall a set of faces and names with near 100 percent recall when sitting in a quiet lab and asked to do so. But throw in external noise, more visual stimuli, and multiple contextual influences, and we can't remember the name of the person we were just introduced to one minute earlier. Even in interpersonal encounters, we rely on recall to test whether or not someone was listening. Imagine that Azam is talking to his friend Belle, who is sitting across from him in a restaurant booth. Azam, annoyed that Belle keeps checking her phone, stops and asks, "Are you listening?" Belle inevitably replies, "Yes," since we rarely fess up to our poor listening habits, and Azam replies, "Well, what did I just say?"

Evaluating

When we evaluate something, we make judgments about its credibility, completeness, and worth. In terms of credibility, we try to determine the degree to which we believe a speaker's

statements are correct and/or true. In terms of completeness, we try to "read between the lines" and evaluate the message in relation to what we know about the topic or situation being discussed. We evaluate the worth of a message by making a value judgment about whether we think the message or idea is good/bad, right/wrong, or desirable/undesirable. All these aspects of evaluating require critical thinking skills, which we aren't born with but must develop over time through our own personal and intellectual development.

Studying communication is a great way to build your critical thinking skills, because you learn much more about the taken-for-granted aspects of how communication works, which gives you tools to analyze and critique messages, senders, and contexts. Critical thinking and listening skills also help you take a more proactive role in the communication process rather than being a passive receiver of messages that may not be credible, complete, or worthwhile. One danger within the evaluation stage of listening is to focus your evaluative lenses more on the speaker than the message. This can quickly become a barrier to effective listening if we begin to prejudge a speaker based on his or her identity or characteristics rather than on the content of his or her message. We will learn more about how to avoid slipping into a person-centered rather than message-centered evaluative stance later in the chapter.

Responding

Responding entails sending verbal and nonverbal messages that indicate attentiveness and understanding or a lack thereof. From our earlier discussion of the communication model, you may be able to connect this part of the listening process to feedback. Later, we will learn more specifics about how to encode and decode the verbal and nonverbal cues sent during the responding stage, but we all know from experience some signs that indicate whether a person is paying attention and understanding a message or not.

We send verbal and nonverbal feedback while another person is talking and after they are done. Back-channel cues are the verbal and nonverbal signals we send while someone is talking and can consist of verbal cues like "uh-huh," "oh," and "right," and/or nonverbal cues like direct eye contact, head nods, and leaning forward. Back-channel cues are generally a form of positive feedback that indicates others are actively listening. People also send cues intentionally and unintentionally that indicate they aren't listening. If another person is looking away, fidgeting, texting, or turned away, we will likely interpret those responses negatively

Paraphrasing is a responding behavior that can also show that you understand what was communicated. When you paraphrase information, you rephrase the message into your own words. For example, you might say the following to start off a paraphrased response: "What I heard you say was…" or "It seems like you're saying…" You can also ask clarifying questions to get more information. It is often a good idea to pair a paraphrase with a question to keep a conversation flowing. For example, you might pose the following paraphrase and question pair: "It seems like you believe you were treated unfairly. Is that right?" Or you might ask a standalone question like "What did your boss do?"

Listeners respond to speakers nonverbally during a message using back-channel cues and verbally after a message using

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

Understanding how listening works provides the foundation we need to explore why we listen, including various types and styles of listening. In general, listening helps us achieve communication goals: physical, instrumental, relational, and identity. Listening is also important in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

In terms of academics, poor listening skills were shown to contribute significantly to failure in a person's first year of college. Wendy S. Zabava and Andrew D. Wolvin, "The Differential Impact of a Basic Communication Course on Perceived Communication Competencies in Class, Work, and Social Contexts," Communication Education 42 (1993): 215–17. In general, students with high scores for listening ability have greater academic achievement. Interpersonal communication skills including listening are also highly sought after by potential employers, consistently ranking in the top ten in national surveys. National Association of Colleges and Employers, Job Outlook 2011 (2010): 25.

Poor listening skills, lack of conciseness, and inability to give constructive feedback have been identified as potential communication challenges in professional contexts. Even though listening education is lacking in our society, research has shown that introductory communication courses provide important skills necessary for functioning in entry-level jobs, including listening, writing, motivating/ persuading, interpersonal skills, informational interviewing, and small-group problem solving. Vincent S. DiSalvo, "A Summary of Current Research Identifying Communication Skills in Various Organizational Contexts," Communication Education 29 (1980), 283–90. Training and improvements in listening will continue to pay off, as employers desire employees with good communication skills, and employees who have good listening skills are more likely to get promoted.

Listening also has implications for our personal lives and relationships. We shouldn't underestimate the power of listening to make someone else feel better and to open our perceptual field to new sources of information. Empathetic listening can help us expand our self and social awareness by learning from other people's experiences and by helping us take on different perspectives. Emotional support in the form of empathetic listening and validation during times of conflict can help relational partners manage common stressors of relationships that may otherwise lead a partnership to deteriorate. Robert M. Milardo and Heather Helms-Erikson, "Network Overlap and Third-Party Influence in Close Relationships," in Close Relationships: A Sourcebook, eds. Clyde Hendrick and Susan S. Hendrick (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 37. The following list reviews some of the main functions of listening that are relevant in multiple contexts.

The main purposes of listening are:

- to focus on messages sent by other people or noises coming from our surroundings;

- to better our understanding of other people's communication;
- to critically evaluate other people's messages;
- to monitor nonverbal signals;
- to indicate that we are interested or paying attention;
- to empathize with others and show we care for them (relational maintenance); and
- to engage in negotiation, dialogue, or other exchanges that result in shared understanding of or agreement on an issue.

Listening Types

Listening serves many purposes, and different situations require different types of listening. The type of listening we engage in affects our communication and how others respond to us. For example, when we listen to empathize with others, our communication will likely be supportive and open, which will then lead the other person to feel "heard" and supported and hopefully view the interaction positively. Graham D. Bodie and William A. Villaume, "Aspects of Receiving Information: The Relationships between Listening Preferences, Communication Apprehension, Receiver Apprehension, and Communicator Style," International Journal of Listening 17, no. 1 (2003): 48. The main types of listening we will discuss are discriminative, informational, critical, and empathetic. Kittie W. Watson, Larry L. Barker, and James B. Weaver III, "The Listening Styles Profile (LS-16): Development and Validation of an Instrument to Assess Four Listening Styles," International Journal of Listening 9 (1995): 1–13.

Discriminative Listening

Discriminative listening is a focused and usually instrumental type of listening that is primarily physiological and occurs mostly at the receiving stage of the listening process. Here we engage in listening to scan and monitor our surroundings in order to isolate particular auditory or visual stimuli. For example, we may focus our listening on a dark part of the yard while walking the dog at night to determine if the noise we just heard presents us with any danger. Or we may look for a particular nonverbal cue to let us know our conversational partner received our message. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 185. In the absence of a hearing impairment, we have an innate and physiological ability to engage in discriminative listening. Although this is the most basic form of listening, it provides the foundation on which more intentional listening skills are built. This type of listening can be refined and honed. Think of how musicians, singers, and mechanics exercise specialized discriminative listening to isolate specific aural stimuli and how actors, detectives, and sculptors discriminate visual cues that allow them to analyze, make meaning from, or recreate nuanced behavior. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley, "A Listening Taxonomy," in Perspectives on Listening, eds. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 18–19.

Informational Listening

Informational listening entails listening with the goal of comprehending and retaining information. This type of listening is not evaluative and is common in teaching and learning

contexts ranging from a student listening to an informative speech to an out-of-towner listening to directions to the nearest gas station. We also use informational listening when we listen to news reports, voice mail, and briefings at work. Since retention and recall are important components of informational listening, good concentration and memory skills are key. These also happen to be skills that many college students struggle with, at least in the first years of college, but will be expected to have mastered once they get into professional contexts. In many professional contexts, informational listening is important, especially when receiving instructions. I caution my students that they will be expected to process verbal instructions more frequently in their profession than they are in college. Most college professors provide detailed instructions and handouts with assignments so students can review them as needed, but many supervisors and managers will expect you to take the initiative to remember or record vital information. Additionally, many bosses are not as open to questions or requests to repeat themselves as professors are.

Critical listening entails listening with the goal of analyzing or evaluating a message based on information presented verbally and information that can be inferred from context. A critical listener evaluates a message and accepts it, rejects it, or decides to withhold judgment and seek more information. As constant consumers of messages, we need to be able to assess the credibility of speakers and their messages and identify various persuasive appeals and faulty logic (known as fallacies). Critical listening is important during persuasive exchanges, but I recommend always employing some degree of critical listening, because you may find yourself in a persuasive interaction that you thought was informative. People often disguise inferences as facts. Critical-listening skills are useful when listening to a persuasive speech in this class and when processing any of the persuasive media messages we receive daily. You can see judges employ critical listening, with varying degrees of competence, on talent competition shows like Rupaul's Drag Race, America's Got Talent, and The Voice. While the exchanges between judge and contestant on these shows is expected to be subjective and critical, critical listening is also important when listening to speakers that have stated or implied objectivity, such as parents, teachers, political leaders, doctors, and religious leaders. We will learn more about how to improve your critical thinking skills later in this chapter.

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is the most challenging form of listening and occurs when we try to understand or experience what a speaker is thinking or feeling. Empathetic listening is distinct from sympathetic listening. While the word empathy means to "feel into" or "feel with" another person, sympathy means to "feel for" someone. Sympathy is generally more self-oriented and distant than empathy. Tom Bruneau, "Empathy and Listening," in Perspectives on Listening, eds. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 188. Empathetic listening is other oriented and should be genuine. Because of our own centrality in our perceptual world, empathetic listening can be difficult. It's often much easier for us to tell our own story or to give advice than it is to really listen to and empathize with someone else. We should keep in mind that sometimes others just need to be heard and our feedback isn't actually desired.

Empathetic listening is key for dialogue and helps maintain interpersonal relationships. In order to reach dialogue, people must have a degree of open-mindedness and a commitment to civility that allows them to be empathetic while still allowing them to believe in and advocate for their own position. An excellent example of critical and empathetic listening in action is the international Truth and Reconciliation movement. The most well-known example of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) occurred in South Africa as a way to address the various conflicts that occurred during apartheid. Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Truth and Reconciliation Commission website, accessed July 13, 2012, http://www.justice.gov.za/trc. The first TRC in the United States occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina, as a means of processing the events and aftermath of November 3, 1979, when members of the Ku Klux Klan shot and killed five members of the Communist Worker's Party during a daytime confrontation witnessed by news crews and many bystanders. The goal of such commissions is to allow people to tell their stories, share their perspectives in an open environment, and be listened to. The Greensboro TRC states its purpose as such: "About," Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission website, accessed July 13, 2012, http://www.greensborotrc.org/truth_reconciliation.php.

The truth and reconciliation process seeks to heal relations between opposing sides by uncovering all pertinent facts, distinguishing truth from lies, and allowing for acknowledgement, appropriate public mourning, forgiveness and healing…The focus often is on giving victims, witnesses and even perpetrators a chance to publicly tell their stories without fear of prosecution.

Listening Styles

Just as there are different types of listening, there are also different styles of listening. People may be categorized as one or more of the following listeners: people-oriented, action-oriented, content-oriented, and time-oriented listeners. Research finds that 40 percent of people have more than one preferred listening style, and that they choose a style based on the listening situation. Graham D. Bodie and William A. Villaume, "Aspects of Receiving Information: The Relationships between Listening Preferences, Communication Apprehension, Receiver Apprehension, and Communicator Style," International Journal of Listening 17, no. 1 (2003): 50. Other research finds that people often still revert back to a single preferred style in times of emotional or cognitive stress, even if they know a different style of listening would be better. Debra L. Worthington, "Exploring the Relationship between Listening Style Preference and Personality," International Journal of Listening 17, no. 1 (2003): 82. Following a brief overview of each listening style, we will explore some of their applications, strengths, and weaknesses.

People-oriented listeners are concerned about the needs and feelings of others and may get distracted from a specific task or the content of a message in order to address feelings. Action-oriented listeners prefer well-organized, precise, and accurate information. They can become frustrated when they perceive communication to be unorganized or inconsistent, or a speaker to be "long-winded."

Content-oriented listeners are analytic and enjoy processing complex messages. They like in-depth information and like to learn about multiple sides of a topic or hear multiple perspectives on an issue. Their thoroughness can be difficult to manage if there are time constraints.

Time-oriented listeners are concerned with completing tasks and achieving goals. They do not like information perceived as irrelevant and like to stick to a timeline. They may cut people off and make quick decisions (taking short cuts or cutting corners) when they think they have enough information.

SUMMARY ON LISTENING

Getting integrated: Listening is a learned process and skill that we can improve on with concerted effort. Improving our listening skills can benefit us in academic, professional, personal, and civic contexts.

Listening is the process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. In the receiving stage, we select and attend to various stimuli based on salience. We then interpret auditory and visual stimuli in order to make meaning out of them based on our existing schemata. Short-term and long-term memory store stimuli until they are discarded or processed for later recall. We then evaluate the credibility, completeness, and worth of a message before responding with verbal and nonverbal signals.

Discriminative listening is the most basic form of listening, and we use it to distinguish between and focus on specific sounds. We use informational listening to try to comprehend and retain information. Through critical listening, we analyze and evaluate messages at various levels. We use empathetic listening to try to understand or experience what a speaker is feeling.

People-oriented listeners are concerned with others' needs and feelings, which may distract from a task or the content of a message. Action- oriented listeners prefer listening to well-organized and precise information and are more concerned about solving an issue than they are about supporting the speaker. Content-oriented listeners enjoy processing complicated information and are typically viewed as credible because they view an issue from multiple perspectives before making a decision. Although content-oriented listeners may not be very effective in situations with time constraints, time-oriented listeners are fixated on time limits and listen in limited segments regardless of the complexity of the information or the emotions involved, which can make them appear cold and distant to some.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Barriers to effective listening are present at every stage of the listening process. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 200. At the receiving stage, noise can block or distort incoming stimuli. At the interpreting stage, complex or abstract information may be difficult to relate to previous experiences, making it difficult to reach understanding. At the recalling stage, natural limits to our memory

and challenges to concentration can interfere with remembering. At the evaluating stage, personal biases and prejudices can lead us to block people out or assume we know what they are going to say. At the responding stage, a lack of paraphrasing and questioning skills can lead to misunderstanding. In the following section, we will explore how environmental and physical factors, cognitive and personal factors, and bad listening practices present barriers to effective listening.

Environmental and Physical Barriers to Listening

Environmental factors such as lighting, temperature, and furniture affect our ability to listen. A room that is too dark can make us sleepy, just as a room that is too warm or cool can raise awareness of our physical discomfort to a point that it is distracting. Some seating arrangements facilitate listening, while others separate people. In general, listening is easier when listeners can make direct eye contact with and are in close physical proximity to a speaker. When group members are allowed to choose a leader, they often choose the person who is sitting at the center or head of the table. Peter A. Andersen, Nonverbal Communication: Forms and Functions (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1999), 57–58. Even though the person may not have demonstrated any leadership abilities, people subconsciously gravitate toward speakers that are nonverbally accessible. The ability to effectively see and hear a person increases people's confidence in their abilities to receive and process information. Eye contact and physical proximity can still be affected by noise; noises such as a whirring air conditioner, barking dogs, or a ringing fire alarm can obviously interfere with listening despite direct lines of sight and well-placed furniture.

Physiological noise, like environmental noise, can interfere with our ability to process incoming information. This is considered a physical barrier to effective listening because it emanates from our physical body. Physiological noise is noise stemming from a physical illness, injury, or bodily stress. Ailments such as a cold, a broken leg, a headache, or a poison ivy outbreak can range from annoying to unbearably painful and impact our listening relative to their intensity. Another type of noise, psychological noise, bridges physical and cognitive barriers to effective listening. Psychological noise, or noise stemming from our psychological states including moods and level of arousal, can facilitate or impede listening. Any mood or state of arousal, positive or negative that is too far above or below our regular baseline creates a barrier to message reception and processing. The generally positive emotional state of being in love can be just as much of a barrier as feeling hatred. Excited arousal can also distract as much as anxious arousal. Stress about an upcoming events ranging from losing a job, to having surgery, to wondering about what to eat for lunch can overshadow incoming messages. While we will explore cognitive barriers to effective listening more in the next section, psychological noise is relevant here given that the body and mind are not completely separate. In fact, they can interact in ways that further interfere with listening. Fatigue, for example, is usually a combination of psychological and physiological stresses that manifests as stress (psychological noise) and weakness, sleepiness, and tiredness (physiological noise). Additionally, mental anxiety (psychological noise) can also manifest itself in our bodies through trembling, sweating, blushing, or even breaking out in rashes (physiological noise).

Cognitive and Personal Barriers to Listening

Aside from the barriers to effective listening that may be present in the environment or emanate from our bodies, cognitive limits, a lack of listening preparation, difficult or disorganized messages, and prejudices can interfere with listening. Whether you call it multitasking, daydreaming, glazing over, or drifting off, we all cognitively process other things while receiving messages. If you think of your listening mind as a wall of ten televisions, you may notice that in some situations five of the ten televisions are tuned into one channel. If that one channel is a lecture being given by your professor, then you are exerting about half of your cognitive processing abilities on one message. In another situation, all ten televisions may be on different channels. The fact that we have the capability to process more than one thing at a time offers some advantages and disadvantages. But unless we can better understand how our cognitive capacities and persona preferences affect our listening, we are likely to experience more barriers than benefits.

Difference between Speech and Thought Rate

Our ability to process more information than what comes from one speaker or source creates a barrier to effective listening. While people speak at a rate of 125 to 175 words per minute, we can process between 400 and 800 words per minute. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 195. This gap between speech rate and thought rate gives us an opportunity to side-process any number of thoughts that can be distracting from a more important message. Because of this gap, it is impossible to give one message our "undivided attention," but we can occupy other channels in our minds with thoughts related to the central message. For example, using some of your extra cognitive processing abilities to repeat, rephrase, or reorganize messages coming from one source allows you to use that extra capacity in a way that reinforces the primary message.

The difference between speech and thought rate connects to personal barriers to listening, as personal concerns are often the focus of competing thoughts that can take us away from listening and challenge our ability to concentrate on others' messages. Two common barriers to concentration are self-centeredness and lack of motivation. Judi Brownell, "Listening Environment: A Perspective," in Perspectives on Listening, eds. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 245. For example, when our self-consciousness is raised, we may be too busy thinking about how we look, how we're sitting, or what others think of us to be attentive to an incoming message. Additionally, we are often challenged when presented with messages that we do not find personally relevant. In general, we employ selective attention which refers to our tendency to pay attention to the messages that benefit us in some way and filter others out. So, the student who is checking his or her Twitter feed during class may suddenly switch his or her attention back to the previously ignored professor when the following words are spoken: "This will be important for the exam."

Another common barrier to effective listening that stems from the speech and thought rate divide is response preparation. Response preparation17 refers to our tendency to rehearse

what we are going to say next while a speaker is still talking. Rehearsal of what we will say once a speaker's turn is over is an important part of the listening process that takes place between the recalling and evaluation and/or the evaluation and responding stage. Rehearsal becomes problematic when response preparation begins as someone is receiving a message and hasn't had time to engage in interpretation or recall. In this sense, we are listening with the goal of responding instead of with the goal of understanding, which can lead us to miss important information that could influence our response.

Prejudice

Oscar Wilde said, "Listening is a very dangerous thing. If one listens one may be convinced." Unfortunately, some of our default ways of processing information and perceiving others lead us to rigid ways of thinking. When we engage in prejudiced listening, we are usually trying to preserve our ways of thinking and avoid being convinced of something different. This type of prejudice is a barrier to effective listening, because when we prejudge a person based on his or her identity or ideas, we usually stop listening in an active and/or ethical way.

We exhibit prejudice in our listening in several ways, some of which are more obvious than others. For example, we may claim to be in a hurry and only selectively address the parts of a message that we agree with or that aren't controversial. We can also operate from a state of denial where we avoid a subject or person altogether so that our views are not challenged. Prejudices that are based on a person's identity, such as race, age, occupation, or appearance, may lead us to assume that we know what he or she will say, essentially closing down the listening process. Keeping an open mind and engaging in perception checking can help us identify prejudiced listening and hopefully shift into more competent listening practices.

Bad Listening Practices

The previously discussed barriers to effective listening may be difficult to overcome because they are at least partially beyond our control. Physical barriers, cognitive limitations, and perceptual biases exist within all of us, and it is more realistic to believe that we can become more conscious of and lessen them than it is to believe that we can eliminate them altogether. Other "bad listening" practices may be habitual, but they are easier to address with some concerted effort. These bad listening practices include interrupting, distorted listening, eavesdropping, aggressive listening, narcissistic listening, and pseudo-listening.

Interrupting

Conversations unfold as a series of turns and turn taking is negotiated through a complex set of verbal and nonverbal signals that are consciously and subconsciously received. In this sense, conversational turn taking has been likened to a dance where communicators try to avoid stepping on each other's toes. One of the most frequent glitches in the turn-taking process is interruption, but not all interruptions are considered "bad listening." An interruption could be unintentional if we misread cues and think a person is done speaking only to have him or her start up again at the same time we do. Sometimes interruptions are more like overlapping

statements that show support (e.g., “I think so too.”) or excitement about the conversation (e.g., “That’s so cool!”). Back-channel cues like “uh-huh,” as we learned earlier, also overlap with a speaker’s message. We may also interrupt out of necessity if we’re engaged in a task with the other person and need to offer directions (e.g., “Turn left here.”), instructions (e.g., “Will you whisk the eggs?”), or warnings (e.g., “Look out behind you!”). All these interruptions are not typically thought of as evidence of bad listening unless they become distracting for the speaker or are unnecessary.

Unintentional interruptions can still be considered bad listening if they result from mindless communication. As we’ve already learned, intended meaning is not as important as the meaning that is generated in the interaction itself. So, if you interrupt unintentionally, but because you were only half-listening, then the interruption is still evidence of bad listening. The speaker may form a negative impression of you that can’t just be erased by you noting that you didn’t “mean to interrupt.” Interruptions can also be used as an attempt to dominate a conversation. A person engaging in this type of interruption may lead the other communicator to try to assert dominance, too, resulting in a competition to see who can hold the floor the longest or the most often. More than likely, though, the speaker will form a negative impression of the interrupter and may withdraw from the conversation.

Distorted Listening

Distorted listening occurs in many ways. Sometimes we just get the order of information wrong, which can have relatively little negative effects if we are casually recounting a story, annoying effects if we forget the order of turns (left, right, left or right, left, right?) in our driving directions, or very negative effects if we recount the events of a crime out of order, which leads to faulty testimony at a criminal trial. Rationalization is another form of distorted listening through which we adapt, edit, or skew incoming information to fit our existing schemata. We may, for example, reattribute the cause of something to better suit our own beliefs. If a professor is explaining to a student why he earned a “D” on his final paper, the student could reattribute the cause from “I didn’t follow the paper guidelines” to “this professor is an unfair grader.” Sometimes we actually change the words we hear to make them better fit what we are thinking. This can easily happen if we join a conversation late, overhear part of a conversation, or are being a lazy listener and miss important setup and context. Passing along distorted information can lead to negative consequences ranging from starting a false rumor about someone to passing along incorrect medical instructions from one health-care provider to the next. Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 191. Last, the addition of material to a message is a type of distorted listening that actually goes against our normal pattern of listening, which involves reducing the amount of information and losing some meaning as we take it in. The metaphor of “weaving a tall tale” is related to the practice of distorting through addition, as inaccurate or fabricated information is added to what was actually heard. Addition of material is also a common feature of gossip. An excellent example of the result of distorted listening is provided by the character Anthony Crispino on Saturday Night Live, who passes along distorted news on the “Weekend Update” segment. In past episodes, he has noted that Lebron James turned down the Cleveland Show to

be on Miami Vice (instead of left the Cleveland Cavaliers to play basketball for the Miami Heat) and that President Obama planned on repealing the "Bush haircuts" (instead of the Bush tax cuts).

Eavesdropping

Eavesdropping18 is a bad listening practice that involves a calculated and planned attempt to secretly listen to a conversation. There is a difference between eavesdropping on and overhearing a conversation. Many if not most of the interactions we have throughout the day occur in the presence of other people. However, given that our perceptual fields are usually focused on the interaction, we are often unaware of the other people around us or don't think about the fact that they could be listening in on our conversation. We usually only become aware of the fact that other people could be listening in when we're discussing something private.

People eavesdrop for a variety of reasons. People might think another person is talking about them behind their back or that someone is engaged in illegal or unethical behavior. Sometimes people eavesdrop to feed the gossip mill or out of curiosity. Steven McCornack, Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 208. In any case, this type of listening is considered bad because it is a violation of people's privacy. Consequences for eavesdropping may include an angry reaction if caught, damage to interpersonal relationships, or being perceived as dishonest and sneaky. Additionally, eavesdropping may lead people to find out information that is personally upsetting or hurtful, especially if the point of the eavesdropping is to find out what people are saying behind their back.

Aggressive Listening

Aggressive listening19 is a bad listening practice in which people pay attention in order to attack something that a speaker says. Steven McCornack, Reflect and Relate:

Aggressive listeners like to ambush speakers in order to critique their ideas, personality, or other characteristics. Such behavior often results from built- up frustration within an interpersonal relationship. Unfortunately, the more two people know each other, the better they will be at aggressive listening. Take the following exchange between long-term partners:

> *Deb: I've been thinking about making a salsa garden next to the side porch. I think it would be really good to be able to go pick our own tomatoes and peppers and cilantro to make homemade salsa.*
>
> *Summer: Really? When are you thinking about doing it?*
>
> *Deb: Next weekend. Would you like to help?*

Summer: I won't hold my breath. Every time you come up with some "idea of the week" you get so excited about it. But do you ever follow through with it? No. We'll be eating salsa from the store next year, just like we are now.

Although Summer's initial response to Deb's idea is seemingly appropriate and positive, she asks the question because she has already planned her upcoming aggressive response. Summer's aggression toward Deb isn't about a salsa garden; it's about a building frustration with what Summer perceives as Deb's lack of follow-through on her ideas. Aside from engaging in aggressive listening because of built-up frustration, such listeners may also attack others' ideas or mock their feelings because of their own low self-esteem and insecurities.

Narcissistic Listening

Narcissistic listening20 is a form of self-centered and self-absorbed listening in which listeners try to make the interaction about them. Steven McCornack, Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 212. Narcissistic listeners redirect the focus of the conversation to them by interrupting or changing the topic. When the focus is taken off them, narcissistic listeners may give negative feedback by pouting, providing negative criticism of the speaker or topic, or ignoring the speaker. A common sign of narcissistic listening is the combination of a "pivot," when listeners shift the focus of attention back to them, and "one-upping," when listeners try to top what previous speakers have said during the interaction. You can see this narcissistic combination in the following interaction:

My boss has been really unfair to me lately and hasn't been letting me work around my class schedule. I think I may have to quit, but I don't know where I'll find another job.

Why are you complaining? I've been working with the same stupid boss for two years. He doesn't even care that I'm trying to get my degree and work at the same time. And you should hear the way he talks to me in front of the other employees.

Narcissistic listeners, given their self-centeredness, may actually fool themselves into thinking that they are listening and actively contributing to a conversation. We all have the urge to share our own stories during interactions, because other people's communication triggers our own memories about related experiences. It is generally more competent to withhold sharing our stories until the other person has been able to speak and we have given the appropriate support and response. But we all shift the focus of a conversation back to us occasionally, either because we don't know another way to respond or because we are making an attempt at empathy. Narcissistic listeners consistently interrupt or follow another speaker with statements like "That reminds me of the time…," "Well, if I were you…," and "That's nothing…"Michael P. Nichols, The Lost Art of Listening (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1995), 68–72. As we'll learn later, matching stories isn't considered empathetic listening, but occasionally doing it doesn't make you a narcissistic listener.

Pseudo-listening

Do you have a friend or family member who repeats stories? If so, then you've probably engaged in pseudo-listening as a politeness strategy. Pseudo-listening21 is behaving as if you're paying attention to a speaker when you're actually not. Steven McCornack, Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 208. Outwardly visible signals of attentiveness are an important part of the listening process, but when they are just an "act," the pseudo-listener is engaging in bad listening behaviors. She or he is not actually going through the stages of the listening process and will likely not be able to recall the speaker's message or offer a competent and relevant response. Although it is a bad listening practice, we all understandably engage in pseudo-listening from time to time. If a friend needs someone to talk but you're really tired or experiencing some other barrier to effective listening, it may be worth engaging in pseudo- listening as a relational maintenance strategy, especially if the friend just needs a sounding board and isn't expecting advice or guidance. We may also pseudo-listen to a romantic partner or grandfather's story for the fifteenth time to prevent hurting their feelings. We should avoid pseudo-listening when possible and should definitely avoid making it a listening habit. Although we may get away with it in some situations, each time we risk being "found out," which could have negative relational consequences.

LISTENING SUMMARY

Environmental and physical barriers to effective listening include furniture placement, environmental noise such as sounds of traffic or people talking, physiological noise such as a sinus headache or hunger, and psychological noise such as stress or anger.

Cognitive barriers to effective listening include the difference between speech and thought rate that allows us "extra room" to think about other things while someone is talking and limitations in our ability or willingness to concentrate or pay attention. Personal barriers to effective listening include a lack of listening preparation, poorly structured and/or poorly delivered messages, and prejudice.

There are several bad listening practices that we should avoid, as they do not facilitate effective listening:

- Interruptions that are unintentional or serve an important or useful purpose are not considered bad listening. When interrupting becomes a habit or is used in an attempt to dominate a conversation, then it is a barrier to effective listening.
- Distorted listening occurs when we incorrectly recall information, skew information to fit our expectations or existing schemata, or add material to embellish or change information.
- Eavesdropping is a planned attempt to secretly listen to a conversation, which is a violation of the speakers' privacy.
- Aggressive listening is a bad listening practice in which people pay attention to a speaker in order to attack something they say.

- Narcissistic listening is self-centered and self-absorbed listening in which listeners try to make the interaction about them by interrupting, changing the subject, or drawing attention away from others.
- Pseudo-listening is "fake listening," in that people behave like they are paying attention and listening when they actually are not.

Improving Listening Competence

Many people admit that they could stand to improve their listening skills. This section will help us do that. In this section, we will learn strategies for developing and improving competence at each stage of the listening process. We will also define active listening and the behaviors that go along with it. Looking back to the types of listening discussed earlier, we will learn specific strategies for sharpening our critical and empathetic listening skills. In keeping with our focus on integrative learning, we will also apply the skills we have learned in academic, professional, and relational contexts and explore how culture and gender affect listening.

Listening Competence at Each Stage of the Listening Process

We can develop competence within each stage of the listening process, as the following list indicates: Alice Ridge, "A Perspective of Listening Skills," in Perspectives on Listening, eds. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 5–6.

To improve listening at the receiving stage,

- prepare yourself to listen,
- discern between intentional messages and noise,
- concentrate on stimuli most relevant to your listening purpose(s) or goal(s),
- be mindful of the selection and attention process as much as possible,
- pay attention to turn-taking signals so you can follow the conversational flow, and
- avoid interrupting someone while they are speaking in order to maintain your ability to receive stimuli and listen.

To improve listening at the interpreting stage,

- identify main points and supporting points;
- use contextual clues from the person or environment to discern additional meaning;
- be aware of how a relational, cultural, or situational context can influence meaning;
- be aware of the different meanings of silence; and
- note differences in tone of voice and other paralinguistic cues that influence meaning.

To improve listening at the recalling stage,

- use multiple sensory channels to decode messages and make more complete memories;
- repeat, rephrase, and reorganize information to fit your cognitive preferences; and
- use mnemonic devices as a gimmick to help with recall.

To improve listening at the evaluating stage,

- separate facts, inferences, and judgments;
- be familiar with and able to identify persuasive strategies and fallacies of reasoning;
- assess the credibility of the speaker and the message; and
- be aware of your own biases and how your perceptual filters can create barriers to effective listening.

To improve listening at the responding stage:

- ask appropriate clarifying and follow-up questions and paraphrase information to check understanding,
- give feedback that is relevant to the speaker's purpose/motivation for speaking,
- adapt your response to the speaker and the context, and
- do not let the preparation and rehearsal of your response diminish earlier stages of listening.

Active listening refers to the process of pairing outwardly visible positive listening behaviors with positive cognitive listening practices. You can improve listening competence at the receiving stage by preparing yourself to listen and distinguishing between intentional messages and noise; at the interpreting stage by identifying main points and supporting points and taking multiple contexts into consideration; at the recalling stage by creating memories using multiple senses and repeating, rephrasing, and reorganizing messages to fit cognitive preferences; at the evaluating stage by separating facts from inferences and assessing the credibility of the speaker's message; and at the responding stage by asking appropriate questions, offering paraphrased messages, and adapting your response to the speaker and the situation.

Active listening is the process of pairing outwardly visible positive listening behaviors with positive cognitive listening practices and is characterized by mentally preparing yourself to listen, working to maintain focus on concentration, using appropriate verbal and nonverbal back-channel cues to signal attentiveness, and engaging in strategies like note taking and mentally reorganizing information to help with recall.

LISTENABLE MESSAGES AND EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

We should not forget that sending messages is an important part of the listening process. Although we often think of listening as the act of receiving messages, that passive view of listening overlooks the importance of message construction and feedback. In the following

section, we will learn how speakers can facilitate listening by creating listenable messages and how listeners help continue the listening process through feedback for others and themselves.

Creating Listenable Messages

Some of the listening challenges we all face would be diminished if speakers created listenable messages. Listenable messages30 are orally delivered messages that are tailored to be comprehended by a listener. Donald L. Rubin, "Listenability = Oral- based Discourse + Considerateness," in Perspectives on Listening, eds. Andrew D. Wolvin and Carolyn Gwynn Coakley (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing Corporation, 1993), 269. While most of our communication is in an "oral style," meaning spoken and intended to be heard, we sometimes create messages that are unnecessarily complex in ways that impede comprehension. Listenable messages can be contrasted with most written messages, which are meant to be read.

The way we visually process written communication is different from the way we process orally delivered and aurally received language. Aside from processing written and spoken messages differently, we also speak and write differently. This becomes a problem for listening when conventions of written language get transferred into oral messages. You may have witnessed or experienced this difficulty if you have ever tried or watched someone else try to orally deliver a message that was written to be read, not spoken. For example, when students in my classes try to deliver a direct quote from one of their research sources or speak verbatim a dictionary definition of a word, they inevitably have fluency hiccups in the form of unintended pauses or verbal trip-ups that interfere with their ability to deliver the content. These hiccups consequently make the message difficult for the audience to receive and comprehend.

This isn't typically a problem in everyday conversations, because when we speak impromptu we automatically speak in an oral style. We have a tendency, however, to stray from our natural oral style when delivering messages that we have prepared in advance—like speeches. This is because we receive much more training in creating messages to be read than we do in creating messages to be spoken. We are usually just expected to pick up the oral style of communicating through observation and trial and error. Being able to compose and deliver messages in an oral style, as opposed to a written style, is a crucial skill to develop in order to be a successful public speaker. Since most people lack specific instruction in creating messages in an oral rather than written style, you should be prepared to process messages that aren't as listenable as you would like them to be. The strategies for becoming an active listener discussed earlier in this chapter will also help you mentally repair or restructure a message to make it more listenable. As a speaker, in order to adapt your message to a listening audience and to help facilitate the listening process, you can use the following strategies to create more listenable messages:

Use shorter, actively worded sentences

- Use personal pronouns ("I want to show you…").
- Use lists or other organizational constructions like problem-solution, pro-con, or compare-contrast.

- Use transitions and other markers that help a listener navigate your message (time markers like “today”; order indicators like “first, second, third”; previews like “I have two things I’d like to say about that”; and reviews like “So, basically I feel like we should vacation at the lake instead of the beach because…”).
- Use examples relevant to you and your listener’s actual experiences.

Giving Formal Feedback to Others

The ability to give effective feedback benefits oneself and others. Whether in professional or personal contexts, positive verbal and nonverbal feedback can boost others’ confidence, and negative feedback, when delivered constructively, can provide important perception checking and lead to improvements. Of course, negative feedback that is not delivered competently can lead to communication difficulties that can affect a person’s self-esteem and self-efficacy. Although we rarely give formal feedback to others in interpersonal contexts, it is important to know how to give this type of feedback, as performance evaluations are common in a variety of professional, academic, and civic contexts.

It is likely that you will be asked at some point to give feedback to another person in an academic, professional, or civic context. As companies and organizations have moved toward more team-based work environments over the past twenty years, peer evaluations are now commonly used to help assess job performance. I, for example, am evaluated every year by two tenured colleagues, my department chair, and my dean. I also evaluate my graduate teaching assistants and peers as requested. Since it’s important for us to know how to give competent and relevant feedback, and since the feedback can be useful for the self.

When Giving Feedback to Others

Be specific. I often see a lack of specific comments when it comes to feedback on speech delivery. Students write things like “Eye contact” on a peer comment sheet, but neither the student nor I know what to do with the comment. While a comment like “Good eye contact” or “Not enough eye contact” is more specific, it’s not descriptive enough to make it useful.

Be descriptive. I’d be hard pressed to think of a descriptive comment that isn’t also specific, because the act of adding detail to something usually makes the point clearer as well. The previous “Not enough eye contact” comment would be more helpful and descriptive like this: “You looked at your notes more than you looked at the audience during the first thirty seconds of your speech.”

Be positive. If you are delivering your feedback in writing, pretend that you are speaking directly to the person and write it the same way. Comments like “Stop fidgeting” or “Get more sources” wouldn’t likely come out during verbal feedback, because we know they sound too harsh. The same tone, however, can be communicated through written feedback. Instead, make comments that are framed in such a way as to avoid defensiveness or hurt feelings.

Be constructive. Although we want to be positive in our feedback, comments like “Good job” aren’t constructive, because a communicator can’t actually take that comment and do something with it. A comment like “You were able to explain our company’s new marketing strategy in a way that even I, as an engineer, could make sense of. The part about our new crisis communication plan wasn’t as clear. Perhaps you could break it down the same way you did the marketing strategy to make it clearer for people like me who are outside the public relations department.” This statement is positively framed, specific, and constructive because the speaker can continue to build on the positively reviewed skill by applying it to another part of the speech that was identified as a place for improvement.

Be realistic. Comments like “Don’t be nervous” aren’t constructive or realistic. Instead, you could say, “I know the first speech is tough, but remember that we’re all in the same situation and we’re all here to learn. I tried the breathing exercises discussed in the book and they helped calm my nerves. Maybe they’ll work for you, too?” I’ve also had students make comments like “Your accent made it difficult for me to understand you,” which could be true but may signal a need for more listening effort since we all technically have accents, and changing them, if possible at all, would take considerable time and effort.

Be relevant. Feedback should be relevant to the assignment, task, and/or context. I’ve had students give feedback like “Rad nail polish” and “Nice smile,” which although meant as compliments are not relevant in formal feedback unless you’re a fashion consultant or a dentist.

Key Terms

- Listening
- Back channel cues
- Discriminative listening
- Informational listening
- Critical listening
- Empathetic listening
- Physiological noise
- Psychological noise
- Selective attention
- Response preparation
- Eaves dropping
- Aggressive listening
- Narcissistic listening
- Pseudo listening
- Active listening
- Listenable messages

CHAPTER 7: CREATING COMMUNICATION CLIMATES AND CONFLICT COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe confirming and disconfirming climates.
- Discuss the types of conflict.
- Describe the strategies for managing conflict.

Pin It! Interpersonal Communication Now - "Sticks and Stones Can Break My Bones but Words Can Hurt Me Too"

In a study published in the journal Science, researchers reported that the sickening feeling we get when we are socially rejected (being ignored at a party or passed over when picking teams) is real. When researchers measured brain responses to social stress they found a pattern similar to what occurs in the brain when our body experiences physical pain. Specifically, "the area affected is the anterior cingulated cortex, a part of the brain known to be involved in the emotional response to pain" (Fox). The doctor who conducted the study, Matt Lieberman, a social psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, said, "It makes sense for humans to be programmed this way . . . Social interaction is important to survival."

Do you feel organized, or confined, in a clean workspace? Are you more productive when the sun is shining than when it's gray and cloudy outside? Just as factors like weather and physical space impact us, communication climate influences our interpersonal interactions. Communication climate is the *"overall feeling or emotional mood between people"* (Wood 245). If you dread going to visit your family during the holidays because of tension between you and your sister, or you look forward to dinner with a particular set of friends because they make you laugh, you are responding to the communication climate—the overall mood that is created because of the people involved and the type of communication they bring to the interaction. Let's look at two different types of communication climates: Confirming and Disconfirming climates.

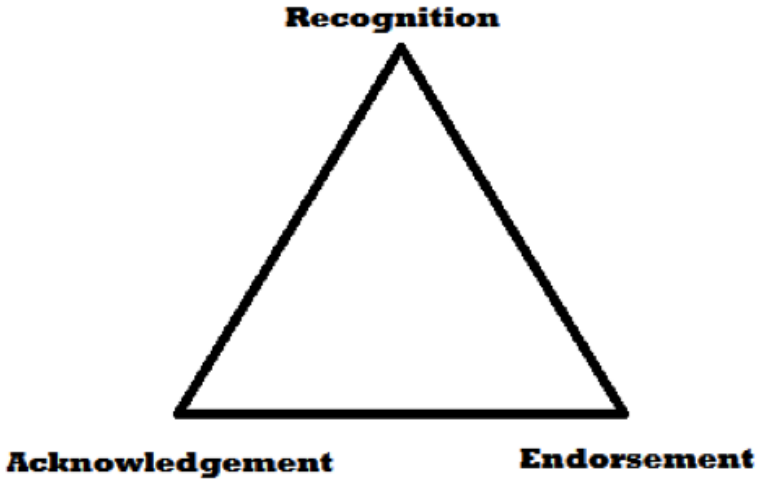
CONFIRMING AND DISCONFIRMING CLIMATES

Positive and negative climates can be understood along three dimensions—recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement. We experience Confirming Climates when we receive

messages that demonstrate our value and worth from those with whom we have a relationship. Conversely, we experience Disconfirming Climates when we receive *messages that suggest we are devalued and unimportant*. Obviously, most of us like to be in confirming climates because they foster emotional safety as well as personal and relational growth. However, it is likely that your relationships fall somewhere between the two extremes. Let's look at three types of messages that create confirming and disconfirming climates.

Recognition Messages: Recognition *messages either confirm or deny another person's existence*. For example, if a friend enters your home and you smile, hug him, and say, "I'm so glad to see you" you are confirming his existence. If you say "good morning" to a colleague and she ignores you by walking out of the room without saying anything, she is creating a disconfirming climate by not recognizing you as a unique individual.

Acknowledgement Messages: Acknowledgement messages go beyond recognizing another's existence by *confirming what they say or how they feel*. Nodding our head while listening, or laughing appropriately at a funny story, are nonverbal acknowledgement messages. When a friend tells you she had a really bad day at work and you respond with, "Yeah, that does sound hard, do you want to go somewhere quiet and talk?" you are acknowledging and responding to her feelings. In contrast, if you were to respond to your friend's frustrations with a comment like, "That's nothing. Listen to what happened to me today," you would be ignoring her experience and presenting yours as more important.



3 Types of Messages Shaping Communication Climates

Figure 7.1[39]

[39] Image by Spaynton is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Endorsement Messages: Endorsement messages go one step further by *recognizing a person's feelings as valid*. Suppose a friend comes to you upset after a fight with his girlfriend. If you respond with, "Yeah, I can see why you would be upset" you are endorsing his right to feel upset. However, if you said, "Get over it. At least you have a girlfriend" you would be sending messages that deny his right to feel frustrated in that moment. While it is difficult to see people we care about in emotional pain, people are responsible for their own emotions. When we let people own their emotions and do not tell them how to feel, we are creating supportive climates that provide a safe environment for them to work through their problems.

Thinking about Conflict

When you hear the word "conflict," do you have a positive or negative reaction? Are you someone who thinks conflict should be avoided at all costs? While conflict may be uncomfortable and challenging it doesn't have to be negative. Think about the social and political changes that came about from the conflict of the civil rights movement during the 1960's. There is no doubt that this conflict was painful and even deadly for some civil rights activists, but the conflict resulted in the elimination of many discriminatory practices and helped create a more egalitarian social system in the United States. Let's look at two distinct orientations to conflict, as well as options for how to respond to conflict in our interpersonal relationships.

Figure 7.2[40]

Conflict as Destructive

When we shy away from conflict in our interpersonal relationships we may do so because we conceptualize it as destructive to our relationships. As with many of our beliefs and attitudes,

[40] Image by JESHOOTS.COM on Unsplash

they are not always well-grounded and lead to destructive behaviors. Augsburger outlined four assumptions of viewing conflict as destructive:

- Conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace.
- The social system should not be adjusted to meet the needs of members; rather, members should adapt to the established values.
- Confrontations are destructive and ineffective.
- Disputants should be punished.

When we view conflict this way, we believe that it is a threat to the established order of the relationship. Think about sports as an analogy of how we view conflict as destructive. In the U.S. we like sports that have winners and losers. Sports and games where a tie is an option often seem confusing to us. How can neither team win or lose? When we apply this to our relationships, it's understandable why we would be resistant to engaging in conflict. I don't want to lose, and I don't want to see my relational partner lose. So, an option is to avoid conflict so that neither person has to face that result.

Conflict as Productive

In contrast to seeing conflict as destructive, also possible, even healthy, is to view conflict as a productive natural outgrowth and component of human relationships. Augsburger described four assumptions of viewing conflict as productive:

- Conflict is a normal, useful process.
- All issues are subject to change through negotiation.
- Direct confrontation and conciliation are valued.
- Conflict is a necessary renegotiation of an implied contract—a redistribution of opportunity, release of tensions, and renewal of relationships.

From this perspective, conflict provides an opportunity for strengthening relationships, not harming them. Conflict is a chance for relational partners to find ways to meet the needs of one another, even when these needs conflict. Think back to our discussion of dialectical tensions. While you may not explicitly argue with your relational partners about these tensions, the fact that you are negotiating them points to your ability to use conflict in productive ways for the relationship as a whole, and the needs of the individuals in the relationship.

Types of Conflict

Understanding the different ways of valuing conflict is a first step toward engaging in productive conflict interactions. Likewise, knowing the various types of conflict that occur in interpersonal relationships also helps us to identify appropriate strategies for managing certain types of conflict. Cole states that there are five types of conflict in interpersonal relationships: Affective, Conflict of Interest, Value, Cognitive, and Goal.

Affective conflict. Affective conflict arises when we have *incompatible feelings with another person*. For example, if a couple has been dating for a while, one of the partners may want to

marry as a sign of love while the other decides they want to see other people. What do they do? The differences in feelings for one another are the source of affective conflict.

Conflict of Interest. This type of conflict arises when people *disagree about a plan of action or what to do in a given circumstance*. For example, Julie, a Christian Scientist, does not believe in seeking medical intervention, but believes that prayer can cure illness. Jeff, a Catholic, does believe in seeking conventional medical attention as treatment for illness. What happens when Julie and Jeff decide to have children? Do they honor Jeff's beliefs and take the kids to the doctor when they are ill, or respect and practice Julie's religion? This is a conflict of interest.

Value Conflict. A *difference in ideologies or values between relational partners* is called value conflict. In the example of Julie and Jeff, a conflict of interest about what to do concerning their children's medical needs results from differing religious values. Many people engage in conflict about religion and politics. Remember the old saying, "Never talk about religion and politics with your family."

Cognitive Conflict

Cognitive conflict is *the difference in thought process, interpretation of events, and perceptions*. Marsha and Victoria, a long-term couple, are both invited to a party. Victoria declines because she has a big presentation at work the next morning and wants to be well rested. At the party, their mutual friends Michael and Lisa notice Marsha spending the entire evening with Karen. Lisa suspects Marsha may be flirting and cheating on Victoria, but Michael disagrees and says Marsha and Karen are just close friends catching up. Michael and Lisa are observing the same interaction but have a disagreement about what it means. This is an example of cognitive conflict.

Goal Conflict

Goal conflict occurs when people *disagree about a final outcome*. Jesse and Maria are getting ready to buy their first house. Maria wants something that has long-term investment potential while Jesse wants a house to suit their needs for a few years and then plans to move into a larger house. Maria has long-term goals for the house purchase and Jesse is thinking in more immediate terms. These two have two different goals in regards to purchasing a home.

Strategies for Managing Conflict

When we ask our students what they want to do when they experience conflict, most of the time they say "resolve it." While this is understandable, also important to understand is that conflict is ongoing in all relationships, and our approach to conflict should be to "manage it" instead of always trying to "resolve it."

One way to understand options for managing conflict is by knowing five major strategies for managing conflict in relationships. While most of us probably favor one strategy over another, we all have multiple options for managing conflict in our relationships. Having a variety of

options available gives us flexibility in our interactions with others. Five strategies for managing interpersonal conflict include dominating, integrating, compromising, obliging, and avoiding (Rahim; Rahim & Magner; Thomas & Kilmann). One way to think about these strategies, and your decision to select one over another, is to think about whose needs will be met in the conflict situation. You can conceptualize this idea according to the degree of concern for the self and the degree of concern for others.

When people select the dominating strategy, or win-lose approach, they exhibit *high concern for the self and low concern for the other person*. The goal here is to win the conflict. This approach is often characterized by loud, forceful, and interrupting communication. Again, this is analogous to sports. Too often, we avoid conflict because we believe the only other alternative is to try to dominate the other person. In relationships where we care about others, it's no wonder this strategy can seem unappealing.

The obliging style shows a *moderate degree of concern for self and others, and a high degree of concern for the relationship itself*. In this approach, the individuals are less important than the relationship as a whole. Here, a person may minimize the differences or a specific issue in order to emphasize the commonalities. The comment, "The fact that we disagree about politics isn't a big deal since we share the same ethical and moral beliefs," exemplifies an obliging style.

The compromising style is evident when *both parties are willing to give up something in order to gain something else*. When environmental activist, Julia Butterfly Hill agreed to end her two-year long tree sit in Luna as a protest against the logging practices of Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO), and pay them $50,000 in exchange for their promise to protect Luna and not cut within a 20-foot buffer zone, she and PALCO reached a compromise. If one of the parties feels the compromise is unequal they may be less likely to stick to it long term. When conflict is unavoidable, many times people will opt for compromise. One of the problems with compromise is that neither party fully gets their needs met. If you want Mexican food and your friend wants pizza, you might agree to compromise and go someplace that serves Mexican pizza. While this may seem like a good idea, you may have really been craving a burrito and your friend may have really been craving a pepperoni pizza. In this case, while the compromise brought together two food genres, neither person got their desire met.

When one avoids a conflict they may suppress feelings of frustration or walk away from a situation. While this is often regarded as expressing a *low concern for self and others* because problems are not dealt with, the opposite may be true in some contexts. Take, for example, a heated argument between Ginny and Pat. Pat is about to make a hurtful remark out of frustration. Instead, she decides that she needs to avoid this argument right now until she and Ginny can come back and discuss things in a more calm fashion. In this case, temporarily avoiding the conflict can be beneficial. However, conflict avoidance over the long term generally has negative consequences for a relationship because neither person is willing to participate in the conflict management process.

Finally, integrating demonstrates a *high level of concern for both self and others*. Using this strategy, individuals agree to share information, feelings, and creativity to try to reach a mutually acceptable solution that meets both of their needs. In our food example above, one strategy would be for both people to get the food they want, then take it on a picnic in the park. This way, both people are getting their needs met fully, and in a way that extends beyond original notions of win-lose approaches for managing the conflict. The downside to this strategy is that it is very time consuming and requires high levels of trust.

Key Terms

- Communication Climate
- Confirming Climate
- Disconfirming Climate
- Recognition Messages
- Acknowledgement Messages
- Endorsement Messages
- Affective Conflict
- Conflict of Interest
- Value Conflict
- Cognitive Conflict
- Goal Conflict
- Dominating Strategy
- Obliging Style
- Compromising Style
- Avoids
- Integrating

CHAPTER 8 COMMUNICATION THEORY

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define theory and explain its functions.
- Demonstrate how theories are developed.
- Explain what makes a useful theory.
- Understand the idea of Theoretical Paradigms.
- Explain the Empirical Laws Paradigm.
- Explain the Human Rules Paradigm.
- Explain the Systems Theory Paradigm.
- Explain the Rhetorical Theory Paradigm.
- Explain the Critical Theory Paradigm.

How did the universe begin? Where did it all come from? Scientists, theologians, and educators have been debating this topic for centuries.

Figure 8.1[41]

[41] Image by Jeremy Thomas on Unsplash

A common place for this debate occurs in school textbooks—should they teach creationism or the big bang theory? How you answer this question depends on the theoretical perspective you hold. In either case, your theoretical perspective includes some common features—-reasons to justify your theory and evidence you use to prove that it is correct. Creationists cite the Bible or other religious texts as proof of their theoretical perspective. Advocates of the big bang theory argue that the earth emerged 13.7 billion years ago and cite the continued expansion of space (Hubble's Law) as verifiable proof that this theory is correct. But how do we know which theory is right? Let's apply this same reasoning to communication. Think about the many ways you develop, and try to answer, questions about the "right" ways to communicate.

We want to leave the intricacies of the theoretical debate between creationism and the big bang theory to our colleagues in the physical sciences, religious studies, and philosophies. However, we'll use this chapter to explore theoretical issues relevant to the study of Communication. By the end of this chapter you should understand what communication theories are, their functions, how we evaluate them, and the five major theoretical paradigms shaping Communication study today. You'll also discover just how important communication theory is to your everyday life.

DEFINING THEORY

When we mention the word theory to our students, we often watch their eyes glaze over as if it is the most boring thing we could talk about. Students sometimes have the misperception that theory has absolutely no relevance in their lives. But, did you know that you use and test theories of communication on a daily basis? Whether you know it or not, your theories guide how you communicate. For example, you may have a theory that attractive people are harder to talk to than less attractive people. If you believe this is true, you are probably missing opportunities to get to know entire groups of people.

Our personal theories guide our communication, but there are often problems with them. They generally are not complete or sophisticated enough to help us fully understand the complexities of the communication in which we engage. Therefore, it is essential that we go beyond personal theories to develop and understand ones that guide both our study and performance of communication.

Before we get into the functions theories perform for us, let's define what we mean by theory. Hoover defined theory as *"a set of inter-related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner that they do"*. Foss, Foss and Griffin defined theory as, *"a way of framing an experience or event—an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world"*.

Theories are a way of looking at events, organizing them, and representing them. Take a moment to reflect on the elegant simplicity of these two definitions by Hoover and Foss, Foss and Griffin. Any thoughts or ideas you have about how things work in the world or your life are your personal theories? These theories are essentially you're framework for how the world

works, and guide how you function in the world. You can begin to see how important it is that your theories are solid. As you'll see, well-developed Communication theories help us better understand and explain the communicative behaviors of ourselves and others.

Functions of Communication Theory

While theories in many disciplines can be hard for some to understand, in a field like Communication, our theories are important to understand because they directly impact our daily lives. In this respect, they serve several functions in guiding our communication.

Communication Theory and You

In elementary school you might have believed in cooties. Or, you might have believed that if a boy was mean to a girl, he must have liked her, and vice versa. In Jr. High and High School, finding a date to the homecoming or prom could be one of the most intimidating things to do. Now, in college, the dating world has once again evolved. The ambiguity between what defines a date and a friendly night out can be frustrating for some and exciting for others. Regardless, when situations like these appear, it is easy to seek advice from friends about the situation, ask a parent, or search the web for answers. Each of these resources will likely provide theories about functioning in relationships that you can choose to use or dismiss when clarifying the relationship's dynamic situation. What are some theories you've heard about how to communicate in cross-gendered relationships?

The first function theories serve is that they help us organize and understand our communication experiences. We use theories to organize a broad range of experiences into smaller categories by paying attention to "common features" of communication situations (Infante, Rancer & Womack). How many times have you surfed the internet and found articles or quizzes on relationships and what they mean for different genders? Deborah Tannen, author of *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversations*, argues that men and women talk in significantly different ways and for significantly different reasons. Of course, these differences cannot be applied to all men and women. But, theories on gender communication help us organize and understand the talk of the different genders in a more simplified context so we can understand general patterns of communication behavior. This helps us make appropriate decisions in gendered communication situations.

A second function of theories is that they help us choose what communicative behaviors to study. Theories guide where we choose to look, what we look at, and how we look at communicative phenomenon. Remember back to Chapter 1 where we defined communication study. Theories focus our attention on certain aspects of that definition. If you find that Tannen's theories regarding how men and women talk differ from your own perceptions, or that they're outdated, you might choose to more closely study the talk or non-verbals of men and women to see if you can rectify the difference in theoretical perspectives. You likely already do this on a personal level. Googling something as simple as "how to act in a relationship," will lead you to hundreds of websites and articles breaking down the dynamics of relationships depending on one's gender. Likewise, if you want to persuade someone to do something for

you, you probably have a theory about what strategies you can use to get them to do what you want. Your theory guides how you approach your persuasive attempts, and what you look for to see if you were successful or not.

A third function of theories is that they help us broaden our understanding of human communication. Scholars who study communication share theories with one another online, through books, journal articles, and at conferences. The sharing of theories generates dialogue, which allows us to further refine the theories developed in this field. Tannen's book allowed the public to re-think the personal theories they had about the communication of men and women. With the opportunity to find countless theories through new books, magazines, the Internet, and TV shows, the general public has the opportunity to find theories that will influence how they understand and communicate in the world. But, are these theories valid and useful? It's likely that you discuss your personal theories of communication with others on a regular basis to get their feedback.

A fourth function of theories is that they help us predict and control our communication. When we communicate, we try to predict how our interactions will develop so we can maintain a certain level of control. Imagine being at a party and you want to talk to someone that you find attractive. You will use some sort of theory about how to talk to others to approach this situation in order to make it more successful. As in all situations, the better your theoretical perspectives, the better chances for success when communicating. While theories do not allow us to predict and control communication with 100% certainty, they do help us function in daily interactions at a more predictable and controlled level. Notice that when you are successful, or unsuccessful, in your interactions, you use this information to assess and refine your own theoretical perspectives.

A fifth function of theories is that they help us challenge current social and cultural realities by providing new ways of thinking and living. People sometimes make the mistake of assuming that the ways we communicate are innate rather than learned. This is not true. In order to challenge the communicative norms we learn, people use critical theories to ask questions about the status quo of human communication, particularly focusing on how humans use communication to bring advantage and privilege to particular people or groups. For example, Tannen argues that when men listen to women express their troubles, they listen with the purpose of wanting to provide a fix or give advice. Tannen argues that many times, women are not looking for advice or a fix, but rather empathy or sympathy from their male conversational partners. With this understanding, it's possible to begin teaching men new strategies for listening in cross-gendered conversations that serve to build stronger communication ties. Critical theories challenge our traditional theoretical understandings, providing alternative communicative behaviors for social change.

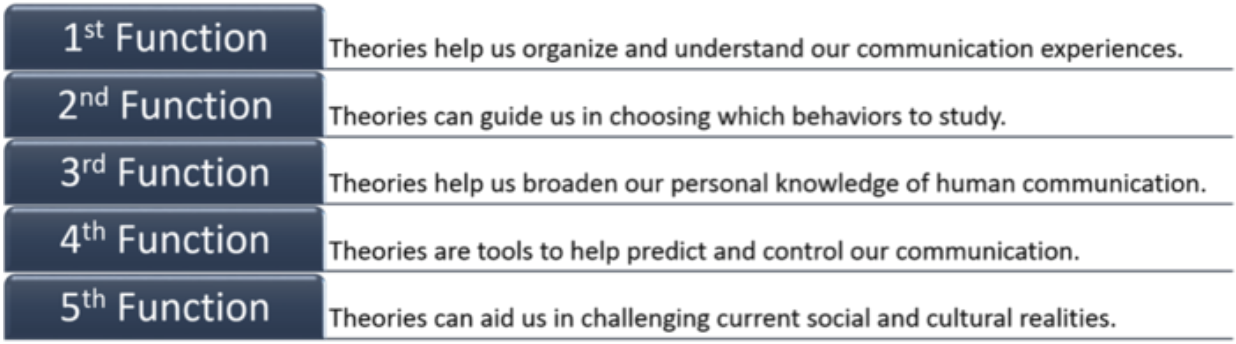


Figure 8.2[42]

While theories serve many useful functions, these functions don't really matter if we do not have well-developed theories that provide a good representation of how our world works. While we all form our personal theories through examining our experiences, how are communication theories developed?

HOW WE DEVELOP COMMUNICATION THEORIES

At this point, you may be wondering where communication theories come from. Because we cannot completely rely on our personal theories for our communication, people like your professors develop communication theories by starting with their own personal interests, observations, and questions about communication (Miller & Nicholson). Those of us who study communication are in a continual process of forming, testing, and reforming theories of communication (Littlejohn & Foss) so that we have a better understanding of our communicative practices. There are three essential steps involved in developing Communication theories: 1) Ask important questions, 2) look for answers by observing communicative behavior, and 3) form answers and theories as a result of your observations (Littlejohn & Foss).

Asking important questions is the first step in the process of discovering how communication functions in our world. Tannen's work grew out of her desire to find out answers to questions about why men and women "can't seem to communicate," a commonly held theory by many. As a result of her line of questioning, she has spent a career asking questions and finding answers. Likewise, John Gottman has spent his career researching how married couples can be relationally successful. Both of their findings, and the theories the have developed, often contradict common beliefs about how men and women communicate, as well as long-term romantic relationships.

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However, simply asking questions is not enough. It is important that we find meaningful answers to our questions in order to continue to improve our communication. In the field of Communication, answers to our questions have the potential to help us communicate better with one another, as well as provide positive social change. If you've ever questioned why something is the way it is, perhaps you're on your way to discovering the next big theory by finding meaningful answers to your questions.

When we find answers to our questions, we are able to form theories about our communication. Answering our questions helps us develop more sophisticated ways of understanding the communication around us – theories! You may have a theory about how to make friends. You use this theory to guide your behavior, then ask questions to find out if your theory works. The more times you prove that it works, the stronger your theory becomes about making friends. But, how do we know if a theory is good, or not?

Developing Good Theories

Take a moment to compare Newton's theory of gravity to communication theories. Simply put, Newton theorized that there is a force that draws objects to the earth. We base our physical behaviors on this theory, regardless of how well we understand its complexities. For example, if you hold a pen above a desk and let go, you know that it will fall and hit the desk every time you drop it. In contrast, communication theories change and develop over time (Infante, Rancer & Womack; Kaplan; Kuhn). For example, you might theorize that smiling at someone should produce a smile back. You speculate that this should happen most of the time, but it probably would not surprise you if it does not happen every time. Contrast this to gravity. If you dropped a pen, and it floated, you would likely be very surprised, if not a little bit worried about the state of the world.

Pin It! Communication Theory Now - The Environmental Paradigm Shift
Not long ago those concerned about environmental issues were considered minority or fringe groups and, as a result, many of their concerns were dismissed. Yet today environmental concerns have so infiltrated the mainstream that it is now "trendy" to be an environmentalist. Thanks to scientists asking difficult theoretical and practical questions about consumption of scarce resources, awareness about air and water quality, food safety, and global warming has become part of global public discourse and "environmentalism has caught on everywhere." According to Jackson, "There's been a paradigm shift in society away from thinking of the Earth as an unending source of resources to instead looking at it as a wider living ecosystem that we are slowly killing. The shift is evident in everything from popular movies to eco-friendly products. From international political treaties regarding environmental policies to waste management strategies within small communities (Jackson)." In fact, evidence has contributed so significantly to theories around global warming that NASA now reports that 97% of climate scientists believe that "climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities."

If communication theories are not 100% consistent, like theories in the physical sciences, why are they useful? This question has initiated a great deal of debate among those who study communication. While there is no definitive answer to this question, there are a number of criteria we use to evaluate the value of communication theories. According to Littlejohn and Foss, scope, parsimony, heuristic value, openness, appropriateness, and validity are starting places for evaluating whether or not a theory is good.

Scope refers to *how broad or narrow a theory is* (Infante, Rancer & Womack; Shaw & Costanzo). Theories that cover various domains are considered good theories, but if a theory is too broad it may not account for specific instances that are important for understanding how we communicate. If it is too narrow, we may not be able to understand communication in general terms. Narrow theories work well if the range of events they cover can be applied to a large number of situations. It is easier to understand some theories when we are given examples or can see being played out.

Parsimony refers to the idea that, *all things being equal, the simplest solution takes precedence over a more complicated one*. Thus, a theory is valuable when it is able to explain, in basic terms, complex communicative situations. If the theory cannot be explained in simple terms it is not demonstrating parsimony.

Heuristic Value means that *a theory prompts other theorists to engage in further study and theorizing about a given problem*. The Greeks used the term heurisko, meaning "I find" to refer to an idea, which stimulates additional thinking and discovery. This is an important criterion that facilitates intellectual growth, development, and problem solving. For most

Communication theories, it would be quite easy to track their development as more people weighed in on the discussion.

Openness is *the quality that a theory allows for, and recognizes, multiple options and perspectives*. In essence, a good theory acknowledges that it is "tentative, contextual, and qualified" (Littlejohn & Foss, 30) and is open to refinement. The openness of a theory should allow a person to examine its multiple options and perspectives in order to personally determine if the theory holds up or not.

Appropriateness refers to *the fit between the underlying theoretical assumptions and the research question*. Theories must be consistent with the assumptions, goals, and data of the research in question. Let's say you want to understand the relationship between playing violent video games and actual violence. One of your assumptions about human nature might be that people are active rather than passive agents, meaning we don't just copy what we see in the media. Given this, examining this issue from a theoretical perspective that suggests people emulate whatever they see in the media would not be appropriate for explaining phenomenon. Validity refers to *the worth and practical nature of a theory*. The question should be asked, "is a theory representative of reality?" There are three qualities of validity — value, fit, and generalizability. Is a theory valuable for the culture at large? Does it fit with the relationship between the explanations offered by the theory and the actual data? Finally, is it generalizable to a population beyond the sample size? In our example of the relationship between violent video games and actual violence, let's say we studied 100 boys and 100 girls, ages 12-15, from a small rural area in California. Could we then generalize or apply our theories to everyone who plays video games?

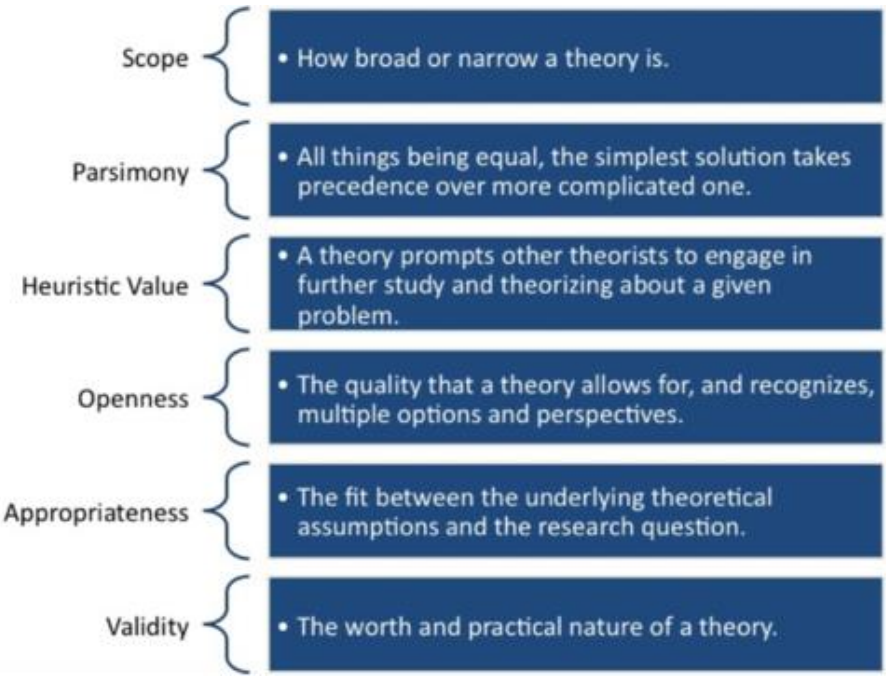

Figure 8.3[43]

The above criteria serve as a starting point for generating and evaluating theories. As we move into the next section on specific theoretical paradigms, you will see how some of these criteria work. Let's now turn to look at ways to more easily conceptualize the broad range of communication theories that exist.

Theoretical Paradigms

One way to simplify the understanding of complex theories is to categorize multiple theories into broader categories, or paradigms. A paradigm is a collection of concepts, values, assumptions, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for a community that shares them, especially an intellectual community. According to Kuhn, intellectual revolutions occur when people abandon previously held paradigms for new ones. For example, when Pythagoras in the 6th century B.C. argued the earth was a sphere, rather than flat, he presented a paradigm shift.

In the field of communication there are numerous ways to categorize and understand theoretical paradigms. No single way is more valuable than another, nor is any paradigm complete or better in its coverage of Communication. Instead, paradigms are a way for us to organize a great number of ideas into categories. For our purposes, we've divided communication theories into five paradigms that we call the Empirical Laws, Human Rules, Rhetorical, Systems, and Critical Paradigms.

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Empirical Laws Paradigm

Theories in the Empirical Laws Paradigm approach Communication from the perspective that there are universal laws that govern how we communicate. Other names for Empirical Laws include: hard science, the positivist approach, the covering-laws approach, and the classical approach. Natural scientists look for universal laws to understand and explain our world.

Using our example of gravity, we know that objects fall to the earth 100% of the time when we drop them. This is a universal law. As Chapter 2 showed, in the late 1950's scholars began studying human communication using approaches developed in the natural sciences (aka the Scientific Method). Thus, early proponents of Empirical Laws theories studied communication to see if there were universal communication laws similar to those in the natural world.

LAWS AND COMMUNICATION

Natural laws at work in our world influence every moment of our lives. Every time you fly in an airplane or cross a bridge you trust that the people who designed and built the plane and bridge followed the physical laws that allow a plane to fly and a bridge to span a distance without collapsing. Every time you press the brakes on a car you trust them to slow you down based on the laws explaining how long a mass, traveling at a certain speed, takes to stop. Even if you do not understand all of these laws, you live by them and believe the laws themselves hold true 100% of the time.

Are there laws you follow about communication with this kind of regularity? Are they applicable 100% of the time, in all situations, and with all people? What happens if someone breaks one of these laws? Are the consequences similar to when you break physical laws? For example, is the consequence for calling someone by the wrong name comparable to that of hitting your brakes and them not working?

Those who approach communication from an empirical laws perspective believe there are laws that govern human communication. The premise of this approach can be stated as a simple equation of causation: If X, then Y. For example, if I greet a person with "Hi, how are you?" then I anticipate a response, "Fine, how are you?" It's likely that you conduct much of your communication using this equation. However, does that mean that it works all of the time?

Pin It! Communication Theory Then - The Empirical Revolution (1950–1970): Theory in a Test Tube

Speech departments in the 1950s promoted the ancient rhetorical wisdom that persuasive discourse was a matter of an ethical speaker using logical arguments—‘‘the good man speaking well.”11 But younger faculty with training in the social sciences were no longer willing to accept this ‘‘truth” by faith. Armed with a scientific skepticism and new methods to assess attitudes, they put rhetorical principles to the test…

Aristotle, for example, wrote that ethos was a combination of a speaker’s intelligence, character, and goodwill toward the audience. Empirically oriented speech researchers subsequently discovered that audience rankings of “communicator credibility” did indeed include factors of competence (intelligence) and trustworthiness (character).12 But they found no evidence that audiences regarded goodwill or positive intentions as traits separate from character.

Scholars interested in this kind of study adopted the media-effects term communication research to distinguish their work from the historical-critical textual analysis of rhetoricians. In 1950 a group of communication researchers founded what is now the International Communication Association (ICA) as a science-based professional organization to rival the Speech Association of America, which was grounded in the humanities. Traditional speech teachers of this era often accused communication researchers of succumbing to ‘‘the law of the hammer.” This was a not-so-subtle dig at those who would pound away with newly acquired statistical tools no matter what the job required.

But irony did little to slow the radical transformation within the communication discipline….The empiricists continued to borrow their core ideas from other disciplines—especially social psychology. Indeed, five of the thirty-three communication theories in this book come from that specialized branch of psychology. Their common methodology and unity of world view gave social scientists in the communication field a greater impact than their numbers alone would indicate. In 1969, the SAA changed its name to the Speech Communication Association (SCA). The term communication in the title was tacit evidence that the scientific approach now dominated the discipline. At the start of the 1960s few departments that taught speech had the word communication as part of their title. By the mid 1970s there were few that didn’t.

There are three characteristics that help us understand empirical laws theories: causation, prediction, and generalization (Infante, Rancer & Womack). Causation states that *there is a “cause and effect” relationship for all actions*. In the physical world, if someone drops a pen it will fall. In human communication, if someone says “hello” to someone, that person responds. Prediction suggests that *once someone determines a particular law is at work, they will use it to predict outcomes of communication situations*. Have you ever rehearsed how you will ask someone out on a date and tried to predict the outcome?

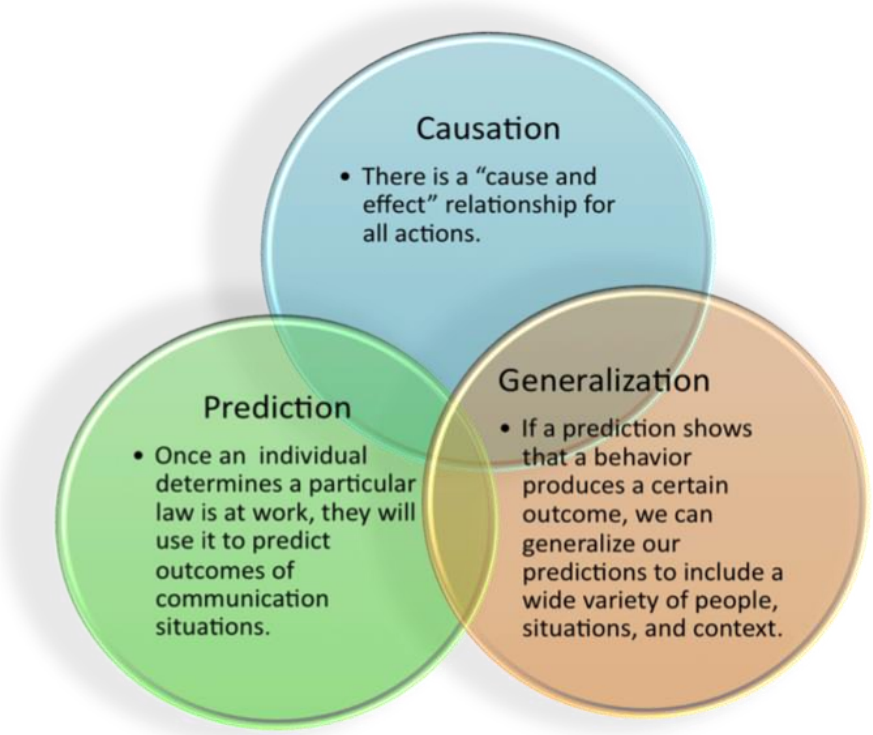

Figure 8.4: Causation, Generalization, Prediction[44]

What evidence did you use to make your prediction? In this example, you are using the "if X, then Y" equation to predict the outcome of the interaction. Generalization suggests that *if a prediction shows that a behavior produces a certain outcome, we can generalize our predictions to include a wide variety of people, situations, and contexts*. We make generalizations such as, "If I'm friendly to others, they will be friendly to me" based on our past experiences with this type of behavior. However, this does not account for scenarios in which the person might not hear you, might be having a bad day and does not wish to respond, or assumes you are talking to another person so they choose not to acknowledge you.

In the physical sciences, laws are absolute. This is comforting because it allows us to make informed decisions based on what we know about the laws that govern the world around us. In our example of gravity, we know that dropping an object will produce the same result every time. We could spend the rest of our lives testing this theory, but we don't have to. We know what the result will be without having to continuously drop an object. Now, imagine what it would be like to always know what the outcome would be of every communication situation! Would that be comforting to you, or make your life boring?

Unlike the physical world, laws that govern human communication are not absolute and are most often bound by culture and context. Empirical laws theories are generally approached from the perspective of probability rather than absoluteness (Miller &

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Berger). Probability states that *under certain conditions it is highly likely that we can predict communication outcomes*. For example, when you greet someone with "hello" it is probable, not absolute, they will respond back with a greeting of their own. If they do not, you might run through a variety of reasons why the other person did not respond in accordance with the "laws" that govern greetings in our culture. Even though empirical laws theories do not produce absolutes about communication, we still use them in our everyday interactions with one another. Businesses, advertisers, schools, and other organizations use this approach to predict consumer, educational, and behavioral habits of particular demographic groups. While their approaches never produce a 100% cause-effect relationship, the information they gather helps them determine what actions to take to be successful in their communicative behaviors.

Empirical Laws in Action

Empirical laws theories are a relatively new approach for understanding communication. We have only been developing empirical laws theories of communication for the past 100 or so years. To date, none of this research has come to the conclusion that, given a certain circumstance, a particular communicative behavior will ALWAYS produce a particular outcome. However, working under an empirical laws approach that accepts probability, we have many research examples that demonstrate probable laws that govern human communication.

Communication Theory Then

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) were some of the first to use empirical laws theories to explain communication. Their interests in mass communication and propaganda during World War II led them to study effective persuasion in mass communication and propaganda campaigns. They theorized that the more attractive a communicator, along with other traits, the more likely people would be persuaded. Their empirical laws theories still influence how a great deal of mass media is produced today. Think about movies, television shows, and advertisements you see. Are most of the people you watch in these mediums considered attractive and intelligent? Those who produce mass media use tremendous resources to research probabilistic empirical laws of human behavior before making decisions about what and who to include in their messages. On a smaller scale, we all use probabilistic empirical laws to govern, predict, and control our communication with others.

The area of leadership in group and organizational communication has a body of well-established empirical laws theories called the trait approaches. These theories suggest that *there are certain physical, personality, and communicative characteristics that make one person more likely to be a leader over another* (Northouse). Trait theories propose that people in western societies who are physically tall, charismatic, intelligent, white, and male are more likely to be leaders, be perceived as leaders, be placed in more leadership positions, and make better leaders than those who don't exhibit these characteristics. You may be thinking, "But what about people like Mother Theresa, Mohatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Caeser Chavez, or Barack Obama?" This question brings up two important points. First, it shows that communication theories are not absolute. Second, it shows that some theoretical viewpoints may work to promote a certain worldview of those in positions of power, an idea we'll explore

more thoroughly when we look at the Critical Theories Paradigm. Despite feeling uncomfortable with some of the assumptions of trait theories, if you look at those in the highest levels of leadership in the U.S., the vast majority have characteristics described in trait theories.

Strengths

A particular strength of empirical laws theories is that they help us determine cause and effect relationships in our communication with others. Understanding communication using these theories helps us predict the outcomes of our interactions with others. While we know that not all outcomes can be determined with 100% reliability, prediction and control allows us to more easily navigate our encounters. Think about the number of encounters you have each day in which you quickly predict and control your interaction with others. While not 100% conclusive, it's comforting that a great number of our interactions have a certain level of probable outcomes.

Weaknesses

A criticism of empirical laws theory is that while it is useful for understanding relatively simple interactions, it can oversimplify or fail to explain situations where a number of variables exist. Your classroom environment serves as a good example. While there are certain predictions you can make about how communication will occur in your classes, why is it that each classroom experience is unique? In your classrooms, it is impossible to predict, control, and generalize how a class will go with 100% accuracy because it is impossible to replicate classes in exactly the same ways. This approach does not account for the variety of human choices and behaviors that are brought into every communication context. It operates under the assumption that, given the same context, people bring the same things to the context each time. Obviously, this is not the case. Human behaviors are complex and cannot be predicted at a 100% accuracy rate. However, empirical laws theories work well for showing us patterns of behavior that guide our communication.

HUMAN RULES PARADIGM

Some Communication scholars believe that we cannot, and should not, try to study communication with an approach that does not work as accurately as it does in the physical sciences (Winch). These scholars believed empirical laws theories could not explain communication effectively so they began developing theories around the idea of *rules* rather than laws. By now you are aware that we all follow rules that guide our communication. If we didn't, human communication would be total chaos and confusion. The Human Rules Paradigm *approaches communication from the perspective that we follow shared rules of communication, not strict laws* (Shimanoff). While Human Rules theories share similar assumptions with empirical laws, they promote a more flexible approach to communication by suggesting that we follow general rules of communication rather than absolute laws that apply 100% of the time to our interactions.

The Difference between Rules and Laws

There is an old saying, “rules are meant to be broken.” This simple statement highlights the fundamental difference between empirical laws and human rules approaches to communication. If you break a law in the physical world there is always a consequence. For example, no two objects can occupy the same space at the same time. A car accident is often a disastrous example of an attempt to break this law. However, if you break a rule, it may not have the same consequences as breaking a law. For example, your parents may have set a curfew for you when you were younger. Imagine you were on your way home at night but stopped to help a friend change a flat tire. Your parents may choose to not punish you after you explain to them the reason you violated the rule.

Those who approach communication using human rules theories believe that communication rules are created by people and are therefore always open to change. Put another way, empirical laws theories seek absolute “Truth” that we can discover through careful observation and testing. Human rules theories see “truth” as subjective and created by humans, not set by the universe in which we live.

Rules are dynamic, whereas laws are not. Rules are contextually and culturally dependent and change as we change. Take for example Social Exchange Theory, which theorizes that *people participate in relationships when there is a fair exchange of costs and rewards* (Roloff; Walster, Walster & Berscheid). When the rules of exchange are violated, participants may choose to terminate the relationship. For example, you’ve likely had a friend who began dating a new boyfriend or girlfriend. You probably realized quite quickly that your friend suddenly, “did not have time for you anymore.” If you were upset over this, you were most likely upset that your friend violated the rules of social exchange; in this case the exchange was time spent together. In this example, you may feel like the change in relationship means you not having your needs met by your friend, while they are likely getting their needs met by the new relationship. Thus, a violation of social exchange has occurred.

Using human rules theories we are still able to predict how people might communicate, much like empirical laws theories. However, unlike empirical laws theories, rules are bound by context and not universal to all situations. For example, we predict that most people abide by posted speed limits on roadways. While we know that there are always exceptions to this (sometimes we are the exception!), we can predict a certain type of driving experience based on rules. Not all places approach speed limits from this perspective.

One of our exchange students came to class one day extremely upset. When asked what was wrong, the student stated he had received a speeding ticket. To this student, the speeding ticket made no sense at all. Why? In the U.S. we approach speed limits as a maximum speed, and risk a ticket when we exceed it. It’s a law. However, this student stated that in his country, speed limits are considered guidelines for how fast to drive. The student went on to explain that police officers in his country are not interested in determining if people accidentally or purposefully drive above the posted speed limit. Instead, they let people make their own

decisions regarding the guidelines of the posted speed limits. In this example, the U.S. approach to speed limits is one of law; break the law and there are consequences. The student's country approached speed limits from a rules perspective; there is flexibility to interpret and act according to the interpretation of the rules based on the current driving conditions, or context.

Think of rules you choose to follow or break every day. Sitting in a classroom, taking notes, listening to your instructor, and doing homework are all "rules" of how to communicate being a student. However, no one is forcing you to follow these rules. You can choose to follow them or not. If you choose to follow them, you probably do so for a variety of reasons. Each rule we choose to follow is a choice. As with all things, there are outcomes as a result of our choices, but unlike empirical laws theories, human rules theories suggest that our experiences are socially constructed in ways that make it easier to organize experience into collectives of general rules that we follow. That way, we are not overly surprised when our interactions do not produce predicted outcomes 100% of the time.

Strengths

One of the primary strengths of human rules theories is that they account for choice in communication behaviors. They suggest that we are not controlled by external laws when it comes to our communication. Instead, we develop rules to help facilitate and understand our interactions, while at the same time not being bound to abide by these rules at all times (remember, rules are sometimes meant to be broken). Thus, we can take comfort in following rules of communication to guide our interactions, but also know that we have flexibility to "play" with the rules because they are dynamic and contextual.

Weaknesses

The primary criticism with human rules theories is that they cannot fully predict behavior or outcomes. However, as of now all theories fail to do this when applied to human communication. Another criticism of human rules theories is that they are culturally and contextually bound. So, when we develop theories about something like communication anxiety as it relates to public speaking, we do so under the framework of our cultural perspective. These same theories often do not apply to other cultures.

SYSTEMS THEORY PARADIGM

The Systems Theory Paradigm represents a dramatic theoretical shift from empirical laws and human rules approaches for understanding communication. Systems thinking began in the social and physical sciences in the 19th century with George Hegel (Kaufmann), and was more fully developed by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 20th century.

Von Bertalanffy argued that everything is interconnected and therefore, we should study interconnectedness as a means of understanding the world. This departs from empirical approaches that traditionally study phenomena by looking at individual components. Conversations surrounding global warming are among the most recognizable ideas of systems

theory. In effect, those that warn us of global warming tell us that all of our actions have an impact on one another and our environment, and thus, we must be mindful of what we do, or we will continue to cause harm to everything on earth.

Systems theory is easily summed up with a simple definition: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Put another way, anything we do as individuals impacts others around us, as well as the environment in which we exist. Discussions about global warming are, in reality, debates about a global version of systems theory. We are becoming increasingly aware that none of us truly exist as individuals without impacting others. Many cultures have long-recognized the importance of thinking from a collectivist perspective, looking out for the good of the whole rather than pursuing the good of the individual. For those of us born and raised in cultures that value the experience of the individual, we are beginning to learn the larger consequences of trying to exist outside the scope of systems theory. We can never fully realize the full scope of our actions. We can only hope that our actions do more positive than negative.

When applied to communication, the Systems Theory Paradigm seeks to understand the interconnectedness of human communication rather than looking at just one part. The basic idea behind Systems Theory is, *“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”* An easy example of this is baking a cake. If you were to lay out all of the ingredients of a cake, you would not have a cake. Instead, you would have the ingredients of cake. But, combine those ingredients in a particular way, you produce a cake. Not only that, you produce an experience surrounding the cake (think birthday, anniversary, wedding, etc.). What is produced by making a cake equals so much more than the simple combination of ingredients.

Another example is an automobile engine. If you have all the pieces of an automobile engine on a garage floor, you do not have an engine. You have parts of an engine. But, if you put the engine parts together in the right way, you get something much greater than the parts; you get transportation. These examples demonstrate the idea that, what makes a cake or automobile engine is the actual interaction or combination of their parts, not the simple sum of the parts themselves.

One area of communication study that utilizes systems theory extensively is the study of Organizational Communication. Scholars in this specialization are interested in the interaction of people to see how they create what we know as organizations (Bavelas & Segal; Katz & Kahn). For example, what makes Wal-mart different than Target? It’s not simply their products or prices. Instead, these two mega-retail stores have a certain “personality” and way of functioning that is different from the other. Those who look at communication from a systems perspective believe that it is the interaction of the participants that makes organizations what they are.

One characteristic of the Systems Theory Paradigm is that systems are teleological (Infante, Rancer & Womack), meaning that *they seek to achieve a particular goal or outcome*. The goal of combining the ingredients of a cake is to produce a cake and facilitate an occasion. The goal of a working automobile engine is transportation. The goal of having a family is love and support.

The goal of a business is to produce products and profit. Communication researchers examine the interactions of those that make up systems to understand the systems' goals, as well as how they attempt to achieve goals.

Another characteristic of systems is they are always trying to achieve homeostasis — *the state of equilibrium or balance*. Using the idea of a family, most families attempt to fit in with their neighbors, co-workers, friends, city, country, culture, etc. Systems are always in a process of trying to achieve a level of homeostasis with their environment. When changes occur in either the environment or a system, system participants will adapt in order to maintain balance. For example, if you moved away from your immediate family to attend college your move had an impact on the homeostasis of your family. As a result, everyone in your family had to adjust in some way to the change brought about by your move in order to create a new sense of homeostasis. Even though you are still part of the family system, the system changed as a result of your move, and must respond in order to adapt to the change.

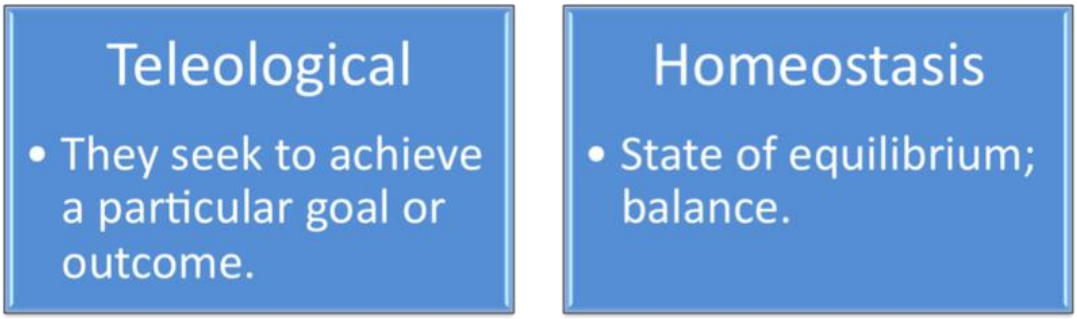

Figure 8.5[45]

The power of looking at communication from a systems perspective is that every communicative act impacts the system as a whole. When there is a change in one part of a system, it changes the entire system to some degree. Let's revisit our example of an automobile engine. Let's say a truck engine started making a terrible noise. The sound was so bad that one would think it might cost hundreds of dollars to fix the problem. However, a mechanic quickly finds that a small bolt had fallen out. Fifty-three cents later (tax included), and five minutes of time, the engine no longer made the terrible noise. Homeostasis was reached once again through the change of one very small part of the engine.

Like a car engine, we form systems with whom we interact. One of the reasons each of your college classes is unique is that each person (component) is unique, and thus, the interaction among the components is unique and cannot be duplicated. When we apply this approach to our communication exchanges we can learn many things about the impacts that our interactions have in the systems in which we interact. Think about systems you belong to like family, work, church, friends, etc. How do your communicative acts, whether big or small, impact the dynamics of these systems? What ways do you communicate in these systems? Do

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you use things like Skype, Facetime, text messaging, or the traditional phone call to communicate with the members in your systems? Technology continues to open new doors of communication that allows us to participate in a system without having to be physically apart of it.

Strengths

Systems Theory Paradigm seeks to understand a more complete picture by examining multiple layers of communication as interconnected rather than looking at isolated people or communication acts. This key strength of the paradigm does not try to predict human behavior, but rather explain it in ways that highlight the interconnectedness of people and their communicative acts. Much of the way we communicate is culturally and contextually specific. This approach does not seek to make universal generalizations about human communication, but rather, explain the totality of our interactions.

Weaknesses

One of the primary criticisms of the Systems Theory Paradigm is that it can be too broad in its focus. If everything is interconnected, how do we know what to study? What do we focus on when trying to understand communication interactions? This can prove challenging considering the dynamic and changing nature of systems, particularly human systems built on changing relationships. It can be difficult to answer why things happen when we use this approach, making it problematic for generating further theories of human communication. Finally, because it is a relatively new approach for understanding communication, this paradigm has yet to produce a definitive body of research. Studies from this perspective tend to take significant time and money to accomplish.

RHETORICAL THEORIES PARADIGM

Rhetoric is the oldest tradition of the Communication field. A good definition of rhetoric is, *"any kind of human symbol use that functions in any realm—public, private, and anything in between"* (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 7). Remember that one of our definitions for theory is, *"a way of framing an experience or event—an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world"* (Foss, Foss, & Griffin, 8). Combining these definitions allows us to understand the Rhetorical Theories Paradigm as, *"a way to understand and account for the way any kind of human symbol use functions in any realm."* Scholars have historically used rhetorical theories as a way to *produce* and *evaluate* messages.

Theories of Message Production

If you have taken a public speaking course, you were likely exposed to rhetorical theories of message production. In public speaking classes students are taught methods for organizing presentations, building credibility with the audience, and making messages more entertaining, informative, and/or persuasive. You probably intuitively understand that there are effective ways for putting together messages. But, how do you know what is truly effective or

ineffective? Whether you are preparing a public presentation, an advertising campaign, or trying to persuade a friend, rhetorical theories guide the ways you produce messages. Companies devote millions of dollars to produce the advertisements we see. You can bet that significant research has gone into what messages will work the best so they do not waste their money on ineffective advertising. Audience analysis, context, goals, etc., are all considered before producing and delivering these messages.

Over the centuries, Communication scholars have devoted entire careers studying what it takes to produce effective messages. Aristotle gave us his ideas of ethos (credibility), logos (logic), and pathos (emotions) as fundamental components for constructing persuasive messages. Cicero gave us the five canons of rhetoric, or the five necessary steps for putting together an effective message. In the modern era, Stephen Toulmin developed the Toulmin model as a *means for constructing persuasive arguments*. Toulmin's model of message production includes a claim, grounds, warrant, backing, modal qualifier, and rebuttal. The claim is *the conclusion or argument being made*. The grounds are *the data and facts offered to support the claim*. To *logically connect the grounds to the claim*, a warrant is given. The backing is used to *support the warrant* and the qualifiers *make a statement about the strength of the claim*. Words such as "possible," "certainly," and "definitely" are examples of qualifiers. Any exception to the claim is the rebuttal. Even if you are unfamiliar with rhetorical theories of message production above, you likely have a good idea of what makes an effective message. For Toulmin, effectiveness was based on issues of practicality — to find a claim that is of interest to people and the ability to justify it. The greater understanding you have of rhetorical theories of message production, the greater potential you have for producing effective messages in a variety of contexts.

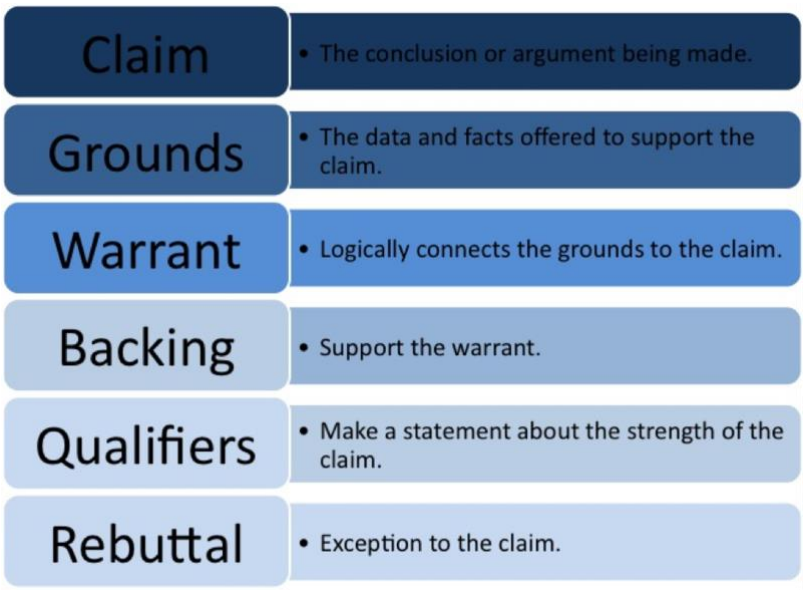

Figure 8.6: Toulmin Model[46]

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Theories of Message Evaluation

Super Bowl Sunday is a day that many people gather together to watch a big football game on television. It is also a day that many people give special attention to watching commercials. It has become a popular pastime for people to evaluate the quality of commercials shown during the Super Bowl. In fact, all of the commercials from the Super Bowl are put on the internet for people to watch and evaluate.

Many people spend a considerable amount of time discussing the effectiveness of commercials. Those who engage in these conversations are, at a basic level, engaging in message evaluation. If you make a comment about these commercials such as, "that was funny" or "that was stupid" you are using some kind of criteria to come to those conclusions. A person approaching these messages using rhetorical theories would ask "why was that funny or stupid?" In other words, what works, or doesn't work, about certain messages?

There are many ways we can use rhetorical theories to evaluate messages. We might choose to use a feminist, an ideological, or a narrative approach to evaluate message effectiveness. For example, Kenneth Burke argues that we can evaluate messages by understanding them as a dramatic play. He contends that all messages contain acts, scenes, agents, purposes, and agencies. If you were to evaluate your relationships with your friends from this perspective, who are the agents, what is the scene, and what act of the play are you in? Jean Baudrillard states that we can evaluate messages from the perspective that messages are commodities that we exchange. Whereas, Michel Foucault asserts that we can evaluate messages by looking at how power is enacted in them. Rhetorical theories give us different "lenses" for us to understand messages. No interpretation is right or wrong. Instead, each interpretation allows us to have a more comprehensive understanding of communication.

As with message production, we are constantly in the process of evaluating messages that are sent and received by us. The greater understanding you have of rhetorical theories for both putting together and evaluating messages, the greater potential you have to be an effective communicator in a variety of contexts. For rhetorical theorists, the message is the primary focus of inquiry when approaching the study of communication.

Strengths

The primary strength of the Rhetorical Theories Paradigm is its ability to help us produce and evaluate effective messages. Rhetorical theories provide a way for us to take context into consideration when we examine messages. Unlike empirical laws theories, rhetorical theories highlight the importance of considering context as essential for understanding messages. Finally, rhetorical theories provide a way for us to foster multiple perspectives in the evaluation and construction of messages.

Weaknesses

A primary weakness of rhetorical theories comes from one of its strengths. With such an

intense focus on messages, it is possible to overlook alternative interpretations of messages. Also, some theories of message evaluation are not critical enough to reveal power dynamics at work in message exchanges. Finally, rhetorical theories are often not generalizable across a variety of communication contexts. While some rhetorical theories can be generalized, rhetorical theories are most often highly contextualized.

CRITICAL THEORIES PARADIGM

At this point you have learned about four different theoretical paradigms we use to understand communication. One problem with these approaches is they often lack an explicit critique of the status quo of communication. Put another way, they serve as a general approach to understand communication norms rather than challenge them. We all realize that there are communication realities in the world that are hurtful and oppressive to particular people, and that there are people in the world that use communication to serve their own needs and interests. How do we bring these communicative practices to light and work to change communication practices that are hurtful?

Pin It! Communication Theory Now – Hip Hop
Byron Hurt is a modern theorist who uses film to critique how sexism impacts both men and women in our society. His cutting-edge film "Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes" looks at the Hip-Hop industry from a critical perspective, focusing on how it enables sexism against women while keeping men in narrowly defined gendered roles.

The Need for Critical Theories

The Critical Theories Paradigm helps us *understand how communication is used to oppress, and provides ways to foster positive social change* (Foss & Foss; Fay). Critical Theories challenge the status quo of communication contexts, looking for alternatives to those forms of oppressive communication. These theories differ from other theoretical approaches because they seek praxis as the overarching goal. Praxis is *the combination of theory and action*. Rather than simply seeking to understand power structures, critical theories actively seek to change them in positive ways. Easily identifiable examples of critical approaches are Marxism, postmodernism, and feminism. These critical theories expose and challenge the communication of dominant social, economic, and political structures. Areas of inquiry include language, social relationships, organizational structures, politics, economics, media, cultural ideologies, interpersonal relationships, labor, and other social movements.

Cultural Studies focus on understanding the real-life experiences of people, examining communication contexts for hidden power structures, and accomplishing positive social change as a result (Dines and Humez; Kellner). According to Kellner, cultural studies involves three interconnected elements necessary for understanding, evaluating and challenging the power dynamics embedded in communication—political economy, textual analysis, and audience reception.

Political economy focuses on *the macro level of communication*. Specifically, this part of cultural studies looks at the way media as text are situated in a given cultural context, and the political and economic realities of the cultural context. In the U.S., we would note that the political economy is one marked with gender, racial, and class inequities.

Textual analysis involves *the process of deconstructing and analyzing elements of a media text*. If you wanted to look at a magazine with a critical eye, you would pay attention to the visual elements (the pictures in the ads; the celebrity photos, and any other drawings, cartoons or illustrations), the verbal messages (the text of the ads, the copy, captions that accompany the photographs), and the relationship between the advertisements and the copy. For example, is there an ad for Clinique eye shadow next to an article on the "hot new beauty tips for fall?" You would also want to pay attention to the representation of gender, race, and class identities as well. Are there any differences or similarities between the portrayal of white women and women of color? What sort of class identity is being offered as the one to emulate?
Audience reception asks us to consider *the role of the text for the audience that consumes it*. You might want to learn why people read particular magazines—what purpose does it fill, what is the social function of this text?

Origins of Critical Theories in Communication

Marxism is one of the earliest origins of critical theory. In addition, postmodernism, feminism, and postcolonialism have greatly influenced how critical theories have grown and expanded to challenge a greater number of social power structures. While each of these approaches examines a different area of oppression, all are critical approaches to enact great social changes, not only in western societies, but in cultures worldwide.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Karl Marx's ideas challenged the status quo of newly emerging industrial societies. As societies moved from agrarian-based economies to ones based in industrial manufacturing, there became an increasing division between the rich and the poor — much like the income inequality talked about so much today. Marx, in two of his most well-known works, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*, argued that working class laborers were being oppressed by those in power, specifically the owners of manufacturing plants.

In any discussion of Postmodernism, another critical theoretical perspective, the difficulty of defining the term is invariably part of the discussion. *Modern* refers to just now (from modo in Latin) and *post* means after. Thus, this term translates into "after just now"—an idea that can be difficult to wrap our heads around. How do you, for example, point to or mark the period after just now? (Covino & Jolliffe, 76). In discussing the postmodern condition, Lyotard explained the relationship between those who have and don't have social power: "The [decision makers] allocate our lives for the growth of power. In matters of social justice and scientific truth alike, the legitimation of that power is based on optimizing the system's performance—efficiency" (27).

A third major influence on the development of the Critical Theories Paradigm comes from feminist theories. Feminist theories explore *power structures that create and recreate gendered differentiations in societies* (Foss & Foss; Dervin; MacKinnon). Critical feminist theories contend that gender relations are often oppressive to both men and women, and that they support an institution based on patriarchal values. Thus, critical feminist theories challenge dominant assumptions and practices of gender in ways that foster more equal and egalitarian forms of communication and social structures in society.

When discussing feminism and feminist theories we refer to a set of multiple and diverse theories. Feminist theories include a wide range of philosophical arguments, economic structures, and political viewpoints. Some of these include Marxist feminism, which focuses on the division of labor as a source of gender inequality, and liberal feminism, which asserts that men and women should have equal status in the culture—such as voting rights, educational and professional opportunities, and equal pay. Eco-feminism recognizes that all parts of the universe are interconnected and that oppression of women and other minorities is analogous to the oppression of the natural environment such as in the cutting down of natural forests to meet consumer demands for paper goods, or the killing of animals for the eating of meat.

Critical Theories in Action

Whether we listen to music on our phones, watch TV, go to the movies, or read a magazine, most of us consume media. Have you ever stopped to think about who puts together those messages? Have you wondered what their goals might be and why they want to send the messages they do? One way we can use critical theories is to examine who owns what media to determine what they are trying to accomplish (Croteau & Hoynes). For example, why does General Electric want to own companies like RCA and NBC? Why does a company like Seagram's want to buy MCA (Universal Studios) and Polygram records? What world-views are these companies creating in the media they produce? These are all questions for which we might consider using theories from the Critical Theories Paradigm. Did you know that in 1983 50 corporations controlled most of the U.S. media (papers, television, movies, magazines,etc.) and that by 2004 that number has dropped down to five corporations (Bagdikian)? Using Critical Theories Paradigm, we can begin to examine the messages that so few companies are constructing and their impacts on how we understand the world around us as shaped through these messages.

Other examples from the critical paradigm include works that examine gender, consumerism, advertising, and television. In her work, Who(se) Am I? The Identity and Image of Women in Hip-Hop, Perry examines the potential danger and damage to African-American women through their objectification in Hip-Hop videos. Carole A. Stabile examines the labor and marketing practices of Nike in her article, Nike, Social Responsibility, and the Hidden Abode of Production. Clint C. Wilson II and Felix Gutierrez discuss the portrayal of people of color in advertising in their article, Advertising and People of Color, while Jackson Katz explores mask of masculinity with his film, Tough Guise 2: The Ongoing Crisis of Violent Masculinity. We use

critical theories to reveal a vast range of possible ideological structures that create and foster dominant world-views, and to challenge and change those ideologies that oppress others.

Strengths

A significant strength of the Critical Theories Paradigm is that it combines theory and practice, seeking to create actual change from theoretical development. Rather than seeking prediction and control, or explanation and understanding, critical theories seek positive social change. The intent behind these theoretical perspectives is to help empower those whose world-views and ideological perspectives have not found equality in social contexts. At their best, critical theories have the potential to enact large-scale social change for both large and small groups of people.

Weaknesses

A potential weakness of critical theories is their dependence on social values. While empirical laws theories seek an objective reality, critical theories highlight subjective values that guide communication behaviors. When values conflict the question of, "whose values are better?" emerges. Because values are subjective, answering this question is often filled with much conflict and debate. The example of gay marriage highlights a current debate taking place over ideological values. How do we define marriage? And, whose definition is best?

COMMUNICATION THEORY SUMMARY

Theories are lenses for understanding the world around us. We don't have to use one theory to understand communication phenomena, but instead, it is possible to use multiple theories to examine our communication. Theories allow us to organize and understand communication experiences, select communication behavior to study, broaden our understanding of human communication, predict and control communication situations, challenge current social and cultural relationships, and offer new ways of thinking and living. Forming theories is a three step process of 1) asking important questions, 2) looking for answers through observation, and 3) forming answers or theories as a result of observation.

Are all theories alike in their usefulness? Of course not. Evaluating the usefulness or value of a theory is important. Six qualities are crucial for evaluating theories—-scope, parsimony, heuristic value, openness, appropriateness, and validity. As you recall, scope refers to the breadth of the theory, parsimony to its level of simplicity, and heuristic value is the theory's ability to generate other theories. When a theory is open this means that it recognizes other perspectives and options. Appropriateness refers to the fit between the research question and theory used to answer it. Finally, validity is the overall worth or practicality of a theory which includes value, fit, and generalizability. When these characteristics are present we can be confident of our choice of theory.

You have also learned five major paradigms for understanding, explaining, and changing the communication around you. It is important to recognize that no theoretical perspective is the

right perspective, although most Communication scholars do favor particular theoretical approaches over others, and conduct communication research from their preferred perspectives. Those that believe there are universal laws which govern human communication conduct research from the empirical laws perspective. Those that think communication is a result of shared, adaptable rules utilize the human rules paradigm. The systems perspective recognizes the interconnectedness of people, relationships and communication. If the use of symbols for message creation and evaluation is the focus, then rhetorical theory is the corresponding paradigm. For scholars who are action oriented and desire social change as an outcome of their research, the critical perspective is the one of choice.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding communication theory help you in your daily life?
2. Pick a theoretical paradigm. Now pick a communication phenomenon. How does that paradigm help explain that phenomenon to you?
3. What would you focus on using critical theories? What questions would you try to answer?
4. Think of a system in which you are a member? What communicative action could you change that would change the system? What do you think the effect would be?
5. What criteria do you use for constructing or evaluating a good persuasive message? How did you establish these criteria?

Key Terms

- Appropriateness
- Audience Reception
- Causation
- Critical Theories
- Cultural Studies
- Empirical Laws
- Explain
- Feminist Theories
- Generalization
- Heuristic Value
- Homeostasis
- Human Rules
- Marxism
- Openness
- Paradigm
- Paradigm Shift
- Parsimony
- Political Economy
- Postmodernism
- Praxis
- Prediction
- Probability
- Rhetoric
- Rhetorical Criticism
- Rhetorical Theories
- Scope
- Social Criticism
- Social Exchange Theory
- Systems Theory
- Teleological
- Textual Analysis
- Theory
- Toulmin's Model
- Trait Theory
- Validity

CHAPTER 9: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define interpersonal communication.
- Explain self-disclosure.
- Understand the role of communication climate on interpersonal communication.
- Be aware of the role of dialectical tensions in interpersonal communication.
- Understand the unique dynamics of friendship.
- Understand the unique dynamics of romantic relationships.
- Understand the unique dynamics of family.
- Understand the various ways of interpreting and responding to conflict in interpersonal communication.

Think about your relationships in the last few years. You may have just transitioned from high school to a community college or university. Perhaps you and your friends from high school went to different colleges and are now living far apart from each other. If you have recently been separated by distance from friends or family, you have noticed that it is more difficult to stay connected and share all of the little things that go on in your day. As you continue to grow and change in college, it is likely that you will create relationships along the way. Being away from your family, you will probably notice changes to your relationships with them. All of these dynamics, and many more, fall under the scope of interpersonal communication.

Figure 9.1[47]

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Before going any further, let us define interpersonal communication. “Inter” means between, among, mutually, or together. The second part of the word, “personal” refers to a specific individual or particular role that an individual may occupy. Thus, interpersonal communication is *communication between individual people*. We often engage in interpersonal communication in dyads, which means *between two people*. It may also occur in small groups such as you and your housemates trying to figure out a system for household chores.

Important to know, is that the definition of interpersonal communication is not simply a quantitative one. What this means is that you cannot define it by merely counting the number of people involved. Instead, Communication scholars view interpersonal communication qualitatively; meaning that it occurs when people communicate with each other as unique individuals. Thus, interpersonal communication is *a process of exchange where there is desire and motivation on the part of those involved to get to know each other as individuals.* We will use this definition of interpersonal communication to explore the three primary types of relationships in our lives—friendships, romantic, and family. Given that conflict is a natural part of interpersonal communication, we will also discuss multiple ways of understanding and managing conflict. But before we go into detail about specific interpersonal relationships, let’s examine two important aspects of interpersonal communication: self-disclosure and climate.

Pin It! Interpersonal Communication Now - Melanie Booth And Self-Disclosure In The Classroom

One emerging area of interest in the arena of interpersonal communication is self-disclosure in a classroom setting and the challenges that teachers face dealing with personal boundaries. Melanie Booth wrote an article discussing this issue, incorporating her personal experiences. Even though self-disclosure challenges boundaries between teacher-student or student-student, she states that it can offer “transformative” learning opportunities that allow students to apply what they have learned to their life in a deeper more meaningful way. She concludes that the “potential boundary challenges associated with student self-disclosure can be proactively managed and retroactively addressed with careful thought and action and with empathy, respect, and ethical responses toward our students” (Booth).

SELF DISCLOSURE

Because interpersonal communication is the primary means by which we get to know others as unique individuals, it is important to understand the role of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is the *process of revealing information about yourself to others that is not readily known by them*—you have to disclose it. In face-to-face interactions, telling someone “I am a white woman” would not be self-disclosure because that person can perceive that about you without being told. However, revealing, “I am an avid surfer” or “My favorite kind of music is “electronic trance” would be examples of self-disclosure because these are pieces of personal information others do not know unless you tell them. Given that our definition of interpersonal

communication requires people to “build knowledge of one another” to get to know them as unique individuals, the necessity for self-disclosure should be obvious.

There are degrees of self-disclosure, ranging from relatively safe (revealing your hobbies or musical preferences), to more personal topics (illuminating fears, dreams for the future, or fantasies). Typically, as relationships deepen and trust is established, self-disclosure increases in both breadth and depth. We tend to disclose facts about ourselves first (I am a Biology major), then move towards opinions (I feel the war is wrong), and finally disclose feelings (I’m sad that you said that). An important aspect of self-disclosure is the rule of reciprocity. This rule states that self-disclosure between two people works best in a back and forth fashion. When you tell someone something personal, you probably expect them to do the same. When one person reveals more than another, there can be an imbalance in the relationship because the one who self discloses more may feel vulnerable as a result of sharing more personal information.
One way to visualize self-disclosure is the Johari Window which comes from combining the first names of the window’s creators, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. The window is divided into four quadrants: the arena, the blind spot, the facade, and the unknown (Luft).

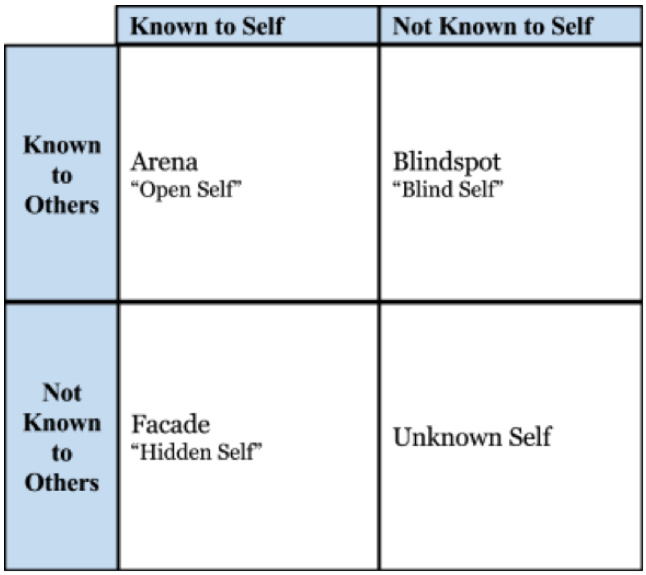

Figure 9.2[48]

The arena area contains information that is known to us and to others, such as our height, hair color, occupation, or major. In general, we are comfortable discussing or revealing these topics with most people. Information in the blind spot includes those things that may be apparent to others, yet we are unaware of it in ourselves. The habit of playing with your hair when nervous may be a habit that others have observed but you have not. The third area, the façade, contains information that is hidden from others but is known to you. Previous mistakes or failures, embarrassing moments, or family history are topics we typically hold close and reveal only in the context of safe, long-term relationships. Finally, the unknown area contains information that neither others, nor we, know about. We cannot know how we will react when a parent

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dies or just what we will do after graduation until the experience occurs. Knowing about ourselves, especially our blind and unknown areas, enables us to have a healthy, well-rounded self-concept. As we make choices to self-disclose to others, we are engaging in negotiating relational dialectics.

Relational Dialectics

One way we can better understand our personal relationships is by understanding the notion of relational dialectics. Baxter describes three relational dialectics that are constantly at play in interpersonal relationships. Essentially, they are a continuum of needs for each participant in a relationship that must be negotiated by those involved. Let's take a closer look at the three primary relational dialectics that are at work in all interpersonal relationships.

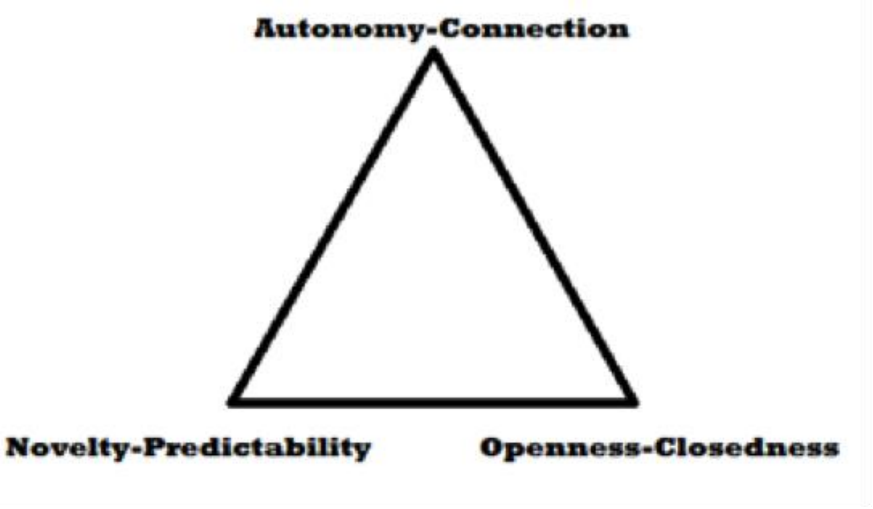

Figure 9.3[49]

Autonomy-Connection refers to our *need to have close connection with others as well as our need to have our own space and identity*. We may miss our romantic partner when they are away but simultaneously enjoy and cherish that alone time. When you first enter a romantic relationship, you probably want to be around the other person as much as possible. As the relationship grows, you likely begin to desire fulfilling your need for autonomy, or alone time. In every relationship, each person must balance how much time to spend with the other, versus how much time to spend alone.

Novelty-Predictability is the idea that *we desire predictability as well as spontaneity in our relationships*. In every relationship, we take comfort in a certain level of routine as a way of knowing that we can count on the other person in the relationship. Such predictability provides a sense of comfort and security. However, it requires balance with novelty to avoid boredom. An example of balance might be friends who get together every Saturday for brunch, but make a commitment to always try new restaurants each week.

[49] Image by Spaynton by CC BY-SA 4.0

Openness-Closedness refers to the desire to be open and honest with others while at the same time not wanting to reveal everything about yourself to someone else. One's desire for privacy does not mean they are shutting out others. It is a normal human need. We tend to disclose the most personal information to those with whom we have the closest relationships. However, even these people do not know everything about us. As the old saying goes, "We all have skeletons in our closet," and that's okay.

How We Handle Relational Dialectics

Understanding that these three dialectical tensions are at play in all relationships is a first step in understanding how our relationships work. However, awareness alone is not enough. Couples, friends, or family members have strategies for managing these tensions in an attempt to meet the needs of each person. Baxter identifies four ways we can handle dialectical tensions.

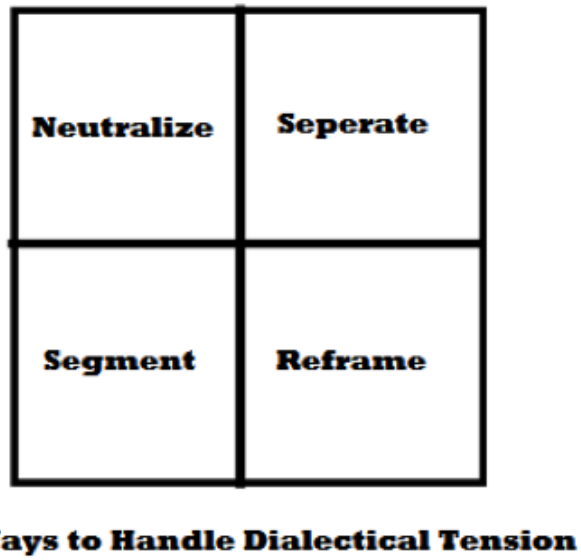

Figure 9.4[50]

The first option is to neutralize the extremes of the dialectical tensions. Here, *individuals compromise, creating a solution where neither person's need (such as novelty or predictability) is fully satisfied*. Individual needs may be different, and never fully realized. For example, if one person seeks a great deal of autonomy, and the other person in the relationship seeks a great deal of connection, neutralization would not make it possible for either person to have their desires met. Instead, each person might feel like they are not getting quite enough of their particular need met.

The second option is separation. This is when someone *favors one end of the dialectical continuum and ignores the other, or alternates between the extremes.* For example, a couple in

[50] Image by Spaynton by CC BY-SA 4.0

a commuter relationship in which each person works in a different city may decide to live apart during the week (autonomy) and be together on the weekends (connection). In this sense, they are alternating between the extremes by being completely alone during the week, yet completely together on the weekends.

When people decide to *divide their lives into spheres* they are practicing segmentation. For example, your extended family may be very close and choose to spend religious holidays together. However, members of your extended family might reserve other special days such as birthdays for celebrating with friends. This approach divides needs according to the different segments of your life.

The final option for dealing with these tensions is reframing. This strategy requires creativity not only in managing the tensions, but understanding how they work in the relationship. For example, *the two ends of the dialectic are not viewed as opposing or contradictory* at all. Instead, they are understood as supporting the other need, as well as the relationship itself. A couple who does not live together, for example, may agree to spend two nights of the week alone or with friends as a sign of their autonomy. The time spent alone or with others gives each person the opportunity to develop themselves and their own interests so that they are better able to share themselves with their partner and enhance their connection.

In general, there is no one right way to understand and manage dialectical tensions since every relationship is unique. However, to always satisfy one need and ignore the other may be a sign of trouble in the relationship (Baxter). It is important to remember that relational dialectics are a natural part of our relationships and that we have a lot of choice, freedom, and creativity in how we work them out with our relational partners. It is also important to remember that dialectical tensions are negotiated differently in each relationship. The ways we self-disclose and manage dialectical tensions contributes greatly to what we call the communication climate in relationships.

Developing and Maintaining Friendships

A common need we have as people is the need to feel connected with others. We experience great joy, adventure, and learning through our connection and interactions with others. The feeling of wanting to be part of a group and liked by others is natural. One way we meet our need for connection is through our friendships. Friendship means different things to different people depending on age, gender, and cultural background. Common among all friendships is the fact that they are interpersonal relationships of choice. Throughout your life, you will engage in an ongoing process of developing friendships. Rawlins suggests that we develop our friendships through a series of six steps. While we may not follow these six steps in exact order in all of our relationships, these steps help us understand how we develop friendships.

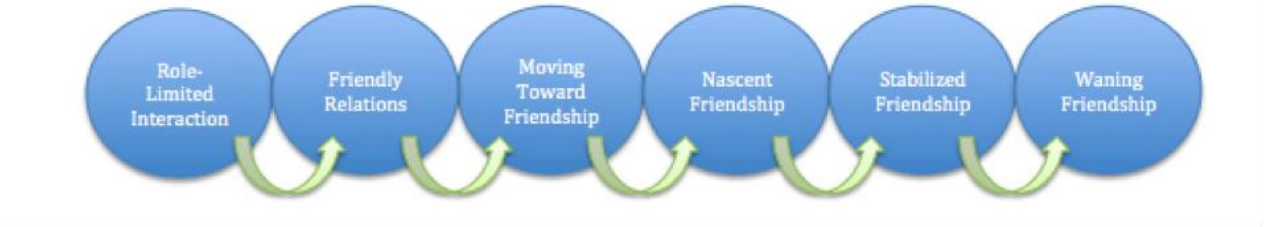

Figure 9.5[51]

The first step in building friendships occurs through Role-Limited Interaction. In this step, we *interact with others based on our social roles*. For example, when you meet a new person in class, your interaction centers around your role as "student." The communication is characterized by a focus on superficial, rather than personal topics. In this step we engage in limited self-disclosure, and rely on scripts and stereotypes. When two first-time freshmen met in an introductory course, they struck up a conversation and interacted according to the roles they played in the context of their initial communication. They began a conversation because they sit near each other in class and discussed how much they liked or disliked aspects of the course.

The second step in developing friendships is called Friendly Relations. This stage is characterized by *communication that moves beyond initial roles as the participants begin to interact with one another to see if there are common interests, as well as an interest to continue getting to know one another*. As the students spend more time together and have casual conversations, they may realize a wealth of shared interests. They realize that both were traveling from far distances to go to school and understood each other's struggle with missing their families. Each of them also love athletics, especially playing basketball. The development of this friendship occurred as they identified with each other as more than classmates. They saw each other as women of the same age, with similar goals, ambitions, and interests. Moreover, as one of them studied Communication and the other Psychology, they appreciated the differences as well as similarities in their collegiate pursuits.

The third step in developing friendships is called Moving Toward Friendship. In this stage, participants *make moves to foster a more personalized friendship*. They may begin meeting outside of the setting in which the relationship started, and begin increasing the levels of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure enables the new friends to form bonds of trust. When the students entered this stage it was right before one joined the basketball club on their college campus. As she started practices and meetings, she realized this would be something fun for her and her classmate to do together so she invited her classmate along.

The fourth step in developing friendships is called Nascent Friendship. In this stage individuals *commit to spending more time together*. They also may start using the term "friend" to refer to each other as opposed to "a person in my history class" or "this guy I work with."

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The interactions extend beyond the initial roles as participants work out their own private communication rules and norms. For example, they may start calling or texting on a regular basis or reserving certain times and activities for each other such as going on evening runs together. As time went on, the students started texting each other more frequently just to tell each other a funny story that happened during the day, to make plans for going out to eat, or to plan for meeting at the gym to work out.

The fifth step in developing friendships is Stabilized Friendship. In this stage, friends *take each other for granted as friends, but not in a negative way*. Because the friendship is solid, they assume each other will be in their lives. There is an assumption of continuity. The communication in this stage is also characterized by a sense of trust as levels of self-disclosure increase and each person feels more comfortable revealing parts of him or herself to the other. This stage can continue indefinitely throughout a lifetime. When the women became friends, they were freshmen in college. After finishing school some years later, they moved to separate regions for graduate school. While they were sad to move away from one another, they knew the friendship would continue. To this day they continue to be best friends.

The final step in friendship development is Waning Friendship. As you know, friendships do not always have a happy ending. *Many friendships come to an end*. Friendships may not simply come to an abrupt end. Many times there are stages that show a decline of a friendship, but in Rawlin's model, the ending of a friendship is summed up by this step. Perhaps the relationship is too difficult to sustain over large geographic distances. Or, sometimes people change and grow in different directions and have little in common with old friends. Sometimes friendship rules are violated to a degree beyond repair. We spoke earlier of trust as a component of friendships. One common rule of trust is that if we tell friends a secret, they are expected to keep it a secret. If that rule is broken, and a friend continually breaks your trust by telling your secrets to others, you are likely to stop thinking of them as your friend.

CHALLENGES FOR FRIENDSHIPS

While the above steps are a general pathway toward friendship, they are not always smooth. As with any relationship, challenges exist in friendships that can strain their development. Three of the more common challenges to friendships are gender, cultural diversity, and sexual attraction. Important to remember, is that each of these constructs comes with its own conflicts of power and privilege because of the cultural norms and the values we give to certain characteristics. These are challenges to relationships since studies show that people tend to associate with others that are similar to themselves (Echols & Graham). Take a look at the pair on the side of the page, they identify as different genders, ethnicities, cultures, and are even attracted to different sexes. Their friendship not only offers an opportunity to learn about differences through each other, but also offers challenges because of these differences. As we emphasize throughout the book, factors such as our gender identities and cultural backgrounds always play a role in our interactions with others.

Gender: Research suggests that both women and men value trust and intimacy in their friendships and value their time spent with friends (Mathews, Derlega & Morrow; Bell &

Coleman; Monsour & Rawlins). However, there are some differences in the interactions that take place within women's and men's friendships (Burleson, Jones & Holmstrom; Coates; Harriman). Quite common among female friends, is to get together simply to talk and catch up with one another. When calling her close friend, Antoinette might say, "Why don't you come over to my place so we can talk?" The need to connect through verbal communication is explicitly stated and forms the basis for the relationship. In contrast, among male friends a more common approach to interaction is an invitation to engage in an activity as a means of facilitating conversation. For example, John might say to his friend, "Hey, Mike, let's get out surfing this weekend." The explicit request is to engage in an activity (surfing), but John and Mike understand that as they engage in the activity, they will talk, joke around, and reinforce their friendship ties.

While we have often looked at gender as male and female, culture is changing in which gender is viewed as a spectrum rather than the male/female binary. Monsour & Rawlins explain the new waves of research into different types of gender communities. More recent research is more inclusive to gender definitions that extend beyond the male/female binary. This research may be cutting edge in its field, but as society becomes more accepting of difference, new ideas of relationship rules will emerge.

Culture: Cultural values shape how we understand our friendships. In most Western societies that emphasize individualism (as opposed to collectivism), friendships are seen as voluntary in that we get to choose who we want in our friendship circle. If we do not like someone we do not have to be friends with him/her. Contrast this to the workplace, or school, where we may be forced to get along with colleagues or classmates even though we may not like them. In many collectivist cultures, such as Japan and China, friendships carry certain obligations that are understood by all parties (Carrier; Kim & Markman). These may include gift giving, employment and economic opportunities, and cutting through so-called 'bureaucratic red tape.' Although these sorts of connections, particularly in business and politics, may be frowned upon in the United States because they contradict our valuing of individualism, they are a natural, normal, and logical result of friendships in collectivist cultures.

Sexual Attraction: The classic film, *When Harry Met Sally*, highlights how sexual attraction can complicate friendships. In the movie, Harry quotes the line, "Men and women can't be friends because the sex always gets in the way." Levels of sexual attraction or sexual tension may challenge friendships between heterosexual men and women, gay men, and lesbian women. This may arise from an internal desire of one of the friends to explore a sexual relationship, or if someone in the relationship indicates that he/she wants to be "more than friends." These situations might place strain on the friendship and require the individuals to address the situation if they want the friendship to continue. One approach has been the recent definition of friendships called, "Friends with Benefits." This term implies an understanding that two people will identify their relationship as a friendship, but will be open to engaging in sexual activity without committing to the other characteristics common in romantic relationships.

FRIENDSHIPS NOW

Take a moment to reflect on how many friends you have in your everyday life. Is that number equivalent or more than the number you have on social media accounts like Facebook? Chances are, those numbers are very different. To those of us who have access to social media, it is changing the ways we develop and maintain friendships. When you make a friend in physical life, the other person has to be in close enough proximity to communicate with on a regular basis to have a face-to-face interaction. That concept is almost nonexistent in the world of social media. Rawlin's first step in developing friendships, Role-Limited Interaction, can be bypassed and moved right into Friendly Relations with the click of a button.

Developing and Maintaining Romantic Relationships

Like other relationships in our lives, romantic relationships play an important role in fulfilling our needs for intimacy, social connection, and sexual relations. Like friendships, romantic relationships also follow general stages of creation and deterioration. Before we explore these stages, let's look at our definition of romantic relationships.

In many Western cultures, romantic relationships are voluntary. We are free to decide whom to date and form life-long romantic relationships. In some Eastern cultures these decisions may be made by parents, or elders in the community, based on what is good for the family or social group. Even in Western societies, not everyone holds the same amount of freedom and power to determine their relational partners. Parents or society may discourage interracial, interfaith, or interclass relationships. While it is now legal for same-sex couples to marry, many same-sex couples still suffer political and social restrictions when making choices about marrying and having children. Much of the research on how romantic relationships develop is based on relationships in the West. In this context, romantic relationships can be viewed as voluntary relationships between individuals who have intentions that each person will be a significant part of their ongoing lives.

Think about your own romantic relationships for a moment. To whom are you attracted? Chances are they are people with whom you share common interests and encounter in your everyday routines such as going to school, work, or participation in hobbies or sports. In other words, self-identity, similarity, and proximity are three powerful influences when it comes to whom we select as romantic partners. We often select others that we deem appropriate for us as they fit our self-identity; heterosexuals pair up with other heterosexuals, lesbian women with other lesbian women, and so forth. Social class, religious preference, and ethnic or racial identity are also great influences as people are more likely to pair up with others of similar backgrounds. Logically speaking, it is difficult (although not impossible with the prevalence of social media and online dating services) to meet people outside of our immediate geographic area. In other words, if we do not have the opportunity to meet and interact with someone at least a little, how do we know if they are a person with whom we would like to explore a relationship? We cannot meet, or maintain a long-term relationship, without sharing some sense of proximity.

Pin It! Interpersonal Communication and You - How Do You Love
Love can come in many different forms. There is a love between a mother and her child. The love between two brothers. The love between a dog and its human companions. These different types of love have many similarities yet have phenomenal differences. Love can be sexual, but it is definitely contextual. The Greeks had six distinct words for love depending on the context, whereas we often use the single term "love" to describe many things. I love pizza. I love my mother. I love my dog. Look at the table below to see what Greek word for love you would use in these sentences

Table 9.1 Types of Love

Type of Love	Definition
Eros	Passion and Commitment
Ludus	Game Playing
Storge	Love and Friendship
Pragma	Pragmatic Love
Mania	Emotional Intensity
Agape	Selfless Caring

We are certainly not suggesting that we only have romantic relationships with carbon copies of ourselves. Over the last few decades, there have been some dramatic shifts when it comes to numbers and perceptions of interracial marriage. It is more and more common to see a wide variety of people that make up married couples.

Just like the steps we examined for developing friendships, there are general stages we follow in the development and maintenance of romantic relationships. Let's look at these six stages of growth in romantic relationships.

The first stage in the development of romantic relationships is No Interaction. As the name suggests, the initial stage of a romantic relationship *occurs when two people have not interacted*. For example, you may see someone you are attracted to on the first day of class and think to yourself, "I really want to meet her." Our attraction for someone may motivate us to move beyond the no interaction stage to see if there is a possibility of developing a romantic relationship.

The second stage for developing romantic relationships is Invitational Communication. When we are attracted to someone, we may *signal or invite them to interact with us*. For example, you can do this by asking them to dinner, to dance at a club, or even, "I really liked that movie. What did you think?" The significance here is in the relational level (how the people feel about each other) rather than the content level (the topic) of the message. As the poet, Maya Angelou, explains, "Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning." The 'shades of deeper meaning' are the relational level messages that invite others to continue exploring a possible romantic relationship. Quite often, we strategize how we might go about inviting people into communication with us so we can explore potential romantic development.

Pin It! Interpersonal Communication and You - Take a Chance
Chances are that there is someone who has caught your eye somewhere on campus. Quite possibly, there is a person in your class right now that you find attractive (maybe someone is even attracted to you at this very moment) and you would like to get to know them better. How would you go about moving from the "No Interaction" stage to the "Invitational Communication" stage? Take a chance and go introduce yourself. Hopefully things will turn out magical between the two of you. If nothing else, maybe you'll meet a new friend.

The third stage of developing romantic relationships is Explorational Communication. When *individuals respond favorably to our invitational communication* we then engage in explorational communication. In this stage, we share information about ourselves while looking for mutual interests, shared political or religious views, and similarities in family background. Self-disclosure increases so we can give and receive personal information in a way that fosters trust and intimacy. Common dating activities in this stage include going to parties or other publicly structured events, such as movies or a concert, that foster interaction and self-disclosure.

The fourth stage of romantic relationships is Intensifying Communication. If we continue to be attracted (mentally, emotionally, and physically) to one another, we begin engaging in intensifying communication. *This is the happy stage (the "relationship high") where we cannot bear to be away from the other person*. It is here that you might plan all of your free time together, and begin to create a private relational culture. Going out to parties and socializing with friends takes a back seat to more private activities such as cooking dinner together at home or taking long walks on the beach. Self-disclosure continues to increase as each person has a strong desire to know and understand the other. In this stage, we tend to idealize one another in that we downplay faults (or don't see them at all), seeing only the positive qualities of the other person.

The fifth stage of romantic relationship development is Revising Communication. When the "relational high" begins to wear off, couples begin to have *a more realistic perspective of one another, and the relationship as a whole*. Here, people may recognize the faults of the other person that they so idealized in the previous stage. Also, couples must again make decisions about where to go with the relationship—do they stay together and work toward long-term goals, or define it as a short-term relationship? A couple may be deeply in love and also make the decision to break off the relationship for a multitude of reasons. Perhaps one person wants to join the Peace Corps after graduation and plans to travel the world, while the other wants to settle down in their hometown. Their individual needs and goals may not be compatible to sustain a long-term commitment.

Commitment is the sixth stage in developing romantic relationships. This occurs when a couple makes the *decision to make the relationship a permanent part of their lives*. In this stage, the participants assume they will be in each other's lives forever and make joint decisions about the future. While marriage is an obvious sign of commitment it is not the only signifier of this stage. Some may mark their intention of staying together in a commitment ceremony, or by registering as domestic partners. Likewise, not all couples planning a future together legally marry. Some may lose economic benefits if they marry, such as the loss of Social Security for seniors or others may oppose the institution (and its inequality) of marriage.

Obviously, simply committing is not enough to maintain a relationship through tough times that occur as couples grow and change. Like a ship set on a destination, a couple must learn to steer through rough waves as well as calm waters. A couple can accomplish this by learning to communicate through the good and the bad. Navigating is when a couple continues to *revise their communication and ways of interacting to reflect the changing needs of each person*. Done well, life's changes are more easily enjoyed when viewed as a natural part of the life cycle. The original patterns for managing dialectical tensions when a couple began dating, may not work when they are managing two careers, children, and a mortgage payment. Outside pressures such as children, professional duties, and financial responsibilities put added pressure on relationships that require attention and negotiation. If a couple neglects to practice effective communication with one another, coping with change becomes increasingly stressful and puts the relationship in jeopardy.

Not only do romantic couples progress through a series of stages of growth, they also experience stages of deterioration. Deterioration does not necessarily mean that a couple's relationship will end. Instead, couples may move back and forth from deterioration stages to growth stages throughout the course of their relationship.

Pin It! Case In Point - Legal Marriage For Same-Sex Couples
The Netherlands became the first country (4/1/01), and Belgium the second (1/30/03), to offer legal marriage to same sex couples. Since then Canada (6/28/05) and Spain (6/29/05) have also removed their country's ban against same-sex marriage. The state of Massachusetts (5/17/04) was the first U.S. state to do so and since then, many more states have followed. As of 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the right marriage for both heterosexual and gay couples.

For more on Marriage Traditions in Various Times and Cultures, see Marriage Traditions in Various Times and Cultures (link: https://buddybuddy.com/mar-trad.html)

The first stage of deterioration, Dyadic Breakdown, occurs when *romantic partners begin to neglect the small details that have always bound them together*. For example, they may stop cuddling on the couch when they rent a movie and sit in opposite chairs. Taken in isolation this example does not mean a relationship is in trouble. However, when intimacy continues to decrease, and the partners feel dissatisfied, this dissatisfaction can lead to worrying about the relationship.

The second stage of deterioration, the Intrapsychic Phase, occurs when *partners worry that they do not connect with one another in ways they used to, or that they no longer do fun things together*. When this happens they may begin to imagine their life without the relationship. Rather than seeing the relationship as a given, the couple may begin to wonder what life would be like not being in the partnership.

The third stage of deterioration, the Dyadic Phase, occurs when *partners make the choice to talk about their problems*. In this stage, they discuss how to resolve the issues and may seek outside help such as a therapist to help them work through the reasons they are growing apart. This could also be the stage where couples begin initial discussions about how to divide up shared resources such as property, money, or children.

The fourth stage of deterioration, Social Support, occurs when *termination is inevitable and the partners begin to look outside the relationship for social support*. In this stage couples will make the news public by telling friends, family, or children that the relationship is ending. As family members listen to problems, or friends offer invitations to go out and keep busy, they provide social support. The couple needs social support from outside individuals in the process of letting go of the relationship and coming to terms with its termination.

The fifth stage of deterioration, Grave Dressing, occurs when *couples reach closure in a relationship and move on with life*. Like a literal death, a relationship that has ended should be mourned. People need time to go through this process in order to fully understand the meaning of the relationship, why it ended, and what they can learn from the experience. Going through this stage in a healthy way helps us learn to navigate future relationships more successfully.

You can probably recognize many of these stages from your own relationships or from relationships you've observed. Experience will tell you that we do not always follow these stages in a linear way. A couple, for example, may enter counseling during the dyadic phase, work out their problems, and enter a second term of intensifying communication, revising, and so forth. Other couples may skip some stages all together. Whatever the case, these models are valuable because they provide us with a way to recognize general communicative patterns and options we have at each stage of our relationships. Knowing what our choices are, and their potential consequences, gives us greater tools to build the kind of relationships we desire in our personal lives.

Family Relationships

Figure 9.6: Family.[52]

The third primary type of interpersonal relationship we engage in is that of family. What is family? Is family created by legal ties, or the bond of sharing common blood? Or, can a family be considered people who share commitment to one another? In an effort to recognize the diversity of families we define family as an *arranged group, usually related by blood or some binding factor of commonality, where individual roles and relationships modify over time.* Family relations are typically long term and generally have a period in which common space is shared.

Pearson suggests that families share similar characteristics as they tend to be, organized, a relational transactional group, sharing a living space for prolonged periods of time and a

[52] Image by geralt on Pixabay

mixture of interpersonal images that evolve through the exchange of meaning over time. Let's take a few moments to unpack this definition.

Families Are Organized. All of us occupy and play fairly predictable roles (parent, child, older sibling) in our family relationships. Similarly, communication in these relationships can be fairly predictable. For example, your younger brother may act as the family peacemaker, while your older sister always initiates fights with her siblings.

Families Are a Relational Transactional Group. Not only is a family made up of the individual members, it is largely defined by the relationships between the members. Think back to our discussion of Systems Theory in Chapter Five. A family that consists of two opposite-sex parents, an older sister, her husband and three kids, a younger brother, his new wife, and two kids from a first marriage is largely defined by the relationships among the family members. All of these people have a role in the family and interact with others in fairly consistent ways according to their roles.

Families Usually Occupy a Common Living Space Over an Extended Period of Time. One consistent theme when defining family is recognizing that family members typically live under the same roof for an extended period of time. We certainly include extended family within our definition, but for the most part, our notions of family include those people with whom we share, or have shared, common space over a period of time. Even though you may have moved away to college, a large part of your definition of your family is the fact that you spent a great deal of your life sharing a home with those you call your family.

Families Possess a Mixture of Interpersonal Images that Evolve Through the Exchange of Meaning Over Time. From our families, we learn important values concerning intimacy, spirituality, communication, and respect. Parents and other family members model behaviors that shape how we interact with others. As a result, we continually form images of what it means to be a family and try to maintain that image of family in our lives. You may define family as your immediate family, consisting of your parents and a sibling. However, your romantic partner may see family as consisting of parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Each of you perform different communication behaviors to maintain your image of family.

Many families have children as part of their makeup. Olson and McCubbin discuss seven stages that families with children go through as they progress through life. Families without children will not follow all of these stages, and blended families, where one parent does not have primary custody of children, may experience less extreme shifts between stages.

The first stage of family development is Establishing a Family. In this stage *couples settle into committed or married life and make necessary changes in acknowledgement of their new legal, relational, and social status*. If they did not live together prior to marriage they may need to work out details of sharing space, money, and time. Often, this stage involved establishing a first home together as a couple.

The second stage of family development is Enlarging a Family. In this stage a couple decides to *expand their family with the addition of children*. While a time of joy and celebration, this is also a period of great stress and change for parents as they figure out new roles as parents. Time for friends, work, and one another is often decreased as the demands of a new child become the primary concern and focus of the couple's attention and resources. In this stage, the relationship is no longer defined in terms of two people but includes the children that are now part of the family.

The third stage of family development is Developing a Family. As children grow, their needs change from primarily physical (feeding, changing diapers, and sleep) to more cognitive and emotional ones. *Parents become the primary source of instilling cultural and spiritual values, as well as fostering a child's individual personality*. This period takes a tremendous amount of time and commitment from parents as the children remain the focus of daily interactions. Think of the family that runs around taking children to soccer, baseball, piano lessons, church, and guiding their educational development. In this stage, the personal development of children is of high importance to the family.

The fourth stage of family development is Encouraging Independence. Around the teen years *children begin the process of naturally pulling away from their parents as a means of establishing and securing an independent identity*. You might recall that this period contained periods of stress and frustration for your parents, as well as you. Children may feel their parents are being overly protective or nosy about their friends and activities, while parents may feel abandoned and concerned for their child's safety as they spend more time away from home. These are often referred to as the rebellious years in which children engage in behaviors for the purpose of establishing independence from their parents.

The fifth stage of family development is Launching Children. Over the course of raising children couples experience a relationship with one another where children are often the central focus rather than each other. In the Launching Children stage, *each member of the couple must now relearn his/her roles as the grown children eventually leave home for college, a career, or their own marriage and family*. If one of the parents gave up a career to raise children he/she may wonder what to do with the free time. While the empty nest syndrome can be stressful it is also a chance for new possibilities as parents have more time, money, freedom, and energy to spend on each other, hobbies, travel, and friends. Many experience excitement about being able to focus on each other as a couple after years of raising children in the home.

The sixth stage of family development is Post-Launching of Children. Depending on how a couple handles stage five, the post-launching of children can be *filled with renewed love or can produce great strain on the marriage as a couple learns that they do not know how to relate with one another outside the context of raising children*. Some couples fall in love all over again and may renew their wedding vows as a signal of this new phase in their relationship. Some parents who may have decided to stay in a marriage for the sake of the children may decide to terminate the relationship after the children have left the family home. For some couples, with no "birds left in the nest" the family dog becomes the new center of attention and

inadvertently takes on the role as one of the offspring and continues to regulate and restrict the couple's actions as the dog demands rearing. Some parents pick up new hobbies, travel around the world, and maintain multiple "date days" each week.

The seventh stage of family development is Retirement. Similar to the launching of children, *freedom from work can be an opportunity for growth and exploration of new relationships and activities. Simply having more time in the day can facilitate travel, volunteer work, or continuing education*. Conversely, people in this stage might experience a reduction in income and the loss of identity that came with membership in a profession. The family may also experience new growth during this stage as grown children bring their own relational partners and grandchildren in as new members of the family.

Communication patterns within the family, and between a couple, are continually changed and revised as a family progresses through the above stages. The fact that a couple generally spends less time together during stages two and three, and more time together in stages five through eight, requires that they continually manage dialectical tensions such as autonomy/connection. Management of these tensions may manifest itself as conflict. All relationships have conflict. Conflict is natural. How we think about and manage conflict is what is important.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Interpersonal communication is communication between individuals that view one another as unique. Quite often, interpersonal communication occurs in dyads. In order for interpersonal communication to occur, participants must engage in self-disclosure, which is the revealing of information about oneself to others that is not known by them. As we self-disclose, we manage our relationships by negotiating dialectical tensions, which are opposing needs in interpersonal relationships. We use a variety of strategies for navigating these tensions, including neutralization, separation, segmentation, and reframing.

As we navigate our interpersonal relationships, we create communication climates, which are the overall feelings and moods people have for one another and the relationship. When we engage in disconfirming messages, we produce a negative relational climate, while confirming messages can help build a positive relational climate by recognizing the uniqueness and importance of another person.

The three primary types of interpersonal relationships we engage in are friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships. Each of these relationships develop through a series of stages of growth and deterioration. Friendships and romantic relationships differ from family relationships in that they are relationships of choice. Each of these relationships requires commitment from participants to continuously navigate relational dynamics in order to maintain and grow the relationship.

Finally, all relationships experience conflict. Conflict is often perceived as an indicator that there is a problem in a relationship. However, conflict is a natural and ongoing part of all

relationships. The goal for conflict is not to eliminate it, but to manage it. There are five primary approaches to managing conflict which include dominating, obliging, compromising, avoiding, and integrating.

Discussion Questions

1. Select an important person in your life and pay attention to your communication climate. How do you and this other person demonstrate recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement?
2. Reflect on one of your important friendships and trace its development through Rawlins' six stages. How was it affected by important transitions in your life, sexual attraction, and diversity?
3. Reflect on a current or past romantic relationship. How did you communicate attraction, or needs for connection and separateness?
4. Does Pearson's definition of family fit your own? Why? Why not?
5. Interview one or both of your parents about how their communication has changed as they have moved along the family life cycle. How did their relational culture change? How did they manage relational dialectics?
6. How was conflict managed in your family while growing up? Was it viewed as positive or negative? How did those early messages and lessons about conflict shape your current attitudes?

Key Terms

- Committed Romantic Relationships
- Conflict
- Content Level of Message
- Domestic Partners
- Dyad
- Dyadic Breakdown
- Dyadic Phase
- Family
- Family Life Cycle
- Grave Dressing
- Intrapsychic Phase
- Interracial Marriage
- Proximity
- Relational Culture
- Relational Level Of Message
- Self-Disclosure
- Self-Identity
- Similarity
- Social Support

CHAPTER 10: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Identify your own cultural identity.
- Understand how communication, identity, and culture are related.
- Describe research methodologies specific to the study of intercultural communication.
- Identify cultural representations in popular culture artifacts.

In efforts to explain the world's population to young children, David J. Smith asks children to imagine the world as a small village so they can understand the vast population figures in a more comprehensible way. In 2012, the world's population was 7,050,000,000 (Smith 7). Instead of talking about numbers of this magnitude, he represents the world as 100 people, where one imaginary person represents 70,500,000 people from the real world. Using Smith's model, we can more easily examine what nationalities make up the world's population, what languages they speak, how old they are, and how these statistics involve wealth and education. Here are some interesting facts from Smith's global village (8). Of the 100 people living in the village:

- 60 are from Asia
- 15 are from Africa
- 11 are from Europe
- 8 are from South and Central America (including Mexico) and the Caribbean
- 5 are from the United States and Canada
- 1 is from Oceania
- So, how do these 100 people talk with one another? While there are nearly 6,000 languages spoken in this village, more than 50% of the villagers speak one of these eight (10):
- 27 speak a Chinese dialect (16 speak Mandarin)
- 9 speak Hindi
- 9 speak English
- 7 speak Spanish
- 4 speak Bengali
- 4 speak Arabic
- 3 speak Portuguese
- 3 speak Russian

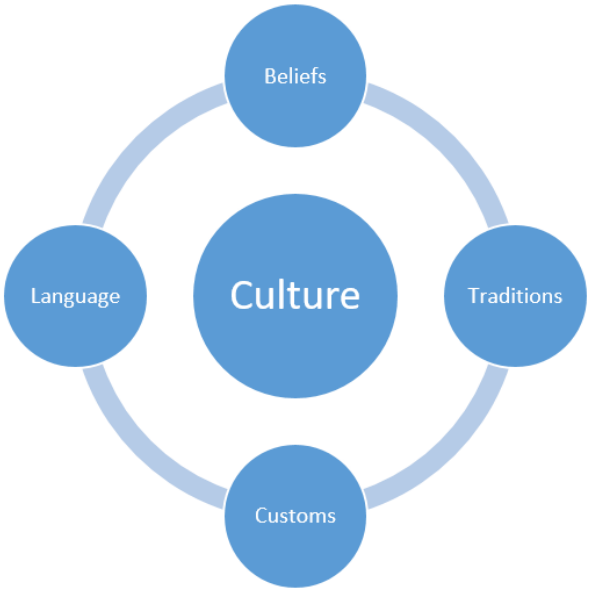

Figure 10.1[53]

Although there are 36 school-aged villagers (5-24 years), only 30 of them go to school, and there is only one teacher. Of the people old enough to read, 14 cannot read at all. Male villagers are taught to read more than females (Smith 21). While 68 villagers breathe clean air, the remaining 32 villagers breathe unhealthy air due to pollution (Smith 18). If each villager earned a similar annual income, each one would have $10,300 per year. Instead, the richest 10 people in the village earn more than $87,500 a year, the poorest 10 villagers earn less than $2 a day, while the remaining 80 earn somewhere in between. As the average annual cost of food and shelter in the village is more than $5,000, many people go without these basic necessities (Smith 22).

Moreover, it probably does not surprise you that the people with less money are also likely not to have electricity and education. Besides simple cultural differences such as what language one speaks or the foods they prefer; cultural identity impacts individuals' accessibility to certain resources such as shelter, electricity, running water, health care, education, and political and legal systems.

If we return to the United States from our look at the global village we see that according to Moore (62-63, 149-50):

- About 20 percent of young black men ages 16-24 are neither in school nor working. Compare this to 9 percent of young white men.
- Black women are four times more likely than white women to die in childbirth.
- Black levels of unemployment have been roughly twice those of white since 1954.
- Women hold only 13 seats in Congress.
- 496 of the top 500 companies are run by men.

[53] Image by Spaynton.is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

- Women's earnings average 76 cents for every $1 earned by men—resulting in a lifetime loss of over $650,133.
- To make the same annual salary as her male counterpart, a woman would have to work the entire year PLUS an additional four months.

The United States is one of the few countries in the world that puts to death both the mentally retarded and children. The other five countries in the world that execute their children are Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

Think about culture and communication as a reciprocal process: culture affects communication and communication affects culture. Both work together to shape how we identify as belonging to one culture or another, how we feel about belonging to a particular cultural group, how we communicate with other cultural groups, and how that group is regarded in the larger social system. In other words, what is the value and level of power afforded to various cultural groups? As you will see, this is often a reflection of the language used to refer to a particular group of people, or the relative value placed on their communication practices.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CULTURE?

Before going any further, let us spend some time discussing what we mean by culture. When you began reading this chapter what did you think we meant by the word culture? Your answer probably had something to do with people from different countries or of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. You are right—to a certain degree. Culture does include race, nationality, and ethnicity, but goes beyond those identity markers as well. The following are various aspects of our individual identity that we use to create membership with others to form a shared cultural identity: race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and social class. In addition to explaining the above identities, we will also discuss ethnocentrism, privilege, advantage, disadvantage, power, whiteness, co-culture, and political correctness as these terms are relevant to understanding the interplay between communication and culture.

When we talk about culture we are referring to *belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social arrangement*. Culture guides language use, appropriate forms of dress, and views of the world. The concept is broad and encompasses many areas of our lives such as the role of the family, individual, educational systems, employment, and gender.

Understanding Race

"When you begin to understand the biology of human variation, you have to ask yourself if race is a good way to describe that."
–Janis Hutchinson, Biological Anthropologist

Race is often difficult to talk about, not because of the inherent complexity of the term itself, but because of the role that race plays in society. Race is what we call a loaded word because it

can bring up strong emotions and connotations. Understandings of race fall into two camps: a biological versus a sociopolitical construction of what it means to belong to a particular racial group. A biological construction of race claims that "pure" races existed and could be distinguished by such physical features as eye color and shape, skin color, and hair. Moreover, these differences could be traced back to genetic differences. This theory has been debunked by numerous scientists and been replaced with the understanding that there are greater genetic differences within racial groups, not between them. In addition, there is no scientific connection with racial identity and cultural traits or behaviors.

Instead of biology, we draw on a sociopolitical understanding of what it means to be of a particular race. This simply means that it is not a person's DNA that places them into a particular racial grouping, but all of the other factors that create social relations—politics, geography, or migration. We can also examine the reality that the meanings of race have changed across time and space. As dramatized in the 2002 film, "Gangs of New York," the Irish were once considered a minority with little social or political status. Now, being Irish in America is considered part of the general majority group, white or Caucasian. Noting the change from the biological to the sociopolitical understanding, we refer to race as "a largely social—yet powerful— construction of human difference that has been used to classify human beings into separate value-based categories" (Orbe and Harris 9).

Figure 10.2[54]

Related to race are three other distinct concepts: racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and racism. Racial prejudice refers to the practice of holding false or negative beliefs of one racial group for the purpose of making another racial group (usually one's own) appear superior or

[54] Image by Shashank Thapa on Unsplash

normative. Racial discrimination is the outward manifestation of racial prejudice: it is when people act upon their negative beliefs about other races when communicating or setting policy. Note, it is possible to be prejudiced without acting upon those beliefs and that all races can discriminate against other races. The final concept, racism, combines racial prejudice with social power. Racism is institutional, rather than individual, meaning it occurs in large institutional contexts such as the representations of particular groups within media or the fact that racial minorities do not have equal access to educational or legal opportunities (Orbe and Harris 10). Racism often involves the unequal accessibility to resources and power.

Where Do You Come From?

Two other concepts that are often confused with race are ethnicity and nationality. Ethnicity refers to a person's or people's heritage and history, and involves shared cultural traditions and beliefs. A person may identify as Asian-American racially while their ethnicity is Chinese. Nationality refers to a people's nation-state of residence or where they hold citizenship. Most often nationality is derived from the country where one was born, but on occasion people give up their citizenship by birth and migrate to a new country where they claim national identity. For example, an individual could have been born and raised in another country but once they migrate to the United States and have American citizenship, their nationality becomes American.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Are you male or female? Do you identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgender? One's gender and sexual orientation are two additional ways to think about culture. Gender is the recognition that one is male, female, or non-binary. Gender is part of culture in that every society has particular gender roles and expectations for males and females. For example, in the United States, it is considered normal for the female gender to wear makeup, while it is often considered inappropriate for a male to do so. However, in some Native American tribes it was customary for the males to adorn themselves with paint for hunting and ceremonial rituals.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's preference for sexual or romantic relationships; one may prefer a partner of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both. Sexual orientation influences one's worldview or politics because while all societies include members who identify as gay or lesbian, these members do not always receive the same social or health benefits as heterosexual couples. However, this is changing. As of 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States made gay marriage legal in all 50 states. However, even though strides are being made, those with a minority sexual orientation might still have to contend on a daily basis that some people think they are deviant or somehow less than heterosexual people and couples. This may result in strained family relationships or discrimination in the workplace.

Classism

You are probably familiar with the concept of class—what do the labels working class, middle-class, and upper-class bring to mind? Money? Economic standing is only one variable that influences class or socioeconomic standing. As the label suggests, one's socioeconomic status is influenced by monetary and social factors. In essence, socioeconomic standing is "your understanding of the world and where you fit in; it's composed of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values, and language; class is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, walk" (Langston 101). For example, in some middle class families children are expected to go to college just as their parents and grandparents had done. It may also be expected for the children to attend reasonably priced state colleges and universities as opposed to Ivy League Universities, which may be the norm in many upper-class families.

By now you are probably able to think of some other identity markers that shape a person's culture or worldview. How about spirituality or religion, profession, hobbies, political persuasion, age, abilities? These too are aspects of cultural identity. Spend some time thinking about how these aspects would influence a person's culture as we have done above.
We may often feel restrained by the constant need to work. We live in a money-centric society where every move we make involves thinking about the monetary gains or losses it will produce.

FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Perhaps you may have noticed the theme of inequality as we have discussed topics like "unequal access to resources and benefits," racial discrimination, and racism. You may have also thought, "oh, my, this is going to be a touchy chapter to read and discuss in class" or "this is interesting and relevant, but I feel uncomfortable talking about this as I don't want to offend anyone." These are very common and understandable reactions and ones we hear when we teach this subject matter. Hopefully, your instructor has set up a safe, open, and respectful classroom environment to facilitate such discussions. The fact that you are self-reflective of your feelings and how to express them to others is a great start! We too want you to be able to discuss this material both in and out of your class in a productive and self-reflective manner. To facilitate that goal we have included some additional concepts— privilege, ethnocentrism, whiteness, and political correctness—that are useful when considering your own cultural identity, your place in society, and your communication with others.

Privilege

Hopefully, you have been thinking about your own cultural identity as you have been reading this chapter. If so, then you have been thinking about labels that define you culturally. Maybe you have defined yourself as female, Latina, and heterosexual. Or maybe you have labeled yourself as gay, white, working-class, and male. When we give ourselves labels such as these,

often we ask ourselves, “Where do I fit in?” This is a good question to ask and demonstrates a recognition of the fact that you belong to more than one culture and that your cultures intersect in various ways. The most significant manifestation of these intersections is power—-the ability to influence others and control our lives. From the statistics given earlier in the chapter and from your own experiences, you should realize that some groups have more power than others. These people are what we refer to as the dominant group: white, male, Christian, middle-class, able-bodied, educated, and heterosexual. People whose cultural identities do not conform to this model are the minority groups and have less sociopolitical and economic power.

Peggy McIntosh uses the term privilege to refer to *the power of dominant groups*. She defines privilege as an invisible knapsack of advantages that some people carry around. They are invisible because they are often not recognized, seen as normative (i.e., “that’s just the way things are”), seen as universal (i.e., “everyone has them”), or used unconsciously. Below is a list of some of the privileges, specifically on race, McIntosh identifies. Can you think of others?

1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area that I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can deal with my hair.
10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color, who constitute the world’s majority, without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge" I will be facing a person of my race.
19. If a traffic cop pulls me over, or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my race will not work against me.
25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color that more or less match my skin.

McIntosh admits, "My perception is that colleges and universities are the main institutions that are raising awareness of the relationship between privilege and oppression, but that this awareness is needed throughout all public and private sectors of the United States; the ability to see privilege should be in the minds of all citizens" (195). As you think about privilege and the resulting advantages that some groups have over others, you should also keep in mind two facts. One, privilege is a relative concept that varies according to context. In some situations we may be more privileged than others, and in order to access some of that privilege one may decide to highlight or conceal parts of their identity. For example, unless a person tells you, you have no way of knowing their sexual orientation. Thus, a gay man might decide to "pass" as straight at a family reunion to avoid conflict from a heterosexist family. The fact that he can choose to pass as an Asian man and cannot make the choice to pass as Latino is another example of privilege. Two, we may have aspects of our identities that are simultaneously advantaged and disadvantaged. The gay, white, working-class, male above is advantaged by the fact that he has light skin and is male, and is disadvantaged by the fact that he is gay and working-class.

Another example is from Nathan Pyle, a BuzzFeed staff member who wrote an article entitled, 10 Privileges I Have Complained About. Read the article and think about privileges you have complained about. Pyle states, "becoming self-aware of my privilege is a journey I'm still on." Perhaps we should all start becoming self-aware of our privileges in America.

Ethnocentrism

One of the first steps to communicating sensitively and productively about cultural identity is to be able to name and recognize one's identity and the relative privilege that it affords. Similarly

important, is a recognition that one's cultural standpoint is not everyone's standpoint. Our views of the world, what we consider right and wrong, normal or weird, are largely influenced by our cultural position or standpoint: the intersections of all aspects of our identity. One common mistake that people from all cultures are guilty of is ethnocentrism—-placing one's own culture and the corresponding beliefs, values, and behaviors in the center; in a position where it is seen as normal and right, and evaluating all other cultural systems against it.

Ethnocentrism shows up in small and large ways: the WWII Nazi's elevation of the Aryan race and the corresponding killing of Jews, Gypsies, gays and lesbians, and other non Aryan groups is one of the most horrific ethnocentric acts in history. However, ethnocentrism shows up in small and seemingly unconscious ways as well. In American culture, if you decided to serve dog meat as appetizers at your cocktail party you would probably disgust your guests and the police might even arrest you because the consumption of dog meat is not culturally acceptable. However, in China "it is neither rare nor unusual" to consume dog meat (Wingfield-Hayes). In the Czech Republic, the traditional Christmas dinner is carp and potato salad. Imagine how your family might react if you told them you were serving carp and potato salad for Christmas. In the Czech Republic, it is a beautiful tradition, but in America, it might not receive a warm welcome. Our cultural background influences every aspect of our lives from the food we consume to the classroom. Ethnocentrism is likely to show up in Literature classes as well. Cultural bias dictates which "great works" students are going to read and study in the classroom. More often than not, these works represent the given culture (i.e., reading French authors in France and Korean authors in Korea). This ethnocentric bias has received some challenge in United States' schools as teachers make efforts to create a multicultural classroom by incorporating books, short stories, and traditions from non-dominant groups.

In the field of geography there has been an ongoing debate about the use of a Mercater map versus a Peter's Projection map. The arguments reveal cultural biases toward the Northern, industrialized nations. To see this bias, read this article (link: https://www.businessinsider.com/mercator-projection-v-gall-peters-projection-2013-12).

Pin It! Case In Point -The Greenland Problem

The Mercator projection creates increasing distortions of size as you move away from the equator. As you get closer to the poles the distortion becomes severe. Cartographers refer to the inability to compare size on a Mercator projection as "the Greenland Problem." Greenland appears to be the same size as Africa, yet Africa's land mass is actually fourteen times larger. Because the Mercator distorts size so much at the poles it is common to crop Antarctica off the map. This practice results in the Northern Hemisphere appearing much larger than it really is. Typically, the cropping technique results in a map showing the equator about 60% of the way down the map, diminishing the size and importance of the developing countries.

Greenland is 0.8 million sq. miles and Africa is 11.6 million sq. miles, yet they often look roughly the same size on maps. This was convenient, psychologically and practically, through the eras of colonial domination when most of the world powers were European. It suited them to maintain an image of the world with Europe at the center and looking much larger than it really was. Was this conscious or deliberate? Probably not, as most map users probably never realized the Eurocentric bias inherent in their world view. When there are so many other projections to choose from, why is it that today the Mercator projection is still such a widely recognized image used to represent the globe? The answer may be simply convention or habit. The inertia of habit is a powerful force.

Whiteness

If you are White, how would you describe your culture? When we ask this question to our students, we find that White students are often uncomfortable with the question, feel guilty about self-identifying as White, or claim that White people do not have a culture. Gordon Alley-Young says, "The invisibility of whiteness and white privilege for many people is what makes it difficult to name and thus to disrupt" (312). These sentiments have led an increasing amount of scholars in a variety of disciplines such as Sociology, Women's Studies, Anthropology, English, as well as Communication to study the concept of Whiteness. Orbe and Harris explain why exploring this concept is important by explaining that "[i]t helps us all view communication as a racialized process [which] sharpens our awareness of how racial categorization is used to reinforce old hierarchies in which some races are more superior than others [and that] whiteness studies also assign each person a role in race relations" (89).

Orbe and Harris continue explaining "communication as a racialized process," stating,

> *[this means] that our communication is structured by larger societal and racial dynamics. Second, understanding Whiteness sharpens our awareness of how racial categorization is used to reinforce old hierarchies in which some races are more superior than others. This helps us recognize how Whiteness can be used to*

> *signify dominance, privilege, and advantage in the United States. And, third, through studying and recognizing the effects of Whiteness, each person plays a role in race relations. White people can no longer sit on the sidelines and claim "it's a black problem" when discussing interracial conflict. (82-83)*

Overall, it removes the White race from the often-unidentified "normative" group and provides a context for studying, talking about, and hopefully improving race relations.

The above discussion about privilege and Whiteness is not meant to suggest that those people with sociopolitical privilege should feel ashamed or guilty. This is often a trap that people fall into and it can shut down important thinking and conversations about intercultural communication. We want everyone to realize that they have a racial identity and thus are an important part of improving race relations. Race relations is not just a subject that concerns minorities—-it concerns everyone as we all play a part and benefit whether consciously or unconsciously.

Political Correctness

Another claim or label that may be used to discount such difficult discussions is Political Correctness, or "PC" as it has been dubbed in the popular press. Opponents of multiculturalism and diversity studies try and dismiss such topics as "that's just PC." Luckily, some of the heated debate about PC have quieted in recent years but the history lingers. In short, political correctness refers to "the elimination of speech that often works to exclude, oppress, demean, or harass certain groups" (Orbe and Harris 58, Remar). The debate largely focused around competing interpretations of the First Amendment right to free speech and the Fourteenth Amendment's right to equal access to education. No matter what your position on this issue, we want to simply recognize two facts. One, that much of the PC debate and fury was largely misrepresented and hyped in the mainstream media by the use of extreme examples and a slippery-slope argument. Rush Limbaugh, for example, became famous for claiming that an awareness and sensitivity of language choice would lead to the "thought Police" or "PC police." Two, that words and labels have great power to create perceptions, realities and identities.

Pin It! Case in Point – Politically Correct
(EXPLICIT) This video (link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=353&v=oAM2cLhBFzU&feature=emb_title) focuses on what would happen to be "forced" to use PC language and adds a comedic and crude twist to the ongoing discussion of what is and is not PC.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS

By now you should be familiar with the three general research approaches—social science, interpretive, and critical. Thus, this chapter will highlight a few specific approaches within these

three general categories that have particular relevance to the study if intercultural communication.

Social Science

Describe and predict behavior. These are the goals of the social scientist. One particular theory useful for this kind of research is Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) that was developed by colleagues of Giles. This model focuses on the ways in which individuals adjust their communication with others. When you tell the story of a college party to a friend or to a parent do you tell it the same way? Do you leave out or highlight certain details? The kinds of decisions you make when telling a story reflect the ways in which you accommodate your communication to your specific audience. In general, there are two types of accommodation: convergence and divergence. When we converge our communication we make it more like the person or persons with whom we are speaking. We attempt to show our similarity with them through our speech patterns. When we diverge, we attempt to create distance between our audience and ourselves. Here, we want to stress our difference from others or our uniqueness. Using social scientific approaches as applied to communication accommodation theory, researchers may attempt to define, describe and predict what sorts of verbal and nonverbal acts can produce the desired convergent or divergent effects.

Interpretive

Like the social scientists, interpretive scholars want to describe behavior, but because of the importance of the individual context, they do not assume accurate and generalizable predictions can be made. As they are particularly relevant to intercultural communication research, we will discuss the following two methodologies in this section—ethnography and co-cultural research.

Since interpretivists believe in the subjective experience of each cultural group, it makes sense that they would select to study intercultural communication as used in particular speech communities. A speech community, according to Hymes is a *"community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety"*. This method is also referred to ethnography. A prolific ethnographer, Gerry Philipsen has identified four assumptions of this method:

- Members of speech communities create meanings.
- Each distinct culture possesses a unique speech code.
- The rules for interpreting actions and meanings are limited to a given culture and cannot be universally applied.
- Within each speech community there are specific procedures and sources for assigning meaning.

Using ethnography guided by these four assumptions, researchers are able to understand culture, its participants, and its communication on its own terms.

Critical Cultural

Originating in the legal arena, Critical Race Theory explores *the role of race in questions of justice, equal access, and opportunity*. Borrowing from the work of Matsuda et.al, Orbe and Harris summarize six key assumptions helpful for understanding critical race theory (125-6).

- Critical race theory recognizes that racism is an integral part of the United States.
- Critical race theory rejects dominant legal and social claims of neutrality, objectivity, and color blindness.
- Critical race theory rejects a purely historical approach for studying race for a contextual/historical one to study interracial communication.
- Critical race theory recognizes the importance of perspectives that arise from co-cultural standpoints.
- Critical race theory is interdisciplinary and borrows from Marxism, feminism, critical/cultural studies, and postmodernism.
- Critical race theory is actively focused on the elimination of the interlocking nature of oppression based on race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

As this methodology is inherently complex and multifaceted it lends itself to producing a rich understanding of interracial and intercultural communication.

Pin It! Intercultural Communication and You – Immersion

The best way to experience intercultural communication is to immerse yourself into a culture. While you are in college take advantage of the study abroad programs your school has to offer. Here is a list of websites that offer students information on studying abroad.

- College Study Abroad (link: https://www.ciee.org/go-abroad/college-study-abroad)
- StudyAbroad.com (link: https://www.studyabroad.com/)

It may be difficult to adjust to a new culture but here are some tips from the Huffington Post to make your study abroad trip run smoothly: 13 Mistakes Study Abroad Students Make

A method focused solely on the interests of Africans is referred to as Afrocentricity. The foremost scholar in this field is Molefi Kete Asante and this functions as an interdisciplinary approach to questions of race relations. Instead of assuming a Eurocentric frame as normative for understanding the world and its people, this perspective embraces “African ways of knowing and interpreting the world” (Orbe and Harris 156). Similarly, there are also Asia centric frameworks for understanding intercultural communication.

Important Concepts for Understanding Intercultural Communication

If you decide to take a class on intercultural communication, you will learn a great deal about the similarities and differences across cultural groups. Since this chapter is meant to give you an overview or taste of this exciting field of study, we will discuss four important concepts for understanding communication practices among cultures.

High and Low Context

Think about someone you are very close to—a best friend, romantic partner, or sibling. Have there been times when you began a sentence and the other person knew exactly what you were going to say before you said it? For example, in a situation between two sisters, one sister might exclaim, "Get off!" (which is short for "get off my wavelength"). This phenomenon of being on someone's wavelength is similar to what Hall describes as high context. In high context communication the meaning is in the people, or more specifically, the relationship between the people as opposed to just the words. When we have to rely on the translation of the words to decipher a person's meaning then this is said to be low context communication. The American legal system, for example, relies on low context communication.

While some cultures are low or high context, in general terms, there can also be individual or contextual differences within cultures. In the example above between the two sisters, they are using high context communication, however, America is considered a low context culture. Countries such as Germany and Sweden are also low context while Japan and China are high context.

Speech Styles

Other variations in communication can be described using Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey's four communication styles. We find it is helpful to think about these descriptors as a continuum rather than polar opposites because it allows us to imagine more communicative options for speakers. They are not fixed into one style or another but instead, people can make choices about where to be on the continuum according to the context in which they find themselves.

This first continuum has to do with the explicitness of one's talk, or how much of their thoughts are communicated directly through words and how much is hinted at. Direct speech is very explicit while indirect speech is more obscure. If I say, "Close the window" my meaning is quite clear. However, if I were to ask, "Is anyone else cold in here?" or, "Geez, this room is cold," I might also be signaling indirectly that I want someone to close the window. As the United States is typically a direct culture, these latter statements might generate comments like, "Why didn't you just ask someone to shut the window?" or "Shut it yourself." Why might someone make a choice to use a direct or indirect form of communication? What are some of the advantages or disadvantages of each style? Think about the context for a moment. If you as a student were in a meeting with the President of your university and you were to tell them to

"Shut the window," what do you think would happen? Can you even imagine saying that? An indirect approach in this context may appear more polite, appropriate, and effective.

Remember the fairy tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? As Goldilocks tasted their porridge, she exclaimed, "this is too hot, this one is too cold, but this one is just right." This next continuum of communication styles can be thought of this way as well. The elaborate style uses more words, phrases, or metaphors to express an idea than the other two styles. It may be described as descriptive, poetic or too wordy depending on your view. Commenting on a flower garden an American (Exact/Succinct) speaker may say, "Wow, look at all the color variations. That's beautiful." An Egyptian (Elaborate) speaker may go into much more detail about the specific varieties and colors of the blossoms, "This garden invokes so many memories for me. The deep purple irises remind me of my maternal grandmother as those are her favorite flowers. Those pink roses are similar to the ones I sent to my first love." The succinct style in contrast values simplicity and silence. As many mothers usually tell their children, "If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all." Cultures such as Buddhism and the Amish value this form. The exact style is the one for Goldilocks as it falls between the other two and would be in their words, "just right." It is not overly descriptive or too vague to be of use.

Remember when we were talking about the French and Spanish languages and the fact that they have a formal and informal "you" depending on the relationship between the speaker and the audience? This example also helps explain the third communication style: the personal and contextual. The contextual style is one where there are structural linguistic devices used to mark the relationship between the speaker and the listener. If this sounds a bit unfamiliar, that is because the English language has no such linguistic distinctions; it is an example of the personal style that enhances the sense of "I." While the English language does allow us to show respect for our audience such as the choice to eliminate slang or the use of titles such as Sir, Madame, President, Congressperson, or Professor, they do not inherently change the structure of the language.

The final continuum, instrumental/affective, refers to who holds the responsibility for effectively conveying a message: the speaker or the audience? The instrumental style is goal- or sender-orientated, meaning it is the burden of the speaker to make themselves understood. The affective style is more receiver-orientated thus, places more responsibility on the listener. Here, the listener should pay attention to verbal, nonverbal, and relationship clues in an attempt to understand the message. Asian cultures such as China and Japan and many Native American tribes are affective cultures. The United States is more instrumental. Think about sitting in your college classroom listening to your professor lecture. If you do not understand the material where does the responsibility reside? Usually it is given to the professor as in statements such as "My Math Professor isn't very well organized." Or "By the end of the Econ. lecture all that was on the board were lines, circles, and a bunch of numbers. I didn't know what was important and what wasn't." These statements suggest that it is up to the professor to communicate the material to the students. As the authors were raised in the American educational system they too were used to this perspective and often look at their teaching methods when students fail to understand the material. A professor was teaching in China and

when her students encountered particular difficulty with a certain concept she would often ask the students, "What do you need—more examples? Shall we review again? Are the terms confusing?" Her students, raised in a more affective environment responded, "No, it's not you. It is our job as your students to try harder. We did not study enough and will read the chapter again so we will understand." The students accepted the responsibility as listeners to work to understand the speaker.

Collectivist versus Individualistic

In addition to the four speaking styles that characterize cultures so do value systems. One of particular importance to intercultural communication is whether the culture has a collectivistic or individualistic orientation. When a person or culture has a collective orientation they place the needs and interests of the group above individual desires or motivations. In contrast, the self or one's own personal goals motivate those cultures with individualistic orientations. Thus, each person is viewed as responsible for their own success or failure in life. From years of research, Geert Hofstede organized 52 countries in terms of their orientation to individualism.

When looking at Hofstede's research and that of others on individualism and collectivism, it is important to remember is that no culture is purely one or the other. Again, think of these qualities as points along a continuum rather than fixed positions. Individuals and co-cultures may exhibit differences in individualism/collectivism from the dominant culture and certain contexts may highlight one or the other. Also remember that it can be very difficult to change one's orientation and interaction with those with different value orientations can prove challenging. In some of your classes, for example, does the Professor require a group project as part of the final grade? How do students respond to such an assignment? In our experience we find that some students enjoy and benefit from the collective and collaborative process and seem to learn better in such an environment. These students have more of a collective orientation. Other students, usually the majority, are resistant to such assignments citing reasons such as "it's difficult to coordinate schedules with four other people" or "I don't want my grade resting on someone else's performance." These statements reflect an individual orientation.

WHERE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OCCURS

Thus far, we have shared with you a bit about what intercultural communication is, some important concepts, and how scholars study this phenomenon. Now we want to spend the final part of the chapter looking at a major context for intercultural communication—-the media. There are other contexts as well, such as interpersonal relationships and organizations, but we will leave these to your own investigation or in a class devoted to intercultural communication.

Media

Looking at texts or media artifacts (these are specific television shows, films, books, magazines, musical artists, etc.) is both a fun and important area of study for intercultural communication. Since most people spend much of their free time taking in some form of media, such as going to the movies with friends or turning on the T.V. at the end of a stressful day, it is an arena that has a great deal of influence and impact over its audience. As you also remember, the media is also the location and source for much of the critical cultural research.

Specifically, what critical theorists tend to look at are the artifacts of popular, or pop culture? At the time this book first came out, bands such as Creed and Wilco; the television programs Friends, West Wing, and Sex and the City; and the films Bowling for Columbine and The Two Towers were all pop culture artifacts. Now, popular bands, television shows, and movies are very different. Popular culture is defined as "those systems or artifacts that most people share and that most people know about" (Brummett 21). So, while you may not listen to or watch the examples listed, chances are that you are at least aware of them and have a basic idea of the plot or content. Popular culture is distinct from high culture, which includes events such as the ballet or opera, visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the L'ouvre, or listening to classical music at the symphony. These activities, unlike the artifacts mentioned earlier all require something to have access. Namely money. Attending the ballet or opera takes considerably more money than purchasing songs on iTunes.

The fact that most of us participate to some degree in consuming popular culture is one reason to study it. Another is that it is an area of struggle for representation—-specifically about cultural identity issues. By looking at the numbers and characterizations of ethnic minorities in television and film we can see the dominant culture's attitudes about them. This is because the dominant culture is the group in control of media outlets and represents groups in particular ways. Representation refers to *the portrayal, depiction, or characterization of particular cultural groups*. A related term is that of symbolic annihilation which refers to *the fact that "women and minorities are underrepresented in media content and that when they are represented they are marginalized, trivialized, or victimized"* (Valdiva 243).

Let us walk through an analysis of a scene in the 2001 film, Spiderman, to illustrate these concepts.

> The female character, Mary Jane, is walking home from work one dark and rainy night. She has neither an umbrella nor proper rain gear so her white shirt and clothes are drenched and cling to her. (Prior to this scene she has been portrayed as the "girl next door" with little or no sexuality.) Her path home takes her through an alleyway where she is quickly surrounded by a group of men of color. One of the men pulls a knife and there is the threat of rape or other violent attack. She does not attempt to fight back but is frozen with fear. But as is the case with superheroes, Spiderman arrives just in the nick of time to save the damsel in distress. After he saves her, she and Spiderman, who, while hanging upside down from a building, share their first kiss.

So, what is going on in this scene? Can you identify examples of representation or symbolic annihilation? There are issues concerning both gender and race in this scene. First, she is portrayed as weak, unable to take care of herself, and in need of a man to save her. This is characteristic of images of women in film. Second, in terms of race, the "good guys" or "innocent victims" are White and the potential attackers are nonwhite. This too represents a stereotyped portrayal of young men of color as criminals or gang members. Finally, and perhaps the most dangerous message in this scene, is the equation of female sexuality, violence, and romance. As her white shirt clings to her, her breasts are revealed in a sexual manner, next she is almost attacked, and then she is sweetly and romantically kissing Spiderman. If you were nearly raped by a group of strangers would you be feeling romantic? Thus, this short scene illustrates how images (we did not even discuss the dialogue) work to unfairly and inaccurately portray groups of people.

By looking to the media scholars can discover what images of various cultural groups are prevalent in a society and the stories that are told about various cultures. As active citizens we can make choices about what media images we decide to consume, accept, or reject. As knowledgeable communicators we can critique the images we see rather than accept constructed and artificial media images as normative or "just the way things are." For as you learned in the first section of the book, language, symbols, and images are not neutral, but are subjective interpretations of a person's or group of people's interpretation of reality.

INTERCULTRUAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

After reading this chapter, you should have a greater understanding of how culture influences communication. We began with an overview and description of the various aspects of personal identity and how they work together to determine a person's and co-cultures relative power and privilege. Next, we traced the process of coming to an understanding of one's individual identity through the use of the identity models for minorities, Bi-racial individuals, Majority members, and those whom identify as global nomads. Turning to specific communication styles we discussed the differences between high and low context cultures and the continuums of direct/indirect, elaborate/exact/succinct, personal/contextual, and instrumental/affective styles. Finally, we examined a particular site for intercultural communication—the media. We hope this chapter has increased your knowledge base as well as your enthusiasm and interest in this exciting area of the Communication discipline. Moreover, we encourage you to think about the importance of culture when studying the other sub-disciplines of communication such as gender, organizational, interpersonal, rhetorical theory, rhetorical criticism, and health communication.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that you see to support Hofstede's claim that the U.S. is the most individualistic society? Are there ways in which we display attributes of collectivism?
2. Describe a situation in which you attempted to diverge or converge your communication with others? What did you do? What were you attempting to accomplish by doing so? What was the result?
3. What examples of representation and symbolic annihilation can you locate and analyze in contemporary texts of popular culture?

Key Terms

- Afrocentricity
- Critical race theory
- Collectivism/Individualism
- Communication Styles
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Ethnocentrism
- Gender
- High and low context
- Identity
- Popular Culture
- Privilege
- Race
- Representation
- Symbolic Annihilation
- Whiteness

CHAPTER 11: GENDER COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Understand the difference between sex and gender.
- Identify the multiplicity of feminisms.
- Discuss prominent theories used in the study of gender and communication.
- Identify the major theorists in gender and communication research.
- Identify the various methods used to study gender communication.
- Describe masculine and feminine speaking styles.
- Recognize the impact of gender on nonverbal communication.
- Know the problems with and the future directions of this area of communication studies.

Have you ever been told that you "throw like a girl," "run like a girl," or "fight like a girl"? Was it an insult? A compliment? We have been taught that throwing like a girl is the equivalent of throwing poorly. We use a variety of channels of communication (language, books, tv, clothing, etc.) to teach children what it means to be a "girl" or a "boy". We limit these identities to separate categories we are not usually supposed to mix. We are taught that men are supposed to be more athletic than women, and even play in different leagues! In almost every professional sport like football, baseball, and basketball the men's league is seen as more competitive and more popular. The company Always decided to examine the phrase "like a girl" (link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs) and how children of different ages would respond! The results were not what you would expect!

So what happens when a girl is able to throw a 70 mile per hour fastball and win The World Series for her team? Ideas about gender are continually being challenged. Mo'ne Davis was the first girl to pitch a shutout in the Little League World Series in August 2014 and is showing everyone what it means to throw like a girl. Known as America's favorite pastime, baseball used to be reserved for men only. Currently, Davis is being recognized because of her rare talent, but also because of her gender (Wallace). With Davis as a role model, we hope to see many more examples of transformations of traditional gender roles! For more information on Mo'ne, check out this article (link: https://www.cnn.com/2014/08/20/living/mone-davis-baseball-sensation-impact-girls-parents/)! This example highlights one of the key characteristics of gender—-that it is fluid. Gender roles of a given culture are always changing.

Figure 11.1[55]

Like in sports, people of all genders are taking on new roles in all different ways! This picture depicts females on the field during a competitive game of lacrosse at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California.

In this chapter, we want to look at the ways in which gender has been constructed in our society and the ways in which we communicate about the idea of gender.

Gender communication is a specialization of the communication field that focuses on the ways we, as gendered beings, communicate. Gender research might look at roles for people of different genders in academia, sports, media, or politics. For example, research in this area could examine the similarities and differences in the conversations that take place in the comment section of a Youtube video created by Bethany Mota verses one created by Philip DeFranco. Researchers could also look at how people of different genders have been represented throughout history. Gender communication is also a field that strives to change the way we talk about people, in order to make a more empathetic and safe space for our entire community. For example, the word "queer" used to be a slur for people who were homosexual. Now we see the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual) community has reclaimed the word queer to mean any person who is not straight. It is now a self proclamation and one that can be empowering for many people.

[55] Image by Jeffrey F Lin on Unsplash

In this chapter, we want to make a distinction between sex and gender before providing an overview of this specialization's areas of research, main theories and theorists, and highlights from research findings about feminine and masculine communication styles. While we are taking a communication lens to the study of gender, we need to acknowledge the contributions made by other academic disciplines such as women's studies, linguistics, and psychology (Stephen, 2000).

As with other specializations in communication, definitions of gender abound (Gamble & Gamble; Gilbert; Howard & Hollander; Lorber; Vannoy). Ivy and Backlund define gender communication as, '"communication about and between men and women"'. Central to this definition are the terms about and between, and men and women. *About* addresses the attention this specialization pays to how the sexes are "discussed, referred to, or depicted, both verbally and nonverbally." *Between* addresses how members of each sex communicate interpersonally with others of the same, as well as the opposite, sex (Ivy & Backlund 4). We find this problematic because it limits the discussion about gender to only men and women. For our purposes, we will be adapting the Ivy and Backlund definition and instead using the definition: communication about and between people of all genders. This new definition is more inclusive of the large number of gender identities that are present in our community. For example gender queer, transgender, and a-gender. We will discuss and define some of these identities later in the chapter, for a more in-depth exploration of these identities, check out this article (link: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/our-evolving-multi-gender-society_b_3901025).

In our society, we use the gendered terms women and men instead of male and female. What's the difference between these two sets of terms? One pair refers to the biological categories of male and female. The other pair, men and women, refers to what are now generally regarded as socially constructed concepts that convey the cultural ideals or values of masculinity and femininity. For our purposes, gender is, "the social construction of masculinity or femininity as it aligns with designated sex at birth in a specific culture and time period. Gender identity claims individuality that may or may not be expressed outwardly and may or may not correspond to one's sexual anatomy" (Pettitt). This definition is important because it discusses the separation between sex and gender as well as the idea that gender is socially constructed.

This basic difference is important, but it's most important that you know something else about these two sets of terms. One set has fixed meaning and the other set maintains fluid or dynamic meaning. Because they refer to biological distinctions, the terms male and female are essentially fixed. That is, their meanings are generally unchanging (as concepts if not in reality, since we do live in an age when it's medically possible to change sexes). Conversely, because they are social constructions, the meanings of the gendered terms masculine and feminine are dynamic or fluid. Why? Because their meanings are open to interpretation: Different people give them different meanings. Sometimes, even the same person might interpret these terms differently over time. For example, as a teenager a girl may portray her femininity by wearing make-up. Eventually, she may decide to forego this traditional display of femininity because her sense of herself as a woman may no longer need the validation that a socially prescribed behavior, such as wearing make-up, provides. We use the terms fluid and dynamic to describe

the social construction of gender because they will change based on the time, place, and culture a person lives in. For example, did you know that high heels were first invented for men to make them look taller? These days, if a man wears high heels, he would be described as "feminine." This is an example of how our ideas of gender can change over time.

THE INTERPLAY OF SEX AND GENDER

A quick review of some biological basics will lay a good foundation for a more detailed discussion of the interplay between sex and gender in communication studies.

Sex

As you may recall from a biology or health class, a fetus's sex is determined at conception by the chromosomal composition of the fertilized egg. The most common chromosome patterns are XX (female) and XY (male). After about seven weeks of gestation, a fetus begins to receive the hormones that cause sex organs to develop. Fetuses with a Y chromosome receive androgens that produce male sex organs (prostate) and external genitalia (penis and testes). Fetuses without androgens develop female sex organs (ovaries and uterus) and external genitalia (clitoris and vagina). In cases where hormones are not produced along the two most common patterns, a fetus may develop biological characteristics of each sex. These people are considered intersexuals.

Pin It! Case In Point- Intersexuality

According to the Intersex Society of North America,"Intersex" is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of her cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY.

Though we speak of intersex as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn't always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until she or he reaches the age of puberty, or finds himself an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) ever knowing. Which variations of sexual anatomy count as intersex? In practice, different people have different answers to that question. That's not surprising, because intersex isn't a discreet or natural category.

What does this mean? Intersex is a socially constructed category that reflects real biological variation. To better explain this, we can liken the sex spectrum to the color spectrum. There's no question that in nature there are different wavelengths that translate into colors most of us see as red, blue, orange, yellow. But the decision to distinguish, say, between orange and red-orange is made only when we need it—like when we're asking for a particular paint color. Sometimes social necessity leads us to make color distinctions that otherwise would seem incorrect or irrational, as, for instance, when we call certain people "black" or "white" when they're not especially black or white as we would otherwise use the terms.

In the same way, nature presents us with sex anatomy spectrums. Breasts, penises, clitorises, scrotums, labia, gonads—all of these vary in size and shape and morphology. So-called "sex" chromosomes can vary quite a bit, too. But in human cultures, sex categories get simplified into male, female, and sometimes intersex, in order to simplify social interactions, express what we know and feel, and maintain order.

So nature doesn't decide where the category of "male" ends and the category of "intersex" begins, or where the category of "intersex" ends and the category of "female" begins. Humans decide. Humans (today, typically

doctors) decide how small a penis has to be, or how unusual a combination of parts has to be, before it counts as intersex. Humans decide whether a person with XXY chromosomes or XY chromosomes and androgen insensitivity will count as intersex.

In our work, we find that doctors' opinions about what should count as "intersex" vary substantially. Some think you have to have "ambiguous genitalia" to count as intersex, even if your inside is mostly of one sex and your outside is mostly of another. Some think your brain has to be exposed to an unusual mix of hormones prenatally to count as intersex—so that even if you're born with atypical genitalia, you're not intersex unless your brain experienced atypical development. And some think you have to have both ovarian and testicular tissue to count as intersex.

Rather than trying to play a semantic game that never ends, there is a pragmatic approach to the question of who counts as intersex. We work to build a world free of shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for anyone born with what someone believes to be non-standard sexual anatomy. By the way, because some forms of intersex signal underlying metabolic concerns, a person who thinks she or he might be intersex should seek a diagnosis and find out if she or he needs professional healthcare.

As you know, hormones continue to affect us after birth—throughout our entire lives, in fact. For example, hormones control when and how much women menstruate, how much body and facial hair we grow, and the amount of muscle mass we are capable of developing. Although the influence of hormones on our development and existence is very real, there is no strong, conclusive evidence that they alone determine gender behavior. The degree to which personality is influenced by the interplay of biological, cultural, and social factors is one of the primary focal points of gender studies.

Gender

Compared with sex, which biology establishes, gender doesn't have such a clear source of influence. Gender is socially constructed because it refers to what it means to be a woman (feminine) or a man (masculine). Traditionally, masculine and feminine characteristics have been taught as complete opposites when in reality there are many similarities. Gender has previously been thought of as a spectrum, as a line; this implies the drastic separation of genders. A better way to think about gender is a circle, where all genders can exist in relation to each other.

One expression of gender is known as androgyny, the term we use to identify gendered behavior that lies between feminine and masculine—-the look of indeterminate gender. Gender can be seen as existing in a fluid circle because feminine males and masculine females

are not only possible but common, and the varying degrees of masculinity and femininity we see (and embody ourselves) are often separate from sexual orientation or preference. The circle chart illustrates how all genders exist on a sort of plane. They are not arranged in a straight line, with female on one end, and male on the other. There are no set borders to any one gender, and there is open space for people to define themselves however they uniquely identify.

Use your phone to visit the QR code in the image below or visit this website (link: https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/11/breaking-through-the-binary-gender-explained-using-continuums/) for more information.

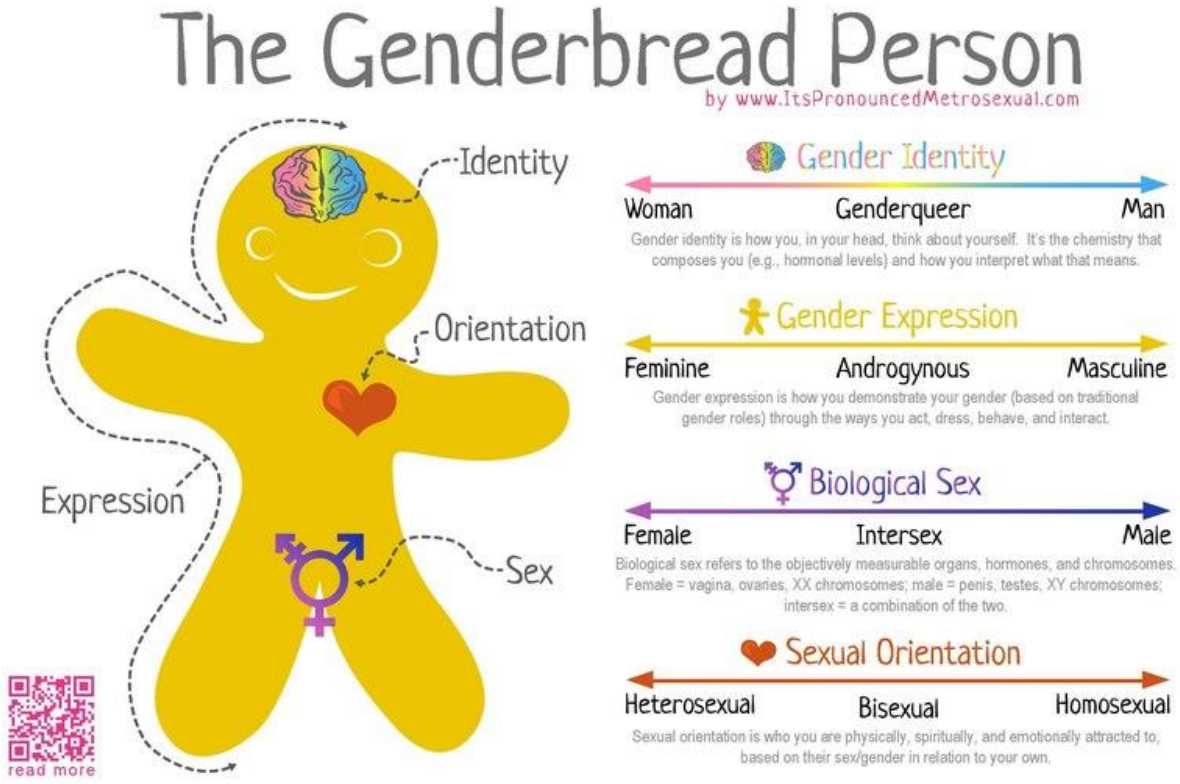

Figure 11.2 Genderbread Person.[56]

The Social Construction of Gender

In this section, we will discuss how gender is dynamic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Gender is dynamic, not just because it exists on a plane, but because its meanings change over time within different cultural contexts. For example, in 1907, women in the United States did not have the legal right to vote, let alone the option of holding public office. Although a few worked outside the home, women were expected to marry and raise children. A woman who worked, did not marry, and had no children was considered unusual, if not an outright failure. Now, of course, women have the right to vote and are considered an important voting block. There are

[56] Image by Sam Killermann is in the public domain

many women who are members of local and state governing bodies as well as the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, even though they aren't representative in government of their 51 percent of the population. Similarly, men were also prescribed to fill a role by society one hundred years ago: marriage and wage earner. Men were discouraged from being too involved in the raising of children, let alone being stay-at-home dads. Increasingly, men are accepted as suitable child-care providers and have the option to stay home and raise children.

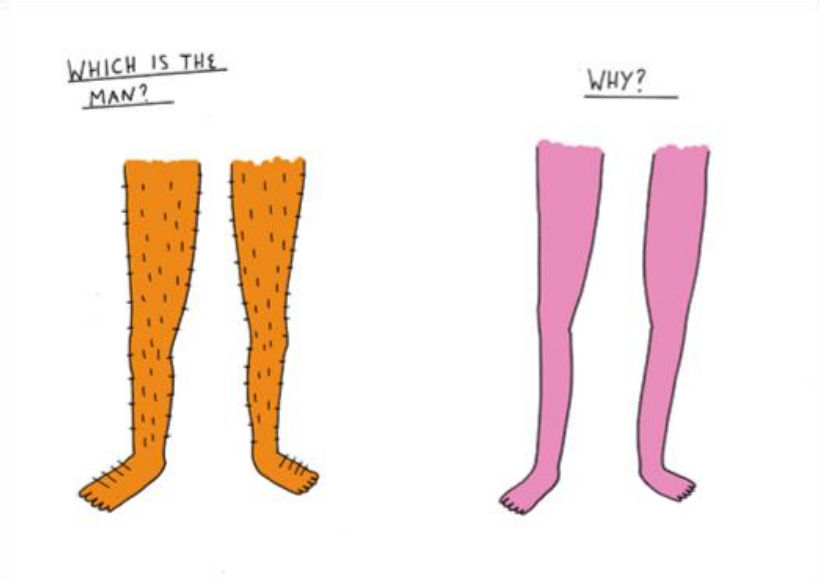

Figure 11.3 Genderlegs[57]

As a social construct, gender is learned, symbolic, and dynamic. We say that gender is learned because we are not born knowing how to act masculine or feminine, as a man or a woman, or even as a boy or a girl. Just as we rely on others to teach us basic social conventions, we also rely on others to teach us how to look and act like our gender. Whether that process of learning begins with our being dressed in clothes traditionally associated with our sex (blue for males and pink for females), or being discouraged from playing with a toy not associated with our sex (dolls for boys, guns for girls), the learning of our genders begins at some point. Once it's begun (usually within our families), society reinforces the gender behaviors we learn. Despite some parents' best efforts to not impose gender expectations on their children, we all know what is expected of our individual gender.

Gender is symbolic. It is learned and expressed through language and behavior. Language is central to the way we learn about gender and enact it through communicative acts because language is social and symbolic. Remember what we learned in chapter two, that language is symbolic because the word "man" isn't a real man. It is a symbol that identifies the physical entity that is a human male. So, when a mother says to her children, "Be a good girl and help me bake cookies," or "Boys don't cry" children are learning through symbols (language) how to "be" their gender. The toys we are given, the colors our rooms are painted, and the after-school

[57] Image by Spaynton is under CC BY-SA 4.0

activities in which we are encouraged to participate are all symbolic ways we internalize, and ultimately act out, our gender identity.

Pin It! Case In Point – Representation
The franchise, Dick's Sporting Goods, received much backlash after 12 year old McKenna Peterson brought attention to the lack of females in their Fall 2014 Basketball catalog. The issue was brought to the corporation's attention when Mckenna's father posted a picture of her letter to the company to his Twitter account. McKenna writes, "There are NO girls in the catalog! Oh, wait, sorry. There IS a girl in the catalog on page 6. SITTING in the STANDS. Women are…mentioned once…for some shoes. And there are cheerleaders on some coupons. It's hard enough for girls to break through in this sport as it is, without you guys excluding us from your catalog." Dick's CEO, Ed Stack, has since apologized to McKenna and admitted it was a mistake to not have female athletes, and promises that they will be featured in next year's issue. However, Dick's might communicate inclusivity to female athletes if they redid their recently released catalog to include female athletes now, because we know that women play ball the same as men and don't just sit on the sidelines.

Finally, gender communication is cultural. Meanings for masculinity and femininity, and ways of communicating those identities, are largely determined by culture. A culture is made up of belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social system. How we communicate our gender is influenced by the values and beliefs of our particular culture. What is considered appropriate gender behavior in one culture may be looked down upon in another. In America, women often wear shorts and tank tops to keep cool in the summer. Think back to summer vacations to popular American tourist destinations where casual dress is the norm. If you were to travel to Rome, Italy to visit the Vatican, this style of dress is not allowed. There, women are expected to dress in more formal attire, to reveal less skin, and to cover their hair as a display of respect. Not only does culture influence how we communicate gender identities, it also influences the interpretation, understanding, or judgment of the gender displays of others (Kyratzis & Guo; Ramsey). Additionally, popular media, such as commercials and catalogs can dictate how culture communicates gender roles.

Theories of Gender Development

We said earlier that gender is socially learned, but we did not say specifically just what that process looks like. Socialization occurs through our interactions, but that is not as simple as it may seem. Below we describe five different theories of gender development.

Psychodynamic. Psychodynamic theory has its roots in the work of Viennese Psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. This theory sees the role of the family, the mother in particular, as crucial in shaping one's gender identity. Boys and girls shape their identity in relation to that of their mother. Because girls are like their mothers biologically they see themselves as connected to

her. Because boy are biologically different or separate from their mother, they construct their gender identity in contrast to their mother. When asked about his gender identity development, one of our male students explained, “I remember learning that I was a boy while showering with my mom one day. I noticed that I had something that she didn’t.” This student’s experience exemplifies the use of psychodynamic theory in understanding gender development.

Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interactionism (George Herbert Mead) is based specifically on communication. Although not developed specifically for use in understanding gender development, it has particular applicability here. Because gender is learned through communication in cultural contexts, communication is vital for the transformation of such messages. When young girls are told to “sit up straight like a lady” or boys are told “gentlemen open doors for others,” girls and boys learn how to be gendered (as masculine and feminine) through the words (symbols) told to them by others (interaction).

Social Learning. Social Learning theory is based on outward motivational factors that argue that if children receive positive reinforcement, they are motivated to continue a particular behavior. If they receive punishment or other indicators of disapproval, they are more motivated to stop that behavior. In terms of gender development, children receive praise if they engage in culturally appropriate gender displays and punishment if they do not. When aggressiveness in boys is met with acceptance, or a “boys will be boys” attitude, but a girl’s aggressiveness earns them little attention, the two children learn different meanings for aggressiveness as it relates to their gender development. Thus, boys may continue being aggressive while girls may drop it out of their repertoire.

Cognitive Learning. Unlike Social Learning theory that is based on external rewards and punishments, Cognitive Learning theory states that children develop gender at their own levels. The model, formulated by Kohlberg, asserts that children recognize their gender identity around age three but do not see it as relatively fixed until the ages of five to seven. This identity marker provides children with a schema (A set of observed or spoken rules for how social or cultural interactions should happen.) in which to organize much of their behavior and that of others. Thus, they look for role models to emulate maleness or femaleness as they grow older.

Standpoint. Earlier we wrote about the important role of culture in understanding gender. Standpoint theory places culture at the nexus for understanding gender development. Theorists such as Collins and Harding recognize identity markers such as race and class as important to gender in the process of identity construction. Probably obvious to you is the fact that our culture, and many others, are organized hierarchically—some groups of people have more social capital or cultural privilege than others. In the dominant U.S. culture, a well-educated, upper-middle class Caucasian male has certain sociopolitical advantages that a working-class African American female may not. Because of the different opportunities available to people based on their identity markers (or standpoints), humans grow to see themselves in particular ways. An expectation common to upper middle-class families, for example, is that children will grow up and attend college. As a result of hearing, “Where are you going to college”? as

opposed to “Are you going to college”? these children may grow up thinking that college attendance is the norm. From their class standing, or standpoint, going to college is presented as the norm. Contrast this to children of the economically elite who may frame their college attendance around the question of “Which Ivy League school should I attend?” Or, the first - generation college student who may never have thought they would be in the privileged position of sitting in a university classroom. In all of these cases, the children begin to frame their identity and role in the society based on the values and opportunities offered by a particular standpoint.

What Do We Study When We Study Gender Communication?

Let’s take a moment to describe in more detail many of the specific areas of gender and communication study discussed in this chapter. You know by now that the field of Communication is divided up into specializations such as interpersonal, organizational, mass media. Within these particular contexts gender is an important variable, thus, much of the gender research can also be integrated into most of these specializations.

There are many kinds of personal relationships central to our lives wherein gender plays an important role. The most obvious one is romantic relationships. Whether it takes place in the context of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or heterosexual relationships, the gender of the couple will have an impact on communication in the relationship as well as relational expectations placed on them from the culture at large. After a man and woman marry, for example, a common question for family and friends to ask is, “So, when are you having a baby?” The assumption is when not if. Since gay and lesbian couples must go outside their relationship for the biological maternal or paternal role, they may be less likely to be asked such a question.

Other interpersonal relationships occur in families and friendships where gender is a consistent component. You may have noticed growing up that the boys and girls in your household received different treatment around chores or curfews. You may also notice that the nature of your female and male friendships, while both valuable, manifest themselves differently. These are just a couple of examples that gender communication scholars’ study regarding how gender impacts interpersonal relationships.

Gender and Organizational Communication

While Liberal Feminist organizations such as NOW have made great strides for women in the workplace, gender continues to influence the organizational lives of both men and women. Issues such as equal pay for equal work, maternity and paternity leave, sexual harassment, and on-site family care facilities all have gender at their core. Those who study gender in these contexts are interested in the ways gender influences the policies and roles people play in organizational contexts. See the Case In Point for information on the current wage-gap.

Pin It! Case In Point - The Wage-Gap Widens

According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (a nonpartisan group), the wage gap between the sexes is widening, not getting better. In 2012 women earned 81 cents to every dollar earned by their male counterparts. In 2013 that fell to 78 cents. The disparity is even greater when kids are involved, citing the GAO's research, Strasburg explains, "Men with kids earn 2.1 percent more, on average, than men without kids. Women with kids earn 2.5 percent less than women without kids" (14). The cause of the disparity is a complex one—-involving economics, education, science, public relations, and social gender roles. If women, for example, are expected to take on a more passive role in the public sphere, they may feel less inclined to negotiate for a higher salary or ask for a raise.

Gender and Mass Communication

A particular focal point of gender and communication focuses on ways in which males and females are represented in culture by mass media. The majority of this representation in the 21st century occurs through channels of mass media—-television, radio, films, magazines, music videos, video games, and the internet. From the verbal and nonverbal images sold to us as media consumers, we learn the "proper" roles and styles of being male and female in American culture. During World War II, for example, there was a shortage of workers in factories because many of the workers (men) were being sent overseas to fight. Needing to replace them to keep the factories in business, the media launched a campaign to convince women that the best way they could support the war effort was to go out and get a job. Thus, we saw a large influx of women in the workplace. All was fine until the war ended and the men returned home. When they wanted their jobs back, they discovered that they were already filled—-by women! The media once again launched a campaign to convince women that their proper place was now back in the home raising children. Thus, many women left paid employment and returned to a more traditional role (This phenomenon is depicted in the film, Rosie the Riveter).

As media and technology increases in sophistication and presence, they become new sites of gender display and performance. More examples of this can be seen in the increase of women filling leadership roles and men portrayed in nurturing home environments in television and advertising (Krolokke). The comedy series, "Up All Night," that ran on NBC from September 2011 to December 2012 reflects this idea. The mom, Reagan, goes back to work as a talk show producer after having a baby while husband, Chris stays at home with their newborn. However, there is still a serious lack of strong female roles in the media. Fortunately for women, one Oscar winning actress, Reese Witherspoon has decided to do something about this. In 2012, Witherspoon "grew increasingly frustrated by the answers she got to her question, 'What are you developing for women?'" (Riley). In her search for a production with a female lead she recalls discovering only "one studio that had a project for a female lead over 30," and thought, "'I've got to get busy.' After 'getting busy', Witherspoon, along with female Australian producer Bruna Papandrea, started Pacific Standard Production Company that focuses on producing films

with a strong female lead. Since the company's start, Witherspoon and Papandrea have produced two films, "Gone Girl," based on the novel by Gillian Flynn, and "Wild", the best-selling memoir by Cheryl Strayed; both released in December 2014. To read more about Witherspoon and her pursuit for women roles read the article by the Columbus Dispatch.

GENDER COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

In this chapter you have been exposed to the specialization of gender and communication. You learned that gender communication is "the social construction of masculinity or femininity as it aligns with designated sex at birth in a specific culture and time period. Gender identity claims individuality that may or may not be expressed outwardly, and may or may not correspond to one's sexual anatomy" (Pettitt). It is important to remember as we discuss gender and communication that there is a difference between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological distinctions that make us male or female. Gender is the socially constructed enactment of what it means to be a man or a woman. We are generally born as either male or female, but taught how to be men and women.

People of all identities are gendered and experience their genders in a variety of ways. As a result of how gender is manifested, many feminists, men, and other activist groups have formed for the purpose of banding together with others who understand gender in similar ways. We discussed 12 types of feminism and five different men's groups that focus on various approaches for understanding and enacting gender. There are a variety of theories that seek to explain how we form gender. Remember that theories are simply our best representations of something. Thus theories of gender development such as Psychodynamic theory, Social Interactionism, Social Learning theory, Cognitive Learning theory, and Standpoint theory are all attempts to explain the various ways we come to understand and enact our genders.

Like with many other specializations in the field of Communication, gender communication applies to a variety of other specializations. Interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication are specializations that are particularly ripe for exploring the impact of gender and communication. Gender communication research continues to explore gender in these contexts, thus helping redefine how gender is understood and behaved.

We explored differences in gender communication styles by looking at language, the purpose of communication, patterns of talk, and nonverbal communication. While impossible to come to a definitive conclusion, gender and communication studies generally promotes the idea that the differences in gender communication are socially learned and are thus fluid and dynamic. Males and females learn to communicate in both masculine and feminine styles and make strategic choices about which style is more effective for a given context.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that your gender was communicated or taught to you by your parents? Other family members? Your school? Friends? Church?
2. Do you see gendered patterns of interaction in your romantic relationships?
3. Did you know there were so many/if any Men's movements, all with different goals, before reading this chapter? What does our limited knowledge of men's movements imply?
4. What ways do you break traditional gender roles?
5. Do you feel drawn to any of the types of feminisms listed in the chapter? Why or why not?

Key Terms

- Androgyny
- Cognitive Learning
- Culture
- Feminine Speech Community
- Gender
- Gender Communicated
- Gendered
- Psychodynamic
- Psychological Theories
- Sex
- Social Learning
- Speech Community
- Standpoint Theory
- Symbolic Interactionism

CHAPTER 12: HEALTH COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Describe barriers in communicating with patients.
- Discuss strategies to effectively communicate with patients.
- Describe general public health campaigns and education.

PATIENT – CAREGIVER COMMUNICATION

Good caregiver-patient communication can increase patient satisfaction, enhance patient adherence to medication and treatment regimes, reduce medical errors, and improve clinical outcomes. Malpractice lawsuits—something every practitioner wants to avoid—often result from inadequate communication with patients. In addition to keeping current in the technical aspects of their profession, physicians, nurses, and other caregivers must build communication skills to effectively deal with the complex challenges of patient care.

How caregivers interact has a dramatic effect on whether patients will feel comfortable raising issues or talking about concerns. Often, caregivers inadvertently discourage effective two-way communication with blocking behaviors. These behaviors are common, especially when discussions touch on unpleasant subjects.

Examples of blocking behaviors include the following:

- interrupting or finishing sentences before patients can express their concerns;
- talking more than the patients, making it difficult for them to squeeze their perspective into the conversation;
- deliberately changing the subject because it is uncomfortable;
- failing to clarify the patient's questions or concerns;
- offering premature or inappropriate reasons or answers;
- overtly avoiding an issue, which conveys a lack of interest in the patient's concern;
- minimizing the patient's questions or concerns;
- disregarding the patient's comments with condescending remarks such as "I have taken care of that"; and
- making promises to do tasks that can't be followed through.

Don't Just Talk, Listen

Communication is more than verbal dialogue; listening is also an important element. Listening is more than just hearing—that is only the first part. It also involves interpretation of what is

being said and evaluation of the information imparted. Caregivers with ineffective listening skills can miss important verbal clues from patients or family members. A study of physician-patient interactions in outpatient clinics found that it takes most patients two minutes to explain their condition; however, the average physician interrupts the patient within 18 to 23 seconds.

Active listening is not just refraining from talking but actively trying to understand the other person's total message. To do this, caregivers must listen for both the content and feelings being expressed by the patient. During discussions, the caregiver should occasionally summarize what has been said thus far and highlight major points. This can be done through paraphrasing, which simply involves the caregiver restating in his or her own words what the patient has said.

Questioning is also a critical communication skill for caregivers. There are two basic types of questions: closed and open-ended. Closed questions generally result in short yes/no or other one-word answers. This type of question should be used by the caregiver if precise, quick answers are needed. Otherwise, open-ended questions can inhibit caregiver-patient communication. To draw information from the patient, the caregiver should ask open-ended questions such as, "How can I help you today?" or "How was that last treatment useful?"

Communication Barriers

While every patient is different, there are some common barriers to effective clinician-patient communication. Emotional barriers can result from many factors, including the following:

- **Preoccupation with issues other than their health**. Patients may be wrestling with internal constraints that influence their capacity to effectively communicate. They may be worrying about issues with their family or job or coping with a new diagnosis or required lifestyle change. Patients may be preoccupied with financial issues or have challenging situations that were unresolved before they became ill. If patients are silent or reluctant to talk, it does not necessarily mean they lack interest in interacting. Patients may need additional time to deal with what they view as more pressing issues before they can effectively communicate with caregivers.
- **Fear.** Some patients may not ask questions for fear of offending the caregiver. They may have attempted to express concerns in the past and been rebuked or made to feel inferior. Often, patients are told they shouldn't worry and should leave their care up to the clinicians. Some patients may fear that questioning practices or raising concerns may actually cause a medical mistake. They may think they won't be heard or that it won't do any good to speak up.
- **Indifference.** Some patients resent participating in their healthcare, feeling that "it is the physician's or nurse's job to take care of me—that's what they are getting paid to do." These patients often view their role as passive and don't see the need to communicate with providers.

Besides emotional barriers, another obstacle to effective caregiver-patient communication is the manner in which the patient verbally conveys thoughts. People who are sick are operating under compromised conditions. Pain and worry can influence their ability to express themselves. Sometimes, patients may communicate in a way that doesn't appear to be respectful of caregivers. This can stimulate a response from clinicians that discourages the patient from speaking up again.

Some patients, as well as their family and friends, may not know how to converse with caregivers in a way that promotes collaboration. The Partnership for Clear Health Communication, a coalition of national organizations working to improve communication between patients and caregivers, has developed a tool called Ask Me 3, which promotes three simple, but essential, questions patients should ask their providers in every healthcare interaction. Information about the tool and educational materials to share with consumers can be found at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's website (link: www.askme3.org).

Literacy Barriers

Patients have varying degrees of literacy. Many people who can sign their name may lack the skills needed to access and assimilate information. Some can only read at a third- or fourth-grade level. These individuals are often unable to comprehend and interpret written words. Many cannot use or apply written words correctly in their daily life.

Patients with limited literacy typically do not confide their difficulty in reading and understanding to caregivers; they often feel embarrassed and do not want to be judged. Therefore, they may not ask questions of the caregiver or let on that they don't understand something.

A patient's limited literacy is not obvious and, because many won't admit to the problem, caregivers must improve their screening efforts. To test a patient's literacy, caregivers should elicit feedback from patients to evaluate their understanding of the information provided. This can be done by asking questions and reiterating key points. If it is discovered the patient has difficulty understanding or retaining information, then communication must be simplified. Written patient education materials may need to be supplemented or replaced by verbal discussions and visual aids.

The American Medical Association Foundation has developed a patient health literacy education toolkit for physicians, healthcare professionals, and patient advocates. Information about the kit can be found online at: www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/9913.html.

Cultural Divide

Our country has numerous and diverse ethnic groups that can create caregiver-patient communication challenges. For example, asking questions or talking about topics directly is considered bad manners among some people raised outside the United States. The caregiver must establish a trusting relationship before these patients will speak freely about their health

problems or related issues. Developing this type of trust takes time. In some countries, patients learn to blindly accept the physician's decision or the nurse's direction without question. And in stressful situations, such as when a patient has a serious illness, communication with caregivers becomes even more challenging.

To improve caregiver-patient communication, clinicians need to learn more about the cultural beliefs and practices of different national cultures. A patient's ethnic background can influence how he or she wishes to communicate and receive information. Knowing what to say is as important as how to say it. Therefore, a general understanding of how each cultural group defines health, views illness, and responds to death is important. For example, in cultures where status is inherited rather than earned, the position of other decision makers in the family must be acknowledged. Also, values related to privacy, including feelings of modesty and shame, can make it more difficult to discuss health-related issues even after building a trusting relationship. The role of family, whether medications and pain treatments are acceptable in their culture, and how their religion or philosophy supports them in times of extreme stress are also valuable factors for caregivers to understand.

Many healthcare organizations have developed staff resources to guide communication while providing care to a patient from a different culture. These resources can help remind staff of the patient's cultural perspectives and values, and how to interpret nonverbal behavior. While not all members of one cultural group behave in exactly the same way, an understanding of their culture can help caregivers engage patients in meaningful dialogue.

Get Past the Obstacles

Each interaction between a caregiver and patient is unique. To individualize discussions, patients must be given a sense of control over their care plan. When patients and their families trust caregivers, they are better able to communicate effectively, cooperate in treatment, and cope with uncertainties. Their trust is dependent on the degree to which they see their caregivers as competent, caring, and responsible. When caregivers are open with patients, they are more likely to share their personal thoughts and feelings.

Being proactive by providing information and anticipating questions is the first step toward better caregiver-patient communication. Clinicians should actively seek patient participation by asking whether they have questions and whether anything has been overlooked from their viewpoint. The more caregivers do this, the more patients will engage in the dialogue.

Caregivers can partner with patients in numerous ways. First, patients should be told what is being done for them and asked whether they have any questions. It is important to refrain from using unfamiliar medical terms or acronyms during these discussions. Clinicians should encourage patients to speak up when something is not right and be prepared to respond appropriately when they do.

A key factor in improving communication with patients is to listen carefully and seriously consider what the patient is saying (even if the message is uncomfortable). Caregivers must avoid blocking behaviors that only serve to set up communication barriers. Below are some approaches that can foster open communication between caregivers and patients:

- Focus on listening to the patient's words and the intended meaning. Hear the patient out and acknowledge their input.
- Listen without interrupting. Listening is not just a skill but also an attitude. If the caregiver appears preoccupied with other issues, the patient will sense they are not being heard.
- Pay attention to your nonverbal behavior. By using positive body language, such as facing the patient and sitting down at their level, caregivers communicate interest in what the patient is saying. It is also helpful to provide for privacy and discourage interruptions during discussions.
- Be careful not to rush the patient, respond defensively, or change the subject.
- Take the time to acknowledge valid points. If the patient rambles or makes ambiguous statements, try rephrasing or paraphrasing or ask clarifying questions.
- Try to understand the patient's message through both their verbal and nonverbal communication. How are they sitting or standing? What is their expression? Do they appear sad? Angry? Nervous?
- Take time to sort out what the patient is saying before responding, then summarize what you've heard.

Discussing Mistakes

The activities of a healthcare organization are often confusing to patients. It's possible that the patient or family may have perceived a situation inaccurately. How caregivers handle the situation will influence the patient's willingness to openly share information in the future. If a mistake has not been made, explain what happened. It is important to help the patient or family member save face. They may feel foolish and embarrassed once they learn their perceptions were incorrect. The caregiver should acknowledge the validity of their concerns and apologize for the confusion or lack of communication that may have created the concern. Thank the patient for paying attention and feeling comfortable enough to pose the question.

One of the more difficult conversations a caregiver may have with a patient is when a mistake has actually been made. The caregiver's reaction is often defensive, especially when the patient has suffered an injury because of the mistake. Most medical professional groups assert that the patient should be informed about an error. Also, The Joint Commission requires that physicians in accredited hospitals inform a patient when results of care differ significantly from the anticipated outcomes.

Whether telling patients about a simple mistake that did not cause harm or one that resulted in an adverse event, there are some communication techniques that can improve the discussion. First, it is important to acknowledge the error and, if appropriate, take corrective action. Whenever possible, include family members in the discussion and try to have both parents

present if the patient is a minor. Eliminate possible interruptions and provide a private space for the discussions. When talking with the patient, make eye contact and speak in a non-hurried manner with an even tone of voice. Provide ample time for the discussion; don't try to fit it in five minutes before the start of a shift or between other duties.

The content of the discussion may be less important than the circumstances of the delivery. Direct, clear statements are important as well as tone of voice. The caregiver may want to start by saying, "I am afraid I have some bad news." It's important to communicate in a manner that is open and compassionate. Give an accurate, clear-cut statement with non-defensive explanations of what has happened. Speak in short statements, frequently stopping to inquire whether everyone understands. Avoid slipping into technical descriptions or medical jargon that may intimidate the patient. Do not assign blame and avoid offering initial beliefs or subjective opinions of possible causes of the mistake.

Disclosing a mistake, especially one that led to an adverse event, creates stress for the patient and family members. This can cause fear, anger, mistrust, or hopelessness. It is often best to offer an apology—which does not denote an admission of liability on the clinician's part.

Skills Training

Good communication between caregivers and patients is the foundation of quality healthcare. Improving interpersonal communication skills—just like improving technical skills—is done best with an organized educational program. Although written material is useful for improving patient communication, behavioral change is more likely to occur in a workshop. The Institute for Healthcare Communication (IHC) is a group that sponsors communication workshops for physicians as well as other healthcare professionals, including nonclinical staff.

Educate, and Enlist the patient

Engagement establishes an interpersonal connection that sets the stage for the patient-caregiver interaction. Empathy demonstrates the caregiver's understanding of and concern for the patient's thoughts and feelings. The patient is seen, heard, and understood by the clinician. Education delivers information to the patient. Enlistment extends an offer to the patient to actively participate in decision making, and enlistment acknowledges that much of what happens in the treatment plan is controlled by the patient.

Communicating Public Health Campaigns and Education

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute, health communication utilizes various communication tactics to inform and influence people's health-related behaviors and decisions. In 2010, this topic was covered in a chapter of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People External link objectives for the first time, where it was shown as being significant in health promotion, disease prevention and quality of life.1The Healthy People initiative establishes scientific, 10-year national objectives for improving Americans' health.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control mentioned on its website, "There are at least six main areas of modelling knowledge, developing practice and ongoing international debate, that have been contributing to its more effective implementation. These are: health literacy, health education, social marketing, risk communication, crisis communication, and health advocacy."

Health Education

One of the main tasks of health education is to inform about lifestyles and behaviors that prevent people from various diseases. In this sense, health education aims to influence a person's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors connected to health in a positive way. It is a process during which people learn how to take care about their own and other people's health.

Initiatives can either focus on improving existing medical problems or preventative education (e.g. prevent people from acquiring various diseases or guide them on how to live with a disease), in any combination of planned learning activities.

Health Education models of intervention have evolved in the past three decades. The field is quite diverse in Europe on what concerns approaches and levels of integration with public health programs.

Health Advocacy

Advocacy is one strategy to raise levels of familiarity with an issue and promote health and access to quality health care and public health services at the individual and community levels. When trying to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular public health goal or program, a combination of individual and social actions may be used to try to affect change. This is one way of understanding Health Advocacy.

The adoption of a health advocacy model can focus on an educational dimension when it identifies emerging public health issues that require action. It encompasses gathering information on existing practice related to public health, related legislation monitoring and providing feedback on how specific regulations impact local groups and communities. It may also help guiding health policy reforms.

Often, health advocacy is carried out using mass and multi-media, direct political lobbying and community mobilization. It may materialize within an institution or through public health associations, patients' organizations, private sector and NGOs. All health professionals have a major responsibility to act as advocates for public health at all levels in society.

Social Marketing

Even though the word "marketing" is often associated with advertising and promotion, the application of the methods to social non-for-profit causes and programs has proven to be a

helpful tool to enhance the effectiveness of efforts to protect and improve public health. Using social marketing tools to conduct public health improvement programs can help to clarify goals and improve success with limited public health resources.

Health-related social marketing aims at improving people's health and quality of their life in concrete social, political and economic environment. It requires familiarity with the audience to whom health messages are being addressed, knowledge about relevance and importance of the problem to the target groups, ability of the group to tackle the problem and potential to promote change of an existing situation in a concrete environment.

Understanding social marketing principles and techniques is key to developing public health programs that can promote knowledge or positive behaviors as well as reduce risky ones.

Health communication has much to celebrate and contribute. The field is gaining recognition in part because of its emphasis on combining theory and practice in understanding communication processes and changing human behavior. This approach is pertinent at a time when many of the threats to global public health (through diseases and environmental calamities) are rooted in human behavior. By bringing together researchers and practitioners from diverse disciplines and adopting multilevel theoretical approaches, health communicators have a unique opportunity to provide meaningful input in improving and saving lives. We are optimistic.

CHAPTER 13: MASS COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define mass communication.
- Identify key functions of mass communication.
- Understand prominent theories of mass communication.
- Understand the role that media plays in your life.
- Describe pop culture.
- Identify several key elements of media literacy.
- Recognize your role in the global community.

You're sitting in a classroom checking twitter while listening to your favorite music when the clock hits the top of the hour. You take out your headphones and put the phone down when you hear the instructor begin talking. She is referring to a web page projected on the screen in front of the class. She welcomes everyone to the start of the school year but stops to wait for the guy next to you to put down his phone that he's reading. She explains that she will only provide an electronic version of the syllabus, pointing to the course web page. Everyone in the class is to go online and read the syllabus before the next class meeting. She explains that, besides lecture and discussion, you will need to watch CNN, read the *Wall Street Journal*, and watch several clips she's listed on YouTube to demonstrate and learn key concepts. Suddenly, from the back of the class a cell phone begins ringing. The instructor stops mid-sentence and explains the class policy about turning off cell phones during class. Your classmate never answers the phone but reaches into his pocket and looks at the phone screen. The instructor explains that you will need to read chapter one of the textbook by next week. Included with your textbook is a pass-code that allows you to connect to an online database so you can access articles for your semester project. After she answers student questions, class is over.

As you head out the door you hear music coming from the building sound system playing the student-run FM radio station. You walk to the student union to grab lunch and watch whatever they're playing on the large screen television. On your drive home, you turn on the radio to listen to the broadcast of your favorite baseball team. While driving, you notice the new billboard advertising Ford trucks. When you get home, you sit down in front of your computer. You check a class web page to see if you have homework, check the day's current events and sporting scores, then check your email. You read several messages, delete the spam, and get irritated at the pop-up advertisements that keep jumping on your screen. After shutting down your computer you sit on the couch to watch a movie streaming through Netflix. As you lean back on the couch, you clear away a stack of magazines to set down your drink.

Figure 13.1[58]

The above example is representative of the amount of mass communication we are exposed to daily. In the U.S. we witness and understand a great deal of our world through mass communication. Remember that in the early part of the 20th century, communication scholars began to ask questions about the impact of media as more and more mass communication outlets were developed. Questions then and now include: To what degree does mass communication affect us? How do we use or access mass communication? How does each medium influence how we interpret messages? Do we play an active or passive role when we interact with media? This chapter explores these questions by examining the concept of mass communication, its evolution, its functions, its theories, and its place in society.

DEFINING MASS COMMUNICATION

Littlejohn and Foss define mass communication as "the process whereby media organizations produce and transmit messages to large publics and the process by which those messages are sought, used, understood, and influenced by audience". McQuail states that mass communication is, "only one of the processes of communication operating at the society-wide level, readily identified by its institutional characteristics". Simply put, mass communication is the public transfer of messages through media or technology-driven channels to a large number of recipients from an entity, usually involving some type of cost or fee (advertising) for the user. "The sender often is a person in some large media organization, the messages are public, and the audience tends to be large and varied". However, with the advent of outlets like YouTube,

[58] Image is licensed under CC0

Instagram, Facebook, and text messaging, these definitions do not account for the increased opportunities individuals now have to send messages to large audiences through mediated channels.

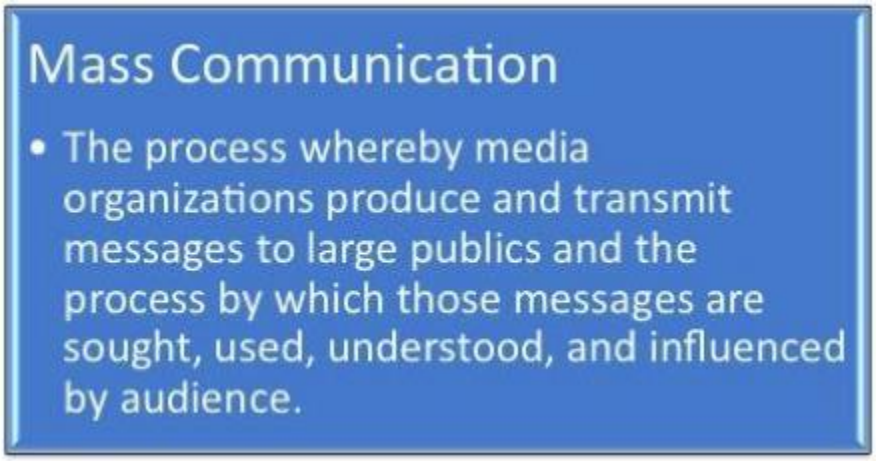

Figure 13.2[59]

Nevertheless, most mass communication comes from large organizations that influence culture on a large scale. Schramm refers to this as a "working group organizer". Today the working groups that control most mass communication are large conglomerates such as Viacom, NewsCorp, Disney, ComCast, Time Warner, and CBS. In 2012, these conglomerates controlled 90% of American Media and mergers continue to consolidate ownership even more. An example of an attempt at such a takeover of power occurred throughout 2014 with Comcast and Time Warner pursuing a merger for $45 billion. If successful, this will be one of the biggest mergers in history.

Remember our definition of communication study: "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results" (Smith, Lasswell & Casey 121)? When examining mass communication, we are interested in who has control over what content, for what audience, using what medium, and what are the results? Media critic Robert McChesney said we should be worried about the increasingly concentrated control of mass communication that results when just a handful of large organizations control most mass communication, "The implications for political democracy, by any standard, are troubling". When interviewed, Ben Bagdikian, media critic and former Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley, cautiously pointed out that over the past two decades, major media outlets went from being owned by 50 corporations to just five (WGBH/Frontline). Both McChesney and Bagdikian warn about the implications of having so few organizations controlling the majority of our information and communication. Perhaps this is the reason new media outlets like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have consistently grown in popularity as they offer alternative voices to the large corporations that control most mass communication.

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Mass Communication Now

This table shows the six most prosperous media conglomerates of 2014. Included is a list of just SOME of the networks they own.

COMCAST	News Corporation	Disney	VIACOM	TIMEWARNER	CBS
-NBC -MSNBC -AT&T	-FOX -Wall Street Journal -New York Post	-ABC -ESPN -Pixar -Miramax -Marvel Studios	-MTV -Nick JR. -CMT -Paramount pictures	-CNN -HBO -Time -Warner Bros.	-Showtime -Smithsonian Channel -NFL.com -Jeopardy -60 Minutes

Image produced with information from businessinsider.com

Figure 13.3[60]

To understand mass communication one must first be aware of some of the key factors that distinguish it from other forms of communication. First, is the dependence on a media channel to convey a message to a large audience. Second, the audience tends to be distant, diverse, and varies in size depending on the medium and message. Third, mass communication is most often profit driven, and feedback is limited. Fourth, because of the impersonal nature of mass communication, participants are not equally present during the process.

Mass communication continues to become more integrated into our lives at an increasingly rapid pace. This "metamorphosis" is representative by the convergence occurring (Fidler) between ourselves and technology, where we are not as distanced from mass communication as in the past. Increasingly, we have more opportunities to use mediated communication to fulfill interpersonal and social needs. O'Sullivan refers to this new use of mass communication to foster our personal lives as "mass-personal communication" where *(a) traditional mass communication channels are used for interpersonal communication, (b) traditionally interpersonal communication channels are used for mass communication, and (c) traditional mass communication and traditional interpersonal communication occur simultaneously."* Over time, more and more overlap occurs. "Innovations in communication technologies have begun to make the barriers between mass and interpersonal communication theory more permeable than ever" (O'Sullivan). Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Snapchat, and Instagram are great examples of new mass communication platforms we use to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships.

As more mass communication mediums develop, Marshall McLuhan states that we can understand media as either hot or cold depending on the amount of information available to

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the user, as well as the degree of participation. A hot medium *"extends one single sense in high definition"* (McCluhan 22). Examples of hot media include photographs or radio because the message is mostly interpreted using one sense and requires little participation by participants. An audience is more passive with hot media because there is less to filter. Television is considered a cold medium because of the *large amount of multisensory information.* Berg Nellis states "Virtual reality, the simulation of actual environment complete with tactile sensory input, might be the extreme in cold media…This and other cutting edge technologies seem to point to increasingly cold media as we move into the digital communication future". Think about online video games, such as the military sci-fi game, Halo. Games like this can be played in teams but the players do not necessarily have to be in close proximity. Simply by logging onto the server gamers can connect, interact, communicate through microphones and play as a team. These games have become so involved and realistic that they represent cold mediums because of the vast amount of sensory input and participation they require.

Perhaps we are turning into a "global village" through our interdependence with mass communication. Suddenly, "across the ocean" has become "around the corner." McLuhan predicted this would happen because of mass communication's ability to unify people around the globe. Are you a player in what Hagermas calls the "public sphere" that mass communication creates by posting information about yourself on public sites? If so, be careful about what you post about yourself, or allow others to "tag" you in, as many employers are googling potential employees to look into their personal lives before making decisions about hiring them. As we continue our discussion of mass communication we want to note that mass communication does not include every communication technology. As our definition states, mass communication is communication that potentially reaches large audiences.

Evolution of Mass Communication

Societies have long had a desire to find effective ways to report environmental dangers and opportunities; circulate opinions, facts, and ideas; pass along knowledge, heritage, and lore; communicate expectations to new members; entertain in an expansive manner; and broaden commerce and trade (Schramm). The primary challenge has been to find ways to communicate messages to as many people as possible. Our need-to-know prompted innovative ways to get messages to the masses.

Before writing, humans relied on oral traditions to pass on information. "It was only in the 1920s-according to the Oxford English Dictionary-that people began to speak of 'the media' and a generation later, in the 1950s, of a 'communication revolution', but a concern with the means of communication is very much older than that" (Briggs & Burke 1). Oral and written communication played a major role in ancient cultures. These oral cultures used stories to document the past and impart cultural standards, traditions, and knowledge. With the development of alphabets around the world over 5000 years ago, written language with ideogrammatic (picture-based) alphabets like hieroglyphics started to change how cultures communicated.

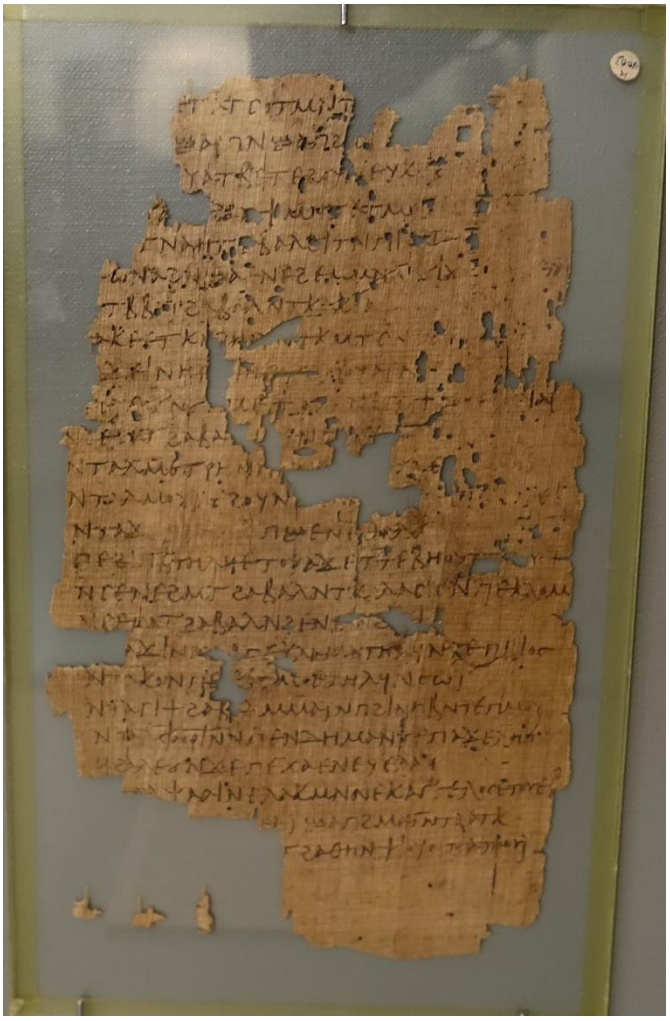

Figure 13.4[61]

Still, written communication remained ambiguous and did not reach the masses until the Greeks and Romans resolved this by establishing a syllable alphabet representing sounds. But, without something to write on, written language was inefficient. Eventually, paper making processes were perfected in China, which spread throughout Europe via trade routes (Baran). Mass communication was not quick, but it was far-reaching (Briggs & Burke). This forever altered how cultures saved and transmitted cultural knowledge and values. Any political or social movement throughout the ages can be traced to the development and impact of the printing press and movable metal type (Steinberg). With his technique, Guttenberg could print more than a single page of specific text. By making written communication more available to larger numbers of people, mass printing became responsible for giving voice to the masses and making information available to common folks (McLuhan & Fiore). McLuhan argued that Gutenberg's evolution of the printing press as a form of mass communication had profound and lasting effects on culture, perhaps the most significant invention in human history.

[61] Image is in the public domain

In 1949, Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, and Fred D. Sheffield wrote the book Experiments on Mass Communication. They looked at two kinds of films the Army used to train soldiers. First, they examined orientation and training films such as the "Why We Fight" that were intended to teach facts to the soldiers, as well as generate a positive response from them for going to war. The studies determined that significant learning did take place by the soldiers from the films, but primarily with factual items. The Army was disappointed with the results that showed that the orientation films did not do an effective job in generating the kind of positive responses they desired from the soldiers. Imagine, people were not excited about going to war.

With the transition to the industrial age in the 18th century, large populations headed to urban areas, creating mass audiences of all economic classes seeking information and entertainment. Printing technology was at the heart of modernization WHICH led to magazines, newspapers, the telegraph, and the telephone. At the turn of the century (1900), pioneers like Thomas Edison, Theodore Puskas, and Nikola Tesla literally electrified the world and mass communication. With the addition of motion pictures and radio in the early 1900s, and television in the 40s and 50s, the world increasingly embraced the foundations of today's mass communication. In the 1970s cable started challenging over-the-air broadcasting and traditional program distribution making the United States a wired nation. In 2014, there was an estimated 116.3 million homes in America that owned a TV (Nielson, 2014 Advance National TV Household Universe Estimate). While traditionally these televisions would display only the programs that were chosen to be broadcast by cable providers, more and more households have chosen to become more conscious media consumers and actively choose what they watch through alternative viewing options like streaming video.

Today, smart T.V.'s and streaming devices have taken over the market and they are expected to be in 43% of households by 2016. These new forms of broadcasting have created a digital revolution. Thanks to Netflix and other streaming services we are no longer subjected to advertisements during our shows. Similarly, streaming services like Hulu provide the most recent episodes as they appear on cable that viewers can watch any time. These services provide instant access to entire seasons of shows (which can result in binge watching).

The Information Age eventually began to replace the ideals of the industrial age. In 1983 *Time Magazine* named the PC the first "Machine of the Year." Just over a decade later, PCs outsold televisions. Then, in 2006, *Time Magazine* named "you" as the person of the year for your use of technology to broaden communication. "You" took advantage of changes in global media. Chances are that you, your friends, and family spend hours engaged in data-mediated communication such as emailing, texting, or participating in various forms of social media. Romero points out that, "The Net has transformed the way we work, the way we get in contact with others, our access to information, our levels of privacy and indeed notions as basic and deeply rooted in our culture as those of time and space" (88). Social media has also had a large impact in social movements across the globe in recent years by providing the average person with the tools to reach wide audiences around the world for the first-time in history.

If you're reading this for a college class, you may belong to the millennial or gen Z generation. Free wifi, apps, alternative news sources, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter have become a way of life. Can you imagine a world without communication technology? How would you find out the name of that song stuck in your head? If you wanted to spontaneously meet up with a friend for lunch, how would you let them know? Mass communication has become such an integral part of our daily lives, most people probably could not function through the day without it. What started as email quickly progressed to chat rooms and basic blogs, such as LiveJournal. From there, we saw the rise and fall of the first widely used social media platform, Myspace. Though now just a shadow of the social media powerhouse it once was, Myspace paved the way for social media to enter the mainstream in forms of websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Snapchat, and Instagram. Facebook has evolved into a global social media site. It's available in 37 languages and has over 500 million users. Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2005 while studying at Harvard University, and it has universally changed the way we communicate, interact, and share our lives with friends, family, and acquaintances. Many people argue about the good and bad qualities of having a Facebook profile, it can be looked at as your "digital footprint" in social media. Profiles log status updates, timeline photos and videos, and archive messages between members.

Another example of mainstream social media is Twitter. Twitter allows for quick 140 character or less status updates (called tweets) for registered users. Tweets can be sent from any device with access to internet in a fast-simple way and connect with a number of people, whether they be family, friends or followers. Twitter's microblogging format allows for people to share their daily thoughts and experiences on a broad and sometimes public stage. The simplicity of Twitter allows it to be used as a tool for entertainment and blogging, but also as a way of organizing social movements and sharing breaking news.

Snapchat is a newer social media platform used by more and more people every day. The function of Snapchat allows the user to send a photo (with the option of text) that expires after a few seconds. It can be looked at like a digital self-destructing note you would see in an old spy movie. Unlike its competitors, Snapchat is used in a less professional manner, emphasizing humor and spontaneity over information efficiency. Contrary to Facebook, there is no pressure to pose, or display your life. Rather, it is more spontaneous. It's like the stranger you wink at in the street or a hilarious conversation with a best friend.

With new forms of communication emerging rapidly, it is important to note the corresponding changes to formal language and slang terms. UrbanDictionary.com is a famous site that can introduce any newbie to the slang world by presenting them various definitions for a term they don't recognize, describe its background, and provide examples for how it's used in context. For example, one of the most popular definitions claims that the word 'hella' is said to originate from the streets of San Francisco in the Hunters Point neighborhood. "It is commonly used in place of 'really' or 'very' when describing something."

In this age of information overload, multiple news sources, high-speed connections, and social networking, life seems unimaginable without mass communication. Can you relate to your

parents' stories about writing letters to friends, family, or their significant others? Today, when trying to connect with someone we have a variety of ways of contacting them; we can call, text, email, Facebook message, tweet, and/or Snapchat; the options are almost endless and ever-changing. Society today is in the midst of a technological revolution. Only a few years ago families were arguing over landline internet cable use and the constant disruptions from incoming phone calls. Now, we have the ability to browse the web anytime on smart phones. Since the printing press, mass communication has literally changed the ways we think and interact as humans. We take so much for granted as "new technologies are assimilated so rapidly in U.S. culture that historic perspectives are often lost in the process" (Fidler 1). With all of this talk and research about mass communication, what functions does it serve for us?

Functions of Mass Communication

Mass communication doesn't exist for a single purpose. With its evolution, more and more uses have developed and the role it plays in our lives has increased greatly. Wright characterizes seven functions of mass communication that offer insight into its role in our lives.

Surveillance. The first function of mass communication is to serve as the eyes and ears for those seeking information about the world. The internet, televisions, and newspapers are the main sources for finding out what's going on around you. Society relies on mass communication for news and information about our daily lives, it reports the weather, current issues, the latest celebrity gossip and even start times for games. Do you remember the Boston Marathon Bombing that happened in 2013? How did you hear about it? Thanks to the internet and smart phones instant access to information is at the user's fingertips. News apps have made mass communication surveillance instantly accessible by sending notifications to smartphones with the latest news.

Correlation. Correlation addresses how the media presents facts that we use to move through the world. The information received through mass communication is not objective and without bias. People ironically state "it must be true if it's on the internet." However, we don't think that in generations past people must have without a doubt stated it "has to be true" because it was on the radio. This statement begs the question, how credible are the media? Can we consume media without questioning motive and agenda? Someone selects, arranges, interprets, edits, and critiques the information used in the media. If you ask anyone who works for a major reality TV show if what we see is a fair representation of what really happens, the person would probably tell you "no."

Sensationalization

There is an old saying in the news industry "if it bleeds, it leads," which highlights the idea of Sensationalization. Sensationalization is when the media puts forward the most sensational messages to titillate consumers. Elliot observes, "Media managers think in terms of consumers rather than citizens. Good journalism sells, but unfortunately, bad journalism sells as well. And, bad journalism-stories that simply repeat government claims or that reinforce what the public wants to hear instead of offering independent reporting -is cheaper and easier to produce" (35).

Entertainment. Media outlets such as People Magazine, TMZ, and entertainment blogs such as Perez Hilton keep us up to date on the daily comings and goings of our favorite celebrities. We use technology to watch sports, go to the movies, play video games, watch YouTube videos, and stream music on a daily basis. Most mass communication simultaneously entertains and informs. People often turn to media during our leisure time to provide an escape from boredom and relief from the predictability of our everyday lives. We rely on media to take us places we could not afford to go or imagine, acquaint us with bits of culture, and make us laugh, think or cry. Entertainment can have the secondary effect of providing companionship and/or catharsis through the media we consume.

Transmission

Mass media is a vehicle to transmit cultural norms, values, rules, and habits. Consider how you learned about what's fashionable in clothes or music. Mass media plays a significant role in the socialization process. We look for role models to display appropriate cultural norms, but all too often, not recognizing their inappropriate or stereotypical behavior. Mainstream society starts shopping, dressing, smelling, walking, and talking like the person in the music video, commercial, or movies. Why would soft drink companies pay Kim Kardashian or Taylor Swift millions of dollars to sell their products? Have you ever bought a pair of shoes or changed your hairstyle because of something you encountered in the media? Obviously, culture, age, type of media, and other cultural variables factor into how mass communication influences how we learn and perceive our culture.

Mobilization

Mass communication functions to mobilize people during times of crisis (McQuail, 1994). Think back to the Boston Marathon Bombing. Regardless of your association to the incident, Americans felt the attack as a nation and people followed the news until they found the perpetrators. With instant access to media and information, we can collectively witness the same events taking place in real time somewhere else, thus mobilizing a large population of people around a particular event. The online community Reddit.com is a key example of the internet's proactivity. While the FBI was investigating the bombing, the Reddit community was posting witness's photos and trying to help identify the culprits. People felt they were making a difference.

Validation. Mass communication functions to validate the status and norms of particular individuals, movements, organizations, or products. The validation of particular people or groups serves to enforce social norms (Lazarsfeld & Merton). If you think about most television dramas and sitcoms, who are the primary characters? What gender and ethnicity are the majority of the stars? What gender and ethnicity are those that play criminals or those considered abnormal? The media validates particular cultural norms while diminishing differences and variations from those norms. A great deal of criticism focuses on how certain groups are promoted, and others marginalized by how they are portrayed in mass media.

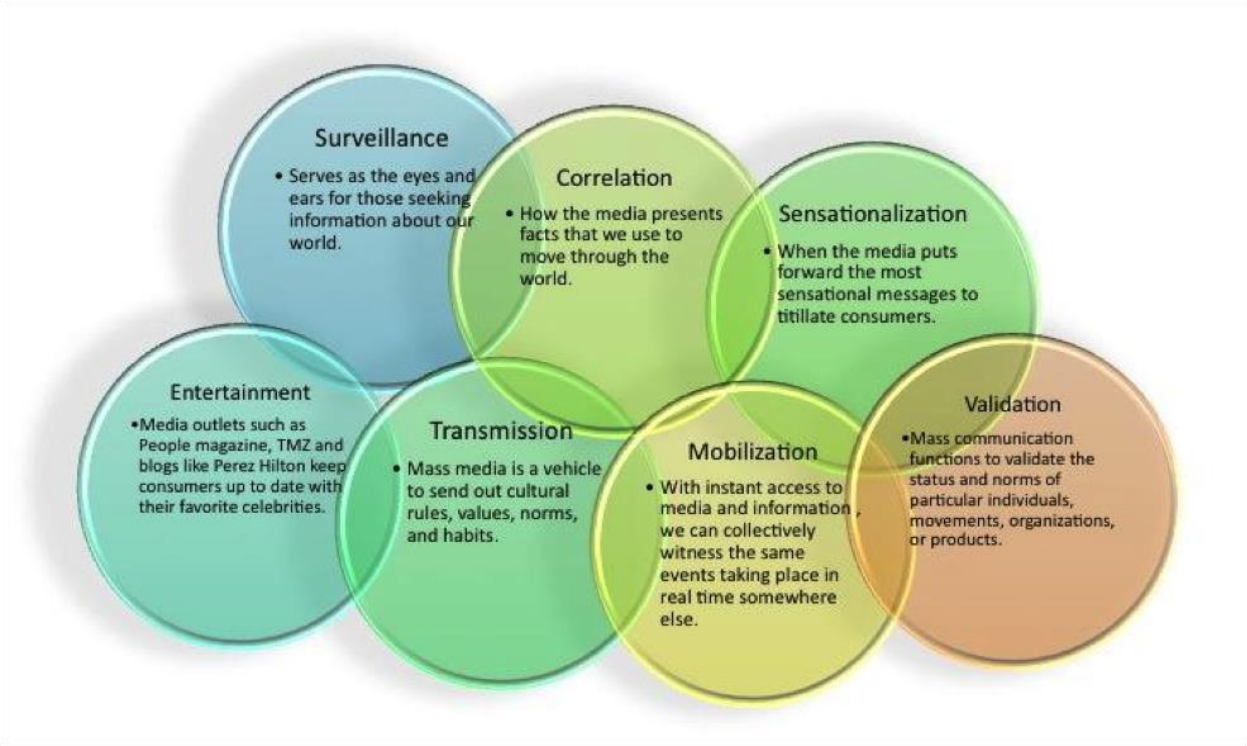

Figure 13.5: Functions of media[62]

Given the power of the various functions of mass communication, we need to be reflective about its presence in our lives (McLuhan & Fiore). We will now turn our attention to the study of mass communication by looking at what mass communication scholars study, and how they study it.

Grounding Theories of Mass Communication

Almost forty years ago Osmo Wiio argued that mass communication does not accurately portray reality. Interesting that all this time later we now have a large number of "reality tv" shows that continue to blur the lines of reality and fiction. Are you always able to tell the difference between fiction and reality in mass communication? Most people tend to rationalize that others are more affected by mass communication than they are (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne). However, we are all susceptible to the influence of mass communication.

Theories are our best representations of the world around us. "Mass communication theories are explanations and predictions of social phenomena that attempt to relate mass communication to various aspects of our personal and cultural lives or social systems" (Baran 374). We need to be discerning as we examine mass communication (Baran). "The beginning of the television age in the 1950s brought in visual communication as well as stimulated the rise of an interdisciplinary theory of the media. Contributions were made from economics, history, literature, art, political science, psychology, sociology and anthropology, and led to the

[62] Image Spaynton is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

emergence of academic departments of communication and cultural studies" (Briggs & Burke 2). Mass communication theories explore explanations for how we interact with mass communication, its role in our lives, and the effects it has on us.

Let's look at five fundamental theories of mass communication: *1) the magic bullet theory, 2) two-step flow theory, 3) multi-step flow theory, 4) uses and gratification theory, and 5) cultivation theory.*

Magic Bullet Theory

The magic bullet theory (also called the hypodermic needle theory) suggests that *mass communication is like a gun firing bullets of information at a passive audience*. "Communication was seen as a magic bullet that transferred ideas or feelings or knowledge or motivations almost automatically from one mind to another" (Schramm 8). This theory has been largely discredited by academics because of its suggestion that all members of an audience interpret messages in the same way, and are largely passive receptors of messages. This theory does not take into account intervening cultural and demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, personality, or education that cause us to react differently to the media messages we encounter. However, many people hold the assumption that media, like television news outlets, simply release information that doesn't encourage audience engagement and critical thinking. Rather than give a story with an unbiased message, that would allow a consumer to create an opinion for themselves, media news outlets present stories to audiences that are attractive to them. Those who believe reality television shows actually portray reality hold some assumptions of the magic bullet theory.

Pin It! Mass Communication Study Now – War

One of the things that has occurred in mass communication during the Iraq war is the absence of images and coverage of American soldiers killed in action. The American government has asked that the media refrain from using these images in their publications. As we have talked about how individuals now have the ability to engage in mass communication, Paul Mcleary (2008) wrote an article for the *Columbia Journalism Review* entitled "Blogging the Long War." In it, he examines the rise of independent reporters using blogs to report events occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan that people may not be able to see in mainstream media. As a result of access to outlets like blogs, individuals, such as soldiers can do their own reporting, and others are able to access alternative sources of information. How do you think these new outlets impact our world view?

Two-Step Flow Theory

After World War II, researchers began noticing that not all audiences react in the same ways to mass communication. Media had less power and relatively less affect than previously assumed (Klapper). The two-step flow theory suggests that mass communication messages do not move directly from a sender to the receiver (Katz & Lazarsfeld). Instead, *a small group of people,*

gatekeepers, screen media messages, reshape these messages, and control their transmission to the masses. Opinion leaders initially consume "media content on topics of particular interest to them" and make sense of it based upon their own values and beliefs (Baran). In the second step, the opinion leaders filter and interpret the messages before they pass them along to individuals with shared ideologies who have less contact with the media, opinion followers. An example of this theory occurs during political campaigns. Research has shown that during an election, media influence your voting preferences (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet) through the information they choose to show about a candidate. This research can still be applied to current political campaigns. Pope Francis has over 4 million followers on twitter and is one of the most re-tweeted social leaders. He uses social media to engage and influence his followers about what's going on in the world. Also, President Obama's use of social media is highly credit as a key factor in the 2008 election. Conservatives often argue that they are marginalized by the "liberal media," while liberals argue that they are marginalized because wealthy conservatives own and control the media. Either way, research reveals that media dependency becomes increasingly important for the public especially during political campaigns (Jeffries).

Multi-step Flow Theory

This theory suggests that *there is a reciprocal nature of sharing information and influencing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors* (Troldahl; Troldahl & Van Dam). The idea is that opinion leaders might create media messages, but opinion followers might be able to sway opinion leaders. Thus, the relationship to media becomes much more complex. Some believe that the role of the opinion leader in our changing culture is diminishing (Baran; Kang) particularly with the ability for average people to reach potentially millions of people through social media. You've likely heard the term "going viral" which is something that could not have happened even ten-fifteen years ago. This mediated diffusion de-bunks the notion of an all-powerful media but still recognizes that media have some effect on the audience.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The uses and gratification theory suggests that *audience members actively pursue particular media to satisfy their own needs*. "Researchers focus their attention, then, on how audiences use the media rather than how the media affect audiences" (Berger 127). The reciprocal nature of the mass communication process no longer sees the media user as an inactive, unknowing participant but as an active, sense-making participant that chooses content and makes informed media choices. We tend to avoid media that do not agree with our values, attitudes, beliefs, or pocketbooks. Schramm argued that we make media choices by determining how gratified we will be from consuming a particular media. Is it easier for you to read a newspaper or would you rather watch television or listen to the radio? Even with all the information on the internet, there are still some people who consider it too time consuming and complex. Yet, many of our students do not have television sets, but instead watch all television, movies, and videos online. Streaming shows online helps us avoid commercials and media content in which we choose not to participate. Netflix, for example, requires a monthly fee in order for you to be commercial free during your shows, but usually you have to wait a season to watch shows. Whereas, Hulu charges under $5 for their services and shares 2-5 commercials per episode, but

you can watch the shows during the original season they are aired. These new ways of watching television have allowed the consumer to make active choices about what media the use and consume.

Pin It! Mass Communication Study And You – Search Engine
Do you do most of your research using search engines like Google or Yahoo? There had been an assumption that today's younger generation is the most web-literate. However, a study carried out by the CIBER research team at the University College London states today's youth "rely heavily on search engines, view rather than read and do not possess the critical and analytical skills to assess the information that they find on the web." The same study showed that people of all ages who use the internet have a low tolerance for any delay in obtaining information. These researchers called on libraries and educational institutions to keep up with the digital age in order to provide people with quick access to information. They also stress the importance of having good research skills, rather than doing quick and simple google searches, without thinking critically about the information and its sources. Does your campus require an sort of "information literacy" training for you to graduate?
-The British Library

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory *questions how active we actually are when we consume mass communication*. For example, the average American views between three and five hours of television a day for an average of 21 hours per week (Hinckly). According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, by age 18, the average American child will have watched 200,000 acts of violence on television. This statistic does not even take into account the violence a child has access to through YouTube videos, Instagram, Facebook, music videos or any other media distribution. When violence is shown on television, rarely are the negative consequences of it acknowledged-47% of victims show no evidence of harm and 73% of perpetrators were not held accountable for their violent actions (Huston et al.).

What kind of impact does all of this have? Is it possible to tell when the average viewer becomes desensitized to violent content, or does it serve as an outlet for normal aggression? Why doesn't all violent content affect every viewer in the same manner? Does too much consumption of violent media cause violent behavior from viewers? People who consume a lot of media see the world as a more violent and scary place because of the high levels of violence they see (Gerbner).

The theory has been extended to address the more general influences of media on human social life and personal beliefs (Lowery; DeFleur). Media present cultural realities such as fear of victimization (Sparks & Ogles), body image, promiscuity, religion, families, attitudes toward racism (Allen & Hatchett), sex roles, and drug use. Kilbourne states, "Advertising doesn't cause

eating problems, of course, any more than it causes alcoholism. [However,] Advertising does promote abusive and abnormal attitudes about eating, drinking, and thinness" (261). Gerbner developed the three B's which state that media blurs people's traditional distinctions of reality, blends people's realities into one common cultural mainstream, and bends the mainstream to fit its institutional interests and the interests of its sponsors.

Mass communication theories are outlined into three categories:(1) theories about culture and society, (2) theories of influence and persuasion and (3) media use theories (Littlejohn and Foss). Understanding a few of the theories on mass communication, let's look at some skills that will help you become a better and more critical consumer of mass communication.

Media Literacy

Studying how we use and consume mass communication allows us to scrutinize the conflicts, contradictions, problems, or even positive outcomes in our use of mass communication. With so much to learn about mass communication, how informed are you? Our consciousness of our media consumption is vital to understanding its effects on us as members of society. Media literacy is *our awareness regarding our mediated environment or consumption of mass communication. It is our ability to responsibly comprehend, access, and use mass communication in our personal and professional lives.* Potter states that we should maintain cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral awareness as we interact with media. Baran suggests a number of skills we can develop in order to be media literate.

Figure 13.6[63]

Understand and respect the power of mass communication messages. An important skill for media literacy is to acknowledge just how dominant mass communication is in our lives and

[63] Image by danieltoro is licensed under CC BY 2.0

around the globe. Through mass communication, media shape, entertain, inform, represent, reflect, create, move, educate, and affect our behaviors, attitudes, values, and habits in direct and indirect ways. Virtually everyone in the world has been touched in some way by mass communication and has made personal and professional decisions largely based on representations of reality portrayed through mass communication. We must understand and respect the power media have in our lives and understand how we make sense of certain meanings.

Understand content by paying attention and filtering out noise. As we learned in Chapter 1, anything that hinders communication is noise. Much of the noise in mass communication originates with our consumption behaviors. How often do you do something other than pay complete attention to the media that you're accessing? Do you listen to the radio while you drive, watch television while you eat, or text message a friend while you're in class? When it comes to mass communication we tend to multitask, an act that acts as noise and impacts the quality of the messages and our understanding of their meanings. We often turn ourselves into passive consumers, not really paying attention to the messages we receive as we perform other tasks while consuming media.

Understand emotional versus reasoned reactions to mass communication content in order to act accordingly. A great deal of mass communication content is intended to touch us on an emotional level. Therefore, it's important to understand our emotional reactions to mass communication. Advertising often appeals to our emotions in order to sell products (Jhally). "Sex sells" is an old advertising adage, but one that highlights how often we make decisions based on emotional reactions, versus reasoned actions. Glance through magazines like *Maxim* or *Glamour* and you'll quickly realize how the emotions associated with sex are used to sell products of all kinds. Reasoned actions require us to think critically about the mass communication we consume before we come to conclusions simply based on our emotional responses.

Develop heightened expectations of mass communication content. Would you consider yourself an informed consumer of mass communication? Do you expect a lot from mass communication? You may like a mystery novel because it's "fun," or a movie might take your mind off of reality for a few hours. However, Baran challenges us to require more from the media we consume. "When we expect little from the content before us, we tend to give meaning making little effort and attention". It depends upon you what you're willing to accept as quality. Some people may watch fewer and fewer mainstream movies because they think the current movies in theaters are low culture or are aimed at less educated audiences. They may begin to look for more foreign films, independent films, and documentaries rather than go to see the popular movies released by Hollywood. We've even seen a backlash against television programming in general. With the rise of services like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime Video, many media consumers have chosen to become what's known as "cord cutters" and cancel their cable subscriptions. These new services often offer popular tv shows and even the most current episodes available to watch at your own leisure.

Understand genre conventions and recognize when they are being mixed. All media have their own unique characteristics or "certain distinctive, standardized style elements" that mark them as a category or genre (Baran 57). We expect certain things from different forms of mass communication. Most of us believe, for example, that we are able to tell the difference between news and entertainment. But, are we? Television news shows often recreate parts of a story to fill in missing video of an event. Do you always catch the "re-enactment" disclaimer? Shows such as *The Daily Show* or *Last Week Tonight* effectively blurred the lines between comedy and news, and both became recognized as credible sources for news information. Even eighty years ago, Walter Lippmann recognized that media are so invasive in our lives that we might have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is manipulated by the media. The "reality TV" genre is now blurring these lines even more. Another example is the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California. He, and others, often refer to him as the "governator," a blurring of his fictional role as the Terminator and his real role as California's governor.

Think critically about mass communication messages, no matter how credible their source. It is essential that we critically consider the source of all mass communication messages. No matter how credible a media source, we can't always believe everything we see or hear because all mass communication is motivated by political, profit, or personal factors. Publicists, editors, and publishers present the information from their perspective–informed by their experiences and agendas. Even if the motive is pure or the spin is minimal, we tend to selectively interpret meanings based on our own lived experiences. Audiences do not always hold similar perceptions regarding mediated messages.

Understand the internal language of mass communication to understand its effects, no matter how complex. This skill requires us to develop sensitivity to what is going on in the media. This doesn't just refer to whether you can program a DVR or surf the internet. This means being familiar with the intent or motivation behind the action or message. "Each medium has its own specific internal language. This language is expressed in production values–the choice of lighting, editing, special effects, music, camera angle, location on the page, and size and placement of headline. To be able to read a media text, you must understand its language" (Baran 58). What effect do these have on your interpretive or sense making abilities? Most news coverage of the Iraq war included background symbols of American flags, eagles, as well as words like "Freedom," and "Liberation." What is the impact of using these symbols in "objective" coverage of something like war? Shows like *Scandal* make editorial choices to glamorize and demoralize politics while making it appear provocatively thrilling. On the surface, we might not realize the amount of effort that goes into dealing with political scandals, but shows like *Scandal* shed a light on these unspoken issues.

Pin It! Case In Point - The Tao Of Media Literacy

How do media affect us? Are we media literate? Werner Heisenberg in The Physicist's Conception of Nature relates a timeless, allegorical story about the role of technology in our lives and questions if our interactions are mindful or thoughtless in regards to change. In Heisenberg's analogy, the wise old, Chinese sage warns us about the delicate balance between humans, nature, and technology.

It has often been said that the far-reaching changes in our environment and in our way of life wrought by this technical age have also changed dangerously our ways of thinking, and that here lie the roots of the crises, which have shaken our times and which, for instance, are also expressed in modern art. True, this objection's much older than modern technology and science, the use of implements going back to our earliest beginnings. Thus, two and a half thousand years ago, the Chinese sage Chuang-Tzu spoke of the danger of the machine when he said: As Tzu-Gung was [traveling] through the regions north of the river Han, he saw an old man working in his vegetable garden. He had dug an irrigation ditch. The man would descend into the well, fetch up a vessel of water in his arms and pour it out into the ditch. While his efforts were tremendous the results appeared to be very [meager]. Tzu-Gung said, "There is a way whereby you can irrigate a hundred ditches in one day, and whereby you can do much with little effort. Would you not like to hear of it?" Then the gardener stood up, looked at him and said, "And what would that be?" Tzu-Gung replied, "You take a wooden lever, weighted at the back and light in front. In this way you can bring up water so quickly that it just gushes out. This is called a draw-well." Then anger rose up on the old man's face, and he said, "I have heard my teacher say that whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine, and he who carries the heart of a machine in his breast loses his simplicity. He who has lost his simplicity becomes unsure in the strivings of his soul. Uncertainty in the strivings of the soul is something which does not agree with honest sense. It is not that I do not know of such things: I am ashamed to use them."

MASS COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Societies have always needed effective and efficient means to transmit information. Mass communication is the outgrowth of this need. If you remember our definition of mass communication as the public transfer of messages through media or technology driven channels to a large number of recipients, you can easily identify the multiple forms of mass communication you rely on in your personal, academic, and professional lives. These encompass print, auditory, visual, interactive media, and social media forms. A relatively recent mass communication phenomenon known as mass-personal communication combines mass

communication channels with interpersonal communication and relationships, where individuals are now gaining access to technology that allows them to reach large audiences.

While mass communication is vital to the success of social movements and political participation it has seven basic functions. The first of which is surveillance, or the "watch dog" role. Correlation occurs when an audience receives facts and usable information from mass media sources. When the most outrageous or fantastic stories are presented we are witnessing the sensationalization function of media. Needing an escape from routines or stress we turn to media for its entertainment value. As a cultural institution, mass communication transmits cultural values, norms and behaviors, mobilizes audiences, and validates dominant cultural values.

As media technology has evolved, so have the scholarly theories for understanding them. The five theories we discussed are different primarily in the degree of passivity versus activity they grant the audience. The magic-bullet theory assumes a passive audience while the two-step-flow and multi-step-flow theories suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between the audience and the message. The theory of uses and gratification suggests that audiences pick and choose media to satisfy their individual needs. Gerbner's cultivation theory takes a long-term perspective by suggesting that media is one of many cultural institutions responsible for shaping or cultivating attitudes.

Because of mass communication's unquestionable role in our lives, media literacy skills are vital for any responsible consumer and citizen. Specifically, we can become media literate by understanding and respecting the power of mass communication messages, understanding media content by paying attention, understanding emotional versus reasoned responses to mass communication, developing heightened expectations of mass communication content, understanding genre conventions and recognizing when they're mixed, understanding the internal language of mass communication, and above all—thinking critically!

Discussion Questions

1. What is the role of the oral tradition in today's society?
2. Does media directly influence individuals?
3. What determines what media an individual will use?
4. Is it the form of the media or its content that most deeply influences us?
5. Which mass communication theory do you feel most accurately portrays your media experiences? Why?
6. With constantly changing technology, what do you see as the future of mass communication?
7. How involved should the government be in protecting us from media effects? Where do you draw the line between free speech and indecency? Is censorship ever warranted?
8. How many social media sites are you apart of and actively participate in? Does one site take priority over the other?

Key Terms

- Cold Media
- Correlation
- Cultivation Theory
- Entertainment
- Gatekeepers
- Global Village
- Hot Media
- Magic Bullet Theory
- Mass Communication
- Masspersonal Communication
- Media Literacy
- Mobilization
- Multi-Step Flow Theory
- Opinion Followers
- Opinion Leaders
- Popular Culture
- Sensationalization
- Surveillance
- Youth
- Transmission
- Two-Step Flow Theory
- Uses And Gratification Theory
- Validations

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