# Introduction to Communication Studies

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Introduction to Public Communication

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# Preface

Greetings, and welcome to Communication 101: Introduction to Public Communication at Indiana State University!

On behalf of the Department of Communication and all who teach Communication 101 here at Indiana State University and throughout the state of Indiana as part of our College Challenge Program, we are proud to present to you *Introduction to Public Communication*, an open education resource (OER) textbook.

An Open Education Resource, in this case, refers to the academic material that is fully vetted according to the highest academic standards and free to others for educational purposes. The contents of our OER textbook, *Introduction to Public Communication*, can also be used to supplement traditional textbooks as needed.  By integrating this OER  the savings in student costs for ISU students are both substantial and sustainable- more than $400,000.00 in one academic year. In addition, we believe there are other profound benefits coupled with the recurring monetary value of this textbook.

In many ways, this is a social justice project. The free textbook increases access to higher education for students of all ages and situations- high school graduates as well as those seeking a career change. It also signifies a shift in values. By means of co-authorship and collaborative knowledge gathering, taking the OER turn makes it possible for us to effectively partner Communication 101 with many other stellar departments at ISU including the Career Center, Center for Community Engagement, Center for Global Engagement, Office of Student Conduct and Integrity, Scott College of Business, and Cunningham Memorial Library. Additional benefits include increased academic freedom for instructors, an ISU-centric learning experience for ISU students, and a flexible textbook that can be easily updated to keep pace with trends in Communication Education, technology, and an ever-changing global world.

The first edition of *Introduction to Public Communication* was launched Fall 2016 at Indiana State University. In the spirit of collective and collaborative assessment, short surveys were completed that provided us with essential feedback for improving the textbook. The revised edition for Fall 2017 is the current edition of the OER text.

The OER textbook is used to administer the hybrid basic course for the Department of Communication at Indiana State University and the College Challenge courses in the program.

**Communication 101: Introduction to Public Communication** is a significant part of the Foundational Studies (General Education) program at ISU. The course is fast-paced and taught as a hybrid communication course focusing on several aspects of communication effectiveness, including public speech, writing, group communication, professional development. The workload in this course is appropriate to a freshman level class.

**The Communication 101 textbook, *Introduction to Public Communication*, is an important resource for learning about communication and successfully completing the course**. This textbook introduces you to the insights generated by centuries of Communication study and research. Each chapter offers valuable knowledge applicable to every degree on ISU's campus. Through your course readings, you will:

- Define communication study and theory
- Understand intercultural communication through global awareness
- Identify the role of conflict in everyday life and conflict management
- Examine the role of verbal and nonverbal communication
- Appraise the importance of listening as a communication skill
- Recognize the complexities of personal and professional relationships
- Assemble to work effectively in small groups
- Use informed learning to conduct research
- Construct informative and persuasive presentations

# Acknowledgments

The Communication Department at Indiana State University would like to acknowledge the following contributors to the creation and continued success of the OER textbook.

A great appreciation for the open source Pressbooks WordPress Plugin to complete our layout, editing, and publishing of the OER textbook.

This book is a joint effort of the Department of Communication, Career Center, Center for Community Engagement, Center for Global Engagement, Office of Student Conduct and Integrity, Scott College of Business, and Cunningham Memorial Library. The book is compiled from three sources, including two Open Education Resources:

- Survey of Communication Study from Wikibooks. Written by Laura K. Hahn and Scott T. Paynton from Humbolt State University. Last edited June 12, 2016, as of this publication. Used under CC-BY-SA 3.0 license.
- Public Speaking: Practice and Ethics, 2012, by Jason S. Wrench and Anne Goding from the State University of New York at New Paltz, Danette Ifert Johnson from Ithaca College, and Bernardo A. Attias from California State University – Northridge. Used under the CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 License.
- Stand Up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition, 2016. This edition adapted from a work originally produced in 2011 by a publisher who has requested that it not receive attribution. Used under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Heather Rayl (Indiana State University) for her design and work with developing various versions of the textbook to be offered in a variety of formats for our students and her tireless efforts in editing, copyright work, and ADA compliance. In large part to her service, you have the look and feel of the OER textbook.

Images used in this book are credited at the end of each chapter.

For support in editing and review of OER content, we are grateful to Ann O'Connor-Ledbetter (Ivy Tech Community College) and Natasha Rascon (Indiana State University) who joined the project and laid the groundwork for the first edition of *Introduction to Public Communication* at Indiana State University.

Supplementing these OER sources, the following individuals provided chapter development and original authorship for the first edition: Kourtney Barrett (Indiana State University), Brian Johnston (Indiana State University), Ann O'Connor-Ledbetter (Ivy Tech Community College), and Katherine Pine (Indiana State University).

Special thanks to those who have endured working on the revision of the textbook for another year and its future. Revisions and continued original authorship by Katherine Pine (Indiana State University) and Bryan-Mitchell Young (Indiana State University); editing by Bryan Hayden (Indiana State University) and Natasha Rascon (Indiana State University).

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Thank you to all who supported this endeavor, and to all of you who will prolong its legacy.

# CHAPTER 1: DEFINING COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDY

# 1.1 Foundations

## Foundations

### Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

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

*Two females talking in Jerusalem by Peter van der Sluijs. CC-BY-SA 3.0*

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, small group communication, and interpersonal communication. 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. Indiana State University's goal in this text is to introduce you to the field of Communication as an academic discipline of study.

## Engaging in Conversation

As professors, we hear 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. This resource 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.

# Defining Communication Study

## What is Communication Study?


*What is communication study?* by Spayton, CC-BY-SA 4.0

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 Communications?" However, 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. If you memorize the definition below, you will have a quick and simple answer to what communication study entails.

Bruce Smith, Harold Lasswell, and Ralph 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" (121).

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), our national organization, states communication is " the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific and aesthetic inquiry." Now, if people ask you what you're studying in a Communication class, you have an answer!

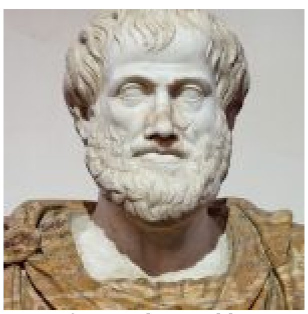
Before we go further, it is important for you to know how we define the actual term "communication."

# 1.2 Defining Communication

## Defining Communication

For decades communication professionals have had difficulty coming to any consensus about how to define the term communication (Hovland, 1948; Lasswell, 1949; Morris, 1946; Nilsen, 1957; Sapir, 1933 & Stevens, 1950). 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 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



*Bust of Aristotle, Marble, Roman Copy after a Greek Bronze by Lysippos, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons*

Aristotle said, "Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making — speaker, subject, and person addressed — it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object."
For Aristotle, it was the "to whom" that determined if communication occurred and how effective it was. Aristotle, in his study of "who says what, through what channels, to whom, and what will be the results" focused on persuasion and its effect on the audience. Aristotle thought it was extremely important to focus on the audience in communication exchanges.

What is interesting is that when we think of communication we are often, "more concerned about ourselves as the communication's source, about our message, and even the channel we are going to use. Too often, the listener, viewer, reader fails to get any consideration at all" (Lee, 2008).

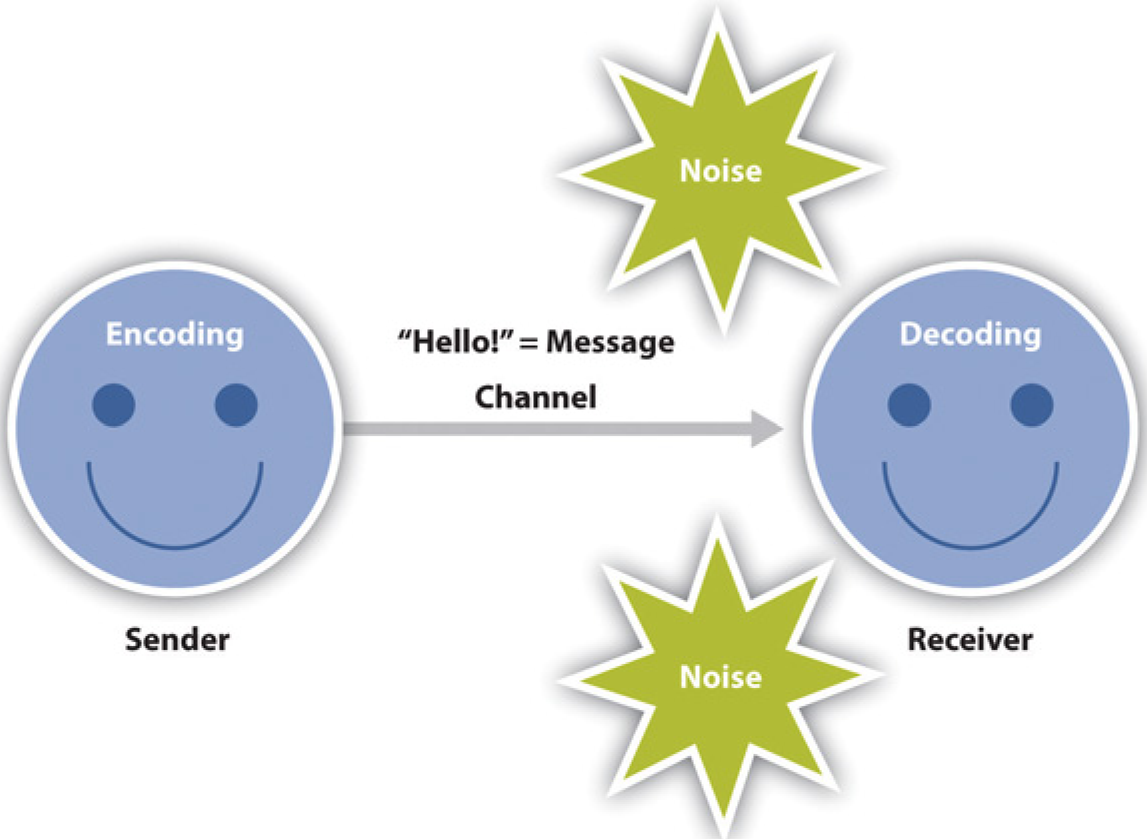
Aristotle's statement above demonstrates that humans who have been studying communication have had solid ideas about how to communicate effectively for a very long time. Even though people have been formally studying communication for a long time, it is still necessary to continue studying communication in order to improve.

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 (1946) proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (often called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a message from one source to another. Watching YouTube videos serves as an example of this. You act as the receiver when you watch videos, receiving messages from the source (the YouTube video). To better understand this, let's break down each part of this model. The **Linear Model** *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.

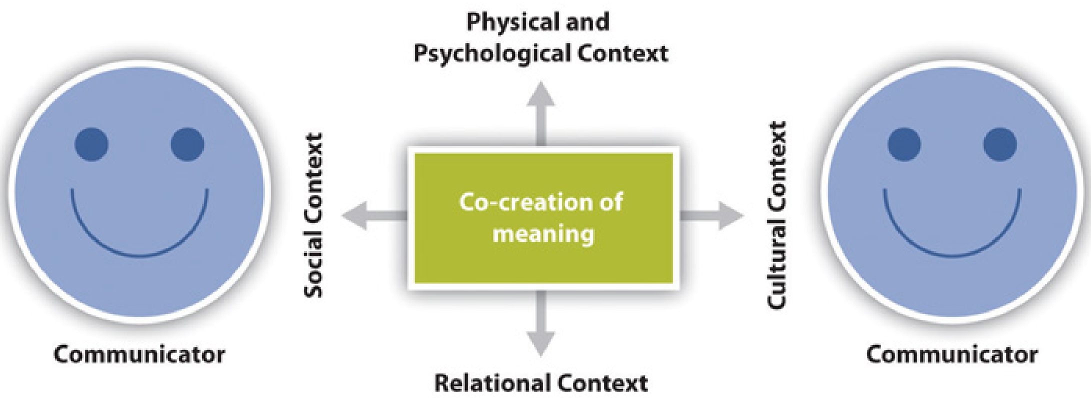
- A **sender** is *someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel*. The sender is the initiator of the communication. For example, when you text a friend, ask a teacher a question, or wave to someone you are the sender of a message.
- A **receiver** is *the recipient 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, CC-BY-SA 3.0

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 on 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 (1970) 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, CC-BY-SA 3.0*

The ability for both parties to provide a response or return in the process is known as **feedback** or *verbal or nonverbal messages sent during the communication process of decoding*. Additionally, it suggests that meaning is co-constructed between all parties involved in any given communication interaction. This notion of co-constructed meaning is drawn from the relational, social, and cultural contexts that make up our communication environments. Personal and professional relationships, for example, have a history of prior interaction that informs present and future interactions. Social norms, or rules for behavior and interaction, greatly influence how we relate to one another. For example, if your professor taught the class while sitting down rather than standing up, you and your colleagues would feel awkward because that is not an expected norm for behavior in a classroom setting. How we negotiate cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions also impact our communication interactions. We may both be from Chicago, but our attitudes may differ greatly depending upon the neighborhood we grew up in.

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. Hopefully, 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).

# Perception and Identity

Have you ever considered the role that perception plays in how we communicate? Indeed, perception affects how we encode and decode messages and it may even impact how we act toward others. You may think of perception happening instantaneously. However, consider instead that **perception** *is a three step process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli.*

Think of **stimuli** *as everything we might notice (see, hear, touch, taste, smell) in our environment, as well as others' messages to us and our own feelings and thoughts*. We simply cannot attend to everything (all the stimuli) in our environments and interactions. We, therefore, select certain stimuli, but not all. What factors impact how we select stimuli? Why do we watch one commercial, but ignore the others? If you close your eyes, can you recall the color shirt your instructor is wearing, whether your classroom has carpet or tiles, how many students are present, or advertisements tacked onto the classroom's billboard? One reason we notice certain stimuli and not others is **selective attention**, *the capacity for or process of reacting to certain stimuli selectively when several occur simultaneously.* Clearly, it is less important what color the walls are painted in your classroom than the information your instructor wants you to hear and retain. What other reasons do we select certain stimuli and not others?

After selecting stimuli from our environment, we engage in organization. **Perceptual organization** *is grouping visual stimuli into a pattern that is familiar to us, placing things, even people, into categories*. You differentiate between friends, family, and work colleagues. However, you may also have friends you consider "family," or colleagues who become friends. What criteria for a friend, family, or colleague do we have that allows for these shifts from one category to another? Additionally, we often compare new experiences with prior ones, or a new dating partner with an ideal archetype we have for the "perfect" romantic partner. What do we look for in a romantic partner, and from where do we inherit this criterion? It is important that we reflect upon how we organize experience and categorize others.

The final step in the process of perception is an **interpretation** *or the assigning of meaning to what we have selected and organized.* When we think of perception as something that "just happens" we are likely thinking of the interpreting step. However, as you can see, this is merely one step in a much more complex process. It is important that as communicators we be more intentional in the selection of stimuli and more reflective in how we organize experience. How might societal values, personal attitudes, cultural heritage, or beliefs affect the way we assign meaning in this context? Have you ever adjusted your opinion of someone or an experience after the initial impression? If so, what role did perception play in that adjustment? Being more aware of perception as a process is one way we can improve our communication skills.

No discussion of perception is complete without considering how personal identity affects the communication process. Indeed, how we see ourselves is often the starting point for how we relate to others. Identity, or our sense of self, includes both self-concept and self-esteem. Our **self-concept** *is the sum total of who we think we are, or how we define ourselves.* How many different categories or aspects of your self can you determine – familial (mother, daughter, sister), physical, emotional, romantic, civic, etc.? Comparatively, our **self-esteem** *is the degree to which we value or devalue who we think we are.* Consider those same categories that you determined for understanding your self-concept. Likely, you are more or less confident in some ways than others. Additionally, our self-esteem may change over time. Athletes spend decades training and competing in peak condition. However, as athletes age, they can no longer compete on the same level. This physical change may negatively impact their self-esteem. It is important to understand the power we have in how we choose to define and value ourselves, even over time as our lives evolve.

Personal identity is also characterized by how we manage our own communication behaviors and actions. We engage in **identity management** *or managing others impressions by using* communication *strategies to influence how others see us*. We will alter and adapt our behavior and/ or appearance accordingly to present the image or person we want to be seen as. Part of this is engaging in **facework**, *strategies used to shape one's image*. If you think about your daily interactions and the different types of ways you strategize your communication flexibility in different communication contexts, you are thinking about facework. Competence in identity management involves the ability to competently apply facework. The different "faces" that you present best meet the relational, social, and cultural contexts of the situation. For example, your "face" that you present at work is more professional than that that you present to friends. In the workplace, you may attend to your dress, your posture, and even your tone of voice. You are also managing your impression and engaging in facework when you are presenting an online presence and determining how to present on different social media sites.

The following list includes additional factors that influence how we assign meaning to ourselves and others. Can you think of how one or more of these has impacted you or your relationship with others?

1. **Self-fulfilling Prophecy:** When our behavior serves to fulfill someone else's expectations for us.
2. **Attribution:** The tendency to either take ownership of our behavior or performance or to blame others or outside forces.
3. **Stereotypes:** Broad generalizations.
4. **Reflective Appraisal:** Evaluating ourselves based upon how we see others seeing us.

With a clearer definition of communication and how it works, you are ready to learn about the history of communication and use your new perception skills to think about how communication has affected the landscape of communication discourse, education, and culture.

# 1.3 Communication Study and You

## Intro

### Communication Study Now: Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips from Aristotle

Does Aristotle's work still apply today outside of college classrooms? Of course, it does. In his book "Organizational Leadership: 73 Tips from Aristotle," Tyme takes Aristotle's work and applies it to leadership in organizational contexts. The book description on Amazon.com reads:"… is the third in a series of three short and effective Kindle books written for the next generation of leaders (and reminders for current ones) in business and organizations on this important topic. Some advice and quotes are timeless and provide a refreshing spin from a legendary figure. At a very young age of 7, Aristotle started a 20-year journey as a student of 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 refute 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 in 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"

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. 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, 2014); the use of deception in texting (Wise & Rodriguez, 2013); college students' "guilty pleasure" media use (Panek, 2014); how sons and daughters communicate disappointment (Miller-Day & Lee, 2001); an examination of motherhood in lesbian-headed households (Koenig Kellas & Suter, 2012); or daughters' perceptions of communication with their fathers (Dunleavy, Wanzer, Krezmien, Ruppel, 2011).

## Communication Helps with Diplomacy

*Ambassador of the State of Israel Dorit Golender presents her letter of credence, by www.kremlin.ru. CC-BY 4.0*

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 an Indiana State University 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." The more you understand communication, the greater potential you have to succeed in all aspects of your life.

## Careers with a Communication Degree

The kind of skills developed by Communication majors is 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

*Excerpt from:* Adams, S. (2013, October 11). The 10 skills employers most want in 20-something employees. *Forbes*.

# 1.4 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned an academic approach to understanding communication and communication study. 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” (1946). 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 visual representations of both communication study and communication. 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. The Old School of communication study consisted of four major periods of intellectual development, including the Classical Period that gave birth to seminal figures who set the foundation for communication study. 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. Why is knowing our history valuable for understanding the discipline?
4. Name three people who you feel used communication effectively in their jobs? In what ways do they communicate effectively using verbal and nonverbal communication?

### Key Terms

- attribution
- Aristotle

- Augustine
- Bacon, Francis
- Blair, Hugh
- Campbell, George
- Cereta, Laura
- channel
- Cicero
- communication
- De Pisan, Christine
- dialectic
- face work
- feedback
- Five Canons of Rhetoric
- identity management
- interpretation
- Isocrates
- Linear Model
- message
- noise
- perception
- perceptual organization
- Plato
- Ramus, Petrus
- receiver
- reflective appraisal
- rhetoric
- selective attention
- self-concept
- self-esteem
- self-fulfilling prophecy
- sender
- Socrates
- sophist
- stereotypes
- stimuli
- Transactional Model

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# CHAPTER 2: GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURE

# 2.1 Introduction

## Introduction

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify your cultural identity.
- Understand how culture, identity, and diversity are related.
- Explain the role of Intercultural Communication in today's global environment.
- Demonstrate conflict management strategies in a global society.
- Know where to go to find more information on study abroad opportunities at Indiana State University.

To explain the world's population to young children, David J. Smith (2011) asked children to imagine the world as a small village. In 2016, The 100 People Project reconfigured the world's population since Smith and represented the world again as 100 people, where one imaginary person represents the population from the real world. Using a model like this, we can also 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. (Simple version, Detailed version)

In the village, of the people old enough to read, 14 cannot read at all. Only 7 villagers would have earned a college degree. The poorest 11 villagers live on less than $1.90 USD per day. And the first spoken language would be Chinese.

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 viewing the United States as a global village we find the following information by Kuzoian in the 2016 Business Insider article, "The United State as 100 People":

- 51 Women and 49 Men
- 23 are under age 18, 63 are between 16 and 65, and 14 are over 65
- 62 are Caucasian, 17 Hispanic/ Latino, 13 are Black,  5 Asian, 2 Multiracial, and 1 Native American
- 16 are immigrants, 8 are children of immigrants, 76 are third generation Americans
- 80 speak English at home
- 71 are Christian
- 80 are urban and 20 rural
- 56 have pets (31 cats/ 37 dogs)
- 92 have cell phones (68 have smart phones and 34 have iPhones)
- 29 have Bachelors degrees
- 10 people control 77% of the household wealth

Think about culture and communication as a reciprocal process: culture affects communication and communication affect 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.

# 2.2 Cultural Awareness

## What Do We Mean by Cultural Awareness?

> "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

Before going any further, let us spend some time discussing what we mean by cultural awareness. When you were 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 a membership with others to form a shared cultural identity: race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ability, disability, religion, 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

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 between 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, 2012).

For additional information, check out the site Understanding RACE, which looks at the differences among people through three lenses: history, human variation, and lived experience (Goodman, Moses, & Jones, 2012).

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, 2012). Racism often involves the unequal accessibility to resources and power.

*Students at ISU come from many different countries.*

Incorporating an understanding of culture is important. Here, at Indiana State University, we offer many study abroad opportunities for students to gain hands-on experiences, in their field, and networking opportunities on a global scale. These experiences help students become better prepared for all aspects of leadership, especially on an international level.

## 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 program we have here at Indiana State University.

It may be difficult to adjust to a new culture but here are some tips from the Huffington Post (2014) to make your study abroad trip run smoothly: 13 Mistakes Study Abroad Students Make

# 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 a 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.

# 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. 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 buying 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. **Culture shock** explains 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 sit in your office

Todd Wasserman (2014) 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. In the article, Wasserman profiles a couple of digital nomads and lists some tips about becoming one yourself.

- **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.

## Gender and Sexual Orientation

Are you male or female? Do you identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgender? One's gender and sexual orientation is two additional ways to think about culture. One way to think about **gender** is the *recognition that one is male, female, or androgynous*. Gender is part of the 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. Notice too, the connotative differences between "makeup" and "paint."

**Sexual orientation** refers to a *person's preference for sexual or romantic relationships; one may prefer a partner of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both*. Sexual orientation influences one's worldview or politics because while all societies include members who identify as gay or lesbian, these members do not always receive the same social or health benefits as heterosexual couples. However, this is changing. As of 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States made gay marriage legal in all 50 states. 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.

For a more detailed discussion of gender and sexual orientation view the resource provided by Planned Parenthood Federation of America Inc (2017).

## 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". In some middle-class families, for example, 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 and may be identified as **co-cultures** exist within the larger culture but are marginalized by the dominant society. 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 2012 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?

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.

# 2.3 Understanding Intercultural Communication

## 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 important cultural dimension concepts for understanding communication practices among cultures.

## Collectivist versus Individualistic

In addition to the four speaking styles that characterize cultures so do value systems. Of particular importance to intercultural communication is whether the culture has a collectivist 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 orientation**. 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. What does it say about your country? Compare it to a country you want to travel to.

When looking at Hofstede's research and that of others on individualism and collectivism, it is important to remember that no culture is purely one or the other. 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. Changing is difficult. 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.

# High Context versus 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 (1976) 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. Low-context communication occurs when we have to rely on the translation of the words to decipher a person's meaning. 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 cultures.

# Power Distance

Hofstede (1997) defines power distance as "the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 28). Hofstede believes that power distance is learned early in families. In high power distance cultures, children are expected to be obedient toward parents versus being treated more or less as equals. In high power distance cultures, people are expected to display respect for those of higher status. For example, in countries such as Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, people are expected to display respect for monks by greeting and taking leave of monks with ritualistic greetings, removing hats in the presence of a monk, dressing modestly, seating monks at a higher level, and using a vocabulary that shows respect. Power distance also refers to the extent to which power, prestige, and wealth are distributed within a culture. Cultures with high power distance have power and influence concentrated in the hands of a few rather than distributed throughout the population. These countries tend to be more authoritarian and may communicate in a way to limit interaction and reinforce the differences between people. In the high power distance workplace, superiors and subordinates consider each other existentially unequal. Power is centralized, and there is a wide salary gap between the top and bottom of the organization.

# Feminity versus Masculinity

Hofstede (1980) found that women's social role varied less from culture to culture than men's. He labeled as masculine cultures those that strive for the maximal distinction between what women and men are expected to do. Cultures that place high values on masculine traits stress assertiveness, competition, and material success. Those labeled as feminine cultures are those that permit more overlapping social roles for the sexes. Cultures that place a high value on feminine traits stress quality of life, interpersonal relationships, and concern for others.

# Uncertainty Avoidance

The extent to which people in a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. Hofstede explains that this feeling is expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability or a need for written and unwritten rules (Hofstede, 1997). In these cultures, such situations are avoided by maintaining strict codes of behavior and a belief in absolute truths. Cultures strong in uncertainty avoidance are active, aggressive, emotional, compulsive, security seeking, and intolerant; cultures weak in uncertainty avoidance are contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting of personal risks, and relatively tolerant. Students from high uncertainty avoidance cultures expect their teachers to be experts who have all the answers. And in the workplace, there is an inner need to work hard, and there is a need for rules, precision, and punctuality. Students from low uncertainty avoidance cultures accept teachers who admit to not knowing all the answers. And in the workplace, employees work hard only when needed, there are no more rules than are necessary, and precision and punctuality have to be learned.

# Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation

In 1987, the "Chinese Culture Connection," composed of Michael H. Bond and others, extended Hofstede's work to include a new dimension they labeled Confucian work dynamism, now more commonly called long-term orientation versus short-term orientation to life. This dimension includes such values as thrift, persistence, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships work dynamism refers to dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated individuals with a sense of commitment and organizational identity and loyalty.

# Indulgence versus Restraint

In 2010 a sixth dimension was added to the model, Indulgence versus Restraint. This was based on Bulgarian sociologist Minkov's label and also drew on the extensive World Values Survey. Indulgence societies tend to allow relatively free gratification of natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun whereas Restraint societies are more likely to believe that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict norms. Indulgent cultures will tend to focus more on individual happiness and well being, leisure time is more important and there are greater freedom and personal control. This is in contrast with restrained cultures where positive emotions are less freely expressed and happiness, freedom, and leisure are not given the same importance. The map below broadly reflects where indulgence and restraint tend to prevail.

For a more detailed information, review the Dimension Maps of the World. These six world maps demonstrate the cultural dimensions distributed by country observing the culture of each.

# 2.4 Conflict Management in Today's Global Society

## Introduction

This chapter will help you understand how conflict management can provide better communication for you within the university setting and in your professional and personal life. This chapter, written specifically for Indiana State University students, has been developed by the Department of Communication and the Office of Student Conduct and Integrity to help reduce stress brought on by limited or under-developed conflict management skills. After completing this chapter, each student should be able to understand their conflict style, strategies, and resources to navigate conflicts and help others around them better manage conflict with proactive and productive results. Remember, not all conflict can be resolved; but, with improved skill-sets, we should be able to manage them better.

### Learning Objectives

1. Understand the reasons for conflict.
2. Identify strategies for resolving conflict.
3. Explain the types of conflict.
4. Identify styles of conflict management.
5. Understand the role of attitude and behavior in conflict.
6. Understand how culture influences conflict.

According to *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language*, conflict is defined as (Johnson, 2000):

con·flict
**Definition(s):**

noun:

a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one: the eternal conflict between the sexes.
(i) a prolonged armed struggle.
(ii) an incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interests.
(iii) Psychol. a condition in which a person experiences a clash of opposing wishes or needs.

verb:

be incompatible or at variance; clash.
(i) [as adj.] (conflicted) having or showing confused and mutually inconsistent feelings.
– origin ME: from L.conflict-'struck together,' from v. configere, from con-'together' + fligere 'to strike.'

From this definition, one can surmise "conflict" traditionally involves incompatible needs or opinions. On a macro-level, nations battle over resources (jobs, land, oil, water, power, etc.) from sanctions to war. Failure to communicate may bring on stagnation (gridlock/standoff) or all out conflict. On a micro-level, individuals can find success by utilizing skills to helping find resolutions that are proactive, versus reactive, in nature.

# Facilitating Discussions about Intercultural Communication Issues

Perhaps you may have noticed the theme of inequality as we have discussed topics such as 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, and political correctness—that are useful when considering your own cultural identity, your place in society, and your communication with others.

# 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.

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 known Aryan groups is one of the most horrific ethnocentric acts in history. However, ethnocentrism shows up in small and seemingly unconscious ways as well. In American culture, if you decided to serve dog meat as appetizers at your cocktail party you would probably disgust your guests and the police might even arrest you because the consumption of dog meat is not culturally acceptable. However, in China "it is neither rare nor unusual" to consume dog meat (Wingfield-Hayes, 2002). 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 Mercator map versus a Peter's Projection map. The arguments reveal cultural biases toward the Northern, industrialized nations.

## Case In Point: The Greenland Problem

The Mercator projection creates increasing distortions of size as you move away from the equator. As you get closer to the poles the distortion becomes severe. Cartographers refer to the inability to compare size on a Mercator projection as "the Greenland Problem." Greenland appears to be the same size as Africa, yet Africa's land mass is actually fourteen times larger. Because the Mercator distorts size so much at the poles it is common to crop Antarctica off the map. This practice results in the Northern Hemisphere appearing much larger than it really is. Typically, the cropping technique results in a map showing the equator about 60% of the way down the map, diminishing the size and importance of the developing countries.Greenland is 0.8 million sq. miles and Africa is 11.6 million sq. miles, yet they often look roughly the same size on maps.

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

# Conflict Types, Styles, and Effects

## Types of Conflict

Of the many reasons for conflict, there are three main types of conflict: simple, pseudo, and ego.

**Simple Conflict:** traditionally stems from different standpoints, views, or goals. With simple conflict, you may feel misunderstood, rejected, or isolated. Accepting another's viewpoints and needs can solve the conflict, manage the situation, or allow the other person to feel valued. Not everyone has the same upbringing or experiences as you, so they may view the world in a different manner.

For this example of simple conflict, one might try being proactive and suggest another restaurant, which you both enjoy, and the two of you have a wonderful lunch together.

**Pseudo Conflict:** (pseudo, meaning "fake" or "false") is a misunderstanding in communication. Either one or both have failed to comprehend what the other was attempting to convey. Left unchecked, this type of communication may further feelings of frustrations and misunderstanding.

Neither side took into consideration the time-difference, there was a conflict due to a misunderstanding. Thankfully you have a positive frame of mind and immediately send an e-mail explaining the misunderstanding and welcoming a second chance at that great position.

**Ego Conflict:** includes personal attacks and degrading of others. When this occurs, it is best to shift ego conflict to pseudo or simple conflict. Ego conflict may raise one's blood pressure and pulse rates and spawn emotional outburst and physical violence.

With ego conflict, many times those involved may need to separate from the situation, even if for ten minutes or a day. During this time, each person should identify what the triggers were, how the confrontation could be better handled, and possible solutions. Each should keep an open mind and focus on listening to the other person.

## Conflict Styles

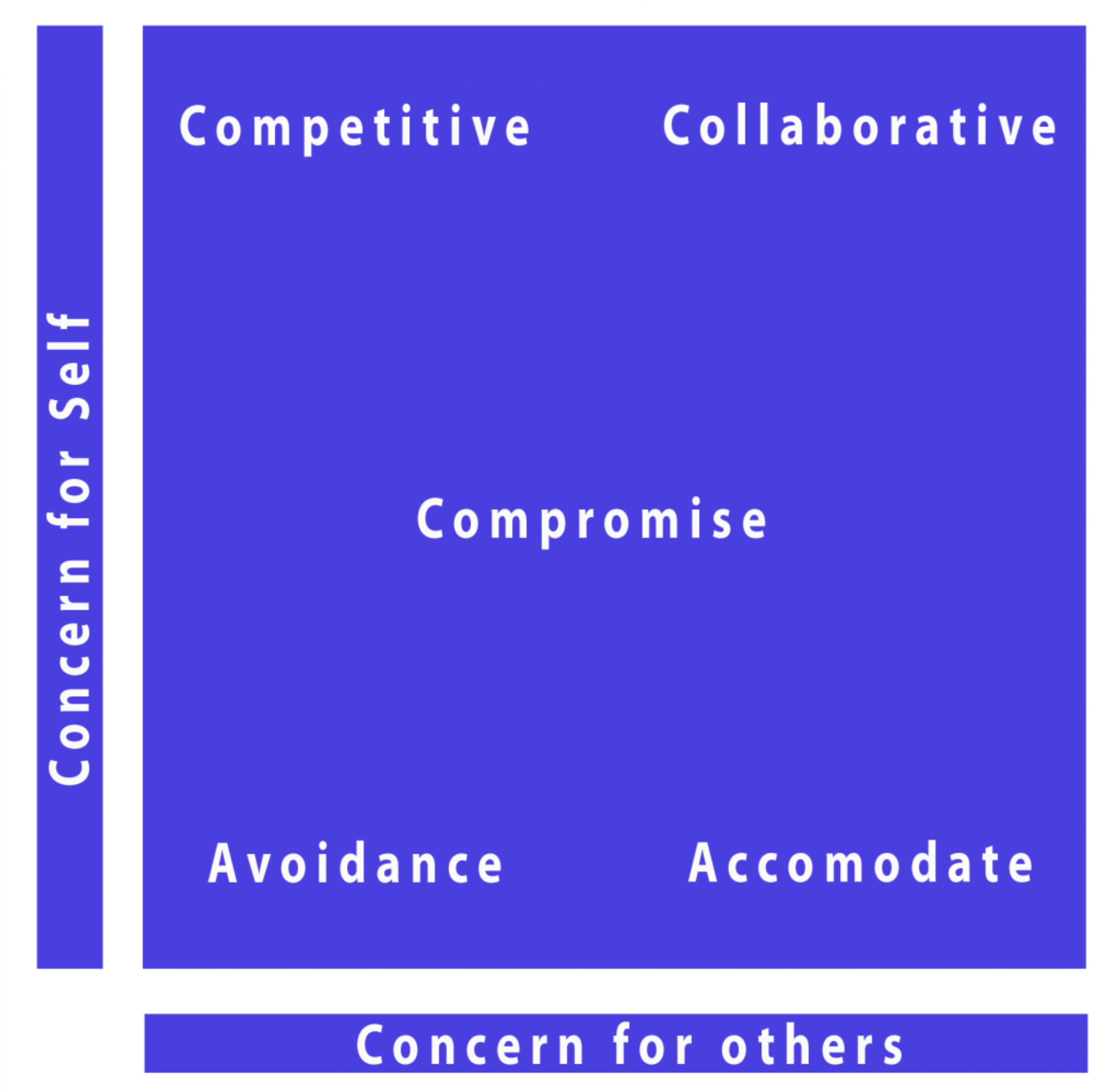
### Conflict Resolution Assessment

Take the assessment developed by the University of Arizona. What conflict resolution style do you follow?

Note that based on the best available research in the field, this questionnaire is designed to assist the user in understanding and assessing his/her current performance. The author makes no implied guarantee of its accuracy or the limits of its applicability.

There are five types of conflict styles: avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, competition, and compromise. Each of us has a conflict style that pairs with our personality and our values, beliefs, and experiences. It is possible to have more than one style and the difference of where those styles are more viable can depend on the environment of the conflict.

Let's review the different types of conflict strategies and then discuss why Susan responds differently in her work at home life.




The graph above (adapted from Moore, *The Mediation Process*) shows how higher/lower concern for self and others affects how we manage conflict. High concern for self may include our desire to control others whereas, low concern for self, sees one hiding from the conflict altogether. With high concern for others, one may seek to work together, or with low concern for others seek to give in to demands or needs. Compromise occupies a middle ground, where many may feel they did not get everything they wanted or needed.

### *Avoidance: "Conflict? What Conflict?"*

Strategies of this style include denial, ignoring, and withdrawing. With limited concern for yourself and sometimes others, an individual with this style will avoid addressing any conflicts or issues. One is not committed to standing their ground or that of others. In this case, the person does not feel they get what they want or need and others feel the same. This is seen as a lose-lose approach where both sides never manage or address what causes their conflict. Both may feel unfulfilled or ignored.

## Competition: "My way is the only way."

In contrast to "avoidance," a competitive style wants to win at any cost with the competitive style. Strategies of this style would include controlling, arguing, outsmarting, and contending. One has high concern for self and little to no concern for others. This style may have one seen as demanding or selfish. Making a stance, when needed, may be warranted; however, if this is a common conflict style, others will feel they are being bullied. This is seen as a win-lose approach to conflict. With this approach, one wins- usually at the expense of the other person. This has the loser feeling short-changed or that needs are being ignored.

## Accommodation: "Whatever you want is okay with me."

Strategies to this style include appeasement, agreement, and flattery. Those with accommodation conflict styles have a higher concern for others and less of self. Here, they give into other's needs and demands and sacrifice their own needs. If chronically using this form of conflict management, others may take advantage of this person. Accommodating individuals will feel they are being taken advantage of and never have their own needs fulfilled.

## Collaboration: "Let's solve this problem together!"

With this type of conflict style, individuals come up with a variety of solutions and the one was chosen is one favored by both. Strategies for this style would include gathering information, looking for other options, conversation, and agreeing to disagree. Referring back to the restaurant scenario, in this style, individuals choose a restaurant both accept. For example, Jane and Thomas are going out for lunch. Jane, a semi-vegetarian, wants seafood and Thomas, a die hard red meat eater, is craving steak. To collaborate, the two throw out other options and decide to go to an Italian restaurant, instead. Both love Italian food and are happy to give up their initial choice. This win-win approach makes both feel a balanced solution was reached for both sides to feel satisfied.

## Compromise: "Meet me in the middle."

Strategies for this style of conflict include reducing expectations, negotiating, a little something for all involved. Compromise is keeping others and ones' own needs into consideration. This may have you give up what you want today- in exchange for another day. Each works for success and happiness. This type is great if used over time and works well with long-term relationships. A good example is two friends agreeing to go to the other's choice for lunch and the next time going to the second person's choice. Both get what they want; but, must wait until it is their turn.

### *Small Group Discussion*

Discuss whether you agree or disagree with your assigned conflict style. Were there other styles you were close to? If yes, which ones and discuss how you think the two relate to one another. Are there pieces of the definitions of the strategies you disagree with if so, share why. Also, think back to Susan and how she has different conflict styles in different environments. Why do you think this is?

# 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 does not have to be negative. Conflict is a natural part of life. Conflict can bring a sense of stress, anxiety, frustration, feeling overwhelmed, emotional; however, conflict can also be rewarding, educational, rewarding, collaborative, and foster positive change internally and external relationships. Most often conflicts can be resolved when both parties feel they have “won” and without the need for someone to “lose.”

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, we can 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, a 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 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.

Generally, individuals respond to conflict in one of three ways:

1. **Ignore/Avoid**. Pretending the conflict either does not exist or choosing to not confront the conflict/issue. The concern with ignoring/avoiding is it likely can become an internal conflict creating stress and anxiety. The longer the conflict sits un-addressed, the more frustration, resentment, and anger one build up inside.
2. **Physical/Verbal Altercation**. Addressing the conflict through yelling and screaming, often with name-calling and variations of hate slurs, intimidating and threatening behaviors or baiting one another into a physical altercation. When the conflict becomes physical, both parties can find themselves in trouble with law enforcement and/or the university.
3. **Conflict Resolution**. Addressing the conflict effectively and efficiently using one of the *Conflict Resolution Methods* described below.

## Conflict Resolution Methods

Navigating conflict takes knowing and understanding your conflict style, being aware of your P.I.N. (positions, interests, and needs), and having the ability to articulate those to the person(s) whom you are experiencing conflict with. It is a best practice to seek the assistance of a neutral third party to help you navigate your particular conflict. Schrage and Giacomini define seven methods of conflict resolution. Note, for this section, an administration is defined as the University.

- **Conflict Coaching**. Individuals seek advice and guidance from administration to address a conflict more effectively and independently.
- **Facilitated Dialogue**. Students access administration for facilitation services to engage a conversation to gain understanding or to manage a conflict. In a facilitated dialogue, parties maintain ownership of decisions concerning the conversation and any resolution of a conflict.
- **Mediation**. Students utilize administration to serve as a third party to coordinate a structured session aimed at resolving a conflict and/or construct a “go forward” or future narrative for the parties involved.
- **Restorative Justice Practices**. Through a diversion program or as an addition to the adjudication process, the administration provides a space and facilitation of services for students taking ownership for harmful behavior and those parties affected by the behavior to jointly construct an agreement to restore community.
- **Shuttle Dialogue**. Administration actively negotiates an agreement between two parties that do not wish to directly engage with one another. This method may be an alternative to a formal adjudication (see below) process or part of the process associated with the Code of Student Conduct.
- **Adjudication (Informal and Formal)**. Process organized through the conduct processes, often involving an arbitrator.
- **Social Justice**. Addresses the differences among us such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and etc.; while also valuing cultural differences and learning how to communicate within and across these differences. What separates social justice from diversity and multiculturalism is how social justice explicitly examines the power structures in society related to these differences as these power structures often result in privilege and oppression

# Triggers and Self-monitoring Enhancement

Unfortunately, none of us have Super Hero powers. We are all simply human. We may stumble on triggers that make us more susceptible to managing conflict in a reactive or negative manner. Knowing your triggers can help reduce bad conflict and redirect to simple good conflict. Below are examples of common triggers that make us more vulnerable to poor conflict outcomes.

1. **Lack of sleep**. When functioning on limited sleep, we become more irritable and likely to over-react to situations.
2. **Low blood sugar or lack of food**. Because our blood sugar levels are lower, our bodies are having to work harder to maintain systems.
3. **Too hot/cold temperatures**. Yes, environment plays a major role in our behavior. Some may experience irritable states when they become too warm or cold. This also includes other sensory triggers: too much noise, overwhelming smells, too many people around, etc.
4. **Limited information** or not being able to understand information. Perhaps not understanding the vocabulary being used or the accent of the person makes you uncomfortable and more irritable.
5. **High face-saving**. Some cultures see their public image as very important. If they feel disgraced or embarrassed they may become irate.

Understanding your triggers helps monitor yourself/actions in conflict situations and can enhance your reactions in a positive manner. By **framing** your conflict in a positive direction, knowing when you are emotional, what your triggers are (what sets you off), and seeking out proactive solutions, you can know how to handle conflict.

In conflicts, each person (or group) involved has a PIN: a position, an interest, and a need. PINs often help those working to find a resolution to the conflict because PINs develop into communication channels when determining the similarities and differences between the parties. Being aware of your own PINs and paying attention to the PIN of whom your conflict is with can be helpful.

- **Positions**. What we state we want
- **Interests**. What we really want
- **Needs**. What we must have

## Outstanding Oranges Activity:

Divide into two large groups. Each group will be given additional information and should select one person to represent their offer to Farmer Johnston.

> Farmer Johnston grows and sells oranges. His oranges are the best in the country. Two buyers approach Farmer Johnston and both want to buy the entire crop.
>
> You represent the buyers and your objective is to present a PIN offer that the farmer cannot refuse.

"By understanding the various complexities that surround conflict, we are able to see the individual components for their actual value, rather than the negative feelings and terms that we have previously associated with this fact," (Olshack, 2001).

## Good, Bad, and Neutral Conflict

Research suggests individuals generally pre-select how they will react to conflict situations (Tamir, 2012). This pre-selection was dependent on desired and self- centered outcomes. (Kleiman & Hassin, 2013). With this being said, some individuals may be preparing themselves for poor or negative outcomes. By handling conflict in a logical manner, issues and situations can be good.

**Good conflict***brings underlying issues and problems into focus*. When handled well, conflict can improve relationships and quality of life. Individuals should consider when and where they will bring up conflict issues and if in an emotional state, consider postponing discussion until a later time. This conversation should be objective and not include personal attacks or bias. Suggestions for solutions should be solicited from both sides and include unique or different recommendations for change. These suggestions should be received openly and without bias. Each person should identify the underlying issues for the conflict and determine solutions acceptable to all parties.

**Bad conflict***brings issues to light in a negative manner*. Individuals make personal attacks and are not able to accept responsibility for any part of the conflict. Furthermore, they see conflict as bad and personal. Emotions over run the conflict and solutions for improvement are limited or none existent. With bad conflict, individuals may be quick to judge and run with their emotions.

**Neutral conflict***may postpone or table conflict for an indefinite period of time*. It may also bring in a third party, or arbitrator, to negotiate a solution that is balanced for all. Sometimes, timing is critical to delivering a positive outcome in the conflict. Conflict is seen as positive and brings about change in a balanced manner.

# Strategies for Handling and Preventing Conflict

There are a variety of approaches or styles to managing conflict, especially when emotionally charged, that individuals may use (Blake & Mouton, 1994). Culture, or an individual's upbringing, usually reflects how one manages such conflict (Croucher, Bruno, McGrath, et al, 2012). Knowing how to identify your own conflict styles, needs, and others needs will help you to develop better, more rewarding, outcomes and demonstrate an ethical perspective.

When individuals compete for resources, like competing for a new job or office space, there is a waste of time, money, or attention from others. There may be incompatible or interference in reaching goals (Hocker & Wilmot, 1991). This may be a conflict on where to go to college, what to eat for dinner, using cell phones in class, or too much noise in the dorm. In addition, research shows that those from different cultures, with differing high or low context approaches to communication, may have varied conflict management styles that further add to the management of conflict (Croucher, Bruno, McGrath, et al, 2012).

In addition to context, our social ***norms*** and ***rituals*** may create expectations that may trigger conflict. Norms are expected behaviors we abide by within groups. These may include our dress, interaction with authorities and elders, social roles (feminine/masculine, parent/child, leader/follower), and verbal/nonverbal communication. By being too loud at a restaurant, disclosing too much personal information, or questioning authority, one might trigger conflict.

Rituals, intentional rituals, and natural rituals may also cause conflict. Intentional rituals, like observing a national holiday or attending a religious service, may conflict with someone else's ***standpoint****, an attitude to or outlook on issues, typically arising from one's circumstances or beliefs*. Natural rituals, such as putting dishes in the dishwasher, flushing the toilet after using, and affect the moods and emotions of others (Goffman, 1967).

# Emotions and our Developing Brain

Though often overlooked, when discussing "conflict" extreme reactions of emotional response can be profound and cause individuals who have not learned to manage conflict proactively and productively to react in a destructive manner (Lindner, 2009). The brain is hardwired to react to conflict. This includes emotional processing through six brain structures (amygdala, basal, ganglia, left prefrontal cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, and orbital frontal cortex). It is the last subsystem, orbital frontal, where individuals are able to regulate control over emotions. Delayed biological development, brain injury, and social environmental factors may lead to less favorable management of conflict (Lindner, 2009).

As an adolescence's body develops, the frontal lobe further develops and reasoning draws within the more logical and less emotional responding. The individual is, thus, better able to understand social norms expected for an adult. Learning to proactively manage conflict re-enforces successful conflict management, ethical behavior, or collaboration. Individuals may feel more at peace.

# Behavioral Expectations

Earlier, we discussed Triggers and Self-Monitoring, as well as the PIN Model. Knowing yourself and taking the time to get to know others is a proactive approach to being able to address conflicts as they arise. Communities, teams, staffs, roommates, and classrooms, should create group expectations and goals in order to establish a community or common standard.

Indiana State University has the Sycamore Standard and the Code of Student Conduct. These documents serve as Behavioral Expectations where conflicts can be addressed using the expectations as a guide for resolution.

Conflict management is a uniquely Communication-oriented skill, and it is likely that before this class you had not been exposed to the many ways we can understand and resolve conflict in our relationships. Successfully completing a college degree includes how well you manage conflict with your classmates, teachers, family and friends back home, and many other relationships. As a student at Indiana State University, you are encouraged to draw upon the many resources available to you for help in managing conflict.

It is important to recognize the types of conflicts we encounter on a daily basis, as well as the various strategies or styles for approaching conflict situations. Employers are increasingly seeking applicants who can demonstrate emotional intelligence, which includes an acumen for managing conflict effectively in professional settings. Additionally, it is important to appreciate the positive or generative possibilities of conflict. If you think about out it, some of the best ideas produced by a culture — like the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, or most intimate bonds between family and friends — are forged out of conflict situations. If we commit to conflict management as a life-long learning experience, rather than something to fear, then our personal, professional, and public lives will benefit greatly.

# 2.5 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

Hopefully, you now have a greater understanding of how culture influences communication in a global society. We began with an overview and description of the various aspects of personal identity and how they work together to determine a person's culture. Next, we traced the process of coming to an understanding of one's individual identity through cultural dimensions. Finally, we discussed how conflict is managed in a globally diverse and culturally sensitive world. Indiana State University encourages you to think about the importance of culture when studying in your major.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that you see to support Hofstede's claim that the U.S. is the most individualistic society? Are there ways in which we display attributes of collectivism?
2. Describe a situation in which you attempted to diverge or converge your communication with others? What did you do? What were you attempting to accomplish by doing so? What was the result?
3. What are some examples of representation and symbolic annihilation can you locate and analyze in contemporary texts of popular culture?
4. How is your major impacted by being culturally competent?

### Key Terms

- collectivist/ individualistic
- conflict styles
- conflict
- culture
- co-culture
- culture shock
- ego conflict
- ethnicity

- ethnocentrism
- femininity/ masculinity
- framing
- gender
- high and low context
- indulgence/ restraint
- long-term/ short-term orientation
- nationality
- norms
- PIN Model
- power distance
- pseudo conflict
- race
- racial discrimination
- racial prejudice
- racism
- rituals
- sexual orientation
- simple conflict
- standpoint
- uncertainty avoidance

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# CHAPTER 3: VERBAL COMMUNICATION

# 3.1 Introduction

## Learning Objectives

After reading this module you should be able to:

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

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

Imagi

ne 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.” You can read the full transcript on 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 worldviews, and achieve personal goals (Pelley, 2000).

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.

# 3.2 Defining Verbal Communication

## Defining Verbal Communication

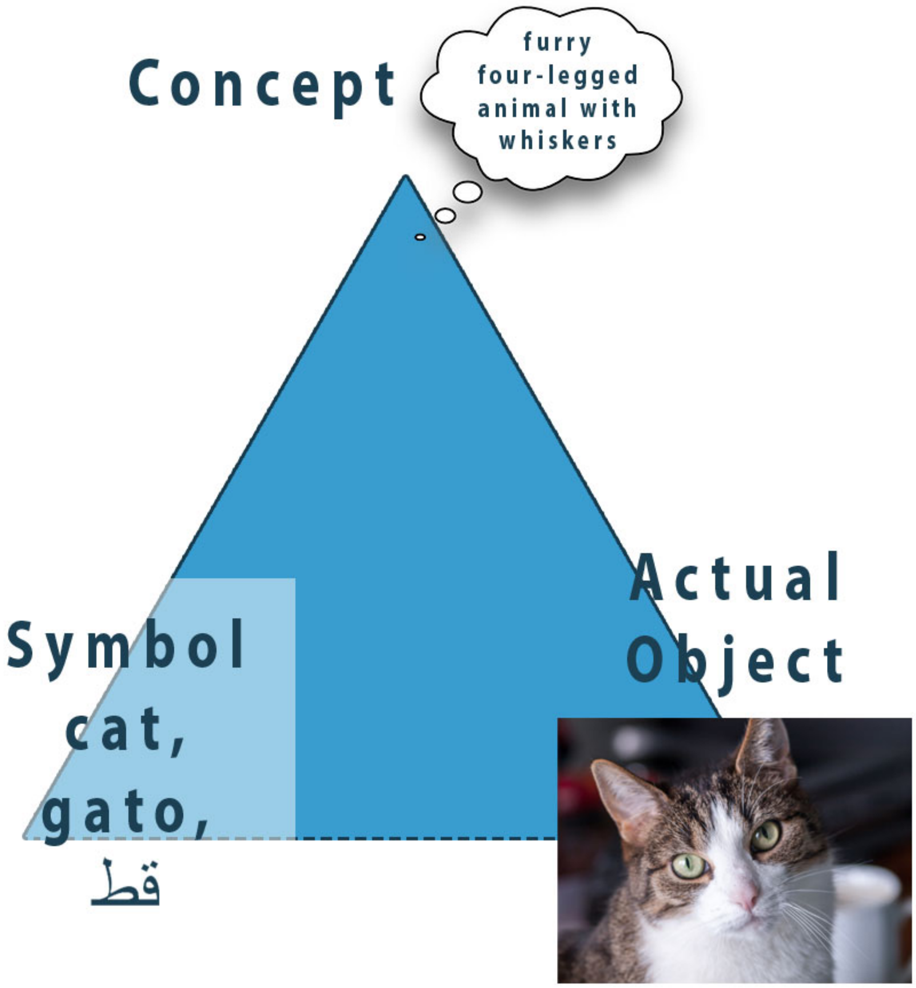
When people ponder the word communication, they often think about the act of talking. We rely on verbal communication to exchange messages with one another and develop as individuals. The term verbal communication often evokes the idea of spoken communication, but written communication is also part of 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

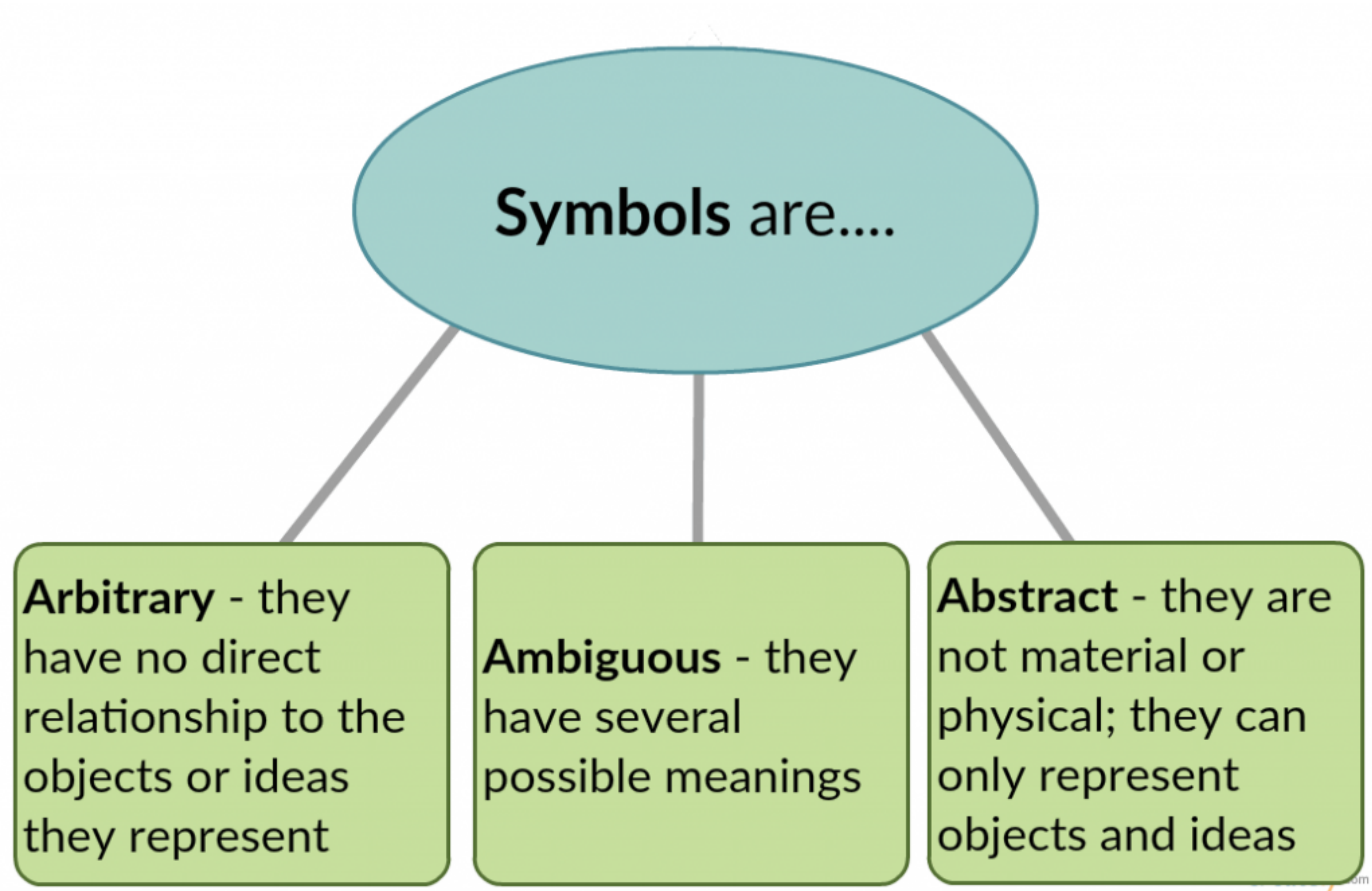
Symbols are arbitrary representations of thoughts, ideas, emotions, objects, or actions used to encode and decode meaning (Nelson & Shaw, 2002). Symbols stand for or represent, something else. For example, there is nothing inherent about calling a cat a cat.




*Ogden & Richard's Triangle of Meaning (1923). Design by H. Rayl, CC-BY 4.0*

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, 1994).




Not only are symbols arbitrary, they are **ambiguous** because *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 jumps 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, 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 summarize, it seems to me
Sounds and letters disagree.

–Based on a poem written by Lord Cromer, *Spectator*, August 9, 1902

- **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.

## 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!

- **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 “home.” The denotative definition of the word is a dwelling or structure/ where you live. However, **connotative meanings**, *the meanings we assign based on our experiences and beliefs*, are quite varied. The connotation is the associated or thoughts and feelings that accompany and define the relationship to the word. For example, again applying the word “home”. This word has many connotations based on your relationship to the word and how you are affected by the use of the word. If asked to explain of “define” what a home is, you may say where your family is or a safe place. These ideas are the connotative expression and not the literal definition of the word. Think about how other words have positive or negative connotations. One consideration is the use of euphemisms in our language. A **euphemism** is a more politically or socially acceptable use of a word. We often use euphemisms to disguise the negative emotions surrounding language in a way that is socially agreed upon. You can think about how poor people may be referred to as “economically disadvantaged” or how “restroom” may be the most polite use of the term in polite or professional conversation.

- **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 or even colleagues at work. **Slang** tends to be more generational and reflects a constantly evolving use of language. Words that are identified as slang are sometimes adapted and added each year to the dictionary due to their necessity in our current culture. Over 500 words have been added to the dictionary to reflect how technology is changing the language. Some examples include “sexting”, “vaping”, and “photobombing”. To see a complete list of new words making it into the dictionary, you can read the article published in WIRED in 2015 (Collins). Others are abandoned for more timely use. Think of how words like “neat” or “cool’ have been replaced by “dope”, “fleak”, or “chill”. Another specialized (often technical) use of language usually deferred to in professional settings or within co-cultures is **jargon**. You may recognize the use of jargon from watching medical dramas on TV or trying to follow along with an IT specialist while you fix your computer.

> Jargon can also be used within skill sets. I'm sure that some of you may identify as "gamers" and you recognize that there is a different language used in this context. 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.

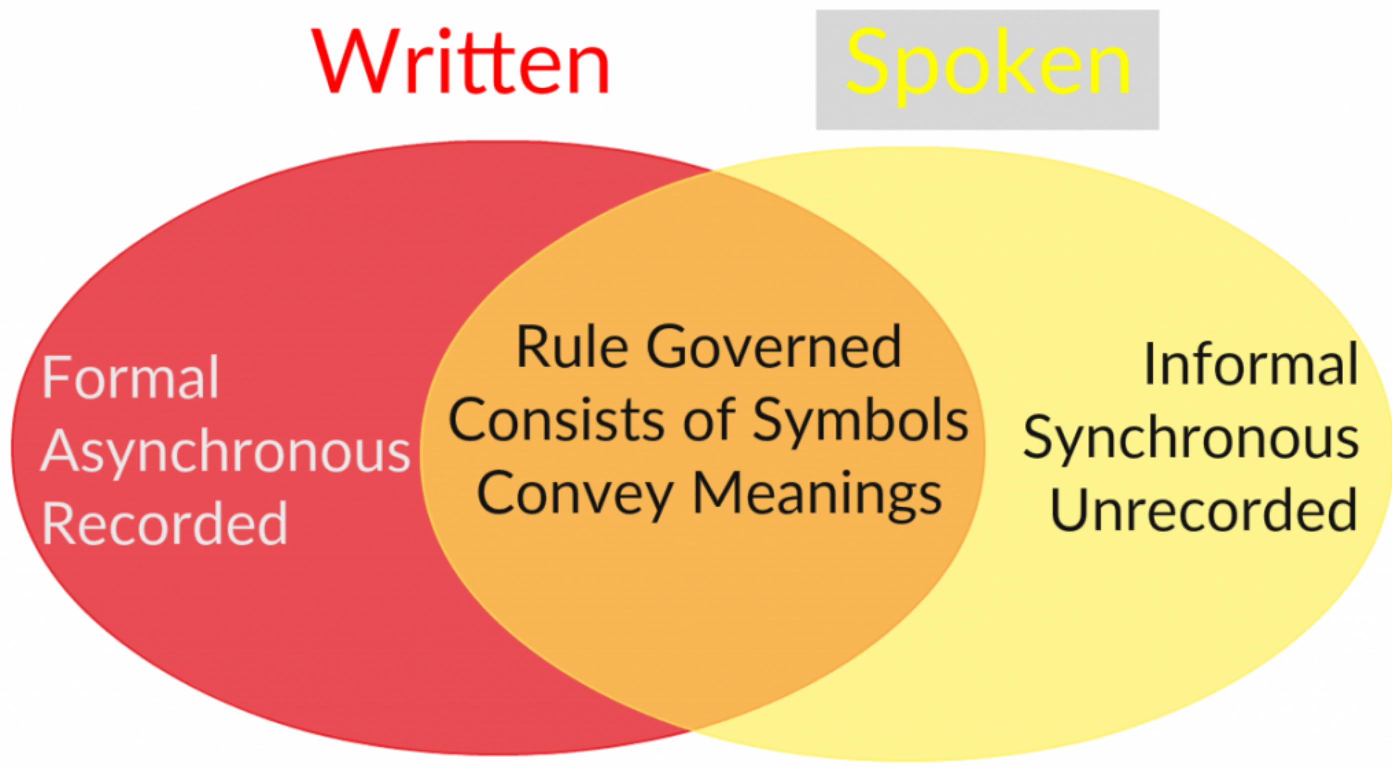
A barrier to understanding language may be the addition of an accent or the use of regionalisms. A **regionalism** is a geographically influenced language use from a particular region. While Americans, British, and Australians all speak English as a language, the differences in accent and region create differences in the way words are pronounced. We can see regionalisms on a smaller scale by looking at how pronunciation changes by region within the United States. You may think about whether you refer to a carbonated drink as "pop", "soda", or a "coke". Are you using a shopping cart or a "buggy"? What other regionalisms can you think of as you have traveled or met people from the northeast, south, or midwest?

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 a 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.

# 3.3 Spoken versus Written Communication: What's the Difference?

## 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 discuss some of their differences. Imagine for a moment that you’re a college student who desperately needs money. Rather than looking for a job you decide that you’re going to ask your parents for the money you need to make it through the end of the semester. Now, you have a few choices for using verbal communication to do this. You might choose to call your parents or talk to them in person. You may take a different approach and write them a letter or send them an email. You can probably identify your own list of pros and cons for each of these approaches. But really, what’s the difference between writing and talking in these situations? Let’s look at four of the major differences between the two: 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.




## 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. Afterward, 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 years 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 (2014), the way two people use utterances and structure their sentences during conversation creates an opportunity to find new meaning in the language and develop "parallelism" which can lead to a natural feeling of liking or sympathy in the conversation partner. Even though it may seem like formal language is valued over informal, this informal language that most of us use when we speak inadvertently contributes to bringing people closer together.

While writing is generally more formal and speech more informal, there are some exceptions, 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 a 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 above. 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 (2014) 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.

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 cataloged 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. 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" to 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.

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

# 3.4 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.

- ***Verbal communication helps us define reality.*** We use verbal communication to define everything from ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people (Blumer, 1969). 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 the world would be like for humans without language. In the 2011 *Scientific American* article, "How Language Shapes Thought", 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 (1920's-30's) developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to explain that language determines thought. People who speak different languages, or use language differently, think differently (Whorf, 1956; Sapir, 1958; Maxwell, 20o4; Perlovsky, 2009; Lucy, 2010; Simpson, 2011; Hussein, 2012). 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.

# 3.5 Summary, Discussion, Questions

SummaryIn this module, 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 our attitudes about the world.

Discussion Questions

1. 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. To what extent do you believe that verbal communication drives thought, or vice versa?

Key Terms

- abstract
- ambiguous
- arbitrary
- asynchronous
- connotative meaning
- denotative meaning
- euphemism
- formal
- informal
- jargon
- phonology
- pragmatics
- regionalism
- rule-governed
- semantics
- slang
- synchronous

- syntactics
- verbal communication

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# CHAPTER 4: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

# 4.1 Introduction

## Learning Objectives

After reading this module you should be able to:

- Define nonverbal communication.
- Explain the main characteristics of nonverbal communication.
- Explain the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Define the eight types of nonverbal communication.
- Describe the functions of nonverbal communication.

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

# 4.2 Defining Nonverbal Communication

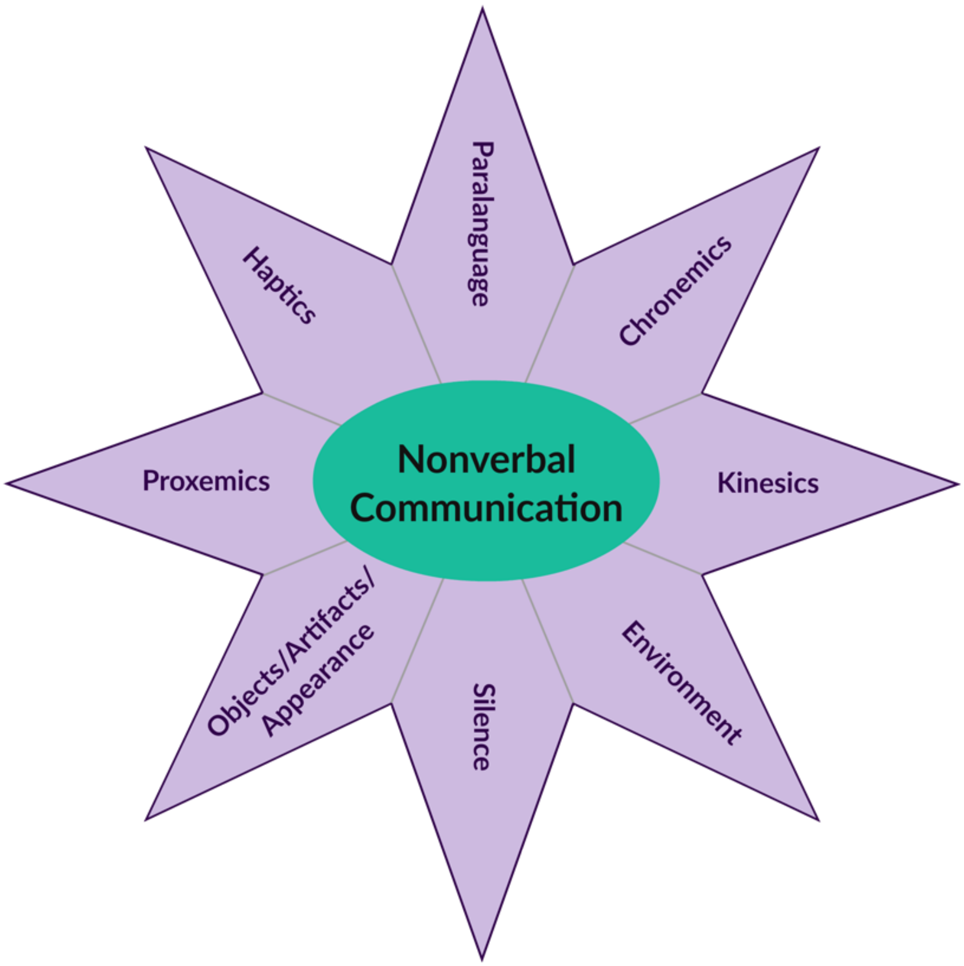
Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall (1996) define nonverbal communication as nonverbal behaviors that are "typically sent with intent, are used with regularity among members of a social community, are typically interpreted as intentional, and have consensually recognized interpretations." This sounds too much like verbal communication, and might best be described as symbolic and systematic nonverbal communication.

Mead (1934) differentiated between what he termed as "gesture" versus "significant symbol," while Buck and VanLear (2002) 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. 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 phone) 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.

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 a rule-governed, shared system of symbols. Rather, nonverbal communication is most often spontaneous, unintentional, and may not follow formalized symbolic rule systems.

# 4.3 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.




*Types of Nonverbal Communication, by Heather Rayl.* CC-BY 4.0

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.

Decoding a single verbal message is difficult due to the arbitrary, abstract, and ambiguous nature of language. However, 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 (1984) found that women are much better than men at accurately interpreting the many nonverbal cues we send and receive (Gore, 2009). How we interpret these nonverbal signals can also be influenced by our gender as the viewer.

***How do you interpret this person's nonverbals?*** *Image from Wikimedia Commons, by Spaynton. CC-BY-SA*

The 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.A digital clock functions similarly to 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.

Now contrast this to an analog clock, that 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.

*How do you interpret this person's nonverbals? Image from Wikimedia Commons, by Spaynton. CC-BY-SA*

The 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. Also, 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 reveal 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.

The fourth difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that some nonverbal communication is universal (Hall, Chia, and Wang, 1996; Tracy & Robins, 2008). 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 use 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! If you travel to different regions of the world, find out what is appropriate.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.

# 4.4 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, 1981). Facial expressions are a primary method of sharing emotions and feelings (Ekman & Friesen, 1967; Scherer, Klaus, & Scherer, 2011). 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., 1993). 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 determine appropriate touch and represent gender constructs.

**Personal Appearance**, **Objects**, and **Artifacts** are types of *nonverbal communication we use to adorn our bodies and surroundings to communicate meaning to others*. Consider your preferences for hairstyle, 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.


*Tattoos, hair style, dress, and makeup are all part of personal appearance. Photo by Michael Dorausch, CC-BY-SA 2.0*

**Proxemics** is *the study of how our use of space influences the ways we relate to others*. Edward Hall (1966) 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 or social situations like a party or concert. 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 the type of relationship the people have: romantic, familial, or friendly.

We use space to regulate our verbal communication and communicate relational and social meanings. It also demonstrates our relational standing with those around us (May, 2000). Proxemics can display both power and status. You can think about how you may determine power and status in the workplace. For example, where is the manager or CEO’s office? What is used to define space? How are these ideas socially constructed? I’m sure that you realize the manager’s office is usually the largest and you may picture it with a view. Power is defined through the space that is occupied, sitting behind a desk or at the head of a conference table. Did you imagine yourself walking into their office? You may have even considered that often you have to go through another person (an assistant) before you can even occupy the space. Thinking about the social constructs, did you think about the ways we divide and assign power using space. So as you think about the manager in their large office, consider those in a "bull pen" or cubicles lining an office space. Go a step further and think about who occupies the basement or ground level floors. What are their power and status? Is it relational to their social status?

## 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.

Our **environment***acts as a nonverbal through our use of perception in the surroundings or conditions we occupy.* 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. Stimuli in your environment can trigger memories and affect your mood, changing or influencing your emotional responses and actions. The environment can produce physiological responses also.

Color theory looks at how colors impact our mood, physical response, and represent cultural dichotomies. 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). The bright colors have also been shown to increase appetite. People and cultures place different emphasis on the use of space as a way to communicate nonverbally. Briggs (2016) for SmarterTravel, provides a more detailed look at color theory in relationship to culture, read "What Colors Mean in Other Cultures".

Sound is another environment nonverbal and has the ability to communicate emotion and change behavior. You may immediately think about how listening to music can change your mood or remind you of personal experiences that create emotional responses. What about studying, working out, or driving, what kind of music do you listen to? It seems silly because we do not think about it but would you try to work out to Mozart or study to Screamo or heavy metal? This is because you recognize that music unconsciously can increase your energy and change your disposition as well as allow for more or less concentration. Have you ever noticed yourself driving faster when a fast song plays in the car? These may be more easily understood but sound also acts to change behavior. Sound has the potential to increase cortisol (a hormone) release in the body that sends you into fight or flight. Think about the last time you heard a fire alarm or a tornado siren, you probably didn't think about it at the time but did your heart jump? Most likely, your heart rate increased. There is an entire market built around sound scapes and how brands communicate a message and get you the consumer to recognize sound and spend more. Here is a Ted Talk by Julian Treasure, a sound consultant that further explains sound and how it affects us cognitively, behaviorally, physiologically, and psychologically (2009).

Olfactics or the study of smell can also send messages nonverbally (consciously and unconsciously). Your sense of smell has similar effects to sound in being able to alter your mood and behaviors through memory and experiences. Studies suggest that mood, sexual attraction, and even your genetic makeup may be linked to smell (Everts, 2012). Other studies have looked at how culturally your tastes in food may be more of a physical response to smell rather than taste (CBS NEWS, 2015). These conscious and unconscious reactions to the environment are affecting how you express yourself and communicate.

**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 (1997) 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

In the U.S., we subscribe to a **monochronic** orientation of time, placing a high value on being on time, and responding more positively to people who are punctual. However, other cultures such as Arab and Latin American countries subscribe to a **polychronic** orientation, viewing time more loosely. Punctuality is not necessarily a goal to achieve. Some cultures are more flexible and believe 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. (Hall, 1959)

| Factor | Monochronic action | Polychronic action |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Actions | do one thing at a time | do many things at once |
| Focus | Concentrate on the job at hand | Are easily distracted |
| Attention to time | Think about when things must be achieved | Think about what will be achieved |
| Priority | Put the job first | Put relationships first |
| Respect for property | Seldom borrow or lend things | Borrow and lend things often and easily |
| Timeliness | Emphasize promptness | base promptness relationship factors |

**Paralanguage or vocalics** is *the term we use to describe vocal qualities such as pitch, volume, inflection, the 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 incongruency 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 incongruency—his paralanguage and facial expression contradict his verbal message. When you use sarcasm, your paralanguage is intended to contradict the verbal message you say.

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 in 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? You can learn more about this movement at their website.

## 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."

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, 1965; Knapp, 1980; Malandro & Barker, 1983).

# 4.5 Functions of Nonverbal Communication

We use verbal communication to express ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people. But what functions does nonverbal communication serve as we communicate (Blumer, 1969)? 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, 2000). 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 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, 2000).

- ***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 areas that Communication scholars study (like nonverbal communication) apply 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). The article 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 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 of which are 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, 1971). 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.

- ***We use nonverbal communication to mislead others.*** We can also use nonverbal communication to deceive or 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, 2000). However, other studies indicate that we are really not very effective at determining deceit in other people (Levine, Feeley & McCornack, 2005) and that we are only accurate 45% to 70% of the time when trying to determine if someone is misleading us (Kalbfleisch, 1992; Burgoon et al., 2004; Horchak, Giger, Pochwatko, 2014). 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, 2004). Even further than this, communication scholars 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.

### 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 indicate relational standing*** (Mehrabian, 1981; Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & deTurck, 1984; Le Poire, Duggan, Shepard, & Burgoon, 2009; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992; Floyd & Erbert, 2003). 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"?

### 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 Burger 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. This article from the *Daily Mail* has more information.

- ***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 a 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 anytime 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. 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.

- ***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, 2005). 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, 2004).

# 4.6 Summary, Discussion, References

## 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.

### Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever communicated with someone outside of your culture? How was their nonverbal communication 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
- monochronic
- nonverbal communication
- paralanguage
- personal appearance
- polychronic
- proxemics
- silence
- unconscious

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# CHAPTER 5: LISTENING

# 5.1 The Importance of Listening

## Learning Objectives

1. Understand the difference between listening and hearing.
2. Identify a variety of listening styles.
3. Explain the challenges to effective listening.
4. Define the stages of listening.
5. Identify steps to improve critical listening.

"Are you listening to me?" This question is often asked because the speaker thinks the listener is nodding off or daydreaming. We sometimes think that listening means we only have to sit back, stay barely awake, and let a speaker's words wash over us. While many Americans look upon being active as something to admire, to engage in, and to excel at, listening is often understood as a "passive" activity. More recently, *O, the Oprah Magazine (2006)*, featured a cover article with the title, "How to Talk So People Really Listen: Four Ways to Make Yourself Heard." This title leads us to expect a list of ways to leave the listening to others and insist that they do so, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: "You can't go wrong by showing interest in what other people say and making them feel important. In other words, the better you listen, the more you'll be listened to."

You may have heard the adage, "We have two ears but only one mouth"—an easy way to remember that listening can be twice as important as talking.

As a student, you most likely spend many hours in a classroom doing a large amount of focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communicate in other areas of your life. As a result, your listening skills may not be all they could be. In this chapter, we will examine listening versus hearing, listening styles, listening difficulties or barriers, listening stages, and listening critically.

# 5.2 Listening vs. Hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sound most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. At its best, l**istening** *is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker*. We do not always listen at our best. Later in this chapter, we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

## Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before the invention of writing, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Myths, legends, folktales, and stories for entertainment survived only because audiences were eager to listen. Nowadays, however, you can gain information and entertainment through reading and electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If you become distracted and let your attention wander, you can go back and replay a recording. Despite that fact, you can still gain at least four compelling benefits by becoming more active and competent at real-time listening.

## You Become a Better Student

When you focus on the material presented in a classroom, you will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. You will take better notes, and you will more accurately remember the instructor’s claims, information, and conclusions. Many times, instructors give verbal cues about what information is important, specific expectations about assignments, and even what material is likely to be on an exam, so careful listening can be beneficial.

## You Become a Better Friend

When you give your best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see you as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when you give your attention only and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

## People Will Perceive You as Intelligent and Perceptive

When you listen well to others, you reveal yourself as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, your ability to understand the meanings of what you hear will make you a more knowledgeable and thoughtful person.

## Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking

When you listen well to others, you start to pick up more on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, you have the ability to analyze what you think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help you transform your speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give you ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in your presentation.

### Exercises

1. With a partner, discuss how you find out when you haven't been listening carefully.
2. What are some of the consequences of poor listening?

# 5.3 Listening Styles

If listening were easy, and if all people went about it in the same way, the task for a public speaker would be much easier. Even Aristotle, as long ago as 325 BC, recognized that listeners in his audience were varied in listening style. He differentiated them as follows:

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. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers.

Thus Aristotle classified listeners into those who would be using the speech to make decisions about past events, those who would make decisions affecting the future, and those who would evaluate the speaker's skills. This is all the more remarkable when we consider that Aristotle's audiences were composed exclusively of male citizens of one city-state, all prosperous property owners.

Our audiences today are likely to be much more heterogeneous. Think about the classroom audience that will listen to your speeches in this course. Your classmates come from many religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them may speak English as a second language. Some might be survivors of war-torn parts of the world such as Bosnia, Darfur, or northwest China. Being mindful of such differences will help you prepare a speech in which you minimize the potential for misunderstanding.

Part of the potential for misunderstanding is the difference in listening styles. In an article in the *International Journal of Listening*, Watson, Barker, and Weaver identified four listening styles: people, action, content, and time (1995).

## People

The people-oriented listener is interested in the speaker. People-oriented listeners listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message. For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to an interview with a famous rap artist, they are likely to be more curious about the artist as an individual than about music, even though the people-oriented listener might also appreciate the artist's work. If you are a people-oriented listener, you might have certain questions you hope will be answered, such as: Does the artist feel successful? What's it like to be famous? What kind of educational background does he or she have? In the same way, if we're listening to a doctor who responded to the earthquake crisis in Haiti, we might be more interested in the doctor as a person than in the state of affairs for Haitians. Why did he or she go to Haiti? How did he or she get away from his or her normal practice and patients? How many lives were saved? We might be less interested in the equally important and urgent needs for food, shelter, and sanitation following the earthquake.

The people-oriented listener is likely to be more attentive to the speaker than to the message. If you tend to be such a listener, understand that the message is about what is important to the speaker.

## Action

Action-oriented listeners are primarily interested in finding out what the speaker wants. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else? It’s sometimes difficult for an action-oriented speaker to listen to the descriptions, evidence, and explanations with which a speaker builds his or her case.

Action-oriented listening is sometimes called task-oriented listening. In it, the listener seeks a clear message about what needs to be done and might have less patience for listening to the reasons behind the task. This can be especially true if the reasons are complicated. For example, when you’re a passenger on an airplane waiting to push back from the gate, a flight attendant delivers a brief speech called the pre-flight safety briefing. The flight attendant does not read the findings of a safety study or the regulations about seat belts. The flight attendant doesn’t explain that the content of his or her speech is actually mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Instead, the attendant says only to buckle up so we can leave. An action-oriented listener finds “buckling up” a more compelling message than a message about the underlying reasons.

## Content

Content-oriented listeners are interested in the message itself, whether it makes sense, what it means, and whether it’s accurate. When you give a speech, many members of your classroom audience will be content-oriented listeners who will be interested in learning from you. You, therefore have an obligation to represent the truth in the fullest way you can. You can emphasize an idea, but if you exaggerate, you could lose credibility in the minds of your content-oriented audience. You can advocate ideas that are important to you, but if you omit important limitations, you are withholding part of the truth and could leave your audience with an inaccurate view.

Imagine you’re delivering a speech on the plight of orphans in Africa. If you just talk about the fact that there are over forty-five million orphans in Africa but don’t explain further, you’ll sound like an infomercial. In such an instance, your audience's response is likely to be less enthusiastic than you might want. Instead, content-oriented listeners want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.

## Time

People using a time-oriented listening style prefer a message that gets to the point quickly. Time-oriented listeners can become impatient with slow delivery or lengthy explanations. This kind of listener may be receptive for only a brief amount of time and may become rude or even hostile if the speaker expects a longer focus of attention. Time-oriented listeners convey their impatience through eye rolling, shifting about in their seats, checking their cell phones, and other inappropriate behaviors. If you've been asked to speak to a group of middle-school students, you need to realize that their attention spans are simply not as long as those of college students. This is an important reason speeches to young audiences must be shorter or broken up by more variety than speeches to adults.

In your professional future, some of your audience members will have real time constraints, not merely perceived ones. Imagine that you've been asked to deliver a speech on a new project to the board of directors of a local corporation. Chances are the people on the board of directors are all pressed for time. If your speech is long and filled with overly detailed information, time-oriented listeners will simply start to tune you out as you're speaking. Obviously, if time-oriented listeners start tuning you out, they will not be listening to your message. This is not the same thing as being a time-oriented listener who might be less interested in the message content than in its length.

## Identifying Your Listening Style

It is important that you realize that your listening style is relational and situational. For example, if you are in a deeply committed relationship, you may be more people-oriented in your listening because you are invested in the other person's feelings and well-being more so than the person that bags your groceries or takes your order at a restaurant. The situational context requires you to focus more on action, content, or time. In the workplace, you will respond with an action orientation and may think of your assignment as a to-do list. In an emergency, you are aware more of time and may not be as worried about the emotional feelings of the person involved but their safety. And in a final review session, you may be much more content focused while normally in class you might focus on what the professor is wearing or what the person next to you is eating. All of these examples represent the way listening styles can shift. You can think of your own listening style as fluid- but you probably recognize the one you tend to be most of the time. Would it surprise you to know that your gender may also play a part in your listening style? Males are generally action-oriented listeners, whereas women are generally more people-oriented listeners (Barker & Watson, 2000). It is key to remember that your listening preference does not equate to your ability and that you want to be able to adapt and apply different listening styles at different times.

## Exercises

1. In a small group, discuss what each person's usual listening style is. Under what circumstances might you practice a different listening style?
2. Make a list of benefits and drawbacks to each of the listening styles discussed in this section.
3. As you prepare for your next speech, identify ways that you can adapt your message to each of the listening styles noted in this section.

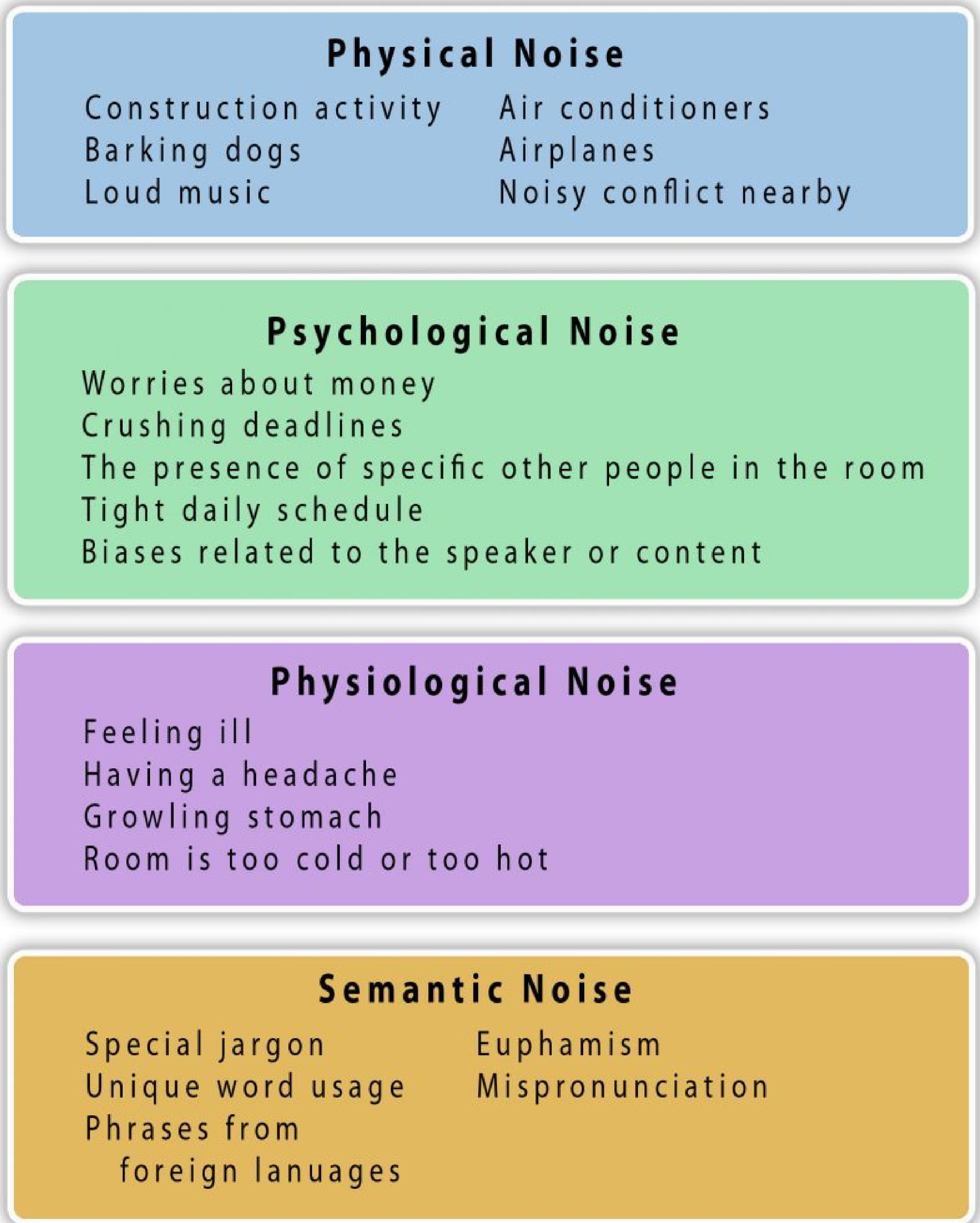
# 5.4 Why Listening Is Difficult

## Why Listening Is Difficult

At times, everyone has difficulty staying completely focused during a lengthy presentation. We can sometimes have difficulty listening to even relatively brief messages. Some of the factors that interfere with good listening might exist beyond our control, but others are manageable. It's helpful to be aware of these factors so that they interfere as little as possible with understanding the message.

## Noise

Noise is one of the biggest factors to interfere with listening; it can be defined as anything that interferes with your ability to attend to and understand a message. There are many kinds of noise, but we will focus on only the four you are most likely to encounter in public speaking situations: physical noise, psychological noise, physiological noise, and semantic noise.


Physical Noise
Construction activity
Barking dogs
Loud music
Air conditioners
Airplanes
Noisy conflict nearby
Psychological Noise
Worries about money
Crushing deadlines
The presence of specific other people in the room
Tight daily schedule
Biases related to the speaker or content
Physiological Noise
Feeling ill
Having a headache
Growling stomach
Room is too cold or too hot
Semantic Noise
Special jargon
Unique word usage
Phrases from foreign lanuages
Euphamism
Mispronunciation

# Physical Noise

Physical noise consists of various sounds in an environment that interfere with a source's ability to hear. Construction noises right outside a window, planes flying directly overhead, or loud music in the next room can make it difficult to hear the message being presented by a speaker even if a microphone is being used. It is sometimes possible to manage the context to reduce the noise. Closing a window might be helpful. Asking the people in the next room to turn their music down might be possible. Changing to a new location is more difficult, as it involves finding a new location and having everyone get there.

# Psychological Noise

Psychological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a receiver's internal thoughts. For example, if you are preoccupied with personal problems, it is difficult to give your full attention to understanding the meanings of a message. The presence of another person to whom you feel attracted, or perhaps a person you dislike intensely, can also be psycho-social noise that draws your attention away from the message.

# Physiological Noise

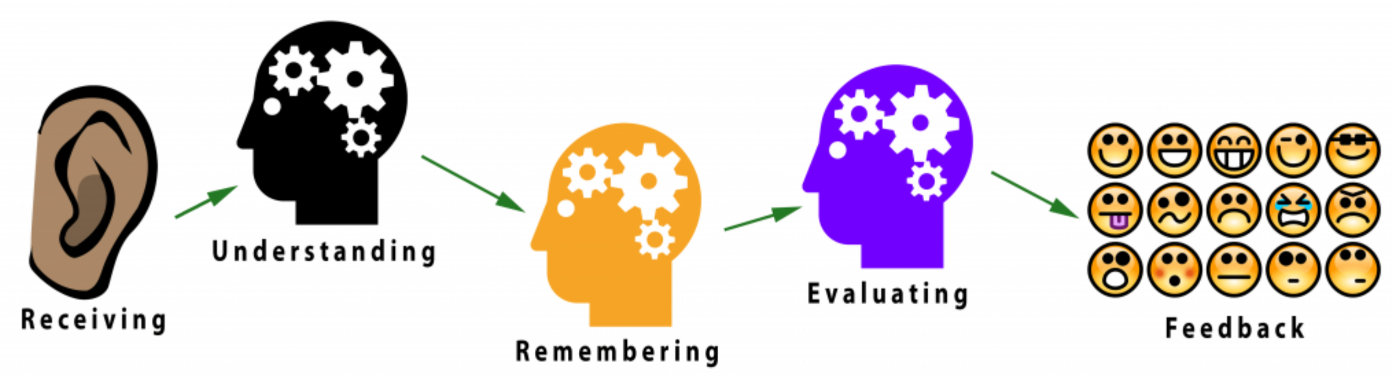
Physiological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a listener's own body. Maybe you're listening to a speech in class around noon and you haven't eaten anything. Your stomach may be growling and your desk is starting to look tasty. Maybe the room is cold and you're thinking more about how to keep warm than about what the speaker is saying. In either case, your body can distract you from attending to the information being presented.

# Semantic Noise

Semantic noise occurs when a receiver experiences confusion over the meaning of a source's word choice. While you are attempting to understand a particular word or phrase, the speaker continues to present the message. While you are struggling with a word interpretation, you are distracted from listening to the rest of the message. An example of semantic noise is a euphemism. Euphemism is diplomatic language used for delivering unpleasant information. For instance, if someone is said to be "flexible with the truth," it might take us a moment to understand that the speaker means this person sometimes lies.

Many distractions are the fault of neither the listener nor the speaker. However, when you are the speaker, being aware of these sources of noise can help you reduce some of the noise that interferes with your audience’s ability to understand you.

# 5.5 Stages of Listening and Ineffective Listening Behaviors




As you read earlier, there are many factors that can interfere with listening, so you need to be able to manage a number of mental tasks at the same time in order to be a successful listener. Author Joseph DeVito has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding (2000).

## Stage 1: Receiving

Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. There are many reasons that we may not receive a message. We often refer to these as listening barriers. If we have barriers to our listening, it is important to be able to recognize them and avoid those behaviors that contribute to poor listening.

## Stage 2: Understanding

In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy. For one thing, if a speaker does not enunciate clearly, it may be difficult to tell what the message was—did your friend say, "I think she'll be late for class," or "my teacher delayed the class"?

Even when we have understood the words in a message, because of the differences in our backgrounds and experience, we sometimes make the mistake of attaching our own meanings to the words of others.

For example, say you have made plans with your friends to meet at a certain movie theater, but you arrive and nobody else shows up. Eventually, you find out that your friends are at a different theater all the way across town where the same movie is playing. Everyone else understood that the meeting place was the "west side" location, but you wrongly understood it as the "east side" location and therefore missed out on part of the fun.

The consequences of ineffective listening in a classroom can be much worse. When your professor advises students to get an "early start" on your speech, he or she probably hopes that you will begin your research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and outlining the speech as soon as possible. However, students in your class might misunderstand the instructor's meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself. Another student might instead think that to start early is to start on the Friday before the Monday due date instead of Sunday night.

So much of the way we understand others is influenced by our own perceptions and experiences. Therefore, at the understanding stage of listening, we should be on the lookout for places where our perceptions might differ from those of the speaker.

## Stage 3: Remembering

Remembering begins with listening; if you can't remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively. The most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it wasn't really learned in the first place. However, even when you are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills. Moreover, if something distracts your attention even for a moment, you could miss out on information that explains other new concepts you hear when you begin to listen fully again.

It's also important to know that you can improve your memory of a message by processing it meaningfully—that is, by applying it in ways that are meaningful to you. Instead of simply repeating a new acquaintance's name over and over, for example, you might remember it by associating it with something in your own life. "Emily," you might say, "reminds me of the Emily I knew in middle school," or "Mr. Impiari's name reminds me of the Impala my father drives."

Finally, if understanding has been inaccurate, recollection of the message will also be inaccurate.

# Stage 4: Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating or judging the value of the message. We might be thinking, “This makes sense” or, conversely, “This is very odd.” Because everyone embodies biases and perspectives learned from widely diverse sets of life experiences, evaluations of the same message can vary widely from one listener to another. Even the most open-minded listeners will have opinions of a speaker, and those opinions will influence how the message is evaluated. People are more likely to evaluate a message positively if the speaker speaks clearly, presents ideas logically, and gives reasons to support the points made.

Unfortunately, personal opinions sometimes result in prejudiced evaluations. Imagine you’re listening to a speech given by someone from another country and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. You may have a hard time simply making out the speaker’s message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others find it annoying or even take it as a sign of ignorance. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If you mistrust a speaker because of an accent, you could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead to focus on the speaker’s meanings.

# Stage 5: Responding

Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process. It’s the stage at which you indicate your involvement.

Almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if at the end of the class you stay behind to finish a sentence in your notes or approach the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over.

## Formative Feedback

Not all response occurs at the end of the message. Formative feedback is a natural part of the ongoing transaction between a speaker and a listener. As the speaker delivers the message, a listener signals his or her involvement with focused attention, note-taking, nodding, and other behaviors that indicate understanding or failure to understand the message. These signals are important to the speaker, who is interested in whether the message is clear and accepted or whether the content of the message is meeting the resistance of preconceived ideas. Speakers can use this feedback to decide whether additional examples, support materials, or explanation is needed.

## Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When you attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker you admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways of indicating your appreciation for or your disagreement with the messages or the speakers at the end of the message. Maybe you'll stand up and applaud a speaker you agreed with or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker you didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade you to donate to a charity, so if the speaker passes a bucket and you make a donation, you are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen most carefully to the messages of speakers we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes about the speaker. If your feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," you might be indicating that you did not listen carefully to the content of the message.

There is little doubt that by now, you are beginning to understand the complexity of listening and the great potential for errors. By becoming aware of what is involved with active listening and where difficulties might lie, you can prepare yourself both as a listener and as a speaker to minimize listening errors with your own public speeches.

# Ineffective Listening Behaviors

At times, the barriers to effective listening (i.e., why listening is difficult) cause us to engage in ineffective listening behaviors. When our goal is to create shared meaning with others, these behaviors interrupt this process.

**Pseudolistening**– pretending *to listen and appears attentive but is not listening to understand or interpret the information* (listeners may respond with a smile, head-nod, or even a minimal verbal acknowledgment but are ignoring or not attending).

**Selective Listening**– *selecting only the information that the listeners* identify *as relevant to their own needs or interests* (listeners may have their own agenda and disregard topics if they do not align with their current attitudes or beliefs).

**Insulated Listening**– *ignoring or avoiding information or certain topics of* conversation (the opposite of selective listening).

**Defensive Listening**– *taking innocent comments as personal attacks* (listeners misinterpret or project feelings of insecurity, jealousy, and guilt, or lack of confidence in the other person).

**Insensitive Listening**– *listening to information for its literal meaning and disregarding the other person's feeling and emotions* (listeners rarely pick-up on hidden meanings or subtle nonverbal cues and have difficulty expressing sympathy and empathy).

**Stage Hogging**– *listening to express one's own ideas or interests and be the center of attention* (listeners often plan what they are going to say or interrupt while the other person is talking).

**Ambushing**– *careful and attentive listening to collect information that can be used against the other person as an attack* (listeners question, contradict, or oppose the other person to trap them or use their own words against them).

**Multitasking**– *listening without full attention while attempting to complete more than one task at a time* (listeners are actually "switch tasking" and your brain is switching from one task to another rapidly and the information is lost). Review the article from the NPR broadcast, "Think You're Multitasking? Think Again" (Hamilton, 2008).

# 5.6 Listening Critically and Ethically

As a student, you are exposed to many kinds of messages. You receive messages conveying academic information, institutional rules, instructions, and warnings; you also receive messages through political discourse, advertisements, gossip, jokes, song lyrics, text messages, invitations, web links, and all manners of communication. You know it's not all the same, but it isn't always clear how to separate the truth from the messages that are misleading or even blatantly false. Nor is it always clear which messages are intended to help the listener and which ones are merely self-serving for the speaker. Part of being a good listener is to learn when to use caution in evaluating the messages we hear.

Critical listening in this context means using careful thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence.

Critical listening can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge. Problems occur when messages are repeated to others who have not yet developed the skills to discern the difference between a valid message and a mistaken one. Critical listening can be particularly difficult when the message is complex. Unfortunately, some speakers may make their messages intentionally complex to avoid critical scrutiny. For example, a city treasurer giving a budget presentation might use very large words and technical jargon, which make it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and ask probing questions.

## Improve Critical Listening

Critical listening is first and foremost a skill that can be learned and improved. Recognizing the Difference between Facts and Opinions Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is credited with saying, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts." Part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts, and this works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message or a message based on opinion, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and facts as they listen to messages.

In American politics, the issue of health care reform is heavily laden with both opinions and facts, and it is extremely difficult to sort some of them out. A clash of fact versus opinion happened on September 9, 2010, during President Obama's nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress outlining his health care reform plan. In this speech, President Obama responded to several rumors about the plan, including the claim "that our reform effort will insure illegal immigrants. This, too, is false—the reforms I'm proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally." At this point, one congressman yelled out, “You lie!” Clearly, this congressman did not have a very high opinion of either the health care reform plan or the president. However, when the nonpartisan watch group Factcheck.org examined the language of the proposed bill, they found that it had a section titled “No Federal Payment for Undocumented Aliens.”

Often when people have a negative opinion about a topic, they are unwilling to accept facts. Instead, they question all aspects of the speech and have a negative predisposition toward both the speech and the speaker. This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of the greatest speeches in history include personal opinions. Consider, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech, in which he expressed his personal wish for the future of American society. Critical listeners may agree or disagree with a speaker’s opinions, but the point is that they know when a message they are hearing is based on opinion and when it is factual.

## Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about what evidence does and does not mean. Assumptions are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate. When listening to a public speech, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact. For example, suppose you’re listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how people who are overweight are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can’t lose weight. You may think to yourself, what about genetics?

By listening critically, you will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions, which may prompt you to question the speaker if questions are taken or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker’s assumptions. If, however, you sit passively by and let the speaker’s assumptions go unchallenged, you may find yourself persuaded by information that is not factual. When you listen critically, you might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. You shouldn’t accept that information unconditionally.

## Facts vs. Assumptions

Facts are verified by clear, unambiguous evidence. Assumptions are not supported by evidence.

Human progress has been possible, sometimes against great odds, because of the mental curiosity and discernment of a few people. In the late 1700’s when the technique of vaccination to prevent smallpox was introduced, it was opposed by both medical professionals and everyday citizens who staged public protests. More than two centuries later, vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and other infectious diseases have saved countless lives, yet popular opposition continues. Listeners should always be open to new ideas. We are not suggesting that you have to agree with every idea that you are faced with in life; rather, we are suggesting that you at least listen to the message and then evaluate the message.

## Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. You already know that it's nearly impossible to write down everything a speaker says. In fact, in your attempt to record everything, you might fall behind and wish you had divided your attention differently between writing and listening. Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the meanings of the message. However much you might concentrate on the notes, you could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as "not," and undermine the reliability of your otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if you give the same care and attention to listening, you are less likely to make that kind of a mistake.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and taking good notes. Many people struggle with this balance for a long time. For example, if you try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, you might find that you can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. At the opposite end, extensive note-taking can result in a loss of emphasis on the most important ideas.

To increase your critical listening skills, continue developing your ability to identify the central issues in messages so that you can take accurate notes that represent the meanings intended by the speaker.

## Listening Ethically

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. We should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak. We should be facing the speaker with our eyes open. We should not be checking our cell phones. We should avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message. Scholars Stephanie Coopman and James Lull emphasize the creation of a climate of caring and mutual understanding, observing that "respecting others' perspectives is one hallmark of the effective listener." Respect, or unconditional positive regard for others, means that you treat others with consideration and decency whether you agree with them or not. Professors Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary (2012) also urge us to treat the speaker with respect even when we disagree, don't understand the message, or find a conversation boring. This doesn't mean we must accept everything we hear;

however, ethically we should refrain from trivializing each others' concerns. We have all had the painful experience of being ignored or misunderstood. This is how we know that one of the greatest gifts one human can give to another is listening.

# Communication Code of Ethics

In 1999, the National Communication Association officially adopted the Credo for Ethical Communication. Ultimately, the NCA Credo for Ethical Communication is a set of beliefs communication scholars have about the ethics of human communication.

## National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication

Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate. Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others. We believe that unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live. Therefore we, the members of the National Communication Association, endorse and are committed to practicing the following principles of ethical communication:

- We advocate truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
- We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.
- We strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
- We promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to fulfill human potential and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and society.
- We promote communication climates of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of individual communicators.
- We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also

respecting privacy and confidentiality.

- We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences of our own communication and expect the same of others.

# 5.7 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

Prior to this chapter, you may not have thought of listening as a skill or even something that we can improve upon. Hopefully, you now have a deeper understanding of the role that effective listening plays in our professional, personal and even public lives. Listening is an intentional act that requires effort on our part and respect for others. It is also beneficial for us to understand others' listening styles so that we can be more effective in how we speak with or address them. Listening critically requires us to suspend our judgment of others or others' ideas and understand their point of view before coming to our own conclusions. Indeed, listening is an inherently ethical act in which we recognize and acknowledge one another.

### Discussion Questions

1. How does listening behavior affect the quality of our personal relationships? If someone that you are in a relationship with changes the way they listen to you, how might that affect the relationship in a positive way?
2. After reading this chapter, in what ways will you consider improving your own listening behaviors?
3. In what ways does critical listening impact our professional relationships?

### Key Terms

- ambushing
- critical listening
- defensive listening
- ethical listening
- insulated listening
- listening vs. hearing
- listening styles
- multitasking
- insensitive listening
- physical noise
- psychological noise
- physiological noise
- pseudolistening

- selective listening
- semantic noise
- stage hogging

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# CHAPTER 6: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

# 6.1 Introduction

## 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 different types of relationships.

Think about your relationships in the last few years. You may have just transitioned from high school to Indiana State 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 a 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 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. We often engage in interpersonal communication in a **dyad**, 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 are 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. But before we go into detail about specific interpersonal relationships, let's examine two important aspects of interpersonal communication: self-disclosure and climate.

# 6.2 Self Disclosure & Climate

## Self Disclosure

### Interpersonal Communication Now: Melanie Booth and Self-disclosure in the Classroom

One emerging area of interest is the area of interpersonal communication is self-disclosure in a classroom setting and the challenges that teachers face dealing with personal boundaries. Melanie Booth (2012) 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."

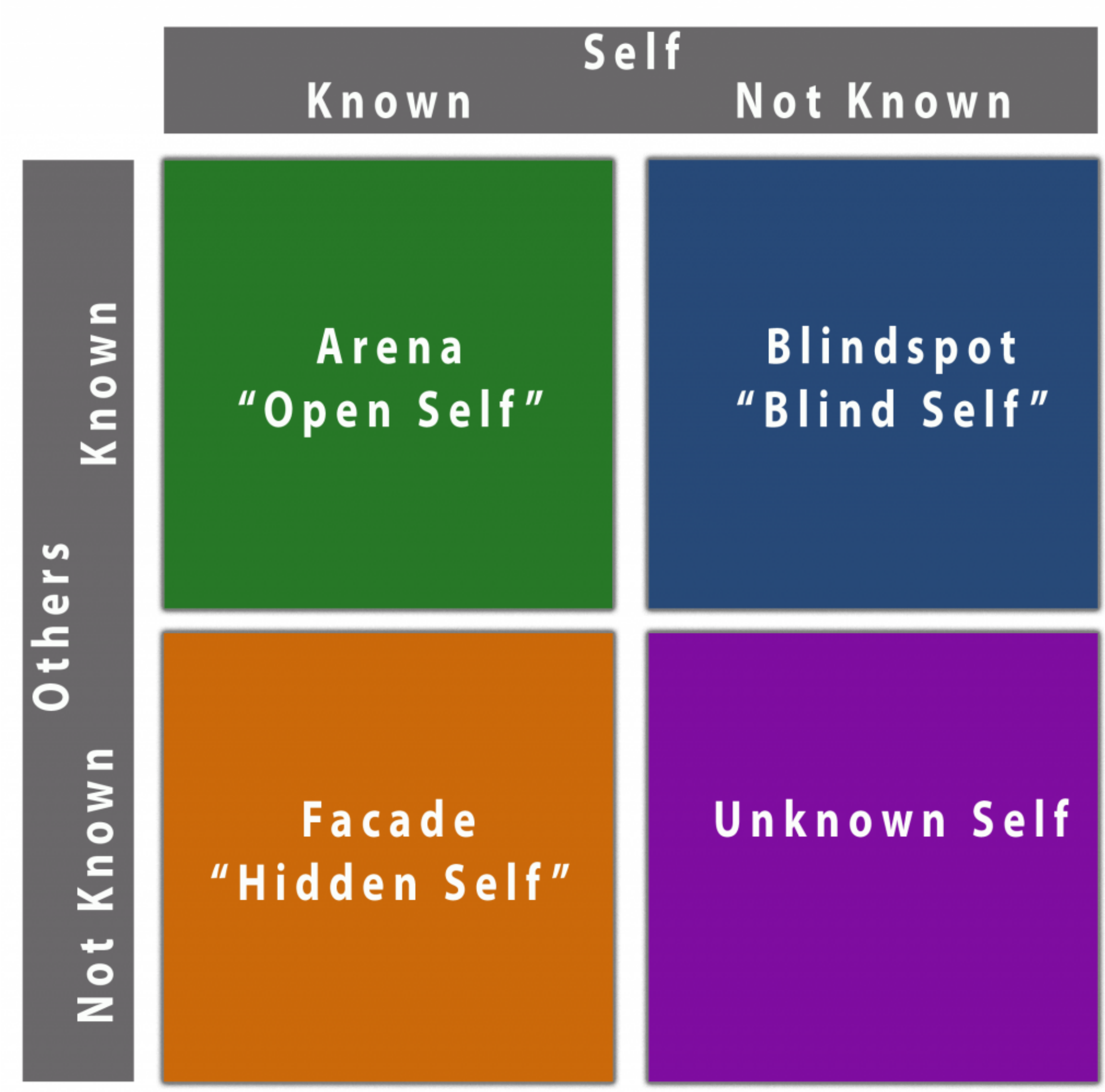
Because interpersonal communication is the primary means by which we get to know others as unique individuals, it is important to understand the role of self-disclosure. **Self-disclosure** is the *process of revealing information about yourself to others that are not readily known by them*—you have to disclose it. In face-to-face interactions, telling someone information that can be easily perceived by you from your appearance is not considered self-disclosing. 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.

# Social Penetration Theory

According to the **social-penetration theory**, there are *degrees of self-disclosure in breadth and depth*, ranging from relatively safe (revealing your hobbies or musical preferences), to more personal topics (illuminating fears, dreams for the future, or fantasies). Altman and Taylor (1973) first described the process of self-disclosure as peeling back the layers of an onion. 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.

# Johari Window

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 (1955). The **Johari Window** is a *model to illustrate self-awareness by better understanding the relationship* between *yourself and others*. The window is divided into four quadrants: the arena, the blind spot, the facade, and the unknown.

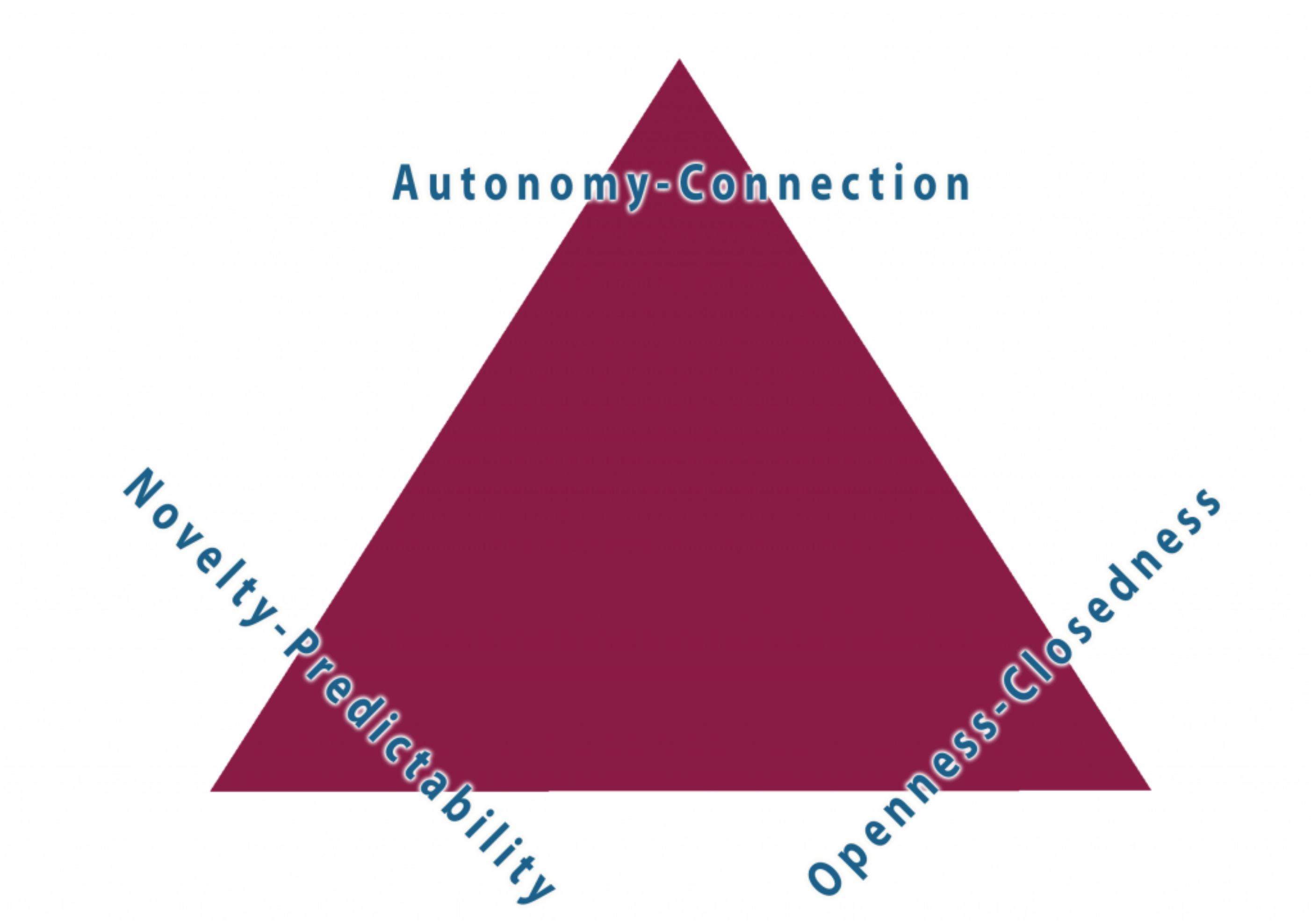



*Johari square*

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.

## Relational Dialectics

One way we can better understand our personal relationships is by understanding the notion of **relational dialectics**, *or the contradictions in relationships that cause tension*. Baxter (1988) 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.



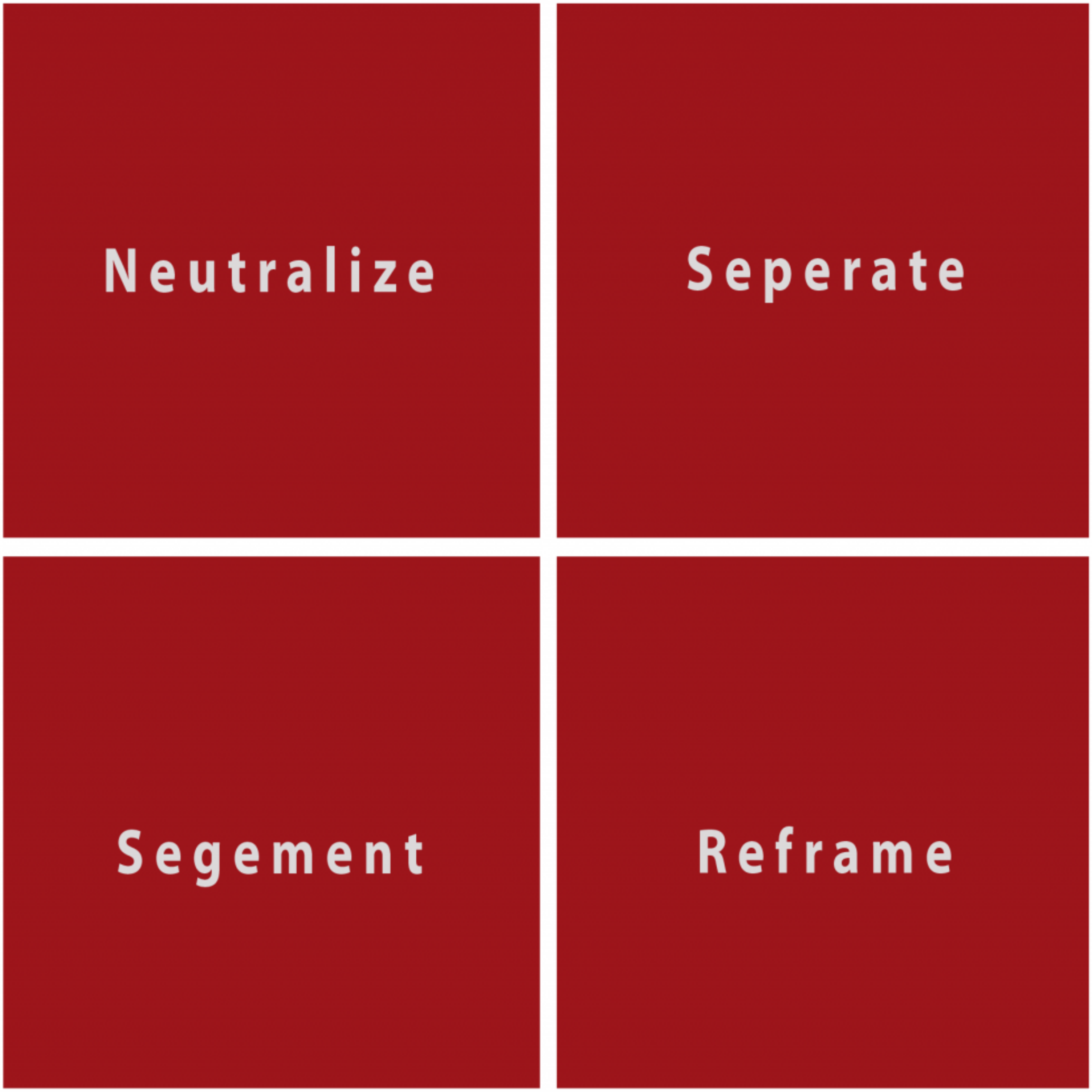

- **Autonomy-Connection** refers to our *need to have a close connection with others as well as our need to have our own space and identity*. We may miss our romantic partner when they are away but simultaneously enjoy and cherish that alone time. When you first enter a romantic relationship, you probably 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 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.

## 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.




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 relationship in which each person commutes to work 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, 1988). 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.

# Communication Climate

Do you feel organized or confined in a clean work-space? 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, 1999). 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.

### Interpersonal Communication Now:
### "Sticks and Stones Can Break my Bones But Words Can Hurt Me Too"

In a study published in the journal Science, researchers reported that the sickening feeling we get when we are socially rejected (being ignored at a party or passed over when picking teams) is real. When researchers measured brain responses to social stress they found a pattern similar to what occurs in the brain when our body experiences physical pain. Specifically, "the area affected is the anterior cingulate 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." (Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005)

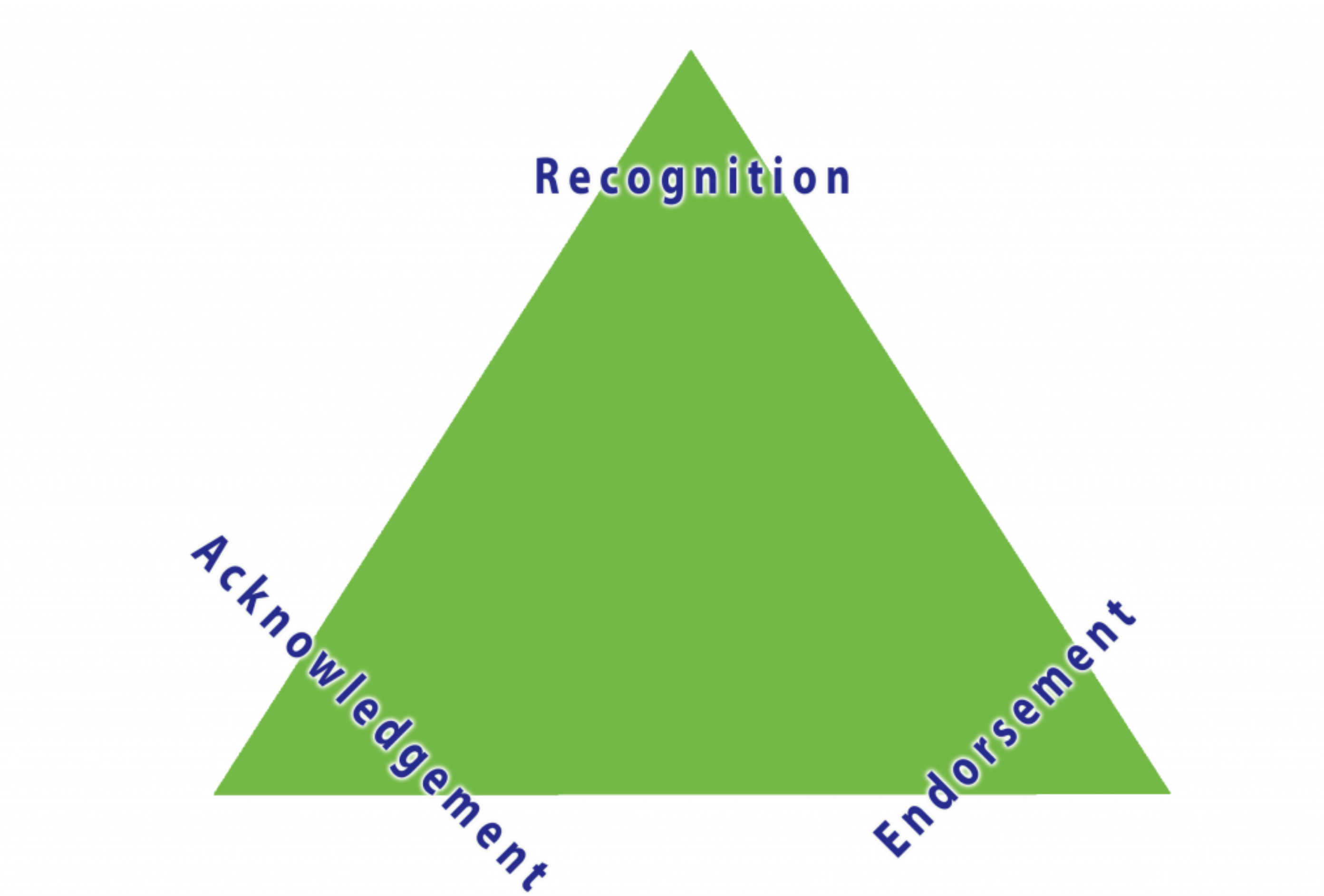
## Confirming and Disconfirming Climates

Positive and negative climates can be understood along three dimensions—recognition, acknowledgment, 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.

- **Acknowledgment 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 acknowledgment 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.

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

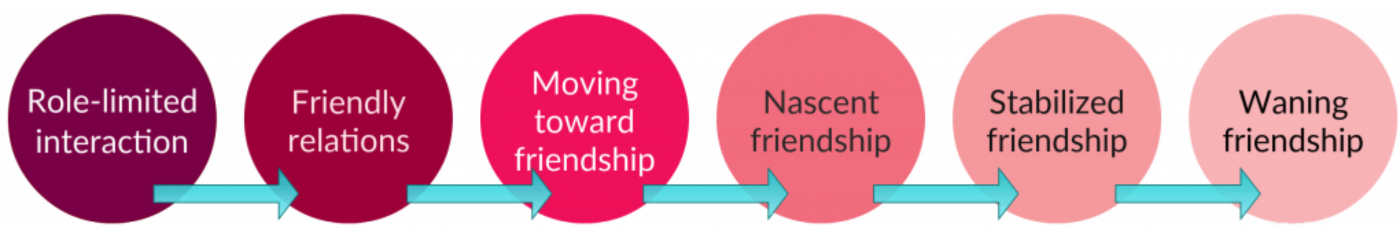


Now that you understand that we must self-disclose to form interpersonal relationships, and that self-disclosure takes place in communication climates, we want to spend the rest of the chapter briefly highlighting some of the characteristics of the three primary interpersonal relationship in which we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

# 6.3: 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 has a different meaning 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 (1981) suggests that we develop our friendships through a series of six steps. While we may not follow these six steps in the exact order in all of our relationships, these steps help us understand how we develop friendships.

## Rawlins' Stages of Friendship




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 your class, the 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 meet in an introductory course, they start up a conversation and interact according to the roles they play in the context of their initial communication. They begin a conversation because they sit near each other in class and discuss how much they like or dislike aspects of the course.

The second step in developing friendships is called **Friendly Relations**. This stage is characterized by *communication that moves beyond initial roles as the participants begin to interact with one another to see if there are common interests, as well as an interest to continue getting to know one another*. As the students spend more time together and have casual conversations, they may realize a wealth of shared interests. They realize that both were traveling from far distances to go to school and understood each other's struggle with missing their families. Each of them also loves 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 enter this stage, it is right before one joins the basketball club on their college campus. As she starts practices and meetings, she realizes this would be something fun for her and her classmate to do together so she invites 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 goes on, the students start 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. The friends met when they were freshmen in college. After finishing school some years later, they move to separate regions for graduate school. While they are sad to move away from one another, they know the friendship will continue. They continue to be best friends.

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

# Challenges for Friendships

While the above steps are a general pathway toward friendship, they are not always smooth. As with any relationship, challenges exist in friendships that can strain their development. Three of the more common challenges to friendships are gender, cultural diversity, and sexual attraction. Important to remember is that each of these constructs comes with its own conflicts of power and privilege because of the cultural norms and the values we give to certain characteristics. These are challenges to relationships since studies show that people tend to associate with others that are similar to themselves (Echols & Graham, 2013). Take a look at the pair below. 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. 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, 2006; Bell & Coleman, 1999; Monsour & Rawlins, 2014). However, there are some differences in the interactions that take place within women's and men's friendships (Burleson, Jones & Holmstrom, 2005; Coates, 1986;

Harriman, 1985). 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 go 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 (2014) 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.

### 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.

- **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, 1999; Kim & Markman, 2013). 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.”(Reiner, 1889). 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 s/he wants to be “more than friends.” These situations might place a 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.

While friendships are created and may be easily recognized as they form, the challenges of culture, gender, and sexual attraction are always present. We can now think about when a friendship becomes romantic or how romantic relationships are characterized and formed differently with their own challenges.

# 6.4 Developing and Maintaining Romantic Relationships

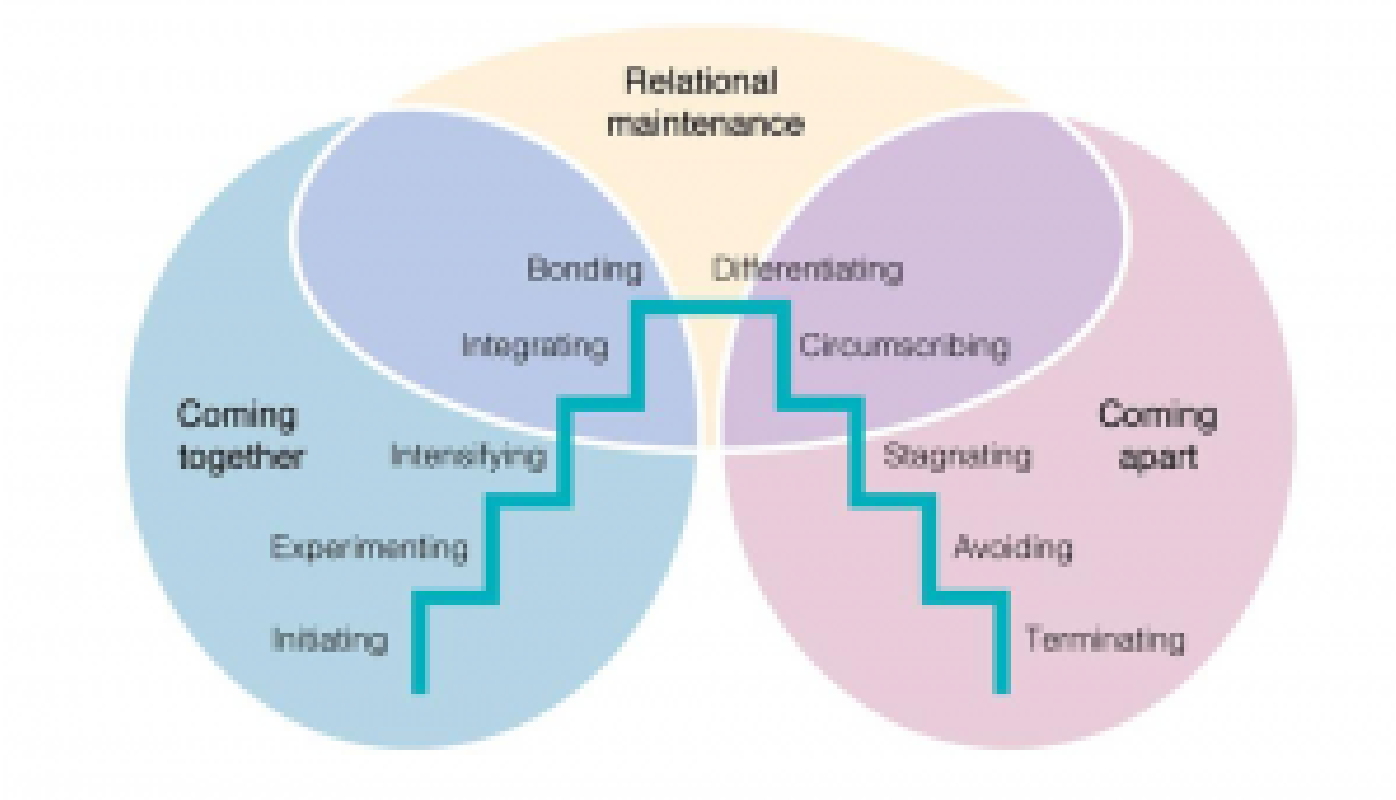
Like other relationships in our lives, romantic relationships play an important role in fulfilling our needs for intimacy, social connection, and sexual relations. Like friendships, romantic relationships also follow general stages of creation and deterioration. Before we explore these stages, let's 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 inter-class relationships. While it is now legal for same-sex couples to marry, many same-sex couples still suffer political and social restrictions when making choices about marrying and having children. Much of the research on how romantic relationships develop is based on relationships in the West. In this context, romantic relationships can be viewed as voluntary relationships between individuals who have intentions that each person will be a significant part of their ongoing lives.

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

There are ten established stages of interaction that can help us understand how relationships come together and come apart (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2009). We will discuss each stage in more detail. We should keep the following things in mind about this model of relationship development: relational partners do not always go through the stages sequentially, some relationships do not experience all the stages, we do not always consciously move between stages, and coming together and coming apart are not inherently good or bad. Relationships are always changing—they are dynamic. Although this model has been applied most often to romantic relationships, most relationships follow a similar pattern that may be adapted to a particular context.

## Knapp's Stages of Relationship Development




### *Coming Together Phase*

### Stage 1: Initiating

In the **initiating** stage, 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.

Initiating is influenced by several factors:

- If you encounter a stranger, you may say, “Hi, my name’s Rich.”
- If you encounter a person you already know, you’ve already gone through this before, so you may just say, “What’s up?”
- Time constraints also affect initiation. A quick passing calls for a quick hello, while a scheduled meeting may entail a more formal start.
- If you already know the person, the length of time that’s passed since your last encounter will affect your initiation. For example, if you see a friend from high school while home for winter break, you may set aside a long block of time to catch up; however, if you see someone at work that you just spoke to ten minutes earlier, you may skip initiating communication.
- The setting also affects how we initiate conversations, as we communicate differently at a crowded bar than we do on an airplane.
- Culture can also impact the interaction. Some cultures have different expectations for interactions between people of different ages, sexes, or other situations while some cultures do not have as many expectations.

Even with all this variation, people typically follow their culture’s social scripts or interaction at this stage.

## Stage 2: Experimenting

In the **experimenting** stage, we are *getting to know the other person to identify compatibility beyond physical attraction*. We share information about ourselves while looking for mutual interests, shared political or religious views, and similarities in family background. 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 small talk. Small talk, a hallmark of the experimenting stage, is common among young adults just beginning to explore a new relationship by staying on polite, uncontroversial topics. Small talk can be annoying sometimes, especially if you feel like you have to do it out of politeness but it serves important functions, such as creating a communicative entry point that can lead people to uncover topics of conversation that go beyond the surface level, helping us audition someone to see if we’d like to talk to them further, and generally creating a sense of ease and community with others. If your attempts at information exchange with another person during the experimenting stage are met with silence or hesitation, you may interpret their lack of communication as a sign that you shouldn’t pursue future interaction. Even though small talk isn’t viewed as very substantive, the authors of this model of relationships point out that most of our relationships do not progress far beyond this point (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2009).

## Stage 3: Intensifying

In the **intensifying** stage, 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.

Other signs of the intensifying stage can include:

- creation of nicknames or inside jokes
- increased use of we and our
- increased sharing emotionally (e.g., saying "I love you".)
- increased physical intimacy
- increased communication about each other's identities
- increased sharing of possessions and personal space (e.g., you have a key to your partner's apartment)

### How do you say I love you?

Putting Love to the Test

In his book *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*, Gary Chapman states that there are five ways people express and experience love: gift giving, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service (devotion), and physical touch. He argues that although people can experience and appreciate each of the five styles, each person has a primary and a secondary love language.

Chapman has a quiz on his website that you can use to "discover your love language." http://www.5lovelanguages.com/ In a column on WebMD, Stephanie Watson and her husband took the test and tried out each of Chapman's languages http://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/features/the-five-love-languages-tested#1

1. What were your initial thoughts to how scholarly or helpful the love languages seemed?
2. Did you find this couple to be indicative of a real couple?
3. Why do you think Web MD would publish an article on the idea of love languages?
4. If you feel comfortable identify your love language and provide some examples of what you really need to fill your love tank.

## Stage 4: Integrating

In the **integrating** stage, *identities and personalities are merged, and a sense of interdependence (dependence on each other) develops.* Verbal and nonverbal signals of the integrating stage are when the social networks of two people merge; those outside the relationship begin to refer to or treat the relationship partners as if they were one person (e.g., always referring to them together—"Let's invite Olaf and Bettina"); or the relational partners present themselves as one unit (e.g., both signing and sending one holiday card or opening a joint bank account). Even as two people integrate, they likely maintain some sense of self by spending time with friends and family separately, which helps balance their needs for independence and connection. They are looking to measure how well their new partner fits into their lives and how other significant relationships (friends and family members) rate or respond to their new love interests.

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.

## Stage 5: Bonding

In the **Bonding** stage**,** a couple makes the *decision to make the relationship a permanent part of their lives*. In this stage, the participants assume they will be in each other's lives forever and make joint decisions about the future. While marriage is an obvious sign of commitment it is not the only signifier of this stage. Some may mark their intention of staying together in a commitment ceremony, by registering as domestic partners, or by becoming Facebook official. 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.

## 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 on 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 the United States.

The Partners Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples has compiled a summary of marriage customs throughout history, as well as a list of governments that support same-sex marriage.

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.

## *Coming Apart Phase*

### Stage 6: Differentiating

Individual differences can present a challenge at any given stage in the relational interaction model; however, in the **differentiating** stage, *each partner in the relationship is reasserting their sense of self and trying to discover who they are as part of a couple*. Communicating differences becomes a primary focus. Differentiating is the reverse of integrating, as we and our reverts back to I and my. People may try to re-establish some of their life prior to the integrating of the current relationship, including other relationships, hobbies, and interests, or possessions. For example, Carrie may reclaim friends who became "shared" as she got closer to her partner and their social networks merged by saying, "I'm having my friends over to the apartment and would like to have privacy for the evening." Or, she may have liked playing golf on Sundays and abandoned it for Sunday dinners with her new partner and her new family. Now, she will want to return to what makes her happy. Individuals in the couple will want to have a sense of self that is independent and not necessarily tied to their partner.

## Stage 7: Circumscribing

In the **circumscribing** stage, *communication decreases and certain areas or subjects become restricted as individuals verbally close themselves off from each other*. Circumscribe means to draw a line around something or put a boundary around it (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2011). They may say things like "I don't want to talk about that anymore" or "You mind your business and I'll mind mine." If one person was more interested in differentiating in the previous stage, or the desire to end the relationship is one-sided, verbal expressions of commitment may go unechoed—for example, when one person's statement, "I know we've had some problems lately, but I still like being with you," is met with silence. Passive-aggressive behavior and the demand-withdrawal conflict pattern may occur more frequently at this stage. Couples often engage in more outward conflict.

## Stage 8: Stagnating

During the **stagnating** stage**,** *romantic partners begin to neglect the small details that have always bound them together and their relationship becomes routine*. For example, they may stop cuddling on the couch when they rent a movie and instead 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 *partners may 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.

They begin to assume that they know their partner and are dissatisfied with them. Instead of communicating, a person may think, "There's no need to bring this up again because I know exactly how he'll react!" Because of this kind of thinking, communication comes to a standstill.

This stage can be prolonged in some relationships. Parents and children who are estranged, couples who are separated and awaiting a divorce, or friends who want to end a relationship but don't know how to do it may have extended periods of stagnation. Although most people don't like to linger in this unpleasant stage, some try to avoid potential pain from termination, some hope to rekindle the spark that started the relationship, or even some enjoy leading their relational partner on.

## Stage 9: Avoiding

The **terminating** stage of a relationship is *when the relationship is ended*. Termination can occur at any point in the relational development model or follow through the phases of coming together and coming apart. Termination can result from outside circumstances such as geographic separation or internal factors such as changing values or personalities that lead to a weakening of the bond. When terminating a relationship, people will often follow a pattern that is typical of their culture. In mainstream American culture, for example, it is typical for someone to start the formal termination of a relationship with a summary message that recaps the relationship and provides a reason for the termination (e.g., "We've had some ups and downs over our three years together, but I'm getting ready to go to college, and I either want to be with someone who is willing to support me, or I want to be free to explore who I am."). The summary message may be followed by a distance message that further communicates the relational drift that has occurred (e.g., "We've really grown apart over the past year"), which may be followed by a disassociation message that prepares people to be apart by projecting what happens after the relationship ends (e.g., "I know you'll do fine without me. You can use this time to explore your options and figure out if you want to go to college too, or not."). Finally, there is often a message regarding the possibility for future communication in the relationship (e.g., "I think it would be best if we don't see each other for the first few months, but text me if you want to."). (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2009)

### Interpersonal Communication and You: Ending Romance

Often relationships end and do so for a variety of reasons. People may call it quits for serious issues such as unfaithfulness or long distance struggles. While sometimes people slowly grow apart and mutually decide to move on without each other. There are a plethora of reasons why people end their relationships. Sometimes it is not a pleasant experience: the initial realization that the relationship is going to cease to exist, the process of breaking up, and then the aftermath of the situation can be difficult to navigate. In an attempt to save you some potential heartache and arm you with advice/knowledge to pass along, here are some videos that propose some insight on dealing with such issues.

- How To Get Over a Crush
- How To Have a Long Distance Relationship

## Moving Through the Steps of Relationships

You can probably recognize many of Knapp's stages from your own relationships or from relationships you've observed. According to Knapp & Vangelisti (2009), movement through the steps of relationships is not linear or fixed. Although this is the sequence many people go through, each relationship is different and relationships may move forward or backward through the steps and may even skip steps.

Some relationships move through the steps quickly while others move through them slowly. Some steps can be quicker than others. Some relationships will never progress beyond the initial steps and others will go a lifetime without terminating. A couple, for example, may enter counseling during the dyadic phase, work out their problems, and enter the second term of intensifying communication, revising, and so forth.It may also be noted that if we were to apply Knapp's model to a different culture, we may see that they can also navigate through the stages of development. For example, in a collectivist culture in which they practice arranged marriages, the couple may enter at bonding but can begin at initiating after the ceremony to strengthen and maintain their relationship.

Obviously, simply committing is not enough to maintain a relationship through tough times that occur as couples grow and change. Like a ship set on a destination, a couple must learn to steer through rough waves as well as calm waters. A couple can accomplish this by learning to communicate through the good and the bad. **Stabilization** is *maintaining a relationship by continuing 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.

As the relationship is deteriorating, the couple can engage in **relationship maintenance**, *a variety of behaviors used by partners in an effort to stay together*. If the couple is differentiating or circumscribing, they may need to stabilize the relationship by talking about their problems and increasing intimacy behaviors. If they are in the stagnating or avoiding stages, they may need social support. 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 saving their relationships or going through the process of letting go and coming to terms with termination.In the deterioration stages, couples will maintain the relationship by communicating. They will discuss how to resolve problematic 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, and responsibilities if they are leading to termination.

We often consider termination or "breaking up" as a negative or undesired effect of a poor relationship, but it can be a valuable experience that provides growth and may sometimes be a positive outcome. Imagine those that are able to leave a hostile or abusive relationship and return to healthy communication. Good or bad, people need to take the time to process the end of a relationship in order to fully understand the meaning of the relationship, why it ended, and what they can learn from the experience. Going through this is a healthy way to learn to navigate future relationships more successfully.

Understanding how relationships develop, coming together and apart, is valuable because we are provided with a way to recognize general communicative patterns and maintenance behaviors we have at each stage of our relationships. Knowing what our choices are, and their potential consequences give us greater tools to build the kind of relationships we desire in our personal lives.

## Case In Point: Stressful Relationships Can Hurt You

Many things can cause us physical and mental harm. But, did you know that unhealthy relationships can too? Your life may be shortened by participating in a stressful relationship. According to researchers, stressful relationships can lead to premature death! As compared to relationships with infrequent worries or conflicts, stressful relationships can increase the chance of premature death by 50%! However, healthy, close bonds contribute to longevity. If you think you have a partner that drives you nuts, they may actually be killing you. This 2014 article in the *New York Daily News* describes a study that examined this phenomenon.

# 6.5: Family Relationships

The third primary type of interpersonal relationship we engage in is that of the family. What is a family? Is family created by legal ties, or the bond of sharing common blood? Or, can a family be considered people who share a 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 (1992) 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. 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. 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 the 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 a 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 performs different communication behaviors to maintain your image of a family.

Many families have children as part of their makeup. Olson and McCubbin (1983) 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.

# Stages of Family Development

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 acknowledgment 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.

# 6.6: Summary, Discussion, References

As you can see, Interpersonal Communication impacts every aspect of our life. If you are taking Communication 101 at Indiana State University, then by now you have experienced both the benefits and the challenges to negotiating a relationship. This chapter has introduced you to a wide range of theories that help explain interpersonal communication as well as skills for improving our relationships. Additionally, it is important to realize that our relationships are not static or fixed in any singular way because we are always changing as individuals. We must communicate effectively to others during these changes, especially when conflicts arise. Our chapter on Conflict Management offers more insight into managing relationships effectively by understanding the nature of conflict and strategies for success in conflict situations.

## 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, acknowledgment, 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

- acknowledgement messages
- autonomy-connection
- avoiding
- bonding
- circumscribing
- communication climate
- confirming climate
- developing a family
- differentiating
- disconfirming climate
- dyad
- encouraging independence
- endorsement messages
- enlarging a family
- establishing a family
- experimenting
- family
- friendly relations
- initiating
- integrating
- intensifying
- interpersonal communication
- Johari Window
- Knapp’s Model
- launching children
- moving toward friendship
- nascent friendship
- neutralize
- novelty-predictability
- openness-closedness
- post-launching of children
- recognition messages
- reframing
- relational dialectics
- relationship maintenance
- retirement
- role-limited interaction
- segmentation
- separation
- self-disclosure
- Social Penetration Theory
- stabilization
- stabilized friendship
- stagnating
- terminating
- waning friendship

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# CHAPTER 7: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

# 7.1 Introduction to Professional Communication and Career Readiness

*Objectives*

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain how communication skills help you transition into a career.
- Identify the 8 career readiness competencies.
- Discuss the role of communication in professional settings.
- Complete the My Plan Assignment

This chapter will help you to think about your communication in professional settings. More than ever, communication skills are those most highly sought after by employers. You may be asking yourself how can communication be more important than how well I understand my work or the skills and application of what I have learned in my program obtaining my degree? The truth is that the communication skills, those that have been identified as soft skills may, in fact, be more significant to your success than the hard skills. "Examples of **hard skills** *include math, physics, accounting, programming, finance, biology, chemistry, statistics, etc…* Examples of **soft skills** include *self-management skills like self-confidence, stress management and people skills like communication or networking skills" (Han, 2017).*

This chapter will focus on how you can apply communication skills to identify and improve your own competency as you become career ready. We will introduce career competencies introduced by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). We will define **competency** as "the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies" (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2017). Each competency will be explored as it relates to communication skills that will demonstrate how you can be successful in academics, extra-curricular offerings (networking), and experiential learning (learning through experience).

As part of the connection to the resources through the Indiana State University Career Center and the Sycamore Career Readiness Plan, you will be introduced to the Career Readiness Certificate in this chapter and complete the My Plan Assignment.

# 7.2 Career Readiness

## What Does it Mean to be Career Ready?

Career readiness of college graduates is of critical importance at Indiana State University, in the labor market, and in the public arena. ISU has made a commitment to developing core career competencies that will help our graduates be successful through the job search process and in the workplace. Through the academic curriculum, extra curricular offerings, and experiential learning, ISU students will develop and improve these competencies so they are competitive in any job market.

**Career Readiness**: *the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace.*

## Competencies

- **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- **Oral/Written Communications:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.
- **Digital Technology:** Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.
- **Leadership:** Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.
- **Professionalism/Work Ethic:** Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and

understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

- **Career Management:** Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- **Global/Intercultural Fluency:** Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. The individual demonstrates openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.

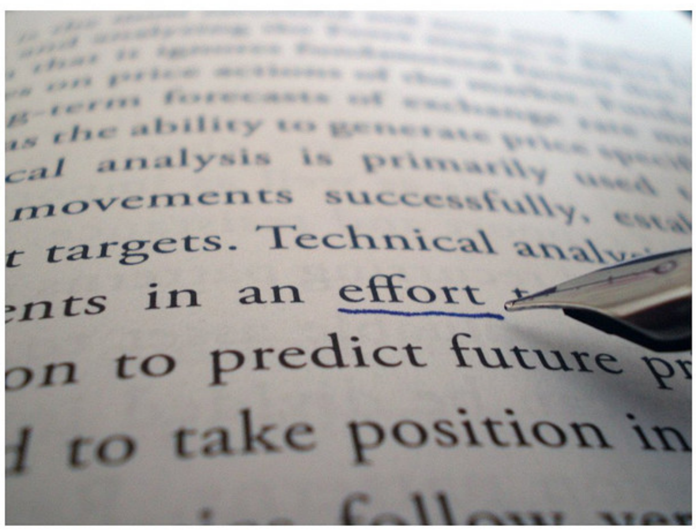
Career Center. Indiana State University. In partnership with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

# 7.3 Competencies

## 1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

### Critical Thinking

Critical thinking means becoming aware of your thinking process. It's a human trait that allows us to step outside what we read or write and ask ourselves, "Does this really make sense?" "Are there other, perhaps better, ways to explain this idea?" Sometimes our thinking is very abstract and becomes clear only through the process of getting thoughts down in words. As a character in E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* said, "How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?" (Forster, 1976) Did you really convey what you meant to, and will it be easily understood? Successful speaking and writing form a relationship with the audience, reaching the audience on a deep level that can be dynamic and motivating. In contrast, when speaking and writing fails to meet the audience's expectations, you already know the consequences: they'll move on.




*Excellence in writing comes from effort. Ramunas Geciauskas – Effort II – CC BY 2.0.*

Learning to speak and write effectively involves reading, practice, critical thinking, and hard work. You may have seen *The Wizard of Oz* and recall the scene when Dorothy discovers what is behind the curtain. Up until that moment, she believed the Wizard's powers were needed to change her situation, but now she discovers that the power is her own. Like Dorothy, you can discover that the power to communicate successfully rests in your hands.

You may be amazed by the performance of Tony Hawk on a skateboard ramp, Mia Hamm on the soccer field, or Michael Phelps in the water. Those who demonstrate excellence often make it look easy, but nothing could be further from the truth. The effort, targeted practice, and persistence will win the day every time. When it comes to communicating, you need to learn to recognize clear and concise messages while looking behind the curtain at how it is created. This is not to say we are going to lose the magic associated with the best people in the field. Instead, we'll appreciate and examine how it was communicated and success was achieved.

## Problem Solving

Business communication can be thought of as a problem-solving activity in which individuals may address the following questions:

- What is the situation?
- What are some possible communication strategies?
- What is the best course of action?
- What is the best way to design the chosen message?
- What is the best way to deliver the message?

# 2. Oral/ Written Communications

## Oral Communication

You no doubt have participated in countless conversations throughout your life, and the process of how to conduct a conversation may seem so obvious that it needs no examination. Yet, all cultures have rituals of various kinds, and conversation is one of these universal rituals. A skilled business communicator knows when to speak, when to remain silent, and to always stop speaking before the audience stops listening. Further, understanding conversation provides a solid foundation for communicating. Why discuss the ritual of conversation? Because it is one of the main ways we interact in the business environment, and it is ripe for misunderstandings. Our everyday familiarity with conversations often makes us blind to the subtle changes that take place during the course of a conversation. Examining it will allow you to consider its components, predict the next turn, anticipate an opening or closing, and make you a better conversationalist. Steven Beebe, Susan Beebe, and Mark Redmond offer us five stages of conversation that are adapted here for our discussion (Beebe, S., Beebe, S., and Redmond, M., 2002).

*Conversations follow rules. Search Engine People Blog – Conversation – CC BY 2.0.*

The first stage of conversation is called **initiation** and requires *openness to interact*. How you communicate openness is up to you; it may involve nonverbal signals like eye contact or body positions, such as smiling or even merely facing the other person and making eye contact. A casual reference to the weather, a light conversation about the weekend, or an in-depth conversation about how the financial markets are performing this morning requires a source to start the process: someone has to initiate the exchange. For some, this may produce a degree of anxiety. If status and hierarchical relationships are present, it may be a question of who speaks when according to cultural norms. The famous anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski called small talk “phatic communion,” (Malinowski, B., 1935) reinforcing the idea that there is a degree of ritual across cultures on how we initiate, engage, and conclude conversations.

The **preview** is *an indication, verbal or nonverbal, of what the conversation is about, both in terms of content and in terms of the relationship*. A word or two in the subject line of an e-mail may signal the topic, and the relationship between individuals, such as an employee-supervisor relationship, may be understood. A general reference to a topic may approach a topic indirectly, allowing the recipient to either pick up on the topic and to engage in the discussion or to redirect the conversation away from a topic they are not ready to talk about. People are naturally curious, and also seek certainty. A preview can serve to reduce uncertainty and signal intent.

Joseph DeVito characterizes this step as getting down to business, reinforcing the goal orientation of the conversation (DeVito, J., 2003). In business communication, we often have **talking points**, a *specific goal or series of points to address*, but we cannot lose sight of the related messages within the discussion of content. You may signal to your conversation partner that there are three points to address, much like outlining an agenda at a meeting. This may sound formal at first, but if you listen to casual conversations you'll often find there is an inherent list or central point where the conversational partners arrive. By clearly articulating, either in written or oral form, the main points, you provide an outline or structure to the conversation.

Similar to a preview step, **feedback** allows the conversational partners to *clarify, restate, or discuss the points of the conversation to arrive a sense of mutual understanding*. In some cultures, the points and their feedback may recycle several times, which may sound repetitious to Western ears. In Western cultures, we often get to the point rather quickly and once we've arrived at an understanding, we move quickly to the conclusion. Communication across cultures often requires additional cycles of statement and restatement to ensure transmission of information as well as reinforcement of the relationship. Time may be money in some cultures, but time is also a representation of respect. Feedback is an opportunity to make sure the interaction was successful the first time. Failure to attend to this stage can lead to the need for additional interactions, reducing efficiency across time.

The acceptance of feedback on both sides of the conversation often signals the transition to **closing**, the conclusion *of the conversation*. Closings are similar to the initiation step (Knapp, M. and Vangelisti, A., 2000), and often involve ritual norms (Malinowski, B., 1935). Verbal clues are sometimes present, but you may also notice the half step back as conversational partners create additional space in preparation to disengage.

There are times when a conversational partner introduces new information in the conclusion, which can start the process all over again. You may also note that if words like "in conclusion" or "oh—one more thing" is used, a set of expectations is now in force. A conclusion has been announced and the listener expects it. If the speaker continues to recycle at this point, the listener's listening skills are often not as keen as they were during the heat of the main engagement, and it may even produce frustration. People mentally shift to the next order of business and this transition must be negotiated successfully.

By mentioning a time, date, or place for future communication you can clearly signal that the conversation, although currently concluded, will continue later. In this way, you can often disengage successfully while demonstrating respect.

# Improving Oral Communication

In successfully communicating orally, it is necessary that we define terms we use and choose precise words to maximize our audience's understanding of our message. In addition, it is important to consider the audience, control your tone, check for understanding, and focus on results. Recognizing the power of verbal communication is the first step to understanding its role and impact in the communication process.

Even when you are careful to craft your message clearly and concisely, not everyone will understand every word you say or write. As an effective business communicator, you know it is your responsibility to give your audience every advantage in understanding your meaning. Yet your presentation would fall flat if you tried to define each and every term—you would end up sounding like a dictionary.

The solution is to be aware of any words you are using that may be unfamiliar to your audience and **define your terms**. When you identify an unfamiliar word, your first decision is whether to use it or to substitute a more common, easily understood word. If you choose to use the unfamiliar word, then you need to decide how to convey its meaning to those in your audience who are not familiar with it. You may do this in a variety of ways. The most obvious, of course, is to state the meaning directly or to rephrase the term in different words. But you may also convey the meaning in the process of making and supporting your points. Another way is to give examples to illustrate each concept or use parallels from everyday life.

To increase understanding, **choose precise words** that paint as vivid and accurate a mental picture as possible for your audience. If you use language that is vague or abstract, your meaning may be lost or misinterpreted. Your document or presentation will also be less dynamic and interesting than it could be.

In addition to precise words and clear definitions, **consider your audience** and use contextual clues as a guide. If you are speaking to a general audience and choose to use a word in professional jargon that may be understood by many—but not all—of the people in your audience, follow it by a common reference that clearly relates its essential meaning. With this positive strategy, you will be able to forge relationships with audience members from diverse backgrounds.

If you say the magic words "in conclusion," you set in motion a set of expectations that you are about to wrap it up. If, however, you introduce a new point and continue to speak, the audience will perceive an expectancy violation and hold you accountable. You said the magic words but didn't honor them. One of the best ways to display respect for your audience is to not exceed the expected time in a presentation or length in a document. Your careful attention to contextual clues will demonstrate that you are clearly considering your audience.

Does your writing or speech sound pleasant and agreeable? Simple or sophisticated? Or does it come across as stuffy, formal, bloated, ironic, sarcastic, flowery, rude, or inconsiderate? Recognize and **take control of your tone**. Once we have characterized our tone, we need to decide whether and how it can be improved. Getting a handle on how to influence your tone and make your voice match your intentions takes time and skill.

When you are communicating, **check for understanding**. Even if they really didn't get it, you can see, ask questions, and clarify right away. That gives oral communication, particularly live interaction, a distinct advantage. Use this immediacy for feedback to your advantage. Make time for feedback and plan for it. Ask clarifying questions. Share your presentation with more than one person, and choose people that have similar characteristics to your anticipated audience.

It can be a challenge to balance the need for attention to detail with the need to arrive at the end product—and its due date. Stephen Covey (1989) suggests beginning with the end in mind as one strategy for success, or **be results oriented**. If you have done your preparation, know your assignment goals, desired results, have learned about your audience and tailored the message to their expectations, then you are well on your way to completing the task. No document or presentation is perfect, but the goal itself is worthy of your continued effort for improvement.

# Written Communication

Something we often hear in business is, "Get it in writing." This advice is meant to prevent misunderstandings based on what one person thought the other person said. But does written communication—getting it in writing—always prevent misunderstandings?

According to a *Washington Post* news story, a written agreement would have been helpful to an airline customer named Mike. A victim of an airport mishap, Mike was given vouchers for $7,500 worth of free travel. However, in accordance with the airline's standard policy, the vouchers were due to expire in twelve months. When Mike saw that he and his wife would not be able to do enough flying to use the entire amount before the expiration date, he called the airline and asked for an extension. He was told the airline would extend the deadline, but later discovered they were willing to do so at only 50 percent of the vouchers' value. An airline spokesman told the newspaper, "If [Mike] can produce a letter stating that we would give the full value of the vouchers, he should produce it" (Oldenburg, 2005).

Yet, as we will see in this chapter, putting something in writing is not always a foolproof way to ensure accuracy and understanding. A written communication is only as accurate as the writer's knowledge of the subject and audience, and understanding depends on how well the writer captures the reader's attention.

## Reading

Reading is one step many writers point to as an integral step in learning to write effectively. You may like Harry Potter books or be a Twilight fan, but if you want to write effectively in business, you need to read business-related documents. These can include letters, reports, business proposals, and business plans. You may find these where you work or in your school's writing center, business department, or library; there are also many Web sites that provide sample business documents of all kinds. Your reading should also include publications in the industry where you work or plan to work, such as

*Aviation Week*, *InfoWorld*, *Journal of Hospitality*, *International Real Estate Digest*, or *Women's Wear Daily*, to name just a few. You can also gain an advantage by reading publications in fields other than your chosen one; often reading outside your niche can enhance your versatility and help you learn how other people express similar concepts. Finally, don't neglect general media like the business section of your local newspaper, and national publications like the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, and the *Harvard Business Review*. Reading is one of the most useful lifelong habits you can practice to boost your business communication skills.

*Julie Falk – Emily Reading at Wagner Falls – CC BY-NC 2.0.*

## Writing

Never lose sight of one key measure of the effectiveness of your writing: the degree to which it fulfills readers' expectations. If you are in a law office, you know the purpose of a court brief is to convince the judge that certain points of law apply to the given case. If you are at a newspaper, you know that an editorial opinion article is supposed to convince readers of the merits of a certain viewpoint, whereas a news article is supposed to report facts without bias. If you are writing ad copy, the goal is to motivate consumers to make a purchase decision. In each case, you are writing to a specific purpose, and a great place to start when considering what to write is to answer the following question: what are the readers' expectations?

When you are a junior member of the team, you may be given clerical tasks like filling in forms, populating a database, or coordinating appointments. Or you may be assigned to do research that involves reading, interviewing, and note taking. Don't underestimate these facets of the writing process; instead, embrace the fact that writing for business often involves tasks that a novelist might not even recognize as "writing." Your contribution is quite important and in itself is an on-the-job learning opportunity that shouldn't be taken for granted.

When given a writing assignment, it is important to make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. You may read the directions and try to put them in your own words to make sense of the assignment. Be careful, however, not to lose sight of what the directions say versus what you think they say. Just as an audience's expectations should be part of your consideration of how what, and why to write, the instructions given by your instructor, or in a work situation by your supervisor, establish expectations.

## Formal versus Informal

There was a time when many business documents were written in the third person to give them the impression of objectivity. This formal style was often passive and wordy. Today it has given way to active, clear, concise writing, sometimes known as "Plain English" (Bailey, 2008). As business and industry increasingly trade across borders and languages, writing techniques that obscure meaning or impede understanding can cause serious problems. Efficient writing styles have become the norm. Still, you will experience in your own writing efforts this "old school versus new school" writing debate over abbreviations, contractions, and the use of informal language in what was once considered a formal business context. Consider the following comparison of informal versus formal and bureaucratic styles.

Bureaucratic: Attached is the latest delivery data represented in topographical forms pursuant to the directive ABC123 of the air transportation guide supplied by the Federal Aviation Administration in September of 2008.

- Formal – Please note the attached delivery data for July 2009.
- Informal – Here's the delivery data for last month.

There is a debate on the use of formal versus informal styles in business communication. Formal styles often require more detail, adhere to rules of etiquette, and avoid shortcuts like contractions and colloquial expressions. Informal styles reflect everyday speech patterns. Many managers prefer not to see contractions in a formal business context. Others will point out that a comma preceding the last item in a series (known as the "serial comma") is the standard, not the exception. Some will make a general recommendation that you should always "keep it professional." Here lies the heart of the debate: what *is* professional writing in a business context? If you answered "it depends," you are correct. The skilled business writer will know his or her audience and will adapt the message to best facilitate communication. Choosing the right style can make a significant impact on how your writing is received.

## Overcoming Barriers to Effective Written Communication

In almost any career or area of business, written communication is a key to success. Effective writing can prevent wasted time, wasted effort, aggravation, and frustration. Skillful writing and an understanding of how people respond to words are central to accomplishing this goal.

How do we display skillful writing and a good understanding of how people respond to words? Following are some suggestions. Do sweat the small stuff, or spelling errors and incorrect grammar, small details that reflect poorly on you and, in a business context, on your company. They imply either that you are not educated enough to know you've made mistakes or that you are too careless to bother correcting them. Making errors is human, but making a habit of producing error-filled written documents makes negative consequences far more likely to occur. When you write, you have a responsibility to self-edit and pay attention to detail.
As writers, we need to keep in mind that words are simply a means of communication and that meanings are in people, not the words themselves. Knowing which words your audience understands and anticipating how they will interpret them will help you prevent bypassing. Nonverbal aspects of a message can get in the way of understanding. Nonverbal expressions in your writing may include symbols, design, font, and the timing of delivering your message. There are no right or wrong answers, but you will use your judgment, being aware that these nonverbal expressions are part of the message that gets communicated along with your words.

Do you review what you write? Do you reflect on whether it serves its purpose? Where does it miss the mark? If you can recognize it, then you have the opportunity to revise. A mental review of the task and your performance is often called reflection. Reflection is not procrastination. It involves looking at the available information and, as you review the key points in your mind, making sure each detail is present and perfect. Reflection also allows for another opportunity to consider the key elements and their relationship to each other.

# 3. Teamwork/ Collaboration

Teamwork is a compound word, combining team and work. Teams are a form of the group normally dedicated to production or problem-solving. That leaves us with the work. This is where our previous example on problem-solving can serve us well. Each member of the team has skills, talents, experience, and education. Each is expected to contribute. Work is the activity, and while it may be fun or engaging, it also requires effort and commitment, as there is a schedule for production with individual and group responsibilities. Each member must fulfill his or her own obligations for the team to succeed, and the team, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest member. In this context, we don't measure strength or weakness at the gym but in terms of productivity.

Teams can often achieve higher levels of performance than individuals because of the combined energies and talents of the members. Collaboration can produce motivation and creativity that may not be present in single-contractor projects. Individuals also have a sense of belonging to the group, and the range of views and diversity can energize the process, helping address creative blocks and stalemates. By involving members of the team in decision-making, and calling up on each member's area of contribution, teams can produce positive results. We can recognize that people want to belong to a successful team, and celebrating incremental gain can focus the attention on the project and its goals.

John Thill and Courtland Bovee (2002, 2004) provide a valuable list to consider when setting up a team, which we have adapted here for our discussion:

- Select team members wisely
- Select a responsible leader
- Promote cooperation
- Clarify goals
- Elicit commitment
- Clarify responsibilities
- Prompt action
- Apply technology
- Ensure technological compatibility
- Provide prompt feedback

**Group dynamics** involve *the interactions and processes of a team and influence the degree to which members feel a part of the goal and mission.* A team with a strong identity can prove to be a powerful force, but it requires time and commitment. A team that exerts too much control over individual members can run the risk or reduce creative interactions and encourage tunnel vision. A team that exerts too little control, with attention to process and areas of specific responsibility, may not be productive. The balance between motivation and encouragement, and control and influence is challenging as team members represent diverse viewpoints and approaches to the problem. A skilled business communicator creates a positive team by first selecting members based on their areas of skill and expertise, but attention to their style of communication is also warranted. Individuals that typically work alone or tend to be introverted may need additional encouragement to participate. Extroverts may need to be encouraged to listen to others and not dominate the conversation. Teamwork involves teams and work, and group dynamics play an integral role in their function and production.

# 4. Digital Technology

## Examples

At some point, you may have answered your phone to find a stranger on the other end asking you to take part in a survey for a polling organization like Gallup, Pew, or Roper. **Online surveys** are also becoming increasingly popular. For example, online survey tools allow people to respond to a set of questions. This type of reader feedback can be valuable.

Normally we'd think of focus groups in a physical setting, but again modern technology has allowed for innovative adaptations. Forums, live Webcasts, and other virtual gatherings allow groups to come together across time and distance to discuss specific topics in **online focus groups**. A Web camera, a microphone, and an Internet connection are all it takes. There are a number of software programs and online platforms for bringing individuals together. Anticipate that focus groups will increasingly gather via computer-mediated technologies in the future as the costs of bringing people together for a traditional meeting increase.

Given the widespread availability and increasingly low cost of electronic communication, technologies that once served to bring people together across continents and time zones are now also serving people in the same geographic area to **facilitate virtual meetings or interviews**. Rather than traveling (by plane, car, or even elevator within the same building) to a central point for a face-to-face interaction, busy and cost-conscious professionals often choose to see and hear each other via one of many different electronic interface technologies: audio-only, audio-visual, and social media. These technologies are key to today's business organizations, and knowing how to use them is a key skill for all job seekers.

The simplest form of **audio-only interaction** is, of course, a telephone call. When you stop to think about it, we use a great many audio-only modes of communication, ranging from phone calls and voice-activated telephone menus to radio interviews, public address systems, dictation recording systems, and computer voice recognition technology.

The importance of **audiovisual interaction** in the business world has increased with the availability of conference calls, Web conferences, and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) communications. If you are going to interact via audio and visual signals, make sure you are prepared. Appropriate dress, setting, and attitude are all required. The integration of a visual signal to the traditional phone call means that nonverbal gestures can now be observed in real time and can both aid and detract from the message.

Online communities, forums, blogs, tweets, cloud computing, and avatar-activated environments are some of the continually developing means of **social media** being harnessed by the business world. The Internet is increasingly promoting tools and platforms for people to interact. From bulletin boards that resemble the Freenet posts of years past to interactive environments like Second Life, people are increasingly representing and interpreting themselves online.

Humans seek interaction, and this has led to new ways to market, advertise, and interact; however, caution is warranted when engaging in social media online. When you use these media, remember a few simple cautions:

1. Not everything is at it appears. The individuals on the forum may not all be who they represent themselves to be.
2. The words you write and the images you send, regardless of how much you trust the recipient, may become public and can remain online forever.
3. Always consider what you access and what you post, and how it represents you and your employer, even if you think others cannot know where you work or who you are.
4. Be aware that Internet service providers (ISPs) are required by law to archive information concerning the use and traffic of information that can become available under subpoena.

Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn allow people to link to, and interact with, others who work in their industry or related ones. More general social media sites like Facebook, which also present threaded discussions and dynamic interfaces with groups that may or may not be limited to those that user intends. Interactive writing platforms such as blogs, wikis, and cloud computing involve having common documents stored on the Internet which can be accessed from multiple sites at once, further facilitating the interaction. Blogs are Web pages with periodic posts that may or may not feature feedback responses from readers. Wikis are collaborations on Web content that are created and edited by users. Cloud computing involves secure access of files from anywhere as information is stored remotely. Somewhere between a social networking site, where people gather virtually to interact, and a computer game lies the genre of avatar-activated virtual worlds such as Second Life. In these environments, users can meet others and make friends, participate in activities, and create and trade virtual property and services.

Business and industry organizations may also incorporate posts and threaded discussions, but often under a password-protected design on a company's intranet or limited-access platform. Employees may use their business-provided computer equipment to access sites that are not business related (if not specifically blocked), but all information associated with an each business's computer is subject to inspection, archival, and supervision.

Every computer is assigned an Internet Protocol or IP address. The IP address can be specifically traced back to the original user, or at least to the computer itself and to who is responsible for its use. From an email via one of the free sites (e.g., Juno, Google's Gmail, or Yahoo! Mail) to cloud computing and wikis, your movements across the Web leave clear "footprints."

# Feedback in a Virtual Environment

First, let's examine some aspects of web tracking that many professionals use. Your document may be kept on our company's Web server, or a computer dedicated to serving the online requests for information via the Internet. Every Web page contains several files including graphics, images, and text. *Each file request and receipt between server and browser counts as a **hit**,* regardless of how many files each page contains.

Hits or page views have largely been discredited as a reliable measure of a document's effectiveness, popularity, or audience size. **Page views** are *a count of how many times a Web page is viewed*, irrespective of the number of files it contains.

Nielsen Online and Source.com are two companies that provide Web traffic rating services, and Google has also developed services to better enable advertisers to target specific audiences. They commonly track the number of unique visits a reader makes to a Web site, and use **cookies**, or *small, time-encoded files that identify specific users*, as a means to generate data.

Jon Kleinberg's HITS (hyperlink-induced topic search) algorithm has become a popular and more effective way to rate Web pages (Kleinberg, 1998). HITS rank documents by the links within the document, presuming that a good document is one that incorporates and references, providing links to, other Web documents while also being frequently cited by other documents. **Hubs**, or *documents with many links, are related to authority pages, or frequently cited documents*.

Moving beyond the Web tracking aspects of feedback measurement in terms of use, let's examine user-generated responses to your document. Let's say you have reviewed the posts left by unique users to the comments section of the article. This, in some ways, serves the same purpose as letters to the editor in traditional media.

With the introduction of online media, the speed of this feedback loop has been greatly increased. Public relations announcements, product reviews, and performance data of your organization are often made available internally or externally via electronic communication. Customer comments, like letters to the editor, can be a valuable source of feedback.

# Netiquette

**Netiquette** refers to *etiquette, or protocols and norms for communication, on the Internet*. Text messages and emails are part of our communication landscape, and skilled business communicators consider them a valuable tool to connect. Whatever digital device you use, written communication in the form of brief messages, or texting, has become a common way to connect. It is useful for short exchanges, and is a convenient way to stay connected with others when talking on the phone would be cumbersome. Texting is not useful for long or complicated messages, and careful consideration should be given to the audience. Electronic mail, usually called e-mail, is quite familiar to most students and workers. It may be used like text or synchronous chat, and it can be delivered to a cell phone. In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy letters for external (outside the company) correspondence, as well as taking the place of memos for internal (within the company) communication (Guffey, 2008). Email can be very useful for messages that have slightly more content than a text message, but it is still best used for fairly brief messages. Emails may be informal in personal contexts, but business communication requires attention to detail, an awareness that your email reflects you and your company, and a professional tone so that it may be forwarded to any third party if needed. Remember that when these tools are used for business, they need to convey professionalism and respect.

You can refer to the Appendix of the textbook for Tips for Effective Business Texting and Tips for Effective Business Emails.

# 5. Leadership

Leaders take on the role because they are appointed, elected, or emerge into the role. We can see types of leaders in action and draw on common experience for examples. The heart surgeon does not involve everyone democratically, typically appointed to the role through earned degrees and experience, and resembles a military sergeant more than a politician. The autocratic leader is self-directed and often establishes norms and conduct for the group. In some settings, we can see that this is quite advantageous, such as open-heart surgery or during a military exercise, but it does not apply equally to all leadership opportunities.

Contrasting the autocrat is the laissez-faire, or “live and let live” leader. In a professional setting, such as a university, professors may bristle at the thought of an autocratic leader telling them what to do. They have earned their role through time, effort, and experience and know their job. A wise laissez-faire leader recognizes this aspect of working with professionals and may choose to focus efforts on providing the professors with the tools they need to make a positive impact. Imagine that you are in the role of a television director and you have a vision or idea of what the successful pilot program should look like. The script is set, the lighting correct, and the cameras are in the correct position. You may tell people what to do and where to stand, but you remember that your job is to facilitate the overall process. You work with talent, and creative people are interesting on camera. If you micromanage your actors, they may perform in ways that are not creative and that will not draw audiences. If you let them run wild through improvisation, the program may not go well at all. Balancing the need for control with the need for space is the challenge of the laissez-faire leader.

Not all leaders are autocrats or laissez-faire leaders. Thomas Harris and John Sherblom (1999) specifically note three leadership styles that characterize the modern business or organization and reflect our modern economy. We are not born leaders but may become them if the context or environment requires our skill set.

A **leader-as-technician** role often *occurs when we have skills that others do not*. If you can fix the copy machine at the office, your leadership and ability to get it running again are prized and sought-after skills. You may instruct others on how to load the paper or how to change the toner, and even though your pay grade may not reflect this leadership role, you are looked to by the group as a leader within that context. Technical skills, from Internet technology to facilities maintenance, may experience moments where their particular area of knowledge is required to solve a problem. Their leadership will be in demand.

The **leader-as-conductor** *involves a central role* in *bringing people together for a common goal*. In the common analogy, a conductor leads an orchestra and integrates the specialized skills and sounds of the various components the musical group comprises. In the same way, a leader who conducts may set a vision, create benchmarks, and collaborate with a group as they interpret a set script. Whether it is a beautiful movement in music or a group of teams that come together to address a common challenge, the leader-as-conductor keeps the time and tempo of the group.

Coaches are often discussed in business-related books as models of leadership for good reason. A **leader-as-coach** *combines many of the talents and skills we've discussed here, serving as a teacher, motivator, and keeper of the goals of the group*. A coach may be autocratic at times, give pointed direction without input from the group, and stand on the sidelines while the players do what they've been trained to do and make the points. The coach may look out for the group and defend it against bad calls and may motivate players with words of encouragement. We can recognize some of the behaviors of coaches, but what specific traits have a positive influence on the group? Thomas Peters and Nancy Austin (1985) identify five important traits that produce results:

1. Orientation and education
2. Nurturing and encouragement
3. Assessment and correction
4. Listening and counseling
5. Establishing group emphasis

Coaches are teachers, motivators, and keepers of the goals of the group. There are times when members of the team forget that there is no "I" in the word "team." At such times, coaches serve to redirect the attention and energy of the individuals to the overall goals of the group. They conduct the group with a sense of timing and tempo, and at times, they relax and let the members demonstrate their talents. Through their listening skills and counseling, they come to know each member as an individual, but keep the team focus for all to see. They set an example. Coaches, however, are human and by definition are not perfect. They can and do prefer some players over others and can display less than professional sideline behavior when they don't agree with the referee, but the style of leadership is worthy of your consideration in its multidisciplinary approach. Coaches use more than one style of leadership and adapt to the context and environment.

A skilled business communicator will recognize how different leadership approaches and styles have their merits. You can think about what type of leader you would want to follow or what type of leader you would want to be. How might you accomplish this goal? What can you do now to practice your leadership skills?

# 6. Professionalism/ Work Ethic

## Communicating in a Professional Space

What you say, whether in person, on the phone, or online can easily define what people think about you. When you have a job, what you say represents you and your employer. Relationships are what can build or easily tear down you and your company. One bad situation or comment can instantly change what someone thinks about you. If they do not have a good relationship with you, that may make them wonder what it will be like working with your employer or co-workers.

While in the workplace or in professional settings, you need to know how to communicate effectively and professionally with everyone. You want to ensure that you are leaving a good impression. You are the image and branding of your company every day. You are associated with a title and the company name. It is important to stay self-aware of how you act, what you say, and how you portray yourself when meeting new people, in both a work and personal setting.

When in meetings with professional colleagues and superiors, remember to listen before you speak. When others are talking, listen to them and think about what they are saying before you add anything to the discussion. Another important idea to keep in mind is to know your audience. Know who you are talking to and addressing. Are you meeting with other students, professors, current or possible employers? Who you are communicating with can easily change the way that you speak and how comfortable you are with the group of people. Watch your body language and facial expressions when in a meeting, as well. This can speak volumes to your level of engagement in the conversation and respect for the other person.

# Your Professional Identity

Many employers use social media as another way to review your qualifications, determine your level of professionalism, and how well you will represent their company and brand. It is imperative that you remain cautious about what you post or share on your social media accounts. It may be that you have protected your privacy settings and are managing your online identity, but people often forget that people may connect to your friends or family through you that have public pages or follow posts you are tagged in. You need to be in control of your self-promotion and personal branding online. It is important to watch what you post, what you re-post and how you respond to posts.

Never talk badly about your place of employment online. If you have a bad day, get mad at your boss or co-workers, etc., do not lash out online; anyone can see your post and this could easily cost you your job or a future one. Employers do not want to hire an employee who will go to social media to talk negatively about their company versus addressing grievance through proper channels, i.e. the Human Resources Department.

Partake in a social media “clean-up”. Go through all of your social media accounts and delete what is inappropriate or does not shed the best light on who you are. If you have posts from middle school, go through and delete them. Delete posts that portray topics and views that are no longer relevant or in-line with who you are today and what you stand for. This helps keep your social media accounts cohesive, well-rounded and true to the person you have evolved into, not the person you might have been or be portrayed to be along the way.

## Work Ethic

Be clear and consistent in your communication to establish and demonstrate a strong work ethic. In creating and maintaining your professional identity, you want to make sure that you are clear in presenting yourself in a positive way. Being consistent demonstrates accountability and dependability, letting people know what they can expect from you and that they can count on you. You want to remember, to look for ways to receive and reflect on feedback. Take what you are told and use that to promote change and personal growth so that you continue evolving into a better version of yourself each day as a professional.

You can review the following article for “5 Factors That Demonstrate a Strong Work Ethic”: integrity, sense of responsibility, emphasis on quality, discipline, and sense of teamwork. (Jenkins, 2017)

# 7. Career Management

## Networking

**Networking** is a key to success in the professional world. *Making connections and starting to build your professional network* while you are still in college will help you to gain experience and possible job offers before graduation. This process starts with communication. You cannot expect employers to contact you. If you are looking for an internship or a job, you need to make those connections yourself.

Get comfortable with being a little uncomfortable and step out of your comfort zone. Be willing to take advantage of opportunities that come your way. There are a million ways to network with professionals all around the world. Go to professional conferences, career fairs, take meetings, send them a message on Linkedin. Any opportunity that can get you meeting people is worth your time. Make the decision to go to an event; it could be the one event that links you to a future career.

When meeting someone in person, have your elevator pitch ready, look professional, and have a firm handshake. The person you are speaking to needs to feel that you are not wasting their time. Be confident and be yourself when meeting someone new. Start a conversation and be proud of your accomplishments. You are introducing yourself so you can make a professional connection and if you are speaking to an individual who works for your dream company, you want them to know that you are genuine and that the interest that you have for the conversation is authentic.

Take notes while you network, this will help with remembering the conversation as well as key points about the person or company. If someone is taking the time to speak with you or give you advice or information that is important; write it down. If they hand you a business card, make a note on the back of it as to who they are, where you met them, etc. Ask a non-traditional question. Employers tend to hear the same questions over and over again. Asking a unique question shows your interest and that you have come prepared. Asking a question that makes the other individual think about the answer they want to give will help them remember you and will leave a lasting impression.

### The Elevator Pitch

You run into the CEO of your dream company. You know that you only have moments to make a lasting impression whilst sharing important information about yourself. What do you say?

You may be thinking, what is an elevator pitch? An **elevator pitch** is *a short, 30 seconds or less, a* snippet *of who you are along with the information you want someone to know about you.* Examples of elevator pitch content are your work experiences; personal accomplishments, your goals, and/or information on how you can help an employer's company.

When creating an elevator pitch, first, decide what you want to get across in your elevator pitch. Essentially, what is your goal? Next, you need to explain what you do, what is your occupation or talent? What your job title is/what you do at work, who you work for, etc. This section of the elevator pitch needs to be quick and to the point. Then add something unique into your elevator pitch to make it more memorable. According to Mindtools.com in their article on Crafting an Elevator Pitch, this is considered your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). What makes you great or unique?

Lastly, you are going to want to end with a question. You want this question to be engaging because you will want the conversation to continue. The key to perfecting your elevator pitch is to PRACTICE. Write your elevator pitch down on paper, say it aloud to yourself, look in a mirror and watch how you say it to yourself. Watch your body language, facial expressions, vocal inflections, etc. Keep doing this until you are confident in yourself and what you are saying.

Your goal when using your elevator pitch is to make the other party feel comfortable and want to join the conversation. You want to leave them wanting to know more about you and think about whether or not you will be an asset to them and their company. One thing to keep in mind is you need to be yourself. Stay confident, be present in the moment and conversation, explain why you would be a good fit for them, and be genuine. People can tell when you are not being yourself and that is a factor that can easily come into play when they are thinking about what you could do for them.

## The Elevator Pitch Isn't For Me

Not everyone is an eloquent speaker or feel comfortable creating a speech to sell themselves. Many business professionals will suggest that you prepare an elevator speech. The article "5 Reasons You Don't Need an Elevator Pitch", suggests other networking strategies in place of the traditional elevator speech (Ayu, 2015). This article encourages you to abandon the script which can be problematic for novel speakers for a genuine conversation that focuses on the person and allows them to respond more naturally. Either way, it is important that you plan ahead, know yourself and your strengths to present your best self and build connections that will help you succeed professionally.

# The Job Search Process

The job search should begin when you are in college and not after you have already graduated. There are many ways to promote yourself while you are in college. Call the hiring manager directly and schedule an appointment with a company representative or hiring manager to learn more about the company. Any connection you make in person, especially since most application processes are online, will help make a good first impression. The hiring manager's job is to get to know you, learn your skills, and determine if you are going to be a good fit for their company as well as if their company is going to be a good fit for you. Give them your business card or resume and let them know that you would love to hear from them about any opportunities that might be available. Keep in mind that you only want to provide your phone number if you have a professional voicemail set up and make sure that you give out your professional email or your school email address, not your personal email address. Finally, follow-up after meetings with a thank you card or note showing your appreciation for their time and the information shared with you.

Another tip when you are going through the job search process is to keep a record of the places you applied, when you applied and if you interviewed. It is recommended that you keep an Excel document with all of this information readily available and easily accessible. Have a section where you state the various companies that you have applied for along with the date that you submitted your application. Write down the contact information for the person you are in contact with so that you are prepared and have that information when you need it.

# The Application Process

The job search process will allow you to research the company, review the job description, and better prepare your application. Part of the job search process is creating a job portfolio that includes your business documents for applying for work. Your application should necessitate a résumé, references, a cover letter, and, in some cases, a professional website or online profile.

A **résumé** is *a document that summarizes your education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences in a clear and concise format for potential employers*. The résumé serves three distinct purposes that define its format, design, and presentation:

1. to represent your professional information in writing,
2. to demonstrate the relationship between your professional information and the problem or challenge the potential employer hopes to solve or address, often represented in the form of a job description or duties,
3. and to get you an interview by clearly demonstrating you meet the minimum qualifications and have the professional background to help the organization meet its goals.

You can consult the Appendix of the textbook for help with writing a résumé.

If you are asked to attach or send a **cover letter**, this is the time to explain to the employer why you want this particular job and what makes you want to work for them. This is when you want to let them know what you can do for them and why you would be the perfect fit for their company. In your cover letter, you do not need to talk about what is on your resume! Cover letters connect your resume to their job position announcement.

A **professional website or online profile page** is similar to *a résumé that represents you: your background, qualifications, and examples of your professional work online.* People network, link, and connect in new ways via online profiles or professional sites like LinkedIn. In many ways, your online profile is an online version of your résumé with connections, friends, and your skills on public display.

You have to take initiative, take your future into your own hands and step out of your comfort zone. Once you have completed your job search, the next step is the job interview.

# The Interview Process

If you receive an interview, document when you heard back and when the interview is set for. An **employment interview** is *an exchange between a candidate and a prospective employer (or their representative).* Employers expect you to be prepared. It is no longer acceptable to walk into an interview, or interview on the phone and not have done your background research of the company that you are interviewing.

## Preparation

Before going into an interview, do your research. Search the company and those who will be interviewing you for the position. Know their names, their positions, and what they do for the company. Learn the company's goals, what they are working to accomplish, and how you can aid in working towards this. Practice interview questions and speaking in that setting. Sit in your room, record yourself or look in the mirror and answer questions and speak to yourself. This helps in making sure that you are prepared and allows you to see what you look like when you speak and how you speak. Watch your body language, facial expressions, and listen to the inflections of your voice. Sometimes you do not notice the way you speak or how you look when you speak so watching yourself can help notice easy changes you can make.

It is helpful to look up potential interview questions and be prepared with how you would answer. It is easy to find commonly asked interview questions online and going through to answer them will help increase confidence and how you wish to speak during the interview. Employers often ask questions that require a response which demonstrates action or a process you took. How you handled something difficult or a time when you were challenged to work with persons with a different point of view. In interviews, be prepared to give examples of “a time when” you had to handle a stressful situation, make a different decision, work with people that challenged you or had to manage/deal with change. Employers want to know beyond the training and skills your degree program and experience has provided; how do you respond to stress, difficult decisions, manage change, and work with groups of people with a diverse background.

## Interviewing

Dress to impress! Show up in professional attire. Even if you are sitting for a phone interview, dress up for it. It helps to get in the mindset of being professional and being prepared for the interview. If you are physically going to an interview, be 15 minutes early. This shows that you are prompt, on-time, and gives you time to gather your thoughts before the interview begins.

You may be invited to participate in a phone interview or conference call and be told to expect it will last around twenty minutes. The telephone carries your voice and your words but doesn’t carry your nonverbal gestures. If you remember to speak directly into the telephone, look up and smile, your voice will come through clearly and you will sound competent and pleasant. Whatever you do, don’t take the call on a cell phone with an iffy connection—your interviewers are guaranteed to be unfavorably impressed if you keep breaking up during the call. Use the phone to your advantage by preparing responses on note cards or on your computer screen before the call. When the interviewers ask you questions, keep track of the time, limiting each response to about a minute. If you know that a twenty-minute call is scheduled for a certain time, you can anticipate that your phone may ring a minute or two late, as interviews are often scheduled in a series while the committee is all together at one time. Even if you only have one interview, your interviewers will have a schedule and your sensitivity to it can help improve your performance.

You can also anticipate that the last few minutes will be set aside for you to ask your questions. This is your opportunity to learn more about the problems or challenges that the position will be addressed, allowing you a final opportunity to reinforce a positive message with the audience. Keep your questions simple, your attitude positive, and communicate your interest. At the same time as you are being interviewed, know that you too are interviewing the prospective employer. If you have done your homework you may already know what the organization is all about, but you may still be unsure whether it is the right fit for you. Listen and learn from what is said as well as what is not said, and you will add to your knowledge base for wise decision making in the future.

In a face-to-face interview, your portfolio/padfolio is where you should keep an extra copy of your questions and resume. Feel free to take notes in your padfolio during the interview. If there is something that they ask you to do, something that you find interesting that you want to remember, they offer you another interview and give you a time, write it down.

It's okay if at this point you are wondering what the difference is between a portfolio and a padfolio. Here's a helpful website. (Quality Logo Products, Inc., 2017)

## Follow-Up

You completed your research of the organization, learned more about the position, were on time for the interview (virtual or in person), wore neat and professional clothes, and demonstrated professionalism in your brief, prepared responses. Congratulations are in order, but so is more work on your part.

Remember that feedback is part of the communication process: follow up promptly with a thank-you note or e-mail, expressing your appreciation for the interviewer's time and interest. You may also indicate that you will call or email next week to see if they have any further questions for you. (Naturally, if you say you will do this, make sure you follow through!) In the event that you have decided the position is not right for you, the employer will appreciate you notifying them without delay. Do this tactfully, keeping in mind that communication occurs between individuals and organizations in ways you cannot predict.

You may receive a letter, note, or voice mail explaining that another candidate's combination of experience and education better matched the job description. If this happens, it is only natural for you to feel disappointed. Focus on your skill sets: if they need improvement, consider additional education that will enhance your knowledge and skills. Seek out local resources and keep networking. Have your professional interview attire clean and ready, and focus on what you can control—your preparation and performance.

# 8. Global/ Intercultural Fluency

## A Global Community

As a professional in the modern business community, you need to be aware that the very concept of community is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Throughout the world's history—until recently—a community was defined by its geographic boundaries. A merchant supplied salt and sugar, and people made what they needed. The products the merchant sold were often produced locally because the cost of transportation was significant. A transcontinental railroad brought telegraph lines, shipping routes, and brought ports together from coast to coast. Shipping that once took months and years was now measured in days. A modern highway system and cheap oil products allowed for that measurement unit to be reduced to days and minutes. Just in time product delivery reduced storage costs, from renting a warehouse at the port to spoilage in transit. As products sold, bar code and RDIF (radio frequency identification) tagged items instantly updated inventories and initiated orders at factories all over the world.

Communication, both oral and written, linked communities in ways that we failed to recognize until economic turmoil in one place led to job loss, in a matter of days or minutes, thousands of miles away. A system of trade and the circulation of capital and goods that once flowed relatively seamlessly have been challenged by change, misunderstanding, and conflict. People learn of political, economic, and military turmoil that is instantly translated into multiple market impacts. Integrated markets and global networks bind us together in ways we are just now learning to appreciate, anticipate, and understand. Intercultural and international communication are critical areas of study with readily apparent, real-world consequences.

Agrarian, industrial, and information ages gave way to global business and brought the importance of communication across cultures to the forefront. The Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Thomas Friedman calls this new world "flat," (Friedman, T., 2005) noting how the integration of markets and community had penetrated the daily lives of nearly everyone on the planet, regardless of language or culture. While the increasing ease of telecommunications and travel have transformed the nature of doing business, Friedman argues that "the dawning 'flat world' is a jungle pitting 'lions' and 'gazelles,' where 'economic stability is not going to be a feature' and 'the weak will fall farther behind'" (Publishers Weekly, 2009). Half of the world's population that earn less than $2 (USD) a day felt the impact of a reduction in trade and fluctuations in commodity prices even though they may not have known any of the details. Rice, for example, became an even more valuable commodity than ever; to the individuals who could not find it, grow it, or earn enough to buy it, the hunger felt was personal and global. International trade took on a new level of importance.

Intercultural and international business communication has taken on a new role for students as well as career professionals. Knowing when the European and Asian markets open has become mandatory; so has awareness of multiple time zones and their importance in relation to trade, shipping, and the production cycle. Managing production in China from an office in Chicago has become common. Receiving technical assistance for your computer often means connecting with a well-educated English speaker in New Delhi. We compete with each other via Elance.com or oDesk.com for contracts and projects, selecting the currency of choice for each bid as we can be located anywhere on the planet. Communities are no longer linked as simply "brother" and "sister" cities in symbolic partnerships. They are linked in the daily trade of goods and services.

If the foundation of communication is important, its application in this context is critical. Just as Europe once formed intercontinental alliances for the trade of metals—leading to the development of a common currency, trade zone, and new concept of nation-state—now North and South America are following with increased integration. Major corporations are no longer affiliated with only one country or one country's interests but instead perceive the integrated market as team members across global trade.

Global business is more than trade between companies located in distinct countries; indeed, that concept is already outdated. Intercultural and international business focuses less on the borders that separate people and more on the communication that brings them together. Business communication values clear, concise interaction that promotes efficiency and effectiveness. You may perceive your role as a business communicator within a specific city, business, or organization, but you need to be aware that your role crosses cultures, languages, value and legal systems, and borders.

# How to Understand Intercultural Communication

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often cited as a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication (Chen, G. and Starosta, W., 2000). Born in 1914, Hall spent much of his early adulthood in the multicultural setting of the American Southwest, where Native Americans, Spanish-speakers, and descendents of pioneers came together from diverse cultural perspectives. He then traveled the globe during World War II and later served as a U.S. State Department official. Where culture had once been viewed by anthropologists as a single, distinct way of living, Hall saw how the perspective of the individual influences interaction. By focusing on interactions rather than cultures as separate from individuals, he asked us to evaluate the many cultures we ourselves belong to or are influenced by as well as those with whom we interact. While his view makes the study of intercultural communication far more complex, it also brings a healthy dose of reality to the discussion. Hall is generally credited with eight contributions to our study of intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; McLean, 2005):

1. *Compare cultures*. Focus on the interactions versus general observations of culture.
2. *Shift to local perspective*. Local level versus global perspective.
3. *You don't have to know everything to know something*. Time, space, gestures, and gender roles can be studied, even if we lack a larger understanding of the entire culture.
4. *There are rules we can learn*. People create rules for themselves in each community that we can learn from, compare, and contrast.
5. *Experience counts*. Personal experience has value in addition to more comprehensive studies of interaction and culture.
6. *Perspectives can differ*. Descriptive linguistics serves as a model to understand cultures, and the U.S. Foreign Service adopted it as a base for training.
7. *Intercultural communication can be applied to international business*. U.S. Foreign Service training yielded applications for trade and commerce and became a point of study for business majors.
8. *It integrates the disciplines*. Culture and communication are intertwined and bring together many academic disciplines.

Hall shows us that emphasis on a culture as a whole, and how it operates, may lead us to neglect individual differences. Individuals may hold beliefs or practice customs that do not follow their own cultural norm. When we resort to the mental shortcut of a stereotype, we lose these unique differences. (Rogers, E. and Steinfatt, T., 1999).

As Hall notes, experience has value. If you do not know a culture, you should consider learning more about it firsthand if possible. The people you interact with may not be representative of the culture as a whole, but that is not to say that what you learn lacks validity. Quite the contrary; Hall asserts that you can, in fact, learn something without understanding everything, and given the dynamic nature of communication and culture, who is to say that your lessons will not serve you well? Your experiences will allow you to learn about another culture and yourself, and help you to avoid prejudice. As Allport illustrated for us, we often assume characteristics about groups with which we have little contact. Sometimes we also assume similarity, thinking that people are all basically similar. This denies cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and many other valuable, insightful differences.

# Common Cultural Characteristics

While we may be members of many different cultures, we tend to adhere to some more than others. As you take many of the same classes and share many experiences on campus, you begin to have more and more in common, in effect forming a small group culture of your own. A similar cultural formation process may happen in the workplace, where coworkers spend many hours each week sharing work experiences and getting to know each other socially in the process.

## Rites of Initiation

Cultures tend to have a ritual for becoming a new member. A newcomer starts out as a nonentity, a stranger, an unaffiliated person with no connection or even possibly awareness of the community. Newcomers who stay around and learn about the culture become members. Most cultures have a **rite of initiation** that marks *the passage of the individual within the community*; some of these rituals may be so informal as to be hardly noticed (e.g., the first time a coworker asks you to join the group to eat lunch together), while others may be highly formalized (e.g., the ordination of clergy in a religion). The nonmember becomes a member, the new member becomes a full member, and individuals rise in terms of responsibility and influence.

In every business, there are groups, power struggles, and unspoken ways that members earn their way from the role of a “newbie” to that of a full member. The newbie may get the tough account, the office without a window, or the cubicle next to the bathroom, denoting low status. As the new member learns to navigate through the community—establishing a track record and being promoted—he passes the rite of initiation and acquires new rights and responsibilities.

Over time, the person comes to be an important part of the business, a "keeper of the flame." The "flame" may not exist in physical space or time, but it does exist in the minds of those members in the community who have invested time and effort in the business. It is not a flame to be trusted to a new person, as it can only be earned with time. Along the way, there may be personality conflicts and power struggles over resources and perceived scarcity (e.g., there is only one promotion and everyone wants it). All these challenges are to be expected in any culture.

## Common History and Traditions

Think for a moment about the history and traditions of a business like Ford Motor Company—what are your associations with Henry Ford, the assembly line manufacturing system, or the Model T? Or the early days of McDonald's? Do you have an emotional response to mental images of the "golden arches" logo, Ronald McDonald, or the Big Mac sandwich? Traditions form as the organization grows and expands, and stories are told and retold to educate new members on how business should be conducted. The history of every culture, of every corporation, influences the present. There are times when the phrase "we've tried that before" can become stumbling block for members of the organization as it grows and adapts to new market forces. There may be struggles between members who have weathered many storms and new members, who come armed with new educational perspectives, technological tools, or experiences that may contribute to growth.

## Common Values and Principles

Cultures all hold values and principles that are commonly shared and communicated from older members to younger (or newer) ones. Time and length of commitment are associated with an awareness of these values and principles, so that new members, whether they are socialized at home, in school, or at work, may not have a thorough understanding of their importance. For example, time (fast customer service) and cleanliness are two cornerstone values of the McDonald's corporation. A new employee may take these for granted, while a seasoned professional who inspects restaurants may see the continued need to reinforce these core values. Without reinforcement, norms may gradually change, and if this were the case, it could fundamentally change the customer experience associated with McDonald's.

## Common Purpose and Sense of Mission

Cultures share a common sense of purpose and mission. Why are we here and whom do we serve? These are fundamental questions of the human condition that philosophers and theologians all over the world have pondered for centuries. In business, the answers to these questions often address purpose and mission, and they can be found in mission and vision statements of almost every organization. Individual members will be expected to acknowledge and share the mission and vision, actualize them, or make them real through action. Without action, the mission and vision statements are simply an arrangement of words. As a guide to individual and group behavioral norms, they can serve as a powerful motivator and a call to action.

# Cultures Are Dynamic Systems

Cultures celebrate heroes, denigrate villains, and have specific ways of completing jobs and tasks. In business and industry, the emphasis may be on effectiveness and efficiency, but the practice can often be “because that is the way we have always done it.” Rituals serve to guide our performance and behavior and may be limited to small groups or celebrated across the entire company. A pink Cadillac has a special meaning for a Mary Kay cosmetics representative. How that car is received is ritualistic, recognizing current success while honoring past performances across the company. Rituals can serve to bind a group together, or to constrain it. Institutions tend to formalize processes and then have a hard time adapting to new circumstances. While the core values or mission statement may hold true, the method of doing things that worked in the past may not be as successful as it once was. Adaptation and change can be difficult for individuals and companies, and yet all communities, cultures, and communication contexts are dynamic, or always changing. As much as we might like things to stay the same, they will always change—and we will change with (and be changed by) them.

# 7.4 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

You are now able to understand how important communication skills are to the practice and continued professionalism expected in business settings. You are now more qualified to begin identifying your career goals and with continued practice, you can be successful in our global, intercultural world. Now that you have been introduced to the NACE career readiness competencies, you are ready to begin your journey as a student toward career professionalism and success. The Indiana State University Career Center provides a significant campus resource as you prepare for your future. As part of your career readiness initiative, you will complete My Plan through ISU.

### Discussion

- How can the career readiness competencies prepare you for a successful transition into the workplace?
- Interview one person whose job involves writing. This can include writing e-mails, reports, proposals, invoices, or any other form of business document. Where did this person learn to write? What would they include as essential steps to learning to write for success in business? What is the benefit of networking while you are in college?
- Make a list of the written communication that you read, skim, or produce in a one day. Please share your results with the class.
- Identify a company that you might be interested in working for. Use the resources described in this section to research information about the company, the kinds of jobs it hires people to do, and the needs and goals of the organization. Share your findings with your classmates.
- Consider a culture with which you have had little interaction. Write down at least five terms to describe that culture.

### Key Terms

- audio-only interaction

- audio-visual interaction
- career readiness
- competency
- cookies
- elevator pitch
- employment interview
- feedback
- group dynamics
- hard skills
- hit
- hubs
- initiation
- leader-as-coach
- leader-as-conductor
- leader-as-technician
- netiquette
- networking
- online profile page
- page views
- preview
- resume
- rite of initiation
- soft skills
- talking points

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# CHAPTER 8: SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

# 8.1 Introduction

## Learning Objectives

After reading this module you should be able to:

- Define what constitutes a group.
- Identify group roles.
- Understand different styles of leadership in groups.
- Recognize options for decision making in groups.
- Identify the six steps to problem-solving in groups.

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. However, according to Forbes magazine, the reality is, many companies are promoting groups as the model working environment (Adams, 2014).

*"When I die, I would like the people I did group projects with to lower me into 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.

# 8.2 Defining Small Groups and Teams

## Defining Small 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 (1990), **a small group** is 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*." They go on to say that the three key components of groups are, "size, goal orientation, and mutual influence." Interpersonal communication is often thought about in terms of a dyad, 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, 2011). So if you feel this is unimportant to know, remember that group communication and teamwork skills are critical to your success later in life.

For example, Joseph Bonito, a communication professor at the 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, 2013). 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 teams are groups, not all groups are teams. A Team is a special type of group. 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 members' 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 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.

## Groups differ from teams in several ways (Boundless Management, 2017:

- Task orientation: Teams require coordination of tasks and activities to achieve a shared aim. Groups do not need to focus on specific outcomes or a common purpose.
- Degree of interdependence: Team members are interdependent since they bring to bear a set of resources to produce a common outcome. Individuals in a group can be entirely disconnected from one another and not rely on fellow members at all.
- Purpose: Teams are formed for a particular reason and can be short- or long-lived. Groups can exist as a matter of fact; for example, a group can be comprised of people of the same race or ethnic background.
- Degree of formal structure: Team members' individual roles and duties are specified and their ways of working together are defined. Groups are generally much more informal; roles do not need to be assigned and norms of behavior do not need to develop.
- Familiarity among members: Team members are aware of the set of people they collaborate with since they interact to complete tasks and activities. Members of a group may have personal relationships or they may have little knowledge of each other and no interactions whatsoever.

Sometimes it is difficult to draw a distinction between a team and a group. For instance, a set of coworkers might meet on occasion to discuss an issue or provide input on a decision. While such meetings typically have an agenda and thus a purpose and some structure, we would not necessarily think of those in attendance as a team. The activity scope and duration is just too small to involve the amount of coordination of resources and effort that teamwork requires.  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.

# 8.3 Characteristics and Types of Groups

## 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 one another 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, 1951; Cragon, Wright & Kasch, 2008; Sherblom, 2002). 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? Because we all communicate every day, there must be something that distinguishes the interaction in groups from other forms of communication. Cragon, Wright, and Kasch (2008) 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*. 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, 2014). Studying 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. Systems Theory suggests that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." This is the very idea of synergy (Sherblom, 2002). 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 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 (Richards, 2017) 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 (1998) categorize groups "on the basis of the reason they were formed and the human needs they serve". 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, 1998). These special people in your life constitute 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, 1998; Sherblom, 2002; Cragan, Wright & Kasch, 2008). Larson and LaFasto (1989) 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".
- **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 is the Sycamore Gaming Club, in which members meet for the purpose of scheduling times to play games, arranging events, and choosing where to play.

- **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.

## 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 for 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. This site has a summary of the kinds of Interest Groups that operate in Washington, DC and how they operate (USHistory.org, 2017).

The study of social movements reveals the importance of groups for accomplishing goals. Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, and Schulz (2010), 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 "*a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals and it includes tactics designed to win public support.*" Without a sufficient group, the actions of individual protesters are likely to be dismissed. The strategy of **solidification** "*occurs mainly inside the agitating group" and is "primarily used to unite followers.*" 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*. 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.

## 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 a 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.

**The Women's Caucus**

The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (CCWI) is a Congressional Member 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. (WPI); 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.

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. 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 ideas such as being able to "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" and create success for yourself.

# 8.4 Power in Groups

## 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?

There is no simple answer to these questions and there is no single definition of power. The word "power" literally means "to be able" and has many implications. One way to think about power is to think about power is in terms of the relationships between people. In the workplace, your boss can exert power to make you work late or fire you. If you don't work there, that person cannot make you do anything. That ability to exert power only exists when there is the proper relationship between people. Additionally, the ability to exert that power depends on the proper place and time. A judge cannot walk down the street sentencing random people to prison sentences. A judge can only sentence someone while presiding over a case where the person is a defendant.

The types of power we draw on in relationships have long been a topic of small group study. Researchers John R. P. French and Bertram Raven identified five types of power someone may draw on: **legitimate**, **expert**, **referent**, **reward**, and **coercive** (French & Raven, 1959). Like power itself, these types of power are relational and dependent on the situation. What works in one situation might not work in another. Let's explore each type in more depth:

## Legitimate Power

**Legitimate power** is the *power that flows from the officially recognized position, status, or title of a group member*. So someone like a boss or your teacher has legitimate power because they have an official position that gives them authority over others.

It is important to note legitimate power only exists when people recognize and respect that position. You can name yourself King of the USA but don't expect to be treated like royalty. Even with a title, leaders must still earn the ability to provide leadership.

## Expert Power

Being an expert in something can also be a source of power. For example, when you have a problem with your computer, who do you turn to? Or maybe you are a person others turn to for help with computers. Either way, how does the computer expert have power in that situation?

**Expert power** is the power *that comes from knowledge, skill, or expertise that a group member possesses and other group members do not*. In the classroom, your teacher ideally has both legitimate power and expert power because that person holds the position and is qualified to teach that topic. In some situations, the boss is not the expert in a particular area. A leader who has legitimate and expert power may be able to take a central role in setting the group's direction, contributing to problem-solving, and helping the group achieve its goal. In groups with a designated leader who relies primarily on legitimate power, a member with a significant amount of expert power may emerge as an unofficial secondary leader.

## Referent Power

**Referent power** is the power *that comes from the attractiveness, likeability, and charisma of the group member*. Some studies have shown that more physically attractive people and more outgoing people are often chosen as leaders. This could be due to their referent power. Referent power also derives from a person's reputation. A group member may have referent power if he or she is well respected outside of the group for previous accomplishments or even because he or she is known as a dependable and capable group member. Like legitimate power, the fact that a person possesses referent power doesn't mean he or she has the talent, skill, or other characteristic needed to actually lead the group. A person could just be likable but have no relevant knowledge about the group's task or leadership experience. Some groups actually desire this type of leader, especially if the person is meant to attract external attention and serve as more of a "figurehead" than a regularly functioning group member. For example, a group formed to raise funds for a science and nature museum may choose a former mayor, local celebrity, or NASA astronaut as their leader because of his or her referent power. In this situation, it would probably be best for the group to have a secondary leader who attends to task and problem-solving functions within the group.

## Reward and Coercive Power

The final two types of power, reward and coercive, are related. **Reward power** is the power *that comes from the ability of a group member to provide a positive incentive as a compliance-gaining strategy*, and **coercive power** is the power *that comes from the ability of a group member to provide a negative incentive*. Imagine if a parent wants you to do something. The parent can either promise you a reward for completing the task or threaten you with punishment if you do not do it. That is reward and coercive power.

These two types of power can be difficult to manage because their use can lead to interpersonal conflict. If one person in a group seems to be rewarded more often it can cause jealousy and if one person feels punished more it can lead to tension and resentment. Additionally, the use of reward power may seem corny or paternalistic to some or may arouse accusations of favoritism or jealousy among group members who don't receive the award.

Like the other types of power, these are only effective if the recipient values the reward or fears the punishment. In grade school, a gold star on a paper may be motivating but it might not be as effective at work. Similarly, being sent to your room is only an effective form of coercion if you don't want to go there anyway.

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?

## 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 (2009) 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. 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 are driven by 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, 1970; Paulson, 2011). 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, 1965; Fisher, 1970; Sherblom, 2002; Benson, 2010; Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp, 2012). 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.

### Stages of Group Formation

- **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 the 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 of 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 a 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.

## 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 (2014) 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.

Now that you understand how groups form, let's discuss the ways in which people participate in groups. Because 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.

# 8.5 Group Roles and Leadership

## 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 easily. 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, 1991). 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 who 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*. The person you identify as the leader of the group or put in charge of the group 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 who 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 there is 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 who *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 cheerleader, 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 environment for others to share ideas and offer suggestions*. **Followers** are *group members who do what they are told, going along with decisions and assignments from the group*. The **Tension Releaser** is the person who *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*.
- **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.

### Case in Point

The popular sitcom Workaholics (2011-present) follows three college dropouts who work at 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 act as the joker or clown at one point or another. As you might guess, this group is very unproductive and ineffective.

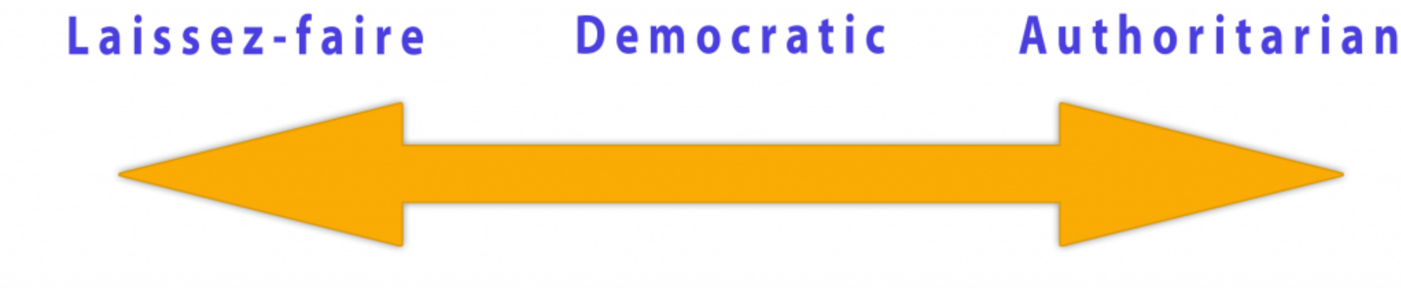
- **Individual Roles.** Because groups are made of individuals, group members often play various roles in order to achieve individual goals. The **Aggressor** engages in *forceful or dominating communication to put others down or initiate conflict with other members*. This communication style can cause some members to remain silent or passive. The **Blocker** is the person who *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 who views the group as one that is there to perform group therapy. The **Withdrawer***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. The **Joker or Clown** uses *inappropriate humor or remarks that can steer the group from its mission*. (University of Minnesota Libraries, 2016)

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. 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? 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.

# 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 of 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, 1990; Berkowitz,1953).




- **Laissez-faire** is a French term that literally means “Let (people) do (as they choose)”. 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, 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, the faculty does not like working in groups where one person is making the decisions. Instead, most 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 no 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. Many scholars recognize that the leadership style is influenced by the relationships that are determined by the group or teams connection and feelings about their leader. In some instances, not taking into account the style of leadership, leaders become transformative. A **Transformative leader** is *highly respected and admired as role-models and mentors.* 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.

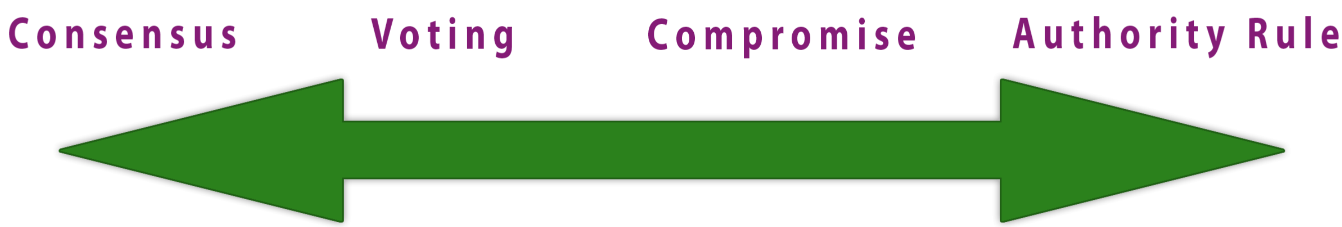
Brilhart and Galanes (1998) divide norms into two categories. General norms "direct the behavior of the group as a whole". Meeting times, how meetings run, and the division of tasks are all examples of general norms that groups form and maintain. These norms establish the generally accepted rules of 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".

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 perform the assigned task? 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 the matter differently? If so, how would you have handled the matter?

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?

# 8.6 Decision Making and Problem Solving 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 all agree to adopt it as a unanimous decision*. 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, because 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 of the group.

### Group Communication and You

Perhaps you're thinking to yourself that your future career isn't really going to require work in a group or team. 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. (Adams, 2014)

**Voting** by the 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 of the faculty voted yes for the person, while two of the 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 they did not want to take the job because they felt that the two people who voted no would not treat them 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 when *each member gives up something, as well as gains something to reach an agreement or solve a problem*. 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 given up and obtained. There is nothing in a compromise that says these concessions 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 a 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 they were not valued in the group process and their time was not validated.

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, 2012). Many people argue that groupthink is the reason behind some of the 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, 2012). 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 way 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 other hand, 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 Sierra 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 other hand, imagine having to work in a group where you believe you could do just the same on your own experiencing a lack of synergy or connection. 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?

# Dividing the Work of Groups

When students are asked to give their feelings on group work, there are always those who say they hate working in groups. However, think about all the groups we work in every day: friendship groups, family groups, sports teams, extracurricular groups. Working with groups is part of our lives. So, what are some ways to make it more productive?

As might be expected from this course, the solution to group problems is effective communication. Throughout the process of working with a group, it is important that you and your group members communicate with each other clearly. If you have a problem, let members know. If you can't make it to a meeting, let members know. There is nothing more frustrating for a group than someone disappearing for days only to show up on the day of the presentation with the expectation that they will be able to participate.

Another thing a group can do is establish rules and expectations for the group. If possible, it should be in writing. You can use something like Google Docs to make a shared document that is online and accessible to everyone. That way if a conflict comes up, the group can refer back to the rules they all agreed to.

Also, sharing schedules with each other is important to do early on. If there is a day of the week or a time of day you can never meet, then tell everyone early on. It is a good idea to also put this in writing. That way if you say you can't meet on Wednesdays and they schedule a meeting that day, you can point to the document and remind them that you told them you were unavailable. There are online services for coordinating schedules that may be useful for this. Some of them are Doodle, Framadate, and When Is Good. Experiment with these. And if one doesn't work for your group then try another.

It can also be helpful to share your working styles and the roles you typically take on in group work. This way you can know the strengths and weaknesses of the group early on. Take advantage of your strengths and work on your weaknesses.

# Cooperation and Collaboration in Groups

When it comes to how groups work, they can be cooperative, collaborative, or a combination of both. What is the difference between cooperation and collaboration? The two terms are often used interchangeably but the distinction between them can be important. In "The Construction of Shared Knowledge in Collaborative Problem Solving," Roschelle and Teasley define cooperative group work as "the division of labour among participants, as an activity where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving" and collaborative work is "a coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem" (1995, p. 70). In many classes, students will cooperate on an assignment and one person will work on the visual aid, another will do the research, and someone else will do the writing.

If a group works collaboratively, everyone shares ideas and contributes to all aspects of the project. The advantage of this is that everyone can have input, have a chance to point out weaknesses, and make the end result better. The disadvantages of this are that it can take more time because the group has to make decisions together which can be chaotic and lead to interpersonal conflicts. This can be minimized by following the guidelines on how to deal with conflict in this textbook. In reality, most groups do a combination of cooperation and collaboration but in most cases, groups should try to be as collaborative as possible.

Lynn Power puts it well when she writes:

The reality is that true collaboration is hard — and it doesn't mean compromise or consensus-building. It means giving up control to other people. It means being vulnerable. It means needing to know when to fall on your sword and when to back down. Collaboration is inherently messy. Great ideas need some tension; otherwise, they would be easy to make. And ultimately, members need to be respectful of other people's roles, thoughts and what they bring to the table. And there also needs to be trusted. (2016)

So next time you do some group work, don't just cooperate, collaborate!

# Six Steps for Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is an important skill because we are faced with problems every day. **Problem-solving** is *the process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues*. We solve problems on our own but we also seek support and guidance when solving problems. A group or team can be a more productive way to solve problems by allowing for more perspectives. Organization makes possible, better outcomes from the time and energy we dedicate to problem-solving in groups. However, this does not come naturally. The following provides us with a script for more efficiently solving problems in groups.

## Step One: Define the Problem

In this step, you explore the nature of the problem, its scope, and who is affected by it. First, group members must come to a shared understanding of key terms embedded in the problem. For example, if your group is asked to propose a solution for improving retention at Indiana State University, does everyone in your group know what is meant by "retention" and appreciate the impact of retention on student learning? Next, group members need to determine potential issues of fact (statistical other data, comparative examples, etc.), value (determining who is impacted by the problem and who should benefit from your solution), and policy (what should be done). Finally, develop a research plan to learn more about the problem and answer question raised during this first step. Some of this research you can do during your first meeting, however, most of this research will be accomplished before your next meeting.

## Step Two: Analyze the Problem

For step two, group members share the results of their research efforts. What do you now know about the problem you have been tasked with solving and those impacted by the problem? During this group discussion, it is often the case that new questions that need answers arise. Make a plan to follow-up with these questions. Next, your group needs to decide on your problem-solving direction. What set of criteria (goals) must any given solution to this problem achieve? Or, what are the non-negotiable accomplishments that must occur?

## Step Three: Generate Possible Solutions

The goal is step three is to generate ideas that may contribute to the formulation of possible solutions. It is at this point where you engage in a brainstorming activity or the generating of ideas related to your discussion. Your group can set its own rules, or norms, for how your brainstorming activity will work. For example, will you allow interruptions or criticisms during the process? Why, or why not? Will you take turns during the brainstorming activity or let it be a free-for-all? Will someone take notes?

## Step Four: Evaluate Possible Solutions

After your group has generated possible solutions, next you systematically evaluate each of these. Determine three or four of the best ideas generated from the brainstorming activity. Next, apply your criteria established in step two to your list of possible solutions. Finally, what are the “plusses” and “minuses” associated with each possible solution? You may also want to revisit your discussion on issues of fact, value, and policy as well as any comparative examples discussed in steps one or two.

## Step Five: Select Your Solution

In this step, you decide upon a solution that your group believes best solves the problem. Given the criteria, plusses and minuses, and comparative examples which solution stands out as the best? Often, groups will employ some degree of synthesis, or the combining of certain elements of one solution with another solution. At any point during the step, groups will either use consensus, compromise, voting, or some combination of all of these as a decision-making method. However, it is important to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. One good practice is to go around the group and give each group member a chance to vocalize his or her opinion.

### Step Six: Develop Your Implementation Plan

The final step in the problem-solving process is crucial for securing a successful outcome for your group's work. Indeed, it is not enough to have a good idea or solution. You must employ forward thinking, a specific plan for how your solution will be implemented or put into action. Who will be responsible for carrying out the solution? What outside or inside resources are needed to carry out this solution? What challenges might be faced along the way and how might these issues be resolved? What is a realistic timetable for the solution bringing a positive return? What will that positive return look like? How will you assess the solution's success and weaknesses?

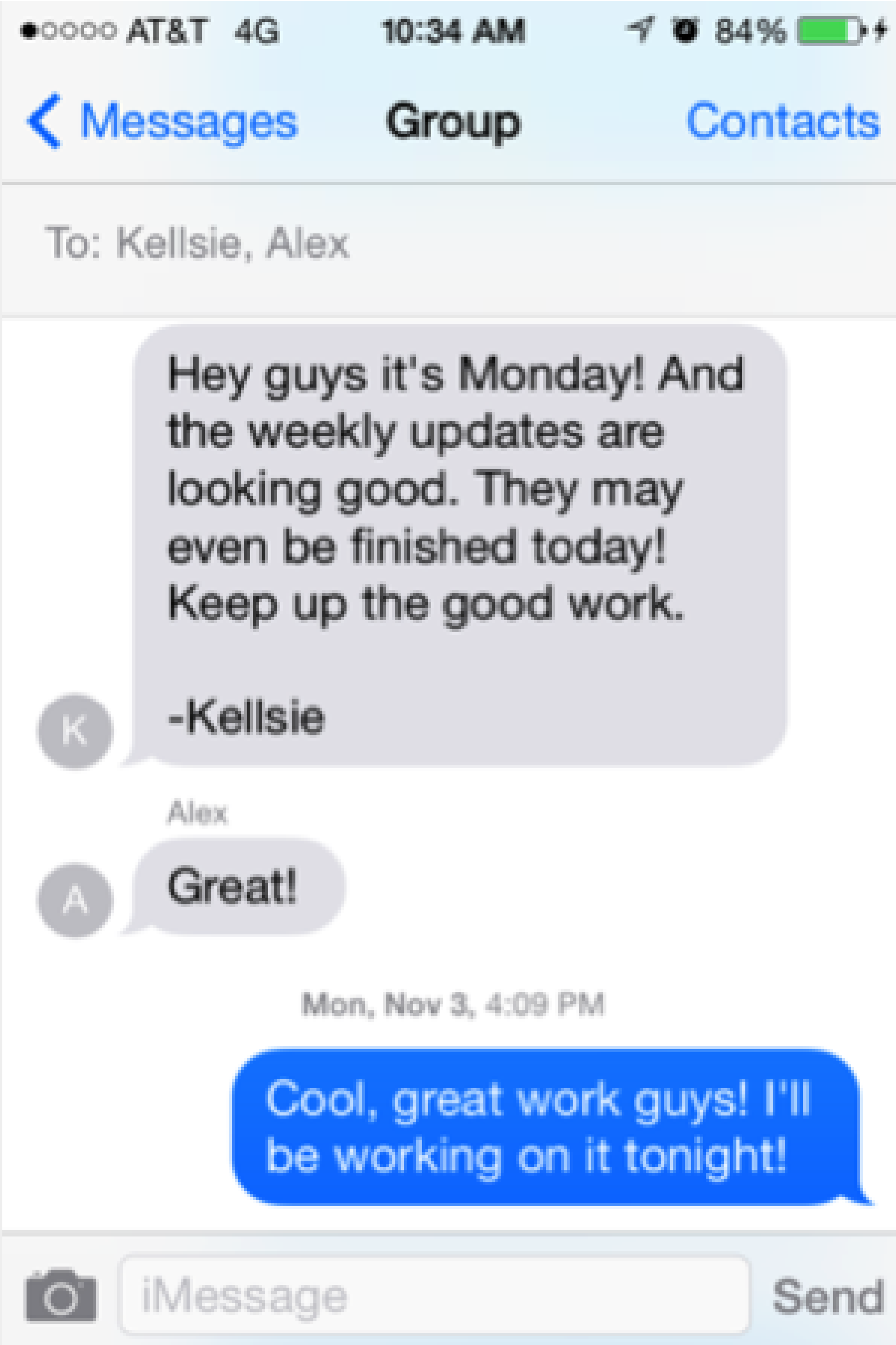
## Group Communication and You

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 sports, 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. Lack of face-to-face encounters requires members to rely on asynchronous forms of communication. 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.The face-to-face nature of traditional group meetings provides immediate processing and feedback through the interaction synchronous group communication.

## 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.

# 8.7 Summary, Discussion, References

## 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.

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.

### 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.

## Key Terms

- activity groups
- authoritarian
- authority rule
- coercive power
- cohesiveness
- collaboration
- common goals
- compromise
- consensus
- cooperation
- decision making in groups
- democratic
- drive reduction
- group roles
- groupthink
- interdependence
- interaction
- laissez faire
- leadership
- learning groups
- legitimate power
- personal growth groups
- polarization
- power
- problem-solving
- promulgation
- referent power
- reward power
- reinforcement
- shared norms
- small group
- solidification

- primary groups
- problem-solving groups
- secondary groups
- stages of group formation
- synergy
- team
- transformative leader
- voting

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- Group of students dissecting a frog
- Marching band in the street
- Group of people white water rafting
- Women’s basketball team

The screen shot of the texting conversation was taken by COMM 101 Instructors and used with permission.

# CHAPTER 9: RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

# 9.1 Introduction

## Learning Objectives

- Define informed learning
- Identify types of research and evidence
- Locate information using research
- Evaluate information for research
- Apply ethical use of information

The first mention of research can send students running for the exits or on a hike to the nearest Wikipedia page, but this need not be the case. If I asked how familiar you were with finding information, conducting research, or evaluating sources, you would probably say, “Not very.” Although you may not think you engage in research regularly, in fact, you conduct research every day in many ways. Our goal is to boost both your confidence and skills for conducting research so that you know what you need and where to find it for any project you are working on.

Imagine you are planning a trip to Alaska.

What are some of the questions you would ask in order to plan your trip?

1. Who is going (family, friends, kids)?
2. How will I travel (car, cruise, air)?
3. When am I going (season, breaks or vacation months, heavy tourism months)?
4. Where am I staying (hotel, bed ‘n breakfast, hostel, friends or family)?
5. What will I do while there/ why am I going (work, tourism, history, entertainment)?

Once you have asked the right questions, you begin to use your resources to plan your vacation. Informed learning begins with knowing what questions to ask and where to find the information you’re looking for. We have already asked the right questions, now it is time to consider the location and resources available to answer those questions.

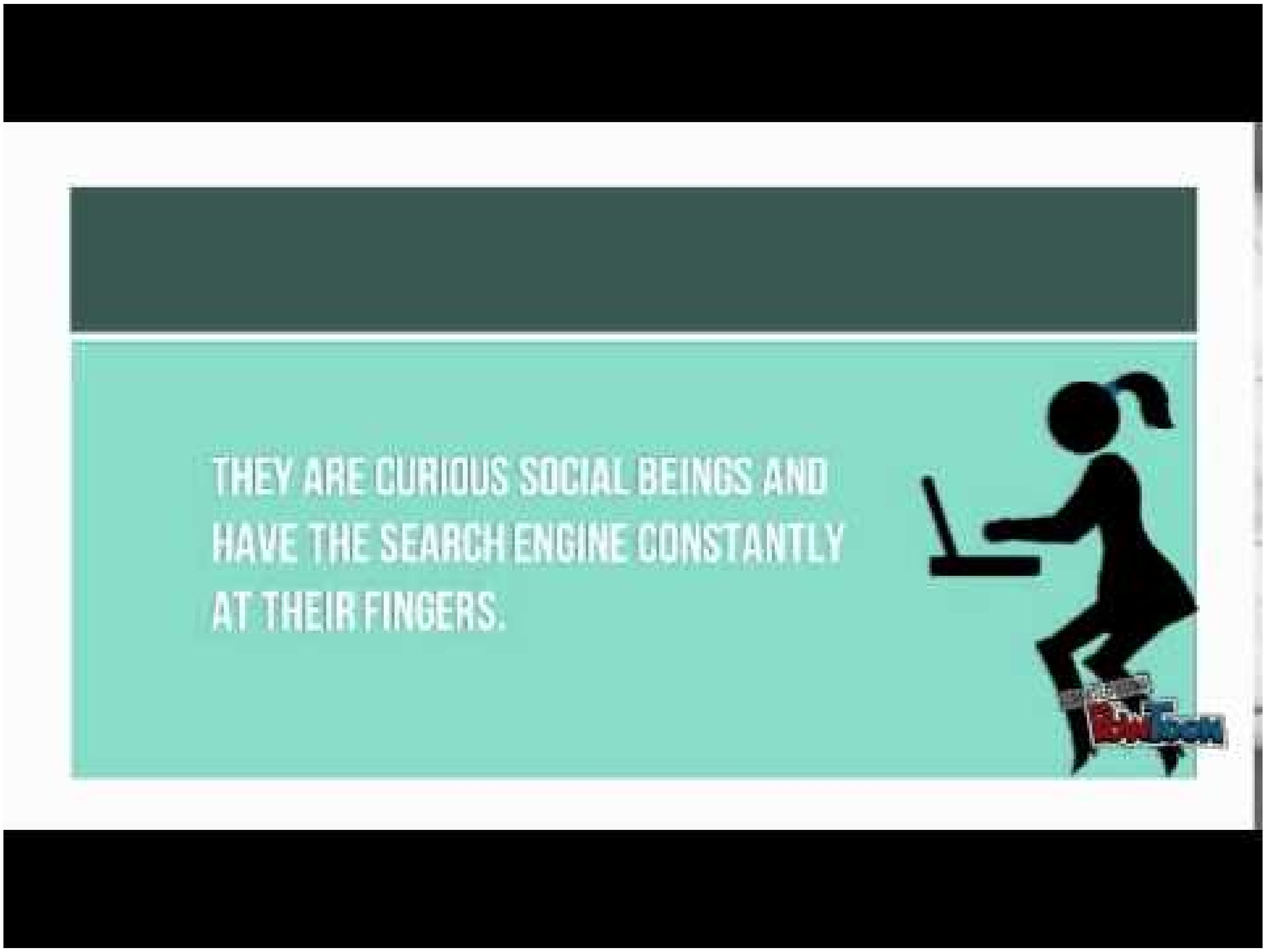
In our Alaska example, you begin by doing online research and locating helpful websites to answer your questions. These websites vary from search sites for articles or comparing different travel hubs including hotels, rentals, airfare, etc. Travel sites may provide seasonal information, historic and educational tourism spots, or popular restaurants and fun activities. The Convention and Visitor Bureau site may provide additional local attractions such as fairs or festivals as well as information about the community. Shopping sites may identify more local treasures by identifying local businesses. Next, you may want to consider speaking with a person who can offer a unique perspective based on knowledge or experience, such as a travel agent. Don't forget to ask those that may have inspired your trip. Ask friends or family members that have visited or live(ed) your destination for special notes that they would share their travels or recommendations. Lastly, before you leave on your trip, do some footwork. Stop into specialty stores, libraries, and book stores for some written guides on the area or literature and travel essentials to accompany you on your trip.

Our Alaska example demonstrates that you do research every day for personal reasons and professional goals. Now it is time to make the transition from personal research to academic research. First, you need to understand what information to use, how to use it, and why you choose one resource over another. This chapter presents a clear definition of informed learning (learning how to be smart in making informational choices), a designation of types of research and how those types are used to provide support, and clear examples of best practices for ethical choices and to avoid plagiarism.

# 9.2: Informed Learning

> **Informed Learning** – *a pedagogy that focuses on learning subject content through engaging with academic or professional information practices* (Maybee, Bruce, Lupton, & Rebmann, 2013).

Informed Learning or Informational Literacy are terms that explain pedagogy (the teaching process) that focuses on how combining subject content through academic practice can result in academic and professional application. Research is applicable to all areas of study at Indiana State University and it is an important connection to educational, personal, and professional learning. These connections boost confidence so that students perform a higher level of comprehension and delivery of content. ISU students recognize that being informed means selecting content for review, building connections, practicing, and implementing higher standards to reading, reviewing research, and demonstration of work.




*A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://textbooks.whatcom.edu/comm101/?p=132*

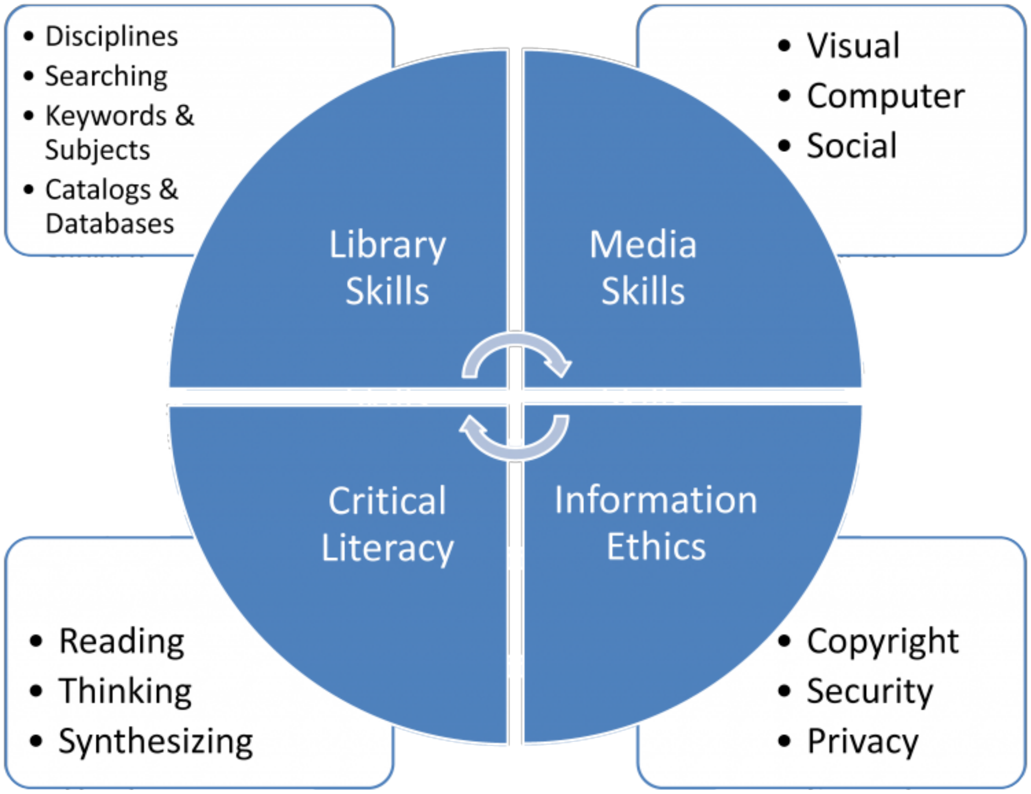
The goal from a student perspective is that informed learning locates resources and evaluates those resources based on conceptual realities mirrored in real life, whether it be family decisions about finance or workplace etiquette. Revising the way you approach learning and including an informed perspective is advantageous for numerous reasons.

Informed learning skills allow students to save time, simplify or clarify reading and assignments, promote connections between ideas and perspectives, encourage participation in the learning process, and facilitate skill development.

## Information Literacy Model

There are various information literacy models. One **Information Literacy Model** c*onsists of four* *components that aid in comprehension of information in various forms*. The four components include library skills, media skills, critical literacy, and information ethics.

- **Library Skills:***Library skills develop literacy by increasing understanding of disciplines of study.* Being able to search within different branches of learning allows you to begin to build a foundation of knowledge to understand areas within your educational pursuits and designated career. Building connections between disciplines create bridges that support a more holistic approach to learning, utilizing search options, keyword and subject search, catalog and database access.
- **Media Skills:***Media skills develop the ability to utilize resources that combine text, graphics, and other combinations of media*. Visual media has always had a strong presence with varied websites offering videos of tutorials and news. Computer generated media are widely becoming a new way to create information. Lastly, social media allows sharing of information more easily than before in the Digital Age.
- **Critical Literacy:***Critical Literacy activates long term memory, including critical reading, critical thinking, and synthesis*. Critical reading is reached when main ideas are determined, interpreted, and evaluated. Critical thinking is reached when analysis, critique, and response motivate observation, experience, and deep learning. Synthesizing is reached when ideas are summarized and a furthered approach to learning is met by combining ideas.
- **Information Ethics:** *Information Ethics teaches you to consider ethical and moral obligations in research, including copyright, security, and privacy*. Research conducted and presented in any format requires an understanding of how to properly evaluate, cite, and attribute sources.




## Exercises

1. In your own words, define informed learning.
2. With a group of classmates, identify strategies, techniques, or tools you have learned that help you approach or apply library skills, media skills, critical literacy, or information ethics.

# 9.3 Research


**Research** is a word that defines *the process of inquiry, location, selection, evaluation, and application of sources*. There are many types of research. A discussion of information includes the different ways that you can conduct research. Informed learning requires that you be able to identify these research types and choose accordingly which one might be useful in what context or scenario. You also want to think about how one type of research might be better implemented for the desired purpose or effect of the audience. The types of research this chapter introduces include Personal and Professional Experience, Internet Research, Library Research, and Interviewing.

## Personal and Professional Experience

You will most likely want to research ideas you find interesting and can see connections to meaningful and effective ways to learn and use the information. Personal and Professional experience are great ways to begin to think about topics or areas that you can write or speak about due to your own knowledge and expertise. Using Personal and Professional experience can help lessen anxiety by allowing you to speak about subjects you are already familiar with or share meaningful stories. Additionally, when speaking from experience you are more excited about your topic, and this improves eye contact because you rely less upon your speaking notes. You connect on a personal level with the audience and build connections through something you are passionate about. Students may not always respond to a topic, but they will respond to a person.

**Personal experience** relies on *the unique frames of reference and worldviews based on the experiences that have shaped your sense of self or identity*. Personal experiences can be based on age, race, or economic status. These personal experiences can also be influenced by the way you were raised, educated, or formed connections to media, society, or culture.

Personal experience is a great way to incorporate a sense of reality and sincerity into your message. You can choose common or shared experiences with your audience to better meet and anticipate audience understanding. If you share your experience, those in the audience will begin to think about their own experiences, identifying and critiquing your experience against their own. It is a great way to encourage interest and engagement. Many times we choose topics that have affected us personally. Sharing these experiences remind others how certain topics affect them at their age, in their neighborhoods, or among their friends because they are being provided a real life experience from their peer.

## Case Study

**The Prom**

Prom is a shared experience for most teenagers and young adults. It reflects a very important ritual with common themes that are echoed in television and film from movies such as *Pretty in Pink*, *Carrie*, and *Mean Girls*. Thee are identifiable characteristics that create this sense of the experience and how it should be shared. including bullying, the dress, alcohol, sex, and dancing. This experience is one that has been chronicled for years as a right of passage and often planned with the same sentiment as a wedding. When you share your experience with peers, there is a level of comparison based on expectations and one’s own relationship to their experience or lack thereof. More recently, we are seeing a resurgence of this experience in the media based on new interpretations of prom in response to gender.

This blog post from the ACLU summarizes some of these new interpretations.

**Professional experience** relies on *information gained in a professional capacity*. If you have gained specific knowledge or experience from education, training, or practice in relationship to your career, the information you have attained counts as professional experience. The phrase “Professional Experience” stands out as an area you would include on your resume and is precisely what you would consider.

Professional experience can add credibility to a presentation by allowing others to see that you have more legitimate knowledge than others. For example, if you have interned, served in the military, or have a professional image as a college student, this lets you share your experiences in a real way and connect to an audience that shares your demographic characteristics. This encourages your audience to make its own connections to your topic.

# Interviews

An **interview** is *a conversation in which someone is questioned about their background, lifestyle or experience and answers are given*. Interviews are a great way to rely on others for personal and professional experience. Interviews can be structured (formal), semi- structured (blended), or unstructured (informal). The traditional interview experience is between two people in a face-to-face setting. Increasingly, interviews are conducted in groups, by a panel, or virtually with the use of technology. No matter the format, interviews following a similar pattern.

Interviewing often follows a simple structure and there are some key ideas that can make your interview more successful. Always remember that you need to do research and prepare before the interview. What can you learn about the person or the person's connection to your topic? What resources can you utilize to gain this knowledge? Based on your research, develop questions or talking points to encourage sharing. Be respectful of others' time and be clear about expectations for the interview (where will you meet, if the interview is recorded, how much time you need, the purpose of the interview, etc.).

Find the information you need and think through how you want to design questions for the interview. Use prepared questions. **primary questions** *identify key ideas and direct the interview content*. **secondary questions** *redirect and clarify or build on primary questions*. For an informational interview, you may ask more **open questions** that *do not require a specific answer and allow the interviewee to direct and manage more of the conversation and acquire more perspectives and variety in responses*. Identify whether questions may be Biased Questions or Neutral Questions. **neutral questions** are *without opinion*; whereas, **biased questions** *present an opinion or agenda in the response*. For a survey or data analysis, you may ask more **closed questions** to generate *short one word answers or numerical responses*.

## Skills Study

Want to get some ideas on how to conduct an Informational (Research) Interview? Lily Zhang, a Career Development Specialist at MIT, wrote a blog post detailing how to construct an informational interview for someone who works in a career you are interested in pursuing.

In thinking about interviewing from a research perspective, the interview offers a new and varied perspective. This builds credibility because it shows diversity in opinion and approach to the subject, which presents more trust when more sources are used. It can be difficult to know exactly what information to include, what information is needed, or how to organize the information. A point person or expert can be a great resource. In many instances, this person has experience researching the topic and provide important advice for what should be considered the most important, relevant or timely points, and how to best communicate a message. Lastly, there are numerous factors that divide us as an audience or create a differing worldview from those around us. We may not identify with the author because we feel they do not represent us, our ideals, or our experiences. An expert can bridge those gaps and allow you to choose someone that your audience can connect to, trust, or admire.

# Internet Research

You may be wondering, "What constitutes Internet research?" Examples of internet research can be **non-print resources**, or *formatswith special characters whose information content can only be access through the use of machines / digital* equipment *such as e-book, e-journals, e- images, etc*. Internet resources can also include email, blogs, and list-serves can be used to collect interview statements and provide experience. Media sources such as radio, TV, film, audio and video recordings add visual content and increase audience engagement with a topic. Websites, virtual libraries, educational indexes and search engines can be used to locate content and knowledge.

Knowing how to utilize a search engine can be extremely helpful in applying informed learning to an online environment. There are shortcuts, operators, features, punctuation, and symbol searches. Also, *a site's address* (i.e., **Uniform Resource Locator**, or URL) contains information that can provide the purpose in selecting a source. You probably recognize .com or .org as two types of URL and there may be others that you recognize but are unsure what would be scholarly or appropriate. American universities, colleges, and secondary schools often use .edu. Not-for-profit or non-profit organizations often use the .org suffix. Businesses, news, and database websites use .com/ .net. Personal sites are individual sites that are not representative of a larger body, but a personal or local business, news, or information website and use .site.

# Library Research

Library research includes all of the resources found in the library or through its website. There are three main areas of library research: Classification and Catalog, Reference Works, and Print Resources. **classification and catalog** use a variety of *categorization to help patrons locate materials in the library*. The catalog organizes resources by author, title, Library of Congress Subject Heading, and call number. **periodicals** are *works published* at *regular intervals such as daily, weekly, monthly, or even annually*. These include general interest magazines and professional and academic journals. Periodicals are generally peer reviewed or edited and provide a variety of perspectives. They can provide in-depth information, research, and data statistics and studies. They can contain more up-to-date information than books or e-books. Newspaper Indexes provide a searchable database of news articles, including more current information. **reference works** are *books and other works that contain useful facts and information, such asEncyclopedia's, Dictionaries, Directories, Atlases, Almanacs, Books of Quotations, and Biographies*. **print resources** are *printed text and images or paper publications that are in the form of physical editions of books, journals, magazines, newspapers,* etc. Books in print can provide more in-depth, credible, and historical research. Newspapers in print can provide more local information by providing access to smaller, community papers.

## The Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University

The Cunningham Memorial Library at Indiana State University has a wealth of resources for conducting your research and also provides a quiet place to work and study. Visit the Cunningham Memorial Library site for a better view of what the library has to offer. Library and cafe hours are easily accessible and you can also find a calendar featuring library events. Many of the events posted here offer student assistance workshops, campus engagement opportunities, or provide events that may meet participation for some class assignments.

Under the "For Students" area near the center of the page, links bring you to information about the library's instruction resources, the Math & Writing Center, services for distance students, and library tutorials.

Sometimes our library does not have the specific source you are looking for. Inter-library loan lets you obtain materials that the library does not have. Reserves and Scanning Services allows you to access course-related materials that help supplement your instruction. Many of the faculty will reserve copies of textbooks to ensure all students have access to needed reading materials. You can always request that a faculty member put additional materials on reserve in the library if you believe it will help your performance in the class.

Reference/Instruction librarians hold weekly walk-in hours for assistance or you may also contact them directly to set up an appointment outside of their regular office hours.

### Identifying Research Types and Use Chart

| Research Type | Reason and Use |
|---|---|
| Internet Research | • Increases engagement and interest<br>• Increases understanding<br>• Focus on currency and trend<br>• Increases relevance and connections<br>• Builds credibility<br>• Demonstrates expertise or experience<br>• Demonstrates knowledge<br>• Demonstrates perspective |
| Library Research | • Builds Informed Learning<br>• Utilize a professional staff<br>• Increases understanding<br>• Increases access to local information<br>• Relates in-depth research<br>• Increases relevance and connections<br>• Builds credibility<br>• Demonstrates expertise or experience<br>• Demonstrates knowledge<br>• Demonstrates perspective |
| Interviewing | • Increases real life connections<br>• Increases relevance and connections<br>• Lessens anxiety<br>• Increases understanding<br>• Demonstrates expertise or experience<br>• Demonstrates knowledge<br>• Demonstrates perspective |
| Personal & Professional Experience | • Increases real life connections<br>• Increases relevance and connections<br>• Lessens anxiety<br>• Demonstrates practicality and workability<br>• Demonstrates personal expertise or experience<br>• Demonstrates professional expertise or experience |

# 9.4 How to Integrate and Present Research

Research is integrated and presented in a text as evidence. The text can be an essay or speech outline that you have written. Written text can also include a computer generated presentation like a slide show. The text can also be verbal and include a speech or presentation. It doesn't matter what text you comprise, you need to incorporate your research. The varied ways that you incorporate your research can help you plan, organize, and deliver your evidence more effectively. Choices you make for integrating and presenting your information depend upon the message you want to convey. There are 4 ways that you can integrate evidence: definitions, examples, facts and statistics, and testimony.

A **definition** is *aformal statement of the meaning or significance of a word, phrase, idiom, etc.*. There are different types of definitions and ways to think about defining a term. Thinking about how the word is used in our language can determine if we want a common meaning or want to use a word more strategically based on how people think about the use of the word. We know there is the denotative or dictionary definition — the literal meaning of the word. There is the connotative definition — the associated meaning of the word based on our world view and experiences. There are more formal ideas about how to define terms such as the **etymological definition**, or *how the word is defined by the word's origin or history*. Definitions provide clarity to complex ideas, jargon, or slang.

An **example** is *a characteristic of its kind or illustrates a general rule*. They can be brief, extended, or hypothetical. A **briefexample** is short and generally adds clarity by providing a detail or characteristic of a piece of information. Examples add relevance by discussing what is current or familiar to the audience as a way to connect information. For example, using a genre of music as an example of what music you listen to in your free time allows the audience to determine similarities, differences, or lack of exposure and experience. An **extendedexample**, or narrative, provides an anecdote or story that relays a more vivid and textured example of a situation, experience, or context surrounding your topic. An extended example often serves as an illustration of an idea. If you are presenting a persuasive speech on local services, you can use an article from a local paper to help the audience visualize how the problem impacts their lives. **Hypotheticalexamples** convey ideas that are common, known, or sensitive in nature that is imagined to depict realistic scenarios. Since a hypothetical example does not have to be connected to a specific person, time, or place, hypothetical examples allow an audience to think introspectively about how they would react or respond in the situation.

A **fact** is *a piece of information used as evidence known or proved to be true*. A **statistic** is *a piece of data from a study of a large quantity of numerical dat*a.a. Facts and statistics can be used to present new ideas or reinforce current ideas or to confirm or disprove information. Data and statistics help audiences consider a topic from a more informed standpoint and help further reasoning. There are, however, some constraints to using statistics efficiently. When used accurately, facts and statistics can present a clear and purposeful message that creates a sense of immediacy in relationship to a topic. When used poorly, facts and statistics can result in information overload or confusion.

When evaluating facts and statistics, it is important to ask the following questions to allow for better understanding.

1. Is the Source Reliable?
2. Is there Manipulation or Distortion?
3. Is the statistic Representative (Sample Size)?
4. Is the Math Correct (Mean/ average, Median/ middle, or Mode/ frequency)?

# Presenting Statistics

It is equally important to present statistics, numerical data, accurately. Introducing statistics as a quantity or rounding the numbers will aid the cognitive process when trying to convey the impact of large numbers. While a large blanket number may be hard to understand, the use of values like “one in three” or an illustration like “five football stadiums long” can present a more simplified, recognizable figure. Combining figures can show seriousness or magnitude of a problem or issue. While you do want to think about your main ideas to be illustrated, statistics should be used sparingly. The audience cannot remember all the information provided and will need to select information based on its goals and needs. Identify the source, cite the author, present a clear idea of where the information comes from, and ensure the audience of the source’s reliability. Explain and clarify the research by providing an interpretation of how the statistic is being applied and how it helps our understanding of the larger topic. Use visuals to help simplify the information and to bolster your audience’s interest.

**Testimony** is *a formal written or spoken statement*. It can be expert or peer-based. The type of testimony you provide has much to do with your topic or the desired audience outcome. **Experts** are *people who are acknowledged authorities in their fields.***Peers** are *people like ourselves; not prominent figures, but ordinary citizens who have the* first-hand *experience on a topic*. It is important that when you present testimony, you consider the authority of the source. Celebrity or athletic endorsements may not be as trusted or credible as professional endorsements. Always credit the author and include their credentials or qualifications to build that credibility and strengthen the source. You can think back to the introduction on personal and professional experience to understand these two types of testimony better.

The tone of your connection can sometimes benefit from peer testimony. Let’s look at our scenario from the introduction of the chapter. If we follow a travel guide or food channel to determine the best restaurants in Alaska, we would have a pretty impressive list. However, would we be able to afford them? Would it be feasible or possible for us to travel to remote areas to visit them all? A trusted friend that lives there may know of a restaurant that is not in any guide but is an affordable, hidden gem.

We integrate testimony as support by either quoting or paraphrasing our original source. **Quoting** is *presenting a message word-for-word, exactly as it was written or stated*. Quoting works best when the quote is short and not drawn out, or when the meaning is better conveyed through language or literary technique. When quoting a source, be sure that you are delivering the quote with the correct meaning or intent and presenting the context in which the quote was used. **Paraphrasing** is *restating or summarizing in one's own words what another person had said*. Paraphrase when the quote is long, difficult to understand, or jargon-heavy. There are a few tips to paraphrase accurately (but remember, you must still cite the original source when paraphrasing):

1. Change the words. Identify the key words that are not your own vocabulary or stand out and change them to reflect your own personality and voice.
2. Edit the quote. Identify areas that you can leave out or add-to in order to make the information helpful to your audience.
3. Re-structure the quote. Can you move the beginning to the middle or to the end? Is the paraphrased information better if you start with the last sentence's idea and work backward to the introduction? Could the body of the quote serve as steps or claims that you can present in order?
4. For a guide on how to paraphrase, check out this site.

# Identifying Evidence Types and Use Chart

| Evidence Type | Reason and Use |
|---|---|
| Definitions/Examples | • Clarifies ideas<br>• Reinforces ideas<br>• Strengthens credibility<br>• Demonstrates significance<br>• Demonstrates relevance<br>• Demonstrates currency |
| Facts/ Statistics | • Clarifies ideas<br>• Reinforces ideas<br>• Strengthens credibility<br>• Demonstrates significance<br>• Demonstrates relevance<br>• Demonstrates currency<br>• Presents ideas strategically |
| Testimony | • Personalizes ideas<br>• Reinforces ideas<br>• Strengthens credibility<br>• Provides variety and texture<br>• Demonstrates significance<br>• Demonstrate relevance<br>• Demonstrates currency<br>• Presents ideas strategically |
| Examples | • Creates audience interest and engagement<br>• Reduces communication apprehension<br>• Clarifies ideas<br>• Personalizes ideas<br>• Reinforces ideas<br>• Strengthens credibility<br>• Provides variety and texture<br>• Demonstrates significance<br>• Demonstrate relevance<br>• Demonstrates currency<br>• Presents ideas strategically |

# 9.5 Evaluating Research

## Evaluating Research

There are five fundamental questions that can help you identify the best measure of credibility and reliability of a source. These steps are easy to remember because they follow the five standard questions you have been learning to ask throughout your life. The five questions of who, what, when, where, and why create the **5 W's of Web Site Evaluation.**

## Identifying the 5 W's of Web Site Evaluation

### Who

Most credible articles include an author of the text. However, if there is not an author noted in a byline, the author may be a sponsoring organization, company, or entity. The best way to locate the author if no byline is present is to scroll to the bottom of the web page. At the bottom of the page, you will usually find the author (entity) and a copyright date. This serves as a published or last updated (revised) date for the source. How do you identify an author when using a Youtube video, or a blog post? The author is not the site, but the name of the responsible party that posted the content. It may seem strange, but you will use the username if a formal name is not provided. Once you have identified the author, you want to evaluate how credible or reliable they are as a source. If there is no information on the web page, you can conduct an Internet search of the author or entity. You can also look for reviews or conduct an article search to see consumer opinions or news related to the author or entity.

### What

What determines the purpose, point-of-view, or type of site you may be used for research. The purpose may be to inform or sell to consumers. It may be a biased news organization or a stay-at-home dad's blog about raising a daughter. It may be an educational site created by an institution of learning or an entertainment site with funny videos that encourages subscribing. Determine how the information may contribute to your research as well as what ideas may be presented and shared. It is important to consider what information you will use based on your own purpose and point-of-view, as well as audience interest. Identify bias, fact or opinion, and evaluate the sources you use. The web site should include formal citations or references for material that is not written by the author. You also should be able to navigate the site without problem or error. Privacy and safety should be a concern when navigating an un-trusted site.

## When

When provides the copyright or publish date of a source. It is imperative that you can discern when a site was written or put online. Without this information, you may not have relevant or current information, and that can be misleading. It can also be an indication that the site is not maintained or updated. If a date is not provided, the credibility of the site and the information on the site is questionable.

## Where

Where may seem like it is asking the same question as Who or What, but it is asking specific questions that examine responsibility and transparency in research. Many web sites will borrow, restate, or write their own information. It is important to identify the primary source (created) along with the secondary source (altered or forwarded) information. In evaluating the way the information is presented on the site, it is important to consider the creator of the content. If you are reviewing a study or survey, you want to consider who was conducting the study, for what purpose, using what resources, when, and to what end. If you know that a company conducted a study of their product and only used those that are on their email list, you can see how this information would be inconsistent and not representative of the larger population. Many companies are subsidiaries of larger companies, so you may not realize that in buying organic (thought of as local or homegrown), you are buying from a large food processing company.

## Why

The last question to ask is why should I use the source? The answer is really a combination of all of the other questions. If you have been able to successfully answer all of the 5 W's and you do not have any doubts about the credibility or reliability of a site, you can explain why a source is useful. When conducting research, variety is also important. Make sure that you are not using sources that are too similar or that present the same information. If you have a source that allows you to answer a research question, prove a point, or provide interest, you need to ask: “Why do I need this source?” The source should offer a segment of the research or purpose in your message that is not replicated somewhere else.

Being able to identify the 5 W’s and how to apply each one when selecting and locating evidence is another contribution to Informed Learning. Applying this level of evaluation and critique is preparing you to succeed academically and professionally by critically thinking about choosing and integrating your research for the desired outcome.

Now that you have an understanding of Web Site Evaluation, it is time to review citing your research so that you maintain academic honesty and avoid plagiarism.

# Referencing and Citations

A **cite** or **citation** is *providing a* reference *or attributing the source ofevidence used for justification of an argument or statement, especially in a scholarly work*.When citing sources, it is important that you provide internal (in-text) citations in the text of your paper or speech outline, as well as oral citations when making a presentation. These citations help the reader/audience evaluate the credibility of the information. The internal citations should correlate to a full citation included in the bibliography. Internal citations are often referred to as parenthetical citations in a paper. Depending on the style guide that you are using, the required information may change. Please refer to your course’s recommended citation guide for assistance.

One way to cite sources in a presentation is to use the **BASE model**. The BASE model presents four key areas where you can cite the Body (author or entity), Access (published or updated date), Source (evidence type), and Example (further information). Presenting one area will provide a citation, but combining these will strengthen your work overall.

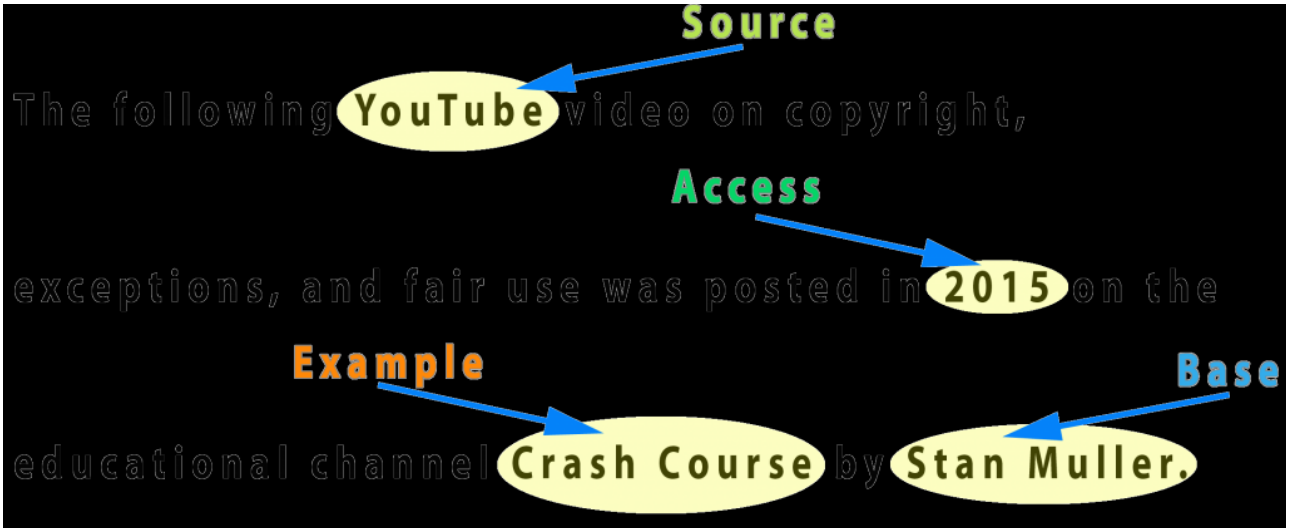
## Exercises

If we wanted to cite a Copyright video we found on Youtube in a presentation, we could use the BASE Method.

**The Sentence**

The following YouTube video on copyright, exceptions, and fair use was posted in 2015 on the educational channel Crash Course by Stan Muller.

**Breaking it down**




## The References Page

We learned that our internal citations correspond to the full citations in the references page or bibliography. The **references page** is *an alphabetical list of all of the resources we used or consulted in our research*. The information includes: author or entity, date, title, sponsor or source, and access and publishing information. The format for the order and specific information content depends on the required style. Please refer to the recommended citation guide for assistance with citing.

# 9.6 Ethics and Plagiarism

The topic of ethics and plagiarism is common to every academic discipline and professional career path. **Ethics** is defined as *the moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity*.We make ethical decisions in the workplace every day, including language that either supports or undermines inclusion and civility. Additionally, company resources and policies determine the culture and climate of an organization. In a professional setting, plagiarism refers to idea development. Whether you are presenting at a conference, conducting a research study, creating a menu for your new restaurant, or designing a website for freelancing, it is necessary to accurately cite original authorship. **Plagiarism** is defined as *the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.* It is important that you avoid plagiarism and understand the consequences for trying to pass off someone else's work or ideas as your own.

Indiana State University's Code of Student Conduct outlines the rights, responsibilities, and expectations that the university expects from all students. Section 2.0, Academic Policies, specifically addresses responsibilities of students in the classroom and has a section on plagiarism. The Office of Student Conduct and Integrity is the primary office on campus responsible for conflict resolution as well as addressing alleged violations of the Code.

## Informed Learning

The kind of skills developed through Informed Learning are highly valued in every step of your education and beyond in your professional and personal life. Courses that include introduction and practice opportunities for student research greatly benefit students. Educators can foster a perspective and relationship between students encouraging involvement and their future in higher education. An academic article published in the Mentor identified "The Benefits of Undergraduate Research: The Student's Perspective" (2013).

1. Better understanding of published works
2. Better at balancing collaborative and individual work
3. Better at determining areas of interest
4. Better able to jump start careers in research
5. Discover passion for research
6. Gained experience in their career or field
7. Continue on to graduate studies and faculty positions

In the article, we learn that many undergraduate students are "overwhelmed by the academic process" and "do not really know what the research process is" (Madan & Teitge, 2013). Your introduction to Informed Learning has set you on a positive path with a student-oriented perspective on research.

# 9.7 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

In this chapter, you learned the definition of Informed Learning and why it is important to your success as an Indiana State University student. Informed Learning begins by exploring what information is needed and where it can be found. The chapter presented a variety of types of research and evidence and discussed how to locate, evaluate, use, and present research to meet your goals. Finally, we reviewed ethical decision making and the benefits to informed learning as an undergraduate student. Remember that as a student at Indiana State University, you are not alone in the research and research presentation process. Consult your friendly librarian at the Cunningham Memorial Library or meet with your professor when you need help.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is informed learning? What do we not consider to be research and evidence?
2. Explain the benefits of thinking about the research process from an informed learning perspective.
3. Name three areas of research you are interested or passionate about. In what ways can you use informed learning and the information on research and evidence to enhance your presentation?

### Key Terms

- BASE model
- biased questions
- cite/ citation
- classification/ catalog
- closed questions
- connotative
- definition
- denotative
- ethics

- example
- experts
- fact
- Information Literacy Model
- informed learning
- interview
- neutral questions
- non-print resources
- open questions
- paraphrasing
- peers
- periodicals
- personal experience
- plagiarism
- primary questions
- print resources
- professional experience
- quoting
- reference works
- references page
- research
- secondary questions
- statistic
- testimony
- Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

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- Trekker by Grant Eaton, CC-BY-NC-SA
- Word cloud created using text from this chapter, and generated using tagxedo.com

# CHAPTER 10: SPEECH PREPARATION

# 10.1 Introduction

## Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of accuracy, clarity, and listener interest in public speaking.
- Define four delivery styles.
- Discuss why public speaking is important.
- Identify strategies for audience analysis.
- Identify a variety of speech patterns to organizing a speech.
- Understand how to include presentational aids in your speech.
- Identify strategies for delivery.
- Understand how to outline a speech.

In this chapter, we wish to address the finer points of effective public speaking so that you can be more successful in future presentations at ISU and later in your professional career.

**Being honest about your personal agenda in choosing a topic is important**. It is not always easy to discern a clear line between informative and persuasive speech. Good information has a strong tendency to be persuasive, and persuasion relies on good information. On a basic level, all communication is persuasive because at the very least when you communicate you are trying to persuade someone to listen to you and to believe you. Thus, informative and persuasive speaking do overlap. It remains up to you to examine your real motives in choosing your topic. Ethical speaking means respecting the intelligence of your audience. If you try to circumvent the purpose of the informative speech in order to plant a persuasive seed, your listeners will notice. Such strategies often come across as dishonest.

**A good speech conveys accurate information to the audience clearly and that keeps the listener interested in the topic**. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to your effectiveness as a speaker. If the information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience. There is no topic about which you can give complete information, and therefore, we strongly recommend careful narrowing. With a carefully narrowed topic and purpose, it is possible to give an accurate picture that isn't misleading.

**Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current**. Even if you know a great deal about your topic or writing a good paper on the topic in a high school course, you need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so you need to update your information almost constantly, but the same is true for topics that, on the surface, may seem to require less updating. For example, the American Civil War occurred 150 years ago, but contemporary research still offers new and emerging theories about the causes of the war and its long-term effects. So even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, you need to carefully check your information to be sure it's accurate and up to date.

For your listeners to benefit from your speech, you must convey your ideas in a fashion that your audience can understand. **The clarity of your speech relies on logical organization and understandable word choices**. You should not assume that something that's obvious to you will also be obvious to the members of your audience. Formulate your work with the objective of being understood in all details, and rehearse your speech in front of peers who will tell you whether the information in your speech makes sense.

In addition to being clear, **your speech should be interesting**. Your listeners will benefit the most if they can give sustained attention to the speech, and this is unlikely to happen if they are bored. This often means you will decide against using some of the topics you know a great deal about. Suppose, for example, that you had a summer job as a veterinary assistant and learned a great deal about canine parasites. This topic might be very interesting to you, but how interesting will it be to others in your class? In order to make it interesting, you will need to find a way to connect it with their interests and curiosities. Perhaps there are certain canine parasites that also pose risks to humans—this might be a connection that would increase audience interest in your topic.

# 10.2 Speaking For An Audience

## Making Information Clear and Interesting for the Audience

The first key to preparing a speech for an audience is analyzing them. **Audienceanalysis** involves*identifying the audience and adapting a speech to their interests, level of understanding, attitudes, and* beliefs. A clear and interesting speech can make use of description, causal analysis, or categories. With description, you use words to create a picture in the minds of your audience. You can describe physical realities, social realities, emotional experiences, sequences, consequences, or contexts. For instance, you can describe the mindset of the Massachusetts town of Salem during the witch trials. You can also use causal analysis, which focuses on the connections between causes and consequences. For example, in speaking about health care costs, you could explain how a serious illness can put even a well-insured family into bankruptcy. You can also use categories to group things together. For instance, you could say that there are three categories of investment for the future: liquid savings, avoiding debt, and acquiring properties that will increase in value.

There are a number of principles to keep in mind as a speaker to make the information you present clear and interesting for your audience. Let’s examine several of them.

## Adjust Complexity to the Audience

If your speech is too complex or too simplistic, it will not hold the interest of your listeners. How can you determine the right level of complexity? Your audience analysis is one important way to do this. Will your listeners belong to a given age group, or are they more diverse? Did they all go to public schools in the United States, or are some of your listener’s international students? The answers to these and other audience analysis questions will help you to gauge what they know and what they are curious about.

Make certain your listeners know what you mean before continuing your speech. Stephen Lucas (2011) explains, “You cannot assume they will know what you mean. Rather, you must be sure to explain everything so thoroughly that they cannot help but understand.” Define terms to help listeners understand them the way you mean them to. Give explanations that are consistent with your definitions, and show how those ideas apply to your speech topic. In this way, you can avoid many misunderstandings.

Similarly, be very careful about assuming there is anything that "everybody knows." Suppose you've decided to present an informative speech on the survival of the early colonists of New England. You may have learned in elementary school that their survival was attributable, in part, to the assistance of Squanto. Many of your listeners will know which states are in New England, but if there are international students in the audience, they might never have heard of New England. You should clarify the term either by pointing out the region on a map or by stating that it's the six states in the American northeast. Other knowledge gaps can still confound the effectiveness of the speech. For instance, who or what was Squanto? What kind of assistance did the settlers get? Only a few listeners are likely to know that Squanto spoke English and that fact had greatly surprised the settlers when they landed. It was through his knowledge of English that Squanto was able to advise these settlers in survival strategies during that first harsh winter. If you neglect to provide that information, your speech will not be as informative as it could be.

## Avoid Unnecessary Jargon

If you decide to give a speech on a highly specialized topic, limit how much technical language or jargon you use. Loading a speech with specialized language has the potential to be taxing on the listeners. It can become too difficult to "translate" your meanings, and if that happens, you will not effectively deliver information. Even if you define many technical terms, the audience may feel as if they are being bombarded with a set of definitions instead of useful information. Don't treat your speech as a crash course in an entire topic. If you must, introduce one specialized term and carefully define and explain it to the audience. Define it in words, and then use a concrete and relevant example to clarify the meaning.

## Create Concrete Images

As a college student, you have had a significant amount of exposure to abstract terms. You have become comfortable using and hearing a variety of abstract ideas. However, abstract terms lend themselves to many interpretations. For instance, the abstract term "responsibility" can mean many things. Among other meanings, it can mean duty, task, authority, or blame. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, it is better to use a concrete word. For example, instead of saying, "Helen Worth was responsible for the project," you will convey clearer meaning when you say, "Helen Worth was in charge of the project", "Helen Kimes made the project a success", or "Helen Worth was to blame for the failure of the project".

To illustrate the differences between abstract and concrete language, let's look at a few pairs of terms:

| Abstract | Concrete |
|---|---|
| Transportation | air travel |
| Success | completion of project |
| Discrimination | exclusion of women |
| Athletic | physically fit |
| Profound | knowledgeable |

By using an abstraction in a sentence and then comparing the concrete term in the sentence, you will notice the more precise meanings of the concrete terms. Those precise terms are less likely to be misunderstood. In the last pair of terms, "knowledgeable" is listed as a concrete term, but it can also be considered an abstract term. Still, it's likely to be much clearer and more precise than "profound."

## Keep Information Limited

When you developed your speech, you carefully narrowed your topic in order to keep information limited yet complete and coherent. If you carefully adhere to your own narrowing, you can keep from going off on tangents or confusing your audience. If you overload your audience with information, they will be unable to follow your narrative. Use the definitions, descriptions, explanations, and examples you need in order to make your meanings clear, but resist the temptation to add tangential information merely because you find it interesting.

## Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge

Certain sets of knowledge are common to many people in your classroom audience. For instance, most of them know what Wikipedia is. Many have found it a useful and convenient source of information about topics related to their coursework. Because many Wikipedia entries are lengthy, greatly annotated, and followed by substantial lists of authoritative sources, many students have relied on information acquired from Wikipedia in writing papers to fulfill course requirements. All this is information that virtually every classroom listener is likely to know.

Because your listeners are already familiar with Wikipedia, you can link important new knowledge to their already-existing knowledge. Wikipedia is an "open source," meaning that anyone can supplement, edit, correct, distort or otherwise alter the information in Wikipedia. In addition to your listeners' knowledge that a great deal of good information can be found in Wikipedia, they must now know that it isn't authoritative.

One way to make the message acceptable to your listeners is to show what Wikipedia does well. For example, some Wikipedia entries contain many good references at the end. Most of those references are likely to be authoritative, having been written by scholars. In searching for information on a topic, a student can look up one or more of those references in full-text databases or in the library. In this way, Wikipedia can be helpful in steering a student toward the authoritative information they need. Explaining this to your audience will help them accept, rather than reject, the bad news about Wikipedia.

## Make It Memorable

If you've already done the preliminary work in choosing a topic, finding an interesting narrowing of that topic, developing and using presentation aids, and working to maintain audience contact, your delivery is likely to be memorable. Now you can turn to your content and find opportunities to make it appropriately vivid. You can do this by using explanations, comparisons, examples, or language.

Let's say that you're preparing a speech on the United States' internment of Japanese American people from the San Francisco Bay area during World War II. Your goal is to paint a memorable image in your listeners' minds. You can do this through a dramatic contrast, before and after. You could say, "In 1941, the Bay Area had a vibrant and productive community of Japanese American citizens who went to work every day, opening their shops, typing reports in their offices, and teaching in their classrooms, just as they had been doing for years. But on December 7, 1941, everything changed. Within six months, Bay Area residents of Japanese ancestry were gone, transported to internment camps located hundreds of miles from the Pacific coast."

This strategy rests on the ability of the audience to visualize the two contrasting situations. You have alluded to two sets of images that are familiar to most college students, images that they can easily visualize. Once the audience imagination is engaged in visualization, they are likely to remember the speech.

Your task of providing memorable imagery does not stop after the introduction. While maintaining an evenhanded approach that does not seek to persuade, you must provide the audience with information about the circumstances that triggered the policy of internment, perhaps by describing the advice that was given to President Roosevelt by his top advisers. You might depict the conditions faced by Japanese Americans during their internment by describing a typical day one of the camps. To conclude your speech on a memorable note, you might name a notable individual—an actor, writer, or politician—who is a survivor of the internment.

Such a strategy might feel unnatural to you. After all, this is not how you talk to your friends or participate in a classroom discussion. Remember, though, that public speaking is not the same as talking. It's prepared and formal. It demands more of you. In a conversation, it might not be important to be memorable; your goal might merely be to maintain the friendship. But in a speech, when you expect the audience to pay attention, you must make the speech memorable.

## Make It Relevant and Useful

When thinking about your topic, it is always very important to keep your audience members center stage in your mind. For instance, if your speech is about air pollution, ask your audience to imagine feeling the burning of eyes and lungs caused by smog. This is a strategy for making the topic more real to them, since it may have happened to them on a number of occasions; and even if it hasn’t, it easily could. If your speech is about Mark Twain, instead of simply saying that he was very famous during his lifetime, remind your audience that he was so prominent that their own great-grandparents likely knew of his work and had strong opinions about it. In so doing, you’ve connected your topic to their own forebears.

## Personalize Your Content

Giving a human face to a topic helps the audience perceive it as interesting. If your topic is related to the Maasai rite of passage into manhood, the prevalence of drug addiction in a particular locale, the development of a professional filmmaker, or the treatment of a disease, putting a human face should not be difficult. To do it, find a case study you can describe within the speech, referring to the human subject by name. This conveys to the audience that these processes happen to real people.

## Develop Your Topic for the Audience

One issue to consider when preparing a speech is how best to present the information to enhance audience learning. Katherine Rowan (2003) suggests focusing on areas where your audience may experience confusion and using the likely sources of confusion as a guide for developing the content of your speech. Rowan identifies three sources of audience confusion: difficult concepts or language, difficult-to-envision structures or processes, and ideas that are difficult to understand because they are hard to believe.

# Difficult Concepts or Language

Sometimes audiences may have difficulty understanding information because of the concepts or language used. For example, they may not understand what the term "organic food" means or how it differs from "all-natural" foods. If an audience is likely to experience confusion over a basic concept or term, clarify the meaning by giving an example and defining the term. Similarly, when using an acronym it is important to explain what it means and perhaps put up the full name on a visual aid. You may know that NCA refers to the National Communication Association but your audience may not

# Difficult-to-Envision Processes or Structures

The second source of audience difficulty in understanding, according to Rowan, is a process or structure. Presentation aids or analogies might be helpful in giving an overview of the process. For the circulatory system, you could show a video or diagram of the entire system or make an analogy to a pump. Then you can move to explaining relationships among the components of the process. Be sure when you explain relationships among components that you include transition and linking words like "leads to" and "because" so that your audience understands relationships between concepts. You may remember the childhood song describing the bones in the body with lines such as, "the hip bone's connected to the thigh bone; the thigh bone's connected to the knee bone." Making the connections between components helps the audience remember and understand the process.

# Difficult to Understand because It's Hard to Believe

A third source of audience confusion, and perhaps the most difficult to address as a speaker, is an idea that's difficult to understand because it's hard to believe. This often happens when people have implicit but erroneous theories about how the world works. For example, the idea that science tries to disprove theories is difficult for some people to understand; after all, shouldn't the purpose of science be to prove things? In such a case, Rowan suggests using a transformative explanation. A transformative explanation begins by discussing the audience's implicit theory and showing why it is plausible. Then you move to showing how the implicit theory is limited and conclude by presenting the accepted explanation and why that explanation is better. In the case of scientists disproving theories, you might start by talking about what science has proven (e.g., the causes of malaria, the usefulness of penicillin in treating infection) and why focusing on science as proof is a plausible way of thinking. Then you might show how the science as proof theory is limited by providing examples of ideas that were accepted as "proven" but were later found to be false, such as the belief that diseases are caused by miasma, or "bad air"; or that bloodletting cures diseases by purging the body of "bad humor." You can then conclude by showing how science is an enterprise designed to disprove theories and that all theories are accepted as tentative in light of existing knowledge.

Rowan's framework is helpful because it keeps our focus on the most significant element of this speech: increasing audience understanding about a topic.

# 10.3 Topic Selection

## Finding Your Purpose

*Theatre Company – Avenue Q Puppets & Monsters – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.*

In the 2004 Tony Award–winning musical *Avenue Q*, the lead character sings a song about finding his purpose in life: “I don’t know how I know / But I’m gonna find my purpose / I don’t know where I’m gonna look / But I’m gonna find my purpose.” Although the song is about life in general, the lyrics are also appropriate when thinking about the purpose of your speech. You may know that you have been assigned to deliver a speech, but finding a purpose and topic seems like a formidable task. You may be asking yourself questions like, “What if the topic I pick is too common?”; “What if no one is interested in my topic?”; “What if my topic is too huge to cover in a three- to five-minute speech?”; or many others.

Finding a speech’s purpose and a topic isn’t as complex or difficult as you might believe. This may be hard to accept right now but trust us. After you read this chapter, you’ll understand how to go about finding interesting topics for a variety of different types of speeches. In this chapter, we are going to explain how to identify the general purpose of a speech. We will also discuss how to select a topic, what to do if you’re just drawing a blank and four basic questions you should ask yourself about the speech topic you ultimately select. Finally, we will explain how to use your general purpose and your chosen topic to develop the specific purpose of your speech.

# Selecting a Topic

One of the most common stumbling blocks for novice public speakers is selecting their first speech topic. Generally, your public speaking instructor will provide you with some fairly specific parameters to make this a little easier. You may be assigned to tell about an event that has shaped your life or to demonstrate how to do something. Whatever your basic parameters, at some point you as the speaker will need to settle on a specific topic. In this section, we're going to look at some common constraints of public speaking, picking a broad topic area, and narrowing your topic.

## Common Constraints of Public Speaking

When we use the word "constraint" with regard to public speaking, we are referring to any limitation or restriction you may have as a speaker. Whether in a classroom situation or in the boardroom, speakers are typically given specific instructions that they must follow. These instructions constrain the speaker and limit what the speaker can say. For example, in the professional world of public speaking, speakers are often hired to speak about a specific topic (e.g., time management, customer satisfaction, entrepreneurship). In the workplace, a supervisor may assign a subordinate to present certain information in a meeting. In these kinds of situations, when a speaker is hired or assigned to talk about a specific topic, he or she cannot decide to talk about something else.

Furthermore, the speaker may have been asked to speak for an hour, only to show up and find out that the event is running behind schedule, so the speech must now be made in only thirty minutes. Having prepared sixty minutes of material, the speaker now has to determine what stays in the speech and what must go. In both of these instances, the speaker is constrained as to what he or she can say during a speech. Typically, we refer to four primary constraints: purpose, audience, context, and time frame.

## Purpose

The first major constraint someone can have involves the general purpose of the speech. As mentioned earlier, there are three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. If you've been told that you will be delivering an informative speech, you are automatically constrained from delivering a speech with the purpose of persuading or entertaining. In most public speaking classes, this is the first constraint students will come in contact with because generally, teachers will tell you the exact purpose for each speech in the class.

# Audience

The second major constraint that you need to consider as a speaker is the type of audience you will have. As discussed in the chapter on audience analysis, different audiences have different political, religious, and ideological leanings. As such, choosing a speech topic for an audience that has a specific mindset can be very tricky. Unfortunately, choosing what topics may or may not be appropriate for a given audience is based on generalizations about specific audiences. For example, maybe you're going to give a speech at a local meeting of Democratic leaders. You may think that all Democrats are liberal or progressive, but there are many conservative Democrats as well. If you assume that all Democrats are liberal or progressive, you may end up offending your audience by making such a generalization without knowing better. Obviously, the best way to prevent yourself from picking a topic that is inappropriate for a specific audience is to really know your audience, which is why we recommend conducting an audience analysis.

# Context

The third major constraint relates to the context. For speaking purposes, the context of a speech is the set of circumstances surrounding a particular speech. There are countless different contexts in which we can find ourselves speaking: a classroom in college, a religious congregation, a corporate boardroom, a retirement village, or a political convention. In each of these different contexts, the expectations for a speaker are going to be unique and different. The topics that may be appropriate in front of a religious group may not be appropriate in the corporate boardroom. Topics appropriate for the corporate boardroom may not be appropriate at a political convention.

# Time Frame

The last—but by no means least important—major constraint that you will face is the time frame of your speech. In speeches that are under ten minutes in length, you must narrowly focus a topic to one major idea. For example, in a ten-minute speech, you could not realistically hope to discuss the entire topic of the US Social Security program. There are countless books, research articles, websites, and other forms of media on the topic of Social Security, so trying to crystallize all that information into ten minutes is just not realistic.

Instead, narrow your topic to something that is more realistically manageable within your allotted time. You might choose to inform your audience about Social Security disability benefits, using one individual disabled person as an example. Or perhaps you could speak about the career of Robert J. Myers, one of the original architects of Social Security. By focusing on information that can be covered within your time frame, you are more likely to accomplish your goal at the end of the speech.

# Selecting a Broad Subject Area

Once you know what the basic constraints are for your speech, you can then start thinking about picking a topic. The first aspect to consider is what subject area you are interested in examining. A subject area is a broad area of knowledge. Art, business, history, physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, and education are all examples of subject areas. When selecting a topic, start by casting a broad net because it will help you limit and weed out topics quickly.

Furthermore, each of these broad subject areas has a range of subject areas beneath it. For example, if we take the subject area "art," we can break it down further into broad categories like art history, art galleries, and how to create art. We can further break down these broad areas into even narrower subject areas (e.g., art history includes prehistoric art, Egyptian art, Grecian art, Roman art, Middle Eastern art, medieval art, Asian art, Renaissance art, modern art). As you can see, topic selection is a narrowing process.

# Narrowing Your Topic

Narrowing your topic to something manageable for the constraints of your speech is something that takes time, patience, and experience. One of the biggest mistakes that new public speakers make is not narrowing their topics sufficiently given the constraints. In the previous section, we started demonstrating how the narrowing process works, but even in those examples, we narrowed subject areas down to fairly broad areas of knowledge.

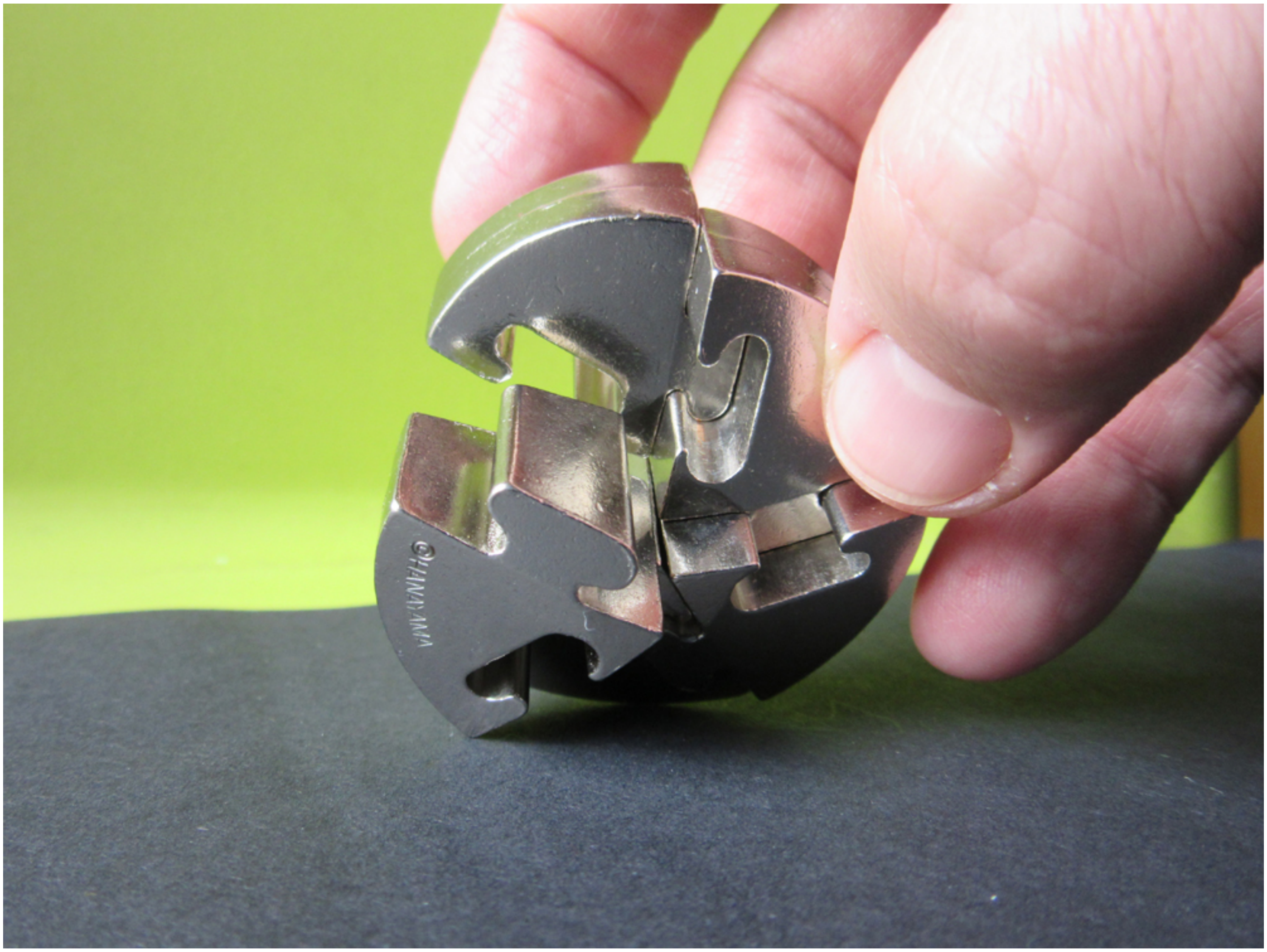
Think of narrowing as a funnel. At the top of the funnel are the broad subject areas, and your goal is to narrow your topic further and further down until just one topic can come out the other end of the funnel. The more focused your topic is, the easier your speech is to research, write, and deliver. So let's take one of the broad areas from the art subject area and keep narrowing it down to a manageable speech topic. For this example, let's say that your general purpose is to inform, you are delivering the speech in class to your peers, and you have five to seven minutes. Now that we have the basic constraints, let's start narrowing our topic. The broad area we are going to narrow in this example is Middle Eastern art. When examining the category of Middle Eastern art, the first thing you'll find is that Middle Eastern art is generally grouped into four distinct categories: Anatolian, Arabian, Mesopotamian, and Syro-Palestinian. Again, if you're like us until we started doing some research on the topic, we had no idea that the historic art of the Middle East was grouped into these specific categories. We’ll select Anatolian art or the art of what is now modern Turkey.

You may think that your topic is now sufficiently narrow, but even within the topic of Anatolian art, there are smaller categories: pre-Hittite, Hittite, Uratu, and Phrygian periods of art. So let’s narrow our topic again to the Phrygian period of art (1200–700 BCE). Although we have now selected a specific period of art history in Anatolia, we are still looking at a five-hundred-year period in which a great deal of art was created. One famous Phrygian king was King Midas, who according to myth was given the ears of a donkey and the power of a golden touch by the Greek gods. As such, there is an interesting array of art from the period of Midas and its Greek counterparts representing Midas. At this point, we could create a topic about how Phrygian and Grecian art differed in their portrayals of King Midas. We now have a topic that is unique, interesting, and definitely manageable in five to seven minutes. You may be wondering how we narrowed the topic down; we just started doing a little research using the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s website.

Overall, when narrowing your topic, you should start by asking yourself four basic questions based on the constraints discussed earlier in this section:

1. Does the topic match my intended general purpose?
2. Is the topic appropriate for my audience?
3. Is the topic appropriate for the given speaking context?
4. Can I reasonably hope to inform or persuade my audience in the time frame I have for the speech?

# 10.4 Organizing Your Speech



In a series of important and groundbreaking studies conducted during the 1950's and 1960's, researchers started investigating how a speech's organization was related to audience perceptions of those speeches. The first study, conducted by Raymond Smith in 1951, randomly organized the parts of a speech to see how audiences would react. Not surprisingly, when speeches were randomly organized, the audience perceived the speech more negatively than when audiences were presented with a speech with clear, intentional organization. Smith also found that audiences who listened to unorganized speeches were less interested in those speeches than audiences who listened to organized speeches. Thompson furthered this investigation and found that unorganized speeches were also harder for audiences to recall after the speech. Basically, people remember information from speeches that are clearly organized—and forget information from speeches that are poorly organized. A third study by Baker found that when audiences were presented with a disorganized speaker, they were less likely to be persuaded, and saw the disorganized speaker as lacking credibility.

These three very important studies make the importance of organization very clear. When speakers are not organized they are not perceived as credible and their audiences view the speeches negatively, are less likely to be persuaded, and don’t remember specific information from the speeches after the fact.

## Determining Your Main Ideas

When creating a speech, it's important to remember that speeches have three clear parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The introduction establishes the topic and orients your audience, and the conclusion wraps everything up at the end of your speech. The real "meat" of your speech happens in the body. In this section, we're going to discuss how to think strategically about the body of your speech.

We like the word strategic because it refers to determining what is important or essential to the overall plan or purpose of your speech. Too often, new speakers just throw information together and stand up and start speaking. When that happens, audience members are left confused and the reason for the speech may get lost. To avoid being seen as disorganized, we want you to start thinking critically about the organization of your speech. In this section, we will discuss how to take your speech from a specific purpose to creating the main points of your speech.

## What Is Your Specific Purpose?

Recall that a speech can have one of three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.

The **general purpose** refers to *the broad goal of creating and delivering the speech*.

A **specific purpose** is *a statement that starts with one of the three general purposes and then specifies the actual topic you have chosen and the basic objective you hope to accomplish with your speech. Basically, the specific purpose answers the who, what, when, where, and why questions* about *your speech*. Suppose you are going to give a speech about using open-source software. Here are three examples (each with a different general purpose and a different audience):

### Example One

**General Purpose:** To inform

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of school administrators about the various open-source software packages that could be utilized in their school districts

### Example Two

**General Purpose:** To persuade

**Specific Purpose:** To persuade a group of college students to make the switch from Microsoft Office to the open-source office suite OpenOffice

### Example Three

**General Purpose:** To entertain

**Specific Purpose:** To entertain members of a business organization with a mock eulogy of for-pay software giants as a result of the proliferation of open-source alternatives

In each of these three examples, you'll notice that the general topic is the same (open-source software) but the specific purpose is different because the speech has a different general purpose and a different audience. Before you can think strategically about organizing the body of your speech, you need to know what your specific purpose is. If you have not yet written a specific purpose for your current speech, please go ahead and write one now.

## From Specific Purpose to Main Points

Once you have written down your specific purpose, you can now start thinking about the best way to turn that specific purpose into a series of main points. Main points are the key ideas you present to enable your speech to accomplish its specific purpose. In this section, we're going to discuss how to determine your main points and how to organize those main points into a coherent, strategic speech.

# How Many Main Points Do I Need?

While there is no magic number for how many main points a speech should have, speech experts generally agree that the fewer the number of main points the better. First and foremost, experts on the subject of memory have consistently shown that people don't tend to remember very much after they listen to a message or leave a conversation. While many different factors can affect a listener's ability to retain information after a speech, how the speech is organized is an important part of that process.For the speeches you will be delivering in a typical public speaking class, you will usually have just two or three main points. If your speech is less than three minutes long, then two main points will probably work best. If your speech is between three and ten minutes in length, then it makes more sense to use three main points.

According to LeFrancois (1999), people are more likely to remember information that is meaningful, useful, and of interest to them; different or unique; organized; visual; and simple. Two or three main points are much easier for listeners to remember than ten or even five. In addition, if you have two or three main points, you'll be able to develop each one with examples, statistics, or other forms of support. This breakdown of support is called **subordination**, *the act of placing in a lower rank or position.* Using supporting or subordinate points *help you to better understand how ideas are connected and how ideas or points are providing more information as you explain or provide more detail.* Including support for each point will make your speech more interesting and more memorable for your audience.

# Narrowing Down Your Main Points

When you write your specific purpose and review the research you have done on your topic, you will probably find yourself thinking of quite a few points that you'd like to make in your speech. Whether that's the case or not, we recommend taking a few minutes to brainstorm and develop a list of points. In brainstorming, your goal is simply to think of as many different points as you can, not to judge how valuable or important they are. What information does your audience need to know to understand your topic? What information does your speech need to convey to accomplish its specific purpose? Consider the following example:

**Specific Purpose**

**Brainstorming List of Points**

- Define open-source software.
- Define educational software.
- List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.
- Explain the advantages of using open-source software.

- Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
- Review the history of open-source software.
- Describe the value of open-source software.
- Describe some educational open-source software packages.
- Review the software needs of my specific audience.
- Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.

Now that you have brainstormed and developed a list of possible points, how do you go about narrowing them down to just two or three main ones? When you look over the preceding list, you can then start to see that many of the points are related to one another. Your goal in narrowing down your main points is to identify which individual, potentially minor points can be combined to make main points.

**Specific Purpose**

**Main Point 1:** School districts use software in their operations.

1. Define educational software.
2. List and describe the software commonly used by school districts.

**Main Point 2:** What is open-source software?

1. Define open-source software.
2. Review the history of open-source software.
3. Explain the advantages of using open-source software.
4. Describe the value of open-source software.
5. Explain the disadvantages of using open-source software.
6. Describe some problems that have occurred with open-source software.

**Main Point 3:** Name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider.

1. Review the software needs of my specific audience.
2. Describe some educational open-source software packages.

You may notice that in the preceding list, the number of subpoints under each of the three main points is a little disjointed or the topics don't go together clearly. That's all right. Remember that these are just general ideas at this point. It's also important to remember that there is often more than one way to organize a speech. Some of these points could be left out and others developed more fully, depending on the purpose and audience. We'll develop the preceding main points more fully in a moment.

# Helpful Hints for Preparing Your Main Points

Now that we've discussed how to take a specific purpose and turn it into a series of main points, here are some helpful hints for creating your main points.

## Uniting Your Main Points

Once you've generated a possible list of main points, you want to ask yourself this question: "When you look at your main points, do they fit together?" For example, if you look at the three preceding main points (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider), ask yourself, "Do these main points help my audience understand my specific purpose?" Suppose you added a fourth main point about open-source software for musicians—would this fourth main point go with the other three? Probably not. While you may have a strong passion for open-source music software, that main point is extraneous information for the speech you are giving. It does not help accomplish your specific purpose, so you'd need to toss it out.

## Keeping Your Main Points Separate

The next question to ask yourself about your main points is whether they overlap too much. While some overlap may happen naturally because of the singular nature of a specific topic, the information covered within each main point should be clearly distinct from the other main points. Imagine you're giving a speech with the specific purpose "to inform my audience about the health reasons for eating apples and oranges." You could then have three main points: that eating fruits is healthy, that eating apples is healthy, and that eating oranges is healthy. While the two points related to apples and oranges are clearly distinct, both of those main points would probably overlap too much with the first point "that eating fruits is healthy," so you would probably decide to eliminate the first point and focus on the second and third. On the other hand, you could keep the first point and then develop two new points giving additional support to why people should eat fruit.

## Balancing Main Points

One of the biggest mistakes some speakers make is to spend most of their time talking about one of their main points, completely neglecting their other main points. To avoid this mistake, organize your speech so as to spend roughly the same amount of time on each main point. If you find that one of your main points is simply too large, you may need to divide that main point into two main points and consolidate your other main points into a single main point.

Let's see if our preceding example is balanced (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). What do you think? Obviously, the answer depends on how much time a speaker will have to talk about each of these main points. If you have an hour to talk, then you may find that these three main points are balanced. However, you may also find them wildly unbalanced if you only have five minutes to speak because five minutes is not enough time to even explain what open-source software is. If that's the case, then you probably need to rethink your specific purpose of ensuring that you can cover the material in the allotted time.

## Creating Parallel Structure for Main Points

Another major question to ask yourself about your main points is whether or not they have a parallel structure. By parallel structure, we mean that you should structure your main points so that they all sound similar. When all your main points sound similar, it's simply easier for your audiences to remember your main points and retain them for later. Let's look at our sample (school districts use software in their operations; what is open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider). Notice that the first and third main points are statements, but the second one is a question. Basically, we have an example here of main points that are not parallel in structure. You could fix this in one of two ways. You could make them all questions: what are some common school district software programs; what is open-source software; and what are some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Or you could turn them all into statements: school districts use software in their operations; define and describe open-source software; name some specific open-source software packages that may be appropriate for these school administrators to consider. Either of these changes will make the grammatical structure of the main points parallel.

## Maintaining Logical Flow of Main Points

The last question you want to ask yourself about your main points is whether the main points make sense in the order you've placed them. The next section goes into more detail of common organizational patterns for speeches, but for now, we want you to just think logically about the flow of your main points. When you look at your main points, can you see them as progressive, or does it make sense to talk about one first, another one second, and the final one last? If you look at your order, and it doesn't make sense to you, you probably need to think about the flow of your main points. Often, this process is an art and not a science. But let's look at a couple of examples.

**School Dress Codes Example**

| | |
|---|---|
| Main Point One | History of school dress codes |
| Main Point Two | Problems with school dress codes |
| Main Point Three | Eliminating school dress codes |

**Rider Law Legislation Example**

| | |
|---|---|
| Main Point One | Why should states have rider laws? |
| Main Point Two | What are the effects of a lack of rider laws? |
| Main Point Three | What is rider law legislation? |

When you look at these two examples, what are your immediate impressions of the two examples? In the first example, does it make sense to talk about history, and then the problems, and finally how to eliminate school dress codes? Would it make sense to put history as your last main point? Probably not. In this case, the main points are in a logical sequential order. What about the second example? Does it make sense to talk about your solution, then your problem, and then define the solution? Not really! What order do you think these main points should be placed in for a logical flow? Maybe you should explain the problem (lack of rider laws), then define your solution (what is rider law legislation), and then argue for your solution (why states should have rider laws). Notice that in this example you don't even need to know what "rider laws" are to see that the flow didn't make sense.

All speeches start with a general purpose and then move to a specific purpose that gives the who, what, where, and how for the speech. Transitioning from the specific purpose to possible main points means developing a list of potential main points you could discuss. Then you can narrow your focus by looking for similarities among your potential main points and combining ones that are similar. Shorter speeches will have two main points while longer speeches will generally have three or more main points. When creating your main points, make sure that they are united, separate, balanced, parallel, and logical.r do to fix your main points?

# Organizational Patterns

Previously in this chapter, we discussed how to make your main points flow logically. This section is going to provide you with a number of organizational patterns to help you create a logically organized speech.

# Topical

By far the most common pattern for organizing a speech is a **topical organizational pattern**, organizing *by categories or dividing the topic into subtopics*. The categories function as a way to help the speaker organize the message in a consistent fashion. The goal of a topical speech pattern is to create categories (or chunks) of information that go together to help support your original specific purpose. Let's look at an example.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of high school juniors about Generic University

**Main Points**

1. Life in the dorms
2. Life in the classroom
3. Life on campus

In this case, we have a speaker trying to inform a group of high school juniors about Generic University. The speaker has divided the information into three basic categories: what it's like to live in the dorms, what classes are like, and what life is like on campus. Almost anyone could take this basic speech and specifically tailor the speech to fit her or his own university or college. The main points in this example could be rearranged and the organizational pattern would still be effective because there is no inherent logic to the sequence of points. Let's look at a second example.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of college students about the uses and misuses of Internet dating

**Main Points**

1. Define and describe Internet dating.
2. Explain some strategies to enhance your Internet dating experience.
3. List some warning signs to look for in potential online dates.

In this speech, the speaker is talking about how to find others online and date them. Specifically, the speaker starts by explaining what Internet dating is; then the speaker talks about how to make Internet dating better for her or his audience members; and finally, the speaker ends by discussing some negative aspects of Internet dating. Again, notice that the information is chunked into three categories or topics and that the second and third could be reversed and still provide a logical structure for your speech.

# Comparison/Contrast

Another method for organizing main points is the **comparison/contrast organizational pattern**, *measuring similarities and differences between two or more subjects*.While this pattern clearly lends itself easily to two main points, you can also create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. Let's look at two examples; the first one will be a two-point example and the second a three-point example.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y

**Main Points**

1. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
2. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of physicians about Drug X, a newer drug with similar applications to Drug Y

**Main Points**

1. Explain the basic purpose and use of both Drug X and Drug Y.
2. Show how Drug X and Drug Y are similar.
3. Show how Drug X and Drug Y differ.

If you were using the comparison/contrast pattern for persuasive purposes, in the preceding examples, you'd want to make sure that when you show how Drug X and Drug Y differ, you clearly state why Drug X is clearly the better choice for physicians to adopt. In essence, you'd want to make sure that when you compare the two drugs, you show that Drug X has all the benefits of Drug Y, but when you contrast the two drugs, you show how Drug X is superior to Drug Y in some way.

# Spatial

The **spatial organizational pattern** *organizes information according to how things fit together in physical space, either geographically or directionally.* This pattern is best used when your main points are oriented to different locations that can exist independently. The basic reason to choose this format is to show that the main points have clear locations. We'll look at two examples here, one involving physical geography and one involving a different spatial order.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform a group of history students about the states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War

**Main Points**

1. Locate and describe the Confederate states just below the Mason-Dixon Line (Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee).
2. Locate and describe the Confederate states in the Deep South (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida).
3. Locate and describe the western Confederate states (Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas).

If you look at a basic map of the United States, you'll notice that these groupings of states were created because of their geographic location to one another. In essence, the states create three spatial territories to explain.

Now let's look at a spatial speech unrelated to geography.

**Specific Purpose:** To explain to a group of college biology students how the urinary system works

**Main Points**

1. Locate and describe the kidneys and ureters.
2. Locate and describe the bladder.
3. Locate and describe the sphincter and urethra.

In this example, we still have three basic spatial areas. If you look at a model of the urinary system, the first step is the kidney, which then takes waste through the ureters to the bladder, which then relies on the sphincter muscle to excrete waste through the urethra. All we've done in this example is create a spatial speech order for discussing how waste is removed from the human body through the urinary system. It is spatial because the organization pattern is determined by the physical location of each body part in relation to the others discussed.

# Chronological

The **chronological organizational pattern***organizes the main idea in time order or in a sequential pattern—whether backward or forward*. Here's a simple example.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform my audience about the books written by Winston Churchill

**Main Points**

1. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings prior to World War II.
2. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings during World War II.
3. Examine the style and content of Winston Churchill's writings after World War II.

In this example, we're looking at the writings of Winston Churchill in relation to World War II (before, during, and after). By placing his writings into these three categories, we develop a system for understanding this material based on Churchill's own life. Note that you could also use reverse chronological order and start with Churchill's writings after World War II, progressing backward to his earliest writings.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform my audience about the early life of Marilyn Manson

**Main Points**

1. Describe Brian Hugh Warner's early life and the beginning of his feud with Christianity.
2. Describe Warner's stint as a music journalist in Florida.
3. Describe Warner's decision to create Marilyn Manson and the Spooky Kids.

In this example, we see how Brian Warner, through three major periods of his life, ultimately became the musician known as Marilyn Manson.

# Causal

The **causal organizational pattern***organizes and* explains *cause-and-effect relationships*. When you use a causal speech pattern, your speech will have two basic main points: cause and effect. In the first main point, typically you will talk about the causes of a phenomenon, and in the second main point, you will then show how the causes lead to either a specific effect or a small set of effects. Let's look at an example.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform my audience about the problems associated with drinking among members of Native American tribal groups

**Main Points**

1. Explain the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans.
2. Explain the effects that abuse of alcohol has on Native Americans and how this differs from the experience of other populations.

In this case, the first main point is about the history and prevalence of drinking alcohol among Native Americans (the cause). The second point then examines the effects of Native American alcohol consumption and how it differs from other population groups.

However, a causal organizational pattern can also begin with an effect and then explore one or more causes. In the following example, the effect is the number of arrests for domestic violence.

**Specific Purpose:** To inform local voters about the problem of domestic violence in our city

**Main Points**

1. Explain that there are significantly more arrests for domestic violence in our city than in cities of comparable size in our state.
2. List possible causes for the difference, which may be unrelated to the actual amount of domestic violence.

In this example, the possible causes for the difference might include stricter law enforcement, greater likelihood of neighbors reporting an incident, and police training that emphasizes arrests as opposed to other outcomes. Examining these possible causes may suggest that despite the arresting statistic, the actual number of domestic violence incidents in your city may not be greater than in other cities of similar size.

# Selecting an Organizational Pattern

Each of the preceding organizational patterns is potentially useful for organizing the main points of your speech. However, not all organizational patterns work for all speeches. Your challenge is to choose the best pattern for the particular speech you are giving. When considering which organizational pattern to use, you need to keep in mind your specific purpose as well as your audience and the actual speech material itself to decide which pattern you think will work best. Ultimately, speakers must really think about which organizational pattern best suits a specific speech topic.

# 10.5 Outlining

## The Fun of Outlining

*Sanberdoo – Skeleton – CC BY 2.0.*

Think of an outline as a skeleton you must assemble bone by bone, gradually making it take form into a coherent whole. Or think of it as a puzzle in which you must put all the pieces in their correct places in order to see the full picture. Or think of it as a game of solitaire in which the right cards must follow a legitimate sequence in order for you to win. The more fully you can come to understand the outline as both rule-bound and creative, the more fully you will experience its usefulness and its power to deliver your message in a unified, coherent way.

This means, of course, that there are no shortcuts, but there are helpful strategies. If you leave a bone out of a skeleton, something will fall apart. By the same token, if you omit a step in reasoning, your speech will be vulnerable to lapses in logic, lapses in the evidence you need to make your case, and the risk of becoming a disjointed, disorienting message. When you are talking informally with friends, your conversation might follow a haphazard course, but a public speech must not do so. Even in conversations with your friends, you might believe they understand what you mean, but they might not.

In a prepared speech, you must be attentive to reasoning in logical steps so that your audience understands the meaning you intend to convey. This is where your outline can help you.

## Why Outline

In order for your speech to be as effective as possible, it needs to be organized into logical patterns. Information will need to be presented in a way your audience can understand. This is especially true if you already know a great deal about your topic. You will need to take careful steps to include pertinent information your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format, you can make decisions about your main points, the specific information you will use to support those points, and the language you will use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose logical integrity. It might even deteriorate into a list of bullet points with no apparent connection to each other except the topic, leaving your audience relieved when your speech is finally over.

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation for your message. It will call on you to have one clear and specific purpose for your message. As we have seen in other chapters of this book, writing your specific purpose in clear language serves you well. It helps you frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. It helps you exclude irrelevant information. It helps you focus only on information that directly bears on your thesis. It reduces the amount of research you must do. It suggests what kind of supporting evidence is needed, so less effort is expended in trying to figure out what to do next. It helps both you and your audience remember the central message of your speech.

Finally, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Remember that live audiences for oral communications lack the ability to “rewind” your message to figure out what you said, so it is critically important to help the audience follow your reasoning as it reaches their ears.

Your authors have noted among their past and present students a reluctance to write full-sentence outlines. It’s a task too often perceived as busy work, unnecessary, time-consuming, and restricted. On one hand, we understand that reluctance. But on the other hand, we find that students who carefully write a full-sentence outline show a stronger tendency to give powerful presentations of excellent messages.

## Tests Scope of Content

When you begin with a clear, concrete thesis statement, it acts as kind of a compass for your outline.

The test of the scope will be a comparison of each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside the scope of the thesis.

Let's say the general purpose of your speech is to inform, and your broad topic area is wind-generated energy. Now you must narrow this to a specific purpose. You have many choices, but let's say your specific purpose is to inform a group of property owners about the economics of wind farms where electrical energy is generated.

Your first main point could be that modern windmills require a very small land base, making the cost of real estate low. This is directly related to economics. All you need is information to support your claim that only a small land base is needed.

In your second main point, you might be tempted to claim that windmills don't pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the thesis. You must resist the temptation to add it. Perhaps in another speech, your thesis will address environmental impact, but in this speech, you must stay within the economic scope. Perhaps you will say that once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the thesis. Now all you need is supporting information to support this second claim.

Your third point, the point some audience members will want to hear, is the cost of generating electrical energy with windmills compared with other sources. This is clearly within the scope of energy economics. You should have no difficulty finding authoritative sources of information to support that claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test the scope of your content because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

## Tests Logical Relation of Parts

You have many choices for your topic, and therefore, there are many ways your content can be logically organized. In the example above, we simply listed three main points that were important economic considerations about wind farms. Often the main points of a speech can be arranged into a logical pattern; use the organizational patterns in the text to organize main points into logical parts.

Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at the three main points in your outline, you should easily be able to see the logical way to which they relate.

# Tests Relevance of Supporting Ideas

When you create an outline, you can clearly see that you need supporting evidence for each of your main points. For instance, using the example above, your first main point claims that less land is needed for windmills than for other utilities. Your supporting evidence should be about the amount of acreage required for a windmill and the amount of acreage required for other energy generation sites, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Your sources should come from experts in economics, economic development, or engineering. The evidence might even be expert opinion but not the opinions of ordinary people. The expert opinion will provide stronger support for your point.

Similarly, your second point claims that once a wind turbine is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. Your supporting evidence should show how much annual maintenance for a windmill costs and what the costs are for other energy plants. If you used a comparison with nuclear plants to support your first main point, you should do so again for the sake of consistency. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about the amount of electricity and its profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to the profit from energy generated at a nuclear power plant. In this third main point, you should make use of just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to show the effectiveness of wind farms compared to the other energy sources you've cited.

Where do you find the kind of information you would need to support these main points? A reference librarian can quickly guide you to authoritative statistics manuals and help you make use of them.

An important step you will notice is that the full-sentence outline includes its authoritative sources within the text. This is a major departure from the way you've learned to write a research paper. In the research paper, you can add that information to the end of a sentence, leaving the reader to turn to the last page for a fuller citation. In a speech, however, your listeners can't do that. From the beginning of the supporting point, you need to fully cite your source so your audience can assess its importance.

Because this is such a profound change from the academic habits that you're probably used to, you will have to make a concerted effort to overcome the habits of the past and provide the information your listeners need when they need it.

# Test the Balance and Proportion of the Speech

Part of the value of writing a full-sentence outline is the visual space you use for each of your main points. Is each main point of approximately the same importance? Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that one of your main points has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points.

Remember that you should use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means investing more time in your search for knowledge.

## Serves as Notes during the Speech

Although we recommend writing a full-sentence outline during the speech preparation phase, you should also create a shortened outline that you can use as notes allowing for a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would do a great deal of reading, which would limit your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, hurting your connection with your audience. For this reason, we recommend writing a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 note cards to use when you deliver your speech. The good news is that your three main points suggest how you should prepare your note cards.

Your first 4 × 6 note card can contain your thesis statement and other key words and phrases that will help you present your introduction. Your second card can contain your first main point, together with key words and phrases to act as a map to follow as you present. If your first main point has an exact quotation you plan to present, you can include that on your card. Your third note card should be related to your second main point, your fourth card should be about your third main point, and your fifth card should be related to your conclusion. In this way, your five note cards follow the very same organizational pattern as your full outline.

When we discuss outlining, we are actually focusing on a series of outlines instead of a single one. Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your speech preparation process, so this section will discuss how you progress from a working outline to a full-sentence outline and, finally, a speaking outline. We will also discuss how using note cards for your speaking outline can be helpful to you as a speaker.

# Types of Outlines

## Working Outline

A working outline is an outline you use for developing your speech. It undergoes many changes on its way to completion. This is the outline where you lay out the basic structure of your speech. You must have a general and specific purpose; an introduction, including a grabber; and a concrete, specific thesis statement and preview. You also need three main points, a conclusion, and a list of references.

One strategy for beginning your working outline is to begin by typing in your labels for each of the elements. Later you can fill in the content.

When you look ahead to the full-sentence outline, you will notice that each of the three main points moves from the general to the particular. Specifically, each main point is a claim, followed by particular information that supports that claim so that the audience will perceive its validity. For example, for a speech about coal mining safety, your first main point might focus on the idea that coal mining is a hazardous occupation. You might begin by making a very general claim, such as "Coal mining is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States," and then become more specific by providing statistics, authoritative quotations, or examples to support your primary claim.

A working outline allows you to work out the kinks in your message. For instance, let's say you've made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation but you cannot find authoritative evidence as support. Now you must re-examine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point in order to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement–three main points–conclusion sequence.

The working outline shouldn't be thought of a "rough copy," but as a careful step in the development of your message. It will take time to develop. Here is an example of a working outline:

*Name*: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

*Topic*: Smart dust

*General Purpose*: To inform

*Specific Purpose*: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust

*Main Ideas*:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no, no—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That's better because it is more clear and precise.)
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

*Introduction*: **(Grabber)** (fill in later)

**(Thesis Statement)** Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and defending against bioterrorism.

**(Preview)** Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

**(Transition)** (fill in later)

*Main Point I*: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects

Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

**(Transition)** (fill in later)

*Main Point II*: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

**(Transition)** (fill in later)

*Main Point III*: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

**(Transition)** (fill in later)

*Conclusion*: (Bring your message "full circle" and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This stage of preparation turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for unity of focus. But if the relationship of one of the main points is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult later for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have a large investment in time and thought.

You can see that this working outline can lay a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in the internal unity of your basic message, you can begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general (main points) to the particular (supporting points) and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits. You only need to assess your supporting points to be sure they're authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they should support.

Sometimes transitions seem troublesome, and that's not surprising. We often omit them when we have informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. However, others might not understand what we mean but think they do, and so we might never know whether they understood us. Even when we include transitions, we don't generally identify them as transitions. In a speech, however, we need to use effective **transitions,** *phrases or words used to connect one idea to the next*. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next type of outline, the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of the shifting focus to the next main point.

## Full-Sentence Outline

Your full-sentence outline should contain full sentences only. There are several reasons why this kind of outline is important. First, you have a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience so that you will not have to struggle with wordings or examples. Second, you have a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your speech. Third, it contributes a fundamental ingredient of good preparation, part of your ethical responsibility to your audience. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

*Name:* Anomaly May McGillicuddy

*Topic*: Smart dust

*General Purpose*: To inform

*Specific Purpose*: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust.

*Main Ideas*:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations.
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

*Introduction*: **(Grabber)** In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey* about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of electrical engineering and computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed “smart dust” as the first in their “Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On.”

**(Thesis Statement)** Thus far researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.

**(Preview)** Today, I’m going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

**(Transition)** To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is.

*Main Point I*: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package.

2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters.
    1. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
    2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

**(Transition)** Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust.

*Main Point II*: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust web site, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications.
    1. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
        1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology's Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification.
        2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.
2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in new *Scientist*, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

**(Transition)** Now that we've explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives.

*Main Point III*: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control has been discussed as possible applications for smart dust.
    1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."
2. Medically, according to the smart dust web site, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with

computers.

1. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly.
2. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of center cells or alert us when we've been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.

**(Transition)** Today, we've explored what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.

*Conclusion*: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries related to smart dust. Even Dr. Kris Pister's smart dust project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were greater than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

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When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as 1 ½ hours to complete the first part of the outline from your name at the top through the introduction. When you've completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, you should be able to complete your draft in another 1 ½ hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you're standing up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various parts of your speech, for instance, the transition and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you've included everything you intended to. Third, it helps you prepare your speaking outline.

You'll also notice the full references at the end of the outline. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes while preparing a speech, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your speech rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Don't think of the references as busy work or drudgery. Although they're more time consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

## Speaking Outline

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Whenever possible, you will use key words and phrases, but in some instances, an extended quotation will need to be fully written on your speaking outline.

Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you've carefully crafted every sequence of words in your speech, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxiety about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a "safety net." In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you, you will end up reading, rather than speaking, to your audience. For now, it is enough to know you shouldn't read, but instead, use carefully prepared note cards.

Your speech has five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore we strongly recommend the use of five note cards: one for each of those five components. There are extenuating circumstances that might call for additional cards, but begin with five cards only.

How will five note cards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can't you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, the presence of your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you don't know the content of your speech. Second, the temptation to read the speech directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, sheets of paper are noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it's easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Plan to use five cards. Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for a visually organized set of notes. With five cards, you will have one card for the introduction, one card for each of the three main points, and one card for the conclusion. You should number your cards and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on only one side means that the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself while you are speaking. Each card should contain key words and key phrases but not full sentences.

Some speeches will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. Some of these quotations might be highly technical or difficult to memorize for other reasons, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you could include an extra card in the sequence of note cards. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How will note cards be sufficient? When they are carefully written, your practice will reveal that they will work. If during practice, you find that one of your cards doesn't work well enough, you can rewrite that card.

Using a set of carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards will help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation. Although they will never provide the exact word sequence of your full-sentence outline, they should keep you organized during the speech.

The "trick" to selecting the phrases and quotations for your cards is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase "more science fact" brings to mind the connection to science fiction and the differences between the real developments and the fictive events of Crichton's novel *Prey*, that phrase on your card will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of no more than five cards written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical set of cards for the smart dust speech:

Card 1.

*Introduction*: 2002, *Prey*, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.

Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.

Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

*Thesis Statement*: Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster, act as defense against bioterrorism.

*Prev.*: What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

*Transition*: To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Card 2.

I. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. 2001 article by Bret Warneke et al titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" publ. in *Computer*, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.
2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.
    1. Each mote could interact w/ others.
    2. (see extended quotation, next card)

Card 3.

*Quotation*: Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Card 4.

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

1. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor., transp. monitor., + scud hunting.
    1. benefit, surveill.
        1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.
        2. could also defeat comm. jamming equipt by communicating among itself and w/ civilians in combat zones.
2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs *New Scientist*, early defense, storms and debris.

*Transition*: Switch gears to daily lives.

Card 5.

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.
    1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, “The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil.”
2. Medically, accdng to SD project website, help disabled.
    1. interface w/ computers
    2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly
        1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

*Transition*: We expl. What SD is, how SD cd be used military, and how SD cd impact our lives.

Card 6.

*Conclusion*: Transf fiction to fact, experts agree potential 2025. Michael Crichton’s Prey isn’t reality, but in developing SD as fact, there are ethical considerations. Pister: privacy.

Dr. Kris Pister: “As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn’t be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far far outweigh the risks to personal privacy.”

Using a set of cards similar to this could help you get through an impressive set of specialized information. But what if you lose your place during a speech? With a set of cards, it will take less time to refind it than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling sheets of paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides.

What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you’ve said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your speech, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small set of well-prepared cards.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading a sequence of words to your audience instead of telling them your message.

# 10.6 Delivery

## Four Delivery Styles

The four most common delivery styles for public speaking include speaking from memory, speaking impromptu, speaking from a manuscript, and extemporaneous speaking. Before writing became a common practice, orators would memorize their speeches, sometimes for months, before presenting to an audience. **Memorized** speaking requires *delivery from memory* still has its place in contemporary society, but the occasions for this type of speaking is usually reserved for introducing important persons, special events such as weddings and funerals, or other ceremonial events. As a student, you may have already experienced impromptu speaking**. Impromptu speaking** requires *the speaker delivers without little to no preparation.* You may also find yourself in this situation during your professional career. If so, there is a short script (or variation of a script) that you can follow: (1) Express thankfulness for the opportunity to speak, (2) Rephrase the question in your own words, (3) Answer the question to the best of your availability, and (4) Briefly explain how your answer speaks to the question. If you cannot answer the question in step three, then be honest, say that you do not have an adequate answer now but that you will follow-up with an answer later.

**Manuscript speaking** requires *the speaker reads every word from a pre-written speech.* This delivery style is appropriate when the speaking occasion demands accuracy of information and/or eloquence. News anchors speak from manuscript to deliver the evening news (the manuscript scrolls on a screen beneath the television camera) and politicians often do as well. When speaking from manuscript it is important to follow a few guidelines: (1) Type your manuscript in all-caps, (2) Double-space between paragraphs, (3) Use italics and bold to emphasize words and phrases, and above all else (4) Rehearse speaking from the manuscript several times so that you can maintain good eye-contact with the audience when you speak.

Extemporaneous speaking is considered the most effective speaking style. When delivering in an **extemporaneous speaking** style *the speaker prepares well (with an outline) and practice in advance, giving full attention to all the facets of the speech—content, arrangement, and delivery.*In this speaking style, you research your topic thoroughly, construct an outline that forces you to think through your main points and sub points as complete thoughts, and then deconstruct this sentence outline so that it serves as your key-word, key-phrase speaking notes. You thereby internalize your speech without quite memorizing it, and your notes are sparse so that you are not tempted to merely read the speech to your audience. The result is a delivery that harnesses the energy of spontaneity, dynamism, has a sense of immediacy, and is thus a more engaging experience for your audience.

There is no foolproof recipe for good delivery. Each of us is unique, and we each embody different experiences and interests. This means each person has an approach, or a style, that is effective for her or him. This further means that anxiety can accompany even the most carefully researched and interesting message. Even when we know our messages are strong and well-articulated on paper, it is difficult to know for sure that our presentation will also be good.

We are still obligated to do our best out of respect for the audience and their needs. Fortunately, there are some tools that can be helpful to you even the very first time you present a speech. You will continue developing your skills each time you put them to use and can experiment to find out which combination of delivery elements is most effective for you.

## What Is Good Delivery?

The more you care about your topic, the greater your motivation to present it well. Good delivery is a process of presenting a clear, coherent message in an interesting way. Communication scholar Stephen E. Lucas tells us:

> Good delivery…conveys the speaker's ideas clearly, interestingly, and without distracting the audience. Most audiences prefer delivery that combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation—directness, spontaneity, animation, vocal and facial expressiveness, and a lively sense of communication (Lucas, 2009).

Many writers on the nonverbal aspects of delivery have cited the findings of psychologist Albert Mehrabian, asserting that the bulk of an audience's understanding of your message is based on nonverbal communication. Specifically, Mehrabian is often credited with finding that when audiences decoded a speaker's meaning, the speaker's face conveyed 55 percent of the information, the vocalics conveyed 38 percent, and the words conveyed just 7 percent (Mehrabian, 1972). Although numerous scholars, including Mehrabian himself, have stated that his findings are often misinterpreted (Mitchell), scholars and speech instructors do agree that nonverbal communication and speech delivery are extremely important to effective public speaking.

In this section of the chapter, we will explain six elements of good delivery: conversational style, conversational quality, eye contact, vocalics, physical manipulation, and variety. And since delivery is only as good as the practice that goes into it, we conclude with some tips for effective use of your practice time.

# Conversational Style

**Conversational style** is *a speaker's ability to sound expressive and to be perceived by the audience as natural*. It's a style that approaches the way you normally express yourself in a much smaller group than your classroom audience. This means that you want to avoid having your presentation come across as didactic or overly exaggerated. You might not feel natural while you're using a conversational style, but for the sake of audience preference and receptiveness, you should do your best to appear natural. It might be helpful to remember that the two most important elements of the speech are the message and the audience. You are the conduit with the important role of putting the two together in an effective way. Your audience should be thinking about the message, not the delivery.

Stephen E. Lucas defines conversational quality as the idea that "no matter how many times a speech has been rehearsed, it still *sounds* spontaneous" [emphasis in original] (Lucas, 2009). No one wants to hear a speech that is so well rehearsed that it sounds fake or robotic. One of the hardest parts of public speaking is rehearsing to the point where it can appear to your audience that the thoughts are magically coming to you while you're speaking, but in reality you've spent a great deal of time thinking through each idea. When you can sound conversational, people pay attention.

# Eye Contact

**Eye contact** is *a speaker's ability to have visual contact with everyone in the audience*. Your audience should feel that you're speaking to them, not simply uttering main and supporting points. If you are new to public speaking, you may find it intimidating to look audience members in the eye, but if you think about speakers you have seen who did not maintain eye contact, you'll realize why this aspect of speech delivery is important. Without eye contact, the audience begins to feel invisible and unimportant, as if the speaker is just speaking to hear her or his own voice. Eye contact lets your audience feel that your attention is on them, not solely on the cards in front of you.

Sustained eye contact with your audience is one of the most important tools toward effective delivery. O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein note that eye contact is mandatory for speakers to establish a good relationship with an audience (O'Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2001). Whether a speaker is speaking before a group of five or five hundred, the appearance of eye contact is an important way to bring an audience into your speech.

Eye contact can be a powerful tool. It is not simply a sign of sincerity, a sign of being well prepared and knowledgeable, or a sign of confidence; it also has the power to convey meanings. Arthur Koch tells us that all facial expressions "can communicate a wide range of emotions, including sadness, compassion, concern, anger, annoyance, fear, joy, and happiness" (Koch, 2010).

If you find the gaze of your audience too intimidating, you might feel tempted to resort to "faking" eye contact with them by looking at the wall just above their heads or by sweeping your gaze around the room instead of making actual eye contact with individuals in your audience until it becomes easier to provide real contact. The problem with fake eye contact is that it tends to look mechanical. Another problem with fake attention is that you lose the opportunity to assess the audience's understanding of your message. Still, fake eye contact is somewhat better than gripping your cards and staring at them and only occasionally glancing quickly and shallowly at the audience.

This is not to say that you may never look at your note cards. On the contrary, one of the skills in extemporaneous speaking is the ability to alternate one's gaze between the audience and one's notes. Rehearsing your presentation in front of a few friends should help you develop the ability to maintain eye contact with your audience while referring to your notes. When you are giving a speech that is well prepared and well rehearsed, you will only need to look at your notes occasionally. This is an ability that will develop even further with practice. Your public speaking course is your best chance to get that practice.

## Effective Use of Vocalics

**Vocalics**, also known as **paralanguage**, is the sub-field of nonverbal communication that *examines how we use our voices to communicate orally*. This means that you speak loudly enough for all audience members (even those in the back of the room) to hear you clearly, and that you enunciate clearly enough to be understood by all audience members (even those who may have a hearing impairment or who may be English-language learners). If you tend to be soft-spoken, you will need to practice using a louder volume level that may feel unnatural to you at first. For all speakers, good vocalic technique is best achieved by facing the audience with your chin up and your eyes away from your notecards and by setting your voice at a moderate speed. Effective use of vocalics also means that you make use of appropriate pitch, pauses, vocal variety, and correct pronunciation.

If you are an English-language learner and feel apprehensive about giving a speech in English, there are two things to remember: first, you can meet with a reference librarian to learn the correct pronunciations of any English words you are unsure of; and second, the fact that you have an accent means you speak more languages than most Americans, which is an accomplishment to be proud of.

If you are one of the many people with a stutter or other speech challenge, you undoubtedly already know that there are numerous techniques for reducing stuttering and improving speech fluency and that there is no one agreed-upon "cure." The Academy Award–winning movie *The King's Speech* did much to increase public awareness of what a person with a stutter goes through when it comes to public speaking. It also prompted some well-known individuals who stutter, such as television news reporter John Stossel, to go public about their stuttering (Stossel, 2011). If you have decided to study public speaking in spite of a speech challenge, we commend you for your efforts and encourage you to work with your speech instructor to make whatever adaptations work best for you.

## Volume

**Volume** refers to *the loudness or softness of a speaker's voice*. As mentioned, public speakers need to speak loudly enough to be heard by everyone in the audience. In addition, volume is often needed to overcome ambient noise, such as the hum of an air conditioner or the dull roar of traffic passing by. In addition, you can use volume strategically to emphasize the most important points in your speech. Select these points carefully; if you emphasize everything, nothing will seem important. You also want to be sure to adjust your volume to the physical setting of the presentation. If you are in a large auditorium and your audience is several yards away, you will need to speak louder. If you are in a smaller space, with the audience a few feet away, you want to avoid overwhelming your audience with shouting or speaking too loudly.

## Rate

**Rate** is *the speed at which a person speaks*. To keep your speech delivery interesting, your rate should vary. If you are speaking extemporaneously, your rate will naturally fluctuate. If you're reading, your delivery is less likely to vary. Because rate is an important tool in enhancing the meanings in your speech, you do not want to give a monotone drone or a rapid "machine-gun" style delivery. Your rate should be appropriate for your topic and your points. A rapid, lively rate can communicate such meanings as enthusiasm, urgency, or humor. A slower, moderated rate can convey respect, seriousness, or careful reasoning. By varying rapid and slower rates within a single speech, you can emphasize your main points and keep your audience interested.

## Pitch

**Pitch** refers to *the highness or lowness of a speaker's voice*. Some speakers have deep voices and others have high voices. As with one's singing voice range, the pitch of one's speaking voice is determined to a large extent by physiology (specifically, the length of one's vocal folds, or cords, and the size of one's vocal tract). We all have a normal speaking pitch where our voice is naturally settled, the pitch where we are most comfortable speaking, and most teachers advise speaking at the pitch that feels natural to you.

While our voices may be generally comfortable at a specific pitch level, we all have the ability to modulate, or move, our pitch up or down. In fact, we do this all the time. When we change the pitch of our voices, we are using inflections. Just as you can use volume strategically, you can also use pitch inflections to make your delivery more interesting and emphatic. If you ordinarily speak with a soprano voice, you may want to drop your voice to a slightly lower range to call attention to a particular point. How we use inflections can even change the entire meaning of what we are saying. For example, try saying the sentence “I love public speaking” with a higher pitch on one of the words—first raise the pitch on “I,” then say it again with the pitch raised on “love,” and so on. “*I* love public speaking” conveys a different meaning from “I love *public* speaking,” doesn’t it?

There are some speakers who don’t change their pitch at all while speaking, which is called monotone. While very few people are completely monotone, some speakers slip into monotone patterns because of nerves. One way to ascertain whether you sound monotone is to record your voice and see how you sound. If you notice that your voice doesn’t fluctuate very much, you will need to be intentional in altering your pitch to ensure that the emphasis of your speech isn’t completely lost on your audience.

Finally, resist the habit of pitching your voice “up” at the ends of sentences. It makes them sound like questions instead of statements. This habit can be disorienting and distracting, interfering with the audience’s ability to focus entirely on the message. The speaker sounds uncertain or sounds as though he or she is seeking the understanding or approval of the listener. It hurts the speaker’s credibility and it needs to be avoided.

The effective use of pitch is one of the keys to an interesting delivery that will hold your audience’s attention.

# Pauses

**Pauses** are *brief breaks in a speaker’s delivery that can emphasize and enhance the clarity of a message*. In terms of timing, the effective use of pauses is one of the most important skills to develop. Some speakers become uncomfortable very quickly with the “dead air” that the pause causes. And if the speaker is uncomfortable, the discomfort can transmit itself to the audience. That doesn’t mean you should avoid using pauses; your ability to use them confidently will increase with practice. Some of the best comedians use the well-timed pause to powerful and hilarious effect. Although your speech will not be a comedy routine, pauses are still useful for emphasis, especially when combined with a lowered pitch and rate to emphasize the important point you do not want your audience to miss.

# Vocal Variety

**Vocal variety** has to do with *changes in the vocalics we have just discussed: volume, pitch, rate, and pauses*. No one wants to hear the same volume, pitch, rate, or use of pauses over and over again in a speech. Your audience should never be able to detect that you're about to slow down or your voice is going to get deeper because you're making an important point. When you think about how you sound in a normal conversation, your use of volume, pitch, rate, and pauses are all done spontaneously. If you try to over-rehearse your vocalics, your speech will end up sounding artificial. Vocal variety should flow naturally from your wish to speak with expression. In that way, it will animate your speech and invite your listeners to understand your topic the way you do.

# Pronunciation

The last major category related to vocalics is **pronunciation**, or *the conventional patterns of speech used to form a word*. Word pronunciation is important for two reasons: first, mispronouncing a word your audience is familiar with will harm your credibility as a speaker; and second, mispronouncing a word they are unfamiliar with can confuse and even misinform them. If there is any possibility at all that you don't know the correct pronunciation of a word, find out. Many online dictionaries, such as the Wiktionary, provide free sound files illustrating the pronunciation of words.

Many have commented on the mispronunciation of words such as "nuclear" and "cavalry" by highly educated public speakers, including US presidents. There have been classroom examples as well. For instance, a student giving a speech on the Greek philosopher Socrates mispronounced his name at least eight times during her speech. This mispronunciation created a situation of great awkwardness and anxiety for the audience. Everyone felt embarrassed and the teacher, opting not to humiliate the student in front of the class, could not say anything out loud, instead providing a private written comment at the end of class.

One important aspect of pronunciation is **articulation**, or *the ability to clearly pronounce each of a succession of syllables used to make up a word*. Some people have difficulty articulating because of physiological problems that can be treated by trained speech therapists, but other people have articulation problems because they come from a cultural milieu where a dialect other than standard American English is the norm. Speech therapists, who generally guide their clients toward standard American English, use the acronym SODA when helping people learn how to more effectively articulate: substitutions, omissions, distortions, and additions.

- **Substitutions** occur when a speaker replaces one consonant or vowel with another consonant (*water* becomes *wudda*; *ask* becomes *ax*; *mouth* becomes *mouf*).

- **Omissions** occur when a speaker drops a consonant or vowel within a word (*Internet* becomes *Innet*; *mesmerized* becomes *memerized*; *probably* becomes *prolly*).
- **Distortions** occur when a speaker articulates a word with nasal or slurring sounds (*pencil* sounds like *mencil*; *precipitation* sounds like *persination*; *second* sounds like *slecond*).
- **Additions** occur when a speaker adds consonants or vowels to words that are not there (*anyway* becomes *anyways*; *athletic* becomes *athaletic*; *black* becomes *buhlack*; *interpret* becomes *interpretate*).

Another aspect of pronunciation in public speaking is avoiding the use of verbal surrogates or "filler" words used as placeholders for actual words (like *er*, *um*, *uh*, etc.). You might be able to get away with saying "um" as many as two or three times in your speech before it becomes distracting, but the same cannot be said of "like." We know of a student who trained herself to avoid saying "like." As soon as the first speech was assigned, she began wearing a rubber band on her left wrist. Each time she caught herself saying "like," she snapped herself with the rubber band. It hurt. Very quickly, she found that she could stop inflicting the snap on herself, and she had successfully confronted an unprofessional verbal habit.

# Effective Physical Manipulation

In addition to using our voices effectively, a key to effective public speaking is physical manipulation, or the use of the body to emphasize meanings or convey meanings during a speech. While we will not attempt to give an entire discourse on nonverbal communication, we will discuss a few basic aspects of physical manipulation: posture, body movement, facial expressions, and dress. These aspects add up to the overall physical dimension of your speech, which we call self-presentation.

# Posture

"Stand up tall!" I'm sure we've all heard this statement from a parent or a teacher at some point in our lives. The fact is, posture is actually quite important. When you stand up straight, you communicate to your audience, without saying a word, that you hold a position of power and take your position seriously. If however, you are slouching, hunched over, or leaning on something, you could be perceived as ill prepared, anxious, lacking in credibility, or not serious about your responsibilities as a speaker. While speakers often assume more casual posture as a presentation continues (especially if it is a long one, such as a ninety-minute class lecture), it is always wise to start by standing up straight and putting your best foot forward. Remember, you only get one shot at making a first impression, and your body's orientation is one of the first pieces of information audiences use to make that impression.

# Body Movement

Unless you are stuck behind a podium because of the need to use a non-movable microphone, you should never stand in one place during a speech. However, movement during a speech should also not resemble pacing. One of our authors once saw a speaker who would walk around a small table where her speaking notes were located. She would walk around the table once, toss her chalk twice, and then repeat the process. Instead of listening to what the speaker was saying, everyone became transfixed by her walk-and-chalk-toss pattern. As speakers, we must be mindful of how we go about moving while speaking. One common method for easily integrating some movement into your speech is to take a few steps any time you transition from one idea to the next. By only moving at transition points, not only do you help focus your audience's attention on the transition from one idea to the next, but you also are able to increase your nonverbal immediacy by getting closer to different segments of your audience.

Body movement also includes **gestures**, *a movement of the hands, arms, or head, etc. to express an idea or feeling*. These should be neither over dramatic nor subdued. At one extreme, arm-waving and fist-pounding will distract from your message and reduce your credibility. At the other extreme, refraining from the use of gestures is the waste of an opportunity to suggest emphasis, enthusiasm, or other personal connection with your topic.

There are many ways to use gestures. The most obvious are hand gestures, which should be used in moderation at carefully selected times in the speech. If you overuse gestures, they lose meaning. Many late-night comedy parodies of political leaders include patterned, overused gestures or other delivery habits associated with a particular speaker. However, the well-placed use of simple, natural gestures to indicate emphasis, direction, size is usually effective. Normally, a gesture with one hand is enough. Rather than trying to have a gesture for every sentence, use just a few well-planned gestures. It is often more effective to make a gesture and hold it for a few moments than to begin waving your hands and arms around in a series of gestures.

Finally, just as you should avoid pacing, you will also want to avoid other distracting movements when you are speaking. Many speakers have unconscious mannerisms such as twirling their hair, putting their hands in and out of their pockets, jingling their keys, licking their lips, or clicking a pen while speaking. As with other aspects of speech delivery, practicing in front of others will help you become conscious of such distractions and plan ways to avoid doing them.

# Facial Expressions

Faces are amazing and convey so much information. As speakers, we must be acutely aware of what our face looks like while speaking. While many of us do not look forward to seeing ourselves on videotape, often the only way you can critically evaluate what your face is doing while you are speaking is to watch a recording of your speech. If video is not available, you can practice speaking in front of a mirror.

There are two extremes you want to avoid: no facial expression and over-animated facial expressions. First, you do not want to have a completely blank face while speaking. Some people just do not show much emotion with their faces naturally, but this blankness is often increased when the speaker is nervous. Audiences will react negatively to the message of such a speaker because they will sense that something is amiss. If a speaker is talking about the joys of Disney World and his face doesn't show any excitement, the audience is going to be turned off to the speaker and his message. On the other extreme end is the speaker whose face looks like that of an exaggerated cartoon character. Instead, your goal is to show a variety of appropriate facial expressions while speaking.

Like vocalics and gestures, facial expression can be used strategically to enhance meaning. A smile or pleasant facial expression is generally appropriate at the beginning of a speech to indicate your wish for a good transaction with your audience. However, you should not smile throughout a speech on drug addiction, poverty, or the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. An inappropriate smile creates confusion about your meaning and may make your audience feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, a serious scowl might look hostile or threatening to audience members and become a distraction from the message. If you keep the meaning of your speech foremost in your mind, you will more readily find the balance in facial expression.

Another common problem some new speakers have is showing only one expression. One of our coauthors competed in speech in college. After one of his speeches (about how people die on amusement park rides), one of his judges pulled him aside and informed him that his speech was "creepy." Apparently, while speaking about death, our coauthor smiled the entire time. The incongruity between the speech on death and dying and the coauthor's smile just left the judge a little creeped out. If you are excited in a part of your speech, you should show excitement on your face. On the other hand, if you are at a serious part of your speech, your facial expressions should be serious.

# Dress

While there are no clear-cut guidelines for how you should dress for every speech you'll give, dress is still a very important part of how others will perceive you (again, it's all about the first impression). If you want to be taken seriously, you must present yourself seriously. While we do not advocate dressing up in a suit every time you give a speech, there are definitely times when wearing a suit is appropriate.

One general rule you can use for determining dress is the "step-above rule," which states that you should dress one step above your audience. If your audience is going to be dressed casually in shorts and jeans, then wear nice casual clothing such as a pair of neatly pressed slacks and a collared shirt or blouse. If, however, your audience is going to be wearing "business casual" attire, then you should probably wear a sport coat, a dress, or a suit. The goal of the step-above rule is to establish yourself as someone to be taken seriously. On the other hand, if you dress two steps above your audience, you may put too much distance between yourself and your audience, coming across as overly formal or even arrogant.

Another general rule for dressing is to avoid distractions in your appearance. Overly tight or revealing garments, over-the-top hairstyles or makeup, jangling jewelry, or a display of tattoos and piercings can serve to draw your audience's attention away from your speech. Remembering that your message is the most important aspect of your speech, keep that message in mind when you choose your clothing and accessories.

## Self-Presentation

When you present your speech, you are also presenting yourself. Self-presentation, sometimes also referred to as poise or stage presence, is determined by how you look, how you stand, how you walk to the lectern, and how you use your voice and gestures. Your self-presentation can either enhance your message or detract from it. Worse, a poor self-presentation can turn a good, well-prepared speech into a forgettable waste of time. You want your self-presentation to support your credibility and improve the likelihood that the audience will listen with interest.

Your personal appearance should reflect the careful preparation of your speech. Your personal appearance is the first thing your audience will see, and from it, they will make inferences about the speech you're about to present.

## Variety

One of the biggest mistakes novice public speakers make is to use the same gesture over and over again during a speech. While you don't want your gestures to look fake, you should be careful to include a variety of different nonverbal components while speaking. You should make sure that your face, body, and words are all working in conjunction with each other to support your message.

## Practice Effectively

You might get away with presenting a hastily practiced speech, but the speech will not be as good as it could be. In order to develop your best speech delivery, you need to practice—and use your practice time effectively. Practicing does not mean reading over your notes, mentally running through your speech, or even speaking your speech aloud over and over. Instead, you need to practice with the goal of identifying the weaknesses in your delivery, improving upon them, and building good speech delivery habits.

When you practice your speech, place both your feet in full, firm contact with the floor to keep your body from swaying side to side. Some new public speakers find that they don't know what to do with their hands during the speech. Your practice sessions should help you get comfortable. When you're not gesturing, you can rest your free hand lightly on a lectern or simply allow it to hang at your side. Since this is not a familiar posture for most people, it might feel awkward, but in your practice sessions, you can begin getting used to it.

## Seek Input from Others

Because we can't see ourselves as others see us, one of the best ways to improve your delivery is to seek constructive criticism from others. This, of course, is an aspect of your public speaking course, as you will receive evaluations from your instructor and possibly from your fellow students. However, by practicing in front of others before it is time to present your speech, you can anticipate and correct problems so that you can receive a better evaluation when you give the speech "for real."

Ask your practice observers to be honest about the aspects of your delivery that could be better. Sometimes students create study groups just for this purpose. When you create a study group of classroom peers, everyone has an understanding of the entire creative process, and their feedback will thus be more useful to you than the feedback you might get from someone who has never taken the course or given a speech.

If your practice observers seem reluctant to offer useful criticisms, ask questions. How was your eye contact? Could they hear you? Was your voice well modulated? Did you mispronounce any words? How was your posture? Were your gestures effective? Did you have any mannerisms that you should learn to avoid? Because peers are sometimes reluctant to say things that could sound critical, direct questions are often a useful way to help them speak up.

If you learn from these practice sessions that your voice tends to drop at the ends of sentences, make a conscious effort to support your voice as you conclude each main point. If you learn that you have a habit of clicking a pen, make sure you don't have a pen with you when you speak or that you keep it in your pocket. If your practice observers mention that you tend to hide your hands in the sleeves of your shirt or jacket, next time wear short sleeves or roll your sleeves up before beginning your speech. If you learn through practice that you tend to sway or rock while you speak, you can consciously practice and build the habit of *not* swaying.

When it is your turn to give feedback to others in your group, assume that they are as interested in doing well as you are. Give feedback in the spirit of helping their speeches be as good as possible.

## Use Audio and/or Video to Record Yourself

Technology has made it easier than ever to record yourself and others using the proliferation of electronic devices people are likely to own. Video, of course, allows you the advantage of being able to see yourself as others see you, while audio allows you to concentrate on the audible aspects of your delivery. As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, if neither video nor audio is available, you can always observe yourself by practicing your delivery in front of a mirror.

After you have recorded yourself, it may seem obvious that you should watch and listen to the recording. This can be intimidating, as you may fear that your performance anxiety will be so obvious that everyone will notice it in the recording. But students are often pleasantly surprised when they watch and listen to their recordings, as even students with very high anxiety may find out that they "come across" in a speech much better than they expected.

A recording can also be a very effective diagnostic device. Sometimes students believe they are making strong contact with their audiences, but their cards contain so many notes that they succumb to the temptation of reading. By finding out from the video that you misjudged your eye contact, you can be motivated to rewrite your notecards in a way that doesn't provide the opportunity to do so much reading.

It is most likely that in viewing your recording, you will benefit from discovering your strengths and finding weak areas you can strengthen.

## Good Delivery Is a Habit

Luckily, public speaking is an activity that, when done conscientiously, strengthens with practice. As you become aware of the areas where your delivery has room for improvement, you will begin developing a keen sense of what "works" and what audiences respond to.

It is advisable to practice out loud in front of other people several times, spreading your rehearsals out over several days. To do this kind of practice, of course, you need to have your speech be finalized well ahead of the date when you are going to give it. During these practice sessions, you can time your speech to make sure it lasts the appropriate length of time. A friend of ours was the second student on the program in an event where each student's presentation was to last thirty to forty-five minutes. After the first student had been speaking for seventy-five minutes, the professor in charge asked, "Can we speed this up?" The student said yes, and proceeded to continue speaking for another seventy-five minutes before finally concluding his portion of the program. Although we might fault the professor for not "pulling the plug," clearly the student had not timed his speech in advance.

Your practice sessions will also enable you to make adjustments to your notecards to make them more effective in supporting your contact with your audience. This kind of practice is not just a strategy for beginners; it is practiced by many highly placed public figures with extensive experience in public speaking.

Your public speaking course is one of the best opportunities you will have to manage your performance anxiety, build your confidence in speaking extemporaneously, develop your vocal skills, and become adept at self-presentation. The habits you can develop through targeted practice are to build continuously on your strengths and to challenge yourself to find new areas for improving your delivery. By taking advantage of these opportunities, you will gain the ability to present a speech effectively whenever you may be called upon to speak publicly.

# Functions of Presentation (Visual) Aids

Why should you use presentation aids? If you have prepared and rehearsed your speech adequately, shouldn't a good speech with a good delivery be enough to stand on its own? While it is true that impressive presentation aids will not rescue a poor speech, it is also important to recognize that a good speech can often be made even better by the strategic use of presentation aids. **Presentational aids** are *items other than the words of a speech that are used to support the intent of the speaker*. In particular, they can be visual aids, audio aids or other supporting technology. Presentational aids can fulfill several functions: they can serve to improve your audience's understanding of the information you are conveying, clarify the message, emphasize points, enhance retention and recall of the message, add variety and interest to your speech, and enhance your credibility as a speaker. Let's examine each of these functions.

## Improve Audience Understanding

Human communication is a complex process that often leads to misunderstandings. If you are like most people, you can easily remember incidents when you misunderstood a message or when someone else misunderstood what you said to them. Misunderstandings happen in public speaking just as they do in everyday conversations.

One reason for misunderstandings is the fact that perception and interpretation are highly complex individual processes. Most of us have seen the image in which, depending on your perception, you see either the outline of a vase or the facial profiles of two people facing each other. This shows how interpretations can differ, and it means that your presentations must be based on careful thought and preparation to maximize the likelihood that your listeners will understand your presentations as you intend them to.

As a speaker, one of your basic goals is to help your audience understand your message. To reduce misunderstanding, presentation aids can be used to clarify or to emphasize.

## Clarify

Clarification is important in a speech because if some of the information you convey is unclear, your listeners will come away puzzled or possibly even misled. Presentation aids can help clarify a message if the information is complex or if the point being made is a visual one.

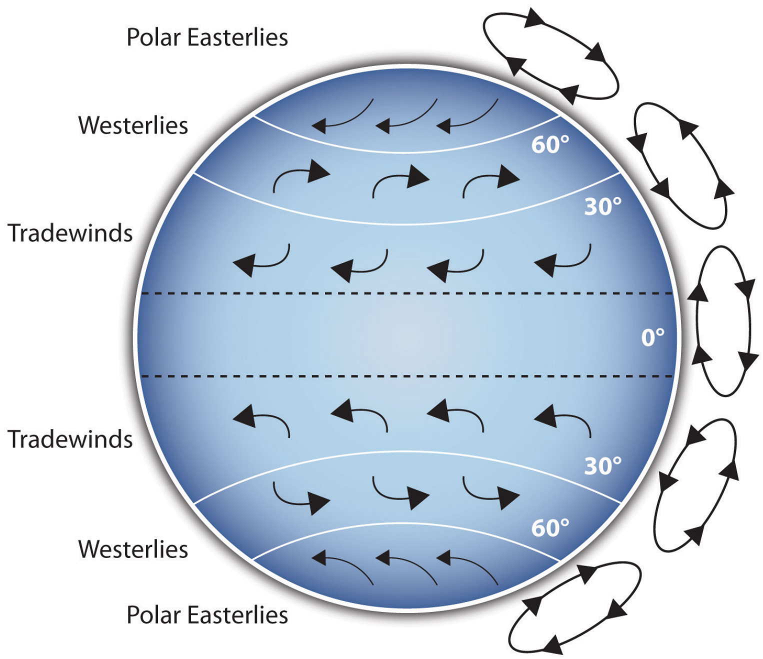



*Figure 10.1 Coriolis Effect*

If your speech is about the impact of the Coriolis effect on tropical storms, for instance, you will have great difficulty clarifying it without a diagram because the process is a complex one. The diagram in Figure 10.1 “Coriolis Effect” would be effective because it shows the audience the interaction between equatorial wind patterns and wind patterns moving in other directions. The diagram allows the audience to process the information in two ways: through your verbal explanation and through the visual elements of the diagram.

Figure 10.2 “Model of Communication” is another example of a diagram that maps out the process of human communication. In this image, you clearly have a speaker and an audience (albeit slightly abstract), with the labels of a source, channel, message, receivers, and feedback to illustrate the interactional model of human communication.

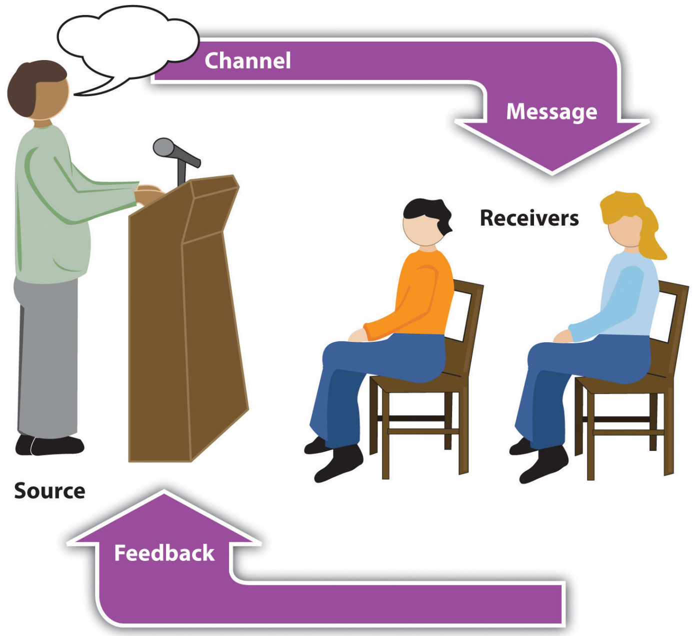
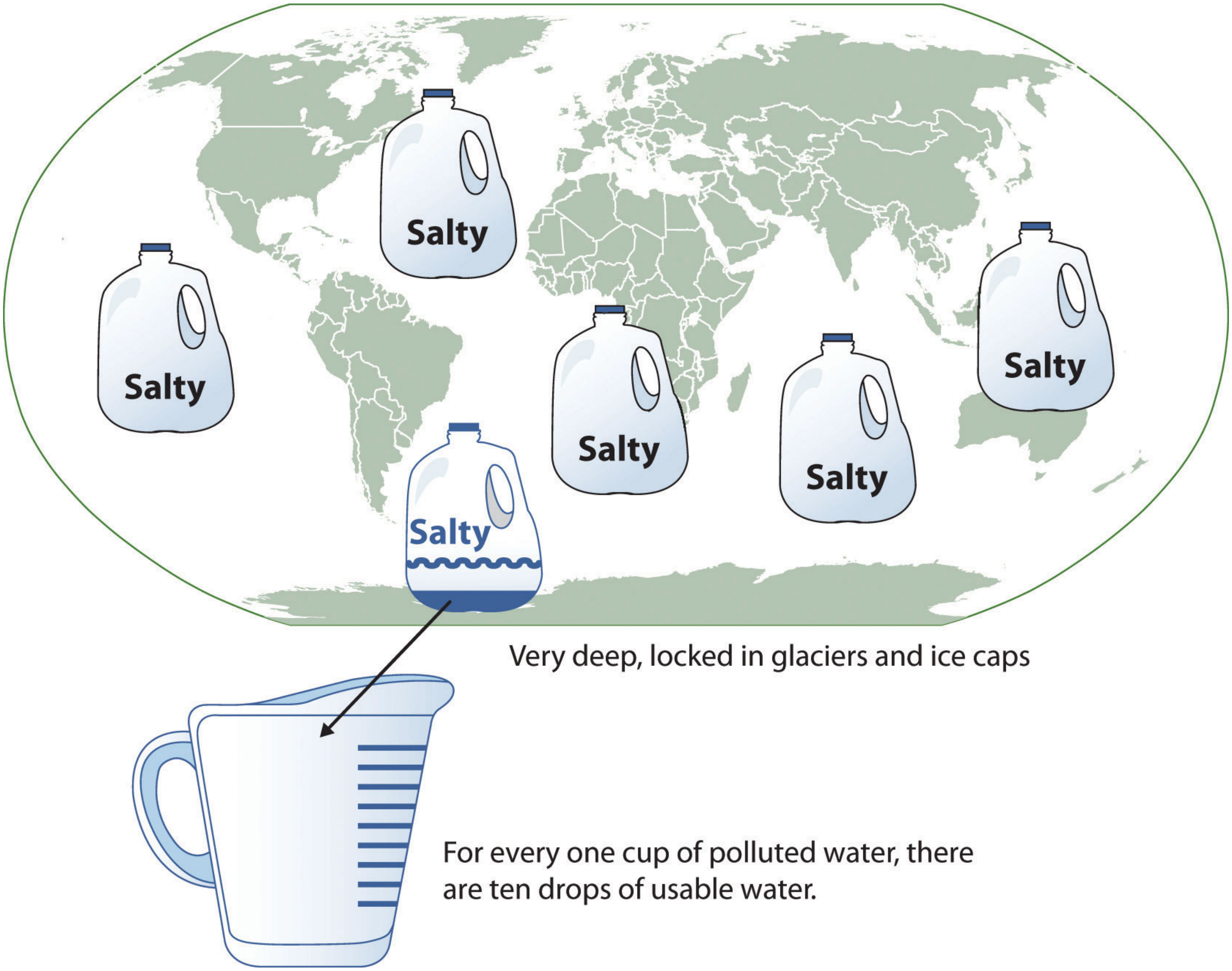



*Figure 10.2: Model of Communication*

## Emphasize

When you use a presentation aid for emphasis, you impress your listeners with the importance of an idea. In a speech on water conservation, you might try to show the environmental proportions of the resource. When you use a conceptual drawing you show that if the world water supply were equal to ten gallons, only ten drops would be available and potable for human or household consumption. This drawing is effective because it emphasizes the scarcity of useful water and thus draws attention to this important information in your speech.




## Enhance Retention and Recall

The second function that presentation aids can serve is to increase the audience's chances of remembering your speech. A 1996 article by the US Department of Labor summarized research on how people learn and remember. The authors found that "83% of human learning occurs visually, and the remaining 17% through the other senses—11% through hearing, 3.5% through smell, 1% through taste, and 1.5% through touch."

When your graphic images deliver information effectively and when your listeners understand them clearly, audience members are likely to remember your message long after your speech is over.

Moreover, people often are able to remember information that is presented in sequential steps more easily than if that information is presented in an unorganized pattern. When you use a presentation aid to display the organization of your speech, you will help your listeners to observe, follow, and remember the sequence of information you conveyed to them. This is why some instructors display a lecture outline for their students to follow during class.

An added plus of using presentation aids is that they can boost your memory while you are speaking. Using your presentation aids while you rehearse your speech will familiarize you with the association between a given place in your speech and the presentation aid that accompanies that material. For example, if you are giving an informative speech about diamonds, you might plan to display a sequence of slides illustrating the most popular diamond shapes: brilliant, marquise, emerald, and so on. As you finish describing one shape and advance to the next slide, seeing the next diamond shape will help you remember the information about it that you are going to deliver.

## Add Variety and Interest

The third function of presentation aids is simply to make your speech more interesting. While it is true that a good speech and a well-rehearsed delivery will already include variety in several aspects of the presentation, in many cases, a speech can be made even more interesting by the use of well-chosen presentation aids.

For example, you may have prepared a very good speech to inform a group of gardeners about several new varieties of roses suitable for growing in your local area. Although your listeners will undoubtedly understand and remember your message very well without any presentation aids, wouldn't your speech have greater impact if you accompanied your remarks with a picture of each rose? You can imagine that your audience would be even more enthralled if you had the ability to display an actual flower of each variety in a bud vase.

Similarly, if you were speaking to a group of gourmet cooks about Indian spices, you might want to provide tiny samples of spices that they could smell and taste during your speech.

## Enhance a Speaker's Credibility

Presentation aids alone will not be enough to create a professional image. As we mentioned earlier, impressive presentation aids will not rescue a poor speech. However, even if you give a good speech, you run the risk of appearing unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed. This means that in addition to containing important information, your presentation aids must be clear, clean, uncluttered, organized, and large enough for the audience to see and interpret correctly. Misspellings and poorly designed presentation aids can damage your credibility as a speaker. Conversely, a high-quality presentation will contribute to your professional image. In addition, make sure that you give proper credit to the source of any presentation aids that you take from other sources.

For a guide on how to integrate presentational aids into your speech and improve your speech delivery, consult the appendix at the end of the textbook.

# 10.7 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed best practices for effective speaking. The decisions we make in preparing and delivering a speech are impacted by our audience, the speaking occasion, as well as our specific purpose or goal. Because informative speaking plays a key role in a variety of professional, personal, and civic contexts it is important that we continually build upon our speaking experience and skill sets. Indeed, we are always refining our ability to speak well. Listening to others' presentations and taking note of their strengths in using presentation aids, delivery style, and clear organization can help us build upon our own best practices. Make a commitment to attend guest speakers at Indiana State University, in our local community, and other special events.

### Discussion Questions

1. What qualities exemplify a good speech?
2. What do you consider to be your best strengths when speaking in public? In what areas do you feel you need the most improvement?
3. How can understanding your audience make for a more effective informative speech?

### Key Terms

- articulation
- audience analysis
- causal organizational pattern
- comparison/contrast organizational pattern
- conversational style
- extemporaneous speaking
- eye contact
- general purpose
- gestures

- impromptu speaking
- manuscript speaking
- memorized speaking
- pauses
- pitch
- presentational aids
- pronunciation
- rate
- spatial organizational pattern
- specific purpose
- subordination
- topical organizational pattern
- transitions
- vocal variety
- vocalics/ paralanguage
- volume

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**Images**

# CHAPTER 11: PERSUASIVE

# 11.1 Foundations of Persuasion

Every day we are bombarded by persuasive messages. Some messages are mediated and designed to get us to purchase specific products or vote for political candidates, while others might come from our loved ones and are designed to get us to help around the house or join them for a night out. Whatever the message being sent, we are constantly being persuaded and endeavoring to persuade others. In this chapter, we focus on persuasive speaking. We revisit the three forms of proof including ethos, pathos, and logos in more detail and consider several common flaws in reasoning, called argumentative fallacies. Next, we focus on the ability of persuasion to change or challenge attitudes, values, and beliefs. After discussing two theories of persuasion, social judgment, and cognitive dissonance, we introduce three organizational patterns for making a successful persuasive case.

## Learning Objectives

1. Define persuasion.
2. Understand three forms of proof.
3. Identify common argumentative fallacies.
4. Identify strategies for building a persuasive argument.
5. Explain a cognitive approach to persuasion.
6. Understand three organizational patterns for persuasive speaking.

The nature of persuasion has changed over the last fifty years as a result of the influx of new communication technology. People are inundated by persuasive messages in today's world, so thinking about how to create persuasive messages effectively is very important for modern public speakers. Conversely, by learning how to make effective persuasive arguments, we become better auditors of others' persuasive appeals.

More than a century ago, public speakers had to contend only with the words printed on paper for attracting and holding an audience's attention. Today, public speakers must contend with laptops, iPads, smartphones, billboards, television sets, and many other tools that can send a range of persuasive messages immediately to a target audience. However, while the technology for delivering persuasive appeals has changed, all persuasive appeals still rely upon three forms of proof that were in play more than 2,500 years ago.

# What Is Persuasion?

**Persuasion** is *an attempt to get a person to behave in a manner, or embrace a point of view related to values, attitudes, and beliefs, that he or she would not have done otherwise.*

## Three Forms of Proof

Rhetorical scholars all the way back to Aristotle have identified at least three forms of proof: ethos, pathos, and logos. Some of the most ancient knowledge ever taught in Western Civilization, indeed the first pay-for-education lessons, concerned persuasive speaking. There are three forms of "proof," or reasons for why audiences agree with a speaker-persuader. These forms date back to antiquity, to the ancient Greeks.

**Ethos** is your *credibility as a speaker*. It is the degree to which an audience perceives a speaker having its best interests at heart. The Greeks referred to this as the speaker having: Good Will, Good Sense, and Good Morals. Today, part of this perception depends upon whether the speaker's presentation is well organized and whether the speaker seems knowledgeable about the subject, which includes having credible source material and an engaging speaking style.

**Pathos** refers to *the emotional impact of your message*. Indeed, it is not enough that your argument makes sense. Your argument must also resonate with an audience, or help an audience identify with your topic or stance. Pathos also includes appeals to cultural heritage or shared values. For instance, both pro-war and anti-war speakers must appeal to patriotism if their argument has a chance to be successful. Personal stories, or hypothetical stories, are often used for the purpose of helping the audience identify with a speaker's stance.

**Logos** refers to *the reasoning employed by a speaker*. A good argument is logical; it has a correct internal structure, insofar as each point relates accurately to other points, and is complete – "no stone left unturned." Evidence in the form of statistical data and/or real or hypothetical examples are part of this form of proof. An argument does not have to be "right" to be structurally sound, where a speaker's claims are backed up by credible evidence. **Argumentative Fallacies**, or *flawed logical appeals*, are more common than many of us realize. Argumentative fallacies are embedded in many of the persuasive appeals found in advertisements and political campaigns. We even commit these fallacies in our own lives and relationships. The following is a short list of some of the more common fallacies that we encounter daily:

1. **Ad Hominem**: attacking a person's character instead of the content of that person's argument. Engaging in name-calling rather than addressing another person's argument.
2. **Appeal to Authority**: appeal to a popular figure that is not an authority in that area.

3. **Bandwagon:** going along with the crowd in support of a conclusion.
4. **Begging the Question**: implicitly using your conclusion as a premise (reason).
5. **False Analogy**: a failure in analogical reasoning that draws an inappropriate comparison between two ideas or situations.
6. **False Cause**: a failure in causal reasoning usually relying on coincidence or correlation.
7. **False Dilemma**: assumes falsely that a complicated problem has particular choices when there are more.
8. **Hasty Generalization:** a failure in inductive reasoning where assumptions (stereotypes) are based on insufficient evidence—essentially making a rushed conclusion without considering all of the variables.
9. **Non Sequitur**: drawing a conclusion which does not follow from the evidence.
10. **Red Herring**: introduces an irrelevant or secondary subject to divert the attention from the main topic.
11. **Slippery Slope**: a string of “if-then” statements that form what may seem like a valid argument; but, typically draws a conclusion that is exaggerated.
12. **Straw Man**: distorting an opposing view so that it is easy to refute.

# 11.2: Why Persuasion Matters

Frymier and Nadler (2013) enumerate three reasons why people should study persuasion. First, when you study and understand persuasion, you will be more successful at persuading others. If you want to be a persuasive public speaker, then you need to have a working understanding of how persuasion functions. Second, when people understand persuasion, they will be better consumers of information. As previously mentioned, we live in a society where numerous message sources are constantly fighting for our attention. Unfortunately, most people just let messages wash over them like a wave, making little effort to understand or analyze them. As a result, they are more likely to fall for half-truths, illogical arguments, and lies. When you start to understand persuasion, you will have the skill set to actually pick apart the messages being sent to you and see why some of them are good and others are simply not.

Lastly, when we understand how persuasion functions, we'll have a better grasp of what happens around us in the world. We'll be able to analyze why certain speakers are effective persuaders and others are not. We'll be able to understand why some public speakers can get an audience eating out of their hands, while others flop.

Furthermore, we believe it is an ethical imperative in the twenty-first century to be persuasively literate. An **ethical imperative** is *the belief of importance thatthe public engages with evidence central to respect for persons and will likely improve health outcomes, facilitate the stewardship of resources, enhance prospects for justice, and build public trust*.We believe that persuasive messages that aim to manipulate, coerce, and intimidate people are unethical, as are messages that distort information. As ethical listeners, we have a responsibility to analyze messages that manipulate, coerce, and/or intimidate people or distort information. We also then have the responsibility to combat these messages with the truth, which will ultimately rely on our own skills and knowledge as an effective persuader.

Personal accountability is one condition under responsibility. People are likely to process information using the central route is when they feel that they will be held accountable for the information after the fact. With accountability, there is the perception that someone, or a group of people, will be watching to see if the receiver remembers the information later on. We've all witnessed this phenomenon when one student asks the question "will this be on the test?" If the teacher says "no," you can almost immediately see the glazed eyes in the classroom as students tune out the information. It's often difficult to hold audience's accountable for the information when they cannot see personal consequences.

Personal responsibility is when people feel that they are going to be held responsible, without a clear external accounting, for the evaluation of a message or the outcome of a message, they are more likely to critically think through the message using the central route. For example, maybe you're asked to evaluate fellow students in your public speaking class. Research has shown that if only one or two students are asked to evaluate any one speaker at a time, the quality of the evaluations for that speaker will be better than if everyone in the class is asked to evaluate every speaker. When people feel that their evaluation is important, they take more responsibility and therefore are more critical of the message delivered.

We can think about how persuasion is part of our daily lives. It is beneficial to think about how our relationship to persuasion can affect us. If you are skilled at understanding when you are being persuaded, why, and how, you will be more informed and skilled as a consumer and in your relationships with others.

# 11.3 Making a Persuasive Argument

*Burns Library, Boston College – Maya Angelou – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.*

Obviously, there are many different persuasive speech topics you could select for a public speaking class. Anything from localized claims like changing a specific college or university policy to larger societal claims like adding more enforcement against the trafficking of women and children in the United States could make for an interesting persuasive speech. You'll notice in the previous sentence we referred to the two topics as claims. In this use of the word "claim," we are declaring the goodness or positivity of an attitude, value, belief, or behavior that others may dispute. As a result of the dispute between our perceptions of the goodness of an attitude, value, belief, or behavior and the perceptions of others, we attempt to support the claim we make using some sort of evidence and logic as we attempt to persuade others. There are three common claims that can be made to proposition your audience: factual, policy, and value.

## Proposition of Fact

## Factual Claims

Factual claims set out to argue the truth or falsity of an assertion. Some factual claims are simple to answer: Barack Obama is the first African American President; the tallest man in the world, Robert Wadlow, was eight feet and eleven inches tall; Facebook wasn't profitable until 2009. All these factual claims are well documented by evidence and can be easily supported with a little research.

However, many factual claims cannot be answered absolutely. Some factual claims are simply hard to determine the falsity or trueness of because the final answer on the subject has not been discovered (e.g., when is censorship good, what rights should animals have, when does life begin). Probably the most historically interesting and consistent factual claim is the existence of a higher power, God, or a religious deity. The simple fact of the matter is that there is not enough evidence to clearly answer this factual claim in any specific direction, which is where the notion of faith must be involved in this factual claim.

Other factual claims that may not be easily answered using evidence are predictions of what may or may not happen. For example, you could give a speech on the future of climate change or the future of terrorism in the United States. While there may be evidence that something will happen in the future, unless you're a psychic, you don't actually know what will happen in the future.

When thinking of factual claims, it often helps to pretend that you're putting a specific claim on trial and as the speaker your job is to defend your claim as a lawyer would defend a client. Ultimately, your job is to be more persuasive than your audience members who act as both opposition attorneys and judges.

# Proposition of Policy

## Policy Claims

The third common claim that is seen in persuasive speeches is the policy claim—a statement about the nature of a problem and the solution that should be implemented. Policy claims are probably the most common form of persuasive speaking because we live in a society surrounded by problems and people who have ideas about how to fix these problems. Let's look at a few examples of possible policy claims:

- The United States should stop capital punishment.
- The United States should become independent from the use of foreign oil.
- Human cloning for organ donations should be legal.

- Nonviolent drug offenders should be sent to rehabilitation centers and not prisons.
- The tobacco industry should be required to pay 100 percent of the medical bills for individuals dying of smoking-related cancers.
- The United States needs to invest more in preventing poverty at home and less in feeding the starving around the world.

Each of these claims has a clear perspective that is being advocated. Policy claims will always have a clear and direct opinion for what should occur and what needs to change. When examining policy claims, we generally talk about two different persuasive goals: passive agreement and immediate action.

## Gain Passive Agreement

When we attempt to gain the passive agreement of our audiences, our goal is to get our audiences to agree with what we are saying and our specific policy without asking the audience to do anything to enact the policy. For example, maybe your speech is on why the Federal Communications Commission should regulate violence on television like it does foul language (i.e., no violence until after 9 p.m.). Your goal as a speaker is to get your audience to agree that it is in our best interest as a society to prevent violence from being shown on television before 9 p.m., but you are not seeking to have your audience run out and call their senators or congressmen or even sign a petition. Often the first step in larger political change is simply getting a massive number people to agree with your policy perspective.

Let’s look at a few more passive agreement claims:

- Racial profiling of individuals suspected of belonging to known terrorist groups is a way to make America safer.
- Requiring American citizens to “show their papers” is a violation of democracy and resembles tactics of Nazi Germany and communist Russia.
- Colleges and universities should voluntarily implement a standardized testing program to ensure student learning outcomes are similar across different institutions.

In each of these claims, the goal is to sway one’s audience to a specific attitude, value, or belief, but not necessarily to get the audience to enact any specific behaviors.

## Gain Immediate Action

The alternative to seeking passive agreement is seeking immediate action or persuading your audience to start engaging in a specific behavior. Many passive agreement topics can become immediate action-oriented topics as soon as you tell your audience what behavior they should engage in (e.g., sign a petition, call a senator, vote). While it is much easier to elicit passive agreement than to get people to do something, you should always try to get your audience to act and do so quickly. A common mistake that speakers make is telling people to enact a behavior that will occur in the future. The longer it takes for people to engage in the action you desire, the less likely it is that your audience will engage in that behavior.

Here are some examples of good claims with immediate calls to action:

- College students should eat more fruit, so I am encouraging everyone to eat the apple I have provided you and start getting more fruit in your diet.
- Teaching a child to read is one way to ensure that the next generation will be stronger than those that have come before us, so please sign up right now to volunteer one hour a week to help teach a child to read.
- The United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal by 20 percent over the next five years. Please sign the letter provided encouraging the president to take this necessary step for global peace. Once you've signed the letter, hand it to me, and I'll fax it to the White House today.

Each of these three examples starts with a basic claim and then tags on an immediate call to action. Remember, the faster you can get people to engage in a behavior the more likely they actually will.

# Proposition of Value

## Value Claims

The final type of claim is a value claim or a claim where the speaker is advocating a judgment claim about something (e.g., it's good or bad, it's right or wrong, it's beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral).

Let's look at three value claims. We've italicized the evaluative term in each claim:

- Dating people on the Internet is an *immoral* form of dating.
- SUVs are *gas guzzling monstrosities*.
- It's *unfair* for pregnant women to have special parking spaces at malls, shopping centers, and stores.

Each of these three claims could definitely be made by a speaker and other speakers could say the exact opposite. When making a value claim, it's hard to ascertain why someone has chosen a specific value stance without understanding her or his criteria for making the evaluative statement. For example, if someone finds all forms of technology immoral, then it's really no surprise that he or she would find Internet dating immoral as well. As such, you need to clearly explain your criteria for making the evaluative statement. For example, when we examine the SUV claim, if your criteria for the term "gas guzzling monstrosity" are the ecological impact, safety, and gas consumption, then your evaluative statement can be more easily understood and evaluated by your audience. If, however, you state that your criterion is that SUVs are bigger than military vehicles and shouldn't be on the road, then your statement takes on a slightly different meaning. Ultimately, when making a value claim, you need to make sure that you clearly label your evaluative term and provide clear criteria for how you came to that evaluation.

# 11.4 Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

The first type of persuasive argument involves a change in someone's attitudes, values, and beliefs. An **attitude** is defined as *an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, or negative or positive*. Maybe you believe that local curfew laws for people under twenty-one are a bad idea, so you want to persuade others to adopt a negative attitude toward such laws. You can also attempt to persuade an individual to change her or his value toward something.

A **Value** refers to *an individual's perception of the usefulness, importance, or worth of something*. We can value a college education or technology or freedom. Values, as a general concept, are fairly ambiguous and tend to be very lofty ideas. Ultimately, what we value in life actually motivates us to engage in a range of behaviors. For example, if you value technology, you are more likely to seek out new technology or software on your own. On the contrary, if you do not value technology, you are less likely to seek out new technology or software unless someone, or some circumstance, requires you to. Lastly, you can attempt to get people to change their personal beliefs.

A **Belief** is a *proposition or position that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof*. Typically, beliefs are divided into two basic categories: core and dispositional. A **Core belief** is *a belief that people have actively engaged in and created over the course of their lives (e.g., belief in a higher power, belief in extraterrestrial life forms)*.

**A Dispositional belief**, on the other hand, is a *belief that people have not actively engaged in but rather judgments that they make, based on their knowledge of related subjects, when they encounter a proposition*. For example, imagine that you were asked the question, "Can stock cars reach speeds of one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile oval track?" Even though you may never have attended a stock car race or even seen one on television, you can make split-second judgments about your understanding of automobile speeds and say with a fair degree of certainty that you believe stock cars cannot travel at one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile track. We sometimes refer to dispositional beliefs as virtual beliefs.

When it comes to persuading people to alter core and dispositional beliefs, persuading audiences to change core beliefs is more difficult than persuading audiences to change dispositional beliefs. For this reason, you are very unlikely to persuade people to change their deeply held core beliefs about a topic in a five- to ten-minute speech. However, if you give a persuasive speech on a topic related to an audience's dispositional beliefs, you may have a better chance of success. While core beliefs may seem to be exciting and interesting, persuasive topics related to dispositional beliefs are generally better for novice speakers with limited time allotments.

# 11.5 Theories of Persuasion

Understanding how people are persuaded is very important to the discussion of public speaking. Thankfully, a number of researchers have created theories that help explain why people are persuaded. While there are numerous theories that help to explain persuasion, we are only going to examine three here: social judgment theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the elaboration likelihood model.

## Social Judgment Theory

Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland (1980) created **social judgment theory***attempts to determine what types of communicative messages and under what conditions communicated messages will lead to a change in someone's behavior by comparing it with current attitudes*. In essence, Sherif and Hovland found that people's perceptions of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors exist on a continuum including latitude of rejection, latitude of non-commitment, and latitude of acceptance.

Sherif and Hovland found that persuasive messages were the most likely to succeed when they fell into an individual's latitude of acceptance. For example, if you are giving your speech on majoring in a foreign language, people who are in favor of majoring in a foreign language are more likely to positively evaluate your message, assimilate your advice into their own ideas, and engage in desired behavior. On the other hand, people who reject your message are more likely to negatively evaluate your message, not assimilate your advice, and not engage in desired behavior.

In an ideal world, we'd always be persuading people who agree with our opinions, but that's not reality. Instead, we often find ourselves in situations where we are trying to persuade others to attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors with which they may not agree. To help us persuade others, what we need to think about is the range of possible attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that exist. For example, in a foreign language scenario where students are being persuaded to major in this major, we may see the following possible opinions from our audience members:

1. *Complete agreement.* Let's all major in foreign languages.
2. *Strong agreement.* I won't major in a foreign language, but I will double major in a foreign language.
3. *Agreement in part.* I won't major in a foreign language, but I will minor in a foreign language.
4. *Neutral.* While I think studying a foreign language can be worthwhile, I also think a college education can be complete without it. I really don't feel strongly one way or the other.
5. *Disagreement in part.* I will only take the foreign language classes required by my major.
6. *Strong disagreement.* I don't think I should have to take any foreign language classes.

7. *Complete disagreement.* Majoring in a foreign language is a complete waste of a college education.

These seven possible opinions on the subject do not represent the full spectrum of choices but give us various degrees of agreement with the general topic. So what does this have to do with persuasion? Well, we're glad you asked. Sherif and Hovland theorized that persuasion was a matter of knowing how great the discrepancy or difference was between the speaker's viewpoint and that of the audience. If the speaker's point of view was similar to that of audience members, then persuasion was more likely. If the discrepancy between the idea proposed by the speaker and the audience's viewpoint is too great, then the likelihood of persuasion decreases dramatically.

## Cognitive Dissonance Theory

In 1957, Leon Festinger proposed another theory for understanding how persuasion functions. **Cognitive dissonance theory** is *an aversive motivational state that occurs when an individual entertains two or more contradictory attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors simultaneously*. For example, maybe you know you should be working on your speech, but you really want to go to a movie with a friend. In this case, practicing your speech and going to the movie are two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another. The goal of persuasion is to induce enough dissonance in listeners that they will change their attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Frymier and Nadler (2013) noted that for cognitive dissonance to work effectively there are three necessary conditions: aversive consequences, freedom of choice, and insufficient external justification.

First, for cognitive dissonance to work, there needs to be a strong enough aversive consequence, or punishment, for not changing one's attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. For example, maybe you're giving a speech on why people need to eat more apples. If your aversive consequence for not eating apples is that your audience will not get enough fiber, most people will simply not be persuaded, because the punishment isn't severe enough. Instead, for cognitive dissonance to work, the punishment associated with not eating apples needs to be significant enough to change behaviors. If you convince your audience that without enough fiber in their diets they are at higher risk for heart disease or colon cancer, they might fear the aversive consequences enough to change their behavior.

The second condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work is that people must have a freedom of choice. If listeners feel they are being coerced into doing something, then dissonance will not be aroused. They may alter their behavior in the short term, but as soon as the coercion is gone, the original behavior will reemerge. It's like the person who drives more slowly when a police officer is nearby but ignores speed limits once officers are no longer present. As a speaker, if you want to increase cognitive dissonance, you need to make sure that your audience doesn't feel coerced or manipulated, but rather that they can clearly see that they have a choice of whether to be persuaded.

The final condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work has to do with external and internal justifications. External justification refers to the process of identifying reasons outside of one's own control to support one's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. Internal justification occurs when someone voluntarily changes a behavior, belief, or attitude to reduce cognitive dissonance. When it comes to creating change through persuasion, external justifications are less likely to result in change than internal justifications.

Imagine that you're giving a speech with the specific purpose of persuading college students to use condoms whenever they engage in sexual intercourse. Your audience analysis, in the form of an anonymous survey, indicates that a large percentage of your listeners do not consistently use condoms. Which would be the more persuasive argument: (a) "Failure to use condoms inevitably results in unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS"—or (b) "If you think of yourself as a responsible adult, you'll use condoms to protect yourself and your partner"? With the first argument, you have provided external justification for using condoms (i.e., terrible things will happen if you don't use condoms). Listeners who reject this external justification (e.g., who don't believe these dire consequences are inevitable) are unlikely to change their behavior. With the second argument, however, if your listeners think of themselves as responsible adults and they don't consistently use condoms, the conflict between their self-image and their behavior will elicit cognitive dissonance. In order to reduce this cognitive dissonance, they are likely to seek internal justification for the view of themselves as responsible adults by changing their behavior (i.e., using condoms more consistently). In this case, according to cognitive dissonance theory, the second persuasive argument would be the one more likely to lead to a change in behavior.

# 11.6 Organizing Persuasive Speeches

## Monroe's Motivated Sequence

One of the most commonly cited and discussed organizational patterns for persuasive speeches is Alan H. Monroe's motivated sequence. **Monroe's motivated sequence** is *a technique for organizing persuasive speeches that inspire people to take* action and functions to help speakers "sequence supporting materials and motivational appeals to form a useful organizational pattern for speeches as a whole".

While Monroe's motivated sequence is commonly discussed in most public speaking textbooks, we do want to provide one minor caution. Thus far, almost no research has been conducted that has demonstrated that Monroe's motivated sequence is any more persuasive than other structural patterns. In the only study conducted experimentally examining Monroe's motivated sequence, the researchers did not find the method more persuasive but did note that audience members found the pattern more organized than other methods.

We wanted to add this side-note because we don't want you to think that Monroe's motivated sequence is a kind of magic persuasive bullet; the research simply doesn't support this notion. At the same time, research does support that organized messages are perceived as more persuasive as a whole, so using Monroe's motivated sequence to think through one's persuasive argument could still be very beneficial.

### Attention

The first step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the attention step, in which a speaker attempts to get the audience's attention. To gain an audience's attention, we recommend that you think through three specific parts of the attention step. First, you need to have a strong attention-getting device. A strong attention-getter at the beginning of your speech is very important. Second, you need to make sure you introduce your topic clearly. If your audience doesn't quickly know your topic, they are more likely to stop listening. Lastly, you need to explain to your audience why they should care about your topic.

## Needs

In the need step of Monroe's motivated sequence, the speaker establishes that there is a specific need or problem. In Monroe's conceptualization of need, he talks about four specific parts of the need: statement, illustration, ramification, and pointing. First, a speaker needs to give a clear and concise statement of the problem. This part of a speech should be crystal clear for an audience. Second, the speaker needs to provide one or more examples to illustrate the need. The illustration is an attempt to make the problem concrete for the audience. Next, a speaker needs to provide some kind of evidence (e.g., statistics, examples, testimony) that shows the ramifications or consequences of the problem. Lastly, a speaker needs to point to the audience and show exactly how the problem relates to them personally.

## Satisfaction

In the third step of Monroe's motivated sequence, the satisfaction step, the speaker sets out to satisfy the need or solve the problem. Within this step, Monroe (1935) proposed a five-step plan for satisfying a need:

1. Statement
2. Explanation
3. Theoretical demonstration
4. Reference to practical experience
5. Meeting objections

First, you need to clearly state the attitude, value, belief, or action you want your audience to accept. The purpose of this statement is to clearly tell your audience what your ultimate goal is. Second, you want to make sure that you clearly explain to your audience why they should accept the attitude, value, belief, or action you proposed. Just telling your audience they should do something isn't strong enough to actually get them to change. Instead, you really need to provide a solid argument for why they should accept your proposed solution. Third, you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem. Monroe calls this link between your solution and the need a theoretical demonstration because you cannot prove that your solution will work. Instead, you theorize based on research and good judgment that your solution will meet the need or solve the problem. Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience, which should include examples demonstrating that your proposal has worked elsewhere. Research, statistics, and expert testimony are all great ways of referencing practical experience.

When you offer rebuttals for arguments against your speech, it shows your audience that you've done your homework and educated yourself about multiple sides of the issue.

## Visualization

The next step of Monroe's motivated sequence is the visualization step, in which you ask the audience to visualize a future where the need has been met or the problem solved. In essence, the visualization stage is where a speaker can show the audience why accepting a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior can positively affect the future. When helping people to picture the future, the more concrete your visualization is, the easier it will be for your audience to see the possible future and be persuaded by it. You also need to make sure that you clearly show how accepting your solution will directly benefit your audience.

According to Monroe, visualization can be conducted in one of three ways: positive, negative, or contrast. The positive method of visualization is where a speaker shows how adopting a proposal leads to a better future (e.g., recycle, and we'll have a cleaner and safer planet). Conversely, the negative method of visualization is where a speaker shows how not adopting the proposal will lead to a worse future (e.g., don't recycle, and our world will become polluted and uninhabitable). Monroe also acknowledged that visualization can include a combination of both positive and negative visualization. In essence, you show your audience both possible outcomes and have them decide which one they would rather have.

## Action

The final step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the action step, in which a speaker asks an audience to approve the speaker's proposal. For understanding purposes, we break action into two distinct parts: audience action and approval. Audience action refers to direct physical behaviors a speaker wants from an audience (e.g., flossing their teeth twice a day, signing a petition, wearing seat belts). Approval, on the other hand, involves an audience's consent or agreement with a speaker's proposed attitude, value, or belief. When preparing an action step, it is important to make sure that the action, whether audience action or approval, is realistic for your audience. Asking your peers in a college classroom to donate one thousand dollars to charity isn't realistic. Asking your peers to donate one dollar is considerably more realistic. In a persuasive speech based on Monroe's motivated sequence, the action step will end with the speech's concluding device. As discussed elsewhere in this text, you need to make sure that you conclude in a vivid way so that the speech ends on a high point and the audience has a sense of energy as well as a sense of closure.

# Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing distinct main points in a clear manner is the problem-cause-solution speech pattern. The **problem-cause-solution organizational pattern***organizes the argument by describing a problem, identifying what you believe is causing the problem, and then recommend a solution to correct the problem.*

**Specific Purpose:** To persuade a civic group to support a citywide curfew for individuals under the age of eighteen

**Main Points**

1. Demonstrate that vandalism and violence among youth are having a negative effect on our community.
2. Show how vandalism and violence among youth go up after 10:00 p.m. in our community.
3. Explain how instituting a mandatory curfew at 10:00 p.m. would reduce vandalism and violence within our community.

In this speech, the speaker wants to persuade people to pass a new curfew for people under eighteen. To help persuade the civic group members, the speaker first shows that vandalism and violence are problems in the community. Once the speaker has shown the problem, the speaker then explains to the audience that the cause of this problem is youth outside after 10:00 p.m. Lastly, the speaker provides the mandatory 10:00 p.m. curfew as a solution to the vandalism and violence problem within the community. The problem-cause-solution format for speeches generally lends itself to persuasive topics because the speaker is asking an audience to believe in and adopt a specific solution.

While these two patterns are recognized as persuasive speech patterns, you can use any organizational pattern to structure your argument. In addition to Monroe's Motivated Sequence and Problem-Cause-Solution Pattern of organization, you can apply any of the organizational patterns introduced in the Speech Preparation chapter. For example, you may choose to use a topical organizion to express reasons for enacting a policy change. You may choose a spatial arrangement of gun laws by geographical locations to persuade an audience for legislation. You may look at how marine life is being affected by pollution and focus on the causal relationship. Lastly, you may compare and contrast the current health care reform to the Affordable Care Act introduced under President Obama.

# 11.7 Summary, Discussion, References

## Summary

Persuasion is ubiquitous or ever-present in our daily lives. It is important therefore that we not only improve our critical listening skills but that we also become more effective in making our own persuasive arguments. In this chapter, we have examined principles of persuasion, why persuasion matters, and best practices for organizing a persuasive speech or making a persuasive case. Persuasion is important for a healthy democratic society. Argumentation and debate can be positive forces that help us evaluate our laws, public policies, and social norms. We must hold others to the same high standard of ethical and meaningful persuasion to which we aspire.

### Discussion Questions

1. Can you find examples of ethos, pathos, or logos in advertisements? Are these effective?
2. In what contexts other than political speeches do you find examples of argumentative fallacies?
3. Have you ever had your attitudes, values, or beliefs challenged when hearing someone else's persuasive argument? Did your views change?

### Key Terms

- Ad Hominem
- Appeal to Authority
- argumentative fallacies
- attitude
- Bandwagon
- Begging the Question
- belief
- Cognitive Dissonance Theory
- core belief
- dispositional belief

- ethical imperative
- ethos
- False Analogy
- False Cause
- False Dilemma
- Hasty Generalization
- logos
- Monroe's Motivated Sequence
- Non Sequitur
- pathos
- persuasion
- problem-cause-solution organizational pattern
- proposition of fact
- proposition of policy
- proposition of value
- Red Herring
- Slippery Slope
- Social Judgement Theory
- Straw Man
- value

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# Appendix 1: Communication Study in the 20th Century

## The Emergence of a Contemporary Academic Field

Think about the different departments and majors on the Indiana State University campus. What about the Department of Communication? How did it get there? You may not know it, but academic departments 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 study of oral communication was generally housed in departments of English (Gray). 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). 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. 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: **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.

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.

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).

There are also smaller regional organizations including:

- Eastern Communication Association (ECA)
- Southern States Communication Association (SSCA)
- Central States Communication Association (CSCA)
- Western States Communication Association (WSCA)

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

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. 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 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 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. 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? A great deal of the way your college classroom 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. What advertising messages are most likely to influence you to purchase a product? Think of the thousands of radio, TV, movie, billboard, and internet advertisements you encounter everyday.

# 1940-1970

World War II played a major role in shaping the direction of communication study during the 1940's. Two instrumental players in communication research during this era, Kurt Lewin and Carl Hovland, studied group dynamics and mass communication. Following World War II, scholars 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.

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, 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 1950'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.

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 **Kenneth Burke** 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).

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 1970's, 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-rights, civil-rights, and anti-war movements in the 1960's and 1970'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 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.

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.

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 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.

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, public relations, family communication, and many more.

# Communication Study Today and Tomorrow

Today, many colleges and universities have Communication as part of their curriculum. 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.

# Summary

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 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 Indiana State University?
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?

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# Appendix 2: Conflict Case Studies

**Application**: *Let's review the case below to see an example of conflict*.

## Case Study A

*Roommate Woes*

Aeriel, a sophomore, and Tara, a senior, are roommates in one of the university dorms and have been enjoying spending time with each other. Most of the time the two women get along very well and conflict is limited to **simple conflict**. Recently, Aeriel has been leaving dirty dishes and personal belongings in the communal area she and Tara share. This has started to annoy Tara, as she is becoming overwhelmed with the messy room, increased class assignments, and the stress of her upcoming graduation. Tara feels Aeriel is taking advantage of her and being disrespectful.

This morning, after stepping on one of Aeriel's wire clothing hangers and lacerating her foot. In anger, Tara threw Aeriel's cell phone against the wall and shattered the screen on Aeriel's phone. This act enraged Aeriel and she started pushing Tara and yelling profanities. The RA was contacted and resulted in Aeriel being arrested for assault.

**Pre-test:**

- If you were Aeriel, what would you have done?
- What could Tara have done/said to have a better outcome?
- Could something have been done to prevent such misunderstandings?

The manner in which an individual handles conflict will determine if the conflict is good, bad, or neutral.

**Questions:**

Working from our case study with Tara and Aeriel, answer the questions below in one short paragraph consisting of at least four sentences.

1. What type of conflict did the women enter into?
2. What were some of the triggers that created the conflict?
3. What approaches did the women take and what could they have done to improve their conflict?

# Case Study B

*The Slammin' Late Night Dance*

*Background:* It is April. Michael and Kristen are volunteers on a student committee responsible for planning monthly Late Night Dances on campus in the Commons. Kristen is in charge of the committee and Michael is the person she has put in charge of security at the dances. At the dance in March (two weeks ago) there was a problem involving an intoxicated student who gained entrance to the dance and caused a fight. Kristen sent Michael an email indicating that he was relieved of his security responsibilities as a result of the fight. When Michael saw Kristen on campus two days later he began screaming at her.

Michael can't believe that Kristen did this to him. He has done a great job all year and lost the job without any explanation. Michael is very angry because Kristen did not have the courtesy to discuss any concerns or problems with him, but instead sent a cowardly note which didn't consider all of the facts. Michael has always wondered about whether or not Kristen is prejudiced, and thinks he now has his answer. Michael knows that Kristen thinks that some of his friends are a bit rough, and it was one of Michael's friends that created the problem at the dance. Michael knows he let a friend in who was a bit too intoxicated (which he should not have done), but was counting on his friends to not create any problems. Instead, one of Michael's friends got carried away while slam dancing and got into a fight with another student. The police were called and the Dean of Students was pretty upset, but Michael knows that these types of things happen when there is slam dancing, whether or not people have been drinking.

*(Notes about Michael: Michael feels that he has done a good job with security and wants to make sure the dances are successful. He very much values dealing directly with people and was upset to receive a note. He knows he was out of line when he screamed at Kristen, and wishes he had not done that, but felt he had no choice.)*

Kristen met Michael at the beginning of the year (August) and put him in charge of dance security because he seemed pretty trustworthy. Things went well for the three fall dances (September, October, and November), as well as for January and February. At the March dance, however, a student started a fight on the dance floor and the police needed to drag him away. Afterwards, Kristen discovered that the student who caused the fight was one of Michael's friends, and Michael had let him into the dance even though he was obviously drunk. This is against the policy set for campus dances. Kristen was very concerned about the security at future dances, since the Dean of Students made it very clear to Kristen that the actions of a few "malcontents" could jeopardize all of the dances for next year. While Kristen still liked Michael, she was afraid of getting into trouble with the university and decided that removing Michael from his position was the only thing she could do to avoid further problems. Kristen dislikes confrontation and did not want to embarrass Michael, so she sent him a note informing him of her decision. A couple of days later Kristen ran into Michael on campus and he began screaming at her, which really frightened Kristen, since Michael seemed full of rage.

*(Notes about Kristen: Kristen did not attend the March dance, but later heard recollections from the Dean, the police, and several of her friends.) Kristen dislikes confrontation and did not want to embarrass Michael, so she sent him a note informing him of her decision. A couple of days later Kristen ran into Michael on campus and he began screaming at her, which really frightened Kristen, since Michael seemed full of rage.*

**Pre-test:**

- If you were Michael, what would you have done? If you were Kristen, what would you have done?
- What could both Michael and Kristen have done/said to have a better outcome?
- Could something have been done to prevent such misunderstandings?

The manner in which an individual handles conflict will determine if the conflict is good, bad, or neutral.

**Questions:**

In our case study with Michael and Kristen- answer the questions below in one short paragraph consisting of at least four sentences.

1. What type of conflict did the two enter into?
2. What were some of the triggers that created the conflict?
3. What approaches did the women take and what could they have done to improve their conflict?

# Appendix 3: Tips for Effective Business Texting and Emails

## Tips for Effective Business Texting

- If you are unsure if texting is appropriate, inquire in an email or phone call and use the method of contact provided or preferred.
- Know your recipient; "? % dsct" may be an understandable way to ask a close associate what the proper discount is to offer a certain customer, but if you are writing a text to your boss, it might be wiser to write, "what % discount does Murray get on $1K order?"
- Let others set the tone. If you are unsure of the level of professionalism adapt according to the tone they set.
- Anticipate unintentional misinterpretation. Texting often uses symbols and codes to represent thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Given the complexity of communication, and the useful but limited tool of texting, be aware of its limitation and prevent misinterpretation with brief messages.
- Contacting someone too frequently can border on harassment. Texting is a tool. Use it when appropriate but don't abuse it.
- Unplug yourself once in awhile. Do you feel constantly connected? Do you feel lost or "out of it" if you don't have your cell phone and cannot connect to people, even for fifteen minutes? Sometimes being unavailable for a time can be healthy—everything in moderation, including texting.
- Don't text and drive. Research shows that the likelihood of an accident increases dramatically if the driver is texting behind the wheel (Houston Chronicle, 2009). Being in an accident while conducting company business would reflect poorly on your judgment as well as on your employer.

## Tips for Effective Business Emails

- Proper salutations should demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups in case a message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient. For example, use a salutation like "Dear Ms. X" (external) or "Hi Barry" (internal).
- Subject lines should be clear, brief, and specific. This helps the recipient understand the essence of the message. For example, "Proposal attached" or "Your question of 10/25."
- Close with a signature. Identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains

your name and business contact information.

- Avoid using all caps. Capital letters are used on the Internet to communicate emphatic emotion or yelling and are considered rude.
- Avoid abbreviations. An email is not a text message, and the audience may not find your wit cause to ROTFLOL (roll on the floor laughing out loud).
- Make proper use of acronyms. You may understand that COO stands for Chief Operating Officer but that can mean many things to different people.
- Be brief. Omit unnecessary words.
- Use a good format. Include line breaks between sentences or divide your message into brief paragraphs for ease of reading. A good email should get to the point and conclude in three small paragraphs or less.
- Reread, revise, and review. Catch and correct spelling and grammar mistakes before you press "send." It will take more time and effort to undo the problems caused by a hasty, poorly written e-mail than to get it right the first time.
- Know the difference between CC and BCC. CC stands for Carbon Copy; it will send an original copy of the email to all parties addressed and CC'd. You use this when you want someone to know that the conversation has occurred without them needing to add input. BCC stands for Blind Carbon Copy and this will send a copy of the email to both the TO and the BCC without the original person seeing who else is BCC'd onto the email. This could be used for when you are working with a group and need to send an email to a member and your professor or boss without the group member knowing, you would BCC your professor or boss. This is simply so your professor or boss can be aware of the conversation occurring with you and the group member without the group member knowing your professor or boss is aware of the conversation as well. This can be used when communicating with a customer directly while informing your superior without the customer being aware.
- E-mail ahead of time if you are going to attach large files (audio and visual files are often quite large) to prevent exceeding the recipient's mailbox limit or triggering the spam filter.
- Test links. If you include a link, test it to make sure it is complete.
- Give feedback or follow up. If you don't get a response in twenty-four hours, e-mail or call. Spam filters may have intercepted your message, so your recipient may never have received it.
- Reply promptly. Watch out for an emotional response—never reply in anger—but make a habit of replying to all e-mails within twenty-four hours, even if only to say that you will provide the requested information in forty-eight or seventy-two hours.
- Use "Reply All" sparingly. Do not send your reply to everyone who received the initial e-mail unless your message absolutely needs to be read by the entire group.

Welcome to The [our name] Store

Dear [customer's name]

Thank you for registering with The [our name] Store.

You can manage your personal information from the "My Account" section of the site when you sign in to The [our name] Store.

You can change your contact details and password, track recent orders, add alternate shipping addresses, and manage your preferences and customer profile all in this one convenient location.

Thank you for your interest in The [our name] Store.

We look forward to your next visit.

To: Harriet Adamo, Physical Plant Manager, XYZ Corporation
From: Mel Vargas, Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
Sent: Mon 10/25/09 8:14 AM
Subject: construction interruptions

Harriet,

I know employees of XYZ Corp. are looking forward to moving into the new ABC Street building in January, but recently groups of employees who do not have business here have been walking through the building. These visits create a safety hazard, interrupt the construction workers, and could put your occupancy date in jeopardy.

Would you please instruct your staff members who haven't already been moved to ABC Street to stay out of the building? If they need to meet here with someone who has already moved, they should conduct their business and leave promptly via the nearest staircase.

We need to avoid further interruptions so our construction workers can get the building ready for occupancy on schedule. If you have any questions, please call me.

Thanks,
Mel

Melvin R. Vargas
Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
1234 Main Street, Big City, USA 98765-1111
(111) 123-4567, ext. 98

# Appendix 5: A Guide to Presentational Aids

## Presentational Aids

What is a presentational or visual aid? This may sound like a basic question but it is one that students frequently have. A visual aid is anything that your audience can see that helps you in your speech. All too often when students hear "visual aid," they only think about PowerPoint. Although it is true that PowerPoint is one of the more commonly used visual aids, it is not the only one. Other types of visual aids include physical objects, handouts, other people, or even yourself! If you are doing a speech on how to make cookies, which would be more effective: a slide showing some cookies or actually bringing in cookies that people can taste?

The first point to consider is what is the most important visual aid? The answer is you, the speaker. You will facilitate the discussion, give life to the information, and help the audience correlate the content to your goal or purpose. You don't want to be in a position where the visual aid is the focus and you are on the side of the stage, simply helping the audience follow along. It should support you in your presentation, rather than the other way around.

## Speaker as Presentation Aid

Speakers can often use their own bodies to demonstrate facets of a speech. If your speech is about ballroom dancing or ballet, you might use your body to demonstrate five basic ballet positions or the basic moves in the cha-cha.

## Other People as Presentation Aids

In many speeches, it can be cumbersome and be distracting for the speaker to use her or his own body to illustrate a point. In such cases, the best solution is to ask someone else to serve as your presentation aid.

You should arrange ahead of time for a person (or persons) to be an effective aid—do not assume that an audience member will volunteer on the spot. If you plan to demonstrate how to immobilize a broken bone, your volunteer must know ahead of time that you will touch him or her as much as necessary to demonstrate how to splint. You must also make certain that they will arrive dressed presentably and that they will not draw attention away from your message through their appearance or behavior.

The transaction between you and your human presentation aid must be appropriate, especially if you are going to demonstrate something like a dance step. Use your absolute best judgment about behavior, and make sure that your human presentation aid understands this dimension of the task.

# Objects as Visual Aids

Physical objects can be a great visual aid but make sure that the object is large enough for everyone to see. If you are doing a speech on making jewelry, holding up a necklace may not be effective because people in the back will not be able to see it. Similarly, passing around an object is often ineffective because it can be distracting, time-consuming, and there is always a risk of the object getting broken. Models are the best objects to use; objects designed for demonstration and teaching.

# Animals as Presentation Aids

When giving a speech on a topic relating to animals, it is often tempting to bring an animal to serve as your presentation aid. While this can sometimes add a very engaging dimension to the speech, it carries some serious risks that you need to consider.

The first risk is that animal behavior tends to be unpredictable. You may think this won't be a problem if your presentation aid animal is a small enough to be kept confined throughout your speech—for example, a goldfish in a bowl or a lizard or bird in a cage. However, even caged animals can be very distracting to your audience if they run about, chirp, or exhibit other agitated behavior. The chances are great that an animal will react to the stress of an unfamiliar situation by displaying behavior that does not contribute positively to your speech.

The second risk is that some audience members may respond negatively to a live animal. In addition to common fears and aversions to animals like snakes, spiders, and mice, many people have allergies to various animals.

The third risk is that some locations may have regulations about bringing animals onto the premises. If animals are allowed, the person bringing the animal may be required to bring a veterinary certificate or may be legally responsible for any damage caused by the animal.

For these reasons, before you decide to use an animal as a presentation aid, ask yourself if you could make your point equally well with a picture, model, diagram, or other representation of the animal in question and inquire with your instructor.

## Handouts

Handouts are appropriate for delivering information that audience members can take away with them and want to look back at in the future. If it is something they will just glance at and then never need again, why not put it on a PowerPoint slide or a poster or some other way? If the material you wish to share comes from an outside source, consider scanning it in or even taking a picture of it and showing that in a PowerPoint slide. If you do decide that a handout is the best way to deliver your information, there is a great deal of work that must be done if they are to be an effective part of the presentation.

First, make sure to bring enough copies of the handout for each audience member to get one. Having to share or look on with one's neighbor does not contribute to a professional image. You should, under no circumstances, provide a single copy of a handout to pass around the class. There are several reasons this is a bad idea. You will have no control over the speed at which it circulates or the direction it goes. Moreover, only one listener will be holding it while you're making your point about it and by the time most people see it they will have forgotten why they need to see it. In some case, it might not even reach everybody by the end of your speech. Also, listeners could still be passing your hand out around during the next speaker's speech. Finally, it can make it seem as if the speech was something you threw together at the last minute.

There are three possible times to distribute handouts: before you begin your speech, during the speech, and after your speech is over. Naturally, if you need your listeners to follow along in a handout, you will need to distribute it before your speech begins. If you have access to the room ahead of time, place a copy of the handout on each seat in the audience. If not, ask a volunteer to distribute them as quickly as possible while you prepare to begin speaking. If the handout is a "takeaway," leave it on a table near the door so that those audience members who are interested can take one on their way out; in this case, don't forget to tell them to do so as you conclude your speech. It is almost never appropriate to distribute handouts during your speech, as it is distracting and interrupts the pace of your presentation.

Like other presentation aids, handouts should include only the necessary information to support your points, and that information should be organized in such a way that listeners will be able to understand it. For example, in a speech about how new health care legislation will affect small business owners in your state, a good handout might summarize key effects of the legislation and include the names of state agencies with their web addresses where audience members can request more detailed information.

If your handout is designed for your audience to follow along, you should tell them so. State that you will be referring to specific information during the speech. Then, as you're presenting your speech, ask your audience to look, for example, at the second line in the first cluster of information. Read that line out loud and then go on to explain its meaning.

As with any presentation aid, handouts are not a substitute for a well-prepared speech. Ask yourself what information your audience really needs to be able to take with them and how it can be presented on the page in the most useful and engaging way possible.

## PowerPoint

When it comes to PowerPoint, the main thing we need to remember is KISS: Keep it Simple, Sycamores!

As with all visual aids, PowerPoint is meant to aid you not replace you. If someone could give your speech using only your slides then you probably have too much on them. So how should you construct your slides? In the 2007 book *Save Our Slides*, William Earnest lays down a few simple rules for using PowerPoint effectively:

1. Pick a good template
2. Choose high-contrast color combinations
3. Limit the number of words
4. Use consistent fonts
5. Handle graphic elements professionally
6. Avoid Animations

Let's go through these one at a time:

Pick a good template

What makes a good template? One that Keeps it Simple, Sycamores! Use simple backgrounds without distracting images. Try to use either dark backgrounds with light text or light backgrounds with dark text. This makes it easier to read. Also, avoid backgrounds that fade from one color to another because it can be difficult to find a font color that is legible on all colors. It is also good to avoid using the same template that everyone else uses. Visual flair can be good if used well.


*A bad template- cc BMY*

Choose high-contrast color combinations

In addition to using a font color that stands out from the background, make sure the colors can be seen in a wide variety of situations. What if you are using a projector and the room isn't dark? Will people be able to see what is on the slides? Is it too bright if the room is completely dark? Are you using too many colors? Remember, Keep it Simple, Sycamores!


*Limit the number of words- cc BMY*

Remember that your audience may be sitting several feet away from you. So, the text should be large enough to easily read from the back of the room. Also, you should want your audience looking at you and not looking at the screen. Remember, the slides are for the audience, not you. Slides should not be a transcript of your presentation. Therefore, try to keep the number of words on each slide to a minimum. A good rule of thumb is less than 40 words per slide. If possible, use bullet points instead of full sentences. If there is too much text on a slide, split it into two or more. Can the fonts be made larger? If so, bump the font size up a little. One trick is to print a slide on a piece of paper. Place the printed sheet on the floor and stand up. If you can't read it then the font is probably too small.

Use consistent fonts

It is tempting to use a bunch of different fonts on your slides but using too many fonts can be overwhelming and confusing but Keep it Simple, Sycamores! Pick one or two fonts and use them consistently. If you pick one font for the title on one slide, use the same font for titles on all the slides.


*Avoid using too many different fonts- cc BMY*

Handle graphic elements professionally

Using pictures can be a great way to make your presentation more memorable. The famous psychologist Albert Mehrabian showed that the way people take in information during a presentation is 55% visual, compared to 38% vocal and only 7% through text. Yet simply adding a few visuals into a presentation may not be the solution. There are a number of traps that people fall into.

1. Using Bullet Points: According to research carried out at UCLA, a visual presentation is five

times more likely to be remembered after three days than a presentation using bullet points.

2. Corny Images: These often have actors showing emotions such as surprise or happiness. The

difficulty is that they can look very corny. Additionally, if the photos are a few years old, the

fashions can look very dated.

3. Using Clip Art: An idea behind its time. Clip Art used to be a great way of making a presentation

visual—particularly when computers were less powerful and every presentation had to be small enough to fit onto a floppy disk. The problem now is that clip art looks very dated compared to a color photograph.

4. Grainy Pictures: Generally, these images are taken from a web page and increased in size. The problem is that, since they were saved as small files to make them load quickly, they do not enlarge well.

5. Copyright Theft: It’s easy and tempting to just lift an image off the web, but you must obtain the permission of the copyright owner before you can use any image.

6. Images Purely for Decoration: A picture is worth a thousand words. So why would you slap down any old image just to fill up a bit of space? Instead of an image showing how their products could suit a wide range of businesses, their graphic design agency had added a picture of a horse! Relevance is everything.

Avoid Animations

Everyone who has had an opportunity to experiment with PowerPoint knows that animation in transitions between slides or even on a single slide can be fun, but often people do not realize that too much movement can distract audience members. While all presentation software packages offer you very cool slide movements and other bells and whistles, they are not always very helpful for your presentation. If you’re going to utilize slide transitions or word animation, stick to only three or four different types of transitions in your whole presentation. Furthermore, do not have more than one type of movement on a given slide. If you’re going to have all your text come from the right side of the screen in a bulleted list, make sure that all the items on the bulleted list come from the right side of the screen.

Practice, Practice, Practice

In addition to these steps, there are a few other tips to using PowerPoint. One is that it is vital to practice the speech. Becoming proficient at using visual aids takes time and practice. The more you practice before your speech, the more comfortable you will be with your visual aids and the role they serve in illustrating your message. Consider where to place or store your visual aid before speaking. When the time comes to give your speech, make sure you reassess your plans and ensure that they work for the audience as they should. Speaking to a visual aid (or reading it to the audience) is not an effective strategy. Know your material well enough that you refer to your visual aids, not rely on them.

Similarly, it is important that you become proficient and comfortable with the technology. Nothing is worse than watching a speaker stand up and not know how to turn on the computer, access the software, or launch his or her presentation. When you use technology, audiences can quickly see if you know what you are doing, so don't give them the opportunity to devalue your credibility because you can't even get the show going.

Always Have a Backup Plan

Always have a backup plan. Unfortunately, things often go wrong. One of the parts of being a professional is keeping the speech moving in spite of unexpected problems. Decide in advance what you will do if things break down or disappear right when you need them. Don't count on your instructor to solve such predicaments; it is your responsibility. If you take this responsibility seriously and check the room where you will be presenting early, you will have time to adapt. If the computer or audiovisual setup does not work on the first try, you will need time to troubleshoot and solve the problem.

Additional tips

- Make sure you proofread your slides. A spelling error can be embarrassing and make your presentation less professional.
- When you deliver your presentation be sure to face your audience, not the screen.
- Similarly, avoid the temptation to read the content to the audience; the audience can read what is projected. The content of the slides serves as a guide or outline for you and the audience.
- Stand to the left of the screen. For the English speaker who reads from left to right, the audience will see you as their eyes move across the screen in one continuous left to right eye movement.
- And remember to speak WITH the audience, not AT them.
- Don't leave a slide up when you aren't using it. In PowerPoint, hitting the B key will blank out the screen. Unfortunately, Google Slides does not have this feature. In this case, you can create a slide without text and a black background each time you want to hide the slides
- Check your equipment
    - o don't assume that a room will have things set up for you
    - o don't assume that your computer will have the necessary connector to connect to their projector
- If you are using their technology, make sure your presentation is in a format that the computer in the room can use.
- Make sure your presentation will work without the internet
- Keep the use of videos and audio to a minimum. Your audience wants to see and hear you speak, not how well you can click play on a video!

With these tips in mind, your presentation will have a much greater chance of success. Whether you are using a batch of cookies as a visual aid or a PowerPoint presentation, just remember to Keep it Simple, Sycamores!

## References

Earnest, W.  (2007). *Save our slides: PowerPoint design that works*. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

PowerPoint images created by Bryan Mitchell Young