INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION



Scott T. Paynton and Laura K. Hahn with Humboldt State University Students

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Book: Introduction to Communication (Lumen)

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Preface

Background

This project began many years ago as an attempt to find the perfect textbook for Humboldt State University's Department of Communication COMM 105-Introduction to Human Communication course. When looking for an appropriate textbook for this course, it became evident that much of the discipline of Communication uses the term “Intro Course” to mean some version of Public Speaking. Further, it became clear that a great deal of Communication departments across the country do not have an introductory course that function as a “survey” course. This is particularly unusual in light of the fact that most other disciplines have these types of courses (e.g. Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Anthropology, etc.). These circumstances provided a quandary regarding locating a good survey textbook that introduces our students to the discipline in ways that go beyond the scope of public speaking textbooks.

We decided to deal with this particular problem by producing a textbook that introduces students to the study of Communication. We firmly believe that it is important for our students to be able to answer the question, “What is Communication Study?” in a way that captures the field of Communication appropriately, as well as an important discipline across colleges and universities. We found it difficult to point our colleagues and students to texts or classes that demonstrate what the field of Communication Study is about. Hence, we wrote the original version of the textbook for our own Introduction to Human Communication course.

Upon completion of the first draft of the textbook, we decided to publish the work in an open-source format for a couple of reasons. First, given the high cost of textbooks, we wanted students who use this book to have it for free, a move that works to help students with the skyrocketing cost of education. Second, it was, and is, our belief that academics should be able to control what they write, and that we should not have to rely on the three to five year cycle publishers use for updating course textbooks. Instead, open source materials allow for immediate currency in the materials we provide our students because they are open for all to edit.

The first edition of this text was published on wikibooks in 2009. We joked that we were “five years ahead” of it being common practice that colleges and universities would embrace using open-source, free materials in classes. We wondered if those involved in the field of Communication would actually edit the text frequently, or if it would function more statically like traditional print textbooks. What we discovered was that many of our colleagues were using the book across the country, but there were almost no edits to the text. It was being treated more like a print version, with an apparent need for a “second edition.” Instead of a continuously updated textbook over the last five years, in 2014 we still had essentially the same version as we published in 2009.

This brings us to the current edition.

Current Edition

We have increasingly moved our pedagogy in our courses to move beyond what we call “the audience of one.” Traditional classroom models are set up in such a way that professors give students assignments, students complete the assignments, the professors grade them, then give them back to the students. The only audience that encounters the students’ work are their professors -- an audience of one. We have found that when we create assignments that are written for the public, the motivation and work of our students rises dramatically.

Given the move to go beyond the audience of one for our students, it occurred to us that our open source textbook would be a perfect fit as a class project for our students. Thus, we developed our senior Communication Capstone course in such a way that our senior Communication students would be the editors of the “second edition” of Survey of Communication Study. We were fortunate to have access to a classroom that was divided into five tables. At each of these tables were two large computer monitors that students could connect their portable computing devices. Each class was spent engaging in groups, or as an entire class, in work on the textbook. The result of this combined work is the current version of the textbook. It was completed through the ingenuity and thoughtfulness of these students.

UPDATE

We were fortunate enough to be able to replicate our Capstone Class with a new group of seniors to produce the "third" edition

of the textbook. Below is a picture with the names of the students who contributed to the current version of the textbook through their hard work and ingenuity.

Authors

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Contributors and Attributions

Special thanks to Lance Lippert (Ph.D. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale) for his contributions to the first edition of the textbook.

The third edition of this textbook was a collaborative project between the authors, Dr. Scott T. Paynton and Dr. Laura K. Hahn, and the Fall 2017 Communication Capstone Class at Humboldt State University. The following students generously shared their creativity, hard work, knowledge and positive energy.

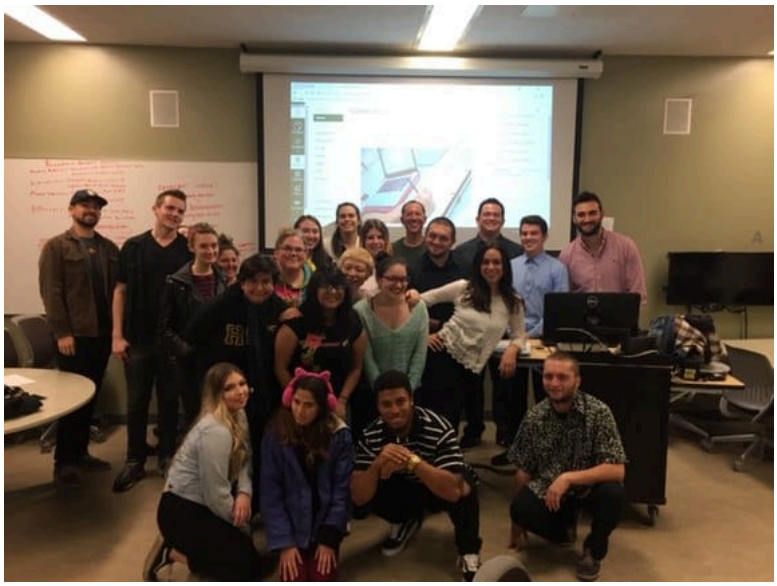


Figure 1: Humboldt State University Communication Capstone Fall 2017

Shaysa Ainsley	Brenda Berrera	Sydney Baty
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Brooke Howell	Katie Lowe	Sarah McElroy
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Jordan Vanbuskirk		



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1: THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

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

1.1: The Foundations of Communication Overview

1.2: Defining Communication Study

1.3: Defining Communication

1.4: Communication Study and You

1.5: The Foundations of Communication Summary

1.6: Communication Challenge- Listening

1.7: The Foundations of Communication References

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1.1: The Foundations of Communication Overview

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



Figure 1.1.1: Two women talking in Jerusalem

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."

To make it easier for you to have a general understanding of Communication study as an academic field, we divide the book into two parts: Chapters 1–6 provide you with the foundations of Communication as an academic field of study. In this chapter you will learn the definitions of Communication and Communication study, as well as understand possible careers that result from studying Communication. In Chapters 2 and 3 you will learn that verbal and nonverbal communication are the primary human acts we study in Communication. The history of Communication study in Chapter 4 lets you see the chronological development of the field, which determined our choices for how we ordered the chapters in Part II. Finally, Chapters 5 and 6 briefly highlight the different theories and research methods we use to study human communication.

Chapters 7–13 highlight many of the prominent Communication specializations that have shaped the field in the past 100 years. We present them in the chronological order in which they became part of the Communication discipline. While there are many more areas of specialization we would like to cover in this text, we have chosen to highlight the ones that have shaped what

you likely recognize as part of the Communication departments at your colleges and universities. Because we cannot cover every specialization, we chose to include ones that were instrumental in the earlier development of the field that are still being explored today, as well as specializations we believe represent new directions in the field that examine communication in our ever-changing society.

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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.2: Defining Communication Study

What is Communication Study?



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.

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 study** 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."*



Egyptian antiquities in the Brooklyn Museum

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 communication. On its website, the National Communication Association (NCA), states that **communication study***"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.

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1.3: Defining Communication

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

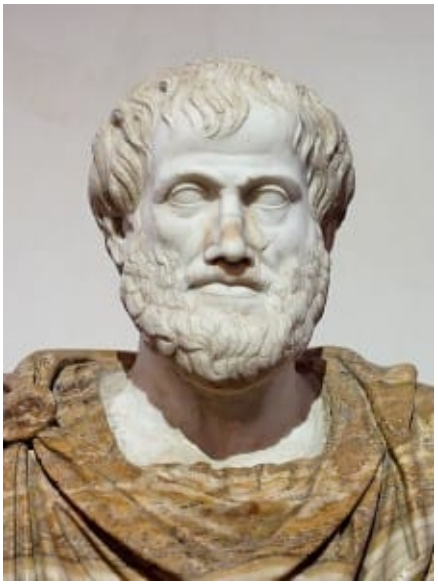
- Define the term “communication” and explain the primary types of communication.
- Define the term “communication competence” and explain attributes of communication competence.
- Identify differences between linear and transactional communication models.
- Identify the components of interpersonal communication.

Now that you know how to define communication study, are you able to develop a simple definition of communication? Try to write a one-sentence definition of 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.

Communication Study Then

Aristotle The Communication Researcher



Aristotle

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 is 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.

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

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 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*.

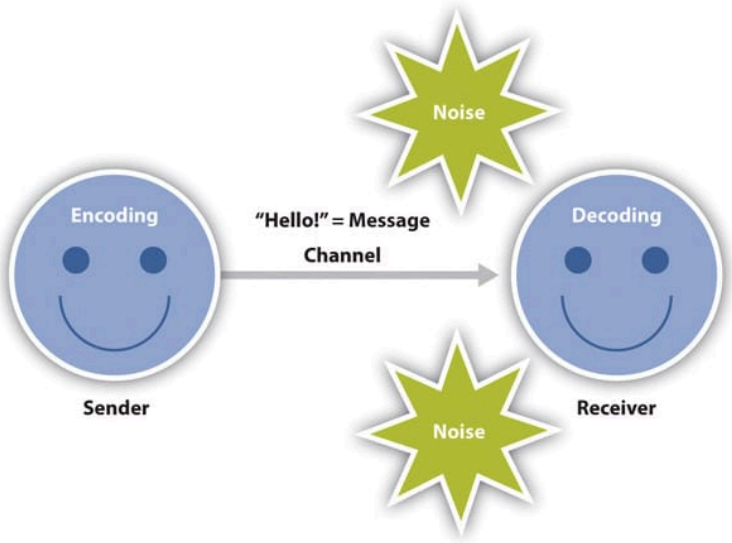
Let's examine two models of communication to help you further grasp this definition. Shannon and Weaver proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (often called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a 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.

TheLinear 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.



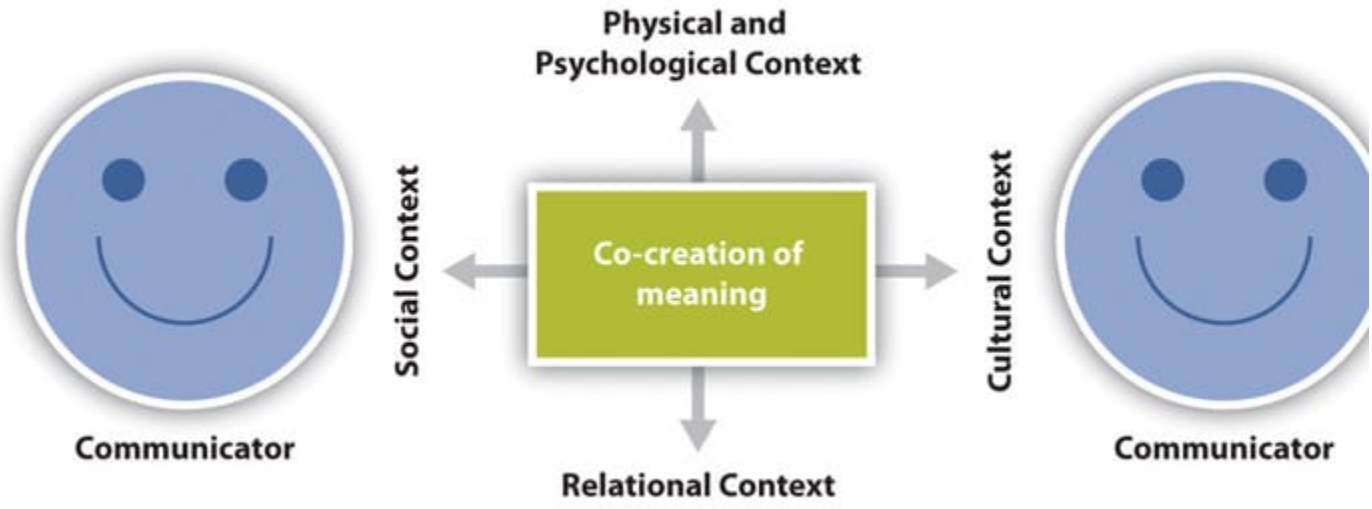
Linear Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

• 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 which we will discuss in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. 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 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.



Transactional Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

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).

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.4: Communication Study and You

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the importance of studying interpersonal communication.
- Discover why taking this course in communication matters to you.

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 (we'll talk about organizational communication in Chapter 11).

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 provides 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.

This third book should provide the following benefits:

- 73 philosophical quotes and interpretations related to business and organizational leadership
- The role that communication plays into achieving the organization's objective
- When to speak up and provide feedback to the organization and HOW to do it
- How veteran team members provide solid wisdom to the next generation
- Methods for subordinates to interact with upper management
- The benefits of recruiting talent to continually advance the organization
- Explains why leaders don't need to know everything but need to perform one function really well"

Tyme, Justin. *Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips from Aristotle.* Amazon, 2012. Kindle.

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 1.4.1: Communication Helps with Diplomacy

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.

Communication Study and You

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.

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"

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

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1.5: The Foundations of Communication Summary

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.

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

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1.6: Communication Challenge- Listening

Challenge 1:

First exercise for Challenge 1: Active Listening. Find a practice partner. Take turns telling events from your lives. As you listen to your practice partner, sum up your practice partner's overall experience and feelings inbrief responses during the telling:

Student notes on this exercise:

Second exercise for Challenge 1: Learning from the past with the tools of the present. Think of one or more conversations in your life that went badly. Imagine how the conversations might have gone better with more responsive listening. Write down your alternative version of the conversation.

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- The Seven Challenges Workbook. **Authored by**: Dennis Rivers. **Provided by**: New Conversations Initiative. **Located at**: http://www.newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

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2: VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

2.1: Verbal Communication Overview

2.2: Defining Verbal Communication

2.3: Communication Challenge- Listening

2.4: Video- The Power of Listening

2.5: Spoken Versus Written Communication

2.6: Functions of Verbal Communication

2.7: Verbal Communication Summary

2.8: Communication Challenge- Explaining

2.9: Verbal Communication References

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2.1: Verbal Communication Overview

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



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**.

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.

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2.2: 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.

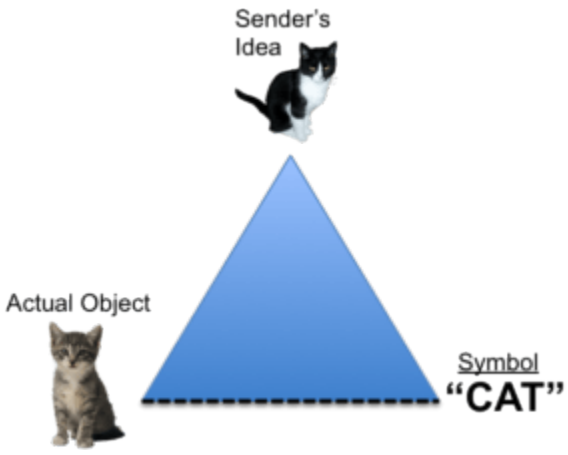
Verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken. In general, verbal communication refers to our use of words while nonverbal communication refers to communication that occurs through means other than words, such as body language, gestures, and silence. Both verbal and nonverbal communication 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.

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.

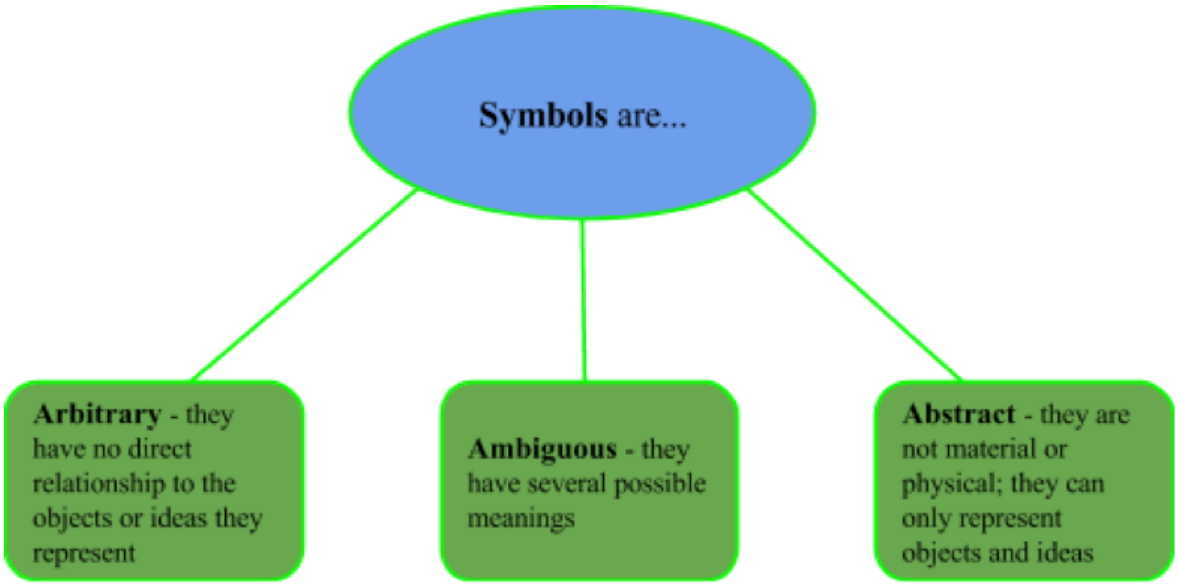
Rather, English speakers have agreed that these symbols (words), whose components (letters) are used in a particular order each time, stand for both the actual object, as well as our interpretation of that object. This idea is illustrated by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richard's triangle of meaning. The word "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.



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.



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 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.

Case In Point

Sounds and Letters: A Poem for English Students

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.
Think of nose and dose and lose
Think of goose, but then of choose.

Confuse not comb with tomb or bomb,
Doll with roll, or home with some.
We have blood and food and good.
Mould is not pronounced like could.

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.

Taken from:http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Ideas/Fun/Wordplay.htm

- **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 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.

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!

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- Image of Symbols are.... **Authored by**: Spaynton. **Located at**: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vcsymbols.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

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2.3: Communication Challenge- Listening

Because Verbal Communication is the starting point and foundation of our survey of communication, we will begin with the fundamental counterpoint to verbal communication; the practice of listening.

SUMMARY

Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don't agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view . In order to get more of your conversation partner's attention in tense situations, pay attention first: listen and give a brief restatement of what you have heard (especially feelings) before you express your own needs or position. The kind of listening recommended here separates **acknowledging** from **approving** or **agreeing**. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings **does not have to mean** that you **approve of** or **agree with** that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks.



By listening and then repeating back in your own words the essence and feeling of what you have just heard, from the speaker's point of view, you allow the speaker to feel the satisfaction of being understood, (a major human need). Listening responsively is always worthwhile as a way of letting people know that you care about them. Our conversation partners do not automatically know how well we have understood them, and they may not be very good at asking for confirmation. When a conversation is tense or difficult it is even more important to listen first and acknowledge what you hear . Otherwise, your chances of being heard by the other person may be very poor.

Listening to others helps others to listen. In learning to better coordinate our life activities with the life activities of others, we would do well to resist two very popular (but terrible) models of communication: arguing a case in court and debating. In courts and debates, each side tries to make its own points and listens to the other side only to tear down the other side's points. Since the debaters and attorneys rarely have to reach agreement or get anything done together, it doesn't seem to matter how much ill will their conversational style generates. But most of us are in a very different situation. We probably spend most of our lives trying to arrange agreement and cooperative action, so we need to be concerned about engaging people, not defeating them. *In business (and in family life, too) the person we defeat today will probably be the person whose cooperation we need tomorrow!*

As Marshall Rosenberg reported in his book, *Nonviolent Communication*, "studies in labor-management negotiations demonstrate that the time required to reach conflict resolution **is cut in half** when each negotiator agrees, before responding, to repeat what the previous speaker had said" (emphasis added).

When people are upset about something and want to talk about it their capacity to listen is greatly diminished. Trying to get your point across to a person who is trying to express a strong feeling will usually cause the other person to try even harder to get that emotion recognized. On the other hand, once people feel that their messages and feelings have been heard, they start to relax and they have more attention available for listening. For example, in a hospital a nurse might say, after listening to a patient: ***"I hear that you are very uncomfortable right now, Susan, and you would really like to get out of that bed and move around. But your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."*** The patient in this example is much more likely to listen to the nurse than if the nurse simply said: ***"I'm really sorry, Susan, but you have to stay in bed. Your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."*** What is missing in this second version is any acknowledgment of the patient'spresent experience.

The power of simple acknowledging. The practice of responsive listening described here separates ***acknowledging*** the thoughts and feelings that a person expresses from ***approving, agreeing, advising, or persuading.***Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings...

...still leaves you the option of agreeing or disagreeing with that person's point of view, actions or way of experiencing.

...still leaves you with the option of saying yes or no to a request.

...still leaves you with the option of saying more about the matter being discussed.

One recurring problem in conflict situations is that many people don'tseparate acknowledging from agreeing. They are joined together in people's minds, somewhat like a two-boxes-of-soap "package deal" in a supermarket. The effect of this is, let us say, that John feels that any acknowledgment of Fred's experience implies agreement and approval, therefore John will not acknowledge any of Fred's experience. Fred tries harder to be heard and John tries harder not to hear. Of course, this is a recipe for stalemate (if not disaster).

People want both: to be understood and acknowledged on the one hand, and to be approved and agreed with, on the other. With practice, you can learn to respond first with a simple acknowledgment. As you do this, you may find that, figuratively speaking, you can give your conversation partners half of what they want, even if you can't give them all of what they want. In many conflict situations that will be a giant step forward. Your conversation partners will also be more likely to acknowledge your position and experience, even if they don't sympathize with you. This mutual acknowledgment can create an emotional atmosphere in which it is easier to work toward agreement or more gracefully accommodate disagreements. Here are three examples of acknowledgments that do not imply agreement:

- Counselor to a drug abuse client:
  "I hear that you are feeling terrible right now and that you really want some drugs. And I want you to know that I'm still concerned this stuff you're taking is going to kill you."
- Mother to seven-year-old:
  "I know that you want some more cake and ice cream, Jimmy, because it tastes so good, but you've already had three pieces and I'm really worried that you'll get an upset tummy. That's why I don't want you to have any more."
- Union representative to company owner's representative:
  "I understand from your presentation that you see XYZ Company as short of cash, threatened by foreign competition, and not in a position to agree to any wage increases. Now I would like us to explore contract arrangements that would allow my union members to get a wage increase and XYZ Company to advance its organizational goals."

In each case a person's listening to and acknowledgment of his or her conversation partner's experience or position increases the chance that the conversation partner will be willing to listen in turn. The examples given above are all a bit long and include a declaration of the listener's position or decision. In many conversations you may simply want to reassure your conversation partner with a word or two that you have heard and understood whatever they are experiencing. For example, saying, "You sound really happy [or sad] about that," etc.

As you listen to the important people in your life, give very brief summaries of the experiences they are talking about and name the want or feeling that appears to be at the heart of the experience. For example:

"So you were really happy about that..."

"So you drove all the way over there and they didn't have the part they promised you on the phone. What a let-down...

"Sounds like you wanted a big change in that situation..."

"Wow. Your dog got run over. You must be feeling really terrible..."

The point here is to empathize, not to advise. If you added to that last statement, **"That total SLOB!!! You should sue that person who ran over your dog. People need to pay for their mistakes, etc.",** you would be taking over the conversation and also leading the person away from her or his feelings and toward your own.

Other suggestions about listening more responsively:

As a general rule, do not just repeat another person's exact words.Summarize their experience in your own words . But in cases

where people actually scream or shout something, sometimes you may want to repeat a few of their exact words in a quiet tone of voice to let them know that you have heard it just as they said it.

If the emotion is unclear, make a tentative guess, as in **"So it sounds like maybe you were a little unhappy about all that..."** The speaker will usually correct your guess if it needs correcting.

Listening is an art and there are very few fixed rules. Pay attention to whether the person speaking accepts your summary by saying things such as "yeah!", "you got it," "that's right," and similar responses.

If you can identify with what the other person is experiencing, then in your tone of voice (as you summarize what another person is going through), express a little of the feeling that your conversation partner is expressing. (Emotionally flat summaries feel strange and distant.)

Such compassionate listening is a powerful resource for navigating through life, and it also makes significant demands on us as listeners. We may need to learn how to hold our own ground while we restate someone else's position. That takes practice. We also have to be able to listen to people's criticisms or complaints without becoming disoriented or totally losing our sense of self worth. That requires cultivating a deeper sense of self worth, which is no small project. In spite of these difficulties, the results of compassion-ate, responsive listening have been so rewarding in my life that I have found it to be worth all the effort required.

Real life examples. Here are two brief, true stories about listening. The first is about listening going well and the second is about the heavy price people sometimes pay for not listening in an empathic way.

John Gottman describes his discovery that listening really works: "I remember the day I first discovered how Emotion Coaching [the author's approach to empathic listening] might work with my own daughter, Moriah. She was two at the time and we were on a cross-country flight home after visiting with relatives. Bored, tired, and cranky, Moriah asked me for Zebra, her favorite stuffed animal and comfort object. Unfortunately, we had absentmindedly packed the well-worn critter in a suitcase that was checked at the baggage counter.

"I'm sorry, honey, but we can't get Zebra right now. He's in the big suitcase in another part of the airplane," I explained."I want Zebra," she whined pitifully.

"I know, sweetheart. But Zebra isn't here. He's in the baggage compartment under-neath the plane and Daddy can't get him until we get off the plane. I'm sorry."

"I want Zebra! I want Zebra!" she moaned again. Then she started to cry, twisting in her safety seat and reaching futilely toward a bag on the floor where she'd seen me go for snacks.

"I know you want Zebra," I said, feeling my blood pressure rise. "But he's not in that bag. He's not here and I can't do anything about it. Look, why don't we read about Ernie," I said, fumbling for one of her favorite picture books.

"Not Ernie!" she wailed, angry now. "I want Zebra. I want him NOW!"

By now, I was getting "do something" looks from the passengers, from the airline attendants, from my wife, seated across the aisle. I looked at Moriah's face, red with anger, and imagined how frustrated she must feel. After all, wasn't I the guy who could whip up a peanut butter sandwich on demand? Make huge purple dinosaurs appear with the flip of a TV switch? Why was I withholding her favorite toy from her? Didn't I understand how much she wanted it?

I felt bad. Then it dawned on me: I couldn't get Zebra, but I could offer her the next best thing — a father's comfort. "You wish you had Zebra now," I said to her. "Yeah," she said sadly.

"And you're angry because we can't get him for you."

"Yeah."

"You wish you could have Zebra right now," I repeated, as she stared at me, looking rather curious, almost surprised. "Yeah," she muttered. "I want him now."

"You're tired now, and smelling Zebra and cuddling with him would feel real good. I wish we had Zebra here so you could hold him. Even better, I wish we could get out of these seats and find a big, soft bed full of all your animals and pillows where we could

just lie down." "Yeah," she agreed.

"We can't get Zebra because he's in another part of the airplane," I said. "That makes you feel frustrated." "Yeah," she said with a sigh.

"I'm so sorry," I said, watching the tension leave her face. She rested her head against the back of her safety seat. She continued to complain softly a few more times, but she was growing calmer. Within a few minutes, she was asleep.

Although Moriah was just two years old, she clearly knew what she wanted — her Zebra. Once she began to realize that getting it wasn't possible, she wasn't interested in my excuses, my arguments, or my diversions. My validation, however, was another matter. Finding out that I understood how she felt seemed to make her feel better. For me, it was a memorable testament to the power of empathy."

Sam Keen describes a friend's lament about the consequences of not listening deeply: "Long ago and far away, I expected love to be light and easy and without failure.

"Before we moved in together, we negotiated a prenuptial agreement. Neither of us had been married before, and we were both involved in our separate careers. So our agreement not to have children suited us both. Until... on the night she announced that her period was late and she was probably pregnant, we both treated the matter as an embarrassing accident with which we would have to deal. Why us? Why now? Without much discussion, we assumed we would do the rational thing — get an abortion. As the time approached, she began to play with hypothetical alternatives, to ask in a plaintive voice with half misty eyes: `Maybe we should keep the baby. Maybe we could get a live-in helper, and it wouldn't interrupt our lives too much. Maybe I could even quit my job and be a full-time mother for a few years.` "

"Maybe . . ." To each maybe I answered: "Be realistic. Neither of us is willing to make the sacrifices to raise a child." She allowed herself to be convinced, silenced the voice of her irrational hopes and dreams, and terminated the pregnancy.

"It has been many years now since our `decision,` and we are still together and busy with our careers and our relationship. Still no children, even though we have recently been trying to get pregnant. I can't help noticing that she suffers from spells of regret and guilt, and a certain mood of sadness settles over her. At times I know she longs for her missing child and imagines what he or she would be doing now. I reassure her that we did the right thing. But when I see her lingering guilt and pain and her worry that she missed her one chance to become a mother, I feel that I failed an important test of love. Because my mind had been closed to anything that would interrupt my plans for the future, I had listened to her without deep empathy or compassion. I'm no longer sure we made the right decision. I am sure that in refusing to enter into her agony, to share the pain of her ambivalence, I betrayed her."

"I have asked for and, I think, received forgiveness, but there remains a scar that was caused by my insensitivity and self-absorption."

[*Workbook editor's note: I have not included this real life excerpt to make a point for or against abortion. The lesson I draw from this story is thatwhatever decision this couple made, they would have been able to live with that decision better if the husband had listened in a way that acknowledged all his wife's feelings rather than listening only to argue her out of her feelings. What lesson do you draw from this story?*]

Contributions and Affiliations

- The Seven Challenges Workbook. **Authored by**: Dennis Rivers. **Provided by**: New Conversations Initiative. **Located at**: http://www.newconversations.net/communication-skills-workbook/listening/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

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2.4: Video- The Power of Listening

Leon Berg is a founding member of the Ojai Foundation, an educational sanctuary in the Upper Ojai Valley of Southern California. He is a Senior Trainer of the Ojai Foundation's Center for Council Practice, and has been facilitating Council groups in the U.S. and abroad for over 20 years. In 2001, he went to Israel to seed the practice of Council among Israeli Jews and Arabs, co-founding the Israeli non-profit organization Ma'agal Hakshava (Listening Circles). Leon has returned to Israel many times since then to conduct Council trainings and lead a variety of coexistence programs. In 2008 Leon and his partner, Glori Zeltzer, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, began to teach their relationship workshops, Tools For Togetherness, to couples seeking to enrich and/or heal their relationships. They now teach the practices to couples in the US and abroad. For more information visit http://tools-for-togetherness.com.

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2.5: 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 (Figure 2.5.1): 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.

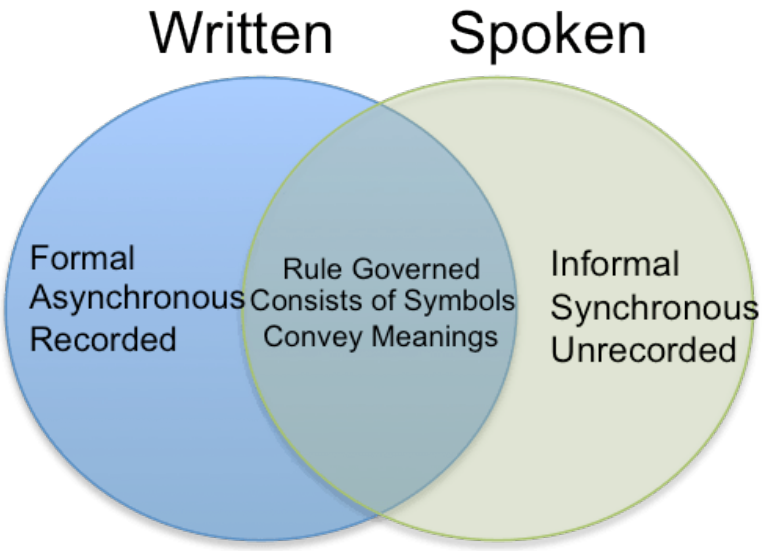


Figure 2.5.1: Written/Spoken Diagram. (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

Case In Point

Informal versus Formal Communication

Text Version

> FYI... we're meeting on friday. wanna go to the office party after? its byob so bring w/e you want. Last years was sooo fun. Your dancing made everyone lol! hope to see ya there -T

Letter Version

> Ann,
>
> For your information, we are having a meeting on Friday, November 6th. Afterwards, there will be an office party. Do you want to go? It will be a Bring Your Own Beverage party, so feel welcome to bring whatever you like. Last year's was so fun, your dancing made everyone laugh out loud!
>
> 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 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.



Figure 2.5.2: Image of two women with phones. (CC BY-SA; Garry Knight via Wikipedia).

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 a 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.

Verbal Communication Then

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:

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

-Global Virtual Classroom

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 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 it, then 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. 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

- Survey of Communication Study. **Authored by**: Scott T Paynton and Linda K Hahn. **Provided by**: Humboldt State University. **Located at**: en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Survey_of_Communication_Study. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlik*

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2.6: 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.

Case In Point

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" according to About.com.

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 appeared 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.

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2.7: Verbal Communication Summary

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

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2.8: Communication Challenge- Explaining

First exercise for Challenge 2: Explaining the kind of conversation you want to have. With your practice partner, try starting each of the conversations on the list. Note which feel easy to start and which feel more challenging. Begin with: **"Right now I'd like to..."** or **"I'd like to take about 1/5/30 minutes and..."**

AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS **"Right now I'd like to take about 5 minutes and..."**	
1.	...tell you about my experiences/feelings... ...that involve no implied requests or complaints toward you OR ...so that you will understand the request, offer, complaint, etc., I want to make
2.	...hear what's happening with you. (More specific: ...hear how you are doing with [topic]...)
3.	...entertain you with a story.
4.	...explore some possibilities concerning ... (requiring your empathy but not your advice or permission)
5.	...plan a course of action for myself (with your help or with you as listener/witness only)
6.	...coordinate/plan our actions together concerning...
7.	...express my affection for you (or appreciation of you concerning...)
8.	...express support for you as you cope with a difficult situation.
9.	...complain/make a request about something you have done (or said) (for better resolution of conflicts, translate complaints into requests)
10.	...confirm my understanding of the experience or position you just shared. (this usually continues with "I hear that you...," "Sounds like you...," "So you're feeling kinda...," or "Let me see if I understand you...")
11.	...resolve a conflict that I have with you about...
12.	...negotiate or bargain with you about...
13.	...work with you to reach a decision about...
14.	...give you permission or consent to.../...get your permission or consent to...
15.	...give you some information about .../...get some information from you about...
16.	...give you some advice about .../...get some advice from you about...
17.	...give you directions, orders or work assignments... / get directions or orders from you
18.	...make a request of you (for action, time, information, object, money, promise, etc.)
19.	...consent to (or refuse) a request you have made to me.
20.	...make an offer to you (for action, information, object, promise, etc.)
21.	...accept or decline an offer you have made to me.
22.	...persuade or motivate you to adopt (a particular) point of view.

23.	...persuade or motivate you to choose (a particular) course of action.
24.	...forgive you for... / ask for your forgiveness concerning...
25.	...make an apology to you about... / request an apology from you about...
26.	...offer an interpretation of... (what ... means to me) / ask for your interpretation of...
27.	...offer an evaluation of... (how good or bad I think ... is) / ask for your evaluation of...
28.	...change the subject of the conversation and talk about...
29.	...have some time to think things over.
30.	...leave/end this conversation so that I can..._____

Second exercise for Challenge 2: Exploring conversational intentions that create problems. (to be explored with as much privacy as you need, or with a therapist) To what degree do you find yourself relying on these kinds of conversations to influence the people in your life? What possibilities do you see for change? To what degree are you or were you an unwilling participant in such conversations? What possibilities do you see for change as you become more aware of conversational intentions?

AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF UN-FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (These conversational intentions and related actions are unfulfilling, at the very least, because we would not like someone to do these things to us . And when we do any of these things, we teach and encourage others to do them to us and/or to avoid contact with us.)	
1.	To lie, deceive or mislead (sometimes partly redeemed by good overall intentions, but usually not)
2.	To threaten
3.	To hurt or abuse
4.	To punish (creates resentment, avoidance and desire for revenge)
5.	To blame (focuses on past instead of present and future)
6.	To control or coerce (force, influence someone against their will and consent)
7.	To manipulate (to influence someone without his or her knowledge and consent)
8.	To demean, humiliate or shame... ...to try to make someone look bad in eyes of others OR ...to try to make people doubt themselves or feel bad about themselves
9.	“Stonewalling:” To deny the existence of a problem in the face of strong evidence and sincere appeals from others
10.	To hide what is important to me from you (if you are an important person in my life)
11.	To suppress or invalidate someone’s emotional response to a given event or situation (as in “Don’t cry!”, or the even more coercive “You stop crying or I’ll *really* give you something to cry about!”)
12.	To withdraw from interaction in order to avoid the consequences of something I have done._____

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3: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

3.1: Nonverbal Communication Overview

3.2: Defining Nonverbal Communication

3.3: Differences Between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

3.4: Types of Nonverbal Communication

3.5: Functions of Nonverbal Communication

3.6: Nonverbal Communication Summary

3.7: Nonverbal Communication References

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3.1: Nonverbal Communication Overview

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.

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3.2: 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.

Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall define nonverbal communication similar to how we defined verbal communication in Chapter 2. They state that nonverbal behaviors are "typically sent with intent, are used with regularity among members of a social community, are typically interpreted as intentional, and have consensual recognized interpretations" (113). 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 3.2.1: Image of two silhouettes. (CC BY-NC-ND; joel zobel via https://flic.kr/p/528J1n)

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.

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3.3: 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.

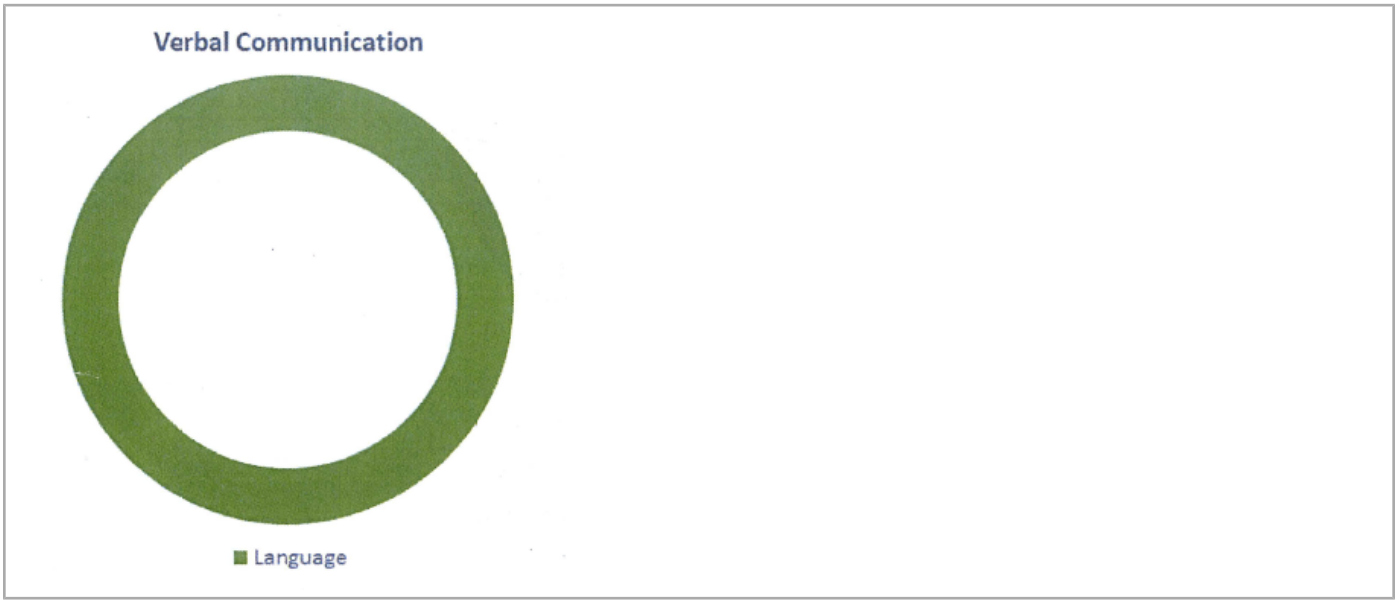


Figure 3.3.1*A*: Verbal Communication chart. (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

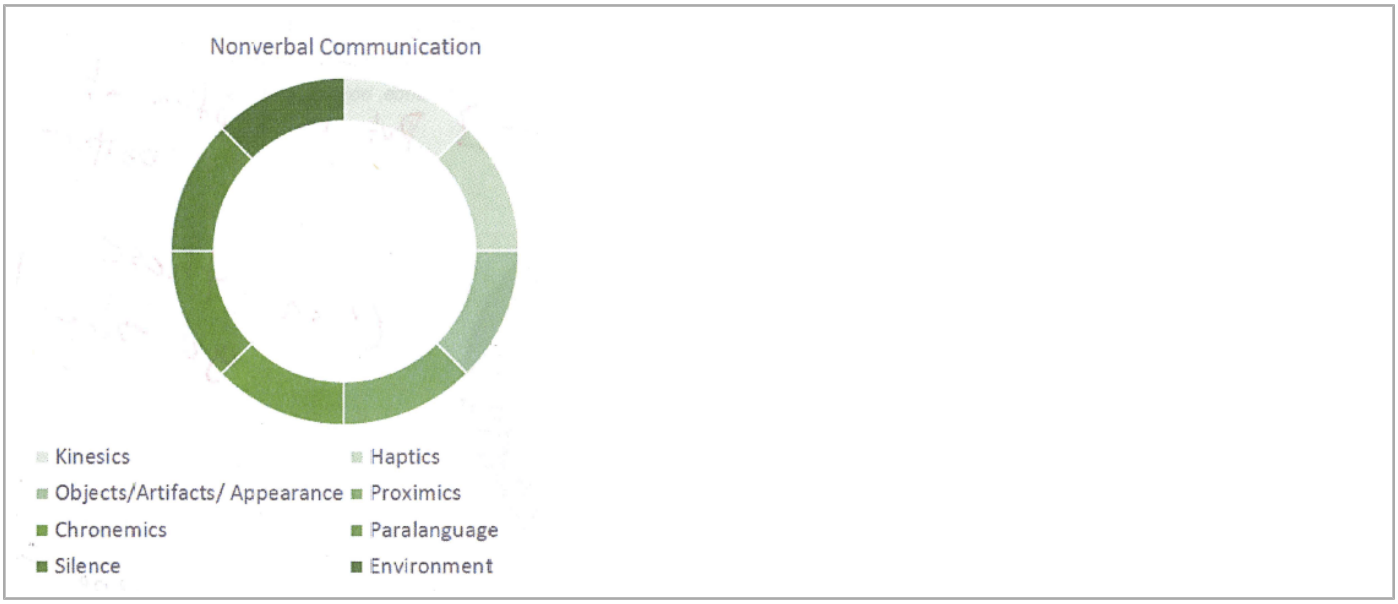


Figure 3.3.1*B*: Nonverbal Communication chart. (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

In Chapter 2 we learned how difficult it can be 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.

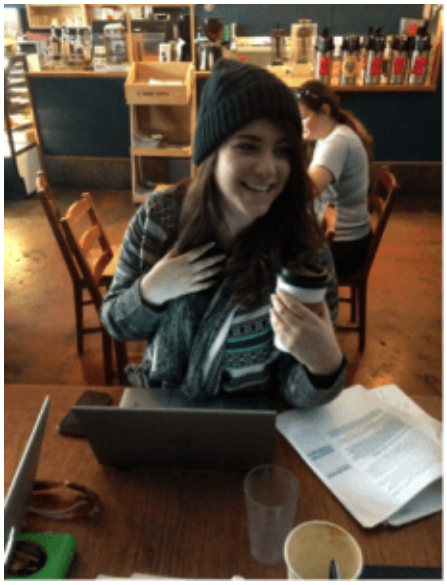


Figure 3.3.2*A*: How do you interpret this student's nonverbals? (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)



Figure 3.3.2*B*: How do you interpret this student's nonverbals? (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

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 3.3.3: What might this driver be trying to convey? (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

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**. 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.

Case In Point

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.**

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 **CLICK HERE**:

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.

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3.4: 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.

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 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 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.



Figure 3.4.1: Tattoos, hair style, dress, and makeup are all part of personal appearance. Image of woman with tattoos. (CC BY-SA; Michael Dorausch via Wikipedia)

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 **environment** 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.

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.

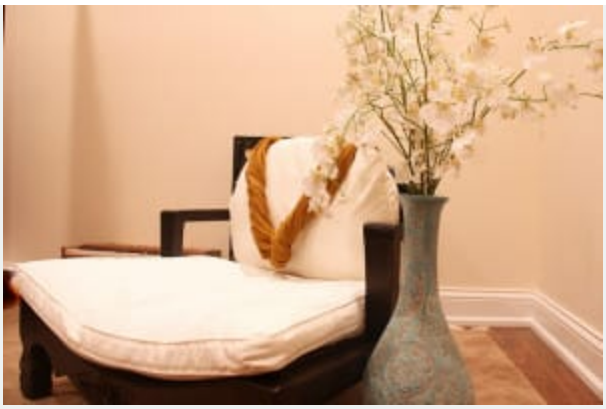


Figure 3.4.2: Example of Feng Shui via a chair/vase combination. (CC BY-NC-ND; ash.wu via https://flic.kr/p/isyU5D)

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.**

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Steven Wright Hysteria stand up

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 meanings*. 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, **click this link**.

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).

Contributions and Affiliations

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3.5: 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.

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.

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 article** if you want to learn more about body language and how to detect lies.

Note

The ideal gas law is easy to remember and apply in solving problems, as long as you get the **proper values a**

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 Japenese 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 read and see more about this, **click here**.

- ***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 looked 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.

Contrast this example to norms in many Asian cultures where frequent touch in crowded public spaces goes unnoticed because space is not used in the same ways. For example, **watch this short video** of how space is used in China's subway system.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Video 3.5.1: China's subway(Chinese's public order in subway)

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 3.5.1: smiling vs. frowning woman. (CC BY-SA; Spaynton via Wikipedia)

- ***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).

Contributions and Affiliations

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3.6: Nonverbal Communication Summary

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

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4: HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION STUDY

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

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

4.1: History of Communication Study Overview

4.2: The Classical Period (500 BCE-400 CE)

4.3: The Medieval Period (400 CE-1400 CE)

4.4: The Renaissance (1400-1600 CE)

4.5: The Enlightenment (1600-1800 CE)

4.6: New School- Communication Study in the 20th Century

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4.1: History of Communication Study Overview

Communication is an increasingly popular major at colleges and universities. In fact, according 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.

As with the rest of the book, 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.

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4.2: 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 4.2.1: The Debate of Socrates and Aspasia

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 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.

Teaching and Learning Communication Then: Sophists: The Original Speech Teachers

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.



Figure 4.2.2: Libanius the sophist

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 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. 17). 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 4.2.3: Detail from Cicero Denounces Catiline

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 in to 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, and 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.

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4.3: 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.



Figure 4.3.1: Augustine Lateran

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.

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 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.

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4.4: 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.

Teaching and Learning Communication Then: Laura Cereta: "Defense of the Liberal Instruction of Women"

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.

"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.



Figure 4.4.1: Laura Cereta

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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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4.5: 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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4.6: New School- Communication Study in the 20th 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).

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) 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) 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 of 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).

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 by those in Communication. **Click This Link** to see them.

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.

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 be instrumental in contributing to the advancement of the discipline. **Read more here**.

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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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4.7: Communication Study 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 study. 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.



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.

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4.8: History of Communication Study Summary

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, 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 study 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

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5: COMMUNICATION THEORY

Learning 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.

5.1: Communication Theory Overview

5.2: Defining Theory

5.3: Functions of Communication Theory

5.4: How We Develop Communication Theories

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5.1: Communication Theory Overview

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



Barred Spiral Galaxy, from the Hubble spacecraft

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.

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5.2: 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"* (38). 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"* (8).

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.

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5.3: 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



Sean De'Bey with Sylfronia King

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?

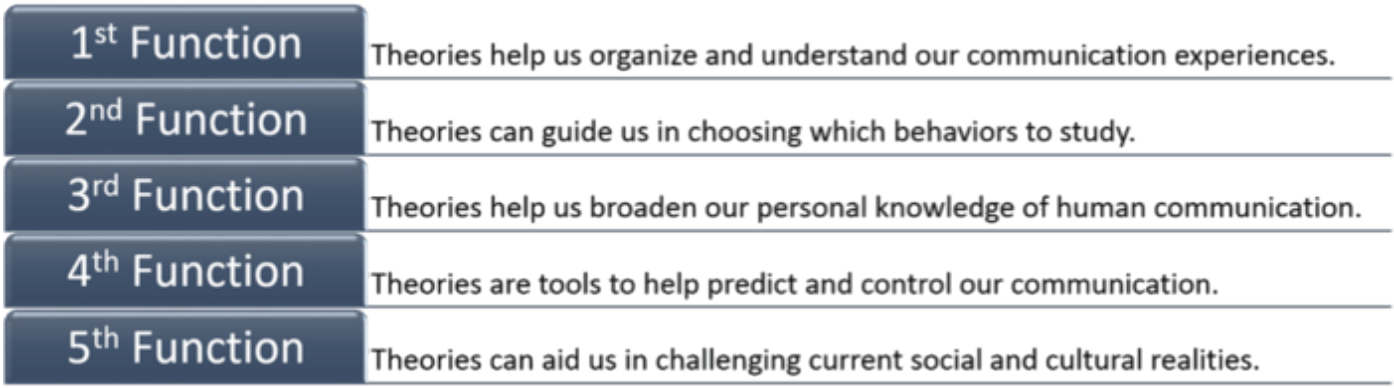
The first function theories serve is that they help us organize and understand our communication experiences. We use theories to organize a broad range of experiences into smaller categories by paying attention to "common features" of communication situations (Infante, Rancer & Womack). How many times 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.



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?

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5.4: How We Develop Communication Theories

At this point, you may be wonder 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.

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.

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.

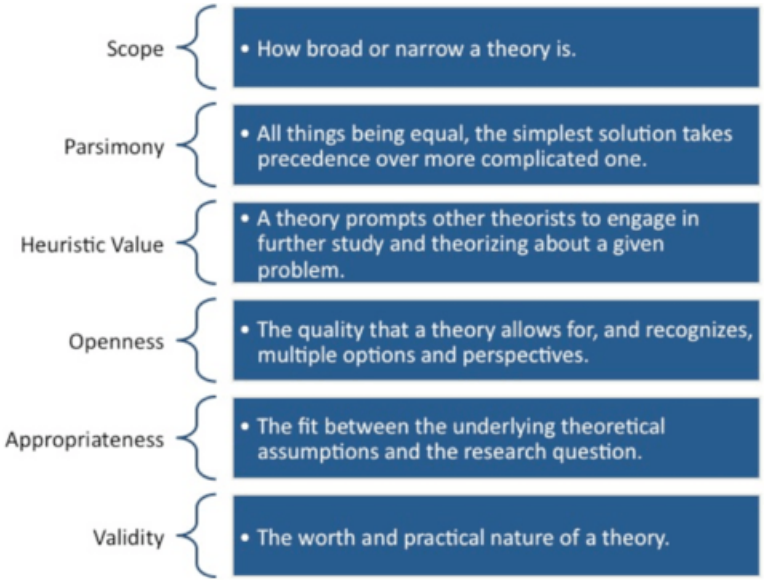
- **Parsimony** refers to the idea that, *all things being equal, the simplest solution takes precedence over a more complicated one*. Thus, a theory is valuable when it is able to explain, in basic terms, complex communicative situations. If the theory cannot be explained in simple terms it is not demonstrating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



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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5.5: 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?

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.

www.afirstlook.com/archive/talkabout.cfm?source=archther

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?



Causation, Generalization, Prediction

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 generalization 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 do not wish to respond, or assume 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 & 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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5.6: 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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5.7: 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.

Case In Point

Bike and Surf California — as written for www.Phoresia.org



It started off as a simple idea. My friend Mike and I wanted to go on a surf trip. Nothing strange about that! However, we have grown increasingly alarmed at how much we drive around looking for surf and the environmental impact this has. It's been much easier to recognize the amount of gas we burn as fuel prices have now pushed $5.00 a gallon in our area. As a result of our increasing awareness and concern, Mike and I wanted to do our trip with minimal environmental impact. How close to a zero-carbon footprint could we come?

I wondered if it would be possible to tow boards and gear behind bikes. We began to plan out all of the details of our trip, preparing to do the ride from Fort Bragg, CA to Santa Barbara, CA over a nine day period. All seemed perfectly simple as we began to put together the pieces for a successful trip. Then, at 4:00 a.m. on a February morning I woke up and thought, "I wonder if we can get sponsors?" We began a letter writing campaign to environmentally friendly gear manufacturers letting them know what we were doing, why we were doing it, and asked if they would like to donate sustainable gear to help us on our journey. While having new gear is great, it was our intent and promise to use the donated gear to educate others about our environmental impacts as consumers and sports enthusiasts, and to demonstrate the alternatives that are available. To our surprise, we received sponsorships from 22 organizations! Going back to systems theory, each of our sponsor's actions impacted Mike and me. We can never fully realize the full scope of our actions. We can only hope that our actions do more positive than negative. What we were seeing taking place was a real-world example of systems theory.

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.

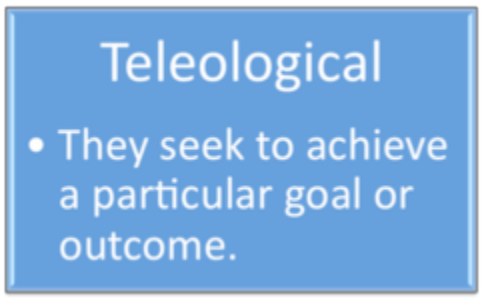
When applied to communication, the Systems Theory Paradigm seeks to understand the interconnectedness of human communication rather than looking at just one part. The basic idea behind **Systems Theory** is, *"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."* An easy example of this is baking a cake. 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.

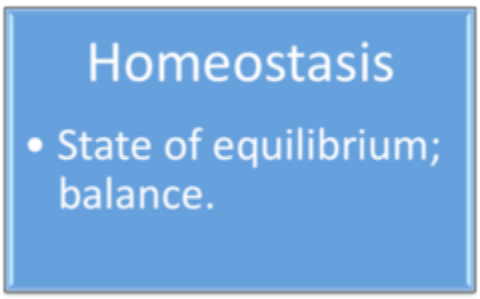
Another example is an automobile engine. If you have all the pieces of an automobile engine on a garage floor, you do not have an engine. You have parts of an engine. But, if you put the engine parts together in the right way, you get something much greater than the parts; you get transportation. These 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.





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 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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5.8: 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.



Toulmin Model

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.



Patriots-Steelers 2005

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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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5.9: 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?

Communication Theory Now

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 societie*s (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?

Contributions and Affiliations

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5.10: Communication Theory Summary

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

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6: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Understand what we consider as Communication research.
- Explain how Communication research is done.
- Identify motivational factors that influence Communication research.
- Explain the three broad approaches to Communication research as well as specific research methodologies.

6.1: Communication Research Overview

6.2: Doing Communication Research

6.3: Motivational Factors for Research

6.4: Rhetorical Methodologies

6.5: Quantitative Methods

6.6: Qualitative Methods

6.7: Communication Research Summary

6.8: Communication Research References

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6.1: Communication Research Overview

One stereotype about college students is that they do not have a lot of extra money to spend. As a result, we have witnessed our students conduct communication research in order to increase their cashflow, and most of them didn't even know they were doing it. What do we mean by this? Many of our students are allotted a certain amount of money by their parents, financial aid, and jobs to pay for school, housing, and extracurricular activities. When money starts to become scarce, many of our students go to their parents to see if they will provide more money. What does this have to do with communication research? Because when these same students have asked for money from their parents in the past, they theorize what communication messages might work in order to get more. For example, if a student asked for money from their parents last semester because they said they were running out of food, and it worked, they might do that again in order to get more money. What is happening is that these students are developing hypotheses regarding what communication behaviors will work to influence their parents. If the behaviors work, it validates they hypothesis. If the behaviors don't work, students can learn from this and adjust their behaviors in future exchanges to obtain a different outcome. It is likely you engage in these types of communication research activities on a daily basis.



Likely you have engaged in basic levels of Communication research without even knowing it. Remember our discussion in the last chapter that 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). Well, we generally do not understand how something functions in the world unless we have had some level of experience with it, and then evaluate the outcome of that experience. Have you ever planned out what you would say and do to persuade someone to go on a date? Have you ever intentionally violated the communicative expectations (such as arriving late or forgetting to do a favor) of a friend, "just to see what would happen?" While we do not consider these to be examples of formal Communication research, they do reveal what Communication research is about. Remember our discussion in Chapter 1, those of us who study Communication are interested in researching "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results?" (Smith, Lasswell and Casey 121).

The term "research" often conjures up visions of a mad scientist dressed in a white lab coat working through the night with chemicals, beakers, and gases on his/her latest scientific experiment. But how does this measure up with the realities of researching human communication? Researching communication presents its own set of challenges and circumstances that must be understood to better conceptualize how we can further our understanding of the ways we communicate with one another.

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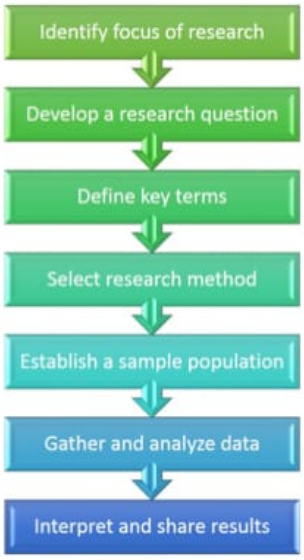
6.2: Doing Communication Research

Students often believe that researchers are well organized, meticulous, and academic as they pursue their research projects. The reality of research is that much of it is a hit-and-miss endeavor. Albert Einstein provided wonderful insight to the messy nature of research when he said, “If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?” Because a great deal of Communication research is still exploratory, we are continually developing new and more sophisticated methods to better understand how and why we communicate. Think about all of the advances in communication technologies (snapchat, instagram, etc.) and how quickly they come and go. Communication research can barely keep up with the ongoing changes to human communication.

Researching something as complex as human communication can be an exercise in creativity, patience, and failure. Communication research, while relatively new in many respects, should follow several basic principles to be effective. Similar to other types of research, Communication research should be systematic, rational, self-correcting, self-reflexive, and creative to be of use (Babbie; Bronowski; Buddenbaum; Novak; Copi; Peirce; Reichenbach; Smith; Hughes & Hayhoe).

Seven Basic Steps of Research

While research can be messy, there are steps we can follow to avoid some of the pitfalls inherent with any research project. Research doesn’t always work out right, but we do use the following guidelines as a way to keep research focused, as well as detailing our methods so other can replicate them. Let’s look at seven basic steps that help us conduct effective research.



- **Identify a focus of research**. To conduct research, the first thing you must do is identify what aspect of human communication interests you and make that the focus of inquiry. Most Communication researchers examine things that interest them; such as communication phenomena that they have questions about and want answered. For example, you may be interested in studying conflict between romantic partners. When using a deductive approach to research, one begins by identifying a focus of research and then examining theories and previous research to begin developing and narrowing down a research question.

- **Develop a research question(s)**. Simply having a focus of study is still too broad to conduct research, and would ultimately end up being an endless process of trial and error. Thus, it is essential to develop very specific research questions. Using our example above, what specific things would you want to know about conflict in romantic relationships? If you simply said you wanted to study conflict in romantic relationships, you would not have a solid focus and would spend a long time conducting your research with no results. However, you could ask, “Do couples use different types of conflict management strategies when they are first dating versus after being in a relationship for a while? It is essential to develop specific questions that guide what you research. It is also important to decide if an answer to your research question already exists somewhere

in the plethora of research already conducted. A review of the literature available at your local library may help you decide if others have already asked and answered a similar question. Another convenient resource will be your university's online database. This database will most likely provide you with resources of previous research through academic journal articles, books, catalogs, and various kinds of other literature and media.

- **Define key terms**. Using our example, how would you define the terms conflict, romantic relationship, dating, and long-term relationship? While these terms may seem like common sense, you would be surprised how many ways people can interpret the same terms and how particular definitions shape the research. Take the term long-term relationship, for example, what are all of the ways this can be defined? People married for 10 or more years? People living together for five or more years? Those who identify as being monogamous? It is important to consider populations who would be included and excluded from your study based on a particular definition and the resulting generalizability of your findings. Therefore, it is important to identify and set the parameters of what it is you are researching by defining what the key terms mean to you and your research. A research project must be fully **operationalized**, specifically describing how variables will be observed and measured. This will allow other researchers an opportunity to repeat the process in an attempt to replicate the results. Though more importantly, it will provide additional understanding and credibility to your research.

Communication Research Then

Wilber Schramm – The Modern Father of Communication

Although many aspects of the Communication discipline can be dated to the era of the ancient Greeks, and more specifically to individuals such as Aristotle or Plato, Communication Research really began to develop in the 20th century. James W. Tankard Jr. (1988) states in the article, Wilbur Schramm: Definer of a Field that, "Wilbur Schramm (1907-1987) probably did more to define and establish the field of Communication research and theory than any other person" (p. 1). In 1947 Wilbur Schramm went to the University of Illinois where he founded the first Institute of Communication Research. The Institute's purpose was, "to apply the methods and disciplines of the social sciences (supported, where necessary, by the fine arts and natural sciences) to the basic problems of press, radio and pictures; to supply verifiable information in those areas of communications where the hunch, the tradition, the theory and thumb have too often ruled; and by so doing to contribute to the better understanding of communications and the maximum use of communications for the public good" (p. 2).

- **Select an appropriate research methodology**. A methodology is the actual step-by-step process of conducting research. There are various methodologies available for researching communication. Some tend to work better than others for examining particular types of communication phenomena. In our example, would you interview couples, give them a survey, observe them, or conduct some type of experiment? Depending on what you wish to study, you will have to pick a process, or methodology, in order to study it. We'll discuss examples of methodologies later in this chapter.

- **Establish a sample population or data set**. It is important to decide who and what you want to study. One criticism of current Communication research is that it often relies on college students enrolled in Communication classes as the sample population. This is an example of convenience sampling. Charles Teddlie and Fen Yu write, "Convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study" (78). One joke in our field is that we know more about college students than anyone else. In all seriousness, it is important that you pick samples that are truly representative of *what* and *who* you want to research. If you are concerned about how long-term romantic couples engage in conflict, (remember what we said about definitions) college students may not be the best sample population. Instead, college students might be a good population for examining how romantic couples engage in conflict in the early stages of dating.

- **Gather and analyze data**. Once you have a research focus, research question(s), key terms, a method, and a sample population, you are ready to gather the actual data that will show you what it is you want to answer in your research question(s). If you have ever filled out a survey in one of your classes, you have helped a researcher gather data to be analyzed in order to answer research questions. The actual "doing" of your methodology will allow you to collect the data you need to know about how romantic couples engage in conflict. For example, one approach to using a survey to collect data is to consider adapting a questionnaire that is already developed. Communication Research Measures II: A Sourcebook is a good resource to find valid instruments for measuring many different aspects of human communication (Rubin et al.).

Communication Research Now

Communicating Climate Change Through Creativity

Communicating climate change has been an increasingly important topic for the past number of years. Today we hear more about the issue in the media than ever. However, “the challenge of climate change communication is thought to require systematic evidence about public attitudes, sophisticated models of behaviour change and the rigorous application of social scientific research” (Buirski). In South Africa, schools, social workers, and psychologist have found ways to change the way young people and children learn about about the issue. Through creatively, “climate change is rendered real through everyday stories, performances, and simple yet authentic ideas through children and school teachers to create a positive social norm” (Buirski). By engaging children’s minds rather than bombarding them with information, we can capture their attention (Buirski).

- **Interpret and share results**. Simply collecting data does not mean that your research project is complete. Remember, our research leads us to develop and refine theories so we have more sophisticated representations about how our world works. Thus, researchers must interpret the data to see if it tells us anything of significance about how we communicate. If so, we share our research findings to further the body of knowledge we have about human communication. Imagine you completed your study about conflict and romantic couples. Others who are interested in this topic would probably want to see what you discovered in order to help them in their research. Likewise, couples might want to know what you have found in order to help themselves deal with conflict better.

Although these seven steps seem pretty clear on paper, research is rarely that simple. For example, a master’s student conducted research for their Master’s thesis on issues of privacy, ownership and free speech as it relates to using email at work. The last step before obtaining their Master’s degree was to share the results with a committee of professors. The professors began debating the merits of the research findings. Two of the three professors felt that the research had not actually answered the research questions and suggested that the master’s candidate rewrite their two chapters of conclusions. The third professor argued that the author HAD actually answered the research questions, and suggested that an alternative to completely rewriting two chapters would be to rewrite the research questions to more accurately reflect the original intention of the study. This real example demonstrates the reality that, despite trying to account for everything by following the basic steps of research, research is always open to change and modification, even toward the end of the process.

Communication Research and You

Because we have been using the example of conflict between romantic couples, here is an example of communication in action by Thomas Bradbury, Ph.D regarding the study of conflict between romantic partners. What stands out to you? What would you do differently?

Which Conflicts Consume Couples the Most
http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/blogs/which-conflicts-consume-couples-most

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6.3: Motivational Factors for Research

We think it is important to discuss the fact that human nature influences all research. While some researchers might argue that their research is objective, realistically, no research is totally objective. What does this mean? Researchers have to make choices about what to research, how they will conduct their research, who will pay for their research, and how they will present their research conclusions to others. These choices are influenced by the motives and material resources of researchers. The most obvious case of this in the physical sciences is research sponsored by the tobacco industry that downplays the health hazards associated with smoking (Frisbee & Donley). Intuitively, we know that certain motivations influence this line of research as it is an example of an extreme case of motivational factors influencing research. Realistically though, all researchers are motivated by certain factors that influence their research.

We will highlight three factors that motivate the choices we make when conducting communication research: 1) The intended outcomes, 2) theoretical preferences, and 3) methodological preferences.

Intended Outcomes

One question researchers ask while doing their research project is, “What do I want to accomplish with this research?” Three primary research goals are to increase understanding of a behavior or phenomenon, predict behavior, or create social change.

Case In Point

The Evolution of Anti-drug Commercials

In 1987 an anti-drug campaign, Your Brain on Drugs began to air on television. Wikipedia writes, “The first PSA, from 1987, showed a man who held up an egg and said, “This is your brain,” before picking up a frying pan and adding, “This is drugs.” He then cracks open the egg, fries the contents, and says, “This is your brain on drugs.” Finally he looks up at the camera and asks, “Any questions?”

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

After careful examination, researchers quickly discovered that this ad campaign was not effective, as it actually made the frying of an egg appealing, especially to those people who were watching the ad that were hungry! Thus, in 1998, they revised the PSA to make it more dramatic.

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Scholars who study health campaigns are interested in finding the most effective ways to help get accurate health information to people so they can act on that information.

Here are some anti-marijuana advertisements the millennial generation may be familiar with:

There is this anti-marijuana commercial that tries to bring about the fears of smoking marijuana. Seth Stevenson states the commercial brings out two fears: "1) the fear that nonsmoker friends, or lovers, might find them tiresome and pathetic, and 2) the fear that they might be growing dependent on the drug."

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

The same can be said for this video. In the video a pet dog tells what looks to be its teenage owner to quit smoking weed. This is supposed to evoke guilt upon the owner and carry out to the viewer. Both campaigns "effectively [pick] at both of these insecurities" that anti-drug campaigns attempt to associate with smoking week.

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Do you find any of these effective? Why or why not? Think of anti-drug campaigns that would be effective for teens/young adults today.

A great deal of Communication research seeks **understanding** as the intended outcome of the research. As we gain greater understanding of human communication we are able to develop more sophisticated theories to help us understand how and why people communicate. One example might be research investigates the communication of registered nurses to understand how they use language to define and enact their professional responsibilities. Research has discovered that nurses routinely refer to themselves as "patient advocates" and state that their profession is unique, valuable, and distinct from being an assistant to physicians. Having this understanding can be useful for enacting change by educating physicians and nurses about the impacts of their language choices in health care.

A second intended outcome of Communication research is **prediction and control**. Ideas of prediction and control are taken from the physical sciences (remember our discussion of Empirical Laws theories in the last chapter?). Many Communication researchers want to use the results of their research to predict and control communication in certain contexts. This type of research can help us make communicative choices from an informed perspective. In fact, when you communicate, you often do so with the intention of prediction and control. Imagine walking on campus and seeing someone you would like to ask out. Because of your past experiences, you predict that if you say certain things to them in a certain way, you might have a greater likelihood that they will respond positively. Your predictions guide your behaviors in order to control the exchange at some level. This same idea motivates many Communication researchers to approach their research with the intention of being able to predict and control communication contexts. For example, in the article **The Fear of Public Speaking**, Sian Beilock, Ph.D explains prediction and control in action.

A third intended outcome of Communication research is positive **critical/cultural change** in the world. Scholars often perform research in order to challenge communicative norms and effect cultural and societal change. Research that examines health

communication campaigns, for example, seeks to understand how effective campaigns are in changing our health behaviors such as using condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases or avoiding high fat foods. When it is determined that health campaigns are ineffective, researchers often suggest changes to health communication campaigns to increase their efficacy in reaching the people who need access to the information (Stephenson & Southwell).

As humans, researchers have particular goals in mind. Having an understanding of what they want to accomplish with their research helps them formulate questions and develop appropriate methodologies for conducting research that will help them achieve their intended outcomes.

Theoretical Preferences

Remember that theoretical paradigms offer different ways to understand communication. While it is possible to examine communication from multiple theoretical perspectives, it has been our experience that our colleagues tend to favor certain theoretical paradigms over others. Put another way, we all understand the world in ways that make sense to us.

Which theoretical paradigm(s) do you most align yourself with? How would this influence what you would want to accomplish if you were researching human communication? What types of communication phenomena grab your attention? Why? These are questions that researchers wrestle with as they put together their research projects.

Methodological Preferences

As you've learned, *the actual process of doing research* is called the **methodology**. While most researchers have preferences for certain theoretical paradigms, most researchers also have preferred methodologies for conducting research in which they develop increased expertise throughout their careers. As with theories, there are a large number of methodologies available for conducting research. As we did with theories, we believe it is easier for you to understand methodologies by categorizing them into paradigms. Most Communication researchers have a preference for one research paradigm over the others. For our purposes, we have divided methodological paradigms into *1) rhetorical methodologies, 2) quantitative methodologies, and 3) qualitative methodologies*.

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6.4: Rhetorical Methodologies

We encode and decode messages everyday. As we take in messages, we use a number of criteria to evaluate them. We may ask, “Was the message good, bad, or both?” “Was it effective or ineffective?” “Did it achieve its intended outcome?” “How should I respond to the message?” Think about the last movie you watched. Did you have a conversation about the movie with others? Did that conversation include commentary on various parts of the film such as the set design, dialogue, plot, and character development? If so, you already have a taste of the variety of elements that go into rhetorical research. Simply stated, rhetorical methods of research are sophisticated and refined ways to evaluate messages. Foss explains that we use rhetorical approaches as a way “of systematically investigating and explaining symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (6).

Steps for Doing Rhetorical Research

We already outlined the seven basic steps for conducting research, but there are ways to vary this process for different methodologies. Below are the basic steps for conducting rhetorical research.

1. Determine a focus of study such as political speeches, television shows or genres, movies or movie genres, commercials, magazine texts, the rhetoric of social movement organizations, music lyrics, visual art, public memorials, etc.
2. Choose a rhetorical research method to evaluate and critique rhetorical acts and/or messages.
3. Analyze the message(s) of focus such as a Presidential address by using a particular rhetorical method.
4. Interpret the implications of the rhetorical act, as well as the rhetorical act itself. For example, a scholar might choose to rhetorically research television violence and provide interpretations regarding the implications of television violence on viewers.
5. Share the results of research. From sharing research comes the opportunity to improve our ability to create and evaluate effective messages. We can also use what we learn from rhetorical research to shape the ways messages are constructed and delivered.

Types of Methods for Rhetorical Criticism

What do rhetorical methods actually look like? How are they done? While each rhetorical methodology acts as a unique lens for understanding messages, no one is more correct over another. Instead, each allows us a different way for understanding messages and their effects. Let’s examine a few of the more common rhetorical methodologies including, *1) Neo-Aristotelian, 2) Fantasy-Theme, 3) Narrative, 4) Pentadic, 5) Feminist, and 6) Ideological*.

- **Neo-Aristotelian Criticism**. In Chapter 2 you learned quite a bit about the rhetorical roots of our field, including a few of the contributions of Aristotle. The neo-Aristotelian method uses Aristotle’s ideas to evaluate rhetorical acts. First, a researcher recreates the context for others by describing the historical period of the message being studied. Messages are typically speeches or other forms of oral rhetoric as this was the primary focus of rhetoric during the Classical Period. Second, the researcher evaluates the message using the canons of rhetoric. For example, the researcher may examine what types of logic are offered in a speech or how its delivery enhances or detracts from the ethos of the speaker. Finally, the researcher assesses the effectiveness of the message given its context and its use of the canons.
- **Fantasy Theme Criticism**. Fantasy Theme analysis is a more contemporary rhetorical method credited to Ernest G. Bormann (1972; 1985; 1990; 2000; Cooren et al.). The focus of this methodology is on groups rather than individuals, and is particularly well-suited for analyzing group messages that come from social movements, political campaigns, or organizational communication. Essentially, a fantasy is a playful way of interpreting an experience (Foss). Fantasy theme research looks for words or phrases that characterize the shared vision of a group in order to explain how the group characterizes or understands events around them. Fantasy theme analysis offers names and meaning to a group’s experience and presents outsiders with a frame for interpreting the group’s rhetorical response.
- **Narrative Criticism**. Much of what you learned as a child was probably conveyed to you through stories (bedtime stories, fables, and fairy tales) that taught you about gender roles, social roles, ethics, etc. Fairy tales, for example, teach us that women are valued for their youth and beauty and that men are valued when they are strong, handsome, smart, and riding a white horse! Other stories you remember may be more personal, as in the telling of your family’s immigration to the United States and the values learned from that experience. Whatever the case, narrative rhetorical research contends that people learn through the sharing of stories. A researcher using this method examines narratives and their component parts—the plot,

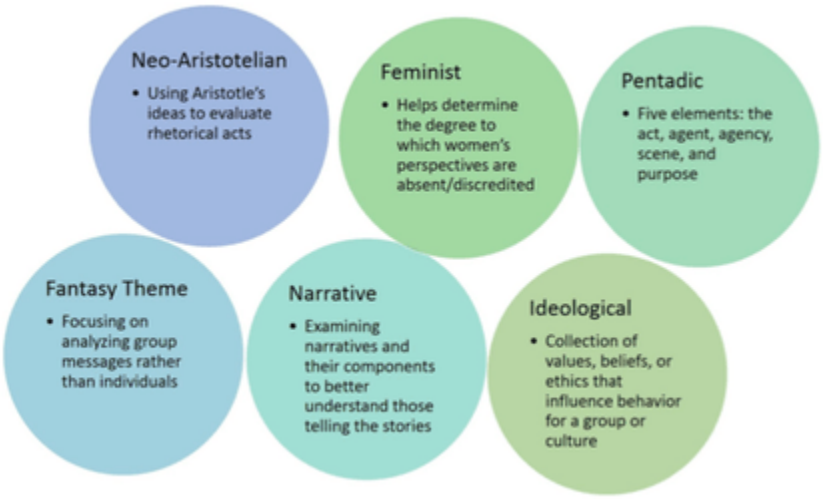
characters, and settings—to better understand the people (culture, groups, etc.) telling these stories. This research approach also focuses on the effects of repeating narratives. Think about Hollywood romantic comedies such as *When Harry Met Sally*, *Silver Lining Playbook*, *Knocked Up*, and *Bridesmaids*. When you see one of these movies, does it feel like you've seen it before? For example, For example, these movies use usually have a confused character and some conflict that ends in a perfect relationship. Why does Hollywood do this? What is the purpose and/or effect of retelling these story lines over and over again? These are some of the concerns of researchers who use narrative analysis to research rhetorical acts.

- **Pentadic Criticism**. Kenneth Burke developed the idea of the pentad using the metaphor of drama. As in a dramatic play, the pentad contains five elements—the act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. The act tells what happened, the agent is who performed the act, agency includes the tools/means the agent used to perform the act, the scene provides the context for the act, and the purpose explains why the act occurred. By using the elements of the pentad to answer questions of who, what, when, where, and why, a rhetorical researcher may uncover a communicator's motives for her or his rhetorical actions. Click below to watch a visual representation of Kenneth Burke's dramatistic pentad.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online



- **Feminist Criticism**. Most feminist perspectives share the basic assumptions that women are routinely oppressed by patriarchy, women's experiences are different then men's, and women's perspectives are not equally incorporated into our culture (Foss). We can use feminist rhetorical research to help us determine the degree to which women's perspectives are both absent and/or discredited in rhetorical acts. Thus, feminist rhetorical research, "is the analysis of rhetoric to discover how the rhetorical construction of gender is used as a means for oppression and how that process can be challenged and resisted" (Foss, 168). Although many think of "women" in reference to feminism, it is important to note that many men consider themselves feminists and that feminism is concerned with oppression of all forms—race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender.
- **Ideological Criticism**. Ideology is a collection of values, beliefs, or ethics that influence modes of behavior for a group or culture. Rhetorical scholars interested in understanding a culture's values often use ideological methods. Ideologies are complex and multifaceted, and ideological methods draw from diverse schools of thought such as Marxism, feminism, structuralism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism. This research often uncovers assumptions and biases in our language that provide insight into how dominant groups and systems are maintained rhetorically, and how they can be challenged and transformed through rhetoric. Artifacts of popular culture such as movies, television shows, etc. are often the focus of this research as they are the sites at which struggles about meanings occur in the popular culture.

Case In Point

Rhetorical Methods In Action

In 2012, Mallary Jean Tenore examines rhetorical strategies that lead to successful speeches in an article titled "**10 rhetorical strategies that made Bill Clinton's DNC speech effective.**" She looks at different rhetorical methods used to develop strong arguments in speech writing.

In contrast, Dr. Stephen H. Browne's (2003) rhetorical criticism entitled, "Jefferson's First Declaration of Independence: A Summary View of the Rights of British America Revisited." explores Jefferson's Summary View of the Rights of British America to understand and demonstrate Jefferson's skill as a storyteller, and explain what Jefferson was trying to accomplish through a series of narratives. This piece demonstrates rhetorical research used as a means of understanding a historical rhetorical act in its particular context.

Outcomes of Rhetorical Methodologies

What is the value of researching acts of communication from a rhetorical perspective? The systematic research of messages tells us a great deal about the ways people communicate, the contexts in which they communicate, the effects of communication in particular contexts, and potential areas to challenge and transform messages to create social change.

Rhetorical research methodologies help us better determine how and why messages are effective or ineffective, as well as the outcomes of messages on audiences. Think about advertising campaigns. Advertising agencies spend millions of dollars evaluating the effectiveness of their messages on audiences. The purpose of advertising is to persuade us to act in some way, usually the purchasing of products or services. Advertisers not only evaluate the effectiveness of their messages by determining the amount of products sold, they also evaluate effectiveness by looking at audience response to the messages within the current cultural and social contexts.

Contributions and Affiliations

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6.5: Quantitative Methods

Steps for Doing Quantitative Research

Rhetorical research methods have been being developed since the Classical Period. As the transition was made to seeing communication from a social scientific perspective, scholars began studying communication using the methods established from the physical sciences. Thus, quantitative methods represent the steps of using the Scientific Method of research.

1. Decide on a focus of study based primarily on your interests. What do you want to discover or answer?
2. Develop a research question(s) to keep your research focused.
3. Develop a hypothesis(es). A hypothesis states how a researcher believes the subjects under study will or will not communicate based on certain variables. For example, you may have a research question that asks, "Does the gender of a student impact the number of times a college professor calls on his/her students?" From this, you might form two hypotheses: "Instructors call on female students less often then male students." and "Instructors call on students of their same sex."
4. Collect data in order to test hypotheses. In our example, you might observe various college classrooms in order to count which students professors call on more frequently.
5. Analyze the data by processing the numbers using statistical programs like SPSS that allow quantitative researchers to detect patterns in communication phenomena. Analyzing data in our example would help us determine if there are any significant differences in the ways in which college professors call on various students.
6. Interpret the data to determine if patterns are significant enough to make broad claims about how humans communicate? Simply because professors call on certain students a few more times than other students may or may not indicate communicative patterns of significance.
7. Share the results with others. Through the sharing of research we continue to learn more about the patterns and rules that guide the ways we communicate.

The term **quantitative** refers to *research in which we can quantify, or count, communication phenomena*. Quantitative methodologies draw heavily from research methods in the physical sciences explore human communication phenomena through the collection and analysis of numerical data. Let's look at a simple example. What if we wanted to see how public speaking textbooks represent diversity in their photographs and examples. One thing we could do is quantify these to come to conclusions about these representations. For quantitative research, we must determine which communicative acts to count? How do we go about counting them? Is there any human communicative behavior that would return a 100% response rate like the effects of gravity in the physical sciences? What can we learn by counting acts of human communication?

Suppose you want to determine what communicative actions illicit negative responses from your professors. How would you go about researching this? What data would you count? In what ways would you count them? Who would you study? How would you know if you discovered anything of significance that would tell us something important about this? These are tough questions for researchers to answer, particularly in light of the fact that, unlike laws in the physical sciences, human communication is varied and unpredictable.



Nevertheless, there are several quantitative methods researchers use to study communication in order to reveal patterns that help us predict and control our communication. Think about polls that provide feedback for politicians. While people do not all think the same, this type of research provides patterns of thought to politicians who can use this information to make policy decisions that impact our lives. Let's look at a few of the more frequent quantitative methods of communication research.

Types of Quantitative Methods

There are many ways researchers can quantify human communication. Not all communication is easily quantified, but much of what we know about human communication comes from quantitative research.

- **Experimental Research** is the most well-established quantitative methodology in both the physical and social sciences. This approach uses the principles of research in the physical sciences to conduct experiments that explore human behavior. Researchers choose whether they will conduct their experiments in lab settings or real-world settings. Experimental research generally includes a control group (the group where variables are not altered) and the experimental group(s) (the group in which variables are altered). The groups are then carefully monitored to see if they enact different reactions to different variables.

To determine if students were more motivated to learn by participating in a classroom game versus attending a classroom lecture, the researchers designed an experiment. They wanted to test the hypothesis that students would actually be more motivated to learn from the game. Their next question was, "do students actually learn more by participating in games?" In order to find out the answers to these questions they conducted the following experiment. In a number of classes instructors were asked to proceed with their normal lecture over certain content (control group), and in a number of other classes, instructors used a game that was developed to teach the same content (experimental group). The students were issued a test at the end of the semester to see which group did better in retaining information, and to find out which method most motivated students to want to learn the material. It was determined that students were more motivated to learn by participating in the game, which proved the hypothesis. The other thing that stood out was that students who participated in the game actually remembered more of the content at the end of the semester than those who listened to a lecture. You might have hypothesized these conclusions yourself, but until research is done, our assumptions are just that (Hunt, Lippert & Paynton).

Case In Point

Quantitative Methods In Action

Wendy S. Zabada-Ford (2003) conducted survey research of 253 customers to determine their expectations and experiences with physicians, dentists, mechanics, and hairstylists. Her article, "Research Communication Practices of Professional Service Providers: Predicting Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty" researched the perceptions of customers' personalized service as

related to their expectations in order to predict their satisfaction with the actual service they received. In this study, the goal was to be able to predict the behavior of customers based on their expectations before entering a service-provider context.

Michael T. Stephenson's (2003) article, "Examining Adolescents' Responses to Anti-marijuana PSAs" examined how adolescents respond to anti-marijuana public service announcements in the U.S. On the surface, this study may fit into the "understanding" part of the continuum of intended outcomes. However, this research can be used to alter and change messages, such as PSAs, to produce behavioral change in the culture. In this case, the change would be to either keep adolescents from smoking marijuana, or to get them to stop this behavior if they are currently engaged in it.

- **Survey Research** is used to ask people a number of questions about particular topics. Surveys can be online, mailed, handed out, or conducted in interview format. After researchers have collected survey data, they represent participants' responses in numerical form using tables, graphs, charts, and/or percentages. On our campus, anonymous survey research was done to determine the drinking and drug habits of our students. This research demonstrated that the percentage of students who frequently use alcohol or drugs is actually much lower than what most students think. The results of this research are now used to educate students that not everyone engages in heavy drinking or drug use, and to encourage students to more closely align their behaviors with what actually occurs on campus, not with what students perceive happens on campus. It is important to remember that there is a possibility that people do not always tell the truth when they answer survey questions. We won't go into great detail here due to time, but there are sophisticated statistical analyses that can account for this to develop an accurate representation of survey responses.



- **Content Analysis**. Researchers use content analysis to count the number of occurrences of their particular focus of inquiry. Communication researchers often conduct content analyses of movies, commercials, television shows, magazines, etc., to count the number of occurrences of particular phenomena in these contexts to explore potential effects. Harmon, for example, used content analysis in order to demonstrate how the portrayal of blackness had changed within Black Entertainment Television (BET). She did this by observing the five most frequently played films from the time the cable network was being run by a black owner, to the five most frequently played films after being sold to white-owned Viacom, Inc. She found that the portrayal, context and power of the black man changes when a white man versus a black man is defining it. Content analysis is extremely effective for demonstrating patterns and trends in various communication contexts. If you would like to do a simple content analysis, count the number of times different people are represented in photos in your textbooks. Are there more men than women? Are there more caucasians represented than other groups? What do the numbers tell you about how we represent different people?

- **Meta-Analysis**. Do you ever get frustrated when you hear about one research project that says a particular food is good for your health, and then some time later, you hear about another research project that says the opposite? Meta-analysis analyzes existing statistics found in a collection of quantitative research to demonstrate patterns in a particular line of research over time. Meta-analysis is research that seeks to combine the results of a series of past studies to see if their results are similar, or to determine if they show us any new information when they are looked at in totality. The article, *Impact of Narratives on Persuasion in Health Communication: A Meta-Analysis* examined past research regarding narratives and their persuasiveness in health care settings. The meta-analysis revealed that in-person and video narratives had the most

persuasive impacts while written narratives had the least (Shen, Sheer, Li).

Outcomes of Quantitative Methodologies

Because it is unlikely that Communication research will yield 100% certainty regarding communicative behavior, why do Communication researchers use quantitative approaches? First, the broader U.S. culture values the ideals of quantitative science as a means of learning about and representing our world. To this end, many Communication researchers emulate research methodologies of the physical sciences to study human communication phenomena. Second, you'll recall that researchers have certain theoretical and methodological preferences that motivate their research choices. Those who understand the world from an Empirical Laws and/or Human Rules Paradigm tend to favor research methods that test communicative laws and rules in quantitative ways.

Even though Communication research cannot produce results with 100% accuracy, quantitative research demonstrates patterns of human communication. In fact, many of your own interactions are based on a loose system of quantifying behavior. Think about how you and your classmates sit in your classrooms. Most students sit in the same seats every class meeting, even if there is not assigned seating. In this context, it would be easy for you to count how many students sit in the same seat, and what percentage of the time they do this. You probably already recognize this pattern without having to do a formal study. However, if you wanted to truly demonstrate that students communicatively manifest territoriality to their peers, it would be relatively simple to conduct a quantitative study of this phenomenon. After completing your research, you could report that X% of students sat in particular seats X% of times. This research would not only provide us with an understanding of a particular communicative pattern of students, it would also give us the ability to predict, to a certain degree, their future behaviors surrounding space issues in the classroom.

Quantitative research is also valuable for helping us determine similarities and/or differences among groups of people or communicative events. Representative examples of research in the areas of gender and communication (Berger; Slater), culture and communication (McCann, Ota, Giles, & Caraker; Hylmo & Buzzanell), as well as ethnicity and communication (Jiang Bresnahan, Ohashi, Nebashi, Wen Ying, Shearman; Murray-Johnson) use quantitative methodologies to determine trends and patterns of communicative behavior for various groups. While these trends and patterns cannot be applied to all people, in all contexts, at all times, they help us understand what variables play a role in influencing the ways we communicate.

While quantitative methods can show us numerical patterns, what about our personal lived experiences? How do we go about researching them, and what can they tell us about the ways we communicate? Qualitative methods have been established to get at the "essence" of our lived experiences, as we subjectively understand them.

Contributions and Affiliations

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6.6: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research methodologies draw much of their approach from the social sciences, particularly the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, and Social-Psychology. If you've ever wished you could truly capture and describe the essence of an experience you have had, you understand the goal of qualitative research methods. Rather than statistically analyzing data, or evaluating and critiquing messages, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the subjective lived-experience of those they study. In other words, how can we come to a more rich understanding of how people communicate?

Steps for Doing Qualitative Research

Qualitative approaches break from traditional research ideals developed in the physical sciences. As a result, the steps for conducting qualitative research vary from the seven basic steps outlined above.



1. Planning is the first step for qualitative research. (Lindlof 176). You might want to study the communication of registered nurses. Obviously, the topic "the communication of registered nurses" is too large so careful planning in regards to who should be the focus of study, in what context, what research questions should be asked, etc. are all part of the initial planning of research.
2. Getting in is the second step of qualitative research (Lindlof). Because qualitative research usually focuses on human communication in real-world settings, researchers must gain access to the people and contexts they wish to study. For example, would you want an audio or video recording of your interaction with a physician as you tell him/her your medical problems (DiMatteo, Robinson, Heritage, Tabbarah, & Fox; Barry)?
3. Observing and learning make up the third step of qualitative research. For example, researchers must decide whether or not to reveal themselves to those they are studying. A researcher may choose to conduct interviews, look at communication artifacts, observe communication as it occurs, write field-notes, and/or audio or video record communication. Each of these choices has an impact on the outcomes of the research.
4. Analyze what you have observed. There are exhaustive methods for examining and analyzing qualitative data. Issues of right versus wrong ways of analysis can be addressed by recognizing that the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to everyone, but to share the lived experiences of those who are researched.
5. Share conclusions of the research. Again, research should be shared with others so they can gain a greater understanding of the lived-experience of those researched.

In an attempt to define qualitative methods Thomas Lindlof states that qualitative research examines the "form and content of human behavior...to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations" (21). Anderson and Meyer state that qualitative methods, "do not rest their evidence on the logic of mathematics, the principle of numbers, or the methods of statistical analysis" (247). Dabbs says that qualitative research looks at the quality of phenomena while quantitative methods measure quantities and/or amounts. In qualitative research researchers are interested in the, "what, how, when, and where of a thing....[looking for] the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg 2-3). Data collection comes in the form of words or pictures (Neuman 28). As Kaplan provides a very simple way of defining qualitative research when he says, "if you can measure it, that ain't it" (206).

Types of Qualitative Methods

While qualitative research sounds simple, it can be a "messy" process because things do not always go as planned. One way to make qualitative research "cleaner" is to be familiar with, and follow, the various established qualitative methods available for studying human communication.

- **Ethnography**. Ethnography is arguably the most recognized and common method of qualitative research in Communication. Ethnography "places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study. From this vantage, researchers can examine various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations" to others (Berg 148). Ethnographers try to understand the communicative acts of people as they occur in their actual communicative environments. One way to think of this is the idea of learning about a new culture by immersing oneself in that culture. While there are many strategies for conducting ethnography, the idea is that a researcher must enter the environment of those under study to observe and understand their communication.

- **Focus Group Interviewing**. Researchers who use focus group interviewing meet with groups of people to understand their communication characteristics. (Berg). These interviews foster an environment for participants to discuss particular topics of interest to the group and/or researcher. While we are all familiar with the numbers that we encounter in political polls, every so often television news organizations will conduct focus group interviews to find out how particular groups actually feel about, and experience, the political process as a citizen. This is an applied version of focus group research techniques and provides insight into the ways various groups understand and enact their realities.

- **Action Research**. A qualitative method whose intended outcome is social change is action research. Action research seeks to create positive social change through "a highly reflective, experiential, and participatory mode of research in which all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subject alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research enterprise" (Berg 196; Wadsworth). The goal of action research is to provide information that is useful to a particular group of people that will empower the members of that group to create change as a result of the research (Berg). An example of action research might be when researchers study the teaching strategies of teachers in the classroom. Typically, teachers involve themselves in the research and then use the findings to improve their teaching methods. If you've ever had a professor who had unique styles of teaching, it is likely that he/she may have been involved in research that examined new approaches to teaching students.



- **Unobtrusive Research**. Another method for conducting qualitative research is unobtrusive research. As Berg points out, "to some extent, all the unobtrusive strategies amount to examining and assessing human traces" (209). We can learn a great deal about the behavior of others by examining the traces humans leave behind as they live their lives. In a research class offered at our university, for instance, students investigated the content of graffiti written in university bathrooms. Because our campus has an environmentally conscious culture, much of the graffiti in bathrooms reflects this culture with slogans written on paper towel dispensers that read, "Paper towels=trees." The students who conducted this research were using unobtrusive strategies to determine dimensions of student culture in the graffiti that was left behind in bathrooms.

- **Historiography**. Historiography is a method of qualitative research "for discovering, from records and accounts, what happened during some past period" (Berg 233). Rather than simply putting together a series of facts, research from this perspective seeks to gain an understanding of the communication in a past social group or context. For example, the timelines in the history chapter of this text are an attempt to chronologically put together the story of the discipline of Communication. While there is no "true" story, your authors have tried to piece together, from their own research, the important pieces that make up what we believe is the story of the formation of Communication study.

- **Case Studies**. Case studies involve gathering significant information about particular people, contexts, or phenomena to understand a particular case under investigation. This approach uses many methods for data collection but focuses on a particular case to gain "holistic description and explanation" (Berg 251). Those who use case study approaches may look at organizations, groups within those organizations, specific people, etc. The idea is to gain a broad understanding of the phenomena and draw conclusions from them. For example, a case study may examine a specific teaching method as a possible solution to increase graduation rates while improving student information retention (Foss et al.). Examining specific cases may help some teachers rethink their current teaching method and offer some alternatives to the standardized teaching paradigms.

While there are other qualitative research methodologies, the methods one chooses to examine communication are most often decided by the researcher's intended outcomes, resources available, and the research question(s) of focus. There are no hard rules for qualitative research. Instead, researchers must make many choices as they engage in this process.

Outcomes of Qualitative Methodologies

What can we learn by using qualitative research methods for studying communication? Qualitative Communication researchers often believe that quantitative methods do not capture the essence of our lived experience. In other words, it is difficult to quantify everything about our lives and therefore, we need different strategies for understanding our world. Think of the various ways you experience and communicate in your relationships? It's highly unlikely that you spend the bulk of your communication quantifying your daily experiences. However, through methods like observation, interviewing, journaling, etc., we might be able to get a better understanding of the ways people experience and communicate their feelings.

Communication Research and You

Qualitative Methods In Actions

Developing the ability to perform research is becoming a necessary skill in both the world of academia as well as in today's competitive workforce. With the move from the industrial age to the information age, many jobs center around the creation and dissemination of information. With so many online options for retrieving information, it is more important to have skills in gathering information rather than memorizing facts and data. As it is vital to be able to access proper information when needed, many universities require a specific amount of research hours for both undergraduate and masters degree programs. A variety of career opportunities require research experience such as marketing agencies or health industries.

Another value of qualitative research is that it resonates with readers who are able to identify with the lived-experiences represented in the research (Neuman). Statistical studies often seem detached from how we experience life. However, qualitative studies contain "rich description, colorful detail, and unusual characters; they give the reader a feel for social settings (Neuman 317). This rich description allows us to identify with the communication experiences of others, and learn through this identification.

Over the years, female scholars have demonstrated a greater frequency in the use of qualitative approaches (Grant, Ward & Rong; Ward & Grant), producing significant contributions to our understanding of human communication using these methods. From understanding to social change, feminist scholars demonstrate the importance of qualitative inquiry for strengthening the body of scholarship in our discipline. While researchers who use quantitative approaches tend to value prediction and control as potential outcomes of their research, those who use qualitative approaches seek greater understanding of human communication phenomena, or evaluate current pragmatic uses of human communication to help identify and change oppressive power structures.

Contributions and Affiliations

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6.7: Communication Research Summary

Summary

Communication research is important because it focuses on a common goal—to enhance our interactions with others. In this chapter we highlighted how research is done and the basic steps that guide most research projects—identify the topic, write a research question, define key terms, select a methodology, establish a sample, gather and analyze the data, and finally, interpret and share the results. When conducting research, three factors motivate the choices we make: our intended outcomes, theoretical preferences, and methodological preferences. Depending on these factors, research may lead us to greater understanding, allow us to predict or control a communication situation, or create cultural change.

Conceptualizing Communication research can be done more easily by understanding the three broad methodological approaches/paradigms for conducting Communication research: Rhetorical Methodologies, Quantitative Methodologies, and Qualitative Methodologies. The rhetorical approach evaluates messages in various contexts such as political discourse, art, and popular culture. A variety of methods are available such as neo-aristotelian, fantasy theme, narrative, pentadic, feminist, and ideological criticism. Quantitative methods are characterized by counting phenomena and are useful for predicting communication outcomes or comparing cultures and populations. They include experimental research, surveys, content analysis, and meta-analysis. Qualitative methods offer the opportunity to understand human communication as it occurs in a "natural" context rather than a laboratory setting. This is accomplished through ethnography, focus groups, action research, unobtrusive research, historiography, and case studies. While these approaches share similarities, their focus and specific methods are quite different and produce different outcomes. No research methodology or method is better than another. Instead, approaches to Communication research simply reveal different aspects of human communication in action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you were going to conduct communication research, what topic(s) would be most interesting to you? What specific questions would you want to ask and answer? How would you go about doing this?
2. Of the three broad research methodologies, do you find yourself having a preference for one of them? If so, what specific type of research method would you want to use within the area you have a preference for?
3. If you were going to conduct research, what outcome would you want to gain from your research? Are you more interested in understanding, prediction/control, or creating social change? What is the value of each of these approaches?

KEY TERMS

- action research
- case studies
- content analysis
- continuum of intended outcomes
- control group
- critical/cultural change
- ethnography
- data
- experimental group
- experimental research
- fantasy theme
- feminist
- focus group interviewing
- historiography
- ideological
- key terms
- meta-analysis
- methodological preferences
- methodology
- narrative

- neo-Aristotelian
- pentadic
- prediction/control
- qualitative methodologies
- quantitative methodologies
- research
- research focus
- research questions
- rhetorical methodologies
- sample
- survey research
- theoretical preferences
- understanding
- unobtrusive research

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7: RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define rhetoric.
- Identify key features of classical rhetorical theory.
- Identify the challenges that contemporary theorists are making to the study of rhetoric.
- Define rhetorical criticism.
- Explain the purpose and uses of rhetorical criticism.
- Explain the different models of rhetorical criticism.
- Understand how rhetorical theory and criticism are a current part of the communication discipline.

In this chapter devoted to rhetorical theory and criticism, we will explore both of these separate but related fields of inquiry, briefly map out their history, discuss some of the major rhetorical theories and methods of doing rhetorical criticism, and finally, explain how this specialization contributes to the larger discipline of Communication. But, before going any further, let's begin by highlighting the definitional and historical debate so we may begin with a common understanding of the term, "rhetoric." Remember from Chapter 5 that we are defining **rhetoric** as *"any kind of symbol use that functions in any realm"* (Foss, Foss, and Griffin 7).

7.1: Rhetorical Criticism Overview

7.2: Rhetoric In Ancient Times

7.3: Understanding Rhetorical Criticism

7.4: Current Uses of Rhetorical Theory and Criticism

7.5: Rhetorical Criticism Summary

7.6: Rhetorical Criticism References

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7.1: Rhetorical Criticism Overview

What do you think of when you hear the word “rhetoric”? Do you have a positive association with the word? Perhaps it feels difficult to define. We often hear that rhetoric is connected to politics, or specifically, the speeches made by politicians, as in, “That campaign speech was just a bunch of empty rhetoric.” Sound familiar? As is often the case, the popular media has distorted the meaning of this word thus, making it difficult to understand. Another problem is that “rhetoric is not a content area that contains a definite body of knowledge, like physics; instead, rhetoric might be understood as the study and practice of shaping content” (Covino and Jolliffe 4). A third source of difficulty when it comes to defining this concept is that scholars themselves have been debating this term for thousands of years!

One would think that after thousands of years people would finally come to an agreement about what rhetoric means. But as is the way with all symbols (words in this case) their meaning can and does change over time to reflect the ever-changing social, political, religious, and cultural context in which they operate. More specifically, they change to reflect the needs, attitudes and beliefs of the people living and communicating within a particular context. Let us take a trip around the world and through time to explore the origin and meaning of rhetoric. As we tour the origins and various definitions of rhetoric we will also highlight the view or scope allowed by each, for “a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (Burke 49).

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7.2: Rhetoric In Ancient Times

We will begin our tour in Ancient Greece with the "first four"—Aspasia of Miletus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—who have come to be regarded as the foremother and forefathers of rhetoric and the Communication discipline as a whole. Although little is known about her because she vanished from history circa 401 BCE, **Aspasia of Miletus** was perhaps the foremother of classical rhetoric as she is rumored to have taught rhetoric and home economics to Socrates. Her social position was that of a *hetaera*, or companion who was "more educated than respectable women, and [was] expected to accompany men on occasions where 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 that included the most prominent Sophists of the day. In the circle she made both friends and enemies as a result of her political savvy and public speaking ability.

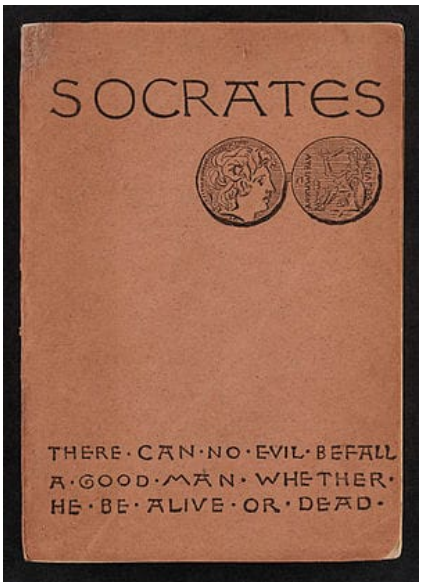


Figure 7.2.1: (1883) Socrates. A translation of the Apology, Crito, and parts of the Phaedo of Plato.

As a student of **Socrates** (469-399 BCE), **Plato** (429-347 BCE) wrote about rhetoric in the form of dialogues wherein the main character is Socrates. Through this form 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 the ultimate truth and understanding*. Think for a moment about contemporary situations wherein this process is utilized. What about an in-class discussion wherein the professor questions the students about an interpretation or meaning of a poem? Or the role that a therapist takes by asking a series of questions to a patient to bring greater clarity in understanding one's own thoughts, motives, and behavioral patterns? These are just two examples of the dialectic at work. What others can you think of? Ironic is the fact that while Plato contributed a great deal to classical rhetorical theory he was also very critical of it. In Georgias, for example, Plato argued that because rhetoric does not require a unique body of knowledge it is a false rather than true art.

While Plato condemned the art of rhetoric, his student, **Aristotle** (384-322 BCE) believed in the possibility of rhetoric as a means of creating community. The dialectical, or give and take approach, allows people to share and test ideas with one another with the goal of a more prosperous city-state. He defined rhetoric as the ability to see, in each particular case, the available means of persuasion. Two parts of this definition are particularly significant: the terms "in each particular case" and "persuasion." The former suggests that Aristotle recognized the importance of context and audience; that a specific situation with a particular audience might direct the speaker, or rhetor, to create a message in a form that might look different in another context with another audience. He recognized the importance of **audience analysis**: that *different things appeal to different people*. To put it in contemporary terms, let us look at an example from the marketing and advertising world. Mattel, the company who makes Barbie has long been interested in selling the doll as well as her friends and accessories worldwide. (Currently, a Barbie is sold somewhere in the world every 2 seconds!) Researching the Japanese doll market, advertisers found that Japanese girls do not play with their dolls in the same way as American girls–dressing them, fixing their hair, and role-playing with them. Instead, Japanese girls might place the dolls on a shelf and admire them. To sell Barbie in Japan meant that Mattel must also "teach" Japanese girls how to play and use Barbie like American kids do. As a result, their Japanese television commercials are explicit in the verbal messages as well as the images of playing with (not looking at) Barbie. Mattel has taken the same message—sell

Barbie—and constructed it differently depending on the context and their audience. This would be an example of creating the necessary appeals to persuade kids (to buy Barbie) in each particular case (America versus Japan).

The second part of his definition dealing with persuasion suggests that Aristotle conceptualized a very specific and limited scope for rhetoric. Rhetoric exists in contexts where a person or a group of people is engaged in the process of communicating for the purpose of changing another in some way. Change may come in the form of trying to influence a prospective voter in an upcoming election or convincing a jury on the guilt or innocence of a defendant in a murder trial. As we will discuss later in this chapter, the sole focus on persuasion is one of the critiques that contemporary theorists have when assessing rhetorical theory.

While much of the classical theorists were men and dealt with traditionally male roles, **Pan Chao** (c. 45 CE-115 CE) provides historical insight into Eastern rhetoric and the role of women in rhetoric. A strong believer in the benefits of education, she was one of the first people to argue for the education of girls and women. Writing on the four qualifications of womanhood (virtue, words, bearing, and work), she said of womanly words, they "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" (Pan Chao 417). The role of women and other nondominant groups is another concern of contemporary theorists that will be discussed later in more detail.

Articulating a Classical Rhetorical Theory

Two other key figures in classical rhetoric are Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Quintillian (c. 35-95). They deserve recognition for combining much of what was known from the Greeks and Romans into more complete theoretical systems. Many of the concepts to emerge from this time are still relevant today, although they may have been transformed in some way to reflect a more contemporary context. You may, for example, recognize them in the setting of a public speaking course. In the classical system there were three types of public speeches—legal, political, and ceremonial. Eventually the genre of rhetorical discourse would include poetry, sermons, letters, songs; and with the advent of the technology, mass mediated discourse such as television, radio, and film.

Another major contribution was the formation of the **five canons**: *invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery*. All of these should be easily recognizable as the stages of speech preparation. First, the speechwriter must invent and formulate the arguments based on logos– rational appeal or logic. Next, the speech is organized in the most effective manner. Aristotle thought the logical appeals should go in the main part or body of the speech and the appeals to ethos and pathos should fall in the introduction and conclusion. After the proper arrangement of the information, the writer must think about style—the particular language choices that will enhance the enjoyment, and thus acceptability of the argument, on the part of the audience. The forth step, memory, was vital in the classical period but is rarely a requirement in today's public speaking contexts. Notes, cue cards, and, teleprompters are all devices that have replaced this original forth canon. The final element, delivery, consists of the use of nonverbal gestures, eye contact and vocal variations when presenting the speech to an audience. Think back to the evaluation form that your professor used to evaluate your speeches in class; chances are you were evaluated in some manner on your ability to perform the five canons.

Rhetoric Loses Its Status, Then Rises Again

As the Roman Empire fell and the historical period known as the Middle Ages (400-1400) dominated, rhetoric fell from grace. It was no longer a valued and honored skill but instead was thought of as a pagan art. This view coincided with the Christian domination of the period as, "Christians believed that the rhetorical ideas formulated by the pagans of classical Greece and Rome should not be studied and that possession of Christian truth was accompanied by an automatic ability to communicate the truth effectively" (Foss, Foss, and Trapp 8). Ironically, it was a Christian, Augustine, who recognized and articulated the role for rhetoric in the church. Prior to his conversion to Christianity, Augustine was a teacher of rhetoric, thus, he knew skills in oratory and that the ability to move an audience was consistent with the duties of a preacher. As the world grew bigger, people needed a form of communication that would travel across distance—thus letter writing became popular and was now considered within the scope of rhetoric.

As the Middle Ages ended, the Renaissance took its place from 1400-1600. During this period two intellectual trends—humanism and rationalism—shaped the study of rhetoric. **Humanism** is *the study of history, moral philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric of classical antiquity*. These thinkers believed that the word was to be known and understood through language, rather that the natural or physical. **Rationalism**, however, *privileged scientific and objective answers to life's questions and as such had little use for rhetoric*. In the modern period that followed three trends in rhetoric emerged—the epistemological, belletristic, and elocutionist.

Challenges To The Canon

While much of the classical rhetorical theories arose from the closely related context of public speaking, much of the theorizing that contributes to contemporary rhetoric comes from outside this context and, to some extent, outside the Communication discipline. While Aristotle and Augustine were chiefly concerned with questions of persuasive ability, contemporary theorists are concerned with relationships between power, knowledge, and discourse. Hopefully, you can see that this is a much broader set of questions and in turn the scope of rhetoric has also expanded. Below, we will discuss this expansion and the contributors.

Rhetoric In Contemporary Times

In addition to the broader set of concerns on the part of contemporary theorists, they specifically challenged certain assumptions and biases of the canon—that of rationalism and voice. Responding to the rational bias are social constructionism and postmodernism. **Social Constructionism** often associated with Thomas Kuhn and Richard Rorty, *questions the premise that scientific or philosophical knowledge can be assumed as fundamentally true*. This perspective "discounts the possibility that truth/reality/knowledge exists in an a priori state." [Instead,] it emphasizes what cultures regard as knowledge or truth" (Covino and Jolliffe 83). Meaning, that the "truth" is not "out there" (as X Files would have us believe). Rather, the truth is determined by our own personal and cultural experiences and how language is used to understand and explain those experiences.

In any discussion of Postmodernism the difficulty of defining the term is invariably part of the discussion. Part of that problem can be located the etymology of the word itself. Modern refers to just now (from modo in Latin) and post means after. Thus, this term translates into "after just now"—an idea difficult to wrap our heads around you might say. How do you, for example, point to or mark the period after just now? (Covino and Jolliffe 76). Some qualities that describe postmodernism are that of fragmentation, nonlinearity, and instability. The film, Moulin Rouge, is an excellent example of a postmodern text as it exemplifies these qualities. The story is told not in a traditionally linear (or modern) form, but instead the dialogue is made up of a patchwork of pop songs from Elton John to Madonna to weave the tale of a 19th century romance.

The second major challenge to the rhetorical canon and to a rational paradigm has been that of voice; who gets to speak and whose rhetoric is considered significant (or even gets labeled as rhetoric). Going back to the classical period, you remember that public oratory was considered the scope of rhetoric. And you also know who traditionally hold positions of power that would grant them access to the public speaking contexts—primarily white, wealthy men. This obviously left out a lot of people: they had no voice. An Afrocentric and feminist perspective offer two responses to this challenge. An Afrocentric position seeks to include linguistic elements from African languages as well as the Black experience in America into the scope and understanding of rhetorical processes. A feminist perspective looks at the ways in which women and other groups have been similarly left of the scope of rhetorical discourse and attempts to uncover the patriarchal biases in language and restore them with more egalitarian principles.

Case In Point: Contemporary Rhetorical Theorists

Here is a list of contemporary theorists who have all challenged the canon in some way. To further your understanding of rhetorical theory explore the works of one or more of these rhetorical scholars to learn about their unique and important contributions.

- Michael Bakhtin
- Kenneth Burke
- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell
- Helene Cixous
- Mary Daly
- Jacques Derrida
- Sonja K.Foss
- Karen A. Foss
- Michel Foucault
- Sally Miller Gearhart
- Julia Kristeva
- Malcom X
- Chaïm Perlman and Lucie Olbrects-Tyteca
- I.A Richards

- Stephen Toulmin
- Virginia Woolf

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7.3: Understanding Rhetorical Criticism

In the second half of this chapter we would like to discuss a close associate to rhetorical theory—rhetorical criticism. To explain this exciting subdiscipline we will discuss the scope of rhetorical criticism, the purpose of this method, the kinds of knowledge produced, and the relationship between rhetorical theory and criticism. We will conclude with examples of how rhetorical criticism seeks to answer contemporary socio and political concerns.

Rhetorical criticism is *an epistemology or way of knowing many scholars find effective in coming to an understanding about the communication process and the artifact under study*. (An **artifact** or **text** is simply *the thing that the critic wants to learn about*. Artifacts can be, for example, speeches, songs, sermons, films or works of art.) Think about a speech you have heard that was very moving and inspirational. At its conclusion perhaps you wondered, "I know that was a great speech, but why"? Or perhaps a visit to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. inspired the question, "How did the artist take a controversial subject (the war) and memorialize it in a way that diffuses the controversy"? Or maybe you are a fan of the show South Park. You recognize that there are jokes that make fun of particular groups of people such as ethnic and racial minorities that could be labeled "racist." Yet, you do not believe that the overall point or message of this program is to espouse a racist agenda. So, what is going on with this show that allows it to contain some of its racial message? These are the types of questions that rhetorical criticism can answer.

Scope

While there is general agreement among rhetorical scholars that criticism is an appropriate method of study, there are differing opinions about why and how it contributes to an overall understanding of rhetoric. Depending on the rhetorical critic, the assumptions about rhetorical criticism vary. As a way of uncovering some of the various assumptions scholars bring to this method of inquiry, we will look at the various definitions of criticism and rhetoric and what is considered within the scope of rhetorical criticism.

To Persuade?

We can begin to see the relationship between rhetorical theory and criticism when we examine the beginnings of criticism. Pay attention to the shared qualities and assumptions. In an early (1925) essay on rhetorical criticism, the study of rhetoric was limited to that of speakers and speeches, and included a number of points to which the critic should attend: speaker's personality, speaker's public character, audience, speaker's leading ideas, motives, topics, proofs, judgment of human nature, questions considered, textual authenticity, arrangement, mode of expression preparation, delivery, style, effect on audience, influence on the time (Wichelns). With this broad agenda for critics, Wichelns failed to provide them with a method to accomplish these goals. His essay was influential in that it lead to an exclusive focus and assumption that criticism was to be centered on oral rhetoric. Hopefully, you can see how this parallels the focus of rhetoric in the classical period.

Other scholars tried to fill in some of the gaps of this early essay. Ewbank tried to broaden the scope in 1931 by performing "case studies" where the critic wrote from personal experience derived from witnessing the speech. He looked at the audience's immediate reactions and the effect of the speech on them. Hunt (1935) said the critic should be focused more on values and less on performance of a work. He wanted critics to make value judgments but gave no definition of such. Bryant (1937) was the first person to question the exclusive focus on "great" individuals. He wanted a focus on social forces or movements and thought forces and figures should be studied together. Booth expanded rhetoric to include novels, plays, editorials and songs.

Of the more recent critics, Cathcart says "rhetoric is used . . . to refer to a communicator's intentional use of language and other symbols to influence or persuade selected receivers to act, believe, or feel the way the communicator desires in problematic situations" (2). Of criticism he says it is "that special form of communication which examines how communication is accomplished and whether it is worthwhile. . . Criticism is thus the counterpart of creativity" (3). Imbedded in these definitions are Cathcart's assumptions that only messages that are intended are within the scope of study. Such messages are designed to change the listener or the situation in some way, presumably to solve the problematic situation. This implies that the rhetor knows how to solve the problem and believes that he or she has the best solution. The requirement of a "problematic situation" narrows the scope considerably as does Cathcart's examples of rhetoric—public discourse such as speeches, essays, interviews, and slogans (2). Thus, for Cathcart, a rhetor comes to the problematic speaking situation with his or her solution based on what he or she believes the audience needs to resolve the conflict. Criticism is used to assess whether the rhetor was successful in persuading the audience to accept the solution and the strategies used to gain such acceptance.

Black in Rhetorical Criticism, defines rhetoric as, “discourse that aims to influence” (17). Criticism then, “is a discipline that, through the investigation and appraisal of the activities and products of men, seeks as its end the understanding of man himself. . . .rhetorical criticism is the criticism of rhetorical discourse” (9, 10). Here, Black offers and suggests a broader scope than Cathcart. Rhetoric is not limited to solely problematic situations; thus, it does not assume that the rhetor has a solution for the audience. Like Cathcart, he assumes the rhetorical goal is to influence and persuade and is concerned with the strategies that are most effective; scholars look at “what he says and how he says it” (17).

Many other critics assume the intent to persuade as the natural goal of rhetoric and focus on the strategies for doing so. Stewart says rhetorical criticism is “the study of man’s past attempt to change the behavior of fellow man, primarily through verbal symbols” (1). Brock and Scott claim rhetoric may be defined as the human effort to induce cooperation through the use of symbols” (6). By reading about the various definitions and assumptions of rhetorical criticism we hope you can begin to see a relationship between some of the early definitions of rhetorical theory (as persuasion) and how that impacted the development of rhetorical criticism.

Or Not to Persuade?

The definitions offered by Foss, however, suggest at least two different assumptions. She defines rhetoric as “the action humans perform when they use symbols for the purpose of communication with one another” (4). Like other theorists and critics, Foss is concerned with symbolic action, however, she does not assume that the sole propose of those symbols is to persuade others. Rhetoric may be intended to persuade, but it may also be “an invitation to understanding”: an offer to others to see our world the way we do, not in the hope that they will change, but that they will understand (5). At other times rhetoric may be used for self-discovery, to bring people together, or entertainment. With the focus on communication as understanding rather than persuasion, Foss offers critics a broad scope for the study of rhetorical discourse.

Foss defines criticism as “the process of systematically investigating and explaining symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (7). Like other critics she wants to understand strategies or processes, but she does not assume that she can understand “man,” rather she wants to understand rhetoric and how humans use it. From her definitions, we see that Foss approaches rhetorical criticism with two assumptions that differ from other scholars. First, she does not assume that the role of the rhetorical critic is to judge the effectiveness of the speaker or discourse: their purpose is to understand. Second, she does not believe that the critic must possess knowledge of the motives of the communicator. In her perspective, this is not necessary because, regardless of intent, a message has been transmitted and produces an effect upon the audience. The goal is to uncover the meanings that are produced, not necessarily the intended meaning.

Purpose

While scholars debate the purpose of rhetorical criticism, the arguments fall into one of two categories: judgment and understanding. While, this may be an oversimplification in some cases, it is useful for our purpose here. Those who see rhetorical criticism as a means of judgment are concerned with articulating the effectiveness of a text or artifact and the strategies that contributed or detracted from its overall success. How effective was President Bush, for example, in persuading the American people and the world that we should go to war with Iraq in his Sate of the Union address in January 2003?

Those concerned with understanding may be concerned with comprehension and appreciation of the artifact itself and how that knowledge contributes to an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical processes. A critic interested in this sort of project might ask a question such as, Does the 2003 film, Charlie’s Angels II: Full Throttle, offer an empowering feminist voice or does it reinscribe a traditionally feminine image? Both questions can be answered by rhetorical criticism: they are just different kinds of questions.

Currently, the collective opinion seems to be moving in the direction of understanding as the purpose of rhetorical criticism. We see that Foss is less concerned with judgment as she is with comprehension as suggested in her above definitions of rhetoric and criticism. She sees a direct and explicit correlation between the criticism of an artifact and an understanding of rhetorical theory: “the critic is interested in discovering what the artifact teaches us about the nature of rhetoric” (8). The overall goal is to contribute to our effectiveness as communicators. When we know and understand how rhetoric works we are able to critique the rhetorical choices of others and make effective rhetorical choices for our own communication. The aim for the individual is to be rhetorically effective in a given situation by understanding the communicative options available to him or her.

Other specific purposes can include artistic, analytic, and ideological. Leff describes the artistic critic as one who sees the text as art and wants to foster an appreciation in the reader (224). The purpose is for the reader to understand and therefore,

appreciate the art form. The analytic critic sees the text, (such as advertisements or political campaigns) as an object of study and seeks the means to comprehend. Wanderer talks of the ideological or advocate critic as looking at how a text may be oppressive, suppress the readers' interpretations, closes off other readings or possibilities (social protests, minorities.) Feminist and ideological criticism seek the emancipation of all human potential and exposes how that potential is being silenced by the existing ideologies.

What Can We Learn?

The value of rhetorical criticism comes from the insights it can provide about rhetorical communication and the artifact we study. Through these methodological process critics come to a greater awareness about the variety of communication options open to us in a given situation. This awareness helps us to be effective communicators. Conversely, discovering what is ineffective in a discourse teaches us what not to do when we communicate with others. By uncovering hidden meanings in a text we learn how various messages are produced and their effects. This can help us decipher how we may want to respond in a given situation: "The value of both critical theory and textual criticism derives from the extent to which they inform discursive practice and advance our understanding of rhetorical communication" (Henry 220-221). Criticism also helps us learn about a specific text. When we can identify a text with pervasive effects, rhetorical criticism can inform us as to how and why that text is so effective. Thus, rhetorical criticism enables scholars to learn more about their own communication strategies, the study of rhetoric, and the specific artifacts that interest us.

The Relationship Between Theory and Criticism

Many critics are concerned with the relationship between theory and practice and how an understanding of one contributes to the other. In this way theory and criticism are mutually interdependent: the purpose for criticism is to unite theory and practice. Criticism must be informed by method so others can see why and how we reason about quality i.e. we need theory for criticism and criticism for theory (Farrell 4). Campbell says the purpose of criticism is to contribute to the modification and application of theory (18). Criticism helps us see gaps in theory and the limits of knowledge so we may ascertain social significance of discourse. If there is a gap in theory criticism helps us create a new one. Hart, however, claims that critics do not have to choose between studying texts and contributing to theory; productive criticism can do both, regardless of the critic's intention. If you remember back to the chapter on theory at the beginning of the text we talked about theory as an idea of how something works. The "something" in this case is language or discourse; rhetorical theories provide models for how language functions as part of the human experience and rhetorical criticism is a way of testing and revising the particular theory with a real life case study.

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7.4: Current Uses of Rhetorical Theory and Criticism

By now you should have a clear understanding of what rhetorical theory and criticism are and the uses they serve for the discipline as well as the world outside academia. We would like to conclude this chapter by detailing some of the current issues and questions occupying rhetorical scholars. As the examples are numerous, we will speak to three specific content areas: the study of social movements, political and campaign rhetoric, and studies of popular culture.

Social Movements

One of the exciting things about Communication is that is it has always been interested in the large sociopolitical issues facing society. Social change as it occurs through social movements is one such area of research. Think back to your history lessons concerning minority populations in the United States. Has the political status of women; African Americans; Asians; gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgendered individuals always been what it is today? (We are not suggesting here that there is finally equality among people of various races, ethnicities, genders, or sexual orientations; only that it has been much worse.) How have those changes come about? Certainly laws and customs have changed in an attempt to provide more equal access to resources and opportunities. But prior to such legislative changes a change in attitude was necessary. Here is where social movement rhetoric played a vital role in changes our nation's history. The rhetoric of leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Caesar Chavez have all been influential in changing attitudes. Scholars interested in these issues study the discourse of the leaders (i.e. their speeches) as well as the rhetorical vision they create for their audience. Moreover, they also attempt to learn from the past about what sort of rhetorical strategies will be successful in contemporary and future movements. As Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen explain, "one of the goals of studying social movements is to make predictions" (141).

Public Address

Another area of research that falls within the scope of rhetorical theory and criticism is that of public address. This area is concerned with politics and political oratory. Some students of rhetoric may go onto careers in speech writing and campaign design on the behalf of political candidates. In this context they are able to utilize their skills in rhetoric and persuasion to answer the challenge of, how can I get people to vote for a particular candidate. Kathleen Hall Jamison is an example of such a person. She worked on the Dukakis presidential campaign and has authored several books in this area. Similarly, one might be in the business of analyzing political speeches and offering suggestions about what is effective and ineffective in a politician's rhetoric.

Popular Culture

The study and critique of popular culture is something that most, if not all, of us participate in at some level. Do you ever watch music videos with your friends and comment on the use of some of the images? Do you look forward to the commercials during the Super Bowl to see the latest and innovative advertising techniques? As you watch, critique, and analyze these images, you are beginning the process of rhetorical criticism. The only difference between you and the professional critic (beside lots of schooling) is that the professional critic has decided to make his or her analysis systematic. This is accomplished by employing one of the formal methods discussed earlier, such as the pentad or a feminist critique. As most people participate in some form of popular culture such as television, films, music, sports, or fashion, you can see the potential impact that popular culture messages and images have on a society. Thus, scholars of popular culture feel it is important to pay critical attention to them rather than dismiss them as trivial.

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7.5: Rhetorical Criticism Summary

Summary

By now you have a more complex understanding of the term rhetoric and realize the distinction between the use of the term in the popular press and its meaning within the context of the Communication discipline. At a very basic level, you know that it refers to the process in which humans use symbols to communicate with one another. Moreover, you should know the contributions of classical and well as contemporary theorists to understanding human symbol use. As a way of knowing, rhetorical criticism provides scholars with a unique methodological tool for understanding communication. Through the contributions and paradigm shifts from classical to contemporary scholars, the scope of rhetorical criticism has been widened to include a variety of social events, acts, and artifacts that we encounter in our daily life. This method has a direct impact on our lives by informing us about the communicative options available to us when communicating with others in cultural, professional, personal and political contexts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What specific contributions did classical theorists make to the study of rhetoric?
2. How have contemporary rhetorical theorists challenged the canon?
3. Compare and contrast classical rhetorical theories versus contemporary ones.
4. What idea has been at the center of most definitions of rhetoric? Do you think rhetoric should refer only to persuasion? What are the limits and advantages to such an approach?
5. What role do you think the study of rhetoric can play in today's social world? The political context?
6. What are some examples of the use of classical rhetorical theory in contemporary rhetorical discourse?
7. What sort of research question would you, as a scholar interested in the rhetoric of popular culture, ask?
8. What might some of the limitations of rhetorical criticism as a method?
9. What are the elements of Burke's pentad? Give an example of how you would apply it to the study of a particular body of discourse.
10. What kind of research question would you want to ask using the method of feminist criticism?

KEY TERMS

- Afrocentric
- Aristotle
- Artifact
- Aspasia of Miletus
- Audience analysis
- Canons
- Cicero
- Dialectic
- Ethos
- Fantasy Theme Criticism
- Feminist Criticism
- Humanism
- Ideological Criticism
- Logos
- Narrative Criticism
- Neo-Aristotelian Criticism
- Pan Chao
- Pathos
- Pentadic Criticism
- Persuasion
- Plato
- Postmodernism

- Public Address
- Quintillian
- Rationalism
- Rhetoric
- Rhetorical Criticism
- Social Constructionism
- Socrates
- Types of speeches

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8: MASS COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

8.1: Mass Communication Overview

8.2: Defining Mass Communication

8.3: Evolution of Mass Communication

8.4: Functions of Mass Communication

8.5: The Study of Mass Communication

8.6: Grounding Theories of Mass Communication

8.7: Media Literacy

8.8: Mass Communication Summary

8.9: Mass Communication References

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8.1: Mass Communication Overview

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 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 8.1.1: (CC BY; Ernst Moeksis via https://flic.kr/p/3KwKHD)

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.

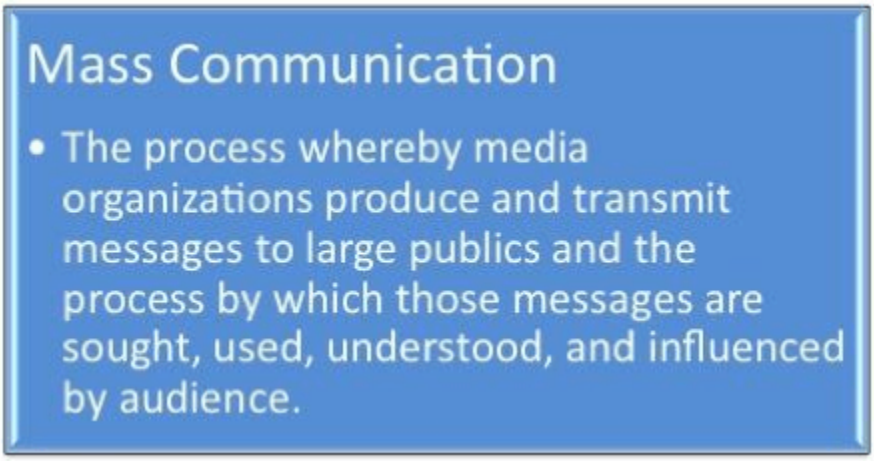
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8.2: Defining Mass Communication

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"* (333). 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"* (7). 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" (Berger 121). However, with the advent of outlets like YouTube, 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.



Nevertheless, most mass communication comes from large organizations that influence culture on a large scale. Schramm refers to this as a "working group organizer" (115). 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" (23). 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.

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

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 **"masspersonal 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 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" (256). 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

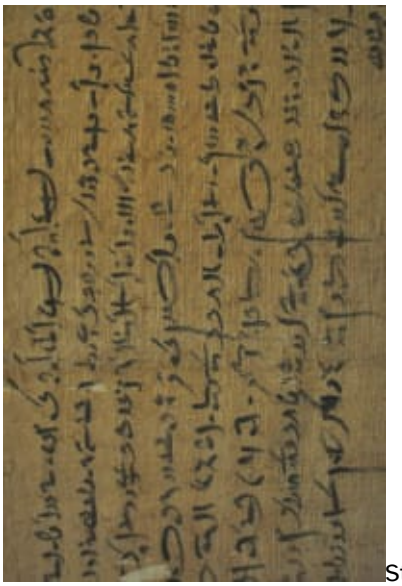
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8.3: Evolution of Mass Communication

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.



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.

Mass Communication Study Then

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 own a TV (Nielson, 2014 Advance National TV Household Universe Estimate). While traditionally these televisions would display only the programs that are 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 form 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 history.



If you're reading this for a college class, you may belong to the millennial generation. Free wifi, apps, alternative news sources, Facebook, 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, timelines photos and videos, and archives messages between members. Here's a short **YouTube video** from rapper/poet Prince Ea about Facebook and the effects of social media on society.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/introductiontocommunication/?p=156

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 connects 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.

Mass Communication Study Now

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 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?

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8.4: 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 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 users 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 if 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).

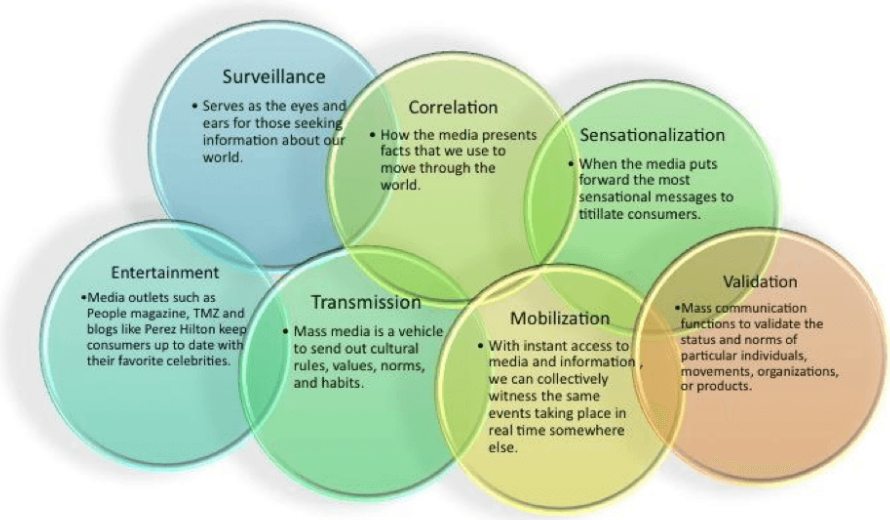
- **Entertainment**. Media outlets such as People Magazine, TMZ, and entertainment blogs such as Perez Hilton keep us up to date on the daily comings and goings of our favorite celebrities. We use technology to watch sports, go to the movies, play video games, watch YouTube videos, and listen to iPods 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, acquaints 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.



Functions of media

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.

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8.5: The Study of Mass Communication

Continuing with the theme of this book, studying the role of mass communication heightens our awareness, helping us become media literate and strengthen our "ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages" (Baran 374). Look around you. Mass communication's influence in contemporary society is pervasive, as we are all interlaced with it in our daily lives.

Mass Communication and Popular Culture



Culture is comprised of *shared behaviors, values, beliefs, and attitudes that are learned through socialization*. As Brummett explains, "**popular culture** are those *systems or artifacts that most people share or know about*"(27). Using Brummett's ideas, in order for mass communication to be popular all forms do not have to be consumed or used by everyone. Instead, its place in culture is so pervasive that we at least have some familiarity with it. You may not watch the shows like *The Walking Dead*, *Big Bang Theory*, or *Modern Family*, but chances are you know something about them.

In contrast to popular culture, **high culture** consists of those *media that are generally not produced for the masses, require a certain knowledge base, and typically require an investment of time and money to experience them*. Examples of high culture include opera, poetry, theater, classical music, and the arts. While we generally do not use the term low culture, "Pop culture refers to mass-mediated kinds of 'low' art such as television commercials, television programs, most films, genre works of literature, and popular music" (Berger 118).

Case In Point

In 2002, a general manager at *CNN Headline News* instructed writers to insert slang words like "fly" (a sexually attractive person) into their televised graphics to resonate with younger viewers (Gordon; Sanders). Irvine points out that advertisers have been doing this for years. Abbreviations to speed up writing such as "lol" (laugh out loud) from chat rooms and e-mail are now becoming popular in daily conversation, and are even included in cell phone commercials advertising text messaging plans. Also, as new television genres replaced older ones, shows like *Survivor*, *Dancing with the Stars* and *American Idol* demonstrated that viewers like watching people in "real" situations. Does media shape our culture or does our culture shape media? Which one reflects the other, or is it possible to tell which one came first? These questions point to the importance of, and need for, media theories to provide the answers.

Keep in mind that popular culture does not necessarily mean poor quality. Popular is not always bad and is often relative to the times. For example, think about baby boomers. Their parents said rock-n-roll music was going to ruin their generation. However, today that very same music is considered classic. In the 1950's it was said that comic books would corrupt children, and jazz was sinful. It seems like every generation has the opinion that the current pop culture of the time will destroy the moral fiber of young people. But it's often the case that those cultural references become our most revered and loved cultural icons of the time period. Regardless of how mass communication is perceived, it implants words, behaviors, trends, icons, and patterns of behaviors that show up in our culture. Or, as some ask, is it the other way around?

Mass communication influences all aspects of society, including the language we use (Spitulnik). For example, in the 1980's,

Wendy's aired the popular television commercial "where's the beef?" In the 1990s, Jerry Seinfeld's television show got us saying, "yada, yada, yada." *Saturday Night Live* popularized the phrase, "I need more cow bell." And *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* coined the term "phone a friend." It is common for us to personalize words or phrases, especially if they're funny, and integrate them into our lives relative to our social contexts. *The Seattle Times* News Service reported that the 2003 version of the *Oxford Dictionary of English* now contains the catch phrase made famous by the HBO show *The Sopranos*–"bada bing"–meaning an exclamation to emphasize that something will effortlessly and predictably happen. This dictionary now contains words implanted by popular culture such as "counterterrorism" and "bootylicious." Certain words become a part of our shared understanding through media exposure. Think about other acronyms and language that are now commonplace that were not just a few years ago: iphone, Instagram, Selfie, Hashtag, Google and Skype (as verbs), sexting, etc.

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8.6: 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.

As we discussed in Chapter 5, 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 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.

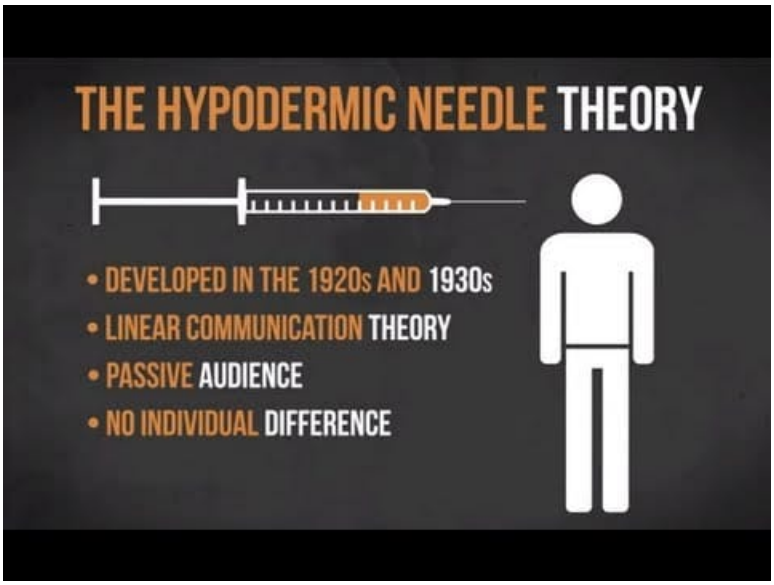
Let’s look at five fundamental theories of mass communication: *1) the magic bullet theory, 2) two-step flow theory, 3) multi-step flow theory, 4) uses and gratification theory, and 5) cultivation theory.*

- **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 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.

Mass Communication Study Now

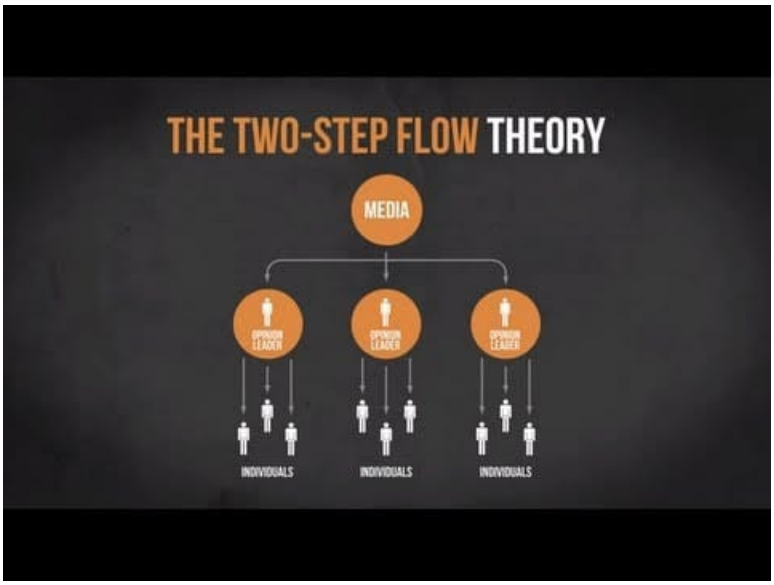
One of the things that has occurred in mass communication during the Iraq war is the absence of images and coverage of American soldiers killed in action. The American government has asked that the media refrain from using these images in their publications. As we have talked about how individuals now 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?

Take a few minutes to view this **Hypodermic Needle Theory Video** that further summarizes and explains the theory.



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- **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). You can watch a short video on the **Two-Step Flow Theory**.



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- **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 share 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.

Mass Communication Study and You

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 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.

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8.7: 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.



- **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 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 though 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" (57).

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 On-Demand, 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 sometimes 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* makes 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.

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.

In this connection 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."

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8.8: Mass Communication Summary

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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9: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

9.1: Interpersonal Communication Overview

9.2: Self Disclosure

9.3: Communication Climate

9.4: Developing and Maintaining Friendships

9.5: Developing and Maintaining Romantic Relationships

9.6: Family Relationships

9.7: Thinking About Conflict

9.8: Interpersonal Communication Summary

9.9: Interpersonal Communication References

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9.1: Interpersonal Communication Overview

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.



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.

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9.2: Self Disclosure

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).

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.

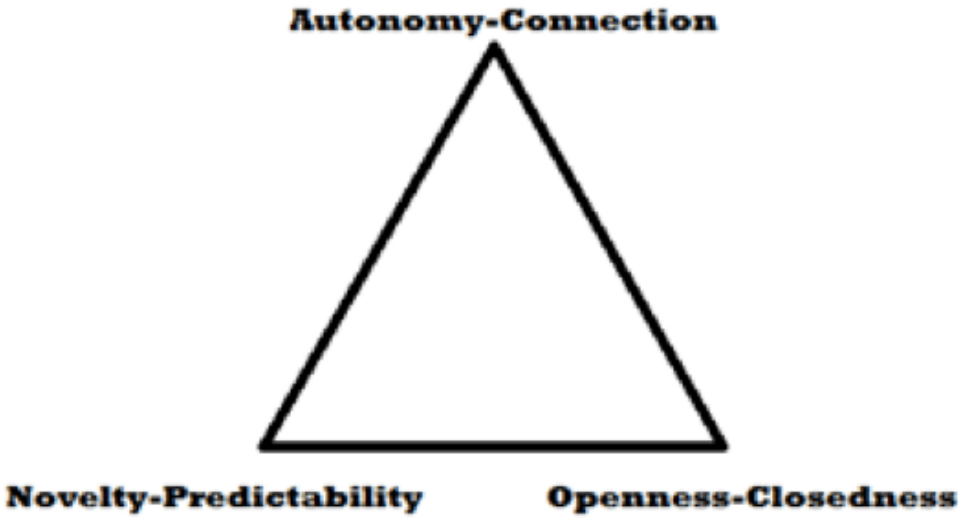
One way to visualize self-disclosure is the Johari Window which comes from combining the first names of the window's creators, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. The window is divided into four quadrants: the arena, the blind spot, the facade, and the unknown (Luft).

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 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.

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	Arena "Open Self"	Blindspot "Blind Self"
Not Known to Others	Facade "Hidden Self"	Unknown Self

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.



- **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.

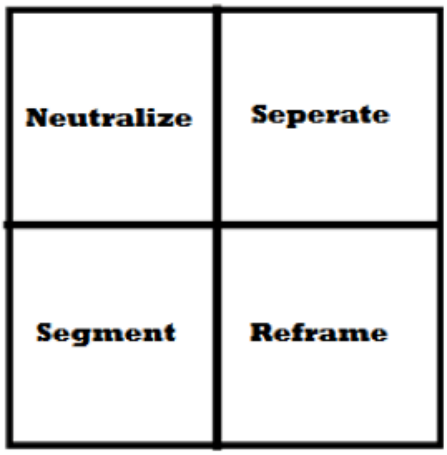
- **Novelty-Predictability** is the idea that *we desire predictability as well as spontaneity in our relationships*. In every relationship, we take comfort in a certain level of routine as a way of knowing what we can count on the other person in the relationship. Such predictability provides a sense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

commitment to always try new restaurants each week.

- **Openness-Closedness** refers to *the desire to be open and honest with others while at the same time not wanting to reveal every thing 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.



4 Ways to Handle Dialectical Tension

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 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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9.3: Communication Climate

Interpersonal Communication Now

"Sticks and Stones Can Beak 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."

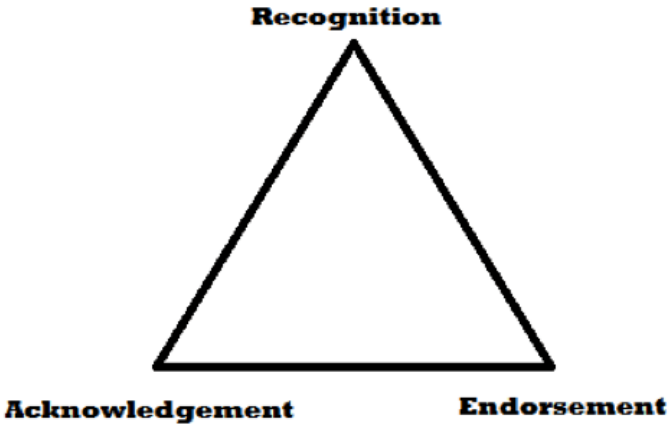
Do you feel organized, or confined, in a clean workspace? Are you more productive when the sun is shining than when it's gray and cloudy outside? Just as factors like weather and physical space impact us, communication climate influences our interpersonal interactions. **Communication climate** is the *"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

- **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 though their problems.

Now that you understand that we must self-disclose to form interpersonal relationships, and that self-disclosure takes place in communication climates, we want to spend the rest of the chapter briefly highlighting some of the characteristics of the three primary interpersonal relationships in which we engage: Friendships, Romantic Relationships, and Family Relationships.

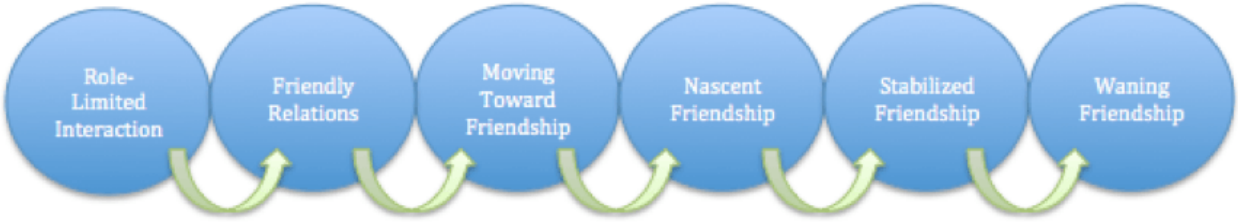
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9.4: Developing and Maintaining Friendships

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.



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 of 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." 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 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.

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9.5: 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 legale 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.

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.

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.

Interpersonal Communication and You

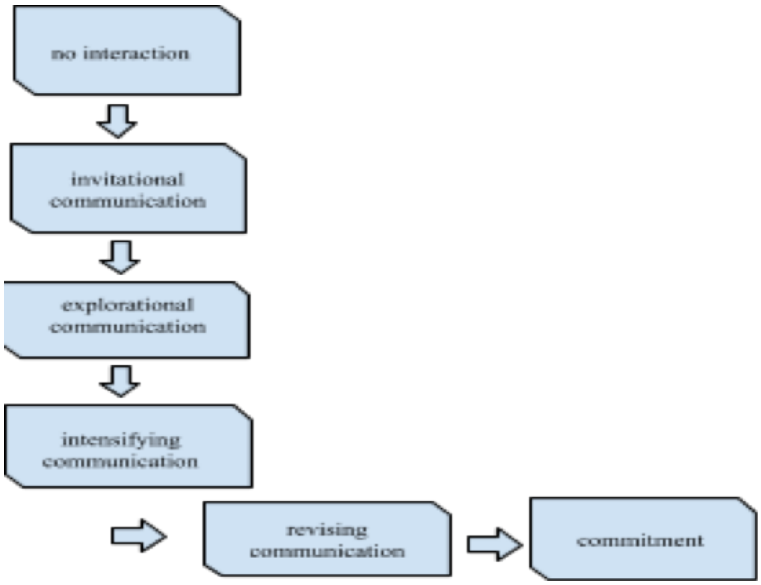
Take a Chance

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 live*s. 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 though 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.

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.

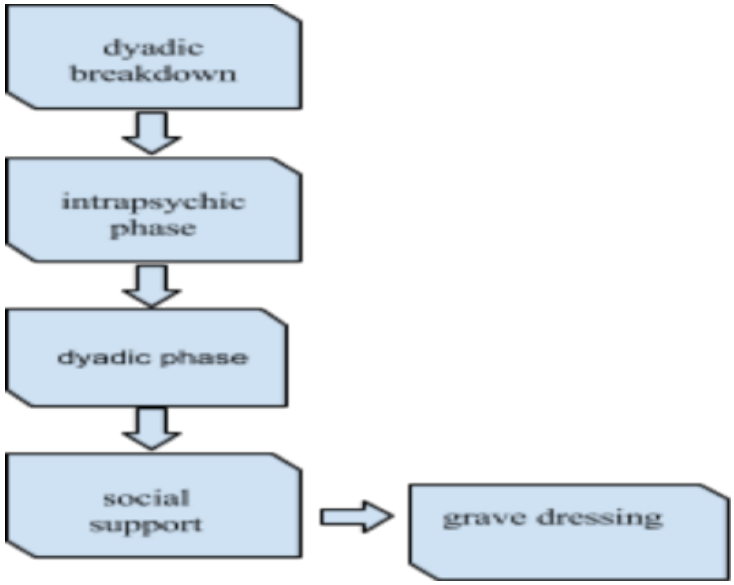
Domestic Partnerships

The status of domestic partner along with benefits for same-sex couples is recognized in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greenland, Iceland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and in parts of the United States.

For more on Marriage Traditions in Various Times and Cultures, see www.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.

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9.6: Family Relationships



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 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.

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9.7: 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.



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

1. Conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace.
2. The social system should not be adjusted to meet the needs of members; rather, members should adapt to the established values.
3. Confrontations are destructive and ineffective.
4. 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.

1. Conflict is a normal, useful process.
2. All issues are subject to change through negotiation.
3. Direct confrontation and conciliation are valued.
4. 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 200-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.

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9.8: Interpersonal Communication Summary

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

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10: GROUP COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define what constitutes a group and team.
- Understand cultural influences on groups.
- Explain how groups and teams form.
- Identify group roles and norms.
- Understand different styles of leadership in groups.
- Recognize style and options for decision making in groups.
- Explain the impact of technology on group communication.

10.1: Group Communication Overview

10.2: Defining Groups and Teams

10.3: The Importance of Studying Communication in Groups and Teams

10.4: Forming Groups

10.5: Groups Roles

10.6: Leadership In Groups

10.7: Decision Making In Groups

10.8: Group Communication Summary

10.9: Group Communication References

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10.1: Group Communication Overview

Have you ever had this happen to you in a college class? At the beginning of the semester your professor hands out the syllabus and explains that a group project is part of the course requirements. You, and others in the class, groan at the idea of this project because you have experienced the difficulties and frustrations of working in a group, especially when your grade depends on the work of others. Does this sound familiar? Why do you think so many students react negatively to these types of assignments? Group work can be fraught with complications. But, the reality is, many companies are promoting groups as the model working environment (Forbes).



Figure 10.1.1: "When I die, I would like the people I did group projects with to lower me in to my grave so they can let me down one last time." – Jessica Clydesdale, frustrated student

Chances are that a class assignment is not your first and only experience with groups. Most likely, you have already spent, and will continue to spend, a great deal of your time working in groups. You may be involved with school athletics in which you are part of a specialized group called a team. You may be part of a work or professional group. Many of you participate in social, religious, and/or political groups. The family in which you were raised, regardless of the configuration, is also a group. No matter what the specific focus—sports, profession, politics, or family—all groups share some common features.

While group communication is growing in popularity and emphasis, both at the academic and corporate levels, it is not a new area of study. The emergence of group communication study came about in the mid 1950s, following World War II, and has been a focus of study ever since. Group communication is often closely aligned with interpersonal communication and organizational communication which is why we have placed it as a chapter in between these two areas of specialization. In your personal, civic, professional lives, you will engage in group communication. Let's take a look at what constitutes a group or team.

Contributions and Affiliations

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10.2: Defining Groups and Teams

To understand group and team communication, we must first understand the definition of a group. Many people think that a group is simply a collection of people, but that is only part of it. If you walk out your front door and pull together the first ten people you see, do you have a group? No! According to Wilson and Hanna, **groups** are defined as, *"a collection of three or more individuals who interact about some common problem or interdependent goal and can exert mutual influence over one another"* (14). They goes on to say that the three key components of groups are, "size, goal orientation, and mutual influence" (14). Interpersonal communication is often thought about in terms of dyads, or pairs. Organizational communication might be thought of as a group that is larger than 12 people. While there are exceptions, for the most part, group size is often thought of in terms of 3-12 people.

Case In Point

Astronaut Jim Lovell's words during the Apollo 13 lunar mission, "Houston, we have a problem," launched a remarkable tale of effective teamwork and creative problem solving by NASA engineers working to try to save the lives of the jeopardized crew when two oxygen tanks exploded en route to the moon. Details of the dramatic and successful resolution to the problem became widely known in the motion picture Apollo 13, but it's not just during dramatic moments when the importance of good teamwork is needed or recognized. In fact, some form of team-oriented work is encouraged in most, if not all, organizations today (Hughes, Jones). So if you feel this is unimportant to know, remember that group communication and teamwork skills are critical for your success later in life.

For example, Joseph Bonito, a communication professor at University of Arizona, allows no more than five people in a group to ensure that everyone's opinions are reflected equally in a discussion. (Baughman and Everett-Haynes). According to Bonito, if there are too many people in a group it's possible that some individuals will remain silent without anyone noticing. He suggests using smaller groups when equal participation is desirable. So, if the ten people you gathered outside of your front door were all neighbors working together as part of a "neighborhood watch" to create safety in the community, then you would indeed have a group.

For those of you who have participated on athletic teams you'll notice that these definitions also apply to a team. While all of the qualities of groups hold true for teams, teams have additional qualities not necessarily present for all groups. We like to define a **team** as a *specialized group with a strong sense of belonging and commitment to each other that shapes an overall collective identity.* Members of a team each have their own part, or role, to fulfill in order to achieve the team's greater goals. One member's strengths can be other member's weaknesses, so working in a team is beneficial when balancing individual input. While all members of an athletic team share some athletic ability and special appreciation for a particular sport, for example, members of a football team, for example, have highly specialized skills as indicated in the various positions on the team—quarterback, receiver, and running back. In addition to athletic teams, work and professional teams also share these qualities. Now that you know how to define groups and teams, let's look at characteristics of groups and teams, as well as the different types of groups and teams.

Characteristics of Groups

- **Interdependence**. Groups cannot be defined simply as three or more people talking to each other or meeting together. Instead, a primary characteristic of groups is that members of a group are dependent on the others for the group to maintain its existence and achieve its goals. In essence, interdependence is the recognition by those in a group of their need for the others in the group (Lewin; Cragon, Wright& Kasch; Sherblom). Imagine playing in a basketball game as an individual against the five members of another team. Even if you're considered the best basketball player in the world, it's highly unlikely you could win a game against five other people. You must rely on four other teammates to make it a successful game.

-  **Interaction**. It probably seems obvious to you that there must be interaction for groups to exist. However, what kind of interaction must exist? Since we all communicate every day, there must be something that distinguishes the interaction in groups from other forms of communication. Cragon, Wright and Kasch state that the primary defining characteristic of group interaction is that it is purposeful. They go on to break down purposeful interaction into four types: *problem solving, role playing, team building, and trust building* (7). Without purposeful interaction a true group does not exist. Roles, norms, and relationships between members are created through interaction. If you're put into a group for a class assignment, for example, your first interaction probably centers around exchanging contact information, settings times to meet, and starting to focus on the task at hand. It's purposeful interaction in order to achieve a goal.

Group Communication Then

The first study that was published on group communication in the New School era of communication study was credited to Edwin Black in 1955. He studied the breakdowns in group interactions by looking at communication sequences in groups. However, it wasn't until the 1960s and 70s that a large number of studies in group communication began to appear. Between 1970 and 1978 114 articles were published on group communication and 89 more were published by 1990 (Stacks & Salwen 360). Study in group communication is still important over a decade later as more and more organizations focus on group work for achieving their goals.

- **Synergy**. One advantage of working in groups and teams is that they allow us to accomplish things we wouldn't be able to accomplish on our own. Remember back to our discussion of Systems Theory in Chapter 5. Systems Theory suggests that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." This is the very idea of synergy (Sherblom). In an orchestra or band, each person is there to perform in order to help the larger unit make music in a way that cannot be accomplished without each member working together.

- **Common Goals**. Having interaction and synergy would be relatively pointless in groups without a common goal. People who comprise groups are brought together for a reason or a purpose. While most members of a group have individual goals, a group is largely defined by the common goals of the group. Think of the example at the beginning of the chapter: Your common goal in a class group is to learn, complete an assignment, and earn a grade. While there may be differences regarding individual goals in the group (what final grade is acceptable for example), or how to achieve the common goals, the group is largely defined by the common goals it shares.

- **Shared Norms**. Because people come together for a specific purpose, they develop shared norms to help them achieve their goals. Even with a goal in place, random interaction does not define a group. Group interaction is generally guided by norms a group has established for acceptable behavior. Norms are essentially expectations of the group members, established by the group and can be conscious and formal, or unconscious and informal. A couple of examples of group norms include the expectation that all members show up at group meeting times, the expectation that all group members focus on the group instead of personal matters (for example, turning cell phones and other distractions off), and the expectation that group members finish their part of the work by the established due date. When members of the group violate group norms, other members of the group get frustrated and the group's overall goal may be affected.

- **Cohesiveness**. One way that members understand of the idea of communicating in groups and teams is when they experience a sense of cohesiveness with other members of the group. When we feel like we are part of something larger, we experience a sense of cohesion or wholeness, and may find a purpose that is bigger than our own individual desires and goals. It is the sense of connection and participation that characterizes the interaction in a group as different from

the defined interaction among loosely connected individuals. If you've ever participated in a group that achieved its goal successfully, you are probably able to reflect back on your feelings of connections with the other members of that group.

You may be asking yourself, what about teams? We have focused primarily on groups, but it's critical to remember the importance of team communication characteristics as well as group communication characteristics. Check out **this article** that breaks down team characteristics and skills that ensure team success (we bet you'll find similarities to the group characteristics that we have just explained).

Types of Groups

Not all groups are the same or brought together for the same reasons. Brilhart and Galanes categorize groups "on the basis of the reason they were formed and the human needs they serve" (9). Let's take a look!

- **Primary Groups**. Primary groups are ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection. They are not generally formed to accomplish a task, but rather, to help us meet our fundamental needs as relational beings like acceptance, love, and affection. These groups are generally longer term than other groups and include family, roommates, and other relationships that meet as groups on a regular basis (Brilhart & Galanes). These special people in your life constituate primary groups because they offer love and support for the long run, and given this, primary groups are typically more meaningful than secondary groups.

- **Secondary Groups**. Unlike primary groups, we form secondary groups to accomplish work, perform a task, solve problems, and make decisions (Brilhart & Galanes; Sherblom; Cragan, Wright & Kasch). Larson and LaFasto state that secondary groups have "a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for attainment of the team goal or objective" (19).

-  **Activity Groups**. Activity Groups are ones we form for the purpose of participating in activities. I'm sure your campus has many clubs that are organized for the sole purpose of doing activities. On our campus, for example, a popular club on our campus is the Surf Club, in which members meet for the purpose of scheduling surfing times, arranging rides, and choosing where to surf.

- **Personal Growth Groups**. We form Personal Growth Groups to obtain support and feedback from others, as well as to grow as a person. Personal Growth Groups may be thought of as therapy groups. An example that is probably familiar to you is Alcoholics Anonymous, where alcoholics can share their stories and struggles and get support from others affected by alcohol. There are many personal growth groups available for helping us develop as people through group interaction with others, such as book clubs, weight watchers, and spiritual groups.

- **Learning Groups**. Learning Groups focus mainly on obtaining new information and gaining knowledge. If you have ever been assigned to a group in a college class, it most likely was a learning group with the purpose of interacting in ways that can help those in the group learn new things about the course content.

- **Problem-Solving Groups**. These groups are created for the express purpose of solving a specific problem. The very nature of organizing people into this type of group is to get them to collectively figure out effective solutions to the problem they have before them. Committees are an excellent example of people who are brought together to solve problems.

After looking at the various types of groups, it's probably easy for you to recognize just how much of your daily interaction occurs within the contexts of groups. The reality is, we spend a great deal of time in groups, and understanding the types of groups you're

in, as well as their purpose, goes a long way toward helping you function as a productive member.

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10.3: The Importance of Studying Communication in Groups and Teams

One of the reasons communication scholars study groups and teams is because of the overwhelming amount of time we spend interacting in groups in professional contexts. More and more professional organizations are turning to groups and teams as an essential way of conducting business and getting things done. Even professions that are seemingly independent, such as being a college professor, are heavily laden with group work. The process of writing this book was a group effort as the authors and their students worked in groups to bring the book to you. Each of us had specific roles and tasks to perform.

Another vital area of group communication concerns the study of social change or social movement organizations. Groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Organization of Women (NOW) are all groups bound together by a shared social and political commitment—-to promote the rights of nonhuman animals, African-Americans, and women respectively. While individuals can be committed to these ideas, the social, political, and legal rights afforded to groups like these would not have been possible through individual action alone. It was when groups of like-minded people came together with shared commitments and goals, pooling their skills and resources, that change occurred. Just about any Interest Group you can think of has a presence in Washington D.C. and spends money to maintain that presence. Visit **here for more information on Interest Groups**.

The study of social movements reveals the importance of groups for accomplishing goals. Bowers, Ochs, Jensen and Schulz, in *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, explain seven progressive and cumulative strategies through which movements progress as they move toward success. Three of the seven strategies focus explicitly on group communication—-promulgation, solidification, and polarization. **Promulgation** refers to the *"a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals and it includes tactics designed to win public support"* (23). Without a sufficient group the actions of individual protestors are likely to be dismissed. The strategy of **solidification***"occurs mainly inside the agitating group" and is "primarily used to unite followers"* (29). The point is to unite group members and provide sufficient motivation and support. The communication that occurs through the collective action of singing songs or chanting slogans serves to unite group members. Because the success of social movements depends in part on the ability to attract a large number of followers, most employ the strategy of **polarization**, which is designed to *persuade neutral individuals or "fence sitters" to join a group* (40). The essence of this strategy is captured in the quote from Eldridge Cleaver, "You are either part of the problem or part of the solution." Taken together these three strategies stress that the key to group success is the sustained effort of group members working together through communication.

Not only do Communication scholars focus on work and social movements, we are also interested in the role that one's cultural identity and membership plays in our communicative choices, and how we interpret the communication of others. This focus sheds interesting insights when we examine membership and communication in groups and teams. One reason for this is that different cultures emphasize the role of individuals while other cultures emphasize the importance of the group. For example, **collectivist cultures** are ones that *place high value on group work because they understand that outcomes of our communication impact all members of the community and the community as a whole, not just the individuals in the group*. Conversely, **individualistic cultures** are ones that *place high value on the individual person above the needs of the group*. Thus, whether we view group work as favorable or unfavorable may stem from our cultural background. The U.S. is considered an individualistic culture in that we value the work and accomplishments of the individual through ideals such as being able to "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" and create success for yourself.

Case In Point

The Historic Number of Women in the 113th Congress

This Congress has 102 female members, including 20 female Senators, the most ever in the history of America. This was also an historic election for women of color. More than half of Asian Americans elected to the 113th Congress are women– including Mazie Hirono (D-HI), who is only the second woman of color and the only Asian American woman ever elected to the Senate. In the House, Grace Meng (D) will become New York's first Asian American member of Congress, and Iraq War veteran Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) the first American Samoan elected as a voting member of Congress. They will both join Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a Thai-born, double amputee war hero. Among Latinas, Congresswoman-elect Michele Lujan Grisham became the first Hispanic woman elected representative from New Mexico.

See the faces of the 113th Congress

The Women's Caucus

The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (CCWI) is a Congressional Member Organization (CMO) registered with the House Organization (CMO) registered with the House Administration Committee; its membership includes the women members of the House of Representatives. CCWI is not formally affiliated with Women's Policy, Inc.; however, the two organizations share similar goals. This relates to our collectivistic culture in organizational groups.

WPI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose sole focus is to help ensure that the most informed decisions on key women's issues are made by policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels. Audiences include elected officials, regulators, women's groups, labor groups, academia, the business community, the media, and the general public.

WPI achieves and shares its rare quality of insight into relevant issues by researching and producing the best available information in the form of compelling and unbiased legislative analyses, issue summaries, impact assessments, and educational briefings. This ensures that policy decisions affecting women and their families have the benefit of input from the most objective sources possible.

For more info on The Women's Caucus visit http://www.womenspolicy.org/

Power in Groups

Given the complexity of group interaction, it's short-sighted to try to understand group communication without looking at notions of power (think back to Critical Theories and Research Methods). **Power** *influences how we interpret the messages of others and determines the extent to which we feel we have the right to speak up and voice our concerns and opinions to others.* Take a moment to reflect on the different ways you think about power. What images come to mind for you when you think of power? Are there different kinds of power? Are some people inherently more powerful than others? Do you consider yourself to be a powerful person? We highlight three ways to understand power as it relates to group and team communication. The word "power" literally means "to be able" and has many implications.

If you associate power with control or dominance, this refers to the notion of power as **power-over**. According to Starhawk, "power-over *enables one individual or group to make the decisions that affect others, and to enforce control*" (9). Control can and does take many forms in society. Starhawk explains that,

> *This power is wielded from the workplace, in the schools, in the courts, in the doctor's office. It may rule with weapons that are physical or by controlling the resources we need to live: money, food, medical care; or by controlling more subtle resources: information, approval, love. We are so accustomed to power-over, so steeped in its language and its implicit threats, that we often become aware of its functioning only when we see its extreme manifestations. (9)*

When we are in group situations and someone dominates the conversation, makes all of the decisions, or controls the resources of the group such as money or equipment, this is power-over.

Power-from-within refers to a more personal sense of strength or agency. Power-from-within manifests *itself when we can stand, walk, and speak "words that convey our needs and thoughts*" (Starhawk 10). In groups, this type of power "arises from our sense of connection, our bonding with other human beings, and with the environment" (10). As Heider explains in The Tao of Leadership, "Since all creation is a whole, separateness is an illusion. Like it or not, we are team players. Power comes through cooperation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness" (77). If you think about your role in groups, how have you influenced other group members? Your strategies indicate your sense of power-from-within.

Finally, groups manifest **power-with**, which is "*the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen*" (Starhawk 10). For this to be effective in a group or



team, at least two qualities must be present among members: 1) All group members must communicate respect and equality for one another, and 2) The leader must not abuse power-with and attempt to turn it into power-over. Have you ever been involved in a group where people did not treat each others as equals or with respect? How did you feel about the group? What was the outcome? Could you have done anything to change that dynamic?

Obviously, communication is the central activity of every group because it is how we organize and maintain groups. While we can all tell positive and negative stories about being in groups, how are they formed in the first place?

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10.4: Forming Groups

Sometimes we join a group because we want to. Other times, we might be assigned to work in groups in a class or at work. Either way, Lumsden, Lumsden and Wiethoff give three reasons why we form groups. First, we may join groups because *we share similar interests or attractions* with other group members. If you are a certain major in college, chances are you share some of the same interests as others in your class groups. Also, you might find yourself attracted to others in your group for romantic, friendship, political, religious or professional reasons. On our campus, our majors have formed the Communication Club to bring together students in the major. A second reason we join groups is called **drive reduction**. Essentially, we join groups so *our work with others reduces the drive to fulfill our needs by spreading out involvement*. As Maslow explains, we have drives for physiological needs like security, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Working with others helps us achieve these needs thereby reducing our obligation to meet these needs ourselves (Maslow; Paulson). If you accomplished a task successfully for a group, your group members likely complimented your work, thus fulfilling some of your self-esteem needs. If you had done the same work only for yourself, the building up of your self-esteem may not have occurred. A third reason we join groups is for **reinforcement**. We are often motivated to do things for the rewards they bring. Participating in *groups provides reinforcement from others in the pursuit of our goals and rewards*.

Much like interpersonal relationships, groups go through a series of stages as they come together. These stages are called *forming, storming, norming, and performing* (Tuckman; Fisher; Sherblom; Benson; Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Groups that form to achieve a task often go through a fifth stage called termination that occurs after a group accomplishes its goal. Let's look at each of the stages of group formation and termination.

- **Forming**. Obviously, for a group to exist and work together its members must first form the group. During the forming stage, group members begin to set the parameters of the group by establishing what characteristics identify the members of the group as a group. During this stage, the group's goals are made generally clear to members, initial questions and concerns are addressed, and initial role assignments may develop. This is the stage when group norms begin to be negotiated and established. Essentially, norms are a code of conduct which may be explicit or assumed and dictate acceptable and expected behavior of the group.

- **Storming**. The storming stage might be considered comparable to the "first fight" of a romantic couple. After the initial politeness passes in the forming stage, group members begin to feel more comfortable expressing their opinions about how the group should operate and the participation of other members in the group. Given the complexity of meeting both individual goals as well as group goals, there is constant negotiation among group members regarding participation and how a group should operate. Imagine being assigned to a group for class and you discover that all the members of the group are content with getting a C grade, but you want an A. If you confront your group members to challenge them to have higher expectations, you are in the storming stage.

- **Norming**. Back to our romantic couple example, if the couple can survive the first fight, they often emerge on the other side of the conflict feeling stronger and more cohesive. The same is true in groups. If a group is able to work through the initial conflict of the storming stage, there is the opportunity to really solidify the group's norms and get to the task at hand as a cohesive group. Norming signifies that the members of a group are willing to abide by group rules and values to achieve the group's goals.

- **Performing**. Performing is the stage we most often associate as the defining characteristic of groups. This stage is marked by a decrease in tensions, less conscious attention to norm establishment, and greater focus on the actual work at hand in order to accomplish the group's goals. While there still may be episodes of negotiating conflict and re-establishing norms, performing is about getting to the business at hand. When you are in a weekly routine of meeting at the library to work on a group project, you are in the performing stage.



- **Terminating**. Groups that are assigned a specific goal and timeline will experience the fifth stage of group formation, termination. Think about groups you have been assigned to in college. We're willing to bet that the group did not continue once you achieved the required assignment and earned your grade. This is not to say that we do not continue relationships with other group members. But, the defining characteristics of the group established during the forming stage have come to an end, and thus, so has the group.

Now that you understand how groups form, let's discuss the ways in which people participate in groups. Since groups are comprised of interdependent individuals, one area of research that has emerged from studying group communication is the focus on the roles that we play in groups and teams. Having an understanding of the various roles we play in groups can help us understand how to interact with various group members.

Group Communication Now

Technology is changing so many things about the ways we communicate. This is also true in group communication. One of the great frustrations for many people in groups is simply finding a time that everyone can meet together. However, computer technology has changed these dynamics as more and more groups "meet" in the virtual world, rather than face-to-face. But, what is the impact of technology on how groups function? Dr. Kiran Bala argues that "new media has brought a sea of changes in intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and mass communication processes and content." With group chat available on almost all social media networks and numerous technological devices, we have a lot to learn about the ways communication technologies are changing our notions of working in groups and individual communication styles.

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10.5: Groups Roles

 Take a moment to think about the individuals in a particular group you were in and the role each of them played. You may recall that some people were extremely helpful, organized and made getting the job done easy. Others may have been more difficult to work with, or seemed to disrupt the group process. In each case, the participants were performing roles that manifest themselves in most groups. Early studies on group communication provide an overwhelming number of different types of group roles. To simplify, we provide an overview of some of the more common roles. As you study group roles, remember that we usually play more than one role at a time, and that we do not always play the same roles from group to group.

We organize group roles into four categories—task, social-emotional, procedural, and individual. **Task roles** are those that *help or hinder a group's ability to accomplish its goals*. **Social-emotional roles** are those that *focus on building and maintaining relationships among individuals in a group* (the focus is on how people feel about being in the group). **Procedural roles** are *concerned with how the group accomplishes its task*. People occupying these roles are interested in following directions, proper procedure, and going through appropriate channels when making decisions or initiating policy. The final category, **individual roles**, includes *any role "that detracts from group goals and emphasizes personal goals"* (Jensen & Chilberg 97). When people come to a group to promote their individual agenda above the group's agenda, they do not communicate in ways that are beneficial to the group. Let's take a look at each of these categories in more detail.

- **Task Roles**. While there are many task roles a person can play in a group, we want to emphasize five common ones. The **Task Leader** is *the person that keeps the group focused on the primary goal or task by setting agendas, controlling the participation and communication of the group's members, and evaluating ideas and contributions of participants*. Your associated students president probably performs the task leader role. **Information Gatherers** are those people who *seek and/or provide the factual information necessary for evaluating ideas, problem solving, and reaching conclusions*. This is the person who serves as the liaison with your professors about what they expect from a group project. **Opinion Gatherers** are those that *seek out and/or provide subjective responses about ideas and suggestions*. They most often take into account the values, beliefs, and attitudes of members. If you have a quiet member of your group, the opinion gatherer may ask, "What do you think?" in order to get that person's feedback. The **Devil's Advocate** is the person that*argues a contrary or opposing point of view*. This may be done positively in an effort to ensure that all perspectives are considered, or negatively as the unwillingness of a single person to participate in the group's ideas. The **Energizer** is the person who *functions as the group's cheer-leader, providing energy, motivation, and positive encouragement*.

- **Social-Emotional Roles**. Group members play a variety of roles in order to **build and maintain relationships in groups.** The **Social-Emotional Leader** is the person who is *concerned with maintaining and balancing the social and emotional needs of the group members and tends to play many, if not all, of the roles in this category*. The **Encourager** practices good listening skills in order to *create a safe space for others to share ideas and offer suggestions*. **Followers** are group members that do what they are told, *going along with decisions and assignments from the group*. The **Tension Releaser** is the person that *uses humor, or can skillfully change the subject in an attempt to minimize tension and avoid conflict*. The **Compromiser** is the one who *mediates disagreements or conflicts among members by encouraging others to give in on small issues for the sake of meeting the goals of the group*. What role do you find yourself most likely to enact in groups? Or, do you find you switch between these roles depending on the group?

- **Procedural Roles**. Groups cannot function properly without having a system of rules or norms in place. Members are responsible for maintaining the norms of a group and play many roles to accomplish this. The **Facilitator** acts like a traffic

director by *managing the flow of information to keep the group on task*. **Gatekeepers** are those group members that attempt to *maintain proper communicative balance*. These people also serve as the points of contact between times of official group meetings. The **Recorder** is the person responsible for *tracking group ideas, decisions, and progress*. Often, a written record is necessary, thus, this person has the responsibility for keeping, maintaining, and sharing group notes. If you're the person who pulls out a pen and paper in order to track what the group talks about, you're the recorder.

- **Individual Roles**. Because groups are made of individuals, group members often play various roles in order to achieve individual goals. The **Aggressor** engages in *forceful or dominating communication to put others down or initiate conflict with other members*. This communication style can cause some members to remain silent or passive. The **Blocker** is the person that fusses or *complains about small procedural matters, often blocking the group's progress by not letting them get to the task*. They worry about small details that, overall, are not important to achieving the group's desired outcome. The **Self-Confessor** uses the group as a setting to *discuss personal or emotional matters not relevant to the group or its task*. This is the person that views the group as one that is there to perform group therapy. The **Playboy or Playgirl***shows little interest in the group or the problem at hand* and does not contribute in a meaningful way, or at all. This is the person who does essentially no work, yet still gets credit for the group's work. The **Joker or Clown** uses *inappropriate humor or remarks that can steer the group from its mission*.

Case-in-Point

The popular sitcom Workaholics (2011-present) follows three college drop-outs who work in a telemarketing company and are notoriously terrible workers. Always working as a group in their shared cubicle, the three young men are all prime examples of group members who play Individual Roles: Anders as the Aggressor, Blake as the Self-Confessor, Adam as the Blocker, and all three of them as the joker or clown at one point or another. As you might guess, this group is very unproductive and ineffective.

While we certainly do not have the space to cover every role you might encounter in a group, we're sure you can point to your own examples of people who have filled the roles we've discussed. Perhaps you can point to examples of when you have filled some of these roles yourself. Important for group members to understand, are the various roles they play in groups in order to engage in positive actions that help the group along. One dynamic that these roles contribute to in the process of group communication is leadership in groups. Let's briefly examine how leadership functions in groups.

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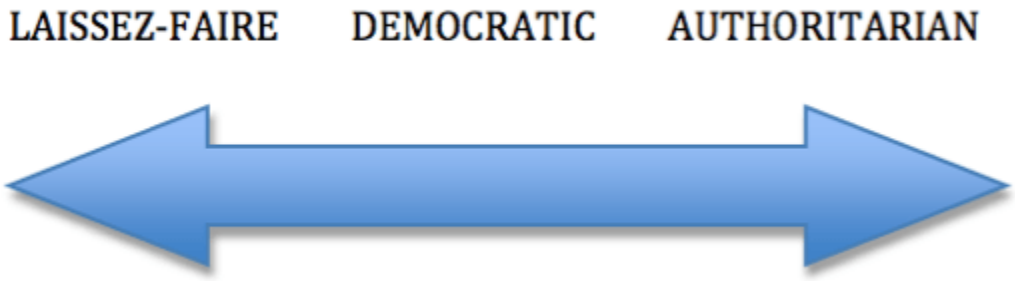
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10.6: Leadership In Groups

While we've examined roles we can play in groups, the role that often gets the most attention is that of the leader. Like defining communication, many people have an idea of what a leader is, but can't really come up with a good definition for the term as there are many ways to conceptualize the role of leader. One way to do this is to think of leaders in terms of their leadership styles. Let's look at three broad leadership styles to better understand the communication choices leaders can make, as well as the outcome of such choices, in a group.

First, let's visualize leadership styles by seeing them as a continuum. The position to the left (Laissez-faire) indicates a leader who exerts little to no control over a group, while the position on the right (Authoritarian) indicates a leader who seeks complete control. The position in the middle (Democratic) is one where a leader maintains a moderate level of control or influence in a group with the group's permission (Bass & Stogdill; Berkowitz).



- **Laissez-faire** is a French term that literally means "let do." This leadership style is one in which the leader *takes a laid back or hands-off approach*. For a variety of reasons, leaders may choose to keep their input at a minimum and refrain from directing a group. What do you think some reasons may be for selecting this leadership style? Perhaps a person feels uncomfortable being a leader. Perhaps a person does not feel that she/he possesses the skills required to successfully lead the group. Or, perhaps the group is highly skilled, motivated, and efficient and does not require much formal direction from a leader. If the latter is the case, then a laissez-faire approach may work well. However, if a group is in need of direction then a laissez-faire style may result in frustration and inefficiency.

- An **authoritarian leadership style** is one in which a leader attempts *to exert maximum control over a group*. This may be done by making unilateral decisions rather than consulting all members, assigning members to specific tasks or duties, and generally controlling group processes. This leadership style may be beneficial when a group is in need of direction or there are significant time pressures. Authoritarian leaders may help a group stay efficient and organized in order to accomplish its goals. However, group members may be less committed to the outcomes of the group process than if they had been a part of the decision making process. One term that you may have heard on your campus is "shared-governance." In general, faculty do not like working in groups where one person is making the decisions. Instead, most faculty prefer a system where all members of a group share in the leadership process. This can also be called the democratic style of leadership.

- The **democratic style of leadership** falls somewhere in the middle of laissez-faire and authoritarian styles. In these situations, *the decision-making power is shared among group members, not exercised by one individual*. In order for this to be effective, group members must spend considerable time sharing and listening to various positions and weighing the effects of each. Groups organized in this fashion may be more committed to the outcomes of the group, creative, and participatory. However, as each person's ideas are taken into account, this can extend the amount of time it takes for a group to accomplish its goals.

While we've certainly oversimplified our coverage of the complex nature of group leaders, you should be able to recognize that there are pros and cons to each leadership style depending on context. There is not one right way to be a leader for every group. Effective leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to fit the needs of the group. Furthermore, as a group's needs and members change over time, leadership styles can accommodate natural changes in the group's life cycle. Take a moment to think

of various group situations in which each leadership style may be the most and the least desirable. What are examples of groups where each style of leadership could be practiced effectively?

Group Norms

Every group in which we participate has a set of norms like we discussed in the "norming" stage. Each group's rules and norms are different, and we must learn them to be effective participants. Some groups formalize their norms and rules, while others are less formal and more fluid. Norms are the recognized rules of behavior for group members. **Norms***influence the ways we communicate with other members, and ultimately, the outcome of group participation*. Norms are important because, as we highlighted in the "norming" stage of group formation, they are the defining characteristics of groups.



Brilhart and Galanes divide norms into two categories. **General norms***"direct the behavior of the group as a whole"* (130). Meeting times, how meetings run, and the division of tasks are all examples of general norms that groups form and maintain. These norms establish the generally accepted rules of behavior for all group members. The second category of norms is role-specific norms. **Role-specific norms***"concern individual members with particular roles, such as the designated leader"* (130).

Not only are there norms that apply to all members of a group, there are norms that influence the behaviors of each role. Consider our brief discussion on leadership. If a group's members are self-motivated, and do not need someone imposing structure, they will set a norm that the group leader should act as a laissez-faire or democratic leader rather than an authoritarian leader. Violation of this norm would most likely result in conflict if leaders try to impose their will. A violation like this will send a group back to the "storming" stage to renegotiate the acceptable norms of the group. When norms are violated, group members most often will work to correct the violation to get the group back on task and functioning properly. Have you ever been in a group in which a particular group member did not do the task that was assigned to them? What happened? How did the group handle this situation as a whole? What was the response of the person who did not complete the task? In hindsight, would you have handled it differently? If so, how?

As groups progress through the various stages, and as members engage in the various roles, the group is in a continual process of decision making. Since this is true, it makes sense to ask the question, "How is it that groups make decisions?"

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10.7: Decision Making In Groups

When groups need to get a job done they should have a method in place for making decisions. The decision making process is a norm that may be decided by a group leader or by the group members as a whole. Let's look at four common ways of making decisions in groups. To make it simple we will again use a continuum as a way to visualize the various options groups have for making decisions. On the left side are those methods that require maximum group involvement (consensus and voting). On the right are those methods that use the least amount of input from all members (compromise and authority rule).



The decision-making process that requires the most group input is called **consensus**. To reach consensus *group members must participate in the crafting of a decision and agree to adopt it*. While not all members may support the decision equally, all will agree to carry it out. In individualistic cultures like the U.S., where a great deal of value is placed on independence and freedom of choice, this option can be seen by group members as desirable, since no one is forced to go along with a policy or plan of action to which they are opposed. Even though this style of decision making has many advantages, it has its limitations as well—it requires a great deal of creativity, trust, communication, and time on the part of all group members. When groups have a hard time reaching consensus, they may opt for the next strategy which does not require buy-in from all or most of the group.

Group Communication and You

Okay, you're a Communication major and this whole idea of working in groups really appeals to you and seems to come naturally. But perhaps you're not a Communication major and you're thinking to yourself that your future career isn't really going to require group or team work. Well, you might want to think again. Forbes magazine released an article titled The Ten Skills Employers Most Want in 2015 Graduates which stated that technical knowledge related to the job is not nearly as important as effective teamwork and communications skills. In fact, the top three skills listed include, 1) ability to work in a team structure, 2) ability to make decisions and solve problems, and 3) ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization. Even non-Communication majors need to develop effective group communication skills to succeed at work.

Even non-Communication majors need to develop effective group communication skills to succeed at work.

Voting by majority may be as simple as having 51% of the vote for a particular decision, or may require a larger percentage, such as two-thirds or three-fourths, before reaching a decision. Like consensus, voting is advantageous because everyone is able to have an equal say in the decision process (as long as they vote). Unlike consensus, everyone may not be satisfied with the outcome. In a simple majority, 49% of voters may be displeased and may be resistant to abide by the majority vote. In this case the decision or policy may be difficult to carry out and implement. For example, our campus recently had a department vote on whether or not they wanted to hire a particular person to be a professor. Three faculty voted yes for the person, while two faculty voted no. Needless to say, there was a fair amount of contention among the professors who voted. Ultimately, the person being considered for the job learned about the split vote and decided that he did not want to take the job because he felt that the two people that voted no would not treat him well.

Toward the right of our continuum is **compromise**. This method often carries a positive connotation in the U.S. because it is perceived as fair since *each member gives up something, as well as gains something*. Nevertheless, this decision making process may not be as fair as it seems on the surface. The main reason for this has to do with what is being given up and obtained. There is nothing in a compromise that says these two factors must be equal (that may be the ideal, but it is often not the reality). For individuals or groups that feel they have gotten the unfair end of the bargain, they may be resentful and refuse to carry out the compromise. They may also foster ill will toward others in the group, or engage in self-doubt for going along with the compromise in the first place. However, if groups cannot make decisions through consensus or voting, compromise may be the next best alternative.

At the far right of our continuum is decision by **authority rule**. This decision-making process *requires essentially no input from the group, although the group's participation may be necessary for implementing the decision*. The authority in question may be a member of the group who has more power than other members, such as the leader, or a person of power outside the group. While this method is obviously efficient, members are often resentful when they feel they have to follow another's orders and feel the group process was a façade and waste of valuable time.

During the decision making process, groups must be careful not to fall victim to groupthink. **Groupthink** happens when *a group is so focused on agreement and consensus that they do not examine all of the potential solutions available to them*. Obviously, this can lead to incredibly flawed decision making and outcomes. Groupthink occurs when members strive for unanimity, resulting in self-deception, forced consent, and conformity to group values and ethics (Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Many people argue that groupthink is the reason behind some of history's worst decisions, such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, The Pearl Harbor attack, The North Korea escalation, the Vietnam escalation, and the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq (Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Let's think about groupthink on a smaller, less detrimental level. Imagine you are participating in a voting process during a group meeting where everyone votes yes on a particular subject, but you want to vote no. You might feel pressured to conform to the group and vote yes for the sole purpose of unanimity, even though it goes against your individual desires.

As with leadership styles, appropriate decision making processes vary from group to group depending on context, culture, and group members. There is not a "one way fits all" approach to making group decisions. When you find yourself in a task or decision-making group you should consider taking stock of the task at hand before deciding as a group the best ways to proceed.

Group Work and Time

By now you should recognize that working in groups and teams has many advantages. However, one issue that is of central importance to group work is time. When working in groups time can be both a source of frustration, as well as a reason to work together. One obvious problem is that it takes much longer to make decisions with two or more people as opposed to just one person. Another problem is that it can be difficult to coordinate meeting times when taking into account people's busy lives of work, school, family, and other personal commitments. On the flip side, when time is limited and there are multiple tasks to accomplish, it is often more efficient to work in a group where tasks can be delegated according to resources and skills. When each member can take on certain aspects of a project, this limits the amount of work an individual would have to do if he/she were solely responsible for the project.

For example, Alex, Kellsie and Teresa all had a project to work on. The project was large and would take a full semester to complete. They had to split up the amount of work equally to each person as well as based on skills. The thought of doing all the work alone was daunting in terms of the required time and labor. Being able to delegate assignments and work together to achieve a professional result for their project indicated that the best option for them was to work together. In the end, the group's work produced different results and views that you wouldn't have necessarily come to working alone. On the flip side, imagine having to work in a group where you believe you could do just the same on your own. When deciding whether or not to work in groups, it is important to consider time. Is the time and effort of working in a group worth the outcome? Or, is it better to accomplish the task as an individual?

Groups and Technology and Social Media

Social media and technology are changing the ways we communicate in groups. There is no doubt that technology is rapidly changing the ways we communicate in a variety of contexts, and group communication is no exception. Many organizations use computers and cell phones as a primary way to keep groups connected given their ease of use, low cost, and asynchronous nature. In fact, it's likely that your course web pages also have "group forums" for class groups to deal with the complexities of finding times to meet. In fact, the group that worked on this chapter used Google Docs to have live chats online, transfer documents back and forth, and form messages to achieve the group's goals–all without ever having to meet in person. As you enter the workforce, you'll likely find yourself participating in virtual groups with people who have been brought together from a variety of geographical locations.

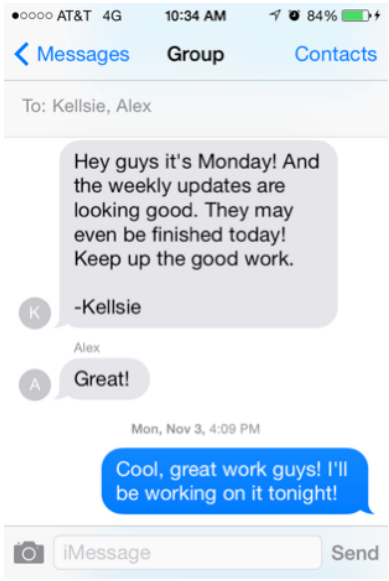
Group Communication and You

Today, we know that social media has the power to bring people together and drive change. Sports fans flock to Twitter and other social media outlets to follow their favorite teams and athletes. Less than 5 percent of TV is sport, but 50 percent of what is tweeted is about sports. And if there was any thought that this phenomenon was only for Americans that is quickly debunked by the worldwide usage statistics.

"The power to create the global sports village and encourage the next generation of pro-social media sports fans is at our fingertips." -Adam C. Earnheardt

While communication technologies can be beneficial for bringing people together and facilitating groups, they also have drawbacks. When we lack face-to-face encounters, and rely on asynchronous forms of communication, there is greater potential for information to be lost and messages to be ambiguous. The face-to-face nature of traditional group meetings provides immediate processing and feedback through the interaction of group members. When groups communicate through email, threads, discussion forums, text messaging, etc., they lose the ability to provide immediate feedback to other members. Also, using communication technologies takes a great deal more time for a group to achieve its goals due to the asynchronous nature of these channels.

Case in Point



This screen shot is from an iMessage group chat between the group that is responsible for this chapter's content. Texting helped our group stay connected, updated, and motivated without having to meet face-to-face.

Nevertheless, technology is changing the ways we understand groups and participate in them. We have yet to work out all of the new standards for group participation introduced by technology. Used well, technology opens the door for new avenues of working in groups to achieve goals. Used poorly, technology can add to the many frustrations people often experience working in groups and teams.

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10.8: Group Communication Summary

Summary

We participate in groups and teams at all stages and phases of our lives, from play groups, to members of an athletic team, to performing in a band, or performing in a play. We form groups based on personal and professional interests, drive reduction, and for reinforcement. Through group and team work we can save time and resources, enhance the quality of our work, succeed professionally, or accomplish socio-political change.

As you recall, a group is composed of three or more people who interact over time, depend on each other, and follow shared rules and norms. A team is a specialized group which possesses a strong sense of collective identity and compatible and complimentary resources. There are five general types of groups depending on the intended outcome. Primary groups are formed to satisfy our long-term emotive needs. Secondary groups are more performance based and concern themselves with accomplishing tasks or decision making. Personal growth groups focus on specific areas of personal problem solving while providing a supportive and emotionally positive context. Learning groups are charged with the discovery and dissemination of new ideas while problem solving groups find solutions.

Once a group comes together they go through typical stages (forming, storming, norming, performing, and terminating) to develop roles, create a leadership strategy, and determine the process for decision making. While numerous specific group roles exit, the four categories of roles include: task, social-emotional, procedural, and individual roles. It is likely that members will occupy multiple roles simultaneously as they participate in groups.

There are three broad leadership styles ranging from least to most control—laissez faire, democratic, and authoritarian. Also related to power and control are options for decision making. Consensus gives members the most say, voting and compromise may please some but not others, and authority rule gives all control to the leader. None of the options for leadership styles and decision making are inherently good or bad—the appropriate choice depends on the individual situation and context. It is important for groups not to become victims of groupthink as they make decisions.

New technologies are continually changing how we engage in group communication. The asynchronous nature of communication technologies can facilitate group processes. However, they also have the potential to slow groups down and make it more difficult to accomplish group goals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences between the terms “team” and “group?” Write down a team you have been a part of and a group you have been a part of. In what ways were they effective or not effective?
2. Review all the different types of group roles. Reflect back on a time when you worked in a group and discuss the role(s) you played. If there were any individuals in this group that prevented the group’s progress, identify their role and explain why it was problematic.
3. Thinking back to groups that you have been involved with in the past, which types of groups had the most effective leader(s) and what were the qualities of those leaders that made them so strong?
4. What are the potential strengths of group discussions? What are the potential limitations of group discussions? What are some strategies to enhance a group’s cohesion?
5. Reflect back on a time when you were working on a group project in class. Discuss each stage of development (forming, storming, norming, performing, and terminating) as it applied to this group.
6. How were/are decisions made in your family? Has the process changed over time? What kinds of communication surround the decision making?

KEY TERMS

- activity groups
- aggressor
- authoritarian
- authority rule

- blocker
- brainstorming
- climate
- cohesiveness
- collectivist
- common goals
- compromise
- consensus
- democratic
- devil's advocate
- drive reduction
- encourager
- energizer
- facilitator
- followers
- forming
- gatekeepers
- general norms
- group
- groupthink
- individualistic
- individual roles
- information gatherers
- interaction
- interdependence
- interests/attraction
- joker/clown
- laissez-faire
- leadership
- learning groups
- norming
- norms
- opinion gatherers
- performing
- personal growth groups
- playboy/playgirl
- polarization
- power
- power-from-within
- power-over
- power-with
- primary groups
- problem solving groups
- procedural roles
- promulgation
- recorder
- reinforcement
- role-specific norms
- secondary groups
- self-confessor
- shared norms
- social-emotional roles
- social-emotional leader
- solidification
- storming
- synergy
- task leader
- task roles

- teams
- tension releasers
- terminating
- voting

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11: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define organizations and organizational communication.
- Explain how the study of organizational communication developed.
- Explain the five theoretical perspectives for understanding organizational communication.
- Understand the challenges to organizational communication.
- Explain the future directions of organizational communication.

11.1: Organizational Communication Overview

11.2: What Is Organizational Communication?

11.3: A Chronological Look at Understanding Organizational Communication

11.4: Challenges in Organizational Communication

11.5: Organizational Communication Summary

11.6: Organizational Communication References

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11.1: Organizational Communication Overview

If you have ever worked a part time job during the school year, worked a full time summer job, volunteered for a non-profit, or belonged to a social organization, you have experienced organizational communication. It's likely that you've been a job seeker, an interviewee, a new employee, a co-worker, or maybe a manager? In each of these situations you make various choices regarding how you choose to communicate with others in an organizational context.

We participate in organizations in almost every aspect of our lives. In fact, you will spend the bulk of your waking life in the context of organizations (March & Simon). Think about it, that means you'll spend more time with your co-workers than your family! At the center of every organization is what we've been studying throughout this book – Communication. Organizational communication is a broad and ever-growing specialization in the field of Communication. For the purpose of this chapter, we will provide a brief overview of the field, highlighting what organizational communication is and how it is studied.

What Is An Organization?

Before we define organizational communication let's look at what an organization is, and how pervasive they are in today's society. Etzioni states, "We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations" (1). Simply put, from birth to death, organizations impact every aspect of our lives (Deetz).

Organizational Communication Now
Networking

The Half Moon Bay chapter of **BNI (Business Network International)** meets to promote local businesses and network with other businesses in the area. BNI is the largest business networking organization in the world, and each chapter acts as it's own organization.

Stephen P. Robbins defines an **organization** as a *"consciously coordinated social unit composed of two or more people, that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals"* (4). Why have organizations in the first place? We organize together for common social, personal, political, or professional purposes. We organize together to achieve what we cannot accomplish individually.

When we study organizational communication our focus is primarily on corporations, manufacturing, the service industry, and for profit businesses. However, organizations also include not-for-profit companies, schools, government agencies, small businesses, and social or charitable agencies such as churches or a local humane society. Organizations are complicated, dynamic organisms that take on a personality and culture of their own, with unique rules, hierarchies, structures, and divisions of labor. Organizations can be thought of as systems of people (Goldhaber) who are in constant motion (Redding). Organizations are social systems (Thayer; Katz & Kahn) that rely on communication to exist. Simon puts it quite simply: "Without communication, there can be no organization" (Simon 57).

Contributions and Affiliations

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11.2: What Is Organizational Communication?

Organizational Communication and You
What is Organizational Communication?

Before you begin reading the rest of this chapter, Watch a cool animated short about "**What is Organizational Communication**"

For an example of another approach to Organizational Communication read **Dennis Schoeneborn's paper on organization as communication** involving the Luhmannian perspective.

Like defining communication study, many definitions of organizational communication exist. Deetz argues that one way to enlighten our understanding of organizational communication is to compare different approaches. However, for the purpose of this text, we want to define organizational communication so you have a frame of reference for understanding this chapter. Our definition is not definitive, but creates a starting point for understanding this specialization of communication study.

We define **organizational communication' *as****the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals.* Organizational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependent. Individuals in organizations transmit messages through face-to face, written, and mediated channels.

Organizational communication helps us to 1) accomplish tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services, and production; 2) acclimate to changes through individual and organizational creativity and adaptation; 3) complete tasks through the maintenance of policy, procedures, or regulations that support daily and continuous operations; 4) develop relationships where "human messages are directed at people within the organization-their attitudes, morale, satisfaction, and fulfillment" (Goldhaber 20); and 5) coordinate, plan, and control the operations of the organization through management (Katz & Kahn; Redding; Thayer). Organizational communication is how organizations represent, present, and constitute their organizational climate and culture—the attitudes, values and goals that characterize the organization and its members.

Organizational communication largely focuses on building relationships and interacting with with internal organizational members and interested external publics. As Mark Koschmann explains in his animated YouTube video, we have two ways of looking at organizational communication. The conventional approach focuses on communication within organizations. The second approach is communication as organization — meaning organizations are a result of the communication of those within them. Communication is not just about transmitting messages between senders and receivers. Communication literally constitutes, or makes up, our social world. Much of our communication involves sending and receiving relatively unproblematic messages and acting on that information. Other times things are a bit more complex, such as when you need to resolve conflict with a close friend or family member. There is much more going on in these situations then merely exchanging information. You are actually engaging in a complex process of meaning and negotiating rules created by the people involved.

For organizations to be successful, they must have competent communicators. Organizational communication study shows that organizations rely on effective communication and efficient communication skills from their members. A number of surveys (Davis & Miller; Holter & Kopka; Perrigo & Gaut) identify effective oral and written communication as the most sought after skills by those who run organizations. The U.S. Department of Labor reported communication competency as the most vital skill necessary for the 21st century workforce to achieve organizational success (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills). **The Public Forum Institute** maintained that employees need to be skilled in public presentation, listening, and interpersonal communication to flourish in an organization.

Organizations seek people who can follow and give instructions, accurately listen, provide useful feedback, get along with coworkers and customers, network, provide serviceable information, work well in teams, and creatively and critically solve problems and present ideas in an understandable manner. Developing organizational communication awareness and effectiveness is more than just having know-how or knowledge. Efficient organizational communication involves knowing how to create and exchange information, work with diverse groups or individuals, communicate in complicated and changing

circumstances, as well as having the aptitude or motivation to communicate in appropriate manners.

How the Field of Organizational Communication Began

As you now know, communication study is deeply entrenched in the oral rhetorical traditions of ancient Rome and Greece. Similar to the many of the early concepts that shaped the discipline, some of the founding principles of organizational communication originated in the East. As early as the fourth century, Chinese scholars concentrated on the "problems of communicating within the vast government bureaucracy as well as between the government and the people" (Murphy, Hildebrandt & Thomas 4). Ancient eastern scholars focused on information flow, message fidelity, and quality of information within their governmental bureaucracy (Krone, Garrett & Chen; Paraboteeah). These still remain areas of focus for organizational communication that you will learn in your classes today.

Organizational Communication and You
Good Communication

The New York Times: Strikes Can Come Easier Than Words. Major League Baseball is trying to ease the language barrier, adopting a new rule that permits interpreters to join mound conversations when pitchers aren't fluent in English. This example shows just how important communication is for the success of a team.

Good Communication Skills Maybe the Only Skill You Need?! The 10 Skills Employers Most Want In 2015 Graduates, a news article from Forbes demonstrates the communication skills desired by most organizations.

Like most of our field's specializations, organizational communication began in the mid 20th century with the work of P. E. Lull and W. Charles Redding at the University of Purdue (Putnam & Cheney). During the industrial age, the focus of organizational communication was on worker productivity, organizational structure, and overall organizational effectiveness. Through this work people were interested in higher profits and managerial efficiency. Follett is often referred to as the first management consultant in the United States (Stohl). She focused specifically on message complexity, appropriate channel choice, and worker participation in organizations. Bernard placed communication at the heart of every organizational process, arguing that people must be able to interact with each other for an organization to succeed.

As a specialization in our field, organizational communication can arguably be traced back to Alexander R. Heron's 1942 book, *Sharing Information With Employees* that looked at manager-employee communication (Redding & Tompkins; Meyers & Sadaghiani). Putnam and Cheney stated that the specialization of "organizational communication grew out of three main speech communication traditions: public address, persuasion, and social science research on interpersonal, small group, and mass communication" (131). Along with public-speaking training for corporate executives as early as the 1920's (Putnam & Cheney), early works like Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* in 1936 focused on necessary oral presentation and written communication skills for managers to succeed in organizations.

Redding and Thompkins identify three periods in the development of organizational communication. During the **Era of Preparation** (1900 to 1940) much of the groundwork was laid for the discipline that we know today. Scholars emphasized the importance of communication in organizations. *The primary focus during this time was on public address, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion.* The **Era of Identification and Consolidation** (1940-1970) *saw the beginnings of business and industrial communication, with certain group and organizational relationships being recognized as important.* During the **Era of Maturity and Innovation** (1970-present), *empirical research increased, "accompanied by innovative efforts to develop concepts, theoretical premises, and philosophical critiques"* (Redding & Thompkins 7).

As with other specializations over the last century, organizational communication has evolved dramatically as dialogue between business and academic contexts. Redding and Thompkins conclude that "by 1967 or 1968, organizational communication had finally achieved at least a moderate degree of success in two respects: breaking from its 'business and industrial' shackles, and gaining a reasonable measure of recognition as an entity worthy of serious academic study" (18).

Organizational Communication Today

As communication evolves, research continues to develop, and organizational communication continues to redefine itself. In the early stages, this area focused on leaders giving public presentations. More recently emphasis has focused on all levels of interaction in organizations. Because interpersonal relationships are a large part of organizational communication, a great deal of research focuses on how interpersonal relationships are conducted within the framework of organizational hierarchies.

Modern organizational communication research has been summarized into eight major traditions: *1) Communication channels, 2) Communication climate, 3) Network analysis, 4) Superior-subordinate communication, 5) the information-processing perspective, 6) the rhetorical perspective, 7) the cultural perspective, and 8) the political perspective* (Putnam and Cheney; Kim) Since the 1980s, this specialization has expanded to include work on organizational culture, power and conflict management, and organizational rhetoric. If you were to take an organizational communication course at your campus, much of the time would be spent focusing on developing your skills in organizational socialization, interviewing, giving individual and group presentations, creating positive work relationships, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, stress management, decision making, and communicating with external publics.

Studying Organizational Communication

Looking back to Chapter Six, we looked at three primary ways Communication scholars conduct research. When we study organizational communication we can look to quantitative methods to predict behaviors, or qualitative methods to understand behaviors. We can use qualitative methods to study communication in the natural environment of organizations in order to understand organizational cultures and how they function (Putnam & Cheney; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo; Kim).

Critical approaches view organizations as "sites of domination" (Miller 116) where certain individuals are marginalized or disadvantaged by oppressive groups or structures. Most often the focus of this line of research involves gender or ethnic identity as they manifest themselves in organizations. The critical researcher uses interpretative research techniques similar to cultural studies. When looking at something such as a company pamphlet or the organization's employee handbook, a critical researcher will expose political messages that may disadvantage particular groups of people.

Contributions and Affiliations

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11.3: A Chronological Look at Understanding Organizational Communication

Now that you have a better understanding of the concept of organizational communication, let's look at five different perspectives for understanding organizational communication that have developed over time.

Classical Management Perspective

The original perspective for understanding organizational communication can be described using a machine metaphor. At the beginning of the industrial age, when people thought science could solve almost every problem, American Frederick Taylor, Frenchman Henri Fayol, and German Max Weber tried to apply scientific solutions to organizations. They wanted to determine how organizations and workers could function in an ideal way. Organizations during the industrial revolution wanted to know how they could maximize their profits so the classical management perspective focused on worker productivity.

Case In Point



Owners Richard and Maurice McDonald

McDonalds

After running a restaurant successfully for 11 years, Richard and Maurice McDonald decided to improve it. They wanted to make food faster, sell it cheaper and spend less time worrying about replacing cooks and car hops. The brothers closed the restaurant and redesigned its food-preparation area to work less like a restaurant and more like an automobile assembly line.

Their old drive-in had already made them rich, but the new restaurant – which became McDonald's – made the brothers famous. Restaurateurs traveled from all over the country to copy their system of fast food preparation, which they called the Speedee Service System. Without cars, Carl and Maurice would not have had a drive-in restaurant to tinker with. Without assembly lines, they would not have had a basis for their method of preparing food.

Being a short-order cook took skill and training, and good cooks were in high demand. The Speedee system, however, was completely different. Instead of using a skilled cook to make food quickly, it used lots of unskilled workers, each of whom did one small, specific step in the food-preparation process.

Instead of being designed to facilitate the preparation of a variety of food relatively quickly, the kitchen's purpose was to make a very large amount of a very few items.

When you visit different restaurants belonging to the same fast-food chain, the menu and food are pretty much the same. There's one reason for this uniformity in fast food – it's a product of mass-production.

http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/fast-food.htm

The machine metaphor of classical management suggests that three basic aspects should exist in organizations: Specialization, Standardization, and Predictability (Miller). Those who advocated this perspective argued that every employee should have a specialized function, thus, essentially any individual could perform a job if they are properly trained. If one individual fails to do the job, they are easily replaceable with another person since people are seen as simply parts of a machine.

Taylor developed his **Theory of Scientific Management** from his early days as a foreman in a machine shop. Little did he know how drastically he was going to influence organizations and our notions of working life. Taylor could not understand why organizations and individuals would not want to maximize efficiency. In Copley's biography about Taylor he reveals a man who was driven by perfection: "The spectacle of a [man] doing less than [his] best was to him morally shocking. He enthusiastically believed that to do anything less than your best is to add to the sum of the world's unrighteousness" (207). However, workers were not always as enthusiastic about efficiency and quality as Taylor, especially given the significant difference in status and pay between management and labor. For the common laborer during the industrial revolution, this new approach to employment meant possibly losing your job if a "scientific" formula showed that fewer workers could do the same job. If you don't think this is alive today, think about organizations such as Apple that have employees overseas manufacture iPhones.

Organizational Communication Then
Frederick Taylor
In today's world, fast food chains are good examples of classical management. Next time you buy that Whopper or Big Mac, you can thank the influence of American businessman Frederick Taylor. Literally using a stopwatch, Taylor's used his time and motion studies to prove that for every job, there is one best way to perform it in the shortest amount of time. This meant properly selecting, training, and rewarding the appropriate worker with the right task (Taylor, 1947). Peek into the kitchen the next time you order that burger, fries, and coke. It is likely that you will see employees separated by station and task, doing their specific part to fulfill your order. Likewise, the design of hard plastic seats and bright colors in fast food restaurants is done with intention to get customers in and out of the restaurant in an efficient and expedient manner.



During this time, Weber was also developing his ideas about **bureaucracy**. He was fascinated with what the ideal organization should look like, and believed that effective hierarchies helped organizations operate effectively. *Precise rules, a division of labor, centralized authority, and a distinctly defined hierarchy should be driven by rational thought void of emotion and outside influence* (Weber). These qualities would allow organizations to operate in a somewhat predictable manner — employees knew what to expect and who was in charge, and management could make decisions based on familiar, relevant information rather than

irrational feelings. Think about the bureaucracy of your college campus, there are numerous divisions of labor, rules, policies, and procedures. Registering for classes, tracking transcripts, obtaining financial aid, living in campus housing, are all part of the time you spend navigating the bureaucracy on your campus. Imagine a campus without bureaucracy. What if you couldn't easily access your transcripts? What if no one kept track of your progress through college? How would you know what to do and when you were done? What if there was no process for applying for financial aid? While bureaucracies can be slow, tedious, and often inefficient, they provide structure we have come to rely on to accomplish personal and professional goals.

Fayol's theory of classical management focused on how management worked, specifically looking at what managers should do to be most effective. For Fayol, organizational members should be clear who is in charge, and everyone should know their role in an organization. He argued that organizations should be grouped in a precise hierarchy that limits the flow of communication to top-down communication.

Theory X is an example of a classical management theory where *managers micro-manage employees by using reward-punishment tactics, and limiting employee participation in decision-making*(McGregor). This theory sees employees as basically lazy or unmotivated. Because of this, managers must closely supervise their workers. Those that do not do their work are disposable parts of the machine. This allows for management to mistreat and abuse their employees, ultimately lowering the very thing they were after, greater productivity.

Organizations using this approach can still be found today. Have you ever had a boss or manager who treated you like an interchangeable part of a machine who had little value? If so, you've experienced aspects of the classical management perspective at work. While scientific approaches to organizations were an interesting starting point for determining how to communicate, the classical management approach fell short in many ways. Thus, development and refinement continued to occur regarding ways to understand organizational communication.

Human Relations Perspective

Because classical management was so mechanical and did not treat people as humans, organizational scholars wanted to focus on the human elements of organizations. The **human relations approach** focuses on how *organizational members relate to one another, and how individuals' needs influence their performance in organizations*. In 1924 Elton Mayo and his team of Harvard scientists began a series of studies that were initially interested in how to modify working conditions to increase worker productivity, decrease employee turnover, and change the overall poor organizational effectiveness at the Hawthorne Electric Plant near Chicago (Roethlisberger & Dickson).

Mayo's team discovered that, no matter what changes they made to the work environment (such as adjusting lighting and temperature levels, work schedules, and worker isolation), worker productivity increased simply due to the fact that researchers were paying attention to them. Simply paying attention to workers and addressing their social needs yielded significant changes in their productivity. This is where the term "The Hawthorne Effect" developed. Mayo's work provided an impetus for a new way of looking at workers in organizations.

Maslow's hierarchy suggests that human beings are actually motivated to satisfy their personal needs. His theory is still of interest to us today as we try to comprehend the relevance of human relations in the workplace. Papa, Daniels and Spiker s describe McGregor's contributions: "As management theorists became familiar with Maslow's work, they soon realized the possibility of connecting higher-level needs to worker motivation. If organizational goals and individual needs could be integrated so that people would acquire self-esteem and, ultimately, self-actualization through work, then motivation would be self-sustaining" (33). Remember that Theory X managers do not trust their employees because they think workers are inherently unmotivated and lazy. At the other end of the managerial spectrum, Theory Y managers (those that take a human relations perspective to employees) assume that workers are self motivated, seek responsibility, and want to achieve success. As a result of this changing perspective, managers began to invite feedback and encourage a degree of participation in organizational decision making, thus focusing on human relationships as a way to motivate employee productivity. Today many companies make employees happy by keeping them well rested and supplying them with ways to catch up on sleep even at work.

Human Resources Perspective

The Human Resources perspective picks up where human relations left off. The primary criticism of human relations was that it still focused on productivity, trying to achieve worker productivity simply by making workers happy. The idea that a happy employee would be a productive employee makes initial sense. However, happiness does not mean that we will be productive workers. As a matter of fact, an individual can be happy with a job and not work very hard. Another reason scholars tried to improve the human relations perspective was because manipulative managers misused it by inviting participation from employees on the

surface, but not really doing anything with the employees' contributions. Imagine your boss encouraging everyone to put their ideas into a suggestion box but never looking them. How would you feel?

Human Resources attempts to truly embrace participation by all organizational members, viewing each person as a valuable human resource. *Employees are valuable resources that should be fully involved to manifest their abilities and productivity*. Using this approach, organizations began to encourage employee participation in decision making.

An example of the human resources perspective is William Ouchi's Theory Z. Ouchi believed that traditional American organizations should be more like Japanese organizations. Japanese culture values lifetime employment, teamwork, collective responsibility, and a sound mind and body. This contrasts with many American work values such as short-term employment, individualism, and non-participation. Many U.S. companies implemented Japanese organizational concepts such as quality circles (QC), quality of work life (QWL) programs, management by objectives (MBO), and W. E. Deming's notion of total quality management (TQM). Each of these approaches was designed to flatten hierarchies, increase participation, implement quality control, and utilize teamwork. Human Resources works "by getting organizational participants meaningfully involved in the important decisions that regulate the enterprise" (Brady 15).

Systems Perspective

Collectively, individuals in organizations achieve more than they can independently (Barnard; Katz & Kahn; Redding; von Bertalanffy; Skyttner). The **systems perspective** for understanding organizations is *"concerned with problems of relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than with the constant attributes of objects"* (Katz & Kahn 18). An organization is like a living organism and must exist in its external environment in order to survive. Without this interaction an organization remains what we call closed, and withers away (Buckley).

Case In Point
Outsources Jobs

The US News & World Reports Article,*Outsourcing to China Cost U.S. 3.2 Million Jobs Since 200–New research shows that more than three-quarters of jobs lost were in manufacturing*states that,

"Jobs outsourced to China have diminished American employment opportunities and have helped contribute to wage erosion since 2001, when China entered the World Trade Organization, new research shows.

Between 2001 and 2013, the expanded trade deficit with China cost the U.S. 3.2 million jobs, and three quarters of those jobs were in manufacturing, according to a report released Thursday from the Economic Policy Institute, a left-leaning Washington think tank. Those manufacturing jobs lost accounted for about two-thirds of all jobs lost within the industry over the 2001 to 2013 period."

Read the rest of the article **HERE** to see the impact of systems theory at the organizational and national levels.

All organizations have basic properties. **Equifinality** means that *a system (organization) can reach its goals from different paths*.

Each professor that teaches public speaking, for example, does so in a different way but, the end result is that the students in each of the classes as completed a course in public speaking. **Negative entropy** is *the ability of an organization to overcome the possibility of becoming run down*. Companies like Apple do everything they can to stay ahead of their competition and keep their products ahead of the curve. **Requisite variety** means that *organizations must be responsive to their external environment and adjust when needed*. Apple is always under pressure to come up with the newest and best technology. When Apple goes a long time without doing so, the public begins to be critical. **Homeostasis** points to *an organization's need for stability in a turbulent environment*. When gas prices go up, for example, organizations impacted by these rising costs take steps to ensure their survival and profitability. **Complexity** states that *the more an organization grows and interacts, the more elaborate it becomes* (Katz & Kahn; von Bertalanffy; Miller). Think about how huge companies such as Verizon must have elaborate organizational systems in place to deal with all of its employees and customers in a competitive market place.

If an organization is a system, how do we use the role of communication to analyze interactions among organizational members? Karl Weick's Theory of Organizing suggests that participants organize through their communication and make sense of unpredictable environments through interactions. Simply put, organizations exist as a result of the interactions of people in those organizations. An organization is more than just a physical building with people inside. Communication is the "process of organizing" implying that communication actually is the organization (Eisenberg & Goodall). Regardless of whether the focus is on the message or the meaning, systems theory stresses the interdependence of integrated people in organizations and the outcomes they produce as a result of their interactions.

Cultural Perspective

Each organization has unique characteristics and cultural differences such as language, traditions, symbols, practices, past-times, and social conveniences that distinguish it from other organizations. Likewise, they are rich with their own histories, stories, customs, and social norms.



Fast food restaurants such as In-and-Out and Chipotle have a culture of serving high quality food at a fast rate, yet they are very different organizations. Chipotle's company motto is "good food is good buisness" (Chipotle.com). We can understand organizations by seeing them as unique cultures.

Simply put, the **cultural perspective** states that *organizations maintain: 1) Shared values and beliefs, 2) Common practices, skills, and actions, 3) Customarily observed rules, 4) Objects and artifacts, and 5) Mutually understood meanings*. Shockley-Zalabak contends, "Organizational culture reflects the shared realities and shared practices in the organization and how these realities create and shape organizational events" (63). Not every individual in an organization shares, supports, or engages in organizational values, beliefs, or rules in a similar manner. Instead, organizational culture includes various perspectives in a continually changing, emerging, and complex environment.

Some people try to treat culture as a "thing." However, organizational cultures emerge through interaction. Members share meaning, construct reality, and make sense of their environment on an ongoing basis. As Morgan states, "There is often more to culture than meets the eye and our understandings are usually much more fragmented and superficial than the reality itself" (151).

Organizational Communication Now
Google
There's no question that Google is a trendsetter. The company made Web search sexy, and lucrative. It established the foundation for an ecosystem that allows any old little Web site to make money off advertising.

With its lava lamps, simple doodle design, pampered employees and millionaires in its rank and file, it has become a cultural icon and an emblem of the gold-rush promise of the Web.

Google was ranked by Fortune magazine as the best place in the U.S. to work, and it has reached another zenith by becoming the most popular Web site. It's even become a verb in the dictionary.

And it may even have started a new trend by creating a job that carries the title "chief culture officer." Stacy Savides Sullivan is that person at Google. Sullivan's mission is simple: retain the company's unique culture and keep the Googlers happy. In an exclusive interview, she tells CNET News.com how she does just that.

What do you do as chief culture officer?
Sullivan: I work with employees around the world to figure out ways to maintain and enhance and develop our culture and how to keep the core values we had in the very beginning–a flat organization, a lack of hierarchy, a collaborative environment–to keep these as we continue to grow and spread them and filtrate them into our new offices around the world.

We want all of our employees to play a part in being involved in keeping our culture the way it is today but also growing and developing it. So some of it is coming up with different programs or processes, and just being there to talk with people when they have issues, setting up Web sites where people can report bugs in their culture and ideas on how to improve it, and those types of thing.

What have we not covered that you think is germane to what you do at

Google?
Sullivan: I think for any company that is growing as quickly as we are the work-life balance component is actually quite high. We don't typically have early-morning meetings or late-night meetings. And people are welcome to do things via conference call at home and we pay for people to connect from home. We have a good paternity-leave policy where the dads can take off a couple of weeks when their spouse has had a child and we pay for peoples' meals when they have new babies for the first few weeks.

We've all heard about the ability for people to bring their dogs to work. And you have such a litany of perks and benefits and things that would encourage people to stay or even join. And we have a benefit where we reimburse people up to $5,000 if they buy a hybrid or electric car. And we have shuttle service (for commuters) to and from San Francisco, the East Bay, Santa Cruz.

http://news.cnet.com/2100-1023_3-6179897.html

When we become involved with organizations, we learn from other people in the organization "the correct way to perceive, think, and feel" (Schein 12). There are three interdependent levels that provide insight into how culture works in organizations.

- **Artifacts** are the first type of communicative behavior we encounter in organizations. Artifacts are*symbols used by an organization to represent the organization's culture*. You might observe artifacts such as office technology, office architecture and arrangement, lighting, artwork, written documents, personal items on desks, clothing preferences, personal appearance, name tags, security badges, policy handbook, or web sites. You might observe routine behavior such as work processes, patterned communication (greetings), non-verbal characteristics (eye contact and handshakes) rituals, ceremonies, stories, or informal/formal interactions between supervisor and subordinate. All of these are artifacts that tell us something about an organization's cultural values and practices. What artifacts represent the college or university you are attending right now?

- **Values** are an *organization's preference for how things should happen, or strategies for determining how things should be accomplished correctly*. Hackman and Johnson believe that values "serve as the yardstick for judging behavior" (33). Many times there is a disconnect between what an organization says it values, and their actual behavior. Disney espouses family values, for example, yet many of their subsidiary companies produce media that do not hold up these values. A way around this for Disney is to make sure to use other names, such as Touchstone Pictures, so that the Disney name is not attached to anything antithetical to "family values."

- **Basic assumptions** are the core of what individuals believe in organizations. These *"unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings" ultimately influence how you experience the world as an organizational member* (Schein 24). Unspoken beliefs reveal how we treat other individuals, what we see as good and bad in human nature, how we discover truth, and our place in the environment (Hackman & Johnson; Burtscher). Basic assumptions guide how organizations treat employees and provide services to customers. Imagine that you work overtime almost everyday without pay. Why would you do this? Maybe you hold the basic assumption that people who work hard ultimately get ahead by being given promotions and pay raises. Imagine if you did this for years with no recognition or acknowledgement. What does that say about your basic assumptions in comparison to those of the organization?

Looking at organizations from the cultural perspective began in the 1980s (Putnam & Kim). During this time, several popular

books focused on ideal corporate cultures, and the cultural perspective became a hot topic. Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life (Deal & Kennedy) and In Search of Excellence (Peters & Waterman) described cultural elements that mark prosperous organizations. The authors talked with Fortune 500 companies and determined that if an organization demonstrates a bias for action, has a close relationship with customers, has identifiable values, reveres individuals that exemplifies organizational values (heroes), and has a solid communication network, it is a healthy organization.

Culture is complicated and unstable. Each organization has its own unique identity, its own distinct ways of doing things, and its own ways of performing culture (Pacanowsky & O 'Donnell-Trujillo). The books mentioned above prompted many organizations to try to replicate the companies with "strong" or "excellent" cultures. Ironically, several of the companies identified with strong or excellent cultures have had a difficult time maintaining productivity over the last twenty years.

An important focal point of the cultural perspective is the climate of an organization. **Climate** is *the general workplace atmosphere or mood experienced by organizational members* (Tagiuri; Green). Organizational climate is a "subjective reaction to organization members' perception of communication events" (Shockley-Zalabak 66). Do you like working with the people at your job? Are you satisfied with the general climate of your college campus? Are you appropriately rewarded for the work you do? Do you feel like a valued member of your church or social group? Climate has a direct effect on organizational relationships and members' satisfaction and morale. Researcher Jack Gibb proposes that the interpersonal communication in organizational relationships, especially between superiors and subordinates, contributes to the overall climate of organizations. Gibb identifies a continuum of climate characteristics ranging from supportive to defensive behaviors that lead to member satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Contributions and Affiliations

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11.4: Challenges in Organizational Communication

As you continue your education in college, you'll continue to understand the need to be prepared for a perpetually evolving, increasingly diverse, and unpredictable global workplace. The key to organizational success, both for you and the organizations with whom you are involved, is effective communication. As you have probably experienced in both your personal relationships and organizational relationships, communication is not always successful. If you have ever worked on a group project for one of your classes, you have likely experienced many of the communicative challenges organizations face in this increasingly fast-paced and global world.

Case In Point
The Ant Colony and Organizational Communication

The YouTube video '**Inside the Colony**' shows the system in which ants use to communicate and live. What are some things we can draw from their lives into daily lives using organizational communication? Write bullet points on your ideas and pick the top on to discuss in class.

Ineffective communication can cause many problems that can impact relationships, productivity, job satisfaction, and morale as we interact in organizations. Gerald Goldhaber summarizes Osmo Wiio's "laws" of communication that are good to remember as you interact in increasingly complex organizations. Wiio pessimistically warns that: 1) If communication can fail, it will fail, 2) If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be misunderstood in the manner that does the most damage, 3) The more communication there is, the more tricky it is for the communication to be successful, and 4) There is always someone who thinks they know better what you said than you do.

One of the greatest challenges facing organizations is the practice of ethics. Ethics are a basic code of conduct (morals) that individuals and groups use to assess whether something is right or wrong. How ethical are you as an organizational participant? Do you always make ethical personal and professional decisions? Have you ever withheld a bit of truth to lessen the impact of revealing the whole truth? What if you accidentally overhear that an individual who is up for a promotion has been stealing from the organization? Do you tell your boss? Or, on a greater scale, what if you discover that your organization is withholding vital information from consumers, or violating lawful practices? Do you blow the whistle or stay loyal to your company? When you write your resume, how accurately do you describe your work history? Each of these scenarios deals directly with ethical considerations and ethical communication.

Case In Point
Ethics

A good example of an ethical dilemma that occurs in the workplace happened to me when one of my co-workers, who is also my good friend, was putting down more hours on her time card than she was actually working. This upset me, because I worked the exact same amount of time as her, yet I was being paid much less. Because our boss was so busy all the time, she never noticed this unfair violation of lawful practices. I had to choose between remaining silent which would prevent my friend from getting in trouble, or speaking out against the injustice in order to sustain a fair workplace.

-Anonymous Coworker

Many organizations practice a climate of "survival of the fittest" as individuals scramble their way up the ladder of success at any cost. Comedian Jimmy Durante posited this advice: "Be nice to people on your way up because you might meet 'em on your way down." Obviously, not every organization has this type of cutthroat culture, but with an inherent hierarchy and imbalance of power, organizations are ripe for unethical behaviors. Because of the competitive nature of many business climates, and the push for profits, organizational and individual ethics are often tested.

Do organizations have a moral responsibility to act ethically outside of their capitalistic and legal obligations? "Since 1985, more than two-thirds of Fortune 500 firms have been convicted of serious crimes, ranging from fraud to the illegal dumping of hazardous waste" (Eisenberg & Goodall 337). The Chevron Corporation, the second largest oil company in the U.S., is just one example of an unethical organization. Tax evasion and several environmental infractions, including dumping over 18 billion gallons of toxic waste into the Amazon rainforest, are examples of their ethical behavior (Sandhu, 2012). Other unethical practices common in organizations include exploiting workers, tax loopholes, overbilling, and dumping toxins. Despite these unfortunate, immoral practices, all of us have an obligation to communicate ethically in all aspects of our lives, including organizations.

Case In Point
The Case of Hills Pet Nutrition, Inc.
In 2007 several major brands of pet food were recalled due to a contaminant in the food. As a result of the poisoned food, thousands of dogs and cats developed renal failure and many died. Many upset customers asked the pet food companies to take financial responsibility for the costs that were incurred while seeking vital veterinary care for their sick pets. Some companies responded ethically with financial settlements; others failed in their ethical responsibility. Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc. (the maker of Science Diet) was one such company. In a letter sent to a customer seeking reimbursement for treating their sick cat, Hill's wrote a one sentence letter stating, ". . . it appears we are unable to settle your claim for Oscar's future medical expenses."

Thinking of this incident in ethical terms Kreps' three principles of ethical communication are of relevance. He states ethical treatment should 1) Tell the truth, 2) Do no harm, and 3) Treat people justly. Has Hills, Inc. engaged in ethical communication? How could they have done so?

Differences in perception and the failure to clarify communication can lead to miscommunication at interpersonal as well as organizational levels. Organizationally, communication failure occurs due to information overload, communication anxiety, unethical communication, bad timing, too little information, message distortion, lack of respect, insufficient information, minimal feedback, ineffective communication, and even disinterest or apathy. To be successful in our organizational environments, we need to be earnest participants, as well as active listeners, to ensure effective communication and mutual satisfaction.

Organizations cannot successfully operate without effective communication at every level.

Future Directions

As with many other specializations in the field of Communication, the area of organizational communication is changing faster than organizations, individuals, and scholars can adapt. It is difficult for organizations to anticipate and keep in front of the changes they encounter. What worked during the industrial age may no longer be relevant in the 21st century. In fact, what worked ten years ago likely does not work today. A sense of urgency, a fast pace, inconsistency, information overload, regenerating technology, and constant change characterize the dynamic changes as organizations move from operating in the industrial age to the information age. When this book was first published, for example, iPhones were just coming on the market. We referred to cds, dvds, and palm pilots in the original text. That was only eight eight years ago, and now we don't use many of those technologies. Miller identifies four elements of the changing landscape for organizations: 1) Organizations are becoming more global, 2) Images and identity are becoming increasingly important, 3) There is a shift to a more predominant service economy, and 4) The changing workforce is highlighted by the "disposable worker" (Conrad & Poole), downsizing, early retirement, and temporary workers.

As a result, new directions of research are emerging. These changes are forcing those of us in organizational communication to reexamine existing communicative practices relative to the changing dynamics of organizations. For example, can a person lead without any personal, face-to-face contact? How do organizational values impact ethics, and what is the attitude towards ethical communication in this increasingly competitive age? How should work-life issues such as working parents, affirmative action, and drug screening be handled? With increasing diversity in the workplace, what is the role of intercultural communication? In this age of elevated tensions, how do stress and emotions communicatively manifest themselves in the workplace? What is the impact of our social media postings on our work lives?

Organizational Communication Now
Leadership in the Social Age

This article is about leadership and their ability to be flexible in work place. "Today's leaders face challenges related to business disruption, ambiguity, complexity, widely connected constituencies and how to communicate with multiple constituencies simultaneously". This ties into how work is different now than it was 10 years ago.
1. Leadership is about who, not what.
2. Leadership is personal.
3. Make experiences true learning experiences.

Scholars are continuing to communicatively adapt and respond to the changing landscape in terms of what we teach, research, and practice. Expect to see a variety of approaches and distinctively unique research agendas that will likely highlight the ways in which you will spend your life working in organizations that are different from today.

Contributions and Affiliations

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11.5: Organizational Communication Summary

Summary

In this chapter, you learned that an organization is a “consciously coordinated social unit composed of two or more people, that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals” (Robbins 4). Organizations are dynamic and are created through our communication. Organizational communication is the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals. Organizational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependent.

The study of organizational communication developed as a result of the rapid changes brought on by the industrial revolution in the past 150 years. The more formal study of organizational communication took root in the mid-1900s and has gained increasing attention over the past 60 years. We examined three predominant periods of organizational communication during this time. The Era of Preparation (1900 to 1940) is the era in which practitioners and scholars focused on public address, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion. The Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940-1970) saw the beginnings of business and industrial communication with certain group and organizational relationships becoming important. During the Era of Maturity and Innovation (1970 –present) organizational communication has worked to rationalize its existence through rigorous research methods and scholarship.

Those in the field of organizational communication study a variety of communication activity in organizational settings. Researchers focus on communication channels, communication climates, network analysis and, superior-subordinate communication. Since the 1980s, this specialization has expanded to include the study of organizational culture, power and conflict management, and organizational rhetoric. Other content areas of focus include communication in groups and teams, leadership, conflict and conflict management, communication networks, decision making and problem solving, ethics, and communication technology. Introductory organizational communication classrooms often focus on skill development in socialization, interviewing, individual and group presentations, work relationships, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, stress management, decision making, or external publics.

Since the start of the industrial revolution, perspectives regarding organizational communication have continued to be developed and refined. The initial organizational communication perspective, founded on scientific principles, is the classical management perspective which focused on specialization, standardization, and predictability in organizations. Following this perspective were the human relations and human resources perspectives which further tried to incorporate human satisfaction, needs, and participation as a means for creating effective organizations and productive employees. The systems perspective allowed researchers to understand organizations as a “whole greater then the sum of their parts.” This perspective focuses on the interactions of the people who form organizations, with the basic assumption that all people in the organization impact organizational outcomes. Finally, the cultural perspective understands organizations as unique cultures with their own sets of artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. As part of the cultural perspective we can examine the climate of an organization to reveal how an organization impacts its members, and how members impact an organization.

The future of organizational communication is complex and rapidly changing. As a result, there are many challenges to organizations. Two of the most compelling challenges are ethics and the rapid changes occurring in organizational life. As competition continues to increase, and greater demands are placed on organizations and individuals, ethics is becoming an essential focus of examination for organizational communication and behavior. Likewise, the rapid advances in technology and globalization are creating increased challenges and demands on organizational members.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of an organization you have worked in. What theoretical perspective did the organization take towards its workers? What was it like working within the boundaries of that perspective?
2. What kinds of organizations does the classical management approach work in today? What kinds of organizations does it not work in?
3. What needs of Maslow’s do you want your job to help you fulfill? Why?
4. How would you describe the “culture” of your campus? What does this tell you about your campus?
5. Explain ethical communication in organizations. What are the challenges? What are the benefits?

6. Review Osmo Wiio's Laws of Communication. Give an example of a time when one of these rules has applied to you.

KEY TERMS

- Artifacts
- Basic assumptions
- Bureaucracy
- Classical management perspective
- Climate
- Competent communicator
- Complexity
- Cultural perspective
- Defensive Climate
- Equifinality
- Era of Preparation
- Era of Identification and Consolidation
- Era of Maturity and Innovation
- Ethical communication
- Homeostasis
- Human relations perspective
- Human resources perspective
- Negative entropy
- Organization
- Organizational communication
- Permeability
- Requisite variety
- Sociability
- Solidarity
- Supportive Climate
- Systems perspective
- Theory of Scientific Management
- Theory X
- Values

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12: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

12.1: Intercultural Communication Overview
12.2: What Do We Mean by Culture?
12.3: Facilitating Discussions about Intercultural Communication Issues
12.4: Knowing Where We Belong
12.5: How Scholars Study Intercultural Communication
12.6: Intercultural Communication Summary
12.7: Intercultural Communication References

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12.1: Intercultural Communication Overview

What is Intercultural Communication? If you were to ask Russel Arent, author of Bridging the Cultural Gap he would tell you that, “Intercultural Communication is the sending and receiving of messages across languages and cultures. It is also a negotiated understanding of meaning in human experiences across social systems and societies.” This provides not only a concise definition but it also describes the importance that understanding has in intercultural interactions.

In this TedTalkX, Pellegrino Riccardi, a man who spent 27 years traveling the world to experience different cultures, refers to culture as, “A system of behavior that helps us act in an accepted or familiar way.”

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 2016, the world’s population was 7.5 billion (Smith 7). Instead of talking about numbers of this magnitude, he represents the world as 100 people. Using Smith’s model, we can examine what nationalities make up the world’s population, what languages they speak, how old they are, and how wealth and education are globally distributed.

Here are some interesting facts from Smith’s global village, including the most recent update from: 100People.org, a website dedicated to keeping this idea alive! If the world were made up of 100 people:

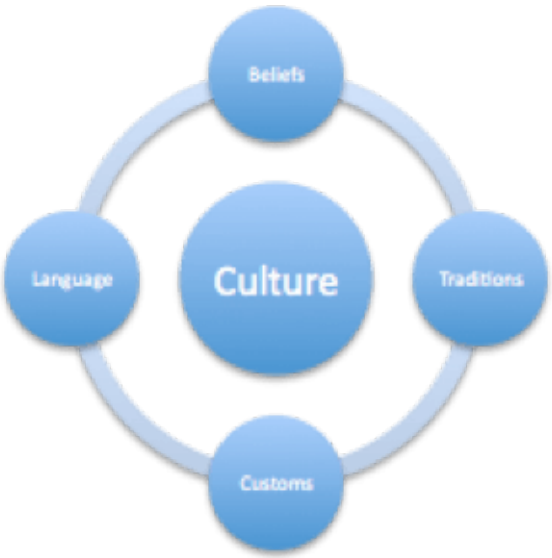
- 50 would be female
- 50 would be male
- 25 would be children
- 75 would be adults,
- 9 of whom would be 65 and older

There would be:

- 60 Asians
- 16 Africans
- 14 people from the Americas
- 10 Europeans
- 31 Christians
- 23 Muslims
- 16 people who would not be aligned with a religion
- 15 Hindus
- 7 Buddhists
- 8 people who practice other religions
- 12 would speak Chinese
- 6 would speak Spanish
- 5 would speak English
- 4 would speak Hindi
- 3 would speak Arabic
- 3 would speak Bengali
- 3 would speak Portuguese
- 2 would speak Russian
- 2 would speak Japanese
- 60 would speak other languages
- 86 would be able to read and write; 14 would not
- 7 would have a college degree
- 40 would have an Internet connection
- 78 people would have a place to shelter them from the wind and the rain, but 22 would not
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 50 would be malnourished and 1 dying of starvation
- 33 would be without access to a safe water supply
- 39 would lack access to improved sanitation
- 24 would not have any electricity

- 48 would live on less than US$ 2 a day
- 20 would live on less than US$ 1 a day

To see a large scale of diversity around the world check out **World Diversity Patterns**!



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, the people with less money are also less likely to have electricity and education. Besides simple cultural differences such as language or food preferences, 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 (Moore):

- 25 percent of black youth ages 16-19 and 11 percent of 20-24 year olds are neither in school nor working. Compare this to 11 and 6 percent of their white peers. (E-16. Unemployment)
- Black infants have double the infant mortality rate than white infants in the US. (CDC)
- Black levels of unemployment have been roughly twice those of white since 1954 (E-16. Unemployment.)
- Women hold 102 seats in Congress (Women in Congress.)
- 475 of the top 500 companies are run by men (Fortune.)
- Women's earnings average 81 cents for every $1 earned by men (Bureau of Labor Statistics.)
- 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. 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. In the U.S., political and economic power is not equally distributed among cultures. We can see this power imbalance reflected in various linguistic practices such as the dominance of English, terms used to refer to different groups of people, and lack of bilingual signs or documents.

Contributions and Affiliations

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- Image of culture diagram. **Authored by**: Spaynton. **Located at**: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Intercultural1.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

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12.2: 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).

For additional information check out this website. The website "look[s] through the eyes of history, science, and lived experience, the RACE Project explains differences among people and reveals the reality – and unreality – of race."



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 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 transgendered? One's gender and sexual orientation are two additional ways to think about culture. Gender is discussed in more detail in Chapter 13, but for now think of it as the recognition that one is male, female, or androgynous. **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 Unites States made gay marriage legal in all 50 states. On top of these specific benefits, those with a nondominant 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.

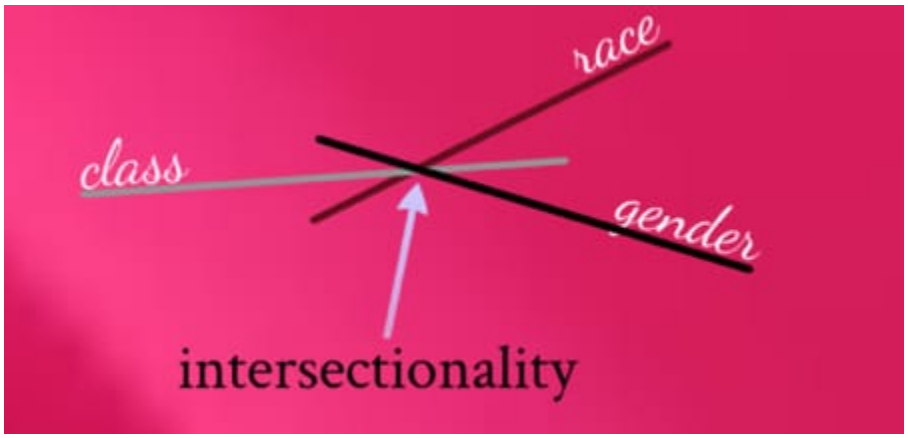
The Role of Money

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. Read Bruce E. Levine's article on this phenomena. How America's Obsession With Money Deadens Us After reading the article, do you believe that we have become more money-centric? Why?

Intersectionality



Individuals cannot look simply at race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ability, disability, religion, and social class in isolation. Instead, we must look at identity as a combination of these. Cultural identities have many parts that all factor into an individual's identity. Intersectionality is the theory that shows how multiple systems of power and oppression operate on individuals in various degrees that directly corresponds to their identity (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality was a theory articulated by Kimberle Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate, in the late 1980's. A United States citizen and a Burmese citizen both growing up in modern times will not have equal opportunities. One might think that the US citizen will have more opportunities based on national privilege. But if the Burmese citizen is from a higher socioeconomic class than the American, the Burmese individual may have more opportunities. Other factors such as race, sexuality and ability also play into how many and which opportunities will be available.

Another example from Kimberle Crenshaw from her 1989 journal article Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics states: *"Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in an intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination. . . . But it is not always easy to reconstruct an accident: Sometimes the skid marks and the injuries simply indicate that they occurred simultaneously, frustrating efforts to determine which driver caused the harm."*

Intersectionality is important for intercultural communication because individuals must realize not only the duality but the depth of identities. This theory is useful for critical analysis because it illuminates the different ways systems of oppression overlap and how systems of privilege and oppression can manifest simultaneously on an individual (Allen, 2010). It is easy for people to assume because they are one thing that is it their whole identity, just like not every feminist's agenda is the same and not every Syrian's views are the same. Intersectionality is a key to intercultural communication because it reminds individuals that systems of power although do not operate uniformly and effect how people will receive and transmit messages.

Contributions and Affiliations

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12.3: 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.

As it was so eloquently put by Carey W. James, ”I haven’t given up the quest, typically if idealistically American, for an open, nonascriptive basis of community life: one in which neighbors help one another out--you know, lend out the lawnmower, come to the funeral, take part in the town meeting-but do not ask one another too many questions about their private lives and pretty much ignore the color of skin, the shapes of noses and eyes, or the distribution of X/Y chromosomes.” This scholar is one of many people in the fight for political correctness to prevail.

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 **nondominant 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 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 a straight man is also a form of privilege. A black woman cannot decide to pass as a white woman, for example. 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.

Watch this video, Students Learn A Powerful Lesson About Privilege

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

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*. When we do this we view our position as normal and right, and evaluate all other cultural systems against our own. If you want to learn more about ethnocentrism, view this slide show.

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 an 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 U.S. 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 classroom curriculum.

Ethnocentrism may show up in Literature classes, for example, as cultural bias dictates which "great works" students are going to read and study. 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, follow this link.

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 the 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 lead 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).

> *view communication as a racialized process—meaning 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

Case In Point

Since his first kneel, Colin Kaepernick has faced backlash from the NFL, fans, “patriots,” and even Donald Trump. He has been told that he will never play in the NFL again and fans have taken to burning his jersey. However, taking a knee has also become a large protest for the unfair treatment of African Americans by police. A peaceful nonverbal communication that says more than most can comprehend.

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. Toward that aim, we will discuss the power of language in greater detail in the following section.

Contributions and Affiliations

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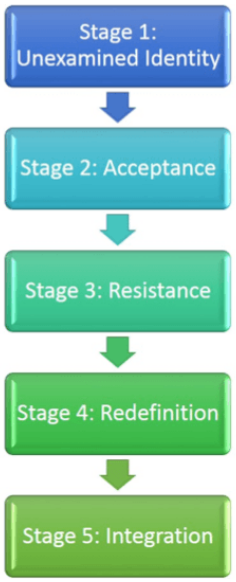
12.4: Knowing Where We Belong

At this point, you are probably aware of the cultural groups to which you belong (i.e., "I am a Latino, middle-class, (almost) college-educated male"). Do you remember the process of coming to awareness of your cultural identity—when did you know you were white and what that meant? Was it during childhood, as a teenager, or reading this chapter? Has your understanding, or acceptance, of your racial heritage changed during the course of your lifetime? For most people it does. Just as Piaget organized the growth of children according to various stages of development, cultural scholars have similarly organized racial awareness along models and stages. Before explaining the various models, let us make a couple general comments about models. One, a model is not the thing it represents. Is the model car you played with as a child the same as the actual automobile? What were the differences? Size, time, maneuverability, details? These same kinds of differences exist between the model of racial identity development and the actual personal process. But just like the car model gives a fairly accurate picture of the actual automobile so do the racial identity models. Two, these models are general and not meant to fit perfectly to every individual's experience. With that said, let us examine the process of coming to an understanding of our racial identity.

To better understand this complex process, and in recognition of the above discussion regarding the distinctions in experiences for various cultural groups, we will present four racial identity models—-*Minority, Majority, Bi-racial, and Global Nomads*.

Minority Identity Development

Because people who identify as members of a minority group in the United States tend to stand out or get noticed as "other" or "different," they also tend to become aware of their identity sooner than individuals who are part of the majority group. Since White is still considered normative in the United States, White people may take their identity, and the corresponding privilege, for granted. While we are using the following four stages of development to refer to racial and ethnic identity development, they may also be useful when considering other minority aspects of our identity such as gender, class, or sexual orientation (Ponterotto and Pendersen). Moreover, there is no set age or time period that a person reaches or spends in a particular stage, and not everyone will reach the final stage.



- **Stage 1: Unexamined Identity**. As the name of this stage suggests, the person in stage one of Phinney's model has little or no concern with ethnicity. They may be too young to pay attention to such matters or just not see the relationship between racial identity and their own life. One may accept the values and beliefs of the majority culture even if they work against their own cultural group.
- **Stage 2: Conformity**. In stage two the individual moves from a passive acceptance of the dominant culture's value system to a more active one. They consciously make choices to assimilate or fit in with the dominant culture even if this means putting down or denying their own heritage. They may remain at this stage until a precipitating event forces them to question their belief system.

- **Stage 3: Resistance and Separation**. The move from stage two to stage three can be a difficult process as it necessitates a certain level of critical thinking and self-reflection. If you have ever tried to wrestle with aspects of your own belief system then you can imagine the struggle. The move may be triggered by a national event such as the case of "Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed on August 9, by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, MO (Buchanan). Learn more about the case here. It may be fostered on a more individual scale such as enrolling in a Women's Studies class and learning about the specifics of women's history in America. Martin Luther King Jr. moved to this stage around age six after the mother of King's White neighborhood friends told them that he could not play with her children anymore because he was Black. A person in this stage may simply reject all of their previously held beliefs and positive feelings about the dominant culture with those of their own group, or they may learn how to critically examine and hold beliefs from a variety of cultural perspectives, which leads to stage four.
- **Stage 4: Integration**. The final stage is one where the individual reaches an achieved identity. They learn to value diversity; seeing race, gender, class, and ethnic relations as a complex process instead of an either/or dichotomy. Their aim is to end oppression against all groups, not just their own.

Majority Identity Development

The following model was developed by Rita Hardiman in 1994 and contains some similarities with Phinney's minority identity development model.

- **Stage 1: Unexamined Identity**. This stage is the same for both minority and majority individuals. While children may notice that some of their playmates have different colored skin, they do not fear or feel superior to them.
- **Stage 2: Acceptance**. The move to stage two signals a passive or active acceptance of the dominant ideology—either way the individual does not recognize that he or she has been socialized into accepting it. When a White person goes the route of **passive acceptance** they have **no conscious awareness of being White although they may hold some subtly racist assumptions** such as "[p]eople of color are culturally different, whereas Whites are individuals with no group identity, culture, or shared experience of racial privilege." Or, White art forms are "classical" whereas works of art by people of color are considered "ethnic art," "folk art," or "crafts" (Martin and Nakayama 132). People in this stage may minimize contact with minorities or act in a "let me help you" fashion toward them. If a White person in this stage follows the active acceptance path then they are conscious of their White identity and may act in ways that highlight it. Refusing to eat food from other cultures or watch foreign films are examples of the active acceptance path of this stage.
- **Stage 3: Resistance**. Just as the move from stage two to stage three in the minority development model required a great deal of critical thought, so does this juncture. Here the members of the majority group cease blaming the members of minority groups for their conditions and see socioeconomic realities as a result of an unjust and biased sociopolitical system. There is an overall move from seeing one's station in life as a purely individual event or responsibility to a more systemic issue. Here, people may feel guilty about being White and ashamed of some historical actions taken by some White people, they may try to associate with only people of color, or they may attempt to exorcise aspects of White privilege from their daily lives.
- **Stage 4: Redefinition**. In this stage, people attempt to redefine what it means to be White without the racist baggage. They are able to move beyond White guilt and recognize that White people and people of all cultures contain both racist and nonracist elements and that there are many historical and cultural events of which White people can be proud.
- **Stage 5: Integration**. In the last phase individuals are able to accept their Whiteness or other majority aspects of their identity and integrate it into other parts of their lives. There is a simultaneous self-acceptance and acceptance of others.

Bi- or Multiracial Identity Development

Originally, people thought that bi-racial individuals followed the development model of minority individuals, but given that we now know that race and the meanings about race are socially constructed, it makes sense to realize that a person of mixed racial ancestry is likely to be viewed differently (from both the dominant culture and the individual's own culture) than a minority individual. Thus, they are likely to experience a social reality unique to their experience. The following five-stage model is derived from the work of W.S. Carlos Poston.

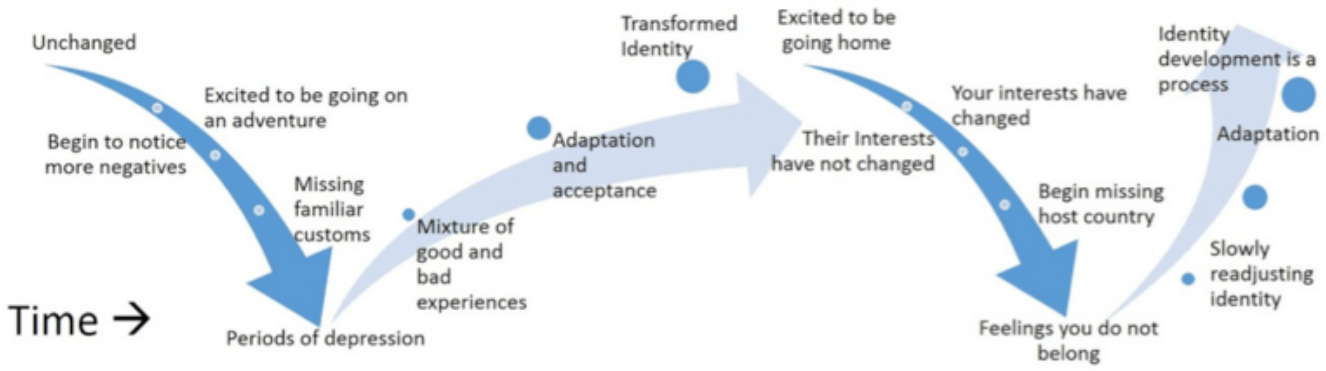
- **Stage 1: Personal Identity**. Poston's first stage is much like the unexamined identity stage in the previous two models. Again, children are not aware of race as a value-based social category and derive their personal identity from individual personality features instead of cultural ones.
- **Stage 2: Group Categorization**. In the move from stage one to two, the person goes from no racial or cultural awareness to having to choose between one or the other. In a family where the father is Black and the mother is Japanese, the child may be asked by members of both families to decide if he or she is Black or Japanese. Choosing both is not an option in this

stage.

- **Stage 3: Enmeshment/Denial**. Following the choice made in stage two, individuals attempt to immerse themselves in one culture while denying ties to the other. This process may result in guilt or feelings of distance from the parent and family whose culture was rejected in stage two. If these feelings are resolved then the child moves to the next stage. If not, they remain here.
- **Stage 4: Appreciation**. When feelings of guilt and anger are resolved the person can work to appreciate all of the cultures that shape their identity. While there is an attempt to learn about the diversity of their heritage, they will still identify primarily with the culture chosen in stage two.
- **Stage 5: Integration**. In the fifth and final stage the once fragmented parts of the person's identity are brought together to create a unique whole. There is integration of cultures throughout all facets of the person's life—dress, food, holidays, spirituality, language, and communication.

Global Nomads

People who move around a lot may develop a multicultural identity as a result of their extensive international travel. International teachers, business people, and military personnel are examples of global nomads (Martin and Nakayama 138). One of the earlier theories to describe this model of development was called the U-curve theory because the stages were thought to follow the pattern of the letter U. This model has since been revised in the form of a W, or a series of ups and downs; this pattern is thought to better represent the up and down nature of this process.



- **Stage 1: Anticipation and Excitement**. If you have ever planned for an international trip, what were some of the things you did to prepare? Did you do something like buy a guide book to learn some of the native customs, figure out the local diet to see if you would need to make any special accommodations, learn the language, or at least some handy phrases perhaps? All of these acts characterize stage one in which people are filled with positive feelings about their upcoming journey and try to ready themselves.
- **Stage 2: Culture Shock**. Once the excitement has worn off or you are confronted with an unexpected or unpleasant event, you may experience culture shock. This is the move from the top of the U or W to the bottom. Culture shock can result from physical, psychological, or emotional causes often correlating with an unpleasant and unfamiliar event. When individuals have spent most of their lives in a certain country, they will most likely experience culture shock when they travel overseas. The differences in cultural language, customs, and even food may be overwhelming to someone that has never experienced them before.

Case In Point

Digital nomads travel the world while you rot in your office.

Todd Wasserman explains the benefits of the increased presence that digital technologies have in our lives. People have realized that they can do their work from anywhere that provides wifi, thus creating a new population of individuals that opt to travel the world while doing the same work that they could have been doing in a home office. To find out more, **click here**.

- **Stage 3: Adaptation**. The final stage at the top of the U and W is a feeling of comfortableness: being somewhat familiar with the new cultural patterns and beliefs. After spending more time in a new country and learning its cultural patterns and beliefs, individuals may feel more welcomed into the society by accepting and adapting to these cultural differences.

After exploring the identity development models for minority, majority, bi-racial individuals, and global nomads, we hope you have some understanding that a person's identity development is a process, occurs in stages, and is specific to the individual and cultural groups. We also hope you noticed that identity development is a social process—it occurs within our relationships with other people and the larger society. Not surprisingly, language is a key factor in shaping our own self-perception as well as the attitudes and beliefs we hold about other cultural groups. In the next section, we will explore the role that language plays in intercultural communication.

There are a variety of global nomads. There are digital and physical nomads, as well as willing and unwilling nomades. Each of these experiences can also be applied to the model but understand that the excitement phase for someone could be positive or negative. Nevertheless, the goal is always to adapt to your situation.

As a consequence of war outbreaks and volatile political climates, individuals are unwillingly thrust into different cultures. Refugees are people fleeing conflict or persecution, they are defined and protected in international law, and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedoms are at risk (UNHCR). As of 2017 there are nearly 20 million refugees worldwide (UNHCR). It is important to have effective intercultural communication in refugee situations because, often the agencies and camps that are resources, are staffed by outsiders. This difference of culture, between refugees and staff, can cause unforeseen obstacles.

An example would be if an agency, trying to provide food for refugees, offered pork to a Muslim community. On one hand, these people need help, but religiously it would be a "haram". If the refugees do not or cannot explain why they do not want to eat pork, the staffers may feel resentment or think they do not need food.

Food is not the only difference that can be a problem for global nomads. Living or sleeping arrangements may also be different and may depend on gender, age, and family structure. Cultural identity, as seen above, is complex and ingrained in individuals, so it is very difficult for people to adapt their identity and practices.

Language Shapes Cultural Perception

Saying that language plays a vital role in intercultural communication and relationships probably seems obvious to you at this point. But do you know how and why? Let us now turn to a more detailed explanation of the power of language. Specifically, we will discuss ascription and avowal, the Sapir-Wharf hypothesis, labels and stereotypes, and reclaiming.



As you have been reflecting on your own identity, do you think it matches up with how others see you? The way people present themselves is referred to as the avowal process. The opposite of that is ascription, how others see us: the qualities or attributes

that are ascribed to us. Part of your avowed identity is probably that of a college student and you hope that others see you this way too. Perhaps one of your hobbies is fashion and you enjoy paying attention to your clothes. You may then see yourself as fashionable and stylish. But do others? Might some of your classmates think you trendy, superficial, or fiscally irresponsible? The qualities that others may ascribe to you based on your fashion sense may in turn affect how you see yourself. This is yet another way that identity is shaped through communication in a social context.

In Part I of this book you were introduced to the idea that language shapes reality; the vocabulary we use to discuss an idea or person influences how we think about our subject. Likewise, if we have no words for a phenomenon then we are discouraged from talking about it or bringing it into our reality. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf believed that the structure of language was a necessary component for producing thought. You have probably heard that Eskimos have numerous words for snow. How many do you have? Snow. Ice. If you ski or snowboard then you probably have a few more. Powder. Moguls. Depending on the extent of your snow vocabulary you can look at the frozen water and perceive it in numerous ways. But if your vocabulary is limited then so is the way you can think and talk about snow. If you have studied languages such as Spanish or French then you are familiar with the concepts of a formal and informal "you." Depending on the relationship between you and your audience you will use a different word for "you" and consequently conjugate your verbs accordingly. If you are talking with a child, for example, you would use the informal version, but if you were speaking with someone of higher social status such as your Professor you would use the formal "you." As you speak and write, this language structure demands that you be consciously aware of social relations. This awareness then becomes part of your social reality.

If you have ever been on the receiving end of a stereotype or derogatory label in reference to your culture, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or other aspect of your identity, then you are acutely aware of the power of language. You know that such language is not a neutral conveyor of ideas, but is designed to alter and shape the way the audience thinks about a particular person or group. Think about the list of terms that historically have been used to refer to persons of African descent—African, Colored, Negro, Black, Afro-American, African American, and the harshest, the N-word. When you read each term, what are the different images or connotations connected with them? Do they bring up different historical periods, varying degrees of sociopolitical power, a variety of relationships to the dominant group? The range of emotions and images that each of these terms produces is further testament to the subjectivity of language as well as its temporal nature.

A more recent linguistic strategy among historically oppressed groups is called **reclaiming**. When a group reclaims a word they are attempting to take it back from the dominant group. If the dominant group has used a word or phrase as an insult then the oppressed group reclaims it for their own, positive meaning. Can you think of some examples? How about "bitch," "queer," "nigga," or "cunt"? Hopefully, you are thinking, "hey, those words may still be insulting to some people; they're not necessarily positive." True. Part of the process in reclaiming is that only certain people can use them in a reclaimed fashion, most simply, the members of the oppressed groups at which the term was designed to hurt. If a woman is walking down the street and a man yells out, "Hey Bitch, watch where you're going!" that is not reclaiming as the term is used as an insult. However, the magazine, BITCH: A Feminist Response to Popular Culture, is reclaiming this term. Here is a YouTube Video where the Bitch Media's co-founder Andi Zeisler talk about the word. Also, visit the website www.bitchmedia.org to learn more. Can all words be reclaimed? Here is one perspective about the word "slut" from Feministing, "an online community run by and for young feminists" (www.feministing.com). A Few Words About Reclaiming 'Slut'

Case In Point

Language shapes more than our cultural perspective, it also shapes our senses! See how in this article from the **New York Times**, Can't Place That Smell? You Must Be American: How Culture Shapes Our Senses

Empathy

In the International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication (June 27th 2017), Benjamin Broom states that, "In intercultural situations, empathy is more complex and more difficult, but it is a key competency for effective intercultural communication." The author goes on to describe how empathy is an opportunity to try to imagine the life of another person. That being said, trying to understand the struggles of another is a first step to positive intercultural communication. Statement shirts or clothing such as, "I Can't Breathe" are attempting to convey a sense of empathy with the plight of African-American males in US society. Seeing another person wearing this shirt might be confusing if one does not ask about it in hope of understanding. Being sensitive to the potential underlying meaning of these kinds of cultural reference can lead to empathy.

Contributions and Affiliations

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12.5: How Scholars Study Intercultural Communication

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"*** (54). This method is also referred to ethnography. A prolific ethnographer, Gerry Philipsen has identified four assumptions of this method:

1. Members of speech communities create meanings.
2. Each distinct culture possesses a unique speech code.
3. The rules for interpreting actions and meanings are limited to a given culture and cannot be universally applied.
4. 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).

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is an integral part of the United States.
2. Critical race theory rejects dominant legal and social claims of neutrality, objectivity, and color blindness.
3. Critical race theory rejects a purely historical approach for studying race for a contextual/historical one to study interracial communication.
4. Critical race theory recognizes the importance of perspectives that arise from co-cultural standpoints.
5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary and borrows from Marxism, feminism, critical/cultural studies, and postmodernism.

6. 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.

Intercultural Communication and You

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.
http://www.ciee.org/study-abroad/
http://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 MakeA 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 Asiacentric 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. **Look Here** to see the results.

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 watching YouTube, media messages have 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 its messages. Another is that it is an area of struggle for representation—specifically about cultural identity issues. **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). 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.

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 is wearing a raincoat which is soon removed, leaving so her pink shirt and clothes to be 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 violent men. One of the men pulls a knife and there is the threat of rape or other violent attack. She fails when she attempts to fight back. 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 is 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 culture, the "good guys" or "innocent victims" are middle class and the potential attackers are portrayed as stereotypical lower class males. This too represents a stereotyped portrayal of young men in the inner city 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 pink 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. 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." 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.

Contributions and Affiliations

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12.6: Intercultural Communication Summary

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 you communication with others? What did you do? What were you attempting to accomplish by doing so? What was the result?
3. What are some 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

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13: GENDER COMMUNICATION

Learning 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.

13.1: Gender Communication Overview
13.2: The Interplay of Sex and Gender
13.3: Feminism versus Feminisms
13.4: Theories of Gender Development
13.5: What Do We Study When We Study Gender Communication?
13.6: Are There Really Differences in Gender Communication Styles?
13.7: Gender Communication Summary
13.8: Gender Communication References

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13.1: Gender Communication Overview

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**” 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 link**! This example highlights one of the key characteristics of gender—-that it is fluid. Gender roles of a given culture are always changing.

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.

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”’** (4). 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** from the Huffington Post.

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.

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13.2: 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.

Case In Point

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.

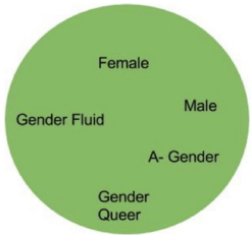
In the same way, nature presents us with sex anatomy spectrums. Breasts, penises, clitorises, scrotums, labia, gonads—all of these vary in size and shape and morphology. So-called “sex” chromosomes can vary quite a bit, too. But in human cultures, sex categories get simplified into male, female, and 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, we at ISNA take 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.



Interested in the different genders on the chart? Go to the following links!

Gender Fluid

A-Gender

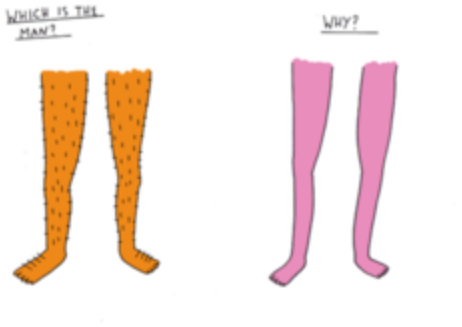
Gender

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.

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 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.



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 activities in which we are encouraged to participate are all symbolic ways we internalize, and ultimately act out, our gender identity.

Case In Point

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. You can read more about this story at **here**.

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.

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13.3: Feminism versus Feminisms

If you have a gender communication course on your campus you may have heard students refer to it as a "women's class," or even more misinformed, as a course in "male bashing." When professors that teach this course hear such remarks, they are often saddened and frustrated: sad because those descriptors define the course as an unsafe place for male students, and frustrated because there is often a common misconception that only females are gendered. Courses in gender and communication serve as powerful places for both female and male students to learn about their own gender constructions and its influence on their communication with others.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the popular misconception that gender is exclusively female is that it has somehow been linked with the other f-word—-feminism. What sorts of images or thoughts come to mind when you hear or read the word feminism? Are they positive or negative? Where did you learn them? Is this a label you would use to define yourself? Why or why not?

Just as gender is not synonymous with biological sex, it is also not synonymous with feminism. As we stated earlier, gender refers to the socially constructed definitions of what it means to be female or male in a given culture. Feminism is a socio-political and philosophical position about the relationships between men, women and power. As a result, there is not one kind of feminism (Lotz; Bing; Marine), thus this section is entitled feminisms. Just as members of republican, democratic, green, and independent political parties disagree and agree about values, causes of social conditions, and policy, so do feminists. Below we provide brief descriptions of thirteen types of feminism. These are not all the feminisms that exist but some of the most common in which you may have already come into contact.

- **Liberal Feminism**. Liberal Feminism is one of the most common types of feminism and is institutionalized in the organization, the National Organization of Women (NOW). Basic beliefs of this position are that women and men are alike in important ways and should receive equal treatment. Accordingly, supporters work for causes such as "equal pay for equal work," gender equity in political representation, as well as equality in other social, professional, and civic causes. This is movement is often referred to as second wave feminism.
- **Radical Feminism**. Growing out of a discontentment with their treatment in New Left political movements of the 1960's, many women began addressing issues of oppression on a systematic level. They argued that oppression of women is a platform on which all other forms (race, class, sexual orientation) of oppression are based. Communication strategies such as "consciousness raising" and "rap groups," and positions such as the "personal is political" grew out of this movement.
- **Ecofeminism**. Coming into consciousness in 1974, Ecofeminism unites feminist philosophy with environmental and ecological ideas and ethics. Ecofeminists see the oppression of women as one example of an overall oppressive ideology. Thus, supporters of this position are not just concerned with ending oppression of women but changing the value structure that supports oppression of the earth (i.e. deforestation), oppression of children (i.e. physical and sexual abuse), and oppression of animals (i.e. eating meat.).
- **Marxist Feminism**. Stemming from the work of Karl Marx, Marxist feminism focuses on the economic forces that work to oppress women. Specifically, Marxist feminists question how a capitalist system supports a division of labor that privileges men and devalues women. If you thought that women were catching up to men economically, think again. The U.S. census found that the salary gap between men and women is not improving. In 2014 women earned 78 cents for every dollar men made – the yearly wage difference could be about $39,157 for women and $50,033 for men. This is a classic example of economic oppression of women in our society.
- **Socialist Feminism**. Extending Marxist feminist thought, Socialist Feminists believe that women's unpaid labor in the home is one of the fundamental causes of sexism and oppression of women. Moreover, patriarchy, the system of sex oppression is connected with other forms of oppression, such as race and class.
- **Womanist**. One criticism of liberal and radical feminism is that these two movements have been largely a movement for and about white women. These movements have often failed to address issues such as the interlocking nature of race, class, and sex oppression. Womanists, then, connect issues of race and sex when working against oppression.
- **Lesbian Feminism**. This type of feminism is connected with one's sexual orientation. Important issues for this feminist perspective include fighting for marriage and adoption rights, fair and safe treatment in the workplace, and women's health issues for gay and lesbian couples.
- **Separatist Feminism**. Instead of fighting against the patriarchal system, this position maintains that patriarchal systems of oppression cannot be changed. Thus, the best way to deal with patriarchy is to leave it. Separatists work toward the formation of women-centered communities that are largely removed from the larger society.
- **Power Feminism**. Power Feminism emerged in the 1990's and urges women not to be victims. Power is derived not by changing a patriarchal structure but by gaining success and approval from traditionally male dominated activities. Although

it labels itself feminist, this position is actually contradictory to some very basic feminist tenants. Instead of recognizing the interplay of cultural institutions and sexual oppression, Power Feminism takes a “blame the victim” position and asserts that if women are denied opportunity then it is their fault.
- **Revalorist Feminism**. Those who are Revalorist Feminists are dedicated to uncovering women’s history through writings, art, and traditional activities such as sewing. Once uncovered, they can be incorporated into educational curriculum, used as a basis for reevaluating existing theoretical and methodological perspectives, and receive a more positive or accepted place in society. Their approach is to move women’s positions, ideas, and contributions from the margin to the center.
- **Structural Feminism**. Unlike Liberal Feminists who contend that women and men are alike in important ways, Structural Feminism holds that men and women are not alike due to different cultural experiences and expectations. These different experiences produce dissimilar characteristics. Because women can bear children, for example, they are more nurturing and caring.
- **Third Wave Feminism**. Third Wave Feminism believes the best way to change patriarchy is to not replicate the strategies of second wave feminism, although it is vital to acknowledge their contributions. Instead, a feminist agenda should focus more on practice than theory, foster positive connections and relationships between women and men, and be inclusive of diversity issues and diverse people.
- **Post Feminism**. Post Feminism suggests that feminism has made sufficient progress at eliminating sexism in our society. There is a move away from sex (women and men) and a focus on the human experience. Though its members aren’t in 100% agreement of the meaning, they generally agree that feminism is over and we have reached equality. However, there is much disagreement about post feminism because many women and men experience inequality daily.

Just as there are many women’s movements, did you know that there are men’s movements too? Men’s movements also vary in their goals and philosophies. Some men’s movements are strong supporters of feminist positions while others resist feminist movements and seek to return to a time where sex roles were clearly defined and distinct. Just as women can consider themselves feminists, many men consider themselves as feminists too!

- **Pro-Feminist Men**. Pro-feminist men are the most closely aligned with the Liberal Feminist position. They share the belief that women and men are alike in important ways, thus, should have access to equal opportunities in work, politics, and the home. They do not stop at challenging the traditional roles for women. They also work for expanding the roles and opportunities of men. The ability to express emotions, to seek nurturing relationships, and to fight against cultural sexism are all concerns of Pro-Feminist Men. The organization NOMAS (National Organization for Men Against Sexism) represents this group of men.
- **Free Men**. Compared to Pro-Feminist men, Free Men – represented by organizations such as NOM (National Organization of Men), the National Coalition for Free Men, and MR, Inc. (Men’s Rights, Incorporated) – seek to restore the macho and independent image of men in culture. While they may acknowledge that women do suffer gender and sex oppression, the oppression leveled at men is far greater. Arguing that feminism has emasculated men, Free Men want women to return to roles of subordination and dependence.
- **Mythopoetic**. Founded by poet, Robert Bly, this group of men is a combination of the previous two perspectives. Although they believe that the man’s role is limiting and damaging to both men and women, they argue that there was a time when this was not the case. Masculinity, they claim, was originally tied to connection with the earth and it was the advent of technology, resulting in modernization and industrialization, and feminism that ripped men from their roots.
- **Promise Keepers**. Strongly aligned with a Christian belief system, Promise Keepers urge men to dedicate themselves to God and their families. They ask men to take a servant leadership role in their families, being involved in their homes as well as in work contexts.
- **Million Man March**. Like the Womanists who believe that a majority of feminisms do not adequately address issues of race and class oppression, many African-American males do not feel represented in the majority of men’s movements. Thus, on October 18, 1995, the leader of the nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan, organized the Million Man March to bring African American men together in Washington, D.C. Like, the Promise Keepers, this group asked men to dedicate themselves spiritually with the belief that this will help strengthen families. Since the march, two decades ago, people gather to observe the Holy Day of Atonement and reflect on the messages spoken that day and the ideas they wish to spread.
- **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes**. This annual event raises awareness of sexualized violence against women–by men. It was founded in 2001 by Frank Baird as a mile walk for men in women’s heels. The idea is to get men to walk the walk and then talk the talk to end sexualized violence. It is not only an event to raise awareness of violence against women but to offer resources to those needed and ultimately creating a united gender movement.

With the different groups or philosophical positions all communicating aspects of gender, the next section examines how gender is related to communication. Specifically we discuss what we study, gender development theories, prominent scholars in this specialization, and research methods used to study gender and communication.

Contributions and Affiliations

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13.4: 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.

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13.5: 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.

Gender and Interpersonal Communication

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 in organizations.

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.

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13.6: Are There Really Differences in Gender Communication Styles?

Many of us have had conversations with others about how different the “other” gender communicates. Countless books have been written claiming they have the answer for understanding the opposite gender. But what have we really learned about gendered ways of communicating? This section talks about language, the purpose of communication, patterns of talk, and nonverbal communication in relation to our gender.

Language

We have already discussed that one way language obscures women’s contributions to academic scholarship is by erasing the name from the ideas generated. Below we will discuss three other ways in which the English language demonstrates a positive bias toward the masculine and a negative bias toward the feminine.

- **Generic “He”**

It is likely that you have been told when you write or speak to use what is referred to as gender-neutral language. This is an attempt to get away from the generic “he” and move toward inclusive pronouns. For example, using “he” when we mean “he or she.” Using gender-neutral language tells us to select the latter option. Another popular way this issue presents itself is with the use of titles that contain gender markers. Words such as “policeman,” “fireman,” “mailman,” and “chairman”; all suggest that the people who hold these positions are male. Over time it has become more common to replace the above titles with gender neutral ones such as “police officer,” “firefighter,” “mail carrier,” and “chairperson.” The linguistic change has two main implications: 1) We don’t know the gender of the person being discussed, and 2) Both males and females can perform these jobs. Since we have learned that language influences perception and constructs our reality, it is important to use language responsibly to reflect nonsexist attitudes (Beal; McConnell and Fazio; Mucchi-Faina; O Barr; Parks; Stringer & Hopper). In recent years, our language has been progressing even further. Instead of simply using she/he and men/women, we recognize that not every person will identify within those categories. Now we see it is more appropriate to use the term “people of all genders” to be more inclusive.

- **Defining Men and Women**

A second way in which language is biased against the feminine is the way it is used to define women. One such way is to use descriptions based on accomplishments or actions to define males, while defining females in terms of physical features or their relationships to men. As First Lady, Michelle Obama received a lot of press coverage about her choice of clothing for public events. Her personal accomplishments with our nation’s school system as a political figure were either downplayed or used against her as evidence that she was not properly filling the role of First Lady. Another way language is used to define men and women is through the slang terms commonly used to refer to one sex or another. What are some common ones you hear on your campus and within your circle of friends? Are women “chicks?” Are men “dudes?” What about explicit sexual references to women as a “piece of ass” or men as “dicks?” These are just some ways in which sexual terms are used to define us. Numerous studies have shown that there are many more sexual terms used for women than men. Stanley (1977) found that there were 220 terms for sexually promiscuous women and 22 similar terms for men.

Case In Point
Vagina Isn't a Dirty Word
While driving in the car with our two young girls, the four year old asked, "If boys have a penis, then what do girls have"? We were taken aback by the question since they were able to name the correct body part for male genitalia but not their own. We told them that girls and women have a vagina. They smiled and then started screaming, "Vagina, Vagina, I have a vagina!" over and over again. We both laughed, saying Eve Ensler would be so proud.

Eve Ensler is the playwright of The Vagina Monologues, a collection of over 200 interviews of women of diverse sexual orientations, racial, class, age, religious, and professional backgrounds. Her play has become an international hit and is performed every year on college campuses and local theatres. It has spawned the V-Day movement which seeks to end sexual violence against women and girls.

One of the key themes in the play is communication, specifically how we communicate about vaginas. In one monologue the woman explains, "Let's just start with the word "vagina." It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: "Hurry nurse, bring me the vagina." "Vagina." "Vagina." Doesn't matter how many times you say it, it never sounds like a word you want to say. It's a totally ridiculous, completely unsexy word. If you use it during sex, trying to be politically correct—"Darling, could you stroke my vagina?"—you kill the act right there."

By reclaiming the word "vagina" through challenging the connotation that it is a dirty, unsexy, or clinical term, Ensler attempts to create a positive way of thinking about "vaginas": an accurate and loving way to refer to girls and women. Her efforts and success demonstrate the power of language to name and create reality.

- **Naming Reality'**

The final way language influences the ways we understand gender is in the reality it creates for us. In the same way that the

term “fireman” suggests that only males can do this job, creating terms to name experiences (or not having such terms) defines what we can or cannot experience. Undoubtedly, you are familiar with the term “sexual harassment” and may be familiar with your campus policy for reducing its occurrence. Did you know that this term did not come into existence until 40 years ago? Did sexual harassment occur prior to 40 years ago? Of course it did! The point is that until there was a term for such behavior (emerging in 1974) there was no way for women (as they are the most common victims/survivors of this behavior) to either talk about what was happening to them or to fight against it. Imagine the difficulty inherent in trying to create a policy or law to prohibit behavior when there is no term for such behavior! With the advent of the term and the publicity about this issue generated by the bravery of Anita Hill when she testified against current Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, most organizations have policies to protect employees from sexual harassment. Without the language, this would have been impossible to accomplish: “the development of a vocabulary with which to accurately describe one’s experiences is an important process during which one needs to reflect on the political implications of that experience” (DeFrancisco & Palczewski 119).

The use of a generic or universal he, the use of nonparallel descriptors for different genders, and the lack of vocabulary are just some of the ways language influences our experiences as one gender or another. See if you can think of other examples.

Purpose of Communication

Starting in childhood, girls and boys are generally socialized to belong to distinct cultures and thus, speak in ways particular to their own gender’s rules and norms (Fivush; Johnson; Tannen). This pattern of gendered socialization continues throughout our lives. As a result, men and women often interpret the same conversation differently. Culturally diverse ways of speaking can cause miscommunication between members of each culture or speech community. These cultural differences are seen in the simple purpose of communication.

For those socialized in a feminine community, the purpose of communication is to create and foster relational connections with other people (Johnson; Stamou). On the other hand, the goal for men’s communication is to establish individuality. This is done in a number of ways such as indicating independence, showing control, and entertaining or performing for others.

Although our previous discussion of feminist movements for women and men indicates that gender roles are changing, traditional roles still influence our communication behaviors. Because men have traditionally been expected to work outside the home to provide financial support for the family, they need to demonstrate their individual competence as this is often the criterion for raises and promotions. Conversely, because women have been expected to work inside the home to provide childcare, household duties, and other social functions the need to create interpersonal bonds is crucial. Thus, it is important to understand the cultural reasons and pressures for the differences in communication, rather than judge one against the other devoid of context.

Patterns of Talk

One way to think of gender communication is in terms of co-cultures or speech communities. A speech community is a “community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech” (Hymes 54). Muted group theory (Kramerae) explains the societal differentiation of gender and its corresponding language development. This develops on two levels:

1. Thus, when discussing patterns of talk we conceptualize them as occurring in different speech communities or co-cultures based on historical, cultural and economic expectations of a given co-culture. For the different genders, we develop different patterns of talk based on expectations placed on us.
    - **Feminine Speech Community**

    When cultures have different goals for their communication, this results in unique communication strategies and behaviors. When the goal is connection, members of a feminine speech community are likely to engage in the following six strategies—equity, support, conversational “maintenance work,” responsiveness, a personal style, and tentativeness.

    Showing equity in conversation means showing that you are similar to others. To do this one might say, “That happened to me too,” or “I was in a similar situation.” Showing support conversationally involves the expression of sympathy, understanding, and emotions when listening or responding to others. Sotirin suggests “women use bitching to cope with troubles by reaffirming rapport; men address troubles as problems of status asymmetry and respond with solutions. The characterization minimizes the political import of women’s bitching; it’s not political but interpersonal; not transformative but cathartic” (20). Have you ever felt as if you were the one in the conversation who had to keep the conversation moving? This is conversational maintenance at work. This work is performed by asking questions and trying to elicit responses from

others. A typical family dinner conversation might begin with one of the parents asking their children, “What happened in school today?” The purpose is to initiate dialogue and learn about others to fulfill the purpose of communication—to maintain connection with others.

When listening to others we often respond in various ways to show that we are attentive and that we care about what the other person is saying. Responsiveness includes asking probing questions such as, “How did you feel when that happened?” or, “Wow, that’s interesting, I’ve never thought of that before.” Displaying a personal style refers to all the small details, personal references, or narratives that a person uses to explain her/his ideas. A professor explaining the stages of friendship development might supplement the model with how a particular friendship developed in their life.

The final quality, tentativeness, involves a number of strategies and has invoked a multiplicity of interpretations. A student might say, “This is probably a stupid question, but…” as a way of qualifying her/his question. Turning statements into questions is another way of showing tentativeness. This is done with tag questions or intonation. Tag questions are phrases tacked onto the end of a sentence. In the statement, “I liked the film, didn’t you?” the “didn’t you?” is the tag. If you have studied French, this is similar to the use of “n’est pas.” When we use our voice to make a statement into a question (intonation) we make the last syllable raise. For example, if your roommate asks you, “what do you want for dinner?” you could say “pizza” to make it a question (“pizza?”) or a statement (“pizza.”) Another way to show tentativeness is through verbal hedges such as, “I sort of think I was too sensitive.”

As you read the types of tentativeness, what were your reactions? How do you feel when someone communicates this way? Generally, scholars have offered four explanations for tentativeness. First, is that this style represents a lack of power, self-confidence, or assuredness on the part of the speaker. Lakoff theorized that the powerlessness in speech mirrored women’s powerlessness in the culture. Wood theorized that tentativeness is a strategy to maintain communication and connection. A final interpretation is that to understand tentativeness we must examine the context in which such speech occurs. The relative power between two speakers may cause the one with less power to communicate tentatively to the other. Do you use markers of tentativeness when speaking with those in power such as your boss, teachers, or parents?

- **Masculine Speech Community**

When the goal is independence, members of this speech community are likely to communicate in ways that exhibit knowledge, refrain from personal disclosure, are abstract, are focused on instrumentality, demonstrate conversational command, are direct and assertive, and are less responsive. Showing knowledge in conversation gives speakers the opportunity to present themselves as competent and capable. If someone has a problem at work one might respond, “You should do this …” or “The best way to deal with that is …” This strategy is sometimes referred to as a “communication tool box.” While some may interpret this as bossy, responding in a manner that tries to fix a problem for someone you care about makes a lot of sense.

The next two features—minimal personal disclosure and abstractness—are related. When we refrain from personal disclosure we reveal minimal or no personal information. While giving a lecture on communication anxiety in a public speaking class, a professor may use examples from famous people rather than revealing her/his own experiences. Likewise, when we speak in less personal terms our conversation tends to become more abstract. Think back to the traditional roles for men and women for a moment. Since men typically have been more involved in the public rather than the private sphere, it makes sense that their communication would be more abstract and less personal.

A masculine communication style tends to be focused on instrumental tasks. This is particularly true in the case of same sex friendships. Like the “tool box” or a problem solving approach to communication, when talk is instrumental it has a specific goal or task. It is used to accomplish something. Take baseball or football, for example. The talk that is used in these activities is strategic. In the case of male friendships it is more likely that men will get together to do something. Whether the activity is rock climbing, going to lunch, or helping someone move, the conversation is instigated by a particular activity. While female friends also like to engage in activities together, they are much more likely to get together “just to talk.”

Conversational command refers to the ability to control or manage conversation. This can be done by controlling which topics are discussed, interrupting, or being the one to control the turn taking in conversation. A popular stereotype is that women talk a lot, but most research shows that men talk more than women. More

talk time is another way to demonstrate conversational command.

Directness is another feature of masculine communication. This refers to the use of more authoritative language and minimal use of tentativeness. Finally, men generally perform “minimal response cues” (Parlee). Response cues include saying, “mmm” or “go on” while nodding when listening to others. Fewer verbal indicators of sympathy, empathy, or understanding are likely to characterize this style of talk. While members of this speech community may be less likely to verbally express sympathy or other similar emotions, this is not the same as saying the members of the community do not feel such emotions. People of different genders feel and care for others in a variety of ways. The difference is how they are communicated, not if they are communicated.

As you were reading about the feminine and masculine speech communities you were probably thinking to yourself, “Hey, I am a woman but I have a lot of masculine communication traits,” or “I know some men who speak in a more feminine style.” As you think, reflect more on these ideas you will realize that all of us are capable of speaking, and do speak, the language of multiple gender cultures. Again, this is one of the reasons it is important to make a distinction between gender and sex. Our gender construction and the contexts in which we speak play a large role in the ways we communicate and express our gender identity. Both men and women may make conscious choices to speak more directly and abstractly at work, but more personal at home. Such strategic choices indicate that we can use our knowledge about various communication styles or options to make us successful in many different contexts.

Differences between Feminine and Masculine Speech Communities		
	Feminine Speech Community	**Masculine Speech Community**
Goal:	Connection	Independence
Characteristics:	Equity	Exhibit Knowledge
	Support	No Personal Disclosure
	Maintenance Work	Abstract
	Responsive	Instrumental Tasks
	Personal Style	Conversational Command
	Tentativeness	Direct
		Less Responsive

Nonverbal Communication

Because you know how important nonverbal communication is to the production of meaning you may have wondered about the gendered nature of nonverbal communication. Below we discuss seven areas of nonverbal communication and the role of gender in each. We will discuss: Artifacts, Personal Space and Proxemics, Haptics, Kinesics, Paralanguage, Physical Attributes, and Silence

- **Artifacts**

Earlier in the chapter we mentioned the pink and blue blankets used to wrap girl and boy babies after birth. These are examples of artifacts that communicate gender. Simply speaking, personal artifacts are objects that humans use to communicate self-identity. The jewelry we choose to wear (or not wear) communicates something about our personal tastes and social roles. Our clothes indicate a preference for certain designers or fashions, or may be used to subvert dominant fashion trends and expectations. An American male who wears a skirt or sarong may be trying to challenge the cultural norm that says pants and shorts are the only appropriate clothes for men.

Artifacts that are an early influence on gender construction are the toys we are given as children. What are typical girl and boy toys and what kind of play do they inspire? You are probably thinking of dolls for girls and cars and trucks for boys. Just walk through the aisles of your local toy store and you will have no difficulty discovering the "girl" aisle (it's pink) and the boy aisle (it's darker colors). Typically toys for boys are more action-oriented and encourage competition. Girls' toys, on the other hand, encourage talk (Barbies talk to each other and role play) and preparation for traditional female roles (playing house). If you think products (toys) are only gendered at a young age, pay close attention when you watch television commercials and look through magazines. What kinds of products do women typically sell? What do men sell? How are gender-neutral products (cigarettes for example) sold to both women and men?

- **Personal Space and Proxemics**

As you recall, the study of space and our use of it (proxemics) has two important dimensions. First, we understand space as our personal space, or the bubble in which we feel comfortable. When someone stands or sits too close to you, you may react by pulling away and describe the interaction as "they invaded my space." Second, space can be thought of in terms of the kinds of physical spaces we have access to. Were some rooms in the family home off limits to you as a child? Relative to both kinds of space is power. People with more power in society are able to invade the space of those with less power with few repercussions. Those with more power also have access to more and better spaces. For example, the upper-class often own multiple homes in desirable locations such as the beach or high-priced urban areas.

What does all of this have to do with gender? Go back to the creation of power and ask yourself, "Which gender in American society holds the most power?" While there are exceptions, most of the time the masculine gender holds the most powerful positions in our culture. Thus, males typically have access to greater space. In the homes of many heterosexual couples, the father has a den and a garage that was for his use only. Mothers are often limited to shared space such as the kitchen and living areas. Not only is there a lack of private space, but also the tasks associated with each (cooking in the kitchen) are work as opposed to the hobbies that take place in the garage (rebuilding cars). What are some ways that space was gendered in your family?

- **Haptics**

People of all genders in our culture use touch to communicate with others. However, there are differences in both the types of touch used and in the messages conveyed (Lee & Guerrero; Guerrero). Women are more likely to use touch to express support or caring, such as touching someone on the shoulder or giving them a hug. Men are more likely to use touch to direct actions of another. The relative power of men to women, coupled with a greater level of social power that can manifest itself in unwanted closeness or touching, have been linked with the problems of sexual harassment and domestic violence (May; McLaughlin). However, men do not use touch only to show control. Men use touch to display affection and desire to romantic partners, to communicate caring and closeness to children, and to show support to friends. Since men are culturally sanctioned for showing caring through touch, especially to other men, a choice to do so is a conscious choice to challenge gender stereotypes for men. Another strategy for touch between men is to create contexts in which it is acceptable such as wrestling, play punching or fighting, or football.

- **Kinesics**

Like haptics, men and women use body language differently and to convey different meanings. Coinciding with cultural messages, men use their bodies to signal strength and control while women use theirs to communicate approachability and friendliness. Women, for example, smile more often than men and Caucasian women do this more than African-American women (Halberstadt & Saitta). Whether the cause is social or biological, men tend to take up more space and encroach on others' space more often than females.

- **Paralanguage**

Consistent with a communication goal of maintaining and fostering relationships with others, women tend to use more listening noises or back-channeling. Such noises are "mmm," "ah," and "oh" and are often accompanied by nodding the head. Often they mean, "I am listening and following what you are saying. Keep going." While men also make listening noises, they do so less frequently and often the meaning is "I agree." Hopefully, you can see how this could cause some miscommunication between the sexes. Likewise, being aware of this difference can reduce miscommunication. For example, when two people (Courtney and Juan)

talk, Juan will often ask Courtney, “are you saying ‘mm hmm” because you agree, or are you just listening?” In doing so, he is trying to determine which gendered approach to listening paralanguage Courtney is employing.

- **Physical Attributes**

Another area of nonverbal communication that has gendered implications is physical attributes—the most common one for gender being body size and shape. If you were socialized in America you probably know how men and women are “supposed” to look. Men should be larger and physically strong while women should be smaller—very thin. These cultural pressures cause both men and women to engage in dangerous behaviors in an attempt to achieve an ideal physical body. Women are more likely to engage in dieting to become thin and men are more likely to weight-lift to excess, or take steroids, to increase muscle mass. The cultural messages for both sexes are physically and emotionally dangerous. Too severe dieting or steroid use can permanently damage the physical body and too much attention to appearance can harm one’s self esteem and take time away from pursuing other activities such as school, career, hobbies, and personal relationships.

- **Silence**

A final area of nonverbal communication that has had large implications on gender is silence. Throughout history women have been silenced in all cultures across the world and this continues today. In chapter 4, we were introduced to one of the early Greek female rhetoricians, Aspasia. We don’t know much about her and her work because women have been systematically left out of our traditional history lessons. Women’s work has often been discredited, published under a male pseudo name, or males have passed it off as their own work. More recently, there’s a great episode of Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey entitled, “Sisters of the Sun,” that demonstrates women making large strides in the study of stars in our galaxy, yet they are rarely mentioned in our history books. Historically, achievements of females have been silenced.

This systematic silencing of women has lead many women to hesitate against speaking out against sexual assault, harassment, violence, or rape that they have experienced. They are often silenced due to uneven power dynamics, the fear of victim blaming, threats, and a countless number of forces. Fortunately, technological and social media efforts of today are working to break this silence. In October 2014, a new hash tag on Twitter was trending in the US and Canada that reads #BeenRapedNeverReported. Rape victims tweet about past experiences they felt they could not talk about and include the hashtag. One tweet reads, “Ive #beenrapedneverreported because he was military, and I am a vocal feminist slut. Who would the media believe? Not me. #DoubleStandards.” You can access the full article **here**.

In another instance Jatindra Dash reports, women in India who suffer from domestic violence tend to keep quiet because they are “scared of … [their] husband, mistrustful of the police and worried what … family and neighbors would think.” India is trying to combat this silence with an ATM-like machine that allows people to report their testimony into a microphone that the police station receives, contacts the person who reports it, and may make an arrest. You can read about this new kiosk **here**. Today’s technology and media may just help disrupt the long history of silence faced by women either placed on them by others or by themselves.

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13.7: Gender Communication Summary

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 feminist, 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 seeks 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
- ecofeminism
- feminine speech community
- feminism
- free men
- gender
- gender communicated
- gendered
- lesbian feminism

- liberal feminism
- marxist feminism
- masculine speech community
- million man march
- muted group theory
- mythopoetic
- power feminism
- pro-feminist men
- promise keepers
- psychodynamic
- psychological theories
- radical feminism
- revalorist feminism
- separatist feminism
- sex
- socialist feminism
- social learning
- speech community
- standpoint theory
- structural feminism
- symbolic interactionism
- third-wave feminism
- womanist

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