

COMMUNICATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

SECOND
EDITION

The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking



STEVE DUCK • DAVID T. McMAHAN



Students Can Relate to Communication in Everyday Life

Whether we are talking or texting, persuading or posting, turn-taking or tweeting, relationships play an essential role in all of the ways we choose to communicate throughout the day.

In *Communication in Everyday Life*, authors Steve Duck and David T. McMahan highlight the inseparable connection between relationships and communication in every chapter to add insight and coherence to the full range of foundational communication concepts, theories, and skills covered in the introductory course. *The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking, Second Edition*, includes four chapters on public speaking that provide comprehensive coverage of preparing and delivering effective presentations. Contemporary examples, the latest research, and enhanced learning tools in every chapter will encourage students to think critically, to relate communication theory to their everyday experiences, and to improve their communication skills in the process.

Effective, Classroom-Tested Learning Tools:

- **Engaging pedagogy** in every chapter encourages critical thinking, links material to students' own experiences, and applies chapter concepts to their own personal and professional lives.
- **Analyzing Everyday Communication** boxes focus on critical analysis of real-life exchanges and relationships.
- **Communication and You** boxes provide opportunities for self-reflection and self-assessment in each chapter.
- **Make Your Case** boxes provide students with an opportunity to develop their own positions or to perform an exercise related to the material.
- **A new appendix** includes annotated speeches.

"[This book] was definitely engaging, and every sentence made me want to continue. . . . I love how [this book] relates to the reader."

—Student
Washburn University

"I have had numerous comments on the readability and tone of the text—students say they actually enjoy reading it!"

—Martha Antolik
Wright State University

Communication in Everyday Life

The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking

Second Edition

From Steve:

To Zach and Minnie, just starting to read about the relational world

From David:

To Jennifer always

Communication in Everyday Life

The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking

Second Edition

Steve Duck
David T. McMahan



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



FOR INFORMATION:

SAGE Publications, Inc.

2455 Teller Road

Thousand Oaks, California 91320

E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.

1 Oliver's Yard

55 City Road

London EC1Y 1SP

United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.

B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area

Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044

India

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.

3 Church Street

#10-04 Samsung Hub

Singapore 049483

Copyright © 2018 by SAGE Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-5063-5024-0 (pbk.)

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

17 18 19 20 21 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Acquisitions Editor: Karen Omer

Development Editor: Anna Villarruel

Editorial Assistant: Sarah Dillard

eLearning Editor: Gabrielle Piccininni

Production Editor: Tracy Buyan

Copy Editor: Robin Gold

Typesetter: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd.

Proofreader: Lawrence Baker

Indexer: Scott Smiley

Cover and Interior Designer: Scott Van Atta

Marketing Manager: Amy Lammers

Brief Contents

[Preface](#)

[A Personal Note to Readers](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Authors](#)

[PART I. COMMUNICATION FOUNDATIONS](#)

[1. An Overview of Communication](#)

[2. Histories and Contexts of Communication](#)

[PART II. COMMUNICATION SKILLS](#)

[3. Identities, Perceptions, and Communication](#)

[4. Verbal Communication](#)

[5. Nonverbal Communication](#)

[6. Culture and Communication](#)

[7. Listening](#)

[PART III. COMMUNICATION CONTEXTS](#)

[8. Personal Relationships](#)

[9. Groups and Leaders](#)

[10. Communication in the Workplace](#)

[11. Technology and Media in Everyday Life](#)

[12. Interviewing](#)

[PART IV. PRESENTATION SKILLS IN CONTEXT](#)

[13. Preparing for a Presentation](#)

[14. Developing a Presentation](#)

[15. Giving Informative and Persuasive Talks](#)

[16. Delivering a Presentation](#)

[Appendix: Sample Presentations](#)

[Glossary](#)

[References](#)

[Index](#)

Detailed Contents

[Preface](#)

[A Personal Note to Readers](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Authors](#)

[PART I. COMMUNICATION FOUNDATIONS](#)

[Chapter 1 An Overview of Communication](#)

[Focus Questions](#)

[Everyday Communication and the Relational Perspective](#)

[What Is Communication?](#)

[Communication Is Symbolic](#)

[Communication Requires Meaning](#)

[Social Construction of Meaning](#)

[Meaning and Context](#)

[Verbal and Nonverbal Influence on Meaning](#)

[Meaning and the Medium](#)

[Communication Is Cultural](#)

[Communication Is Relational](#)

[Communication Involves Frames](#)

[Coordinating Interactions](#)

[Assigning Meanings](#)

[Perspectives](#)

[Communication Is Both Presentational and Representational](#)

[Communication Is a Transaction](#)

[Communication as Action](#)

[Communication as Interaction](#)

[Communication as Transaction](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

[Chapter 2 Histories and Contexts of Communication](#)

[Focus Questions](#)

[The Challenges of Writing History](#)

[The Development of a Discipline](#)

[The Emergence of Areas of Study](#)

[Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism](#)

[Interpersonal Communication](#)

[Mass Communication](#)

[Coming Together \(Kind of\) as Communication Studies](#)

[Future of Communication and the Relational Perspective](#)

[Methods of Studying Communication](#)

[Social Scientific Approach](#)

[Assumptions](#)

[Methods](#)

[Advantages](#)

[Disadvantages](#)

[Interpretivist Approach](#)

[Assumptions](#)

[Methods](#)

- [Advantages](#)
- [Disadvantages](#)
- [Critical Approach](#)
 - [Assumptions](#)
 - [Methods](#)
 - [Advantages](#)
 - [Disadvantages](#)
- [Improving Communication Studies Through the Relational Perspective](#)
 - [Communication Education and Instructional Communication](#)
 - [Cultural Communication](#)
 - [Family Communication](#)
 - [Group Communication](#)
 - [Interpersonal Communication](#)
 - [Media](#)
 - [Health Communication](#)
 - [Organizational Communication](#)
 - [Persuasion](#)
 - [Political Communication](#)
 - [Public Relations](#)
 - [Rhetorical Criticism](#)
- [Where Next?](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)
- [PART II. COMMUNICATION SKILLS](#)
 - [Chapter 3 Identities, Perceptions, and Communication](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [Do People Have Core Selves?](#)
 - [Different Moods](#)
 - [Different Situations](#)
 - [Different Relationships](#)
 - [Different Evaluations](#)
 - [Identities and Perceptions](#)
 - [Selecting](#)
 - [Organizing, Interpreting, and Evaluating](#)
 - [Identities and Communication](#)
 - [Symbolic Identities and a Symbolic Self](#)
 - [Self-Disclosure](#)
 - [Dynamics of Self-Disclosure](#)
 - [Narratives](#)
 - [Transacting Identity and Other People](#)
 - [Altercasting](#)
 - [Self as Others Treat You](#)
 - [Performative Self](#)
 - [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
 - [Key Concepts](#)
 - [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
 - [Media Connections](#)
 - [Chapter 4 Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [How Is Verbal Communication Symbolic?](#)

- [Verbal Communication Involves Meaning](#)
 - [Denotative and Connotative Meanings](#)
 - [Words and Values](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Relational](#)
 - [Relationships Regulate Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Relationships and Shared Meanings](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Cultural](#)
 - [Verbal Communication Transacts Cultures](#)
 - [Cultures Regulate Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Cultural Ways of Talking](#)
- [Verbal Communication and Frames](#)
 - [Recognizing Frames](#)
 - [Ways of Speaking](#)
 - [Accommodation: Adjusting Relational Frames](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Presentational](#)
 - [Telling Stories](#)
 - [Kenneth Burke's Pentad](#)
- [Functions of Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Influencing Others: Facework and Politeness](#)
- [Relationships and Everyday Talk](#)
 - [Instrumental Function](#)
 - [Indexical Function](#)
 - [Essential Function](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)
- [Chapter 5. Nonverbal Communication](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [Misconceptions About Nonverbal Communication](#)
 - [Misconception One: 93% of Meaning Comes From Nonverbal Communication](#)
 - [Misconception Two: Some Nonverbal Communication Is Universally Understood](#)
 - [Misconception Three: Deception Can Be Accurately Detected Through Nonverbal Communication](#)
 - [Misconception Four: People Read Nonverbal Communication](#)
- [What Is Nonverbal Communication?](#)
 - [Symbolic](#)
 - [Decoding and Encoding](#)
 - [Dynamic and Static](#)
 - [Guided by Rules](#)
 - [Cultural](#)
 - [Personal](#)
 - [Multichanneled](#)
 - [Ambiguous](#)
 - [Less Controlled](#)
 - [Continuous](#)
- [The Functions of Nonverbal Communication](#)
 - [Interconnects With Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Regulates Interactions](#)
 - [Identifies Individuals](#)
 - [Transmits Emotional Information](#)
 - [Relational Meaning and Understanding](#)

Types of Nonverbal Communication

Environment

Proxemics

Personal Space and Distance

Kinesics

Eye Contact and Gaze

Vocalics

Chronemics

Haptics

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

Questions to Ask Your Friends

Media Connections

Chapter 6 Culture and Communication

Focus Questions

How Can Culture Be Identified and Studied?

Culture as Structure

Culture as Transacted

Coded Systems of Meaning

Structure-Based Cultural Characteristics

Context

Collectivism/Individualism

Time

Conflict

Transacting Culture

Culture Is Embedded Within Your Communication

Culture Goes Beyond Physical Location

Cultural Groups Are Created Through Communication

Cultural Membership Is Enacted Through Communication

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

Questions to Ask Your Friends

Media Connections

Chapter 7 Listening

Focus Questions

Why Is Listening Important?

Listening and Education

Listening and Career

Listening and Religion and Spirituality

Listening and Health Care

Listening and Relationships

Listening Objectives

Active Listening

Engaged and Relational Listening

Disengaged Listening

Engaged Listening for a Transactional World

Relational Listening

Critical Listening

Elements of Critical Listening

Recognizing and Overcoming Listening Obstacles

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

Questions to Ask Your Friends	
Media Connections	
PART III. COMMUNICATION CONTEXTS	
Chapter 8 Personal Relationships	
Focus Questions	
What Are Personal Relationships?	
Benefits of Personal Relationships	
Relationships and What You Know	
Relationships and Support	
Initiating Relationships: The Relationship Filtering Model	
Talking to Strangers	
Steps in the Relationship Filtering Model	
Transacting and Maintaining Personal Relationships	
Composing Relationships Through Communication	
Keeping Relationships Going Through Communication	
Relational Dialectics	
Coming Apart	
Symptoms and Sources of Decline	
Breakdown Process Model	
Focus Questions Revisited	
Key Concepts	
Questions to Ask Your Friends	
Media Connections	
Chapter 9 Groups and Leaders	
Focus Questions	
What Is a Group?	
Types of Groups	
Characteristics of Groups	
Cohesiveness	
Interdependence	
Commitment	
Group Norms	
Member Roles	
Group Culture	
Group Development and Decision Making	
Group Decision Making Is About Relationships	
Leadership	
Leadership Styles	
Leadership Power	
Leadership Vision	
Leadership Ethics	
Leadership Is Transacted	
Focus Questions Revisited	
Key Concepts	
Questions to Ask Your Friends	
Media Connections	
Chapter 10 Communication in the Workplace	
Focus Questions	
Learning About the Workplace	
Vocational Anticipatory Socialization	
Metaphors of Organizations	
Going to Work: The Workplace as a Special Frame	

- [Workplace Goals](#)
 - [Workplace Formality/Hierarchy](#)
 - [Workplace Identities](#)
- [The Workplace as a Culture](#)
 - [Workplace Routine and Structuration Theory](#)
 - [Industrial Time](#)
- [The Workplace as Relationships](#)
 - [Positive Influences of Relationships at Work](#)
 - [Relationships and Workplace Challenges](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)
- [Chapter 11 Technology and Media in Everyday Life](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [Perceptions of Technology and Media](#)
 - [Cave Drawings and Other Key Concerns](#)
 - [Every Technology Is Relational](#)
 - [Impact of Technology](#)
 - [The Relational Uses of Technology and Media](#)
 - [The Use of Technology and Media Is a Shared Relational Activity](#)
 - [Technology and Media Inform People About Relationships](#)
 - [Technology and Media Function as Alternatives to Personal Relationships](#)
 - [Technology and Media Are Used in Everyday Talk](#)
 - [Smartphones: Constructing Identities and Relationships](#)
 - [Constructing Identities Using Smartphones](#)
 - [Relating Through Smartphones](#)
 - [Constructing Identities and Maintaining Relationships Online](#)
 - [Social Networking Sites and the Construction of Identities](#)
 - [Online Communication and Relationships](#)
 - [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
 - [Key Concepts](#)
 - [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
 - [Media Connections](#)
- [Chapter 12 Interviewing](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [Preparing for an Interview](#)
 - [Cover Letters and Résumés](#)
 - [Résumés](#)
 - [Interviews](#)
 - [Characteristics of an Interview](#)
 - [Types of Interviews](#)
 - [Pre-Interview Responsibilities](#)
 - [Interviewer Responsibilities](#)
 - [Interviewee Responsibilities](#)
 - [Beginning an Employment Interview](#)
 - [Greeting and Establishing Appropriate Proxemics](#)
 - [Negotiating Relational Connection and Tone](#)
 - [Establishing Purpose and Agenda](#)
 - [Asking the Questions During an Employment Interview](#)
 - [Primary and Secondary Questions](#)
 - [Open and Closed Questions](#)

- [Neutral and Leading Questions](#)
- [Directive and Nondirective Questioning](#)
- [Avoiding Illegal Questions](#)
- [Answering the Questions During an Employment Interview](#)
 - [Adjusting the Interview Frame](#)
 - [Learning From Successful and Unsuccessful Interviewees](#)
 - [Answering Common Questions](#)
 - [Dealing With Illegal Questions](#)
- [Concluding an Employment Interview](#)
 - [Interviewer Responsibilities](#)
 - [Interviewee Responsibilities](#)
- [Post-Interview Responsibilities](#)
 - [Interviewer Responsibilities](#)
 - [Interviewee Responsibilities](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)
- [PART IV. PRESENTATION SKILLS IN CONTEXT](#)
 - [Chapter 13 Preparing for a Presentation](#)
 - [Focus Questions](#)
 - [Presenting and Relationships](#)
 - [Getting Ready to Present](#)
 - [How Do You Analyze Audiences?](#)
 - [A Speaker's Relationship With the Audience](#)
 - [Relationship With the Issue and Position](#)
 - [Audience View of the Occasion](#)
 - [Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values](#)
 - [Selecting Your Topic](#)
 - [Consider Yourself](#)
 - [Consider Your Audience](#)
 - [Searching for a Topic](#)
 - [Determining the Purpose and Thesis of Your Presentation](#)
 - [General Purpose](#)
 - [Specific Purpose](#)
 - [Thesis Statement](#)
 - [Evidence and Support Material](#)
 - [Definitions](#)
 - [Facts and Opinions](#)
 - [Comparisons and Contrasts](#)
 - [Testimony](#)
 - [Examples](#)
 - [Statistics](#)
 - [Selecting and Using Evidence and Support Material](#)
 - [The Quantity of Evidence and Support Material](#)
 - [The Quality of Evidence and Support Material](#)
 - [Comparing the Effectiveness of Evidence and Support Material](#)
 - [Selecting and Searching for Sources \(Inventio\)](#)
 - [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
 - [Key Concepts](#)
 - [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
 - [Media Connections](#)

Chapter 14 Developing a Presentation

Focus Questions

Gaining Confidence as a Speaker

The Body: How Do You Develop an Argument?

Principles of Presentation: Organization and Development

Organizational Patterns

Introductions and Conclusions

Introducing Your Presentation

Concluding Your Presentation

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

Questions to Ask Your Friends

Media Connections

Chapter 15 Giving Informative and Persuasive Talks

Focus Questions

Key Features of Informative Presentations

Presenting Definitions and Descriptions

Expository Presentations

Process and How-To Demonstrations

Strategies for Successful Informative Presentations

Key Features of Persuasive Presentations

Presenting to Convince

Presenting to Actuate

Persuasive Speaking and Artistic Proofs

Persuasive Speaking and the Social Judgment Theory

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

Questions to Ask Your Friends

Media Connections

Chapter 16 Delivering a Presentation

Focus Questions

Managing Emotions About Speaking

Egotist Fallacy

The Audience

Dealing With Initial Nerves

Guidelines for Effective Delivery: Answers to Common Questions

Be Natural

Be Conversational

Be Normal If Any Errors Occur

Styles of Delivery

Effective Delivery

Personal Appearance

Vocalics

Facial Expression and Body Position

Gestures

Presentation Aids

Making the Most of Your Anxieties

Recognizing and Knowing What You Fear

Experience and Skill Building

A Final Thought About Anxiety

Focus Questions Revisited

Key Concepts

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
[Media Connections](#)
[Appendix: Sample Presentations](#)
[Glossary](#)
[References](#)
[Index](#)

Preface

Communication in Everyday Life: The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking has been written to provide students with a new kind of introduction to the central issues and topics of communication. Accordingly, it can serve as the course textbook for general education courses in communication, as the course textbook for survey courses taken by communication majors, and as a resource for anyone interested in the study of communication. Yet it demonstrates a fresh approach.

This book, therefore, includes discussions of material traditionally included in such textbooks. However, it also includes material conspicuously absent from other textbooks but increasingly relevant in the everyday lives of students, such as the continued relational integration of media and technology along with global influences. Further, the book allows all of these topics to cohere and coalesce by pointing out the *relational* basis of all communication as a major feature of students' everyday lives.

This book is written in a conversational tone with an acknowledgment that students arrive at college with various levels of academic preparedness and that students come from a number of different backgrounds with diverse life experiences.

Finally, this book recognizes the value of well-developed learning tools for students and the benefits of robust ancillary materials for both students and instructors.

Through this preface, we will briefly introduce the focus on everyday communication and the relational perspective guiding this book. We will then examine pedagogical features, instructor support, and available ancillary materials.

Before discussing those areas, however, we need to address what makes *Communication in Everyday Life: The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking* different from *Communication in Everyday Life: A Survey of Communication* (without public speaking). That sure is a tough one, isn't it? This version has public speaking chapters, and the other version does not have them. Otherwise, all the material examined in the other version appears in this version, with the exception of family, health, and influence chapters.

Although that difference between the two versions is obvious, the reason for developing two versions may not be as clear. Quite simply, though, some schools and instructors want to include public speaking in their introductory courses, but others do not include public speaking in these courses. This is the book for those schools and instructors who include public speaking in their courses. Further, the relational perspective and focus on everyday communication readily apply to the study of public speaking, increase student understanding of the material, and increase student preparation for delivery of presentations.

So, now that we have addressed the differences between the two versions, we can begin examining their shared theme and other shared characteristics.

Everyday Communication and a Relational Perspective

Topics in textbooks such as this one are frequently introduced only to be quickly left behind as students are introduced to ensuing topics. Issues of communication are discussed as if occurring in isolation, and a common thread or unifying theme is often absent. Like academic silos, each chapter houses a single topic, without any consideration about how topics may be interconnected and can be understood through a shared perspective.

The isolation of topics provides students with an artificial and unrealistic view of actual communication. It specifically obscures the interrelated nature of communication. For example, completely separating personal relationships and media conceals the fact that in real life such media as television, video games, and the Internet are often used and consumed in the (increasingly virtual) company of others, convey information about relationships, and serve as topics of everyday talk. Likewise, social media are explicitly used to conduct and maintain relationships, while health care and social support are based in relationship activity.

In addition to further separating topics, the lack of a common theme prevents students from recognizing how topics in communication fit and come together as part of a greater whole and how they might be studied in a coherent fashion. The everyday use of interpersonal communication is a universal experience, and attempts to both teach and understand it are founded in teacher–student rapport and based around recognition of the universals of human experience.

Within this book, topics are frequently introduced and discussed in connection with other topics. Naturally, this approach runs the risk of focusing too much on these connections and not enough on each specific topic. However, this approach is accomplished in such a manner that students are reminded of other topics and provided with an awareness of the interconnected nature of communication.

When it comes to a unifying theme, *everyday communication* and a *relational perspective* will guide our exploration of communication.

Everyday Communication

The discipline of communication has traditionally focused on the “big” moments or seemingly extraordinary events of human interaction. These instances might include initial encounters, arguments, betrayals, dramatic self-disclosures, or other intense occurrences. These events may be memorable, but they are not all that common.

In actuality, most of a person’s life experiences and interactions with others are of the everyday, seemingly ordinary, and seemingly dull variety. This everyday communication might include brief conversations while getting ready for school or work, a quick text message between classes, or talking while watching video clips online (or sharing those clips as a means of expressing common interests and relationship). The content of these interactions might include schedules, the weather, what to eat, or any other seemingly mundane topic.

Everyday communication may not always be memorable, but it is very important. Beyond the frequency of this sort of interaction, major portions of a person’s life take shape through routine, seemingly mundane everyday communication. Everyday communication creates, maintains, challenges, and alters relationships and identities as well as culture, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, meaning, and even reality.

We will, of course, discuss major moments and events in human interaction when appropriate. However, we will always return to the significance of communication in everyday life and how references to everyday lived experiences will assist students in understanding the material.

Relational Perspective

The relational perspective is based on the belief that communication and relationships are interconnected. Relationships affect communication, and communication affects relationships. Relationships flow into daily experiences, and all communication has a relationship assumed underneath it. At the same time, relationships are developed, maintained, and modified through communication.

Relationships are an inherent part of any topic of communication. Interactions among those with whom a personal relationship is shared are often the basis of identity construction and they influence perceptions of the world. Relationships guide our use and understanding of both verbal and nonverbal communication. Culture and society are created and performed through relationships and interactions with specific other people. Recognizing the type of relationship will assist people when they are engaged in the listening process. Groups and the workplace can be understood not as structures but as the enactment of relational communication. People use media and technology relationally more than as individuals. Relationships often serve as the basis for influencing another person. Successful interviews involve the creation of relationships among interviewers and interviewees. Further, presentations are generally given to people with whom some sort of preexisting relationship exists, and even when this is not the case, relationship connections are established between a speaker and audience members.

Given the variety of their educational backgrounds, demographic characteristics, and experiences, all students share the fact that their understanding of the world has been formed and influenced by relationships. The relational perspective makes the importance and operation of communication more understandable through direct connections to the experience of all students and therefore will facilitate classroom discussion while channeling and capitalizing on students' natural interests.

Pedagogical Features

We view the pedagogical features within textbooks as fundamental elements in the comprehension and incorporation of the material being presented. Rather than using them as meaningless filler or only to break up the text, we use them to provide students with a better understanding of the material and a better appreciation for its importance and application in everyday life. These pedagogical tools have been tested in our own and other classrooms and provide students with opportunities to enhance their learning.

Overview

To help guide the students, each chapter begins by introducing students to the topic and setting up the key issues that will be addressed. Focus Questions are also posed in the opening spread to further direct students through the chapter.

Chapter Boxes

The main body of the chapters includes the following pedagogical boxes: (1) Analyzing Everyday Communication, (2) By the Way, (3) Communication + You, (4) Disciplinary Debate, (5) Ethical Issue, (6) Make Your Case, and (7) Skills You Can Use. With the exception of Ethical Issue and Skills You Can Use boxes, each of these boxes includes questions for students to further consider what is being discussed.

Analyzing Everyday Communication boxes encourage students to apply what they have learned in the analysis of everyday life situations. For instance, the culture chapter ([Chapter 6](#)) asks students to go to a public space where members of a unique cultural group are gathered and observe the ways they communicate.

By the Way boxes appear multiple times within each chapter and present students with additional information to ponder as they study the material. These boxes will enhance student interest in the material by providing unique or bonus information about what is being discussed. For example, the verbal communication chapter ([Chapter 4](#)) introduces students to Taa, perhaps the world's most complicated language with 112 distinct sounds.

Communication + You boxes ask students to consider the material in relation to their lives and lived experiences. Specifically, this feature will sensitize students to issues and encourage them to become careful observers of the activities and events going on in their lives, compelling them to examine and apply the material. For instance, the overview of communication chapter ([Chapter 1](#)) asks students to be aware of how their next conversation gets framed through talk.

Disciplinary Debate boxes encourage critical thinking by asking students to consider competing views within communication scholarship or positions that counter those presented in the text. For example, in the personal relationships chapter ([Chapter 8](#)), students are asked to consider whether relationships actually develop and end in stages as textbooks so often claim.

Ethical Issue boxes urge students to contemplate and develop a position regarding ethical quandaries that arise in communication. For instance, the technology and media chapter ([Chapter 11](#)) asks students to consider whether employers should use material on social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, when making hiring decisions.

Make Your Case boxes provide students with opportunities to develop their own positions or to provide a personal example about the material. For example, in the listening chapter ([Chapter 7](#)), students are asked to provide and respond to a time when they encountered problems with listening involving customer service.

Skills You Can Use boxes present students with guides to integrate the material into their lives. For instance, the groups chapter ([Chapter 9](#)) discusses how recognizing the relational elements of a group can assist them when promoting a particular agenda or decision.

Photographs

Photographs included in each chapter also serve as pedagogical tools. Each photo caption is stated in the form of a question that corresponds with material being discussed. Students will be asked to examine the photograph and answer the accompanying question based on their understanding of the material. Rather than being open-ended, these questions have specific answers that appear on the student study site: <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>.

End-of-Chapter Pedagogical Materials

Each chapter also ends with pedagogical materials that bring the overview and focus questions full circle. Focus Questions Revisited are implemented as a way of summarizing chapter material via pedagogical structure rather than as a simple (and usually ignored) chapter summary. Also, instead of including review questions, which often only establish lower levels of comprehension, each chapter includes (a) Questions to Ask Your Friends and (b) Media Connections. These features enable students to further examine how the chapter material fits within their communicative lives as a whole. Questions to Ask Your Friends provide students with questions to ask their friends to further increase their awareness of the material and integrate it into their lives. In the culture chapter ([Chapter 6](#)), for example, students are encouraged to ask their friends about what was challenging and what was rewarding about recent intercultural experiences. Media Connections lead students to draw from media to further explore the issues discussed in each chapter. For example, the personal relationships chapter ([Chapter 8](#)) instructs students to examine the Sunday newspaper section of marriages, engagements, and commitment ceremonies for similarities in attractiveness.

Conversational Tone

To further assist student learning, we have deliberately adopted an informal and conversational tone in our writing, and we even throw in a few jokes. We are not attempting to be hip or cool: Trust us; we are far from either, so much so that we are not even sure if the words *hip* and *cool* are used anymore. Are *tight* and *dope* now used? Does *fleek* only deal with eyebrows and grooming? Regardless, we use a conversational voice because we believe that it makes this book more engaging to read. Plus, we genuinely enjoy talking about this material. We want to share our enthusiasm in a way that we hope is infectious.

Instructor Support

Although a fundamental feature of the book is, of course, to update discussion of topics by integrating the latest research while providing a new relationally based perspective on the material normally included in traditional texts, this is a two-edged sword. A challenge associated with developing a new textbook—especially one offering an original approach and addressing more up-to-date issues of communication—is that many instructors already have their courses in good shape and do not need the extra burden of rewriting those courses to fit a completely new text. We have therefore sought to add material in a way that supplements and develops rather than replaces traditional material. By this means, we seek to support those teachers who have already developed useful courses and who want to add some spice from the newer research without having to completely revise their existing lectures and notes. Thus, although the present text updates much of the theory and research included in older-style texts, we have constructed this book to reflect the traditional basic text design. A host of ancillary materials are also available that would benefit both new and experienced instructors.

Digital Resources



Our Content Tailored to Your LMS

SAGE coursepacks makes it easy to import our quality instructor and student resource content into your school's learning management system (LMS). Intuitive and simple to use, SAGE coursepacks gives you the control to focus on what really matters: customizing course content to meet your students' needs.

Say NO to . . .

- required access codes
- learning a new system

Say YES to . . .

- using only the content you want and need
- high-quality assessment and multimedia exercises

Customized and curated for use in:

Blackboard
Canvas
Desire2Learn (D2L)
Moodle

Created specifically for *Communication in Everyday Life: The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking*, Second Edition, by Steve Duck and David T. McMahan, SAGE coursepacks is included FREE! *Instructors*, contact your sales representative to request a brief demonstration or additional information.

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge!

edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e

Accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment with the SAGE edge personalized approach.

SAGE edge for Instructors supports teaching with quality content and easy-to-integrate course management tools, featuring:

- Our content delivered directly into your LMS
- An intuitive and easy-to-use format that makes it easy to integrate SAGE coursepacks into your course with minimal effort
- Pedagogically robust assessment tools that foster review, practice, and critical thinking and offer a better, more complete way to measure student engagement, including:
 - Instructions on how to use and integrate the comprehensive assessments and resources provided
 - Diagnostic chapter pretests and posttests that identify opportunities for student improvement, track student progress, and ensure mastery of key learning objectives
 - Test banks built on Bloom's Taxonomy that provide a diverse range of test items with ExamView test generation
 - Activity and quiz options that allow you to choose only the assignments and tests you want
- Editable, chapter-specific PowerPoint® slides that offer complete flexibility for creating a multimedia presentation for the course
- Lecture notes that summarize key concepts on a chapter-by-chapter basis to help with preparation for lectures and class discussions
- Lively and stimulating chapter activities that can be used in class to reinforce active learning and that apply to individual or group projects
- A set of all the graphics from the text, including all of the images, tables, and figures in PowerPoint, .pdf, and .jpg formats for class presentations
- Multimedia content, including links to video, audio, and webpages that appeal to students with different learning styles

SAGE edge for Students enhances learning in an easy-to-use environment that offers:

- Mobile-friendly eFlashcards that reinforce understanding of key terms and concepts that have been outlined in the chapters
- Mobile-friendly web quizzes that allow for independent assessment of progress made in learning course material
- Multimedia content, including links to video, audio, and webpages that appeal to students with different learning styles
- Answers to in-text photo caption questions

A Personal Note to Readers

Communication in Everyday Life: The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking was developed with the belief that introductory communication courses play a central role in the discipline by attracting new majors, providing a foundation for upper-level courses, and supporting the entire academic community as important general education requirements and preparations for future life. The basic course is not just about training students in a discipline. It is about educating them more broadly for life beyond college and instilling within them an inquisitive curiosity—and the tools to employ it well—that will serve them throughout their lives. It is one of the most important courses a student of any discipline will take.

Accordingly, we did not want to present students with a cookie-cutter book that looks and reads like every other textbook published in the past few decades. Many publishers encouraged us to do just that! Rather, if we were to develop a new textbook, it had to bring something fresh and meaningful to the study of communication.

We believe that our relational perspective and focus on everyday life provide students with a coherent structure to their study of communication and an opportunity to apply the familiar experience of their own personal and professional lives to increase their understanding of them.

We believe that some traditional material such as verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and listening should be included in any introductory course. But other material such as social media and technology, culture, and family is conspicuously absent from other books, despite each of them being an integral part of students' lives.

We believe that a writing style can be achieved that is engaging and accessible to all readers at any level of academic preparedness. Students new to college should find the writing understandable while increasing their ability to study and comprehend the material. Students at advanced levels of preparedness should find the writing suitable for the collegiate level. No students should ever feel as if they are being presented with insultingly simple prose. Rather, the writing should be at appropriate and manageable levels and feel like it was written by humans.

We believe that books should not be written only for the “traditional student”—an assumed 18- to 22-year-old upper-middle-class student who does not work, whose parents are paying for college, and who plans on spending spring break on an exotic beach somewhere. We have nothing against such students, but we just recognize that many students are older, struggling financially, or are paying their own way through college. Many students work at least one job while going to school, and some of them have children of their own to care for as they study. Like ours when we were in school, their spring breaks will be spent working additional hours rather than lounging on the sand.

We believe that pedagogical tools within the text such as boxes and photos should be more than just meaningless filler and should instead be focused on teaching and learning. Further, whenever possible, photographs should depict realistic-looking people in realistic situations rather than models or celebrities depicting unrealistic and theatrical communication.

Finally, we believe that ancillary materials such as self-quizzes, activities, and Internet resources should be developed to benefit students, new instructors, and experienced instructors alike. We also wanted to ensure that these ancillary materials were available to *all* students and not just those students purchasing a new copy of the book rather than a used copy of the book.

To substantiate, challenge, and build on these beliefs, we engaged in extensive discussions with our fellow course instructors and directors as well as students throughout the United States and other countries. We wanted to know what they needed in a textbook, what worked and did not work with previous textbooks, and what innovations must be included. Primarily because of their input and encouragement during all facets of its development and production, the first edition of *Communication in Everyday Life: The Basic Course Edition With Public Speaking* was met with an overwhelmingly positive response. These discussions continued once the first

edition was published and remained fundamental in the development and production of this edition.

This second edition has enabled us to advance the components that worked so well in the first edition and to include additional features and modifications to enhance its use in communication classrooms. In general, we have streamlined much of the text to increase its readability. Numerous tables and charts have also been included to help readers synthesize the material. Most of the original photographs have been replaced, and many additional photographs have been included. Fresh and additional pedagogical boxes have been included in each chapter. In response to instructor and student comments, the coverage of some material has been rearranged, removed, increased, or added. The latest research and findings have been incorporated throughout each of the chapters, as have updated discussions and examples. We are thankful for the success of the first edition and are excited about the potential impact of the second edition.

We are passionate about the study of communication and are deeply committed to its instruction. It is our sincere hope that everyone who reads this book will experience improved understanding and enjoyment of communication. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to share our enthusiasm for communication and the opportunity to demonstrate its importance and application in everyday life.

—*Steve and David*

Acknowledgments

A book such as this one is a tremendous undertaking, and we are grateful to the many people who have contributed to the development of this volume. We are thankful to our students, both graduate and undergraduate, who knowingly or unknowingly provided observations, examples, and thoughtful discussion of the ideas presented here. We are also thankful to the instructors and students who have used the previous edition of the book as well as our other books for allowing us into their classrooms. Many of them enabled us to live out the relational perspective through personal contact by phone and e-mail and through much-appreciated visits on campuses and at conferences. Their feedback and encouragement are greatly appreciated and have enhanced this volume in immeasurable ways.

Involvement in such books takes an enormous toll on relational life. We are extremely thankful to our respective families and friends. Their forbearance provides a supportive atmosphere for us to manage the long hours and extended absences required to bring such projects to completion. Beyond their acceptance of long absences and of seeing the back of our heads more often than the front of them as we sat at our computers, we are especially grateful for the suggestions and comments of Ben Lawson-Duck, Gabriel Lawson-Duck, and Jennifer McMahan as they withstood discussions about what we happened to be working on at a given moment.

Additionally, we would like to thank all of our parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, extended families, colleagues, acquaintances, strangers we have encountered, people we like, and people we despise, all of whom have provided us with ideas for a relational perspective of communication.

We also wish to extend our warm appreciation to the extraordinary people at SAGE Publications who have assisted in bringing this book into existence and for their confidence in this book's capability of being a meaningful tool for student learning and a positive influence in the discipline.

We are also indebted to the following people for their unstinting generosity in commenting on the textbook despite their incredibly busy schedules and for making many brilliant suggestions that we were all too happy to borrow or appropriate without acknowledgment other than here. They generously contributed to whatever this book in its turn contributes to the growth and development of the field. We could not have fully developed the relational perspective and conveyed the impact of everyday communication without their professionalism and thoughtfulness.

Second Edition Reviewers

Bakari Akil II, Florida State College at Jacksonville; Manuel G. Avilés-Santiago, Arizona State University; Jeanean Eldridge, Upper Iowa University; Karley A. Goen, Tarleton State University; Janice Kelly, Molloy College; Bret Kofford, Imperial Valley College and San Diego University–Imperial Valley campus; Christopher H. Smejkal, St. Louis Community College at Meramec; Tatyana Thweatt, Pima Community College; Martina Topić, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Business School.

First Edition Reviewers

Susan Westcott Alessandri, Suffolk University; Martha Antolik, Wright State University; Colleen E. Arendt, Fairfield University; Megan N. Bell, University of Minnesota at Crookston; Marcia S. Berry, Azusa Pacific University; Sarah L. Cole, Framingham State University; Kevin Cummings, Mercer University; Katie Dawson, University of Louisiana at Monroe; Melissa K. Donley, University of Northern Colorado; Sarah Bonewits Feldner, Marquette University; Joy Goldsmith, Young Harris College; Jo Anna Grant, California State University at San Bernardino; Adam Gutschmidt, Wright State University; Donna L. Halper, Lesley University; Kathleen C. Haspel, Fairleigh Dickinson University; Kim Elizabeth Higgs, University of North Dakota; Julie Homchick, Seattle University; Dena Huisman, University of Wisconsin at La Crosse; William E. Hurt, University of South Carolina at Beaufort; Jacqueline A. Irwin, California State University at Sacramento; Vicki L. Karns, Suffolk University; Edith E. LeFebvre, California State University at Sacramento; Amy Lenoce, Naugatuck Valley Community College; Deborah Lewis, Birmingham City University; Melissa A. Maier, Upper Iowa University; Tino G. K. Meitz, University of Tübingen; Jonathan Millen, Rider University; Aimee E. Miller-Ott, University of Hartford; Jennifer Moreland, The College of Wooster; Heidi L. Muller, University of Northern Colorado; Alison N. Novak, Drexel University; Sivanes Phillipson, Hong Kong Baptist University; Ronda Picarelli, California State University at Northridge; Jeffrey H. Pierson, Bridgewater College; Joquina Reed, Texas A&M International University; Christine E. Rittenour, West Virginia University; Tracy R. Routsong, Washburn University; Terri L. Russ, Saint Mary's College; John H. Saunders, Huntingdon College; Susan Silcott, Ohio University; Arlene Swartzman, University of Maryland University College; Matthew R. Turner, Radford University; Patricia Turner, Community College of Vermont; Kyle Tusing, University of Arizona; Alice E. Veksler, University of Connecticut; Michelle T. Violanti, University of Tennessee at Knoxville; Bruce Wickelgren, Suffolk University; Julie Woodbury, Hamline University.

About the Authors



Steve Duck

taught in the United Kingdom before taking up the Daniel and Amy Starch Distinguished Research Chair in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa. He has been a professor of communication studies, an adjunct professor of psychology, and a former Dean's Administrative Fellow and is now Chair of the Rhetoric Department. He has taught interpersonal communication courses, mostly on relationships but also on nonverbal communication, communication in everyday life, construction of identity, communication theory, organizational leadership, and procedures and practices for leaders. More recently, he has taught composition, speaking, and rhetoric, especially for STEM students. By training an interdisciplinary thinker, Steve has focused on the development and decline of relationships, although he has also done research on the dynamics of television production techniques and persuasive messages in health contexts. Steve has written or edited 60 books on relationships and other matters and was the founder and, for the first 15 years, the editor of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. His book *Meaningful Relationships: Talking, Sense, and Relating* won the G. R. Miller Book Award from the Interpersonal Communication Division of the National Communication Association. Steve cofounded a series of international conferences on personal relationships. He won the University of Iowa's first Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award in 2001 and the National Communication Association's Robert J. Kibler Memorial Award in 2004 for "dedication to excellence, commitment to the profession, concern for others, vision of what could be, acceptance of diversity, and forthrightness." He was the 2010 recipient of the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Helen Kechriotis Nelson Teaching Award for a lifetime of excellence in teaching, and in the same year was elected one of the National Communication Association's Distinguished Scholars. He hopes to sit on the Iron Throne and be famous.



David T. McMahan

has taught courses that span the discipline of communication, including numerous courses in interpersonal communication and personal relationships, media and technology, communication education, theory, and criticism. David's research interests also engage multiple areas of the discipline with much of his research devoted to bridging the study of relationships, technology, and media. This work encompasses discussions of media and technology in everyday communication, the incorporation of catchphrases and media references in everyday communication, and the relational aspects of the Internet and digital media. His diverse research experiences also include studies on symbolic displays of masculinity and violence in rural America, media-based political transformations of the world's nation-states, the reporting of mass-murder suicide in *The New York Times*, and prime-time animated series. In addition to authoring numerous books, his work has appeared in such journals as *Review of Communication*, *Communication Education*, and *Communication Quarterly*, as well as edited volumes. A tremendously active member of the discipline, David's endeavors include serving on a number of editorial review boards, serving as editor of the *Iowa Journal of Communication*, and serving as president of the Central States Communication Association. He has also received multiple awards for his work in the classroom and has been the recipient of a number of public service and academic distinctions, including being named a *Centennial Scholar* by the Eastern Communication Association. He hopes to someday win the singles championship at Wimbledon.

Part I Communication Foundations

[Chapter 1 An Overview of Communication](#)



©Steve Duck

[Chapter 2 Histories and Contexts of Communication](#)



©iStockphoto.com/mrPliskin

1 An Overview of Communication



©Steve Duck

Chapter Outline

[Everyday Communication and the Relational Perspective](#)

[What Is Communication?](#)

[Communication Is Symbolic](#)

[Communication Requires Meaning](#)

[Social Construction of Meaning](#)

[Meaning and Context](#)

[Verbal and Nonverbal Influence on Meaning](#)

[Meaning and the Medium](#)

[Communication Is Cultural](#)

[Communication Is Relational](#)

[Communication Involves Frames](#)

[Coordinating Interactions](#)

[Assigning Meanings](#)

[Perspectives](#)

[Communication Is Both Presentational and Representational](#)

[Communication Is a Transaction](#)

[Communication as Action](#)

[Communication as Interaction](#)

[Communication as Transaction](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are symbols?
2. How is meaning established?
3. How is communication cultural?
4. How is communication relational?
5. What are communication frames?
6. What does it mean to view communication as both representational and presentational?
7. What does it mean to view communication as a transaction?

Can you think of anything important in your life that does not involve communication? In reality we do not think it is possible for anyone to legitimately come up with any aspect of life that does not involve communication and that would not be made better by the ability to understand communication more thoroughly. Just consider some of the areas covered in this book. You will have the opportunity to examine such topics as friendships and romantic relationships, media, technology, cultures, personal and public influence, families, health care, and the workplace. You will learn about how your communication and the communication of others influence and actually develop these and many other areas of your life.

We are passionate about the study of communication, and we believe very strongly that you can benefit from knowing more about how communication works. We wrote this book partly because we believe that everyone needs to know more about communication. *Communication in Everyday Life* will help you better understand—and even improve—your life through better understanding of communication.

Everyday Communication and the Relational Perspective

One thing making this book different from other communication textbooks is its focus on *everyday communication*. The discipline of communication has traditionally focused on the “big” moments or seemingly extraordinary events of human interaction. These instances include initial encounters, betrayals, disclosure of secret information, family upheavals, and other dramatic experiences you may occasionally encounter during your lifetime. These events may be memorable, but they do not make up much of a person’s lived experiences. For instance, romantic relationships only rarely feature moments in which partners hold hands, gaze into one another’s eyes, and share their deepest darkest secrets and declarations of unending love.

In actuality, most interactions of romantic partners are of the everyday, seemingly ordinary, or even seemingly dull variety. This everyday communication might include brief conversations as they get ready for work or school, a quick phone call or text between classes or during a break, talking in the car while in traffic, or chatting while watching television or videos online. The content of these conversations is seemingly mundane and may include topics such as schedules, weather, what to eat, what to watch on television, what bills need paying, or the source of a foul odor.

Is the connection between relationships and communication really that significant?



Everyday communication may not always be memorable, but it does *constitute* (i.e., compose) a person's life, and it happens to be incredibly important. Major portions of a person's life take shape through routine, seemingly mundane everyday communication. Everyday communication creates, maintains, challenges, and alters relationships and identities as well as culture, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, meaning, and even reality. Everyday communication should be studied not just because of its frequency in our lives but also because extraordinary things happen through everyday communication. When discussing all types of communication, we will continuously interconnect them with your everyday life and experiences.

Something else that sets this book apart from other communication textbooks is the relational perspective that we have developed through our books and research. The constant guide in understanding communication will be the relationships that you have with other people. The relational perspective is based on the belief that communication and relationships are interconnected. Any type of communication you ever participate in has a relationship assumed underneath it.

The relationship shared by people will influence what is communicated, how it is shared, and the meanings that develop. People generally talk with friends in a different way than with their parents. Coworkers generally talk with one another in a different way than with their supervisors. The meanings of communication also change depending on the relationships. For instance, saying "I love you" will take on a different meaning if said to a romantic partner, a friend, a family member, a supervisor, or someone you just met. In turn, communication creates, reinforces, and modifies all relationships. Saying "I love you" can do many things. It can lead to the creation of a new relationship, strengthen a relationship, maintain a relationship, or result in the realization that people do not view a relationship in the same way. Ultimately, the link between relationships and communication is undeniable, and it can be used to study all communicative activity.

We sincerely believe that your life as a student, friend, romantic partner, colleague, and family member can be improved through the study of communication. Whatever your purpose in reading this book, and whatever your ultimate goal in life, we hope that it will enrich your life by sharpening your abilities to observe and understand communication activities going on around you.

By the way . . . : Citing Sources



You will notice that when we refer to someone else's work or ideas, we will list the surname of the author(s), a date, and a page number when quoting the author(s) directly. The date gives the year in which the original paper or book was published, and the page number is where the original quote can be located. This format is used in most social science textbooks and professional writing, with the full reference at the end of each chapter or at the end of the book. You may also be asked to use this format when you write your own papers or speeches.

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you suppose including references is so important?
2. Why would it be necessary for scholars to follow the same format when citing references?

What Is Communication?

In introductory chapters such as this one, you might expect the primary subject to be defined. In this case, you might be looking for an authoritative definition of *communication* that may very well show up on an examination you will take in the near future. Well, here is one you might like: *Communication* is the transactional use of symbols, influenced, guided, and understood in the context of relationships. Actually, that definition is not half bad, but it does not really do justice to what communication really entails. Your instructor may provide you with a better one.

A number of definitions of communication are out there, and many of those definitions are very acceptable. More than four decades ago, a list of 126 definitions of *communication* appearing in communication scholarship was compiled (Dance & Larson, 1976). Imagine the number of definitions that must have emerged since then! Of course, education should go beyond memorizing a definition and rather should explore deeper issues or characteristics of an issue or a topic, so that is exactly what will be done in this chapter.

One fact that makes the study of communication unique, compared with, say, chemistry, is that you have been communicating your entire life. Previous experience with this topic can be beneficial because you will be able to draw from relationships and events in your own life when studying the material. You will even be able to apply the material—and, we hope, improve your communication abilities and life in general along the way.

The drawback to previous experience is that people may not see the value in studying something that is such a common part of life. You may even be asking the “big deal” questions: What is so problematic about communication? Why bother to explain it? Don’t people know what it is about and how it works? Communication is just about sending messages, right?

True: Most of the time, people communicate without thinking, and it is not usually awkward. However, if communicating is so easy, why do people have misunderstandings, conflicts, arguments, disputes, and disagreements? Why do people get embarrassed because they have said something thoughtless? Why, then, are allegations of sexual harassment sometimes denied vigorously, and how can there ever be doubt whether one person intentionally touched another person inappropriately? Why are some family members such a problem, and what is it about their communication that makes them difficult? Why is communication via e-mail or text message so easy to misunderstand? None of these problems would occur if people who asked the previous “big deal” questions were right.

Make your case: Communication for Everyone



If you are not already convinced, we hope the importance of communication will become increasingly clear as you continue reading this chapter and finish the entire book. You may be using this book for a required course in your major, a required general studies course, or an elective course. Make the case for a basic communication course being required for all graduates at your school. To get started, people in the professional world consistently rank effective communication a vital trait for new hires and necessary for advancement.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some other reasons a communication course should be required?
2. Should students be required to take more than one communication course?

When first coming to the study of communication, many people assume that communication simply involves the sending of messages from person to person through the spoken word, text messages, or Facebook and Twitter updates. That basic view has some truth to it, but communication involves a lot more than merely transmitting information from Person A to Person B.

Is communication simply the exchange of messages?



©iStockphoto.com/Wavebreak

As you read this chapter, you will likely start to recognize that communication is more complex than it initially appears. Let's begin by examining a common situation, a restaurant server speaking to customers:

"Hi! My name is Flo, and I'll be your server today. Our special is a bowl of soup for \$3.95. If you have any questions about the menu, let me know."

What you may already suppose about communication before studying it formally may be somewhat obvious in this example. Words are being used to convey information from one person to another person. Upon closer inspection, however, much more activity is taking place in this basic exchange.

The message is made up of words or symbols, which are used to allow one idea or representation to stand for something else. Taken-for-granted cultural assumptions are being made when these symbols are selected. "Menu" rather than "a list of all the food that we prepare, cook, and serve in this restaurant for you to choose for your meal" is said because it is assumed the customer will know the code word *menu* and its meaning in a restaurant

rather than its meaning on a computer screen. If you are a member of a culture in which this sort of interaction is common, it all likely makes sense.

The server's message may also make sense because you know how to "perform/communicate restaurant." The comments are appropriate only in some places and at some times. If Flo were standing in the middle of a park screaming those words at everyone who passed by, you would likely think she was mentally unstable. They also make sense only at the beginning of the interaction, not during the meal or when the customer is leaving the restaurant.

Notice also how the message makes the interaction work in a particular way, setting up one person (server) in a particular kind of relationship with the other person (customer) while setting that relationship up as friendly and casual ("Hi," not "A thousand welcomes, great ones. Command me as you will, and I shall obey").

You have built-in expectations about the relationship between a server and a customer. You already know and take for granted that these relational differences exist in restaurants and that restaurants have "servers" who generally carry out instructions of "customers." Therefore, you expect the customer will be greeted, treated with some respect by the server, told what "the special" is, and asked to make choices. You know the customer will eventually pay for the food and that the server is there not only to bring food, water, the check, and change but also to help resolve any difficulties understanding the menu. Flo will answer any questions about the way the food is prepared or help if you need to find the restrooms. Both the customer and the server take this for granted; it is a cultural as well as relational element of communication.

This relatively brief encounter also demonstrates that communication is more than just the exchange of messages. It may appear as though a simple message involving the greeting, the speaker's name and job, her relationship to you, and the nature of the special on the menu is being sent to the customer. Beyond the transmission of a simple message, however, something will take place as a result of the message exchange. Further, worlds of meaning are being created, and personal perspectives are being displayed. Additional issues such as gender, status, power, and politeness are being negotiated. All of these things and much more are taking place within this simple exchange.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will introduce and begin our initial discussion of seven key characteristics of communication: (1) Communication is symbolic, (2) communication requires meaning, (3) communication is cultural, (4) communication is relational, (5) communication involves frames, (6) communication is both presentational and representational, and (7) communication is a transaction. Examining these characteristics will provide a better understanding of what communication and its study really involve.

By the way . . . : Communication Apprehension



When studying communication, it is important to recognize that some people are nervous or fearful when communicating in some situations. For instance, some people are anxious when answering a question posed in the classroom. Other people are uncomfortable contributing to small group discussions. For most people, delivering a presentation is something that makes them quite anxious. *Communication apprehension* is the technical term used for the fear or anxiety you might experience when faced with communicating in situations that make you uncomfortable. On the upside, this book will help you better understand unknown and unrecognized aspects of communication. The unknown is a frequent source of discomfort. Knowing the unknown should help you manage those feelings of discomfort.

Questions to Consider

1. What communication situations make you the most anxious?
2. What aspects of those situations make you the most uncomfortable?

Communication Is Symbolic

All communication is characterized by the use of symbols. A symbol is an arbitrary representation of something else. This may be an object, an idea, a place, a person, or a relationship—to name only a few. As we discuss in the upcoming chapters, symbols are either verbal or nonverbal. Verbal communication involves language, whereas nonverbal communication involves all other symbols. Accordingly, a symbol can be a word, a movement, a sound, a picture, a logo, a gesture, a mark, or anything else that represents something other than itself.

To fully understand symbols, we can begin by discussing what they are not. Although the terms *symbol* and *sign* are sometimes used interchangeably, they do not represent the same thing. Signs are consequences or indicators of something specific, which human beings cannot change by their arbitrary actions or labels. For example, wet streets may be a sign that it has rained; smoke is a sign of fire. There is a direct causal connection between smoke and fire and between wet streets and rain.

Symbols, however, have no direct connection with that which they represent. They have been arbitrarily selected. For instance, the word *chair* has been arbitrarily chosen to represent the objects on which we sit, and other languages present the same item in different symbolic ways (e.g., *cathedra*, *sella*, *chaise*, *stoel*, and *zetel*). We call a chair a *chair* simply because the symbol made up of the letters *c*, *h*, *a*, *i*, and *r* has been chosen to represent that object. There is nothing inherent within that object that connects it to the symbol *chair*. Nothing about the symbol *chair* connects it to that object. Once again, a symbol is an arbitrary representation.

symbols: arbitrary representations of ideas, objects, people, relationships, cultures, genders, races, and so forth

sign: a consequence or an indicator of something specific, which cannot be changed by arbitrary actions or labels (e.g., “wet streets are a sign of rain”)

As close to a moose placed on a pole as we are going to get, this particular traffic sign is actually warning motorists of a moose crossing rather than instructing them to stop. Are traffic signs really signs, or are they symbols?



©iStockphoto.com/Pgiam

It is sometimes difficult to recognize that symbols are simply arbitrary representations. It sometimes might seem as though there is a natural connection rather than an arbitrary connection. A stop sign—or more appropriately stop *symbol*—is one example of how people tend to see symbols as naturally linked to what they represent. It may seem

natural that a red octagon with the capital letters *S*, *T*, *O*, and *P* written in the middle would compel people to cease forward movement when driving an automobile. However, there is no direct connection between that symbol and that particular behavior. A giant moose placed on a pole could arbitrarily represent that same course of action just as naturally as the symbol people call a *stop sign* arbitrarily represents that action. There is no direct causal connection between a symbol and what it represents.

Because symbols are arbitrary representations of something else, they can be different in different cultures, and strangers need extra help. When Steve's mother first came to the United States from England, for example, she could find directions not to "toilets" but only to "restrooms," and she did not want a rest. Eventually, she had to ask someone. The euphemism *restroom* is not immediately obvious to cultural outsiders as a reference to toilet facilities. In other cultures—for example, in England—they may be referred to as "conveniences" or by a sign saying "WC" (meaning water closet).

Making things even more difficult is the fact that the same symbol can mean a variety of different things even in the same culture. We talk more about meaning in the next section, but for now consider how the symbolic act of waving to someone can have multiple meanings (e.g., a greeting, a farewell gesture, or an attempt to gain attention). When David's cousin was 3 years old, he was asked to bring a yardstick to his dad who was planning on taking some measurements. His cousin promptly returned with a stick from the front yard.

The complexity of symbols is further evidence of the complexity of communication, but recognizing such complexities will enable you to begin developing a more advanced understanding and appreciation of communication.

Communication Requires Meaning

Communication requires that symbols convey meaning, what a symbol represents. Particular meanings, however, are not tied to only one symbol but can be conveyed in multiple ways using different symbols. For example, happiness can be conveyed by saying “I’m happy” or by smiling. During a relationship, you may have learned that frequency of talk is a meaningful indicator of a friend’s emotional state. So that friend may indicate happiness just by talking more frequently than otherwise.

meaning: what a symbol represents

Social Construction of Meaning

Social construction involves the way in which symbols take on meaning in a social context or society as they are used over time. For instance, family members may use certain words or phrases that have particular shared meanings. The meanings of these words or phrases have developed through their use over time, and those unique meanings are recognized and understood by members of that family. The same thing occurs within larger cultural groups. Words and phrases used every day within the society to which you belong did not originate with previously established meanings. Rather, the taken-for-granted meanings attached to these symbols have developed through repeated and adapted use over time.

Meaning has to develop somehow, and it happens when groups of people use particular symbols. To demonstrate this idea, we can use a bent paperclip as an example. To our knowledge, there is no word or symbol for a bent paperclip, so we will just randomly use the made-up word *abdak*—which seems as good a word as any. One day, your instructor decides that there is a need to use a word to convey bent paperclip and selects *abdak* to do so. (Stay with us, we are going somewhere with this example!) So, from now on, in that particular class, students refer to bent paperclips as *abdaks*. In another course, you see a bent paperclip and refer to it as an *abdak*. You might have to explain to your classmates in that course what you mean, or they might just figure it is a word they had never come across and take for granted you know what you are talking about. Then, other people use it, again and again, all over campus. The term *abdak* soon becomes a word used and understood on your campus, and using and understanding that word might even indicate being a member of the campus community.

Yet, *abdak* does not stop there. Members of your campus community use the term when interacting with people from other schools. Next thing you know, *abdak* is a term used in academic settings. Then, when used by academics with their nonacademic friends, family, and acquaintances, it becomes a term generally recognized by most people. Eventually, the symbol made up of the letters *a*, *b*, *d*, *a*, and *k* becomes recognized and understood just as the symbol made up of the letters *c*, *h*, *a*, *i*, and *r* is recognized and understood.

The meanings associated with and assigned to any symbol have been socially constructed. In other words, through the social and relational use of symbols, meanings become associated and assigned. Something else to consider is that this process happens continuously. So, over time, original meanings can be lost and new meanings can vary wildly. Someday, you might call someone an *abdak*, and that person will be offended!

social construction: the way in which symbols take on meaning in a social context or society as they are used over time

By the way . . . : *Setting* a Record for Definitions



The word (symbol) *set* has the most definitions of any English word, with some unabridged dictionaries including more than 400 meanings.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some other words that have many meanings? (To get you started, the second most “meaningful” word also has three letters and begins with the letter *r*.)
2. Can you come up with any words with a single definition? This question might be more difficult than you think.

Meaning and Context

A single symbol or message can also have multiple meanings when used in different contexts. For example, the *physical context*, or the actual location in which a symbol is used, will affect its meaning. If you said, “There is a fire” while in a campground, it would mean something entirely different than if you said those exact same words while in a crowded movie theater.

What type of communication context involves physical locations?



©Fuse/Thinkstock

The same symbols will also differ in meaning according to the *relational context*, or the relationship shared by the people interacting. Look again at the earlier example of saying, “I love you.” It means something vastly different said to you by your mother, your brother, your friend, your priest, your instructor, someone you have been dating for more than a year, or someone you have just met on a blind date.

The *situational context* will also affect the meaning of a symbol. Consider the phrase “I love you” said by the same person (e.g., your mother) on your birthday, after a fight with her, on her deathbed, at Thanksgiving, or at the end of a phone call.

Verbal and Nonverbal Influence on Meaning

Accompanying verbal and nonverbal symbols will also affect meaning. For instance, the same words send different messages depending on how they are delivered. Using “I love you” as an example once again, consider those words said by a romantic partner in a short, sharp way; in a long, lingering way; with a frown; with a smile; or with a hesitant and questioning tone of voice. We discuss the interaction between verbal and nonverbal communication in greater detail later in the book. For now, however, just recognize how determining meaning is more complex than it may originally seem.

Disciplinary Debate: Power of the Medium



There is some disagreement among scholars in the discipline concerning the impact of a medium of technology. Some scholars believe that the primary medium used by members of a society determines social structure, cultural values, and even how people think. Other scholars believe that people determine how a medium is used and ultimately determine social structure and cultural values.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe technology has the power to shape society?
2. Do you believe that people have more control than technology?

Meaning and the Medium

The medium, or the means through which a message is conveyed, will also affect the meaning of a message. A medium might include sound waves or sight—especially when interacting face-to-face with someone. It can also include smartphones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, social networking sites, a note placed on someone’s windshield, smoke signals, or many other methods of communication.

The topic is especially important in cases involving a medium. For instance, breaking up with a romantic partner can be accomplished using any of the means listed, but some may be deemed more appropriate than others. Breaking up with someone face-to-face may be considered more appropriate than sending him or her a text message or changing your relational status on Facebook from “In a relationship” to “Single.” Beyond the message of wanting to break up, additional messages, including how you view the romantic partner, the relationship itself, and yourself, are conveyed based on the medium used.

medium: means through which a message is conveyed

Skills You Can Use: Adapting to Cultural Expectations



Communicating in a manner consistent with cultural expectations increases a person’s ability to influence others. Consider how you might adapt or adhere to cultural expectations when planning to speak with another person, a group of people, or a large audience.

Communication Is Cultural

Another characteristic of communication is that it is cultural. Different cultures make different assumptions and take different knowledge for granted. Each time you talk to someone, from your culture or another, you are taking knowledge for granted, doing what your culture expects, and treating people in ways the culture acknowledges. You are doing, performing, and enacting your culture through communication.

Ultimately, culture influences communication, and communication creates and reinforces these cultural influences. Consider what took place during your most recent face-to-face conversation with someone. Did you greet this person with a kiss or a handshake? Was there additional touch or no touch at all? How far were you standing from one another? Did you maintain eye contact? What were you wearing? Did you take turns talking, or did you talk at the same time? How did you refer to one another? What did you talk about? Did the physical setting affect what was discussed? How was the conversation brought to a close? What happened at the end? Your answers to these questions are based partly on cultural expectations.

When you follow these cultural expectations, you are also reinforcing them. Their position as the “proper” way to do things has been strengthened. Cultural expectations are also reinforced when someone violates them. Consider the most recent experience when you or someone else did something embarrassing. It was probably embarrassing because cultural expectations had been violated. Or, if there was no touch in your most recent face-to-face conversation, what would have happened if you had touched the other person? If touching would have been inappropriate, then the other person may have responded in a negative manner—enforcing cultural expectations.

Ethical Issue

Is communicating in a manner consistent with someone’s cultural expectations but inconsistent with your normal communication style unethical?

Communication Is Relational

As mentioned previously, communication and relationships are intertwined. Communication affects relationships, and relationships affect communication. The ways in which communication and relationships are connected are fully explored throughout the book. For now, it is important to recognize that relationships are assumed each time you communicate with someone.

Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, and Don Jackson (1967) originally put it a little differently, suggesting that whenever you communicate with someone, you relate to him or her at the same time. All communication contains both a content (message) level and a relational level, which means that, as well as conveying information, every message indicates how the sender of a message and the receiver of that message are socially and personally related.

Sometimes the relational connection between sender and receiver is obvious, such as when formal relational terms (e.g., *dad*) or terms unique to a relationship (e.g., *sweetie* or *stinky*) are included.

Quite often, the relational connection between sender and receiver is less obvious. However, relational cues within communication enable you to determine, for instance, who is the boss and who is the employee. Yelling “Come into my office! Now!” indicates a status difference just through the *style* of the communication. Because the relationships between people often are not openly expressed but subtly indicated or taken for granted in most communication, the content and relational components of messages are not always easy to separate.

By the way . . . : Saying “Hello” in Japanese



In Japanese, there are more than 200 ways for one person to address another according to protocols of respect and status differences recognized by the participants.



©Fuse/Thinkstock

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways are respect and status conveyed when speaking English?
2. In what ways is disrespect conveyed when speaking English?

Exploring the relational characteristic of communication a bit further, it can be maintained that relationships create worlds of meaning for people through communication, and communication produces the same result for people through relationships. Group decision making, for example, is accomplished not just by the logic of arguments, agenda setting, and solution evaluations but also by group members' relationships with one another outside the group setting. Groups that meet to make decisions almost never come from nowhere, communicate, make a decision, and then go home. The members know one another, talk informally outside the group setting, and have personal likes and dislikes for one another that will affect their discussions about certain matters. Many decisions that appear to be made during an open discussion are actually sometimes tied up before the communication begins. Words have been whispered into ears, promises made, factions formed, and relationships displayed well in advance of any discussion.

Consider examples from your life. Is everyone equal in your family? How are your interactions with friends different from your interactions with enemies? When watching television, does it make a difference whether you like the newscaster? Have you ever felt a connection to a character in a movie? On your last job interview, did the employer treat you like a potential valued colleague or an interchangeable worker? Are you more likely to contact some people through text messages and less likely to contact other people through text messages? We examine these questions and more throughout the remainder of the book.

Communication Involves Frames

Communication is very complex, but the use of frames helps people make sense of things. Frames are basic forms of knowledge that provide a definition of a scenario, either because both people agree on the nature of the situation or because the cultural assumptions built into the interaction and the previous relational context of talk give them a clue (Wood & Duck, 2006). Think of the frame on a picture and how it pulls your attention into some elements (the picture) and excludes all the rest (the wall, the gallery, the furniture). In similar fashion, a communication frame draws a boundary around the conversation and pulls our attention toward certain things and away from others.

frames: basic forms of knowledge that provide a definition of a scenario, either because both people agree on the nature of the situation or because the cultural assumptions built into the interaction and the previous relational context of talk give them a clue

communication frame: a boundary around a conversation that pulls one's attention toward certain things and away from others

Communication + You: Taking Things for Granted



You may not even be aware of how frames provide you with additional context and information in any communication interaction. After your next conversation with someone, take note of two or three key things that were said by this person.

Questions to Consider

1. What was taken for granted? What did you need to know to understand these things?
2. Do the same thing with someone with whom you share a different relationship. In what ways were the taken-for-granted assumptions the same, and in what ways were they different?

Coordinating Interactions

Frames help people understand their roles in a conversation and what is expected of them. If you are being interviewed, for instance, your understanding of the interview frame lets you know that the interviewer will be asking questions and you will be expected to answer them. Likewise, your understanding of the restaurant frame helps you understand why one person is talking about “specials” and insisting that you make decisions based on a piece of laminated cardboard that lists costs of food. Your understanding of the classroom frame will inform you of what you should do as a student and how you should interact with your instructor and with your classmates. A shared understanding of these frames is what enables people to make sense of what is taking place to coordinate their symbolic activities.

Ethical Issue

Your communication with someone may appeal to certain relational obligations. For instance, friends may be expected to do certain things (give someone a ride) if they are truly friends. Is it ethical to appeal to such obligations, or is it simply part of being a friend? Are there any limits to what a person may ask someone else to do based on their relationship?

Assigning Meanings

People also use framing assumptions to make decisions about what symbols are used and how these symbols should be interpreted. Your relationship with someone and your knowledge of that person, for instance, influence what can be taken for granted or left unsaid and what must be explained. You may have a friend or relative with whom you can have a conversation, and no one else in the room would know what you are discussing. More than possibly including words or terms unfamiliar to other people, the symbols used have meaning unique to that particular relationship. Shared relational knowledge enables you and the other person to assign unique meanings to those words. Such words would not need to be explained in your conversation because both of you know that the other person understands what those words, or symbols, mean.

Perspectives

Communication frames are based partly on a person's perspectives of situations and relationships with others. These frames of perspective will greatly influence the coordinating of interactions and the assigning of meaning discussed earlier. They also explain why people do not always agree on what exactly is taking place.

Many conversations between close friends are “framed” by previous experiences and conversations—hence, the phrase *frame of reference*. In what ways can you deduce that these women are friends and that they therefore share some history together that frames their interaction?



©Christopher Robbins/Photodisc/Thinkstock

Consider how instructors and students do not always frame situations and their relationships in the same way. For instance, when a student asks an instructor for an extension on an assignment, a number of factors influence how both approach that interaction. A student may be considering personal demands at home, work, and other classes as valid reasons an extension should be granted. An instructor may be considering fairness to other students, maintaining accountability, and personal schedule constraints as reasons an extension should not be granted. A student may perceive the instructor as unwilling to provide an extension simply because he or she is mean or on a power trip. An instructor may perceive a student as simply being uncaring and lazy, which explains why the assignment could not be completed on time. A student may see himself or herself as a consumer paying for an education and expect instructors to satisfy his or her every whim. (Do not get us started on this one!) An instructor may perceive himself or herself in a superior role or view students more like clients—sometimes a person must tell clients things they do not want to hear. These are just a few examples of perspectives being used to frame an interaction. They certainly do not represent all perspectives, and some perspectives may be the total opposite of those presented here. Still, it gives you some idea about how a person's perspectives will influence communication frames being used during an interaction.

Ethical Issue

Communicating by using words, terms, and knowledge shared by other people can include them in a conversation. At the same time,

doing so can exclude individuals who lack that shared understanding. So two people might be talking in a way that excludes a third person who is present. Would you consider this scenario an unethical use of communication?

Communication Is Both Presentational and Representational

Another characteristic of communication is that it is both representational and presentational. Accordingly, although communication normally describes facts or conveys information (representation), it also presents your particular version of the facts or events (presentation). Communication is never neutral. It always conveys the perspective or worldview of the person sending a message. Your communication with other people *presents* them with a way of looking at the world that is based on how you prefer them to see it.

representation: describes facts or conveys information (contrast with *presentation*)

presentation: one person's particular version of, or "take" on, the facts or events (contrast with *representation*)

At first glance, the notion of communication being both presentational and representational is difficult to grasp. Consider the following way of looking at this issue: When you speak to someone, you have a number of words—your entire vocabulary—that can be used to construct your message. You will choose some words to construct the message and not choose other words. You will arrange those words chosen in certain ways and not in other ways. Your selection of words and the arrangement of those words are meaningful acts. For instance, two different perspectives concerning people in the United States unlawfully are presented through using either the term *undocumented worker* or the term *illegal alien*. Your use of words and your construction of messages do not just represent ideas and information; these acts present your view of the world to others.

On some occasions, the presentation of these views is carefully developed. For example, imagine or recall a situation in which a friend has questioned something you have done, but you believed your actions were justified and wanted to explain this justification to your friend. In such cases, you would likely select your words very carefully and thoughtfully, wanting your friend to view the situation from your perspective. Your message is conveying information (representational) while providing a glimpse into your perspective and how you want your friend to view the situation (presentational).

On other occasions, the selection of words may not be carefully planned but nevertheless presents your perspective to others. Each time someone communicates, a worldview is being shared through the selection of terms, regardless of how much thought has gone into the construction of a message. Someone saying, "I suppose I should probably go to work now" in a gloomy manner provides a glimpse into how that person views his or her job—presumably not favorably. Someone saying, "I get to go to my communication class now" in an understandably excited manner provides a glimpse into how that person views the course—presumably very favorably.

Would sending a text message be considered an act, an interaction, or a transaction?



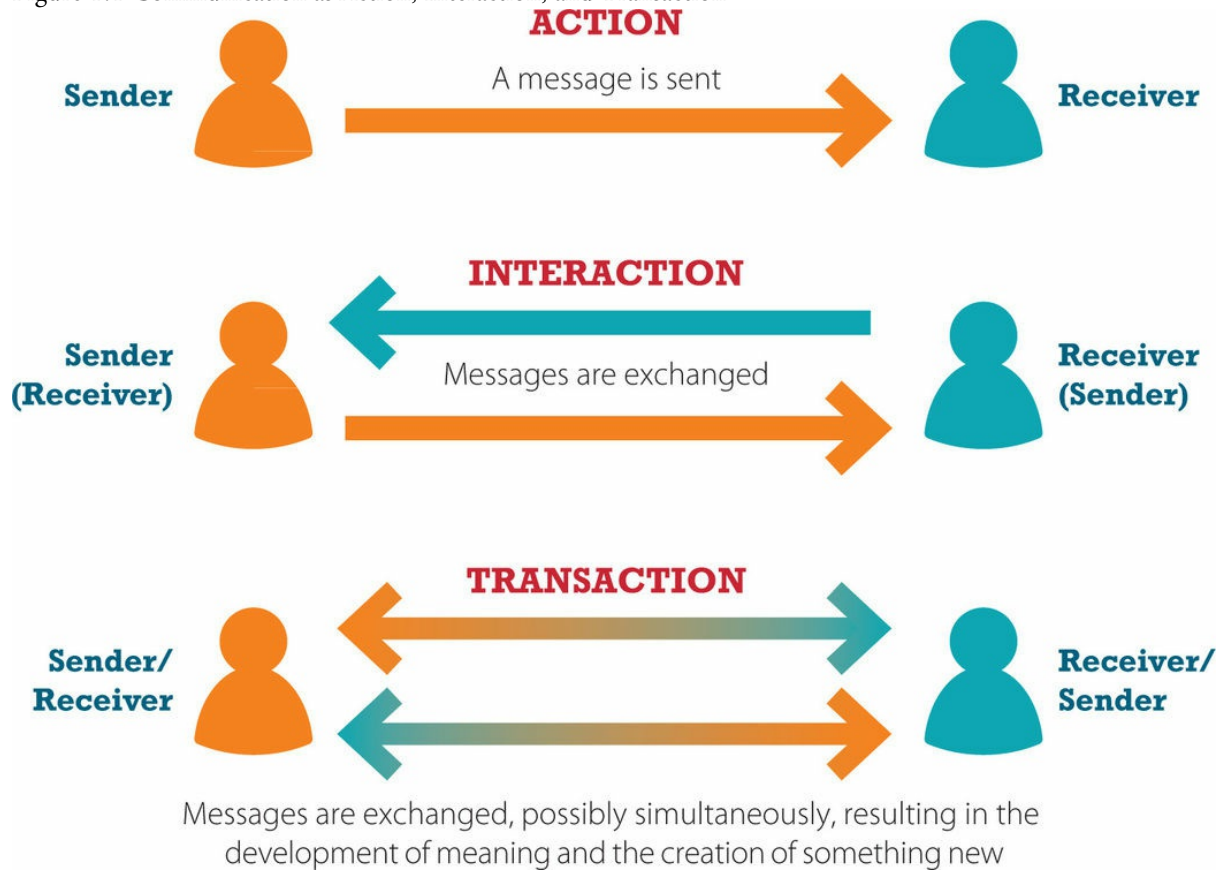
©iStockphoto.com/JRLPhotographer

The representational and presentational nature of communication is not limited to interactions between people but includes all types of communication. Consider the earlier communication class example. Our use of the descriptor *understandably excited* provides a glimpse into the worldview of your authors. When a liberal news channel reports political events, it picks up on different aspects of the news than a conservative news channel would. The channels explain, analyze, and evaluate events differently. Each channel presents reality in the way it wants you to understand it. In this sense, you might want to think of representation as *facts* and presentation as *spin*.

Communication Is a Transaction

The transactional nature of communication is the final characteristic we will address in this chapter. When addressing communication as a transaction, though, we first must address two other common ways of thinking about communication: communication as action and communication as interaction. As seen in [Figure 1.1](#), each way of thinking about communication assumes something different about how communication works, with communication as transaction being the more sophisticated and more fruitful way of thinking about communication.

Figure 1.1 Communication as Action, Interaction, and Transaction



Communication as Action

Communication as action is simply the act of a sender sending a message to a receiver. Communication as *action* occurs when someone leaves a message on your voice mail, sends you an e-mail, or puts a message in a bottle in the ocean—that is, when someone transmits a message. So if Emalyn sends a text message to Corban, communication has occurred. It is pretty simple, really. However, it is not too interesting. If action was all there was to communication, we would be studying something else and not writing books about it. Communication as action could be developed slightly by questioning whether someone must *receive* a message for it to be communication. What if Corban does not check his text messages? Has communication truly occurred? That is about as far as we can take things, though. If communication were only an action, then there would really be no need to study it.

Communication as Interaction

Communication as interaction counts something as communication only if there is an exchange of information. In this much more typical perception of communication, someone sends a message, which is received by someone who in turn sends a message back to the original sender. Using the previous example, communication takes place if Emalyn sends Corban a text, Corban receives the text from Emalyn, and Corban then sends a reply to Emalyn. Although this view of communication is slightly more advanced than communication as action, it remains limited in its scope and fails to capture what truly happens when people communicate.

communication as action: the act of sending messages—whether or not they are received

communication as interaction: an exchange of information between two (or more) individuals

Communication as Transaction

A more sophisticated and interesting way to see communication is communication as transaction, or the construction of shared meanings or understandings. For example, communication exists between Emalyn and Corban if, through their texts, they both arrive at the shared realization that they understand/know/love/need each other. In other words, communication in this sense is more than the mere exchange of symbols. The speakers get more out of it, and extra meanings are communicated above and beyond the content of the messages exchanged.

Communication is interesting and worthy of study not because it merely involves the exchange of messages but because something magical and extra happens in this process. Two people speak and trust is built (transacted); two people touch one another and love is realized (transacted); two people argue and power is exerted (transacted); a man holds the door open for a woman and either sexist stereotyping or politeness is transacted. In all cases, the communication message transacts or constitutes something above and beyond the symbols being exchanged.

If that is not enough reason to study communication, there is even more to consider. Communication does not just create meaning; it creates the stuff of life. This constitutive approach to communication maintains that communication creates or brings into existence something that has not been there before. From this point of view, communication does not just construct meanings. Through communication relationships are created, cultures are created, genders are created, ethnicities are created, sexualities are created, and even realities are created. These are created through communication and maintained, negotiated, challenged, and altered through communication.

For instance, relationships are not locations that we suddenly jump into—even though people refer to being *in* a relationship. Instead, relationships are quite literally talked into existence. Through communication—especially words, but also nonverbal communication—relationships are brought into being, and through communication the maintenance, negotiation, challenges, and alterations of relationships occur.

So, returning to the question posed at the beginning of the chapter, there does not appear to be any part of life that does not involve communication. Communication serves as the actual foundation for most of our life experiences. This fascinating area of study provides a great deal of enjoyment and comes with continuous transformation and paths to explore. Those are some of the reasons we study communication. We are glad that you are joining us.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Shopping Research

We have begun to introduce new ways to analyze situations in your everyday life. The next time you go shopping, take notes about the employee–customer relationship.



Questions to Consider

1. How does the relationship get accomplished? For example, what is communicated/transacted by an employee's clothing, style of speech (bubbly or bored), or manner (friendly or aloof)?
2. What impressions do you form about the employee and his or her view of you?

communication as transaction: the construction of shared meanings or understandings between two (or more) individuals

constitutive approach to communication: communication can create or bring into existence something that has not been there before, such as an agreement, a contract, or an identity

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are symbols?

Symbols are arbitrarily selected representations of something with no direct connection to that which they represent. Though sometimes used interchangeably, the terms *symbol* and *sign* do not describe the same thing. Signs are consequences or indicators of something specific, which human beings cannot change by their arbitrary actions or labels.

2. How is meaning established?

Because they are completely arbitrary, symbols have the potential for multiple meanings that are subject to change. The meaning assigned to a symbol has been socially constructed and is contingent on the contexts (physical, relational, situational) in which the symbol is used and other symbolic activity (verbal and nonverbal), as well as on the medium used to transmit it.

3. How is communication cultural?

Culture influences communication, and communication creates and reinforces these cultural influences. Each time someone communicates, he or she is taking knowledge for granted, doing what his or her culture expects, and treating people in ways the culture acknowledges. Culture is accomplished, performed, and enacted through communication.

4. How is communication relational?

All communication contains both a content (message) level and a relational level, which means that, as well as conveying information, every message indicates how the sender of a message and the receiver of that message are socially and personally related. Communication and relationships are intertwined. Communication affects relationships, and relationships affect communication.

5. What are communication frames?

Communication frames are basic forms of knowledge that provide a definition of a scenario, either because both people agree on the nature of the situation or because the cultural assumptions built into the interaction and the previous relational context of talk give them a clue. A communication frame draws a boundary around the conversation and pulls our attention toward certain things and away from others. Frames help people understand their role in a conversation and what is expected of them. People also use framing assumptions to make decisions about what symbols are used and how these symbols should be interpreted.

6. What does it mean to view communication as both representational and presentational?

Communication describes facts or conveys information (representation) while conveying the perspective or worldview or slant of the person sending a message (presentation). Communication gives other people and audiences a way of looking at the world that is based on how the source of a message prefers them to see it.

7. What does it mean to view communication as a transaction?

Viewing communication as a transaction means understanding that communication is more than just the simple exchange of messages. Rather, communication involves the construction of shared meanings or understandings between two (or more) individuals. Moreover, communication constitutes, or creates, aspects of life such as relationships, culture, gender, and even reality.

Key Concepts

communication as action 16
communication as interaction 16
communication as transaction 17
communication frame 13
constitutive approach to communication 17
frames 12
meaning 8
medium 10
presentation 14
representation 14
sign 7
social construction 9
symbols 7

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends to define *communication*. In what ways do their definitions align with the characteristics of communication discussed in this chapter? In what ways do their definitions counter these characteristics?
2. Ask your friends to consider the difference between signs and symbols. Do they find it difficult to view some symbols as being completely arbitrary?
3. Ask your friends whether a message must be received before communication occurs. What do their answers tell you about viewing communication as an action?

Media Connections

1. In what ways do song lyrics not merely entertain but also present particular ways of living, particular attitudes, and particular styles? Find examples that present relationships differently (e.g., from Bruno Mars, Carrie Underwood, Rihanna, or Mel Tormé).
2. Watch a political discussion on a television news channel or online. How are opposing positions being presented? Is the distinction between representation and presentation obvious or hidden?
3. Watch the audio and visual coverage of a live event on television or online. Then read about the same event in a newspaper the next day. How does the medium affect your understanding of the event and the meanings you assign to the event?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

2 Histories and Contexts of Communication



©iStockphoto.com/mrPliskin

Chapter Outline

- [The Challenges of Writing History](#)
- [The Development of a Discipline](#)
- [The Emergence of Areas of Study](#)
 - [Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism](#)
 - [Interpersonal Communication](#)
 - [Mass Communication](#)
- [Coming Together \(Kind of\) as Communication Studies](#)
- [Future of Communication and the Relational Perspective](#)
- [Methods of Studying Communication](#)
- [Social Scientific Approach](#)
 - [Assumptions](#)
 - [Methods](#)
 - [Advantages](#)
 - [Disadvantages](#)
- [Interpretivist Approach](#)
 - [Assumptions](#)
 - [Methods](#)
 - [Advantages](#)
 - [Disadvantages](#)
- [Critical Approach](#)
 - [Assumptions](#)
 - [Methods](#)
 - [Advantages](#)
 - [Disadvantages](#)
- [Improving Communication Studies Through the Relational Perspective](#)
 - [Communication Education and Instructional Communication](#)
 - [Cultural Communication](#)
 - [Family Communication](#)
 - [Group Communication](#)
 - [Interpersonal Communication](#)
 - [Media](#)
 - [Health Communication](#)
 - [Organizational Communication](#)
 - [Persuasion](#)
 - [Political Communication](#)
 - [Public Relations](#)
 - [Rhetorical Criticism](#)
- [Where Next?](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. How did the modern communication discipline develop?
2. What is the social scientific approach to communication?
3. What is the interpretivist approach to communication?
4. What is the critical approach to communication?
5. What are some of the major areas of study in the communication discipline?

In [Chapter 1](#), we noted that “communication” is symbolic, presentational, and transactive (and you should understand and be comfortable with those terms before you read what comes next). We also pointed out that “communication” is more involved and interesting than our commonsense understanding of it would mislead us to believe. Although it will take us a while to steer you on the exciting journey of unpacking what seems at first to be obvious and TFG (taken for granted), some people find it helpful to think about where our ideas about “communication” came from—how the scholarly study of communication developed. You are probably also interested in where it leads—what you can do with a deeper understanding of communication, other than leading a joyous and successful life. We will cover this both indirectly in the body of the chapter and very directly at its end.

The very fact that you are reading these words means you are now engaged in the study of communication. You may be curious about interpersonal communication or about the way in which communication works or how it goes wrong. You may be inquisitive about communication in groups of friends or in the workplace. You may be interested in careers in media, advertising, the Internet, human resources, gaming, public relations, robotics, or nonprofits. The study of communication will take us into all of these issues and more.

So yippee! You came to the right place, and these questions are, very broadly speaking, the way the study of communication developed. Initially separate, parallel interest was focused on the communication between two people (interpersonal communication) and between media sources (newspapers, radio, film, TV) and large audiences. At the end of the last century, these interests both broadened and converged, taking in family communication, health communication, the Internet, and culture as areas worth understanding as part of the way to comprehend “communication.” By 2016, the wide range of topics and the growth of understanding of communication made it a popular major in colleges. Many students come to it not realizing just how much there is to learn about something that we do every day without thinking. It’s a bit like the way in which the study of medicine developed from obvious and familiar thinking about bodies and their structure but is now a highly sophisticated study stretching from molecular biology to the social and epidemiological environments in which molecules and bodies live and experience themselves.

Of course, studying communication is not an easy proposition, regardless of how rewarding it ultimately may be. If you take a chemistry course, other people will have a general idea of what you are studying. Although there are naturally a few differences from school to school, the basic chemistry course and chemistry major look pretty much the same in colleges and universities throughout the world. The same thing goes for psychology, English, biology, and just about every area of study other than communication. Telling someone you are studying communication, however, requires explaining to her or him just what you are studying.

More than just students must explain what the study of communication involves. Instructors must do the same thing when telling people what they teach. To make matters even more challenging, instructors of communication do not always agree on what should be studied or how it should be studied!

Consider the number of names by which departments specializing in the study of communication may be called. Some of them go by the following: *communication*, *communications*, *communication studies*, *communication arts*, *speech*, *speech communication*, *rhetorical studies*, *mass communication*, *media ecology*, and *media studies*. Then, there may be combinations of those names: *communication studies and media* or *speech and communication*. There can also be additional areas added to the name, such as *journalism*, *film*, *radio and television*, *theater*, and so on.

The first lesson to learn, then, is that some of the disputes about the definition of *communication* come from the fact that different people see it as an umbrella over different topics in the first place (speech? theater? film? TV? interpersonal? media?). Your authors' unifying approach is to connect communication to the one thing that lies beneath all speech, talk, or sharing of symbols—namely, relationships.

Communication + You: What's in a Name?



We will discuss the importance of naming things and the impact of doing so later in the book. For now, take a moment to consider what impact the name of an academic department has on how it is perceived by members of the department itself, by members of other departments, by students, by administration, and by people outside academia.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the name of the department devoted to the study of communication on your campus? How do you believe people perceive that department based on its name
2. If there are multiple departments on campus devoted to the study of communication, how do people perceive them to be both similar and different?

The Challenges of Writing History

This introduction may give you some idea of the reasons why communication is such a diverse area of study and how we propose to help it all make sense for you. Our relational approach will end up tying things together, both in this chapter and in the rest of the book. However, we cannot (yet) give a relational approach to the history of communication. Just like strangers meeting for the first time and ending up as friends, we need to focus first on the diversity and different histories (or strangers' experiences) that can ultimately be tied together by understanding the deeper underlying commonalities. This way we can see and form the relationship between initially different perspectives (personalities).

It is naïve to assume that there is only one view about the history of communication. You may have noticed that the title of this chapter therefore says *histories* of communication rather than *history* of communication. By now you will be ahead of us and will get the idea that writing a single history of the discipline is too simplistic. There are many different perspectives and many different beliefs about the origins of something so varied—at least, when you look only on the surface.

For instance, a person focusing on media would start at one point (perhaps the printing press), and a person studying interpersonal communication would start at another point (perhaps conversation studies at the beginning of the last century). The underlying common feature is that both media and interpersonal communication depend on some relationship with “the audience.” But we’ll come to that a little later.

We also made the point in the first chapter that communication is both representational and presentational. Communication can describe *facts* and can offer a *spin* on those facts. So describing history is also presentational, with a particular spin put on things.

Each historian writes from a particular perspective and with particular major interests. One area of study in communication studies is devoted to historiography, which studies the persuasive effect of writing history in particular ways and the reasons why particular reports and analyses are offered by specific authors. The history of the United States of America written by a British historian in 1815 would be quite differently positioned (“We won! We got rid of a troublesome colony!”) from such a history written by an American historian in 1815 (“We won! We got rid of a troublesome oppressor!”).

Communication research and theory develop and change as scholars labor in their studies. One of the key goals of research is precisely to make developments and corrections to our understanding. Such changes lead to a reevaluation of what has happened and had been assumed to be true before, for example, correcting the omission (from older history) of the contributions of women or people of color (Delia, 1987). Occasionally, those studies that have previously been regarded as reliably *classic* are then seen in a new light that makes them less important. In their turn, the replacement *classics* also fade as new approaches and critiques become available. That’s progress!

By the way . . . : Continued Disagreements



Disagreement is nothing new when it comes to the study of communication. It started with the ancient Greek schools of rhetoric and philosophy, which were often in conflict with one another. Rhetoricians wanted to persuade people by any means that was effective. Philosophers wanted to find only good, honest, truthful arguments. Dishonest means of persuasion were sometimes acceptable to rhetoricians but not to philosophers.



US Public Domain PD-1996

Questions to Consider

1. Would you rather be represented by a dishonest but effective attorney or an honest one (even if you are guilty)?
2. What are some other areas of life in which this debate is still relevant?

historiography: the study of the persuasive effect of writing history in particular ways and the reasons why particular reports and analyses are offered by specific authors

The Development of a Discipline

When it comes to the origins of the communication discipline, writers are likely to begin with Aristotle in the 4th century BCE. However, we can trace the roots of communication study to well before Aristotle. The first documented essay on communication was written around 3000 BCE, addressed to Kagemni, son of the Pharaoh Huni. The earliest existing book on effective communication is *Precepts*, written in Egypt by Ptahhotep around the year 2675 BCE (McCroskey, 1968).

In modern times, the communication discipline was formalized for academic study out of studies of rhetoric, elocution, and speech. The first formally organized professional association devoted to its study, the Eastern Communication Association, was founded in 1910 (see Chesebro, 2010).

Ethical Issue

A link to the National Communication Association (NCA) "Ethical Statements" can be found at www.natcom.org/publicstatements. Do you agree with the NCA Credo for Ethical Communication? Would you add, remove, or alter any of the statements?

The first national association devoted to the study of communication, currently known as the National Communication Association, was established in 1914 as the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking. Always a contentious discipline, this association was founded by a rogue group of 17 members of the National Council of Teachers of English who did not believe enough attention was being given to the study of oral address (Cohen, 1994).

When looking at images such as this one, changes in focus will lead to changes in what is observed and how it is seen. How might this be similar to the development of histories?



©iStockphoto.com/lvcandy

Since these first two academic associations, a number of associations have been developed throughout the world. These associations are established based on region of the country (e.g., Central States Communication Association, Eastern Communication Association, Southern States Communication Association, and Western States Communication Association), state location (e.g., Iowa Communication Association), and interest (e.g., Kenneth Burke Society and International Association for Relationship Research). There is also an International Communication Association and a World Communication Association.

Such organizations provided the basis for offering degrees in “communication studies” (etc.) and the basis for students getting credit for their work in that discipline in schools and colleges across the world. In short, these organizations provide the discipline with a *presence* in the larger academic community. The most important functions these associations provide are the publication of journals and the holding of conferences. Journals are where academic research is published. [Table 2.1](#) provides a list of journals currently published by the National Communication Association and its four regional affiliates. Conferences, which are usually held annually, allow academics to come together to develop and share ideas related to the discipline and its instruction as well as to share and discuss research. That’s how lecture notes get updated and you are told about current ideas rather than those wrinkly ones that are past their sell-by dates.

The Emergence of Areas of Study

As a formal academic discipline, then, communication got its start as a discipline devoted to the study of public speaking, debate, and performance. A person did not study *communication*; rather, a person studied *public speaking* or *speech*. Public speaking's legacy is still evident in the discipline, especially within basic communication courses. However, without ignoring such influences and origins, modern books such as this one now stress the importance of understanding everyday behaviors, rather than special events such as major speeches by single individuals. Abe Lincoln was not the only person alive on November 19, 1863, but we know more detail about the Gettysburg Address than we do about the lives of ordinary folk of the time, though this emphasis is rapidly changing. The change from an emphasis on striking individuals or unusual events to a deeper understanding of everyday behavior is taking place in many different disciplines as they mature. Our focus on everyday life is one of the growing trends.

Table 2.1 **Communication Journals**

National Communication Association

Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies
Communication Education
Communication Monographs
Communication Teacher
Critical Studies in Media Communication
First Amendment Studies
Journal of Applied Communication Research
Journal of International and Intercultural Communication
Quarterly Journal of Speech
Review of Communication
Text and Performance Quarterly

Central States Communication Association

Communication Studies

Eastern Communication Association

Communication Quarterly
Communication Research Reports
Qualitative Research Reports in Communication

Southern States Communication Association

Southern Communication Journal

Western States Communication Association

Communication Reports
Western Journal of Communication

In what follows, we will discuss the three major areas that emerged during communication's first century as a formal discipline: (1) rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, (2) interpersonal communication, and (3) mass communication.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism

The study of rhetoric originated with the development and delivery of public address. Wealthy citizens sent their sons (yes!) to learn from such wise people as Aristotle and Socrates. With the invention of writing, the study of rhetoric expanded into that realm as well. In modern times, the development of formal sites of higher learning and academic departments as we now know them led to the placement of rhetoricians in departments of English.

Scholars more interested in the study of public address than the written word eventually distanced themselves from the English discipline. These scholars argued what now seems obvious in hindsight—literature and public address and performance are not the same things, even if the basis of good writing and good speaking does rest on the same principles of research, organization of thought, and careful reflection on the type of audience for whom the output is intended.

Rhetorical criticism and theory developed student learning beyond the actual creation and delivery of a speech. It also enabled students to describe, interpret, and evaluate the spoken word.

The study of rhetoric underwent massive changes throughout the past century, as new techniques and perspectives were developed (Olson, 2010). However, rhetoric's value and position within universities were not readily challenged during its early emergence. This is likely because of its historical lineage and is in sharp contrast to what was experienced by the next areas of communication that we discuss.

Interpersonal Communication

During the same time that communication associations were being founded, there was an emerging interest in interactions between people. For instance, scholars studied such interpersonal concepts as characteristics of dyads and interaction rituals at the beginning of the previous century. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, articles about conversation were appearing in a journal of what would eventually be known as the National Communication Association.


The study of interpersonal interaction continued to grow and develop in subsequent decades, with scholars from multiple disciplines engaged in its study (Borisoff, Hoel, & McMahan, 2010). Scholars from newly developed speech departments and linguistics, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines were studying interpersonal communication but did not have their own academic home. Without an academic home shared by people with similar interests, it is difficult to collaborate on research, and there is limited influence in universities.

Departments devoted to the study of speech and rhetoric were also experiencing problems by the end of World War II. A *social scientific* revolution had occurred during that period. Increasing numbers of scholars were engaged in scholarship involving experiments and statistical analysis. However, scholars in departments studying speech and rhetoric generally were engaged in other types of scholarship. As a result, departments needed to adjust to remain relevant (Cohen, 1994).


So there was a group of scholars needing an academic home and a discipline needing to adapt to a new academic environment. Whether it was the number of speech researchers already studying conversation and interaction (McMahan, 2004), the oral tradition of speech departments (Wiemann, Hawkins, & Pingree, 1988), or a combination of factors, scholars studying interpersonal communication eventually found themselves in speech departments.

It should be noted, however, that this arrangement was far from peaceful. People in these departments were being forced to study new subject matter and other people in these same departments needed to justify their research. Neither of these groups was really happy about the situation, and this tension continued for a number of years.

By the way . . . : The Position of Public Speaking



Public speaking is a common and unsurprising feature of many basic communication courses. The communication discipline is still expected by other disciplines in the academic community to teach speech. The ability to give coherent presentations is a necessary skill for students, and our discipline teaches it better than any other discipline. Yay! Go Comm Studies!



Thinkstock/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think public speaking should be included in basic communication courses?
2. Would not including public speaking have a positive or negative impact on the discipline of communication?

Mass Communication

A third major area of the communication discipline that played a key role in its development was mass communication. We have taken issue with the *mass* part of the term *mass communication* in other writings (Duck & McMahan, 2012). However, we will use the term here because that was what the area was generally labeled during the early development of the discipline.

As with interpersonal communication, scholars from multiple departments within universities engaged in the study of mass media such as newspapers, books, and eventually radio in the early decades of the previous century. As with interpersonal communication, an official academic home for scholars interested in this research did not exist.

Mass communication scholars found an initial home in journalism departments. Once again, as was the case with interpersonal communication, this arrangement was mutually beneficial to those studying mass communication and journalism. They were able to establish an academic home, while their research provided legitimacy for journalism education. Until that time, many universities did not consider journalism worthy of graduate study (Carey, 1979; Wilcox, 1959). However, mass communication scholars did not get along with those already in those departments, and they didn't really fit.

Coming Together (Kind of) as Communication Studies

The way we just ended the sections on rhetoric, interpersonal communication, and mass communication makes it sound as if nothing has happened for the past few decades, except the collection of a lot of dissatisfied curmudgeons. That is far from the truth. In fact, a great deal has happened since the initial founding of the discipline. For the sake of time and space, we will provide you with a condensed version.

As mentioned already, public speaking is still an area of study in many basic communication courses. However, it has a limited presence in the discipline in advanced courses.

Rhetoric continues to be a notable area in the discipline. However, its study is no longer limited to public address. Instead, rhetoric is more likely to study all influences on communication—especially political communication—including media content, technology, and even architecture.

Disciplinary Debate: Skills or Theory?



The primary question for early mass communication scholars and those already in journalism departments was “What should be their focus?” Those already teaching journalism believed the focus should be more on skills and training. Mass communication scholars believed the focus should be on research and theory. Scholars taking an applied communication approach would probably be somewhere in the middle—seeking ways to use theory and research to improve communication in various settings.



©iStockphoto.com/Creatas

Questions to Consider

1. Choosing from the two extremes, do you believe the discipline of communication should focus more on skills or on theory?
2. Are the two extremes enough to justify separate disciplines?

The study of interpersonal communication continued to grow in popularity at the undergraduate and graduate levels. A departure from earlier research in this area, the study of interpersonal communication tends to focus on close personal relationships rather than simply two people talking with one another. The study of social and personal relationships is now a dominant presence in the discipline of communication.

It is important that students of communication be aware of some of the challenges still facing the discipline and work together to address and overcome these challenges. What are these challenges?



© iStockphoto.com/PeopleImages

Mass communication and journalism are still connected to some extent in some universities. However, the study of media is most likely to occur in another department and is generally considered an area of communication studies. A primary reason for this separation is the introduction of other media than newspapers. Radio was already in homes by the 1940s, and television was introduced in the 1950s. Also giving rise to its move away from journalism, scholars in departments of communication became increasingly interested in the study of media. They welcomed scholars and students with comparable interests. As with interpersonal communication, the study of media is now a major area in the discipline of communication. Indeed it has significantly expanded with the rise of the social media. The fact that such social media are used for relational purposes often means that scholars studying social media may be in either interpersonal communication or media divisions of a communication department.

Future of Communication and the Relational Perspective

History writing frequently tends to assume that everything stops at the present. It also tends to assume that the present is the way that things *should* be, the result of a “logical unfolding” of developments that are described within the analysis or report.

If we assume that the development of the discipline has not yet finished, we must assume it is continuing. If the discipline of communication studies has not evolved to a final state of perfection as a result of previous historical and intellectual forces, then where is it to go next?

If you do not know our answer to this question by the time you finish reading this book, then our time spent writing this textbook has not been worthwhile. Here’s a clue: We are unable to see any area of communication studies to which a *relational perspective* could not be taken. The chapters represented in this book are on traditional topics studied by undergraduates in communication majors and basic courses nationwide. We have been able to give all of these topics a relational twist and to show that underneath all these traditional topics is a presumption about the nature of personal relationships and their influence in everyday life.

The future of the discipline can benefit from applying our relational perspective even more broadly. We hope that our overview in this chapter and the other chapters in this book convince enough people to take our particular view of the topic and to push forward for those social changes that are necessary to make the future foreseen in this book become a reality.

As communication enters its second century as a formal academic discipline, things are looking pretty good. In many colleges and universities, departments related to communication studies are listed among those with the largest numbers of majors. Further, the knowledge and skills taught in the discipline are among the most sought after by employers. It is a respected and powerful area of study that can only grow from adopting the relational prospective.

Methods of Studying Communication

Now you know! The very nature of communication is expansive, and numerous challenges have been experienced in the development of the discipline. In part, these differences are intertwined with scholarly concerns about methods. If you want to study pairs of people interacting, then you can bring them into the lab, interview them in their homes, or analyze transcripts of their chatter. If you want to study the effects of television or social media, then you need to develop a different style of approach. You may run mass surveys, collect anonymous e-mail data, or establish viewing and usage trends in a large population.

These differences in methods are significant because they point researchers at different sorts of information and different questions. A personal interview gives a researcher a lot more detail about behavior than does an anonymous survey, but the survey generates a larger amount of data about the general population. For example, in an interview, a researcher can make notes on the interviewee's nonverbal behavior, tone of voice, or hesitancy in answering questions. All these things may be relevant to an interpretation of the answers. A survey, however, tells the researcher what a lot of people think, and the information is not biased by one odd report.

Table 2.2 Approaches to the Study of Communication

Approach	Social Scientific	Interpretivist	Critical
Assumptions of the World	Objective, causal, and predictable world	Subjective, arbitrary, and uncertain world	Subjective world in which there is an imbalance of power
Truth	A single Truth exists	Multiple truths exist because there exist multiple perspectives and no fixed reality	Multiple truths exist, but those of some groups have greater influence than do those of others
Communication	Predictable and controllable	Creative and indeterminate	Struggle for power
Goals	Description, correlation, and prediction	Description and understanding	Uncover power imbalances and possibly eliminate
Primary Methods	Experiments Questionnaires/surveys	Observation Interviews Textual analysis	Interviews Textual analysis
Advantages	Explains observable patterns of communication Researcher objectivity Studies are relatively easy to conduct	Draws attention to impossibility of truly objective research Provides deep understanding of communication Examines natural communication	Directs researchers toward the recognition and study of societal inequalities
Disadvantages	Numerous methodological problems	Limited scope Possible inaccuracy Subjectivity of researcher Time-consuming	Challenges associated with accepting the view of researcher as all-powerful and appropriate

Although there are many approaches to the study of communication, we will focus on the three that have had the most influence: (1) social scientific, (2) interpretivist, and (3) critical. [Table 2.2](#) provides an overview of these approaches.

Although the summary that follows is necessarily brief, it will give you some sense of the different styles of investigation and study that you may come across while pursuing your own studies. We encourage you to be mindful of a couple of things. First, although these approaches are presented separately and at times may seem to be in opposition, many communication scholars do not view them as mutually exclusive. Scholars frequently engage in more than one approach. In fact, your authors have adopted all three approaches at one time or another when conducting research. Second, in some instances, research may conjoin more than one approach. Common examples of this dual approach are studies using both interpretivist and critical approaches explained later.

Social Scientific Approach

The social scientific approach to communication studies views the world as objective, causal, and predictable. It can involve laboratory experiments, precise measurements of behavior, and an emphasis on statistical numerical analysis of what is studied. Researchers using this approach to study communication seek to describe communication activity and to discover connections between phenomena or causal patterns.

Using this approach, researchers might seek to *describe* patterns of communication among close friends. They might also seek to determine whether there is a *connection* between favorable comments by professors and student performance. Researchers might attempt to determine whether supportive communication *causes* children to behave in a more positive manner.

Assumptions

The social scientific approach assumes that Truth (with a capital *T*) exists. Truth is independent of the researcher and will be discovered by different researchers using the same methods. If this Truth exists, certain assumptions must be made.

First, reality is objective and exists externally to human beings. What this means is that a person's world is made of real things that will be experienced and reacted to in generally the same way by everyone. If I see blue then so will you, and it will be the same wavelength that you can see.

Second, because a true reality exists, human communication is predictable, and causal connections can be uncovered. Once these connections are uncovered, we can learn what behaviors are connected and we can learn what will likely occur in certain circumstances.

By the way . . . : The Name Game



Social science tends to have standardized definitions for terms and usually uses those definitions in similar ways. This means, for example, that two different social scientists will portray or represent or measure “silence” in the same way—such as a period of ten seconds or more when no one is speaking.



© IStockphoto.com/natbits

Questions to Consider

1. What problems might occur when social scientists do not define terms in similar ways?
2. Is it possible to define terms in exactly the same way?

social scientific approach: views the world as objective, causal, and predictable; researchers using this approach primarily seek to describe communication activity and to discover connections between phenomena or causal patterns

Methods

The social scientific approach primarily uses *experiments* or *questionnaires/surveys* to study communication.

Experiments

Experiments generally involve the manipulation of a person's experience to determine how he or she will respond. This sort of manipulation could be as simple as having some people experience one thing and having other people experience something different. Participants in an experiment Kevin Williams (2013) conducted, for instance, played video games using either a traditional handheld controller or motion-based controls to determine whether the type of control influences hostility, identification with the game avatar, or sense of immersion within the game.

Questionnaires/Surveys

Questionnaires or surveys are used to gather information from people. Although experiments usually provide data observed by researchers, questionnaires or surveys provide data reported to the researcher by participants (Metts, Sprecher, & Cupach, 1991).

One type of questionnaire or survey asks people to recall a particular situation or interaction. Studying the ways in which college students talk to instructors about disappointing grades, for example, Courtney Wright (2012) asked participants to recall a recent disappointing grade and answer questions about the conversation with their instructors about that grade.

Another type of questionnaire or survey provides people with a scenario and asks them to respond based on that situation. For instance, Erin Donovan-Kicken, Joseph McGlynn, and Jane Damron (2012) studied the ways in which people in stressful circumstances avoided questions from friends by providing students with hypothetical situations to consider.

Advantages

The social scientific approach to communication has some advantages. First, studies are relatively easy to mount and can involve large numbers of participants, especially when it comes to questionnaires.

Second, different types of social scientists often strongly agree about the way in which assessments can be made of behavior. The statistical analysis of data generally conducted with social scientific research takes the investigator out of the equation and does not allow subjective interference in the interpretation of results.

Perhaps the main advantage of the social scientific approach is its ability to explain patterns of observations theoretically and to derive new predictions from previous work. Observers or researchers are better able to understand communication and recognize patterns accordingly.

Disadvantages

There are, nevertheless, a number of disadvantages or problems to this approach. First, the primary assumption of this approach has been challenged. Human behavior tends to be creative and unpredictable rather than fixed and predictable. It can also be argued that people create their own unique realities rather than simply react to an established shared reality.

Multiple Variables

The remaining problems with the social scientific approach deal with the methodology that tends to be used with this approach. First, a number of variables affect communication and cannot all be identified. For instance, a researcher can have someone play a violent video game and then measure that person's behavior. However, there are multiple influences on that person's behavior beyond playing that video game. Even though researchers are careful to account for many factors, it is impossible to consider everything—for example, whether the person had too much pepper on his or her lunch.

Culturally Insensitive

Research methods are often culturally insensitive. Experiments and questionnaires are frequently created in ways that do not account for differences in race, religion, gender, sexuality, education, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, and so on. In many cases, dominant social views are privileged over others.

Restrictive

Similarly, when constructing questionnaires, the researcher may impose too much restriction on subjects. The construction of a questionnaire presents the sorts of questions that the investigator wants to ask, but these may be the wrong questions.

Why are college students the participants in most research?



Participant Accuracy

Participants may not always be honest about the answers provided to researchers. Frequently, people who respond tell a researcher what they think he or she wants to hear or what they think makes them look good (“social desirability effect”). Through direct observation, for example, the Middletown Media Studies project found that people use twice as much media as they report using on surveys and questionnaires (Papper, Holmes, & Popovich, 2004).

Convenient Samples

Convenient samples of participants are often used when conducting social scientific research. Researchers frequently use participants who are nearby and readily accessible to take part in an experiment or to complete a questionnaire. As researchers tend to be professors, those nearby and convenient participants tend to be students. Accordingly, communication scholars and others who study human behavior know a great deal about the communication and behavior of college students. However, the communication and behavior of college students are not representative of other groups, such as older adults, less educated persons in society, those who work the night shift, or humans in other societies.

Interpretivist Approach

The interpretivist approach to the study of communication seeks to understand and describe the communication experience. This frequently involves observation of communication in natural settings rather than in a laboratory. This approach also uses interviewing and textual analysis to study communication.

Assumptions

The interpretivist approach rejects the idea that a single reality exists and causal connections can be discovered. Communication is seen as creative, uncertain, and unpredictable. Therefore, interpretivist scholars do not believe that Truth (with a capital *T*) can be discovered or that it even exists.

In further contrast to social scientific approaches, interpretive approaches reject the idea that research can ever be value free. Researchers are seen as personally interpreting whatever is being studied based on their knowledge and perspectives. From this point of view, neutrality cannot exist, so no researcher can ever be truly objective.

interpretivist approach: views communication as creative, uncertain, and unpredictable, and thus rejects the idea that a single reality exists or can be discovered; researchers using this approach primarily seek to understand and describe communication experience

Methods

The interpretivist approach to communication frequently uses *grounded theory* to analyze collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory, as its name suggests, works from the ground up and focuses on observations grounded in data and developed systematically. The researcher first gathers data on a particular topic. These data are then examined repeatedly with the expectation that knowledge and understanding will emerge.

This method of analysis might be confusing without understanding the data being analyzed and knowing how the data were collected. So we need to clarify those two issues. In what follows, we discuss the data being analyzed and the common methods used in data collection using the interpretivist perspective.

Data

When people come across the term *data*, there may be a tendency to associate it with numbers. Compared with social scientific research, however, the data used in interpretivist research tend not to be quantitative or number-based.

Rather, the data used in interpretivist research are actually symbolic activity. These data might include, for example, nonverbal behaviors when interviewing or words spoken when interacting with an enemy. Numerous instances of interviewing or enemy interaction would be gathered and recorded in some manner. The nonverbal behaviors and words used in each situation would then be analyzed.

Ethical Issue

Before conducting any research involving humans, scholars must have their studies approved by a review board to ensure that the study is ethically sound and will not harm the participants. This approval must be gained even when you are conducting direct observation. Unlike participants taking part in an experiment, completing a survey, or being interviewed, people being observed in natural settings frequently do not know they are being studied. Do you consider it ethical to study people who do not know they are being studied? Why might researchers want to do this anyway?

Direct Observation and Participant Observation

Now that we have discussed the data that are being analyzed, we can examine various ways in which the data are gathered. Direct observation and participant observation, sometimes referred to as *ethnographic research*, involve observing communication and gathering information (data) about its use in natural settings.

What advantage might gathering data through interviews have over gathering data through a questionnaire?



© iStockphoto.com/wdstock

When conducting direct observation, researchers observe communicative activity by a particular group but do not engage in these interactions themselves. Among other ethnographic methodology, Yanrong Chang (2012) used direct observation to examine Chinese criminal courtroom communication.

Participant observation requires researchers to interact with the group but do nothing that would alter what would have otherwise taken place. David (McMahan, 2011) used this method by working at a rural tavern to study the physical altercations that take place within them.

Interviews

Interviews are also frequently used when conducting interpretive research. Data collected through interviews result from asking participants questions and engaging in general conversation with them about a particular issue of communication. In a way, interviews can be a lot like questionnaires completed by participants. However, interviews allow researchers to ask follow-up questions and probe deeper into the information being provided by participants. Kristen Norwood (2013a, 2013b), for example, interviewed parents of transgendered people and was able to gauge their general reactions to their children's change but also to follow up with specific questions that paid attention to particular answers.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis involves the analysis of recorded communication, which could be visual, auditory, or both. Textual analysis conducted as part of interpretivist research frequently takes the form of conversation analysis or discourse analysis. In both of these approaches, verbal communication from an interaction is specifically analyzed, often by using a written transcript of the interaction. Liz Holt (2012), for example, used conversation analysis to examine the ways laughter is used to neutralize complaints.

Advantages

Like the social scientific approach to the study of communication, the interpretivist approach has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of this approach is that it provides a deep understanding of communication that cannot be gained through other perspectives. Another advantage of the interpretive approach is that communication is more likely to be studied in a natural context. A laboratory experiment, for instance, makes it easier for researchers to control what happens, but it can never fully represent what happens naturally. What happens in a laboratory does not happen naturally, and vice versa.

Finally, the interpretivist approach claims that scholars can never be truly objective. All observers have their own biases and interpretative styles. Even a social scientist is trained to observe and evaluate data in particular ways. Thus, interpretivism has the advantage of recognizing the influence of the observer on the results obtained, something the “scientist” typically overlooks, at least in the absence of Schrödinger’s cat.

Disadvantages

There are also a number of disadvantages to the interpretivist approach and the methodology used in its study.

Limited Scope of Understanding

First, interpretivist work seems to commit to individual levels of analysis without the possibility of making any broader understandings of human communication. In other words, we learn a great deal about the communication of very specific people through interpretivist research. This knowledge increases our understanding of communication in a general sense and has value. However, it is not transferable to the study of other specific people, and it does not allow for a wide-ranging understanding of communication.

Researcher Accuracy and Perspective

Another issue with this approach involves believing the researcher. If people view things differently, who is to say that the researcher's observations and conclusions are accurate? Another researcher might report something entirely different. Further, researchers using interpretivist methods may import their own values and understandings when studying the communication of others. Especially when conducting direct and participant observation, researchers are often outsiders, or not an actual member of the community they are studying. Accordingly, they are never able to fully understand the communication taking place from the perspective of the group being studied.

Make your case: Pick Your Approach



Both the social scientific approach and the interpretivist approach come with advantages and disadvantages. Scholars may choose one approach when conducting a research project and then use the other when conducting a different research project.

Questions to Consider

1. With those things being said, which approach do you think is the better one, and why?
2. Should scholars be required to choose and use only one approach in all their research? Why or why not?

Time-Consuming

Compared with methods primarily used in social scientific research, the methods used when taking an interpretivist approach are very time-consuming. It takes a great deal of time and energy to conduct these studies, especially when it comes to collecting the data.

Critical Approach

The critical approach to communication seeks to identify the hidden but formidable symbolic structures and practices that create or uphold disadvantage, inequity, or oppression of some groups in favor of others. Scholars taking this approach try to uncover hidden or explicit power within a societal group (i.e., who does not have power, how power is maintained, and how existing power differences are challenged).

Assumptions

The critical approach to the study of communication assumes that a built-in structure in society gives advantage to one set of people rather than another. Accordingly, certain members of society (men, white people, heterosexuals) have a greater ability to impose their values and establish the nature of taken-for-granted aspects of society than do other people (women, people of color, homosexuals).

Oppression and advantage are transacted or exercised through communication as well as through other means. Some groups of people have greater opportunities to express and convey their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, whereas other groups of people are repressed and have limited opportunities to be heard or recognized.

Another concern of some critical scholars is that only certain types of experiences are valued and expressed in a given society precisely because of the power dynamics that are contained in that society. For example, we know a lot about the thoughts and experiences of Julius Caesar but we have absolutely no idea what any of his soldiers thought because they did not write them down, or if they did, their reports have not survived.

critical approach: seeks to identify the hidden but formidable symbolic structures and practices that create or uphold disadvantage, inequity, or oppression of some groups in favor of others

Methods

The methods used in the critical approach are very similar to those used in interpretive approaches. Examining issues of power and gender, for example, Kate Harris, Kellie Palazzolo, and Matthew Savage (2012) used interviews to study the ways in which sexism is reinforced when people talk about intimate partner violence.

Another method used by those taking a critical approach involves the analysis of texts. As with interpretivist research, these texts might be transcripts of interactions. They might also be those of such media products as television, music, and movies. For instance, through a textual analysis of the television programs *Brothers & Sisters* and *Six Feet Under*, Frederik Dhaenens (2012) demonstrated how heteronormativity, a cultural bias toward opposite-sex romantic relationships, has resisted representations of gay male domesticity—a trend recently changed by *Modern Family*.

Advantages

The critical approach has been very important in redirecting the thinking of communication scholars toward the awareness of inequities in society at large. Critical theorists have encouraged us to identify inequalities and to make it our goal to eradicate them. To the extent that the theorists are able to be successful in this venture, people in the future will participate equally in relationships and benefit equitably from their communication in everyday life.

Disadvantages

One of the problems faced by the critical approach is the criticism that it is giving itself power and the right to identify the nature of inequity and how it might be challenged. Are those who engage in critical scholarship—including your two authors—really so important that they can best determine what sorts of inequity matter more than others and determine the possibility of their elimination? What gives anyone the right to make the call?

Along those lines, it can never be clear whether an assessment of power is accurate. As with those taking an interpretivist approach, critical scholars are very often not a part of a group being studied. Accordingly, their understanding will never be as complete or as accurate as actual members of a group. For example, the strict military discipline of the Roman army was not regarded as unreasonable or oppressive at the time and was voluntarily accepted by soldiers and others alike as a perfectly reasonable part of the system. Likewise, you may very well view some present differences in power as perfectly acceptable (for example, we do not challenge the fact that children should do what their parents say and that they have no vote even though they are members of the society). A difference in power may exist only from the perception of an outside reviewer (for example, some battered women do not agree with outside observers that their husbands are doing anything wrong [Levit, 2015]). The challenge of critical scholars, again, is dealing with the questions of how we know we are correct and what gives us the right to make such judgments.

Ethical Issue

Is it ethical for a communication scholar to claim that a particular group is wrong because perceived inequality may exist in its communication styles or social structure? A reasonable person would easily point out that unequal treatment based on gender, race, religion, or sexuality is wrong. However, how far should scholars, and society for that matter, take issues of power?

Skills You Can Use: Power and Privilege



You do not have to conduct research to be aware of issues of power and privilege in everyday life. Such issues can be discovered in conversations with friends, family, and coworkers; advertisements; news reports; and television programs, among other areas. You will be able to sharpen your skills as a communicator by making yourself aware of how differences in power and privilege are evident in all communication.



©iStockphoto.com/Photodisc

Improving Communication Studies Through the Relational Perspective

In this section of the chapter, we briefly introduce various areas of study in the discipline of communication. We also discuss how these areas can be studied from a relational perspective.

First, space prevents us from going into great detail about these areas. However, some of these areas have entire chapters devoted to them later in the book. Even then, we encourage you to explore independently and more thoroughly the areas you find particularly interesting. As mentioned previously, there is always something additional to examine and more questions to answer when it comes to the study of communication.

Second, not every area of communication will be included. Those that are included have a major presence in the discipline, but that does not mean that those not included are less valuable. Plus, new areas are always being created. Again, we encourage you to explore the entire discipline of communication and apply the relational approach.

Communication Education and Instructional Communication

The discipline of communication is unique in that a major area of study is devoted to improving its instruction. Communication education involves the teaching of communication itself. Instructional communication involves the study of teaching as communication. Both areas are dedicated to improving instruction.

Virginia Richmond and Ann Frymier (2010) reported that major programs of research in these areas include nonverbal immediacy, teacher power, teacher credibility, affinity seeking, humor, clarity, social communication style and orientation, teacher misbehaviors, argumentativeness, and verbal aggression, among many other areas related to instruction and learning. Communication apprehension, an area of study developed originally by James McCroskey (1970) and subsequently by multiple scholars, has received perhaps the most attention in this area. Indeed, it has recently been extended to several other areas such as the qualities of leadership and group cohesion (Kong, Huang, Liu, & Zhao, 2016).

Relationships develop in the classroom and within all academic contexts among students and instructors, among students and advisers, among students themselves, and among instructors themselves. Understanding the relationships of instruction is necessary to understanding learning and best instructional practices.

Cultural Communication

The discipline of communication has strong interest in cultural influences. Ronald Jackson (2010) notes the existence of four areas of cultural communication study. *Intracultural communication* examines communication within a single culture. *Intercultural communication* examines communication when members of different cultural groups interact. *Cross-cultural communication* compares the communication of different groups. *Critical cultural communication* examines issues of power within cultural contexts and seeks to contest hegemony and promote social justice. As we discuss in the upcoming chapter on culture ([Chapter 6](#)), abstract notions such as culture can be understood and recognized through relationships. Further, culture is actually developed, enacted, maintained, and altered through relationships.

Family Communication

The study of family communication is often placed under the broad umbrella term of *interpersonal communication*. Many relationships are studied under that term, including romantic relationships, friendships in their various forms, and even social relationships. However, given its particular societal importance and the number of scholars studying this area, family communication has emerged as a specific area of study in its own right (see Turner & West, 2015).

Relationships are naturally the primary area of study within family communication. The many topics of investigation within this area include family structure, specific relationships within family units, and issues such as conflict, divorce, family traditions, storytelling, violence, and celebration rituals.

Group Communication

As with family communication, the study of group communication is pretty much what you would expect it to be. According to Dennis Gouran (2010), small-group research emerged as a major area of discipline beginning in the 1970s. Gouran has also isolated key perspectives within this area that include the following: (a) functional theory of communication in decision-making groups, (b) the decision development perspective, (c) symbolic convergence theory, (d) structuration theory, (e) bona fide groups theory, and (f) socio-egocentric. The model assumes that each group member generates messages only in response to input variables. Stripped of its pomposity, this is simply to say that people respond to other people speaking to them or that the ego is responsive to socio/social input. Group communication has been strengthened in recent years through the study of leadership communication.

In a later chapter ([Chapter 9](#)), we examine how group communication can be better understood by taking a relational perspective. People within groups rarely have zero history with one another. Rather, they enter into group situations with preexisting relationships that influence their interactions and decision making. Group members with little shared history or few preexisting relationships (such as juries) often anticipate future connection or, at minimum, generate relational alliances and adversaries within the group.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication has become a general term for the study of relationships. In past decades, scholars studying interpersonal communication primarily viewed it as something that happens when two separate individuals come together. Communication was seen as little more than the way inner thoughts were shared and how two people asserted their individuality and achieved their personal goals.

Scholars increasingly study the ways in which relationships, identities, and meanings are created through interactions themselves. Of course, relationships then serve as the foundation for all other communication and human activities. Much more interesting than it used to be, if you ask us!

Media

The study of “mass communication” has moved well beyond newspapers. *Media* and *media studies* are now the more appropriate and recognized terms for this area of exploration. There are three primary areas of media study, each incorporating an array of approaches and methods.

One area of study examines the impact of technology, or a particular medium, on the construction of knowledge, perceptions, and social systems. For instance, scholars may study the ways in which the Internet has changed what counts as knowledge and how people perceive information.

A second area of study entails media content. In this broad area of study, scholars exploring this area might examine particular television genres or how video game content supports the dominant views of a society.

The final primary area of study examines people’s reactions to technology and media content. In the past, scholars viewed technology and media content as powerful agents capable of manipulating users and audiences. More recently, communication scholars have recognized that people actively interpret media content in a variety of ways and use media content and technology for a number of different reasons.

As we discuss in the chapter on media and technology ([Chapter 11](#)), the formation and maintenance of relationships occur partly through their use of technology. Further, people’s use and understanding of technology and media content are based largely on relationships.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Converging Relationships and Media

The use of media is often done with others. For instance, people may play video games with friends and watch television with family members. The next time you find yourself in such a situation, consider what might be taking place.



©Thinkstock/Stockbyte

Questions to Consider

1. How is using media together affecting your relationship?
2. How does using media with others affect your actual use of those media and how they are understood?

Health Communication

Linda Lederman (2010) has traced the origins of the study of health communication to the 1980s. Early research in this area focused on interactions between patients and doctors and public campaigns concerning health issues. Since that time, health communication has been one of the fastest-growing areas of the discipline. It has also grown beyond doctor–patient communication to provider–patient communication in recognition of patient interactions that take place among many types of health care providers.

Communication involving any treatment or health-related issues is now studied under the banner of health communication. Accordingly, this communication can occur within social networks of friends, family, and acquaintances as well as among health care providers. Further, the study of health campaigns and information sharing is increasingly focused on Internet use when seeking medical information.

Relationships among providers and patients as well as among providers provide great insight into communication taking place and health care in general. Further, health information is frequently gained through social networks, and health information gained online or through media is accessed through the context of relationships.

Organizational Communication

The study of organizational communication involves communication taking place within an organization or a workplace. The sharing of information within an organization was an original focus of this area of study. Increasingly, those studying organizational communication are concerned with the processing of information and the creation of meanings and relationships within organizations and workplaces.

As we discuss in [Chapter 10](#), the workplace and organizations in general are best viewed as relational enterprises through which meanings are developed and shared understandings are created or challenged. Organizations are essentially created by relationships, and that is how their operation and productivity are carried out. For example, leadership is now often studied from a relational perspective (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016).

Persuasion

The study of persuasion can easily be traced back to ancient Greece and the Roman Empire where famous thinkers Aristotle and Cicero each wrote books about both friendship and persuasion. It can also be argued that the study of persuasion led to the initial interest in interpersonal interaction among those teaching in speech departments. Influenced by many studies of persuasion and attitude change in psychology (e.g., Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), many researchers who were interested in persuasion and had received rhetorical training began to turn away from the traditional focus of rhetorical analyses (speeches) and toward other forms of communication.

The study of persuasion essentially examines the ways in which people's thinking and behavior can be modified (changed, strengthened, weakened, and so on). Given those broad parameters, persuasion naturally can involve many contexts and areas of communication, such as interpersonal communication, media, and others discussed within this section of the chapter. And depending on whom you ask and the context, persuasion can be called *coercion*, *compliance*, *brainwashing*, *influence*, *manipulation*, *indoctrination*, or *propaganda* (Gass & Seiter, 2015). It could also be argued that symbol using is inherently persuasive.

Regardless of the context and purpose of persuasive study, relationships play a fundamental role in nearly every regard. We discuss the impact of relationships on public persuasion in [Chapter 15](#).

Political Communication

As with persuasion, the study of political communication can be traced back to the days of ancient Greece and the Roman Republic. According to Judith Trent and Robert Friedenberg (2010), however, it emerged as a formal area of the discipline in the 1970s and fully developed in the early 1980s. This area of the discipline has several topics of study. Scholars in this area study, for instance, campaign strategy, voter behavior, campaign advertisement, news media coverage, candidate speeches, and candidate debates. Although most research is focused on political campaigns, scholars may also examine communication once a politician is elected. Further, the use of the Internet as a political tool has invigorated this area of the discipline (Farrell, 2012).

Relationships play a key role in political communication. Candidates generally want to develop positive relationships with voters, who will then be more likely to cast a vote on the candidates' behalf. Relationships are formed within campaign staffs and among campaign volunteers. An extraordinarily important consideration in political communication research must be the impact that talk about candidates and political issues among friends, family, and acquaintances has on voters' perceptions and actions.

Public Relations

The study of public relations entails understanding the ways in which organizations (and increasingly high-profile people) communicate and should communicate with the general public. Specifically, the study of public relations is concerned with determining how organizations can influence how the public views them and their activities.

In an obvious sense, especially given the second word in the name of this area, the study of public relations is about developing relationships between organizations and the public. Further, as with political communication, an important area of concern within this area of study must be the ways in which organizations are discussed among people who share relationships.

Rhetorical Criticism

If rhetorical criticism can be recognized as the analysis of symbolic activity, then it can easily be argued to serve as the basis of all communication study. Certainly, a convincing argument can be made for that perspective. If we examine rhetorical criticism specifically, however, we can witness its tremendous development as an area of study within the discipline of communication.

Rhetorical criticism, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, has developed well beyond the study of public address. It is just as likely, if not more likely, to entail the analysis of digital communication, cartoons, memorials, billboards, and the human body because it is the analysis of a speech (see Olson, Finnegan, & Hope, 2008).

Approaches to rhetorical criticism directly or indirectly involve relationships. They can all be applied in some manner to the study of personal relationships. Further, incorporating a relational perspective, by simply exploring how relationships are involved with these approaches, can result in their further development and understanding. Any analysis or study of symbolic activity could be strengthened through the recognition of relationships.

Where Next?

The previous sections have indicated the many connections and different methodologies that characterize the study of communication. These discussions have two consequences, one for your reading the rest of this book and one for your future life.

Taking these in reverse order, the consequences of studying communication as a qualification for future life can be enormous. It is not surprising that the different approaches connect also in many ways with different uses for a qualification in communication studies. Because of the different backgrounds and techniques that are used to study communication, a qualified communication student will be able to deal with most forms of collection of social scientific data, content analysis, interviewing techniques, mass surveys, and critical understanding of messages. For these reasons, and because of the intersection of communication studies with health issues, culture, and organizational or business environments, degrees in communication studies lead to many different future pathways. The National Communication Association mentioned earlier in this chapter indicates that there are many answers to the question of “Why study communication?”

(<http://www.natcom.org/whystudycommunication/>). These range from the generally improved ability to create written or spoken output or to use nonverbal and other communication skills more expertly, to the more specific opportunities it creates to develop a career pathway. Such opportunities exist in public relations, in news or broadcasting outlets, in nonprofit organizations, and in advertising. Communication graduates get jobs as public information officers, health campaign coordinators or marketing officers, legal reporters, human rights officials, fund-raisers, media planners, copywriters, consultants, or event planners and can follow other careers in business or human resources.

The second implication of the discussions we have just presented steer us forward in the next phases of the book. In addition to a fuller and more detailed understanding of verbal and nonverbal behavior in communication, the following chapters take us into questions of identity management and conduct of personal relationships. We also deal with broader questions about group activity as it influences and is influenced by communication practices. Furthermore, we will need to develop an understanding of organizational behavior or health practices as moderated by communication or relational activity and to tackle a number of other questions that lead from the previous discussion.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. How did the modern communication discipline develop?

The modern discipline of communication developed as increasing numbers of scholars became interested in the study of communication, accompanied by the creation of academic associations and of academic departments devoted to the study of communication.

2. What is the social scientific approach to communication?

The social scientific approach believes in the existence of a single reality that causes people to communicate in predictable ways, thereby enabling communication to be studied empirically.

3. What is the interpretivist approach to communication?

The interpretivist approach believes that multiple realities are created symbolically, thereby requiring communication to be studied in a subjective manner.

4. What is the critical approach to communication?

Critical approaches focus on how power is constructed, challenged, and maintained through communication, thereby seeking to identify the hidden but powerful structures and practices that create or uphold disadvantage, inequity, or oppression of one subgroup of society by any other.

5. What are some of the major areas of study in the communication discipline?

Some areas within the discipline of communication include (1) communication education and instructional communication, (2) communication theory, (3) cultural communication, (4) family communication, (5) group communication, (6) health communication, (7) interpersonal communication, (8) media, (9) organizational communication, (10) persuasion, (11) political communication, (12) public relations, and (13) rhetorical criticism.

Key Concepts

critical approach 35
historiography 23
interpretivist approach 32
social scientific approach 30

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends how they would define *communication studies*. How do their definitions compare with the perspectives offered in this chapter?
2. Ask your friends if they believe a single reality, external to human beings, exists or if they believe human beings create their own realities. Would their responses make them more social scientists or more interpretivists? How do you know that your friends see blue the same way you do?
3. Ask your friends if they would stretch the truth on a first date assuming it would guarantee the date went well and that they would never be found out. Do they believe it more important to tell the absolute truth even if it means the date will not go well? Many people are on their “best behavior” during a first date and may not communicate as they normally do. Do your friends believe that this qualifies as being untruthful?

Media Connections

1. Watch or listen to a news broadcast. What elements of rhetoric can be studied? What elements of media can be studied? What elements of interpersonal communication can be studied? How might a relational perspective of communication be used to bridge these areas of study?
2. Watch or listen to a political speech. What elements of rhetoric can be studied? What elements of media can be studied? What elements of interpersonal communication can be studied? How might a relational perspective of communication be used to bridge these areas of study?
3. Watch a television sitcom. How are male and female characters portrayed? In what ways are traditional gender roles being upheld? Watch carefully! Even when it appears as if traditional gender roles are being challenged, these traditional roles are often being reinforced.

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

Part II Communication Skills

[Chapter 3 Identities, Perceptions, and Communication](#)



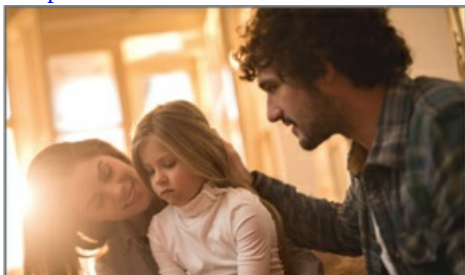
©iStockphoto.com/BelindaGarfath

[Chapter 4 Verbal Communication](#)



©Jupiterimages/Brand X Pictures/Thinkstock

[Chapter 5 Nonverbal Communication](#)



©iStockphoto.com/skynesher

[Chapter 6 Culture and Communication](#)



Mario Tama/Getty Images

[Chapter 7 Listening](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Zurijeta

3 Identities, Perceptions, and Communication



©iStockphoto.com/BelindaGarfath

Chapter Outline

[Do People Have Core Selves?](#)

[Different Moods](#)

[Different Situations](#)

[Different Relationships](#)

[Different Evaluations](#)

[Identities and Perceptions](#)

[Selecting](#)

[Organizing, Interpreting, and Evaluating](#)

[Identities and Communication](#)

[Symbolic Identities and a Symbolic Self](#)

[Self-Disclosure](#)

[Dynamics of Self-Disclosure](#)

[Narratives](#)

[Transacting Identity and Other People](#)

[Altercasting](#)

[Self as Others Treat You](#)

[Performative Self](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. Does it make sense that someone has a true core self?
2. How do perceptions influence identities?
3. What does it mean to say that identities are symbolic constructions?
4. What is the difference between self-description and self-disclosure?
5. What is the role of narratives in the construction of identities?
6. How do other people influence identity construction?

Did you know that you develop multiple identities throughout the day? Before making an appointment for psychological evaluation, recognize that we are not talking about a medical disorder. Everyone constructs multiple identities as part of his or her everyday relational lives. Consider the many relational roles a person establishes in everyday life. A person may at once be a friend, sibling, parent, and child. That same person may be a student, coworker, supervisor, or customer. Within these various roles, when interacting with different people, and when interacting in different contexts, a person may be passive, strict, caring, detached, feminine, or masculine. That same person may end the day cheering for a sports team in a group of die-hard fans or taking part in an online discussion about a favorite web series. Each of these aspects of daily experience requires the development of a different identity.

Just as the primary subject of a textbook is usually defined in an introductory chapter, a reader can generally expect to find a definition of the main topic or topics of a given chapter in the opening pages of that chapter. However, as we saw when attempting to define *communication* in [Chapter 1](#), defining terms is not always a simple task. Throughout this chapter, we will develop what is meant by *identities*. For now, an identity can be simply defined as who a person is. There is more to it than just that, of course. And, determining *who a person is* is not that straightforward or even possible. For now, though, that simple definition can set us on our exploration of this area.

identity: a person's uniqueness, represented by descriptions, a self-concept, inner thoughts, and performances, that is symbolized in interactions with other people and presented for their assessment and moral evaluation

Before jumping fully into the chapter, and to clarify what might be meant by determining who a person is as not being straightforward or possible, we need to discuss a few key ideas. First, *people do not possess core selves*. The notion that people construct multiple identities may be somewhat unique. From the introductory paragraph, this idea might make sense to you. However, there exists a general idea that people are who they are. Each person is often thought to possess a core self or an established personality developed from previous experiences and other factors. This core self may drive decisions and becomes known to others partly through actions but more specifically through revealing information about one's self to others.

Theorists have described this idea as the "Onion Model" (Altman & Taylor, 1973) because it suggests an inner core covered up with layer after layer of information and characteristics right out toward the surface skin. If you cut an onion in half, you will see the way the analogy works. This suggests to some theorists that they can describe getting to know someone as working their way toward the core, cutting through the outer layers one after the other to reach the central "truth."

In actuality, people do not possess a central, unchanging self influencing actions and waiting to be revealed through disclosure. (This is a common assumption, however, so we will discuss this idea within the chapter.) People may have developed and possess core values and beliefs. They may also have a particular biological makeup and physical characteristics that influence the way they communicate with others and—probably more so—the way others communicate with them. However, people construct multiple, sometimes contradictory, identities through communication with others.

Second, *identities, communication, and relationships are interconnected*, which explains the placement of this chapter near the beginning of the book, even before we discuss verbal and nonverbal symbols. A *person* is using verbal and

nonverbal symbols, so it is necessary to establish who that person might be. Even more importantly from our approach, a *relator* is using verbal and nonverbal communication. So, an individual is using symbols but doing so within the context of relationships.

At the same time, as we will discuss further within this chapter and still others to come, these identities and relationships are being transacted, or created, through symbols. Your identities influence your communication, and communication influences your identities. This notion may be somewhat difficult to comprehend, and we discuss this matter in more detail later in the chapter. For now, basically think of yourself as clay (clay has certain characteristic qualities and properties) and communication as the potter (the clay can be molded and shaped).

Moreover, although identities connect communication to meaning, they also connect people relationally. For instance, we become friends with people whose identities and personalities we like. Not only that, our social understanding of identities is tested and established through these relationships.

Third, *society provides you with ways to describe and evaluate identities and personalities*. Categories such as gluttonous, sexy, short, slim, paranoid, kind, masculine, and feminine are all available to you. Society tells you how to be “masculine” and “feminine.” It indicates such things as “guys can’t say that to guys” (Burleson, Holmstrom, & Gilstrap, 2005), restricting the way men can give one another emotional support. Society also places more value on some identities than others. In some rural cultures, for instance, being “tough” is considered something toward which men should strive, whereas being “weak” is something that should be avoided (McMahan, 2011).

Finally, *people perform their identities with others*. This idea means that rather than *having* an identity, people are *doing* an identity. Further, just as there does not exist a core self, this idea may initially appear somewhat odd. However, consider the following question. If you happen to see an adult and a child together and determine the adult is the child’s parent, how did you conclude that to be the case? The answer is likely that the person was *acting* like a parent, doing certain things and communicating the way a parent would communicate.

Disciplinary Debate: What Is an Identity?



Many different areas of study are concerned with the issue of “identity.” Despite the importance of this concept, however, there is very little agreement about the way in which identity should be understood. Some scholars regard it as perfectly obvious that there is a “central core” of identity that an individual “has” and that is essentially unchanging. Other scholars take the position that an individual’s identity is constructed through interaction with other people. They believe that a person’s behavior and “personality” are influenced by the situations and social circumstances in which the individual is placed. A third position is that the notion of personality—and identity—is itself a construction of our society that is meaningless in other cultures and therefore not a central truth about human beings.

Questions to Consider

1. Where do you come down in this debate?
2. Are these positions mutually exclusive, or is there some truth to all of them?

When people perform identities associated with social roles, they are not being fake and are not necessarily being dishonest—although one would hope the pilot getting ready to fly a plane is actually a pilot or the doctor getting ready to perform surgery is actually qualified! Rather, they are acting in ways that both society and they perceive to be associated with a certain identity.

How do daily interactions with other people form or sustain your identity? What is being communicated here about gender, identity, and culture?



©Jupiterimages/Brand X Pictures/Thinkstock

Performing identities associated with particular roles may be easy to understand and accept. Other types of identity performance tend to be a bit more challenging to grasp, at least initially, but will be discussed further within this chapter. Take the example of masculinity and femininity mentioned earlier. People perform being masculine, and they perform being feminine. These performances are based on what a society or cultural group establishes as masculine and feminine. And a given person sometimes performs in a masculine manner and sometimes performs in a feminine manner, depending on the situation and the people with whom an interaction is taking place.

Having discussed some of the key ideas to be explored within this chapter pertaining to identities, there is one more thing to consider before we get started. You may have very perceptively noticed that the word *perception* is included in the chapter title.

The transaction of identities is guided partly through perceptions of oneself, other people, and situations. Perception involves how a person views the world, organizes what is perceived, interprets information, and

evaluates information—all of which will influence symbolic activity. It is therefore important to include such material in discussions of identity.

The ideas we have presented set the discipline of communication and this textbook apart. Identities, relationships, cultural membership, and the like are not located within people or embedded within their minds. They are instead created symbolically through communication with others. Now that these general ideas have been established, we can begin exploring them in more detail.

perception: process of actively selecting, organizing, interpreting, and evaluating information, activities, situations, people, and essentially all the things that make up your world

Do People Have Core Selves?

After reading the introduction to this chapter, you know what our answer to this question is going to be: No, they do not. However, we will justify that response a bit more within this section. As a result, you will be introduced to a traditional yet flawed approach to the study of identities. And knowing why this approach is not necessarily accurate will provide you with a more accurate understanding of identities.

Mentioned in the opening of this chapter, the Onion Model sees identity as analogous to an onion where deeper and deeper layers of more intimate information about a person are found beneath previous layers (see [Figure 3.1](#)). A cross-section of the onion reveals these layers as well as the central core at the very heart of the onion. According to this model, others very rarely reach the central core. For instance, a person may get to know someone else broadly but in a shallow way—a broad *V* cut a couple of layers deep into the onion. Or a person may get to know someone's identity in a narrower but deeper cut—a narrow *V* cutting through several layers.

How many people in this photo are performing a social role and its accompanying identity requirements? Be sure to justify your answer.



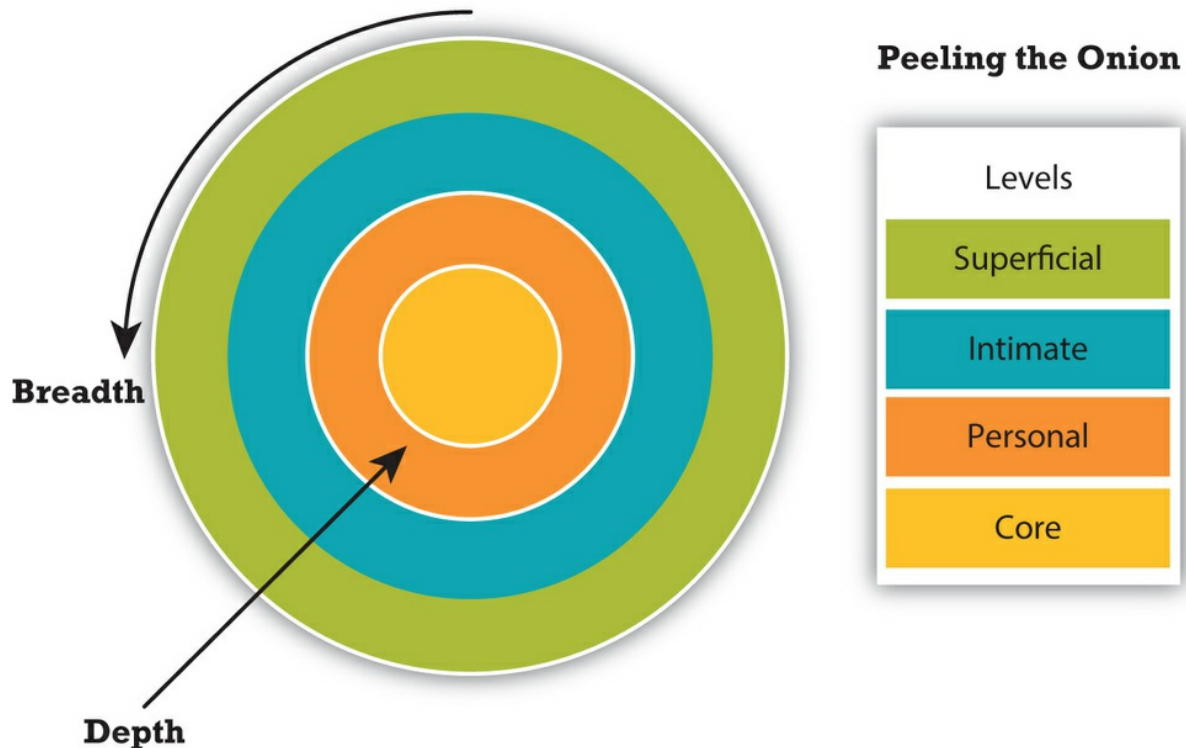
©iStockphoto.com/Rich Legg

Because it seems pretty simple and because people may feel that who they are is fairly stable and is deeply embedded within them, this model has persevered in the discipline of communication, despite the lack of research support for it (Altman, Vinsel, & Brown, 1981).

Partly on grounds of a lack of supporting research, despite the frequency with which it is reported in communication texts, and partly on logical grounds, we reject this model, and here is why. We will start with Bob.

Bob is a really nice guy. He is loyal, trusting, open, honest, comforting, caring, active in organizing charitable events (especially for kids who are mentally challenged), a fabulous cook (he specializes in the cuisines of other cultures), and devoted to his aging parents. He is active in the local parent-teacher association and does long Saturdays coaching and refereeing the blossoming mixed-sex soccer group that he started.

Figure 3.1 The Onion Model



At work, Bob is the most hated officer in the Border Protection branch of Homeland Security. There is no one who is such a completely ruthless, nasty, dogged, suspicious, awkward cuss. He is a complete pain to others, and there is no one better at interrogation. He nails people who make illegal applications for a green card and has the highest record in the whole border area for catching cheats. He regularly has grown, otherwise secure adults breaking down in tears in his office. If you get interviewed for immigration by Bob and are not 100% straight up, then he will get you.

Who is the real Bob? Does he have an evil twin? No, he just constructs multiple identities throughout his everyday life, just like everyone else does. Multiple experiences in everyday life challenge the idea of having a core self or identity. We will examine some examples in the remainder of this section.

Ethical Issue

Of course, we are maintaining that people construct multiple identities and act or communicate in different ways with different people, in different situations, and so on. There is no true core self or person to be discovered, and people will not act the same way in all situations. Having said that, though, people who behave differently around different people are sometimes accused of being “fake.” Are these people being unethical? Also, is it unethical to accuse someone of being fake?

Different Moods

You may feel outgoing and confident some days and communicate with others accordingly. Other days, you may feel more reserved and insecure, and this is reflected in your communication with others. People can have mood swings as a result of periodic hormonal imbalances, gluten intolerance, or just having had a series of really unfortunate events happen to them on a bad hair day. Many changes in mood are temporary, relatively unimportant, and reversible. Get the hormones back into balance, avoid certain foods, and let the sun shine in, and then most people will be back to their same old selves. However, these fluctuations are a problem for anyone who sees identity as fixed or layered like an onion.

Different Situations

A person may be unfriendly and distant when at school but funny and sociable when at work. This person may be more confident and comfortable at work than at school. Or this person may have yet to make friends at school with whom he or she can interact in a sociable manner. It is also possible that this person views his or her time at school as serious business, and he or she wants to remain focused. Whatever the case might be, the point is the same. People transact multiple identities given different situations and different areas of their lives. A person does not have a fixed identity, and a layered onion is not an accurate way to think about the transaction of identities in everyday life.

Different Relationships

People also transact multiple identities given the many different relationships shared with others. You may act one way around your friends and an entirely different way around your relatives. Different relational identities are constructed based on the relationships being transacted. Once again, if people had an unchanging core self, there would be no change in communication and behavior around different people. However, this change takes place, occasionally in dramatic ways.

Different Evaluations

Sometimes people evaluate the same person in vastly different ways. For instance, you may know someone whom you view as kind, yet one of your friends sees the person as nasty. Or two professors may argue about whether a particular student is intelligent or someone who stands no chance of improving. If every person had just one identity at the core of his or her personality and everyone perceived it identically, then these competing evaluations would make no sense. Yet such varying evaluations of people happen quite frequently.

Sometimes even a single person will evaluate another person in vastly different ways. If people really had a stable core inside a set of layers that we could peel away to reach “the truth,” then we would never be able to change our minds about someone. If someone were a good and loyal friend, he would never turn into an enemy unless he had a personality transplant. Yet you have most likely had the experience of seeing someone in a different light over time.

Make your case: College for Traditional and Nontraditional Students



Consider nontraditional students and identities. Nontraditional students have the same concerns as all students, such as getting their work done on time and receiving good grades. However, they view themselves differently. Nontraditional students frequently return to school after working for several years. Perhaps they have decided that their line of work is not challenging enough, they recognize that their full potential is not being realized, or perhaps they have lost their job in a rough economy. Many of these students have already been successful outside of the classroom, yet they are very apprehensive about *entering* one. Such students are used to being obeyed—to being someone to whom people turn for advice, a leader, a mentor, and an example.

Now consider traditional students. These students most likely experienced success in high school. Many entering students graduated high school with honors, participated in many activities, received a number of awards and distinctions, were well known in their school, and were admired by others. Now, these students may view themselves as adrift in a sea of people who were more successful in their own high schools and are now classmates in college competing for grades.

Questions to Consider

1. Which is the *real* person: the successful professional and authoritative leader or the obviously older student in a classroom where previous experience counts for very little?
2. Which is the *real* person: the standout high school student who excelled at everything or the awkward first-year student seeking some sort of recognition?

Return to these questions once you have read the entire chapter and see if your responses have changed.

Identities and Perceptions

Consider further the notion introduced earlier that one person's evaluation of another person changes over time. Could identity be a matter of *perception* rather than *fact*? Something transacted between two communicators, rather than something set in a stone onion? When a stranger does something rude, your first thought may be to blame personality ("This is an evil person, perhaps with psychopathic tendencies"). Or you might put it down to an identity that was constructed during childhood when the person had some bad experiences. (Lawyers often explain their clients' bad behavior in such terms.) Conversely, that "rude stranger" probably sees his or her identity in personality terms, too, but more favorable ones—as a decent person who is being irritated by an annoying stranger (you!)—and may walk away thinking, "What a jerk!" Notice that these are representations, attributions, or claims based on perception and not on facts. These views are based on the way one person perceives and understands the evidence.

Within this section, we will examine how perceptions influence the development of identities and meanings. These perceptions are based on relational and cultural understandings. And they involve the process of actively selecting, organizing, and evaluating information, activities, situations, and people, and essentially naming and giving significance to all the things that make up your world.

Selecting

Receiving stimuli does not necessarily mean you will recognize their presence or direct your attention to them. Imagine going up to a friend whose concentration is focused on reading *Communication in Everyday Life*. You greet her by saying hello or by saying her name, but she does not seem to recognize you are speaking. This person continues to focus solely on the book. You speak again, a little louder this time, and still receive no response. You may tap her on the shoulder to get her attention or hit her gently over the head with your new copy of *Communication in Everyday Life*. You are not being ignored; this person simply does not attend to the sound of your voice. In short, she is attending to the world *selectively*.

Everyone selects and focuses more on some things than others. If something stands out for whatever reason, you are more likely to focus your attention on that. If you scan a room of people wearing similar clothing, you will likely focus on the one person whose clothing is dissimilar to that of the others.

A person's motives or needs at a particular moment in time will also influence our selection process. If you have an important appointment later in the day, you will probably focus more on clocks than you might when you have nothing planned. If you are traveling and getting hungry, you might start noticing restaurants when you pass by.

Our beliefs, attitudes, and values also affect the selection process, as explained by the following: (a) selective exposure, (b) selective perception, and (c) selective retention.

Selective Exposure

One explanation for our selectivity is selective exposure, which means you are more likely to expose yourself to that which supports your beliefs, values, and attitudes. Accordingly, you are less likely to expose yourself to that which counters your beliefs, values, and attitudes (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). So, if you tend to be politically conservative, you would be more likely to listen to Rush Limbaugh and more likely to avoid watching MSNBC. If you are politically liberal, you would be more likely to do the opposite. Selective exposure also explains why people might be more likely to spend time with individuals whose beliefs, values, and attitudes are similar to their own.

selective exposure: the idea that you are more likely to expose yourself to that which supports your beliefs, values, and attitudes

Selective Perception

Beyond exposing ourselves to some things and not others, we will also pick up on some parts of a message and not pick up on other parts. Selective perception means you are more likely to perceive and focus on things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes. And, you are less likely to perceive and focus on things that do not support your beliefs, values, and attitudes. If you view yourself as a competent person, you will be more likely to pick up on compliments and less likely to focus on criticism. The opposite, of course, would happen if you view yourself as an incompetent person. Selective perception also explains why two different people might evaluate the same person in different ways. If you want to believe that someone is good, you will probably focus on that person's good qualities while ignoring the negative ones. And, the opposite holds true as well.

selective perception: the idea that you are more likely to perceive and focus on things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes

Selective Retention

Once something is experienced, we are also likely to remember some parts and not remember other parts. Selective retention, also referred to as *selective memory*, means you are more likely to recall things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes. And, you are less likely to recall things that do not support your beliefs, values, and attitudes. Using the earlier examples, if you view yourself as a competent person, you will be more likely to

remember receiving compliments and less likely remember criticism. The opposite holds true, once again, if you view yourself as an incompetent person. Likewise, if you want to believe someone is good, you will tend to remember the good things that the person does and tend to forget the negative things.

selective retention: the idea that you are more likely to recall things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes

By the way . . . : Standpoint Theory



Julia Wood (1992) rightly maintains that the social groups to which we belong will affect our perceptions of the world and accordingly what we know. For example, among many, the perceptions of a middle-class Latina lesbian from the southern part of the United States will be different than those of a heterosexual White male living in poverty in the northeastern part of the United States. From a critical perspective, it can be argued that less powerful members of society might be ideal knowers, partly because they must be aware, as much as possible, of the perceptions and the worldview of the more powerful. Whereas it is not necessary for powerful members of society to know the perceptions and worldviews of others.

Questions to Consider

1. How do you think the social groups to which you belong affect your perceptions and worldview?
2. Do you believe the notion of ideal knowers to be accurate?

Organizing, Interpreting, and Evaluating

Your observations of the world are selectively chosen and then organized in ways that allow you to retrieve them when necessary. The ways in which things are organized will influence how they are interpreted and evaluated, which is why we examine these three areas together.

When new information is selected, it is connected to previous information that is already organized and stored as your own characteristic way of looking at the world (through your organizational goggles). Your organizational goggles are constantly being updated based on new experiences and evaluations of their meaning to you. This system seems efficient. However, it is not without its disadvantages.

George Kelly (1955) maintained that a person's processes are "channelized" by the ways in which events are anticipated. As a result, certain ways of acting become more deeply ingrained in your thinking. Imagine running the end of a stick in a straight line over and over in the same spot on the ground. Eventually, an indentation begins to develop and becomes deeper as you continue to run the end of that stick in the same place. You create a rut, and the same thing can happen with ways of behaving and viewing the world. The more you behave in a certain way and the more often you view the world in the same way, the deeper and more ingrained it becomes in your thinking. After a while, it becomes difficult to imagine behaving in another way or viewing the world in a different way.

Kelly's (1955) work has resulted in a better understanding of the ways in which people think and relate to others. It can also be used to better understand how we organize information through the following: (a) schemata, (b) prototypes, and (c) personal constructs.

Schemata

Schemata are mental structures that are used to organize information partly by clustering associated material. For example, information about relationships can be stored and connected in "relationship" schemata and drawn on when needed. This information is stored in a relatively accessible manner, so it can be used to make sense of what you are experiencing and to anticipate what might happen in a given situation.

schemata: mental structures that are used to organize information partly by clustering or linking associated material

Prototype

A prototype is the best-case example of something (Fehr, 1993). For instance, we may have a prototype of a romantic partner based on an actual person or a composite of different people. You use your prototype of *romantic partner* or anything else as a guidepost for measuring how other examples measure up. Of course, no one is likely to measure up fully to the ideal version you have in your head.

prototype: the best-case example of something

Personal Constructs

How evaluation actually takes place and how we perceive the world is the result of personal constructs, individualized ways of construing or understanding the world and its contents; they are bipolar dimensions we use to measure and evaluate things. Whereas prototypes tend to be broad categories, personal constructs are narrow and more specific characteristics. These personal constructs can be used in the development of prototypes and used to determine how close someone may come to meeting all the criteria. Using a romantic partner again as an example, the following personal constructs could be used:

Attractive–Unattractive
Kind–Mean
Passive–Aggressive
Intelligent–Ignorant
Humorous–Dull
Employed–Unemployed

personal constructs: individualized ways of construing or understanding the world and its contents; they are bipolar dimensions used to measure and evaluate things

By the way . . . : A Soft Table



Because it is easy for our thinking to get into a rut, Kelly (1955) urged people to imagine a table as being soft. When touching a table, you probably anticipate that it will be hard, and most of the time, you will be correct. However, you should always consider the possibility that the table will be soft. Always consider the opposite, and always consider other possibilities. When done consistently, a person's behaviors and views frequently become seen as correct and natural rather than things that should be constantly evaluated and reassessed. Alternatives may or may not be better, but they should always be considered.

Questions to Consider

1. Can you come up with an example from your own behaviors or views that is so ingrained that it is difficult to imagine doing or thinking differently?
2. Can you come up with an example of a time when you did change your way of thinking in some dramatic way?

Communication + You: Identifying Yourself



How would you describe yourself? Would you give your national, ethnic, gender, sexual, age, social class, or religious identity, or anything else?



©Digital Vision/Thinkstock

Now check the categories that you can use to personalize your profile on Facebook or another social networking site. People are asked to identify themselves by association with particular categories such as favorite videos and music, hobbies, and sexual orientation.

Questions to Consider

1. Are these the categories you would use to describe yourself to a child, an employer, or a new neighbor?
2. Would you consider your social networking site profile to be an accurate representation of how you view yourself and how others view you?

Identities and Communication

We began this chapter by broadly questioning the idea that people have true inner selves. In the next section, we started to take this idea apart by showing that people understand identities based partly on their perceptions of others and by using socially constructed labels. In what follows now, we will examine how identities are symbolically created, self-disclosure and issues connected with disclosures, and the use of narratives in the transaction of identities.

Symbolic Identities and a Symbolic Self

We will begin by considering how identities are created and performed symbolically and how, without symbols, we could not even perceive ourselves as unique individuals.

Transacting Identities Symbolically

Identities can be understood as being transacted symbolically through communication with others. Who we understand ourselves to be and how we want others to perceive us at a given moment is established through our use of symbols. Essentially, our multiple identities are created and performed through verbal and nonverbal communication.

Sorts of identities might include personal identities (kind, mean, hardworking, lazy, fan of musicals), relational identities (parent, child, friend, enemy), social identities (customer, employee, supervisor), and those identities involving biological sex, race, sexual orientation, and national or regional origin, which are relatively stable and unchanging. Karen Tracy (2002) refers to the latter type of identities as *master identities*. Some people argue that people do possess a core, unchanging self with this type of identity, but that is not necessarily the case, as we will explain later.

Transacting personal identities includes communicating and behaving in ways culturally understood to represent those characteristics. For example, a kind person might talk in ways and do things that people would consider kind. Or a fan of musicals might spend the day humming the soundtrack of *Rent* when not talking about his or her favorite Broadway performers. Transacting relational and social identities includes communicating and behaving in ways culturally associated with those roles. For instance, a parent will communicate as a parent is expected to communicate and will do parent-type stuff, whatever that happens to be.

Then, we get to master identities. Here, again, is where people might claim that a core self exists. After all, they might argue, a person is born a male or female, born a particular race, born homosexual or heterosexual, and born in a particular place. Though all true, cultural understanding and norms influence the symbolic activities associated with these categories. Further, a person may choose to not conform to those symbolic activities or may choose to emphasize or disregard these identities when communicating with others. So, even though master identities are those a person may be born with, they are ultimately socially and symbolically created and performed.

By the way . . . : Identities and Relationships



Beyond the fact that some of the identities we transact are based on relationships shared with others, much identity work takes place through relationships in general. Our relationships with others provide us with opportunities to develop who we are and how we want to be perceived by others. Through relationships, we develop trust so that we may disclose personal information about ourselves. And we come to understand ourselves through our interactions with others. A person cannot have a concept of self without reflection on identities via the views of other people with whom he or she has relationships.

Questions to Consider

1. How have your interactions with others allowed you to develop a particular identity?
2. How have your identities been supported or challenged through your interactions with others?

Identities and Cultural Memberships

Beyond the fact that some of the identities we transact are based on cultural membership, such membership informs people about the value of identities and the proper ways of constructing those identities. And your identities are based partly on the beliefs and prevailing norms of the society in which you live. When you communicate with other people in your culture, you get information about what works and what does not, what is acceptable and what is not, and how much you count in that society—what your identities are worth.

Questions to Consider

1. What types of identities are valued in some of the cultural groups to which you belong?
2. In what ways does the same identity (e.g., friend) seem different in different cultural groups to which you belong?

Symbolic Self

If not for symbols, there would be no need to talk about people being unique or enacting particular identities.

Your identity is shaped by culture and the people you interact with, and this affects the way you communicate and receive communications. This is because you can reflect that your “self” is an object of other people’s perceptions and that they can do critical thinking or listening about you as well. In short, your identity is a symbolic self, a self that exists for other people and goes beyond what it means to you; it arises from social interaction with other people. As a result, you fit identity descriptions into the form of narratives that you and your society know about and accept. Hence, any identity that you offer to other people is based on the fact that you all share meanings about what is important in defining a person’s identity. This matters in communication because the identity that you adopt will alter your ethos—your ability to be taken seriously and to be persuasive.

Another way of thinking about identity, then, is in terms of how broad social forces affect or even transact an individual’s view of self. This set of ideas is referred to as symbolic interactionism. In particular, George Herbert Mead (1934) suggested that people get their sense of self from other people and from being aware that others observe, judge, and evaluate their behavior. How many times have you done or not done something because of how you would look to your friends if you did it? Has your family ever said, “What will the neighbors think?”

Mead (1934) called this phenomenon the human ability to adopt an attitude of reflection. You think about how you look in other people’s eyes or reflect that other people can see you as a social object from their point of view. Guided by these reflections, you do not always do what you want to do; instead, you do what you think people will accept. You may end up doing something you don’t want to do because you cannot think how to say no to another person in a reasonable way. You cannot just stamp your foot and shout, “*I won’t!*”

Your identity, then, is not yours alone but is partly adopted from society and so affects your credibility. Indeed, Mead (1934) also saw self as a transacted result of communicating with other people: You learn how to be an individual by recognizing the way that people treat you. You come to see your identity through the eyes of other people, for whom you are a meaningful object. People recognize you and treat you differently from everyone else.

By the way . . . : Sexual and Gender Identities



Sexual and gender identities are not necessarily as straightforward as being able to say, “I am a homosexual” or “I am a female.”



©iStockphoto.com/Francisco Romero

Questions to Consider

1. How might transsexual individuals, transgendered individuals, and those individuals who do not view themselves as belonging to any established sex or gender category challenge traditional notions of identity?
2. Are any identity categories still relevant, or are they essentially meaningless?

symbolic self: the self that is transacted in interaction with other people, that arises out of social interaction, not vice versa, and hence, that does not just “belong to you”

symbolic interactionism: how broad social forces affect or even transact an individual person’s view of who he or she is

attitude of reflection (symbolic interactionism): thinking about how you look in other people’s eyes, or reflecting that other people can see you as a social object from their point of view

Self-Disclosure

Now that we have talked in general about how identities are symbolically constructed and understood, we can talk about specific ways in which this takes place. One way that people establish identities is by telling people about themselves. If you ask people to tell you who they are, they will tell you their names and start revealing information about themselves, usually with stories that place themselves in various contexts, but they will tend to use socially prescribed terminology about identity. We will begin by telling you a bit about Steve Duck.

What is meant by a symbolic self, and why do we have to account to other people for who we are?



©iStockphoto.com/ranplett

Steve Duck is a proper name—a first requirement socially for identifying oneself—and it indicates to someone in your culture that the person is male and has to put up with many very unoriginal jokes about his name. Although he has lived in the United States of America for more than 30 years, he is a Brit, or English as he prefers to think of it. His family comes from Whitby in North Yorkshire, England, where the first recorded Duck (John Duck) lived in 1288. John Duck and Steve Duck share the same skeptical attitude toward authority figures. John is in the historical record because he sued the Abbot of Whitby over ownership of a piece of land. John was descended from the Vikings who sacked and then colonized Whitby in about 800 CE (*Duck* is a Viking nickname-based surname for a hunchback. Have you ever ducked out of the way of anything? If so, you have crouched like a hunchback.)

Steve Duck is also relatively short for a man, is bald but bearded, likes watching people but is quite shy, and can read Latin. Steve likes the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, enjoys doing cryptic crosswords, knows about half the words that Shakespeare knew, and has occasionally lied. He resents his mother's controlling behavior, was an Oxford College rowing coxswain (cox'n), loves reading Roman history, and is gluten intolerant. He thinks he is a good driver and is proud of his dad, who was a Quaker pacifist (that antiauthority thing again) who won three medals for bravery in World War II for driving an unarmed ambulance into the front line of a war zone to rescue two seriously wounded (armed) comrades. Steve has had two marriages and four children, carries a Swiss Army

knife (and as many other gadgets as will fit onto one leather belt), and always wears two watches. He is wondering whether to get the new Swiss Army knife that has a data storage capacity, a laser pointer, and a fingerprint password.

Self-Description or Self-Disclosure

Notice that some of this information about Steve's identity involves characteristics people might use to describe him without knowing him personally (e.g., male, bearded, short, bald, two watches). This self-description usually involves information about self that is obvious to others through appearance and behavior. If you wear your college T-shirt, talk with a French accent, or are tall, these characteristics are available even to strangers. In many cases, characteristics of self-description position a person within categories (e.g., national, racial, or ethnic groups). It is not really an individual identity but is more about group membership.

self-description: description that involves information about self that is obvious to others through appearance and behavior

Some points in Steve's description of himself count as self-disclosure, the revelation of information that people could not know unless a person makes it known to them. In this example, these are the points that describe particular feelings and emotions that other people would not know unless Steve specifically disclosed them. The *resents*, *is proud of*, *enjoys*, *thinks*, and *is wondering* parts give you a view of his identity that you could not directly obtain any other way, though you might work it out from what Steve says or does. Self-disclosure often involves the revelation of private, sensitive, and confidential information. Values, fears, secrets, assessments, evaluations, and preferences all count as such confidences that you share with only a few people.

self-disclosure: the revelation of personal information that others could not know unless the person *made* it known

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Disclosure

Analyze three recent interactions with people you would consider, respectively, a friend, an acquaintance, and a stranger.

Questions to Consider

1. What disclosure, if any, took place during these interactions?
2. What does this tell you about disclosure and relationships?

Dynamics of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is an important aspect of identity construction and has a long history in the discipline of communication. Accordingly, we will spend a bit more time examining this issue. As we will discuss, self-disclosure has traditionally been viewed as favorable and fairly straightforward. Like most things, though, it is more complicated than one might originally think.

The Value of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure was traditionally seen as beneficial to identity construction and personal relationships. Sidney Jourard (1964, 1971) originally wrote about self-disclosure as making your identity “transparent” to others. People who are transparent in this way are acting in the most psychologically healthy manner. Early research also connected self-disclosure with growth in intimacy. Classic reports (e.g., Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993) found that the more people become intimate, the more they disclose to each other information that is both broad and deep. Also, the more you get to know someone’s inner knowledge structures, the closer you feel to him or her.

Closeness generally develops only if the information is revealed in a way that indicates it is privileged information that other people do not know. For example, if a person lets you (and only you) know the secret that he or she has a serious invisible illness (such as diabetes, lupus, or prostate cancer), an unusually strong fear of spiders, or a significantly distressed marriage, you feel valued and trusted because that person let you into his or her inner life.

Passing on the Onion

This all makes sense to a certain extent, but it seems as if we are slicing into that onion again. The truth is that, as Kathryn Dindia (2000) points out, the revelation of identity is rarely a simple progression and is certainly not just the declaration of facts leading to instant intimacy. Self-disclosure is a dynamic process tied to other social processes and how you disclose yourself over time. It continues through the life of relationships and is not a single one-time choice about whether to disclose or not. Part of your identity is the skill with which you reveal or conceal information about yourself and your feelings, as any good poker player knows.

This also would lead a person to assume that self-disclosure is always beneficial, self-disclosure is always desired and welcomed, and no topic is off-limits because the more a person discloses, the better things are going to be. However, none of these assumptions would be true.

Good, Bad, or Nothing

When someone self-discloses information, three possibilities may occur. First, you might feel honored that someone trusts you with his or her secrets. And that person may be successfully creating a desired identity.

Another possibility is that you do not like what people are telling you or they disclose too much information. Sandra Petronio and Wesley Durham (2008), for example, found that too much disclosure is sometimes far from a good thing. In this case, both the relationship and the identity work may suffer.

The third possibility is that you simply do not care about what you are being told. Disclosure itself does not make a difference to a relationship; the relationship makes a difference to the value of disclosure. If you feel the relationship is enhanced by self-disclosure, it is. If you do not, then the relationship does not grow in intimacy.

Dialectic Tensions

Even when the relationship is one in which disclosure might be welcomed, it is not *always* welcomed. There are times when people want to provide personal information and want to receive personal information from others.

And there are times when people do not want to provide or receive personal information. Leslie Baxter (2011) identifies a push–pull dialectic tension of relationships. These tensions occur whenever you are of two minds about something or feel a simultaneous pull in two directions.

Some communication scholars (e.g., Baxter, 2011; Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008) suggest that there simply is no singular core of identity but a dialogue between different “voices” in your head. For example, in relationships, you want to feel connected to someone else, but you do not want to give up all of your independence. You can see how you—and your identity—can grow by being in a relationship, but you can also see that this comes at a simultaneous cost to your identity, independence, and autonomy. Such a view significantly affects the way in which you visualize communication, not as a message sent by one inner core to another, but as something jointly created by two people.

The autonomy–connectedness dialectic is only one dialectic tension. Another is openness–closedness, where people feel social pressure to be open yet also want to retain control over private information. This tension leads to people sometimes giving out and sometimes holding back information about themselves and takes us fully back to self-disclosure. In any relationship, a person can feel willing to reveal information sometimes but crowded and guarded at other times. A personal relationship is not a simple experience any more than identity is. Each affects the other over time. Also, you may tell different versions of your identity to different audiences on different occasions.

dialectic tension: occurs whenever one is of two minds about something because one feels a simultaneous pull in two directions

Identities and Boundaries

Rather than all information being available for disclosure, people negotiate boundaries of privacy with others (Petronio & Durham, 2008). These boundaries are determined partly by the relationship. One difference between friendship and mere acquaintance, for instance, is that you have stronger boundaries around your identity for acquaintances than you do for friends. Also, as Jon Hess (2000) notes, you may simply not like some people. You do not want these people to know “personal stuff” and may actively limit what they find out. Even when it comes to close relationships, certain topics may be avoided (Palomares & Derman, 2016).

How do you explain the fact that a person can experience different sides of self and hold different views simultaneously?



Petronio and Durham (2008) deal with the inconsistencies in the revelation of information by pointing to the importance of boundary management of the topics within different relational settings. People experience a tension between a desire for privacy and a demand for openness differently in different relationships. Couples make up their own rules for controlling the boundaries of privacy. So, for example, two people may define, between themselves, the nature of topics that they will mention in front of other people and what they will keep to themselves. A married couple may decide what topics to discuss in front of the children, for instance, and these topics may change as the children grow older. In other words, people show, employ, and work within different parts of their identity with different audiences at different times.

These researchers also draw attention to the ways in which a couple can decide how much to disclose. Amount, type, or subject of self-disclosure can be a topic for discussion (often called *metacommunication* or communication about communication). In contrast to Jourard's (1964, 1971) idea that there are absolute rules about self-disclosure of identity, Petronio (2002) demonstrated that it is a matter of personal preference, worked out explicitly between the partners in a relationship through communication.

Narratives

Self-disclosure may be accomplished through story form, but we will discuss narratives as a separate way that people construct identities. People often use stories to tell others something about themselves and help shape a sense of who they are for others. Actually, people tell stories about themselves and other people all the time and pay special care to what they say, particularly for occasions such as job interviews, sales pitches, and strategic communication of all sorts. You may have noticed that you adapt stories of your identity by a social context. You are influenced by both society/culture and the specific persons to whom you do the telling.

Ethical Issue

If you have a guilty secret and are getting into a deep romantic relationship with someone, should you tell him or her early on or later? Or should you not tell him or her at all?

Stories We Tell

A report about your identity characterizes you by means of a memory or history in its narrative or a typical or an amusing instance that involves character (your identity), plot, motives, scenes, and other actors. Even when you reveal an inner self, this story organizes your identity in ways other people understand in terms of the rules that govern accounts, narratives, and other social reports. As Jody Koenig Kellas (2008) has pointed out, narratives can be an *ontology* (how I came to be who I am), an *epistemology* (how I think about the world), an *individual construction*, or a *relational process*, such as when romantic partners tell the story about how they first met.

Skills You Can Use: Transacting Identities Online



People develop impressions of others through social networking profiles. Consider what your profile says about you, and ask yourself whether your profile conveys the identity or identities that you desire. If not, think about what might be changed to help construct the desired identities. If your profile is working, think about how it can be further enhanced and if it will be the one you use five years from now. Look back over what you have read in this chapter that would help you to make decisions about these particular questions.



©iStockphoto.com/rvlsoft

Origin Stories

Reports about an identity have a narrative structure that builds off a sense of origin and a sense of continuity. The self comes from somewhere and has roots—"I'm Hispanic," "I'm a true Southerner," "I'm a genuine Irish McMahan."

Identity comes partly from narratives of origin. These can be personal, cultural, or species (“What was my great-grandfather like?” “Where did I come from?” “Where did our culture come from?” “How did humans get started?”). A sense of origin leads, for most people, straight back to their families, the first little society that they ever experienced (Huisman, 2008). The family experience is the first influence on a person’s sense of origin and identity. It gives the person a sense of connection to a larger network of others. Indeed, in African American cultures, “the family” can be seen as a whole *community* that goes beyond the direct blood ties that define family in other cultures. Your earliest memories give you a sense of origin as represented by your experiences in a family-like context.

Shaping the Stories

Stories about you must fit with what your societal audience believes to be coherent and acceptable. It is not just that you *have* a self but that you shape the *telling* of your identity in a way that your audience (culture, friends) will accept. When Bob from earlier in the chapter, a nontraditional student, a Bears fan, or a fraternity/sorority member talks about achievement or activities, the story is probably told differently to friends, former coworkers, Packers fans, or the dean of students.

Transacting Identity and Other People

The shaping of stories to suit a particular audience highlights the importance of other people in the transaction of identities. Actually, we could get philosophical and consider, similar to whether a tree falling in the woods without anyone around makes any sound, whether someone attempting to construct an identity without anyone around is really constructing an identity. For example, is the Broadway musical fan mentioned previously creating an identity when humming along to show tunes alone in the car? Or does the development of identities require someone else being there?

How is your sense of identity represented by connections to the past?



KidStock/Getty Images

There is actually no need to get too philosophical at this point. A more important consideration is identity construction that takes place because of other people, either because of their actions and communication or simply through interactions with them. In what follows, we will examine altercasting, treatment from others, and the performative self.

Altercasting

We will begin with altercasting, which involves the work that someone's communication does to impose, support, or reject identities of others (Tracy, 2002). *Altercasting* refers to how language can give people an identity and then force them to live up to the description, whether positive or negative (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). For example, you are altercasting when you say, "As a good friend, you will want to help me here" or "Only a fool would. . . ." These label the listener as a certain kind of person (or not) by positioning the person to respond appropriately (as a friend or not as a fool). Even such small elements of communication transact your identity and the identities of those people around you.

Altercasting may also refer to the rejection of someone's identity. Just because someone attempts to create an identity does not mean that it will be accepted. It could just as easily be rejected by other people. You may know someone who attempts to come off as tough or dominant, but other people may reject this identity. Rather than trembling in this person's presence, people may make fun of this person or do things to intimidate this person.

Conversely, *altercasting* may also refer to communication that accepts and supports the identity of someone. Perhaps people do accept that person's tough and dominant identity. In this case, their communication may support this tough and dominant identity by giving that person more space or not making eye contact with that person.

In all these situations, the communication of other people is influencing the transaction of someone's identity. The construction of identity does not take place in isolation; rather, it depends partly on other people.

Ethical Issue

Consider situations in which imposing an identity onto someone might be considered unethical. Is it unethical to tell people that they are strong when attempting to get their assistance with lifting a heavy object? Is that situation unethical if you really do not believe they are strong? Is encouraging your classmates by telling them that they are smart and will do well on an upcoming exam unethical, if you really do not believe either to be true but are saying it to help?

altercasting: how language can impose a certain identity on people, and how language can support or reject the identity of another person

Self as Others Treat You

How people perceive themselves and their attempts to construct identities are influenced by the ways in which they are treated by others. Both directly and indirectly, your interactions and communication with other people shape your views of yourself.

Relationships connect through communication to the formation of your identity. If other people treat you with respect, you come to see yourself as respected, and self-respect becomes part of your identity. If your parents treated you like a child even after you had grown up, they may have drawn out from you some sense that you were still a child, which may have caused you to feel resentment. If you are intelligent and people treat you as interesting, you may come to see yourself as having a different value to other people than does someone who is not treated as intelligent. You get so used to the idea that it gets inside your “identity” and becomes part of who you are, but it originated from other people, not from you.

If you are tall, tough, and muscular (not short, bald, and carrying a Swiss Army knife), perhaps people habitually treat you with respect and caution. Over time, you get used to the idea, and identity is enacted and transacted in communication as a person who expects respect and a little caution from other people (Duck, 2011). Eventually, you will not have to act in a generally intimidating way to make people respectful. Your manner of communicating comes to reflect expected reactions to you. Although your identity begins in the way you are treated by other people, it eventually becomes transacted in communication.

By the way . . . : Physical Attractiveness



Physically attractive people often act confidently because they are aware that other people find them attractive. Conversely, unattractive people have learned that they cannot rely on their looks to make a good impression. They need other ways of impressing other people (e.g., by developing a great sense of humor [Berscheid & Reis, 1998]). In a phrase, you come to see yourself as others see you.



©iStockphoto.com/Thinkstock

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent do you find that this research confirms your own experiences in life?
2. Do you think this applies to other such characteristics as intelligence and talent?

Performative Self

Another way that people influence identity construction is just by being there. They provide you with an audience for which to perform. Identity is not just *having* a symbolic sense of self but *doing* it in the presence of other people and doing it well in their eyes. Everyone *does* his or her identity for an audience, like an actor in a play. Performative self means that selves are creative performances based on the social demands and norms of a given situation. As we will now discuss, you try to present the right face to people you are with and do your identity differently in front and back regions.

performative self: a self that is a creative performance based on the social demands and norms of a given situation

Facework

Facework is part of what happens in everyday communication, and people have a sense of their own dignity. This gets transacted in everyday communication by polite protection of the person's "face."

This idea is about the performance of one's identity in public, the presentation of the self to people in a way that is intended to make the self look good. Erving Goffman (1959) indicated the way in which momentary social forces affect identity portrayal. Goffman was interested in how identity is performed in everyday life so that people manage their image to make everyone "look good" (Cupach & Metts, 1994). The concept of "looking good" of course means "looking good *to other people*." It is therefore essentially a relational concept.

It takes you one step closer to looking at the interpersonal interaction that occurs on the ground every day. Rather than looking at society in an abstract way, Goffman (1959) focused on what you actually *do* in interactions. In part, your portrayal of yourself is shaped by the social needs at the time, the social situation, the social frame, and the circumstances surrounding your performance.

Front and Back Regions

Goffman (1959) differentiated a front region and back region to social performance: The front region/front stage is *not a place* but *an occasion* where your professional, proper self is performed. For example, a server is all smiles and civility in the front stage of the restaurant when talking to customers. This behavior might be different from how he or she performs in the back region/backstage (say, the restaurant kitchen) when talking with the cooks or other servers and making jokes about the customers or about being disrespectful to them. But again, the back region is not just a place: If all servers are standing around in the restaurant before the customers come in and they are just chatting informally among themselves, the instant the first customer comes through the door, their demeanor will change to "professional," and they will switch to a front-region performance.

That means the performance of your identity is sprung into action not by your own free wishes but by social cues that this is the time to perform your "self" in that way. An identity is a performance. It shows how a person makes sense of the world not just alone but within a context provided by others.

Any identity connects to other identities. You can be friendly when you are with your friends, but you are expected to be professional when on the job and to do student identity when in class. So is this what allows Bob from earlier in the chapter to be "two people," one at work and one in the social community?

Individuals inevitably draw on knowledge shared in any community, so any person draws on information that is both personal and communal. If you change from thinking of identity as about "self as character" and instead see it as "self as performer," you also must consider the importance of changes in performance to suit different audiences and situations.

front region: a frame where a social interaction is regarded as under public scrutiny, so people have to be on their best behavior or acting

out their professional roles or intended “faces” (contrast with *back region*)

back region: a frame where a social interaction is regarded as not under public scrutiny, so people do not have to present their public faces (contrast with *front region*)

Focus Questions Revisited

1. Does it make sense that someone has a true core self?

Like an urban myth, this way of looking at identity, which has no basis in research and has been abandoned by the theorists who proposed it, still feels like it *ought* to be right and is repeated unscientifically in many communication textbooks. Perhaps it is something we would like to believe, but as shown during the chapter, it is basically a worthless idea, even when placed up against common sense.

2. How do perceptions influence identities?

The transaction of identities is guided partly through perceptions of audiences and situations. Factors such as how a person views the world, organizes what is perceived, interprets information, and evaluates information will influence symbolic activity and, accordingly, the construction of identities.

3. What does it mean to say that identities are symbolic constructions?

Identities can be understood as being transacted symbolically through communication with others. Who we understand ourselves to be and how we want others to perceive us at a given moment is established through our use of symbols. Essentially, our multiple identities are created and performed through verbal and nonverbal communication.

4. What is the difference between self-description and self-disclosure?

Self-description usually involves information about self that is obvious to others through appearance and behavior. Self-disclosure involves the revelation of information that people could not know unless a person makes it known to them.

5. What is the role of narratives in the construction of identities?

People often use stories to tell others something about themselves and help shape a sense of who they are for others. People adapt stories of their identities to a social context. These stories are influenced by both society/culture and the specific persons to whom they are being told.

6. How do other people influence identity construction?

Identity construction takes place because of other people, either because of their actions and communication or simply through interactions with them. Such influence involves altercasting, treatment from others, and the performative self.

Key Concepts

altercasting 63
attitude of reflection 57
back region 65
dialectic tension 60
front region 65
identity 47
perception 49
performative self 64
personal constructs 55
prototype 54
schemata 54
selective exposure 53
selective perception 53
selective retention 53
self-description 58
self-disclosure 59
symbolic interactionism 57
symbolic self 57

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Discuss with your friends or classmates the most embarrassing moment that you feel comfortable talking about, and try to find out what about the experience threatened your identity. What identity were you projecting at the time, and what went wrong with the performance?
2. Have your friends look at how advertisers sell the image of particular cars in terms of what they will make the owner look like to other people; the advertisers recognize that identity is tied up in material possessions. Discuss with your friends the following topics: How is your identity affected by your preferences in music, the Internet, fashion magazines, resources, or wealth?
3. Get a group of friends together and ask them each to write down what sort of vegetable, fish, dessert, book, piece of furniture, style of music, meal, car, game, or building best represents their identity. Read the responses out loud and have everyone guess which person is described.

Media Connections

1. Examine the social network sites of some of your connections on those sites. Do their identities created through those sites match the identities they tend to transact offline?
2. Collect examples that demonstrate how media representations of ideal selves (especially demands on women to be a particular kind of shape, but try to be more imaginative than just these images) are constantly thrown in our path.
3. How do television talk shows encourage us to be open, honest, and real? Do these programs teach us anything about the “right” ways to be ourselves?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

4 Verbal Communication



©Jupiterimages/Brand X Pictures/Thinkstock

Chapter Outline

- [How Is Verbal Communication Symbolic?](#)
- [Verbal Communication Involves Meaning](#)
 - [Denotative and Connotative Meanings](#)
 - [Words and Values](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Relational](#)
 - [Relationships Regulate Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Relationships and Shared Meanings](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Cultural](#)
 - [Verbal Communication Transacts Cultures](#)
 - [Cultures Regulate Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Cultural Ways of Talking](#)
- [Verbal Communication and Frames](#)
 - [Recognizing Frames](#)
 - [Ways of Speaking](#)
 - [Accommodation: Adjusting Relational Frames](#)
- [Verbal Communication Is Presentational](#)
 - [Telling Stories](#)
 - [Kenneth Burke's Pentad](#)
- [Functions of Verbal Communication](#)
 - [Influencing Others: Facework and Politeness](#)
- [Relationships and Everyday Talk](#)
 - [Instrumental Function](#)
 - [Indexical Function](#)
 - [Essential Function](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. How is verbal communication symbolic?
2. How does verbal communication involve meaning?
3. How is verbal communication relational?
4. How is verbal communication cultural?
5. What frames your understanding of verbal communication?
6. What is the presentational nature of verbal communication?
7. What are the functions of verbal communication?

A man walked into a bar. A second man walked into a bar. A third one didn't . . . because he ducked. You know the word *bar*, and you most likely know that jokes often start with the phrase "A [man] walked into a bar." Such cultural knowledge frames expectations about the story being told. A *frame*, you recall from [Chapter 1](#), is a context that influences the interpretation of communication. If you were faintly amused by the opening sentences here, it is partly because the word *bar* is used in the first sentence differently than you expected on the basis of the frame of the story. The punch line works only because you are misled—twice—into thinking of a different kind of "bar." Familiarity with the story's cultural form frames your expectations in a way that pulls the last sentence right out from under you. Language has a syntax and a grammatical structure, but when used conversationally, it uses cultural and relational assumptions. *Syntax* refers to the rules about subject–verb agreement or word order ("We *is* here" is wrong, and it is correct to say either "*He* is here" or "We *are* here"; "The cat sat on the mat" means something different from "The mat sat on the cat"). *Grammar* refers to rules beyond this; for example, it is polite to put oneself second in the phrase "John and I went . . ." although "I and John went . . ." is syntactically acceptable.

Verbal communication involves the *use* of language. Notice that the word *use* is emphasized in this definition. When discussing verbal communication, communication scholars do not simply look at language but rather explore the ways in which it is used when interacting with others. *Language* is just a collection of symbols that can be arranged in a particular order according to a particular syntax. Remember, though, that symbols themselves have no meaning. Words, like all symbols, are given meaning when they are put into use. Within this chapter, we explore the ways in which language is put into use. Notice also that this paragraph uses different terms to describe what is happening in verbal communication (words, language, symbol). Observe that each of the terms is more abstract than the one before it (the *ladder of abstraction* (Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1992)). In much the same way, we could describe my dietary choice as "Cobb Salad" or "Lunch" or "Nutrition." Again moving up that *ladder of abstraction*, we can choose to focus a discussion of verbal communication very specifically or very abstractly. Part of the point in this chapter, however, is that the use of specific words connects to the abstract, the symbolic, the taken-for-granted that is embedded in our talk, just like the cultural knowledge of the structure of jokes. Whenever humans use specific words in speech, the words carry connections to these broader frames and so the concrete word connects to the very abstract concept.

This chapter is, therefore, structured somewhat differently from others in this book. In exploring verbal communication, we will follow the characteristics of communication discussed in [Chapter 1](#). We will point out that verbal communication is symbolic, involves meaning, is relational, is cultural, involves frames, is presentational, and is transactive. Doing so will reinforce these connections even when they are not explicitly addressed. The recognition of these connections is essential to a clear understanding of verbal communication in everyday life.

verbal communication: the use of language to connect with another mind

How Is Verbal Communication Symbolic?

The answer to the opening question is pretty obvious if you have already read the introductory paragraphs of this chapter. If you have not read them, why are you starting here? Go read them, and we will wait. . . . All right, the answer is this: Verbal communication involves the use of language, which is made up of symbols.

Why might this pairing of street signs be amusing to a citizen in the United States, and what is taken for granted by those who understand the joke?



©iStockphoto.com/Lori Howard

Symbols are arbitrary representations of something else. This does not mean that the connections are random or silly, but that they are essentially made up and used because they make sense to the users. There is no direct connection between a symbol and what it represents. When it comes to the word *chair*, used as an earlier example of symbols, there is no natural connection between an object on which you sit and the five letters *r*, *h*, *c*, *a*, and *i* arranged in the order *c*, *h*, *a*, *i*, *r*. That symbol is just used to represent that object in English. In other languages, it is represented arbitrarily and symbolically by other characters (*stoel* in Dutch, but in Japanese Kanji, 椅子).

As a result of this lack of direct connection, symbols can be chosen to represent ideas in more or less any form that becomes applied and accepted through usages. Notice the use of *applied*. It is not that words *have* meanings but that meanings *are applied* to words. To repeat, symbols have no inherent meaning. They are given meaning along with value and power when they are used during interactions among people. This fact does not mean that studying language is meaningless—many of our linguist friends would certainly take issue with that notion.

However, as much as your authors enjoy learning new words and studying the development of languages, we find the actual *use* of words more interesting. Meanings are applied through language. (Ask yourself why *Cool* has arbitrarily come to mean “Satisfactory, admirable, acceptable, or a state of general well-being” and check out the development at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_\(aesthetic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cool_(aesthetic)).) Moreover, through the use of language, along with other symbolic activity, relationships, identities, cultures, and realities are transacted. Now that is really fascinating!

By the way . . . : Taa



Of the thousands of languages worldwide, the most complicated may be Taa, which is primarily spoken in Botswana. It has 112 distinct sounds, more than any other language. (For comparison, English has around 45 sounds, depending on the dialect.) Making Taa particularly complicated, the majority of the words start with one of 83 sorts of clicks. For Xhosa use of clicks see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZlp-croVYw&ab_channel=SilvioMarchini

Questions to Consider

1. If you speak more than one language, what does that tell you about the arbitrary nature of symbols?
2. If you only speak one language, do you think this makes the arbitrary nature of symbols more difficult to grasp?

Verbal Communication Involves Meaning

So, we know that verbal communication is symbolic and that meanings are established through its use. And, later in this chapter, we explore how people go about assigning meanings using a communication frame. Before tackling that issue, though, we need to examine what *meaning* actually means. Words are given the following two types of meaning: denotative and connotative (“connotative” is more abstract than “denotative”). Taking things one step further, words are also given value based on the meanings applied.

What factors might be influencing the conversation of these two people?



©iStockphoto.com/Jacob Ammentorp Lund

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

Words, as with all symbols, can be given multiple meanings depending on how they are used and the circumstances surrounding their use (Ogden & Richards, 1946). Polysemy is the term used to recognize that there can be multiple meanings given to the same word, such as *bar*. If all symbols can have several different meanings, then each time you speak or hear a word, you must determine which meaning applies.

Denotative meaning is the general meaning of a word. It is the meaning or meanings appearing next to each word in the dictionary. (*Dictionary*, *Definition*, and *Denotative* all start with the same letter, if you need help remembering the term on an examination.) If you point at a cat and say, “Cat,” everyone will know that the sound denotes the object that is furry and whiskered and currently sleeping on your keyboard as you read this book.

Denoting the same object or idea by the same words is a fundamental requirement for communicating. Conversation works only when people can assume that they share the same world by using the same words to denote the same items. Remember, there does not need to be complete agreement by individuals on the meanings of a word, especially for an abstract concept such as “Liberty,” but there is often at least some overlap of meanings. The polysemic nature of words can make determining intended meaning a challenging task, though. *Cat* means not only the furry animal but also a whip (cat-o’-nine-tails), a catfish, or even, in jazz circles, a “cool guy.”

polysemy: the fact that multiple meanings can be associated with a given word or symbol rather than with just one unambiguous meaning

denotative meaning: the identification of something by pointing it out (“that is a cat”)

Sapir–Whorf hypothesis: the idea that the names of objects and ideas make verbal distinctions and help you make conceptual distinctions rather than the other way around

Disciplinary Debate: Language and Perception



Developed from the writings of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf (Sapir, 1949; Whorf, 1956), the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis proposes that “you think what you can say.” In other words, the names that make verbal distinctions also help you make conceptual distinctions rather than the other way around. Essentially, the language you speak affects how you view the world. Other scholars oppose this notion of linguistic relativism and might ask the first question as follows.

Questions to Consider

1. English speakers have a word for the front of the hand (*palm*), but no single word for the back. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, does this mean that English speakers should not be able to tell the difference?
2. To what extent do you believe language shapes how people view the world?

Connotative meaning refers to the overtones and complications associated with a word or an object. (*Complications*, *Clues*, and *Connotative* all start with the same letter, if you need help remembering the term on an examination.) For example, cats are seen as independent, cuddly, hunters, companions, irritations, allergens, stalkers, stealthy, and incredibly lucky both in landing on their feet all the time and in having nine lives. If you talk about a friend as a “pussycat,” you are most likely referring to the connotative meaning and implying that he is soft and cuddly and perhaps stealthy, companionable, and lucky. You are not referring to the denotative meaning and warning people that the friend is secretly a cat and has fur and sleeps on keyboards.

Connoting involves the implications of a word, so some words carry baggage that can elicit an emotional response. Consider, for instance, the different emotions stirred up by the words *patriot* and *traitor*. The first connotes many good feelings of loyalty, duty, and faithfulness. The second connotes bad qualities such as deceit, two-facedness, untrustworthiness, and disloyalty. These connotations are extra layers of meaning atop the denotation of a person as one kind of citizen or the other.

Words carry strong and varying connotations in particular cultures (Jiqun, 2012) and within particular relationships. As a result, your ability to understand someone improves as you know more about the associations he or she makes to certain words, either culturally or personally.

By the way . . . : Hello, Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch



Media references are often used in conversations because of associated connotative meanings (McMahan, 2004). For instance, a friend might be nicknamed “Jon Snow” after the character from *Game of Thrones* to highlight commitment or to acknowledge leadership.



HBO/Photofest

Questions to Consider

1. Think about some of the conversations you have recently had during which media references were used. Why do you suppose they are effective when used in conversations?
2. Do you use media references more with some people than with other people?

Words and Values

As a result of their denotative and connotative meanings, words generally acquire particular values in a society. The values associated with words develop over time and are reinforced and socially constructed. Consider the characteristics of values encoded through words in [Table 4.1](#).

connotative meaning: the overtones, implications, or additional meanings associated with a word or an object

God terms: powerfully evocative terms that are viewed positively in a society (contrast with *Devil terms*)

Devil terms: powerfully evocative terms viewed negatively in a society (contrast with *God terms*)

God Terms and Devil Terms

Recognizing that words and all symbols are given value within societies, communication philosopher Kenneth Burke (1966) made a distinction between God terms and Devil terms. God terms are powerful terms that are viewed positively in a society. Devil terms are equally powerful terms that are viewed negatively in a society. In the United States, such a term as *freedom* may be considered a God term, and such a term as *ISIS* may be considered a Devil term. (See [Table 4.2](#) for some other examples.) However, God and Devil terms are not absolutes for everyone in the same society. Depending on your point of view, for example, such words as *Bush* or *Clinton* or *Political Correctness* may be one or the other. Furthermore, societal views of God or Devil terms may change with the passing of time. Within the United States, for example, *immigrant* has been viewed as both (Engels, 2011). When the concept of the melting pot was appreciated, immigrants were seen as bringing needed new blood into the growing republic; at other times, immigrants were seen as a threat to the way of life.

Table 4.1 Values Encoded Through Words

Values encoded through words can be positive or negative.

Communication studies would naturally be positive, but *terrorism* would likely be negative.

Values encoded through words can be shared by individuals.

If you tell your instructor, “I deserved a B on this paper, but you gave me a C+,” both you and the instructor recognize that a B is “better than” a C+ in the framework of values related to grades.

Values encoded through words can differ among people.

People may react differently to the words *Republican*, *Democrat*, *conservative*, *liberal*, *capitalism*, and *socialism*.

Values encoded through words can change over time.

The word *nice* generally has a positive association now. However, it was originally used when referring to someone as ignorant, having been derived from the Latin word for ignorant, *nescius*.

Table 4.2 God and Devil Terms

God terms in the United States	Liberty, Justice, Equality, American Dream
Devil terms in the United States	Communism, Torture, Prejudice, King George III

God and Devil terms also exist in personal relationships. For instance, one partner may know what topics should not be mentioned around the other partner—his or her Devil terms. Conversely, certain terms might be so unquestionably revered by a partner that their use can always bring about a positive reaction. Consider how a society’s God and Devil terms are also reinforced through relationships. Sometimes a partner may act on behalf of society by saying, “Oh! You shouldn’t say such things!” Such a statement reinforces, and reminds the other person of, the norms of society and its God and Devil terms.

Make your case: God Term or Devil Term?



People can assign different values to any particular word. What is a God term to one person may be a Devil term to another. Answer the following questions in your own mind, then discuss in class.

Questions to Consider

1. Which of the following words would *you* consider God terms, and why?
2. Which would *you* consider Devil terms, and why?

Abortion Facebook Homework Smartphone

C (grade) Natural Student Rifle

Banker Politician Teacher Dollar

Cigarettes Raw Food Oil Microsoft

Exercise Twitter Snow Apple

Verbal Communication Is Relational

Verbal communication is also relational. Accordingly, verbal communication influences relationships, and relationships influence verbal communication. Whenever you communicate verbally, a particular relationship is presumed with another person, the members of a group, or an audience. Another way of thinking about this is that when you are verbally communicating, you are also relating. “You! My office! Now!” conveys a power relationship, for example, whereas “Would you drop into my office when you have a minute?” is much more informal. Relationships are developed and maintained through symbolic activity (of which verbal communication is one example). Relationships are symbolic creations, literally talked into existence by the very words that we use. That statement may be difficult to wrap your head around at this point, but it will become clearer after we cover that idea later on.

Communication + You: Talking With Your Friends



You and your friends probably have several examples of shorthand words and phrases for reminding one another of events, feelings, or people who populate your relational history. You may also have special nicknames for people known only to you and your partner or close friends.



©iStockphoto.com/Wavebreakmedia

Questions to Consider

1. What are some examples of these words, phrases, and names, and what do they tell you about your relationships?
2. Have you ever been the “out-of-towner” in a group of friends, where you did not understand shorthand words or phrases and needed an explanation?

Relationships Regulate Verbal Communication

Relationships influence the meanings that are given to words and the words that are actually used. As mentioned in [Chapter 1](#), the words *I love you* have different meanings depending on the relationship in which they are spoken. Saying those words to a romantic partner would mean something different from saying those words to a friend or parent. Moreover, relationships influence what words are uttered in the first place. Regardless of great customer service, you would not expect a checkout person at a grocery store to say that to you as a customer.

Here as well, we see relationships being created through verbal communication. The very fact that you would or would not say something reinforces the existence of a particular relationship! With friends, for example, we draw on words differently than we do in work relationships, family relationships, and school relationships. Specific relationships are also reinforced through the meanings and intentions we assign to the words of others. Dan Kirkpatrick, Steve Duck, and Megan Foley (2006) noted that enemies do not trust each other to mean what they say, each suspecting the other's words to be a lie or a misdirection.

Relationships and Shared Meanings

We can take the relational nature of verbal communication a bit deeper, by looking at the creation and recognition of shared meanings. The more personal your relationship is with someone, the better you can understand his or her intentions and meanings. Part of becoming closer to other people is learning how they tick—an informal way of saying that you understand their worlds of meaning. When you know people better, you also know better than strangers what those people mean when they make certain comments.

Relationships are transacted partly through shared meanings and patterns of communication. In other words, the understandings shared by you and a friend represent common understanding and your relationship. No one else shares the exact understandings, common history, experiences, knowledge of the same people, or assumptions that you take for granted in that relationship. When you talk to people, you use words that refer to your shared history and common understandings that represent your relationship. Relationships presume common, shared knowledge.

Think for a minute about what happens when a friend from out of town comes to visit, and you go out with your in-town friends. You probably notice that the conversation is a bit more awkward. You are required to do more explaining. For example, instead of saying, “Landan, how was the hot date?” and waiting for an answer, you must throw in a conversational bracket that helps your friend from out of town understand the question. You may say, “Landan, how was the hot date?” and follow it with an aside comment to the out-of-towner (“Landan has this hot new love interest he has a *real* crush on, and they finally went out last night”).

conversational hypertext: coded messages within conversation that an informed listener will effortlessly understand

By the way . . . : Speaking and Social Class



Somewhat connected to our discussion here, Basil Bernstein (1971) made a distinction between restricted codes and elaborated codes.

Restricted code leaves a great deal unsaid, with the assumption being that other people will understand because of shared connections and accompanying shared knowledge (for example, describing a cartoon strip as if the audience can see what the speaker sees: “It went up the drainpipe and is going to get hit”). Elaborated code leaves very little unsaid, with the assumption being that people would not be able to understand otherwise. (For example, “There is a cat in the picture and it goes up the drainpipe on the side of the house to catch a mouse that it saw running in there, but the mouse its waiting at the top with a hammer.”) Examining class differences and education, Bernstein maintained working-class speakers struggled because they communicated in a restricted code, but middle-class speakers succeeded because they were able to communicate using both codes. In particular, restricted code assumes authority, especially when spoken by a parent to a child whereas elaborated code assumes a need to explain reasons (“Be quiet because I tell you to” compared with “Be quiet because this is a library and other people probably want to read quietly without being disturbed”).

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe class distinctions of this sort exist today?
2. If so, are they still transacted partly through restricted and elaborated codes?

restricted code: a way of speaking that emphasizes authority and adopts certain community/cultural orientations as indisputable facts (contrast with *elaborated code*)

elaborated code: speech that emphasizes the reasoning behind a command; uses speech and language more as a way for people to differentiate the uniqueness of their own personalities and ideas and to express their own individuality, purposes, attitudes, and beliefs than as a way to reinforce collectivity or commonality of outlook (contrast with *restricted code*)

Conversational Hypertext

Talk among people who share a personal relationship is characterized by a great deal of conversational hypertext (Duck, 2002). The term conversational hypertext refers to coded messages within conversation that an informed listener will effortlessly understand.

You know what hypertext is from your use of the Internet, and your talk works the same way. In conversation, people often use a word that suggests more about a topic and would therefore show up on a computer screen in blue, pointing you to a hyperlink. For example, you might say, “I was reading Duck and McMahan, and I learned that there are many more extra messages that friends pick up in talk than I had realized before.” This sentence makes perfect sense to somebody who knows what a “Duck and McMahan” is, but others may not understand. On a computer, they would use their mouse to find out more by clicking on “Duck and McMahan” and being taken to <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>. In a conversation, they would “click” on the hypertext by asking a direct question: “What’s a Duck and McMahan?”

In relationships, shared meanings and overlaps of perceptions make communication special and closer. You and your friends talk in coded, hypertextual language all the time and probably do not even recognize when you are doing it because it seems so natural in your personal relationship. Only when you encounter someone who does not understand the code, such as the out-of-town friend in the previous example, do you probably recognize the hypertext and realize that it needs to be unpacked, expanded, or explained directly for the out-of-towner.

Verbal Communication Is Cultural

Verbal communication is also cultural, much in the way that it is relational. Accordingly, verbal communication influences culture, and culture influences verbal communication. Whenever you communicate verbally, cultural assumptions are presumed and involve appropriateness and meanings within a given society or group.

When discussing culture, we are not just talking about such nation-states as the United States and China. Also included in discussions of culture are any groups of people who share distinct meanings and styles of speaking or dress, for example, bikers, New Yorkers, or hipsters. Embedded within these distinct meanings and styles of communication are the values and beliefs of those cultural groups.

Multiple cultural groups exist within larger nation-states, and as a result, you likely belong to many of them simultaneously. They might include cultural groups involving your life on campus, at work, and within your community and may reach very deeply into personal identity. Recently some universities have acknowledged the variety of such communities by adopting a policy of allowing incoming students to indicate their preferred pronouns to avoid forcing them to use gender binaries, for example ([Figure 4.1](#)).

Ethical Issue

Note how sexist, racist, and heteronormative language is both relational and cultural: It always places one group of people in an inferior position relative to another group of people. Is it ever ethical to use this kind of language? Look at [Figure 4.1](#) as you consider this question.

Verbal Communication Transacts Cultures

Cultures are developed and maintained through verbal communication and other symbolic activity. Like relationships, cultures are symbolic creations. Cultural groups are distinct and brought into being because of the way in which their members communicate. We talk more about this idea in [Chapter 6](#) on culture but in the meantime, consider the fundamental role that relationships play in this process. Through our relationships, we come to understand cultural ways of communicating. You have learned culturally appropriate ways of talking through interactions with family, friends, neighbors, classmates, coworkers, and even the person at a fast-food drive-through.

Cultures Regulate Verbal Communication

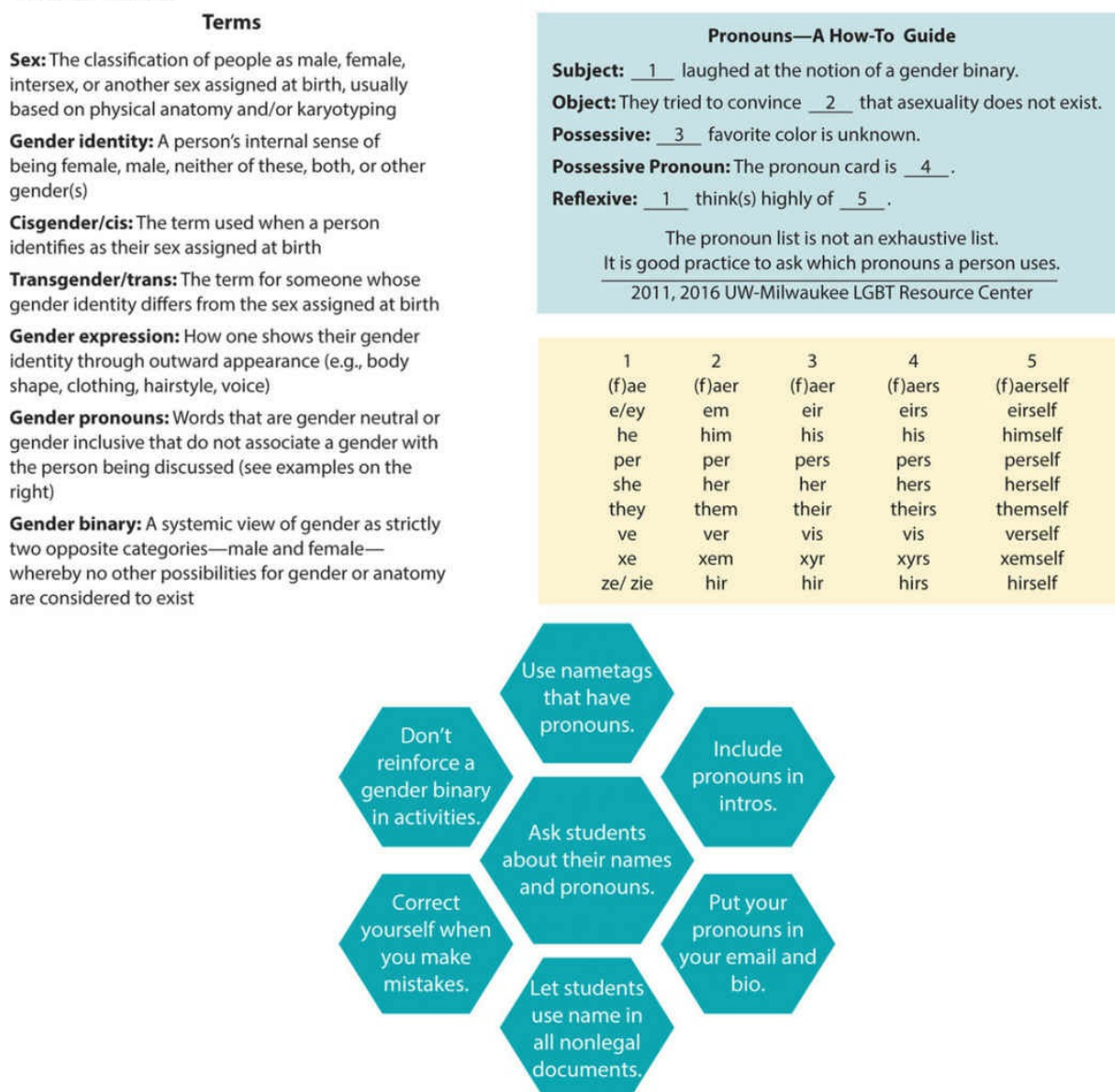
Cultures influence the meanings that are given to words and the words that are actually used. Some cultural groups curse more than others do, for instance. You are so good at communicating culturally and are so skilled at moving seamlessly in and out of various groups that you may not even recognize that you are doing it. Aware or not, you communicate in unique ways when among members of different cultural groups because of the meaning systems and norms of those groups. For instance, you would likely talk in distinct ways when interacting within on-campus culture and work culture. Here, like relationships, cultures are being created through verbal communication because you would or would not say something reinforces those cultures.

Cultural Ways of Talking

To understand the nuances involved in talking culturally, we can examine categories of cultural talk. These styles of cultural talk are usually applied to nation-states, and we take issue with such broad characterizations later in the book, but they will illustrate our point here. These styles of talk have unique meaning systems, values, and styles. [Table 4.3](#) provides definitions and examples of talk attempting to get someone to finish a project at work.

Figure 4.1 Gender Pronoun

The figure proposes a new way of representing pronouns for those who do not wish to be classified in the simple binary of "Male" or "Female."



Source: Overall figure adapted from Trans Student Educational Resources. (n.d.). Creating Affirming Environments for Trans* Students at the University of Iowa. Retrieved from <https://studentsuccess.uiowa.edu/assets/Handout-SST-Presentation-Kilgo.pdf>; pronoun definitions adapted from Trans Student Educational Resources. (2016). LGBTQ+ definitions. Retrieved from <http://www.transstudent.org/definitions>; text boxes from University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee LGBT Resource Center (2011, 2016). Gender Pronouns. Retrieved from <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>

Verbal Communication and Frames

Frames assist people in making sense of communication by drawing attention to how they should be communicating, how they might expect others to communicate, and how they should assign meanings to symbols. Conversational frames are used to make sense of and assign meaning to verbal communication.

Table 4.3 Cultural Styles of Talk

Feminine and Masculine

Feminine talk is nurturing, harmonious, and compromising (Arrindell et al., 2013).

I hope you can finish this project soon and am certain you will do a good job. Let me know if you need any additional assistance.

Masculine talk is tough, aggressive, and competitive (Arrindell et al., 2013).

If you cannot complete this project now, I will replace you with someone who can.

High Context and Low Context

High-context talk relies heavily on the context in which it takes place. Words are used sparingly with a great deal left unsaid. Relationships among people are extremely important (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010). In the following example, the cultural implications of friendship (which would probably entail prompt work) are used to get the person to complete the project.

It is good to have a friend working on this project.

Low-context talk is straightforward, and the message itself says everything. Relationships are separated from the message as much as possible (Samovar et al. 2010).

This project needs to be completed soon because it is behind schedule and completing it after the deadline will be harmful for you, me, and everyone in this company.

Collectivist and Individualist

Collectivist talk stresses group benefit and harmony rather than personal needs and advancement (Du & King, 2013; Morsbach, 2004; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Completing this project soon will benefit the team a great deal.

Individualist talk stresses individual needs and achievement (Du & King, 2013; Kong, 2016).

Completing this project soon would look good on your yearly evaluation.

You are better able to communicate with another person when both of you recognize that frames are shared. Sometimes these frames are assumed. At other times, frames are signaled by means of various relational, cultural, and personal cues. For example, saying, “Let’s not be so formal” is a direct way of saying that you are in the

“friendly frame.” Saying, “Take a seat and make yourself comfortable” is more indirect but has the same effect.

Of course, difficulties may arise if people are using different frames of understanding. Different frames may be used unknowingly. Different frames could be used purposefully, especially if people do not perceive the situation or their relationships in the same way.

Ethical Issue

How do pronouns transact identity? How do pronouns and gender binaries construct social categories? Are there certain circumstances when gender-neutral pronouns should be required?

feminine talk: that which is characterized as nurturing, harmonious, and compromising (contrast with *masculine talk*)

masculine talk: that which is characterized as tough, aggressive, and competitive (contrast with *feminine talk*)

high-context talk: that which is characterized as relying on the context in which it takes place, with words used sparingly and the relationship shared by interactants being extremely important (contrast with *low-context talk*)

low-context talk: that which is characterized as straightforward, with the message speaking for itself and the relationship separated from the message as much as possible (contrast with *high-context talk*)

collectivist talk: that which is characterized as stressing group benefit and harmony rather than personal needs and advancement (contrast with *individualist talk*)

individualist talk: that which is characterized as stressing individual needs and achievement (contrast with *collectivist talk*)

Recognizing Frames

A number of types of conversational frames may be applied when interacting with others. Because relationships and cultures influence meaning, they act as frames when assigning meaning to verbal communication. The physical location can also act as a frame when assigning meaning, so you engage in “classroom talk” rather than “restaurant talk” by asking your instructor a question about course content rather than requesting that your instructor bring you a tasty beverage.

Ways of Speaking

In everyday communication, the *form* of language selected to express thoughts and emotions carries important relational messages. The form of speech also enables people to properly frame an interaction. When talking with friends, your language is probably informal and simple. When talking with your instructor or with a boss, your language is probably formal and more complex.

The woman on the left is telling her friend how the chaos around her house prevents her from ever having time to herself. Her friend is assuring her that her concerns sound warranted and that she is a valuable person. *Alternative scenario:* The friend tells her to stop complaining and get over herself. Which cultural styles of talk does each of these two scenarios demonstrate?



©iStockphoto.com/kissenbo

Forms of language can generally be categorized as either *high code* or *low code* (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973). High code is a formal, grammatical, and very correct way of talking. Low code is an informal and often ungrammatical way of talking. Consider the difference between saying, “My state of famishment is of such a proportion that I would gladly consume the complete corporeality of a member of the species *Equus caballus przewalskii*” and “I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse.” The first statement is written in high code, and the second is written in low code.

When interacting with someone in a close relationship and when feeling relaxed, people are more likely to use low code. High code is more likely to be used when speaking to someone with whom a person is unfamiliar or someone with greater power or higher social rank. It is also more likely to be used when a person is uncomfortable or views the interaction as formal. Knowing these differences in codes will enable you to understand the frames that you or others may be using when communicating and how the participants and the situation are being perceived.

Accommodation: Adjusting Relational Frames

Frames initially set up an interaction but can be adjusted as it proceeds. People choose particular ways of interacting and can change them just the same, adjusting the interaction to fit another person or as a result of changes in feelings or in the relationship that occurs during the course of the interaction.

Howard Giles and his colleagues (e.g., Giles, Linz, Bonilla, & Gomez, 2012) have shown that people will change the words they use as well as nonverbal communication (discussed in the [next chapter](#)) to indicate a relational connection with the person to whom they are talking. They called this process accommodation and identified two types: convergence and divergence.

In convergence, a person moves toward the style of talk used by the other speaker. For example, an adult converges by using baby talk to communicate with a child, or a brownnosing employee converges by talking to the boss in “company lingo” talk.

high code: a formal, grammatical, and very correct—often “official”—way of talking

low code: an informal and often ungrammatical way of talking

accommodation: when people change their accent, their rate of speech, and even the words they use to indicate a relational connection with the person to whom they are talking

convergence: a person moves toward the style of talk used by the other speaker (contrast with *divergence*); usually indicates liking or respect

In divergence, a person moves away from another’s style of speech to make a relational point, such as establishing dislike or superiority. A good example is how computer geeks and car mechanics insist on using technical language with customers, instead of giving simple explanations that the nonexpert could understand. This form of divergence keeps the customer in a lower relational place.

divergence: a person moves away from another’s style of speech to make a relational point, such as establishing dislike or superiority (contrast with *convergence*).

By the way . . . : Git ’er done!



Linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure (Komatsu, 1993) draw a distinction between *langue* (pronounced “longh”) and *parole* (pronounced “puh-ROLL”). *Langue* is the formal grammatical structure of language that you read about in books on grammar. *Parole* is how people actually use language, with informal and ungrammatical phrases that carry meaning all the same. “Git ’er done!” is an example of *parole* but would earn you bad grades in an English grammar course (*langue*).



Paul Warner/Contributor/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you suppose people write one way and speak to people a different way?
2. Why do English courses not teach both ways?

Verbal Communication Is Presentational

Verbal communication, as with all symbolic activity, can be both representational and presentational. It is representational in that it can be used to name things and convey information. Accordingly, the word *cat* is used to represent (denote) that animal to others. You do not have to draw a picture, bring a live cat, or act out its behaviors on your hands and knees. If you think about it, even though it is generally taken for granted, the representational nature of verbal communication and the development of symbol using by humans is astounding.

Perhaps less obvious but equally powerful is the presentational nature of verbal communication. The use of verbal communication also provides information about the perspective and worldview of the person sending a message. Your selection of words when describing a scene, persuading someone, discussing another person, or simply talking about the weather is meaningful and conveys your worldview to others. All verbal communication is presentational, but when people tell stories and provide accounts, verbal communication's presentational value is particularly recognizable.

Telling Stories

Much of everyday life is spent telling stories about yourself and other people. Suggesting that storytelling is one of the most important human tendencies, Walter Fisher (1985) coined the term *Homo narrans* (Latin for “the person as a storyteller or narrator”).

A narrative is any organized story, report, or prepared talk that has a plot, an argument, or a theme, or can be interpreted as having one. The term *narrative* covers what is involved when you say *what* people are doing and *why* they are doing it. This applies whether talk includes funny events, tragic events, significant emotional experiences, relational stories (meeting new people, falling in love, arguing, making up, and breaking up), or describing one’s day.

Narratives are particularly presentational because speakers do not just relate facts but also arrange the story in a way that provides their perspective. Stories are often told in a way that makes the speaker appear in a favorable light.

langue: the formal grammatical structure of language (contrast with *parole*)

parole: how people actually use language: where they often speak using informal and ungrammatical language structure that carries meaning to us all the same (contrast with *langue*)

narrative: any organized story, report, or talk that has a plot, an argument, or a theme and in which speakers both relate facts and arrange the story in a way that provides an account, an explanation, or a conclusion

accounts: forms of communication that go beyond the facts and offer justifications, excuses, exonerations, explanations, or accusations

Giving Accounts

Although narratives appear on the surface just to report (represent) events, they frequently account for (present) the behaviors. Accounts are forms of communication that offer *justifications* (“I was so mad”), *excuses* (“I was really tired”), *exonerations* (“It wasn’t my fault”), *explanations* (“And that’s how we fell in love”), *accusations* (“But he started it”), and *apologies* (“I’m an idiot”). Accounts “go beyond the facts.”

People tell stories every day, whether about the crazy commute that made them late to work or a funny interaction with a checkout clerk. How do you know that one of the people in this photo is telling a story, and what role does storytelling seem to play in their relationship?



©iStockphoto.com/Susan Chiang

Giving an account involves telling a story that justifies, blames someone for, or calls for someone to account for what happened (Scott & Lyman, 1968). The facts reported in accounts are actually quite presentational. Indeed, the description of something contains spin that explains the facts being reported. For example, your friend may say, “I just failed a math test. It was way too hard.” Both statements appear to be facts. One is actually an explanation for why your friend failed (the test was too hard). It is also a presentational account—a personal view about the reason for the failure (because the test was too hard, not because “I’m stupid”).

Listen with fresh ears to everyday conversation, and you will start to hear accounts much more often. Think about their structure and what it tells you about the relationship shared by the person providing the account and the person receiving the account. For example, you do not bother to justify yourself to people whose opinions you do not care about. Also, you would not justify yourself to an enemy in the same way you would to a friend. You expect the friend to know more about your background and to cut you some slack. Relationships affect whether accounts are given and how they are structured.

Ethical Issue

Should the stories you tell always be true? Why or why not?

Kenneth Burke's Pentad

The presentational nature of verbal communication is a fundamental component of everyday communication and personal relationships. Therefore, it stands to reason that being able to analyze the presentational aspects of communication and narratives you encounter would be beneficial. As Burke once remarked (Burke, 1968, p. 299), "At the very start, one's terms jump to conclusions." In our terms, words "frame" discourse.

Burke's pentad is composed of five elements that explain the motivation of symbolic action. Essentially, Burke was interested in determining the reasons why people used the words that they did. Burke correctly recognized that the use of words results in meanings that are symbolic and go beyond their denotative meanings or connotative meanings. The very act of choosing and using words is meaningful. The key to fully understanding communication is understanding the motives of the people communicating. The selection of words provides clues to understanding motives and provides insight into the perceptions of symbols used.

pentad: five components of narratives that explain the motivation of symbolic action

Elements of the Pentad

There are five elements of the pentad, a name conveniently and not coincidentally derived from the Greek word for "five." In [Table 4.4](#), you will find the names of these elements and what they involve. You will also see how the following event might be categorized: *Following an argument and as soon as she got home, Jessie sent Casey a text message stating she wanted to end their relationship.*

As you consider the terms of the pentad, notice that they are all elements that make up a good story or narrative. It is a good bet that within any story, each one of these elements will be included. However, not all of them will be given the same amount of attention or provided the same emphasis.

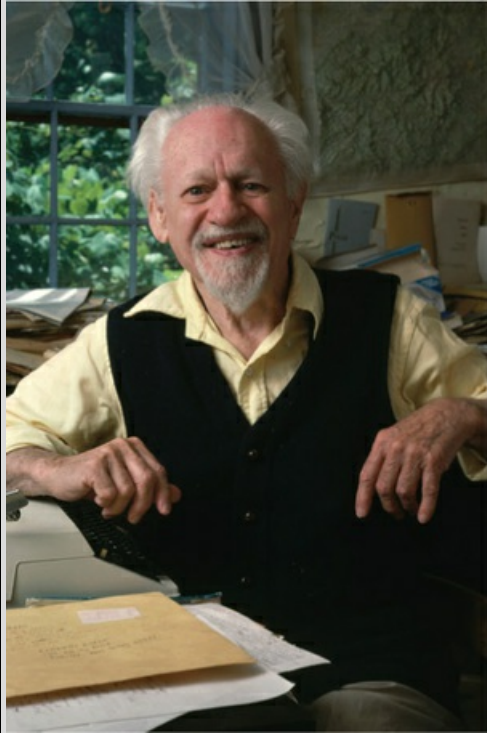
The element(s) emphasized in a story provide information about the speaker's motivation and how it puts a spin on the situation. Stories are not simply narrations of events but personalized ways of telling. When a person highlights certain elements of the pentad and not others, he or she is presenting his or her view of the world and emphasizing those elements of the sequence that deserve the most attention or explain what happened.

We can use your academically challenged friend from a previous example to illustrate what we mean. Suppose your friend says the following after doing poorly on an examination: "That room was so cold, it was difficult to concentrate on the test." In this example, the *scene* is being emphasized as the important element of the story. Your friend is not taking responsibility as an *agent*, but instead blaming the location of the act.

By the way . . . : Would You Believe Six Fingers?



After originally developing the pentad, Burke (1969) would sometimes include a sixth element: *attitude*. Describing this term, he noted that building something with a hammer would involve an instrument, or *agency*. Building something with diligence would involve an *attitude*. So, the pentad may actually be a hexad.



©Nancy R. Schiff/Hulton Archive/Getty

Questions to Consider

1. What are some examples of narratives and accounts focused on attitude?
2. What might be the (unstated) attitude accompanying agency in the example from [Table 4.4](#)?

act: element of the pentad involving what happened (see *scene, agent, agency, purpose*)

scene: element of the pentad involving the situation or location of an act (see *act, agent, agency, purpose*)

agent: element of the pentad involving who performed an act (see *act, scene, agency, purpose*)

agency: element of the pentad involving how an act was accomplished (see *act, scene, agent, purpose*)

purpose: element of the pentad involving why an act that took place (see *act, scene, agent, agency*)

Ratios of the Pentad

The elements of the pentad can be used and understood individually. However, they are also interconnected. Burke (1969) likened them to five fingers on a hand, separate and yet interrelated and used together.

Narratives and accounts may use more than one element of the pentad when framing outcomes or situations as inevitable. When doing so, the outcome or situation seems almost natural, unavoidable, and unquestionable. [Table 4.5](#) provides some ratios for you to consider. Keep in mind that there exist many more. We encourage you to construct your own using the elements of the pentad to better understand them and recognize them in your everyday life.

Table 4.4 Elements of the Pentad

Act	What happened	Jessie ended her relationship with Casey
Scene	Situation or location of the act	Immediately following an argument; Jessie's home
Agent	Who performed the act	Jessie
Agency	How the act was accomplished	Through sending a text message
Purpose	Why the act took place	To end a relationship

Table 4.5 **Accounting Using Ratios**

Agent:	Uses a person's character to explain actions
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He's the kind of guy who does that sort of thing.• Friends don't let friends drive drunk.
Scene:	Uses a situation or circumstances to justify action
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desperate times call for desperate measures.• This is war, and harsh methods are needed to obtain the truth from prisoners.
Scene:	Uses a situation to explain the kinds of characters who are found there
Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Politics makes strange bedfellows.• Miami, Florida, is a sunny place for shady people.

Functions of Verbal Communication

The use of verbal communication and all symbolic activity is transactive. Things are accomplished beyond the exchange of symbols. On its most basic level, verbal communication enables people to symbolically represent objects, ideas, places, and explanations. As mentioned earlier, using the word *cat* makes life a lot easier than getting down on all fours and acting like a cat. It is also less embarrassing than if you had to go so far as to start licking your leg, coughing up a hairball, and shedding. Video of that behavior would have a nonstop ticket to YouTube!

Verbal communication does more than just represent, though. It presents the worldviews of a speaker and is used to influence other people. It also creates meanings, realities, relationships, identities, and cultures. We mentioned in [Chapter 1](#) that the stuff of life is created, transformed, and maintained through verbal communication and other symbolic activity.

These ideas are explored in more detail within later chapters. For now, we want to explore two important functions of verbal communication. We will examine the use of verbal communication when influencing others. We will then examine its relational functions.

Influencing Others: Facework and Politeness

As people interact with one another in everyday life, they generally want to be viewed by others in a positive light. They want to be accepted and to be viewed with respect. There are also many times throughout the day that they will need to affect the behaviors of others. This impact can be as minor as asking someone to pass the ketchup to as major as asking a huge favor. Influencing how we are viewed by others and influencing the behaviors of others involve facework and politeness.

Skills You Can Use: Telling Stories and Providing Accounts



Burke's (1969) pentad can help you analyze the stories and accounts of others. However, it can also be used as you develop your own. Consider when it might be more appropriate to emphasize act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose when sharing particular stories and accounts with others.

By the way . . .: Nonverbal Facework



Although *face* is used as a metaphor, it is worth noticing how often people who are embarrassed or who feel foolish cover their faces with their hands. It is an almost automatic reaction to shame or to the recognition that they have done something foolish.

Questions to Consider

1. We talk about nonverbal communication in the [next chapter](#), but how do you think nonverbal communication is used with facework?
2. Which do you think is more important in facework, verbal communication or nonverbal communication?

Facework

William Cupach and Sandra Metts (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Metts, 2000) use the term facework when referring to the management of people's *face*, meaning dignity, respect, and acceptance. In most cases, people want to be viewed in a positive manner by others, and those others may include anyone with whom an encounter is shared. Accordingly, people desire positive face regardless of whether interacting with a close friend or with classmates, colleagues, instructors, employees at a store, or even strangers on the street. For instance, people tend to get angry when ignored by store employees while shopping. The anger likely comes not just from having one's time wasted but also from not feeling respected. Conversely, store employees may not feel respected when being yelled at by a customer.

Ethical Issue

Should you always be polite and save people's face when they do something embarrassing?

Face Wants

People have positive face wants and negative face wants. Positive face wants refer to the need to be seen and accepted as a worthwhile and reasonable person. Positive face wants are dealt with and satisfied quite frequently through verbal communication. For instance, you often hear people pay such compliments as "You are doing a great job" or "How very nice of you." These are addressed directly to positive face wants.

Negative face wants refer to the desire not to be imposed on or treated as inferior. The management of this last type of face want is perhaps the most familiar. For example, you may hear people say such things as "I don't mean to trouble you, but would you . . ." or "Sorry to be a nuisance, but . . ." Our personal favorite from students, "I have a *quick* question," implies that it will not be a lot of trouble or a big imposition to answer it.

Face concerns are evident in everyday communication among those sharing a relationship (see Charee, Romo, & Dailey, 2013). Use of either type of face allows you to manage your relationships by paying attention to the ways people need to be seen in the social world. The behaviors are therefore a subtle kind of relational management done in talk.

facework: the management of people's dignity or self-respect, known as "face"

positive face wants: the need to be seen and accepted as a worthwhile and reasonable person (contrast with *negative face wants*)

negative face wants: the desire not to be imposed on or treated as inferior (contrast with *positive face wants*)

Maintaining Positive Face

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1971) promoted the notion that *face* is something managed by people in social interactions. People cooperate to maintain positive face for one another and to avoid negative face for one another.

An example of helping others to maintain a positive face and avoid a negative face may occur when they make a mistake or do something embarrassing. In such cases, people trivialize an embarrassing mistake by saying, "Oh, don't worry about it" or "I do that all the time." In effect, they are saying that they do not see the other person's

behavior truly as an indication of the “true self.” They are trying to let the individual off the hook *as a person* and are separating momentary mistaken actions from the person as a socially appropriate being.

Politeness Theory

As mentioned earlier, people must affect the behaviors of others throughout daily life. When this is done, there is a chance that positive face can be diminished and negative face can be imposed. Linguists Penelope Brown and Steven Levinson (1978) developed a theory of politeness to describe the ways that people deal with these possibilities.

Although there is a chance that face will be threatened, not all face-threatening acts are equal. When determining the size of the face threat, the following three things must be considered: (1) the relationship shared by the interactants, (2) the power difference of the interactants, and (3) the size of the imposition. Some relationships are more likely than others to make impositions appropriate. For instance, asking a friend to help you move is more acceptable than asking an acquaintance. Differences in power may make impositions more appropriate. For instance, a boss asking an employee to move a box would be more acceptable than a coworker of the same standing asking another coworker to do the same thing. The sizes of impositions also differ. Asking someone to open a window is less of an imposition than asking someone to give you a ride to the airport.

Determining the size of the face-threatening act assists people when determining the best way to influence someone else’s behavior. In [Table 4.6](#), for example, a respondent may practice avoidance by brushing off the request with such responses as “Lift with your knees” or “Put some. . . .”

Table 4.6 Politeness Strategies

Bald on Record	Act directly without concern for face needs. Likely used when an imposition is small or appropriate given relationship of interactants. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I need you to help me lift this sofa for a minute.• I need you to give me your recipe for Duck & McMahan Pancakes Supreme ("Mmmm, them's real goooooood").
Positive Politeness	Focus on positive face of the person, often through flattery or offering something in return. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are so strong, muscular, and fit. Could you help me to lift this sofa?• If you would give me your recipe for Duck & McMahan Pancakes Supreme ("Mmmm, them's real goooooood"), I will tell your grandchildren what a great cook you are.
Negative Politeness	Acknowledge possibility of negative face, offering regrets or being pessimistic. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a lot to ask, but would you mind helping me lift this really heavy sofa?• I don't suppose you would be willing to share with your own offspring your super-secret recipe for those fabulous pancakes that you worked so hard to develop from the Duck and McMahan website?
Off Record	Hint or present the request in a vague manner. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I sure could use some help lifting this sofa.• I don't know how I am going to get to make my friends those pancakes I promised.
Avoidance	Sometimes the face-threatening act is so large, the respondent avoids it entirely. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lift with your knees.• Put some butter in the pan. You are on your own!

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Look at What I Can Do

Think about a situation where you overheard two people talking and you could tell—you just *knew*—that they were not close but that one of them was trying to impress the other and get into a relationship with him or her.



©iStockphoto.com/DragonImages

Questions to Consider

1. What did you notice that made you sure you were right about the person doing the “impressing”?
2. How did you know whether the other person was impressed?

bald on record (politeness strategy): when a person acts directly without concern for face needs (see *avoidance*, *negative politeness*, *off record*, *positive politeness*)

positive politeness (politeness strategy): when a person focuses on positive face, often through flattery or by offering something in return (see *avoidance*, *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *off record*)

negative politeness (politeness strategy): when a person acknowledges the possibility of negative face, offering regrets or being pessimistic (see *avoidance*, *bald on record*, *off record*, *positive politeness*)

off record (politeness strategy): when a person hints or presents a face-threatening act in a vague manner (see *avoidance*, *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *positive politeness*)

avoidance (politeness strategy): when a person avoids a face-threatening act altogether (see *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *off record*, *positive politeness*)

Relationships and Everyday Talk

Another important function of verbal communication is its use in the development and maintenance of relationships. Steve Duck and Kris Pond (1989), apart from being our favorite combination of author names, came up with some ideas about the way relationships connect with talk in everyday life. They pointed out that talk can serve the following three functions for relationships: (1) instrumental, (2) indexical, and (3) essential.

Talk in friendships or relationships can be described in terms of three functions: instrumental, indexical, and essential. Which function of talk would you use to describe the two students in this photo?



©iStockphoto.com/Wavebreakmedia

Instrumental Function

The instrumental function of talk occurs when what is said results in the accomplishment of a goal in the relationship. The instrumental function of talk in relationships is illustrated whenever you ask someone out for a date, to a party, to meet you for coffee, to be your friend, or to be just a little bit more sensitive and caring. What you say reveals a goal that you have in mind for the relationship, and talk is the means or instrument by which you reveal it. Anything you say that serves the purpose of bringing something new to or changing anything about the relationship is an instrumental function of talk in relationships.

Indexical Function

The indexical function of talk demonstrates or indicates the nature of the relationship between speakers. You index your relationship in *what* you say to someone and the *way* that you say it (nonverbal). As we noted earlier, if you say in a sharp tone “Come into my office; I want to see you!” you are being discourteous, and you are indicating that you are superior to the other person and have the relational right to order him or her around. If you say in a pleasant tone “Would you happen to have a free moment? I would appreciate it if we could meet in my office,” you are indicating respect for the other person and indicating relational equality. The content and relational elements of the talk occur together. In your talk with other people, you constantly weave in clues about your relationships. The fact that you would say some words to some people and avoid saying them to other people indicates different relationships.

Essential Function

The essential function of talk happens when talk makes a relationship real or brings it into being. The essential function of talk often occurs through the use of coupling references or making assumptions that the relationship exists. People very easily underestimate the extent to which talk and its nonverbal wrapping *are* a relationship.

instrumental function of talk: when what is said brings about a goal that you have in mind for the relationship, and talk is the means or instrument by which it is accomplished (e.g., asking someone on a date or to come with you to a party)

indexical function of talk: demonstrates or indicates the nature of the relationship between speakers

essential function of talk: a function of talk that makes the relationship real and talks it into being, often by using coupling references or making assumptions that the relationship exists

Verbal communication creates and embodies relationships both directly and indirectly. Direct talk would be such statements as “You’re my friend” and “I love you.” Indirect talk, which recognizes the relationship’s existence but does not mention it explicitly, would include such questions or statements as “What shall we do this weekend?” and “Let’s do something really special tonight.” The essential function of talk operates in less obvious ways as well. Examples of these less obvious forms of talk include frequent references to *we* and *us* along with the use of nicknames.

Of course, when two people are in a relationship, they do not spend every moment with each other. You experience absences, breaks, and separations in your relationships. These may be relatively short (one person goes shopping), longer (a child goes to school for the day), or extended (two lovers get jobs in different parts of the country).

Because these breaks occur, there are ways to indicate that, although the interaction may be over, the relationship itself continues. For example, you might say, “See you next week,” “Talk to you later,” or “In the [next chapter](#), we will be discussing nonverbal communication.”

Focus Questions Revisited

1. How is verbal communication symbolic?

Verbal communication is the use of language. Language uses words. Words are symbolic representations.

2. How does verbal communication involve meaning?

Words have denotative meaning and connotative meaning. *Denotative meaning* is the general (Dictionary) meaning of a word. *Connotative meaning* refers to the (Complicated) overtones and implications associated with a word or an object. Words are also given particular value in a society.

3. How is verbal communication relational?

Verbal communication influences relationships, and relationships influence verbal communication. Whenever you communicate verbally, a particular relationship is presumed with another person, the members of a group, or an audience. Another way of thinking about this is that when you are verbally communicating, you are also relating.

4. How is verbal communication cultural?

Verbal communication is cultural, much in the way that it is relational. Verbal communication influences culture, and culture influences verbal communication. Whenever you communicate verbally, cultural assumptions are presumed involving appropriateness and meanings within a given society or group.

5. What frames your understanding of verbal communication?

Frames used to understand communication can involve relationships, cultures, settings, and other factors influencing communication. These frames can be recognized and established through the form of language. They can also be adjusted during the course of a conversation.

6. What is the presentational nature of verbal communication?

The selection of words when speaking is meaningful and provides information about the perspective and worldview of the person sending a message. All verbal communication is presentational, but when people tell stories and provide accounts, its presentational nature is particularly recognizable.

7. What are the functions of verbal communication?

Verbal communication is used to represent other things. In doing so, verbal communication also provides information about the worldview of others. It is used to influence other people. It also creates meanings, realities, relationships, identities, and cultures.

Key Concepts

accommodation 79
accounts 80
act 82
agency 82
agent 82
avoidance 85
bald on record 85
collectivist talk 78
connotative meaning 72
convergence 79
conversational hypertext 75
denotative meaning 71
Devil terms 72
divergence 80
elaborated code 75
essential function of talk 86
facework 84
feminine talk 78
God terms 72
high code 79
high-context talk 78
indexical function of talk 86
individualist talk 78
instrumental function of talk 86
langue 80
low code 79
low-context talk 78
masculine talk 78
narrative 80
negative face wants 84
negative politeness 85
off record 85
parole 80
pentad 81
polysemy 71
positive face wants 84
positive politeness 85
purpose 82
restricted code 75
Sapir–Whorf hypothesis 71
scene 82
verbal communication 69

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Try conducting a conversation with one of your friends where you use only high code. Afterward, ask your friend how long it took to notice something wrong or inappropriate in the situation.
2. Ask your friends if they ever find it hard to know when you are kidding and what makes it hard.
3. Have your friends report an occasion when they caught someone in a bold-faced lie and how they knew. How did they handle it, based on what you know about facework?

Media Connections

1. Find news stories that are structured in ways that illustrate the pentad.
2. Language used on social networking sites and when making comments online tends to be more argumentative than that which is used elsewhere. Collect examples of argumentative language use online and consider why such language use is more prevalent online.
3. What techniques do news anchors use on television to relate with their audience and seem friendly, likable, and credible?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

5 Nonverbal Communication



©iStockphoto.com/skynesher

Chapter Outline

[Misconceptions About Nonverbal Communication](#)

[Misconception One: 93% of Meaning Comes From Nonverbal Communication](#)

[Misconception Two: Some Nonverbal Communication Is Universally Understood](#)

[Misconception Three: Deception Can Be Accurately Detected Through Nonverbal Communication](#)

[Misconception Four: People Read Nonverbal Communication](#)

[What Is Nonverbal Communication?](#)

[Symbolic](#)

[Decoding and Encoding](#)

[Dynamic and Static](#)

[Guided by Rules](#)

[Cultural](#)

[Personal](#)

[Multichanneled](#)

[Ambiguous](#)

[Less Controlled](#)

[Continuous](#)

[The Functions of Nonverbal Communication](#)

[Interconnects With Verbal Communication](#)

[Regulates Interactions](#)

[Identifies Individuals](#)

[Transmits Emotional Information](#)

[Relational Meaning and Understanding](#)

[Types of Nonverbal Communication](#)

[Environment](#)

[Proxemics](#)

[Personal Space and Distance](#)

[Kinesics](#)

[Eye Contact and Gaze](#)

[Vocalics](#)

[Chronemics](#)

[Haptics](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are some common misconceptions about nonverbal communication?
2. What is nonverbal communication?
3. How does nonverbal communication interconnect with verbal communication?
4. How does nonverbal communication regulate interactions?
5. How does nonverbal communication identify people?
6. How does nonverbal communication transmit emotional information?
7. What are the most common types of nonverbal communication?

Nonverbal communication is any symbolic activity that communicates a message other than words. This definition covers a very wide range of topics: facial expression, hand movements, dress, tattoos, jewelry, physical attractiveness, timing of what happens, distance, tone of voice, eye movements, the positioning of furniture to create atmosphere, touch, and smell—and that is not an exhaustive list.

Nonverbal communication is used differently by different cultures. In Mediterranean cultures, especially Italian, it is used as a perpetual accompaniment of speech with much arm and hand movement as well as facial expressions changing for emphasis and clarity. However, it is a mistake to resign nonverbal communication to only special cultural examples.

Nonverbal communication is always present during face-to-face interactions and carries messages over and above the words you speak. For example, a smile makes your words seem friendly, but a sneer makes the same words seem sarcastic. Nonverbal communication may go along with verbal communication, but not always. You might say, “I’m *not* angry,” but look as if you are really angry. Or you might say, “I love you,” and only have to exchange a glance with your partner for him or her to see that you really mean it. Accordingly, nonverbal communication *frames* talk and helps you determine its meaning.

Nonverbal communication can also frame other people’s assessments and judgments of you and your identity, your status and power, and your sincerity in what you say. It can further indicate how you feel about other people. The way you move, look, and sound conveys relational messages to others. All nonverbal communication conveys something about your sense of relaxation and comfort with the person with whom you are speaking. Nonverbal communication also indicates your *evaluation or assessment* of that person. In short, nonverbal communication is an essential *relational* element of all interaction, and you cannot have interactions without nonverbal communication; nor can you have interactions without the *relational messages* that nonverbal communication sends.

Nonverbal communication has been tied up with your communication all of your life, so it might be difficult to fully appreciate its importance. However, consider difficulties that may arise when nonverbal cues are absent, such as when texting, sending an e-mail, or making comments on social networking sites. Even if that example does not convince you, the value in understanding nonverbal communication will soon become apparent as you read this chapter. Increasing your understanding of nonverbal communication may also increase your effectiveness in interpreting the messages of others and in conveying your own messages.

nonverbal communication: any symbolic activity other than the use of language

Misconceptions About Nonverbal Communication

Even though it might be difficult to consider the importance of nonverbal communication and people sometimes take it for granted, some widely held misconceptions about nonverbal communication exist. We should clear those up before moving forward. However, these misconceptions are so ingrained, you may have trouble believing that they are not true. And because academics do not always agree, even your instructor may have other ideas. Some advice: If it comes up on an examination, go with your instructor's view and not ours. Your grade point average will thank you! Nevertheless, here are some misconceptions about nonverbal communication, you may have encountered.

Misconception One: 93% of Meaning Comes From Nonverbal Communication

We will start with a big one. It is frequently stated by well-meaning instructors and textbook authors along with not-so-well-meaning “image consultants,” “communication coaches,” and self-help book authors that 93% (or some other high number) of meaning comes from nonverbal communication. This statement is usually provided by instructors and textbook authors to convey the importance of nonverbal communication and by those other people to sell their “services” or books. The truth is, it is not true.

Do not get us wrong, nonverbal communication is important, it is just impossible to put a number on it, or anything for that matter. And, in some cases, more meaning might come from nonverbal communication, but in other cases, more meaning might come from verbal communication.

Like many misconceptions and myths, this one has an origin that has been widely misunderstood. It is based on two experiments conducted more than a half-century ago by a psychologist, Albert Mehrabian (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967). His findings indicated that 7% of meaning came from words, 38% of meaning came from tone of voice, and 55% of meaning came from body movement. So, 93% of meaning comes from nonverbal.

However, there were a host of problems with these studies. Among many other problems, he was only looking at emotional words, participants based responses after hearing only a single word, the number of participants was extremely small, and the experiment was conducted in an artificial, unnatural way.

Even though that number is untrue regardless of the situation, in his defense, Mehrabian only ever claimed it involved emotional words (or “word” in the case of the experiment). Plus, he really disliked that his research had been misinterpreted so broadly. He has been quoted saying, “I am obviously uncomfortable about misquotes of my work. From the very beginning, I have tried to give people the correct limitations of my finding. Unfortunately, the field of self-styled ‘corporate image consultants’ or ‘leadership consultants’ has numerous practitioners with very little psychological expertise” (quoted in Atkinson, 2005, p. 345). When asked if it were true that 93% of meaning is nonverbal, he maintained, “Of course not. And every time I hear my results being quoted in this way, I cringe inside. It must be obvious to anyone with a little bit of common sense that this cannot be right” (quoted in De Bruyckere, Kirschner, & Hulshof, 2015, p. 82).

So, there is no particular percentage of meaning derived from nonverbal communication. However, it is important and worth our attention.

Misconception Two: Some Nonverbal Communication Is Universally Understood

Another misconception about nonverbal communication, and one about which academics may even disagree, is that some nonverbal communication is universally understood. That is simply not true.

However, it is easy to see why people might believe that it is true. No matter where you go in the world, you will probably see people with similar facial expressions. And, there are some innate nonverbal behaviors, such as shivering perhaps when a person is cold or frightened and the flushing of cheeks when experiencing some emotions or an illness.

Yet, there exist no universally understood nonverbal behaviors. Some nonverbal behaviors and symbols are perhaps universally recognized (the smile, for example), but they do not necessarily have universal meaning in the same contexts. Even within a single culture, those behaviors can have vastly different meanings. Further, there may be similarities among nonverbal behaviors, but there are subtle differences among different cultural groups (Elfenbein, 2013).

Misconception Three: Deception Can Be Accurately Detected Through Nonverbal Communication

As with nonverbal communication being universally understood, people tend to believe that certain nonverbal communication will consistently reveal deception (Global Deception Research Team, 2006). So persistent is this belief that when attempting to spot a liar, some people become so focused on trying to determine deceit by overserving nonverbal communication, they overlook such other factors as what they are actually saying or reasons why they might be lying (Bond, Howard, Hutchinson, & Masip, 2013; Masip & Herrero, 2014). There was even a television program about someone able to detect deception, and so-called experts advertise the ability to determine whether someone is being honest or dishonest. If this belief were true, of course, no poker player would ever be able to bluff and con artists as well as many politicians would be out of business. And, beyond outright lies, what about all of those times when you “hid” your real feelings, such as pretending to be happy when you were really upset?

The truth is that no particular nonverbal behavior (eye movement, facial expression, vocal cues, or anything else) consistently reveals deception. However, that does not prevent people from believing that it is possible. In fact, people tend to believe they are better at spotting liars than they really are, which probably is advantageous for the liars. Yet, people have nearly as good of a chance of determining deceit by simply guessing as they would by trying to determine it by focusing on nonverbal communication, and even people such as police officers and others whose job would benefit from the ability to spot a liar are no better at doing so than the general population (Aamodt & Custer, 2006; Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Vrij, 2008).

In a completely unrelated matter, your authors would like to talk with you about reasonably priced oceanfront property in Iowa. . . .

Misconception Four: People Read Nonverbal Communication

This final misconception may just be a matter of word choice rather than something about which people are completely wrong. People do assign meaning to nonverbal communication as they do with verbal communication. However, nonverbal communication does not involve language and cannot be read; it has no grammar. Nevertheless, the phrase “reading people like a book” still exists.

What features of nonverbal communication can you use to form an impression of this person?



This argument might seem to be a whole lot about nothing at all. After all, people who talk about reading nonverbal communication probably do not mean it literally. The problem, though, is when people attempt to exploit this misconception for a profit. There are many books by so-called nonverbal communication experts who claim to be able to teach people to read people like a book or teach the secrets to reading “body language.” Such experts also hire themselves out to media outlets to “analyze” the “body language” of celebrities and politicians. They are really not reading nonverbal communication and are probably not any better at assigning meaning to nonverbal communication than anyone else.

What Is Nonverbal Communication?

Though a definition of nonverbal communication was provided earlier, a more complete examination is needed to better understand and appreciate it. As we engage in a deeper exploration of nonverbal communication, we will address the characteristics it shares with verbal communication. For instance, both verbal and nonverbal communication are symbolic and share many of the same characteristics, such as being personal, ambiguous, guided by rules, and linked to culture. We also discuss characteristics unique to nonverbal communication, such as its continuous nature and that it is often beyond our full control. This comparison will help you understand the workings of nonverbal communication and should add to your understanding of verbal communication, with which it often occurs.

Symbolic

Nonverbal communication involves the use of symbols. Accordingly, everything we discuss about symbols in [Chapter 1](#) applies to nonverbal communication. In this regard, nonverbal communication and verbal communication are alike, with both being symbolic. The key difference between them is that verbal communication involves the use of language and nonverbal communication involves all other symbolic activity.

Decoding and Encoding

Nonverbal communication requires decoding and encoding. Decoding is the act of assigning meaning to nonverbal symbols. When decoding a nonverbal message, you draw meaning from something you observe. For example, if somebody blushes unexpectedly, you might decode that as meaning he or she is embarrassed. Effective decoding increases the chances of accurately assigning meaning to the messages of others. It will also enable you to determine a person's emotions. Successful medical and sales professionals tend to be good decoders (Puccinelli, Andrzejewski, Markos, Noga, & Motyka, 2013; Sheeler, 2013), and the ability to successfully decode nonverbal communication even correlates with winning when playing sports (Lausic, Razon, & Tenenbaum, 2015). [Table 5.1](#) provides characteristics of effective decoding.

decoding: the act of assigning meaning to nonverbal symbols you receive

Table 5.1 Characteristics of Effective Decoding

Effective decoders *attend* to whether others pay attention to nonverbal communication and seem to understand it. A skilled decoder will determine whether the person with whom he or she is interacting seems to pick up on nonverbal cues being provided.

Effective decoders *bond* with others and watch for signals others send about comfort in the situation. A skilled decoder will notice when a speaker is anxious and will smile more often or reward the speaker with head nods and encouraging nonverbal communication to put him or her at ease.

Effective decoders *coordinate* with others and respond to cues so the interaction runs smoothly with no awkward silences.

Effective decoders *detect* the undercurrents of a speaker's talk by attending carefully to eye movements and gestures that "leak" what the speaker truly feels.

Encoding is the act of using nonverbal symbols to convey meaning. When encoding a nonverbal message, you put your feelings or other information into behavior. For instance, if you are feeling happy, you tend to *look* truly happy. Effective encoding increases the chances that others will accurately assign meaning to your messages. It will also enable you to put your feelings "out there" and help other people "get" what is going on inside you when so desired. Skillful actors, teachers, and politicians tend to be good encoders (Koppensteiner & Grammer, 2010). [Table 5.2](#) provides characteristics of effective encoding.

encoding: putting feelings into behavior through nonverbal communication

Dynamic and Static

Nonverbal communication can be both dynamic and static. Dynamic nonverbal communication is that which is changeable during an interaction. We will discuss specific types of nonverbal communication more completely later in the chapter, but for now examples include eye contact, facial expression, voice, and gestures. As you talk with someone, for example, your eye contact will vary, your facial expressions will change, elements of your voice will change, and various gestures will be incorporated.

Static nonverbal communication is that which does not change during an interaction. Examples of static nonverbal communication are clothing, hairstyle, body art, and piercings, as well as general surroundings such as the arrangement of furniture or the color of the walls. Although some of these things may change during an interaction, most often they do not change.

Table 5.2 Characteristics of Effective Encoding

Effective encoders *affirm* others through encoding approval and liking while talking. Examples of this behavior include smiling and maintaining eye contact.

Effective encoders *blend* their nonverbal communication with their verbal communication to allow for consistency between what is spoken and what is conveyed nonverbally.

Effective encoders are *direct* by striving to make their nonverbal communication clear and as unambiguous as possible.

Effective encoders exhibit *emotional clarity* so that the emotions of their words are matched by their nonverbal expression of emotion.

dynamic: elements of nonverbal communication that are changeable during interaction (e.g., facial expression, posture, gesturing; contrast with *static*)

static: elements of nonverbal communication that are fixed during interaction (e.g., shape of the room where an interaction takes place, color of eyes, clothes worn during an interview; contrast with *dynamic*)

Guided by Rules

Nonverbal communication is guided by rules. Rules guide the choice of nonverbal symbols that should be used in specific situations and with certain people. The appropriateness of greeting someone with a kiss depends on whether he or she is your romantic partner, an attendant behind the counter at a gas station, or someone from a culture where a kiss on the cheek is an accepted greeting even between persons of the same sex (Russia or Italy, for example). Rules also guide evaluation of nonverbal behavior. A brisk handshake is evaluated differently than a hearty handshake; a slight smile is evaluated differently than a broad smile (Hillewaert, 2016).

How can body art be both cultural and personal?



©iStockphoto.com/naphtalina

Compared with those guiding verbal communication, the rules guiding nonverbal communication are learned

indirectly and primarily through your interactions with others. This course may be the first time you have ever formally studied nonverbal communication, but you have been studying verbal language in school for years. With nonverbal communication, you have learned nearly everything, from the meaning of particular nonverbal symbols to the structure of their use, informally throughout your lifetime as you have interacted with other people.

Cultural

Nonverbal communication is linked to cultural appropriateness (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012). Cultures vary on the meanings and appropriateness of nonverbal behaviors. In the United States, eye contact is often viewed as a display of courtesy, honesty, and respect. In other countries, making eye contact, especially with a superior, is considered improper and highly disrespectful. Further, many gestures are acceptable in some cultures but impolite or offensive in others. There also exists a host of cultural differences involving space, touch, time, and other nonverbal behaviors.

Personal

Nonverbal communication can be very personal. Similar to verbal communication, you develop your own personal meanings and use of nonverbal symbols. A person's use of some nonverbal symbols may even become idiosyncratic over time. Some people may not like to hug or be hugged, for example. Others still may wear their hair in distinctive styles or wear unique clothing.

Multichanneled

Nonverbal communication can also be considered multichanneled. In other words, nonverbal communication can be conveyed through many channels. And, multiple nonverbal messages can be received at the same time through multiple sensory channels. Sight, sound, touch, smell, and even taste (an area of nonverbal communication not receiving much attention) can be used in various combinations or all together in the reception of nonverbal messages. The multichanneled nature of nonverbal communication is beneficial because we often rely on accompanying nonverbal behaviors when assigning meanings to any single nonverbal message.

Ambiguous

Nonverbal communication is highly ambiguous, even more than the meaning of verbal communication. Indeed, the meaning of nonverbal communication is often unclear without additional information from context or communication frames. The ambiguous nature of communication can actually be valuable, though. When flirting, for instance, the associated nonverbal behaviors can mean many different things. Eye contact, a quick or sustained glance, a smile, or even a wink can be used either to flirt with someone or just to be friendly. Here, ambiguity is useful because it releases the pressure to receive the desired response. If the other person is interested, the response transacts your ambiguous message as flirtatious. If the other person is not interested, the response transacts your ambiguous behavior as “just being friendly” (Hall & Xing, 2015).

Although nonverbal communication is ambiguous, that does not mean that it is impossible to determine its meaning. You can more accurately interpret the meaning of nonverbal communication by recognizing that it occurs as part of a system and is related to other parts of an interaction. [Table 5.3](#) examines four clues to consider when assigning meaning.

Less Controlled

Nonverbal communication is less subject to control than is verbal communication. You might be able to keep from calling someone you dislike a jerk, but nonverbally you may be expressing your displeasure unknowingly through dirty looks or changes in posture and distance.

Table 5.3 Assigning Meaning to Nonverbal Communication

Verbal Communication	Nonverbal communication is understood in part by the <i>verbal communication</i> used with it. It can affect how words are understood, and words can affect how nonverbal communication is understood. Someone caressing your thigh and saying, “I love you” is doing something different than someone touching your thigh and saying, “Is this where it hurts?”
Other Nonverbal Communication	Any nonverbal communication has a relationship to <i>other nonverbal communication</i> that happens simultaneously. If someone is staring at you with a scowl and clenched fists, you can assume that the stare is intended as a threat; if the stare is accompanied by a smile and a soft expression, it is intended as friendly. Likewise, a smile accompanied by agitated gestures, sweating, or blushing probably means the person is nervous, but someone smiling and looking relaxed with an open posture is probably feeling friendly and confident.
Physical / Situational Context	The interpretation of nonverbal communication depends on the <i>physical context and situational context</i> of the interaction. If someone stares at you in class, it feels different from a stare across a crowded singles bar. A scream at a sports match probably means your team just scored, but a scream in your home could indicate the discovery of a rodent.
Relationship	How nonverbal communication is interpreted is also affected by your <i>relationship</i> to another person. If the person touching your thigh is a nurse, you’re probably right to assume that the touch is part of a treatment or medical exam, so stay there and get well. If the person is a stranger in a park, it’s time to leave—quickly.

Nonverbal behaviors often occur without your full awareness and reveal how you really feel or hidden information (Iwasaki, & Noguchi, 2016). This nonverbal betrayal of someone’s internal feelings is known as leakage. Because your spontaneous nonverbal communication is more difficult to control than your verbal communication, people are more likely to believe your nonverbal over your verbal messages—especially when the two are contradictory. People rely more on what you do than on what you say.

Disciplinary Debate: Controlled Nonverbal Communication



We maintain that nonverbal communication is less controlled than verbal communication. However, some people (such as con artists and actors) can train themselves to appear certain ways and even control their heart rates and other physical features.

Questions to Consider

1. Does this mean that nonverbal communication is actually easy to control with enough practice?
2. Can some nonverbal communication be controlled while other nonverbal communication is uncontrollable?

Continuous

Nonverbal communication is continuous and ongoing. If nothing else, you will always be communicating nonverbally through your physical appearance. More to the point, when interacting face-to-face, you begin communicating nonverbally before you start talking and will continue communicating after you stop. You can stop communicating verbally, but you cannot stop communicating nonverbally.

Ethical Issue

Now that you are learning more about nonverbal communication, would it be ethical to use this knowledge to your advantage when interacting with people who do not possess this knowledge?

The Functions of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication has many functions in everyday life, primarily in the transaction of meanings. Beyond the construction of meaning, though, nonverbal communication interconnects with verbal communication, regulates interactions, and identifies people. It also registers people's emotional states or displays their attitudes about themselves, the other person in the interaction, or their comfort level. Nonverbal communication further establishes relational meaning and understanding.

Interconnects With Verbal Communication

One function of nonverbal communication involves its interconnection with verbal communication. Your interpretation of verbal meaning is often framed by accompanying nonverbal elements, such as tone of voice, facial expression, and gestures.

Your nonverbal communication might *repeat* your verbal communication, sending a corresponding nonverbal message. For example, when you say hello to someone from across the room, you might wave at the same time.

Alternatively, nonverbal messages can *substitute*, or be used in place of, verbal messages. For example, you might just wave to acknowledge someone and not say anything.

Nonverbal communication is often used to *emphasize* or highlight the verbal message. If you have ever gone fishing and described “the one that got away” to your friends, you have no doubt used nonverbal communication to emphasize just how big that fish really was by holding your arms out wide to indicate its gargantuan length. A verbal message can also be emphasized through your tone of voice. When you tell someone a secret, for example, you may use a hushed voice to emphasize its private nature.

When nonverbal communication is used to *moderate* verbal communication, it plays down a verbal message. For instance, a doubtful tone of voice and the slight scrunching of your face and shoulders could indicate uncertainty. If your supervisor did this while saying, “I may be able to give you a raise this year,” you would probably not expect a raise. By moderating the verbal message nonverbally, your boss is letting you know there is uncertainty in that statement.

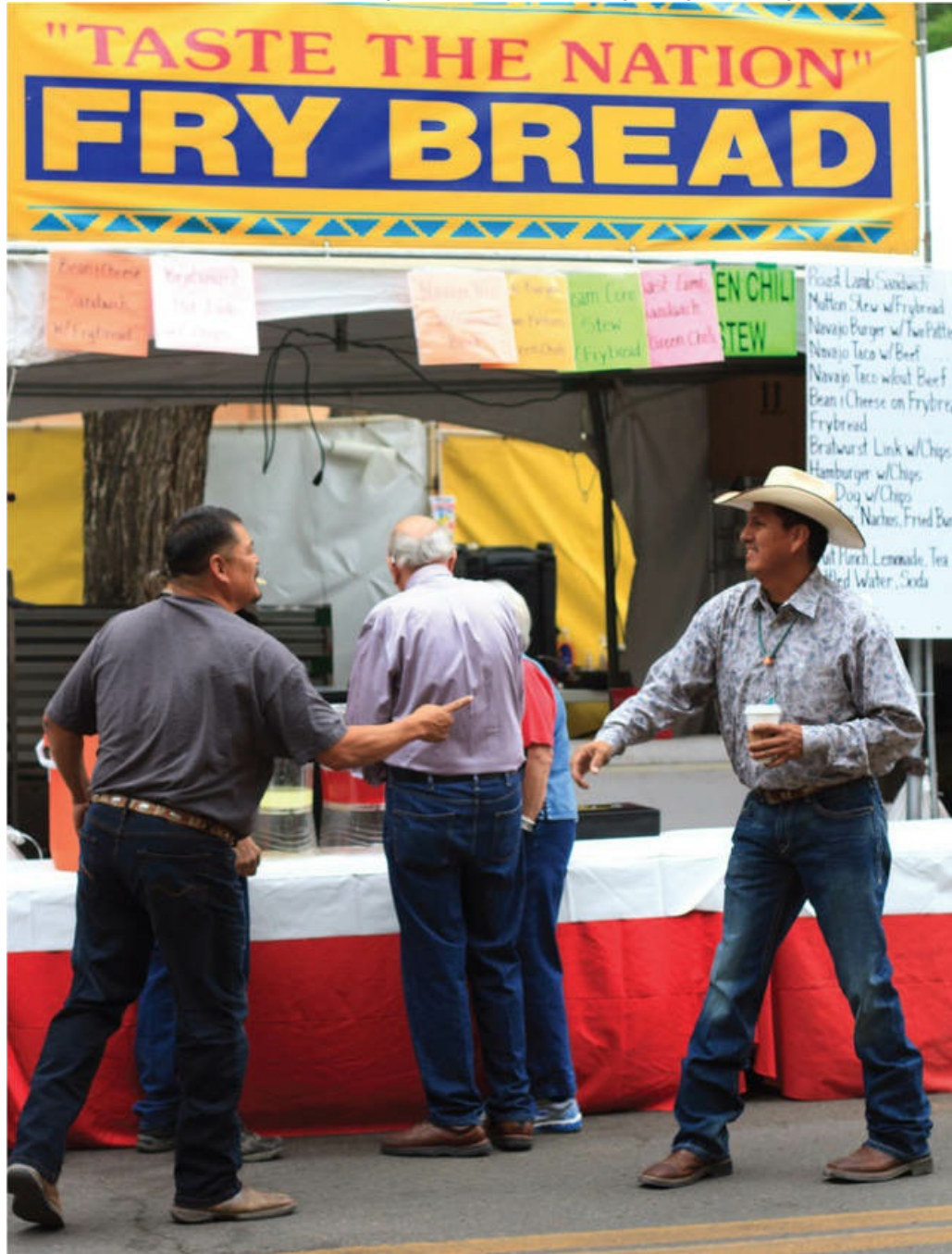
Your nonverbal communication can also *contradict* your verbal communication—sometimes intentionally, such as when you are being sarcastic (“Oh, nice job!” said angrily when someone spills coffee on you). Contradiction may occur unintentionally as well: for instance, when someone charges into a room, slams the door, sits down on the couch in a huff, and says “Oh, nothing” when you ask what is wrong. Contradiction is not always obvious, but you are generally skilled at detecting it—especially when you share a close, personal relationship with the speaker. Faced with contradiction, you will likely believe the person’s nonverbal over verbal communication. Why? (Hint: Spontaneous nonverbal communication is less subject to your control than is verbal communication.)

leakage: unintentional betrayal of internal feelings through nonverbal communication

Regulates Interactions

Nonverbal communication also helps regulate interactions. Nonverbal communication aids in starting or ending interactions. It is also used to determine and establish turn taking during interactions, so that people know when it is their turn to speak, so that they can indicate a desire to speak, and so that they can encourage the other people to speak.

How can nonverbal communication regulate interactions by beginning or ending a conversation?



©iStockphoto.com/JannHuzenga

Nonverbal communication can indicate whether you will actually engage in conversation. If one of your friends walks past you at a rapid pace with an intense look on his or her face, it shows that he or she is in a hurry or not in

the mood to talk. In this case, you might avoid interacting with your friend at this time. If someone looks frustrated or confused, however, you may decide to interact with him or her because the nonverbal behavior signals a need for help.

Nonverbal communication also assists in turn taking, which keeps interactions flowing and helps people avoid talking over one another. Through facial expression, vocal changes, and other nonverbal behaviors, people recognize when other people want them to take over the conversation, indicate to other people that they want to take over the conversation, and encourage other people to take over the conversation.

Nonverbal communication also signals the end to an interaction. You may, for example, stop talking, start to edge away, or show other signs of departure, such as looking away from the other person more often or checking the time on your phone or watch. When the interaction is coming to an end, speakers generally join in rituals of ending, such as stepping back, offering a handshake, or stating directly that it is time to go.

Identifies Individuals

Nonverbal communication also functions to identify specific individuals. Just as dogs know each other individually by smell, humans recognize one another specifically from facial appearance. You also use physical cues such as muscles, beards, skin color, breasts, and the color of a person's hair to identify him or her as a particular sex, age, race, or athletic ability.

Clothing conveys someone's sex or gender identity, personality (whether a person wears loud colors, sedate business attire, or punk clothing), favorite sports team, and job (police, military, security). Clothing can also identify changes in people, such as whether they have a special role today (prom outfits, wedding wear, gardening clothes).

People can also distinguish others' scents: What perfume or cologne do they wear? Do they smoke? Are they drinkers? People often do not comment on these kinds of clues, but if your physician smells of alcohol, you may well identify him or her as professionally incompetent to deal with your health concerns.

Communication + You: Nonverbal Communication and Anxiety



Think about a situation where you felt uncomfortable in the presence of another person. Inside, you may have been filled with anxiety. Consider how the other person could have known that you were anxious; for example, you may have been sweating, blushing, agitated, speaking too fast, or jumpy.



©iStockphoto.com/David Crespo Nieto

Questions to Consider

1. What did you do to try to conceal your nerves?
2. Have you ever seen other people trying to appear calm, but you weren't fooled? What behaviors gave away their anxiety?

Transmits Emotional Information

An additional function of nonverbal communication is to convey emotional information (Sanford, 2012). When you are angry, you scowl; when you are in love, you look gooey; when you feel happy, you smile. Nonverbal communication actually allows you to convey three different kinds of emotional information as follows.

Attitude Toward the Other

Nonverbal communication conveys your *attitude toward the other person*. If your facial expression conveys anxiety, viewers assume you are frightened. If your face looks relaxed and warm, viewers assume you are comfortable. If you care about what your instructor has to say, you fall silent when a lecture begins; talking in class (instructors' biggest complaint about students) makes it difficult for people to hear but also shows lack of respect.

Attitude Toward the Situation

Nonverbal communication conveys your *attitude toward the situation*: Rapidly moving about while talking conveys a message of anxiety. Police officers often see fidgeting and an inability to maintain eye contact as indicators of a person's guilt.

Attitude Toward Yourself

Nonverbal communication conveys information about your *attitude toward yourself*. If a person is arrogant, confident, or low in self-esteem, it is expressed through nonverbal behaviors. Arrogance shows up in nonverbal actions, such as facial expression, tone of voice, eye contact, and body posture. If someone stands up to his or her full height and faces you directly, you might assume that he or she is confident. Conversely, if he or she slouches and stares at the ground, you might assume that he or she is shy, lacks confidence, and is insecure.

Relational Meaning and Understanding

Nonverbal communication is a silent *relational* regulator. Your relationships with others inform your everyday communication, and your everyday communication develops relationships. Regulation of interactions controls engagement, politeness, coordination of action, and sense of pleasure in the interaction—all of which are ultimately relational in effect. The appearance of others enables you to distinguish and make judgments about them. Appearance also forms the basis of relational attraction. In fact, you often are attracted to people with facial and bodily features very similar to your own. Additionally, we also become aware of and promote changes in our relationships based on changes in nonverbal communication (Manusov, Docan-Morgan, & Harvey, 2015).

Types of Nonverbal Communication

Multiple types of nonverbal communication are used collectively in the construction and interpretation of meaning, the regulation of interactions, the development of identities, and the enactment of relationships. In what follows, we discuss types of nonverbal communication individually to provide a more detailed explanation, but keep in mind that nonverbal communication works as a whole system comprising all these elements.

Environment

When considering the environment as nonverbal communication, we can consider the natural or human-made surroundings in which communication takes place. The environmental context has a major impact on how people feel, how they behave, and how they communicate with one another. For instance, consider differences when dining at a fast-food restaurant versus an upscale restaurant. Through smells, colors, layout, seating, sounds, lighting, temperature, and even other environmental factors, fast-food restaurants have been designed so that people are more likely to be hungry and will eat quickly so that their space is freed up for other customers (Eaves & Leathers, 1991). Upscale restaurants manipulate those same environmental factors in different ways so that people might linger, so that they spend more money, and so that they are willing to spend more money because they are getting added value for their dining experience through comfort and décor.

Perceptions of Environment

Your perception of an environment will ultimately influence how you feel, how you behave, and how you interact with other people. Mark Knapp, Judith Hall, and Terrence Horgan (2014) have offered the following six dimensions of environments that influence our perceptions: (1) formality, (2) warmth, (3) privacy, (4) familiarity, (5) constraint, and (6) distance.

Make your case: Environment and Health Care



Consider how the environment of health care offices might influence how a patient might feel and influence patient–provider interactions. For instance, a more sterile environment with scalpels, needles, and other pointy objects in view might make a patient more nervous, whereas a more comforting environment with plush seating and surgical objects out of view might make a patient more relaxed. Further, the feeling of seclusion and privacy when talking with a provider might make the patient more likely to disclose uncomfortable information and provide more honest answers, than if the environment is one in which a patient might believe the conversation will be overheard by other people.

Questions to Consider

1. How might you design a health care office so that it is more comforting for patients?
2. How might you design a health care office so that patients feel a greater sense of privacy?

environment: the natural or human-made surroundings in which communication takes place

Formality

The formality dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as formal or informal. In other words, it involves whether you find a place to be serious and proper or relaxed and casual. Using the restaurant examples mentioned earlier, a fast-food restaurant is generally informal, so you might feel more relaxed, might not feel the need to dress nicely, and might not feel the need to speak softly when interacting with people. Conversely, an upscale restaurant might be perceived as more formal, so you might feel the need to behave more “properly,” dress more nicely, and hold conversations to a more quiet level.

Warmth

The warmth dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as welcoming, inviting, and comfortable. To an extent, this dimension might seem to overlap with formality because many people might feel more comfortable in an informal setting rather than a formal setting. However, some people may prefer more formal and structured settings over more informal and less regulated settings, so that is not necessarily always the case. A warm environment is any that you perceive as welcoming and comfortable, and that can vary for many people, although some businesses strive to make their locations just that to attract more customers.

Privacy

The privacy dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as secluded, where a person’s communication and activities are less apparent to unintended people. A sense of privacy might increase the likelihood that people will behave in ways, positive or negative, that they would not behave if other people could be watching them. It might also increase the possibility that someone will be willing to disclose more personal information than he or she would be if other people could overhear the conversation.

Familiarity

The familiarity dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as known. A sense of familiarity generally leads to comfort. Consider how you felt when first being on campus. Much of campus was probably unknown, which may very well have increased the nervousness you might have been experiencing. As your campus surroundings became more familiar, you likely felt more comfortable than you originally felt when there were so many unknowns. Chain stores such as Target and Walmart use familiarity to their advantage to encourage people to visit and to shop. When entering such chain stores, no matter where you find yourself and even if you have not been to that particular location, you can generally expect to find the same layout as any other location of that store you have been to in the past. Such familiarity, and subsequent comfort, increases the likelihood that you will shop there and spend your money.

Constraint

The constraint dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as restricting movement. Being constrained is sometimes uncomfortable for people, but many public places use constraint to manage people’s movements. IKEA stores, for example, are notoriously but effectively maze-like, channeling people

through the entire store and making it very difficult to skip any area. Plus, because it does seem so confusing and thinking they might not make it back to a particular area, people are likely to pick up items along the way, even if they are not certain they want to buy them. Once something is in a cart or in hand, a person becomes more likely to buy that item.

Although people do not always have as much space as they would like, what term is used to represent the need for people to establish space as their own?



Distance

The distance dimension deals with the extent to which an environment is perceived as enabling a person to be near to or far from another person or objects. The distance between people can greatly affect behavior and comfort. For instance, when people are standing in close proximity in such confined spaces as elevators, busses, or subways, they are more likely to avert their eyes and avoid interaction. Conversely, when people are positioned farther apart for whatever reason, they might find it difficult to interact, even if they desire to do so. This issue is something to keep in mind when considering the next type of nonverbal communication, proxemics.

Proxemics

Proxemics is the study of space and distance in communication. The occupation of space and the distance you maintain from others conveys messages about control, acceptance, and relationships. We will begin our discussion with territoriality and then talk about personal space and distance.

Skills You Can Use: Arranging Your Space



Your arrangement of the space in your interaction can make another person feel more comfortable or less comfortable and make that person feel more in control or less in control. Consider ways in which the arrangement of space that you control can be adjusted according to the types of relationships you want to achieve when people enter your space.

Territoriality

The need to establish space as your own is somewhat of a human need. Territoriality is the establishment and maintenance of space that people claim for their personal use. Irwin Altman (1975) points out three types of territory that you may establish: primary, secondary, and public. *Primary territory* is space that you own or have principal control over. This space is central to your life and includes such spaces as your house, room, apartment, office, or car. How you maintain and control this space communicates a great deal to those around you. Decorating your home in a particular fashion provides you with a sense of comfort and informs others about the type of person you may be or the types of interests you may have. Even in dorm rooms, though they are generally less than spacious, roommates find ways to assert ownership of “their” areas (Erlandson, 2012).

proxemics: the study of space and distance in communication

territoriality: the establishment and maintenance of space that people claim for their personal use

You establish *secondary territory* as your own through repeated use, even if it is space that is not central to your life or exclusive to you. A good example of secondary territory is the room where your class is held. Chances are pretty good that you and your fellow students sit in the exact same seats that you sat in on the first day of class. Even though this space does not belong to you, others associate it with you because of repeated use. Accordingly, if you came to class one day and someone was sitting in “your” seat, you might get upset or uncomfortable if you were forced to sit elsewhere.

Public territory is space open to everyone but available for your sole temporary occupancy once established as such. These spaces might include park benches, seats in a movie theater, and tables at a library. Secondary and public territory can involve the same type of physical space, such as a table at a restaurant, so consider the following example. If you go to the same restaurant every day for lunch and always sit at the same table, eventually it will become your secondary territory. Although it is open to everyone, once you claim that space for your temporary use, you assume exclusive control over it for the time being and would not expect anyone to violate that.

There are numerous cultural variations in the use of public territory. In the United States, for example, if you and your date went to a restaurant and were seated at a table for four, the two additional seats would remain empty regardless of whether other people were waiting to be seated. In many European countries, however, it would not be surprising if another couple you do not know is eventually seated at your table.

By the way . . . : Religious Practices



Note that in many religions (e.g., Judaism and Islam), women and men are allocated different spaces within religious buildings and may not interact during religious ceremonies. In weddings, for example, the male and female participants may be separated by a physical barrier or a symbolic one such as a sheet, indicating what is the “proper” place in that religion for the fully active male participants and

the restricted participation of the women.



©Sam Panthaky/AFP/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever encountered this type of territoriality? If so, how did you respond to it?
2. If you have never encountered this type of territoriality, how do you think you would have responded if you had?

Territoriality and Relationships.

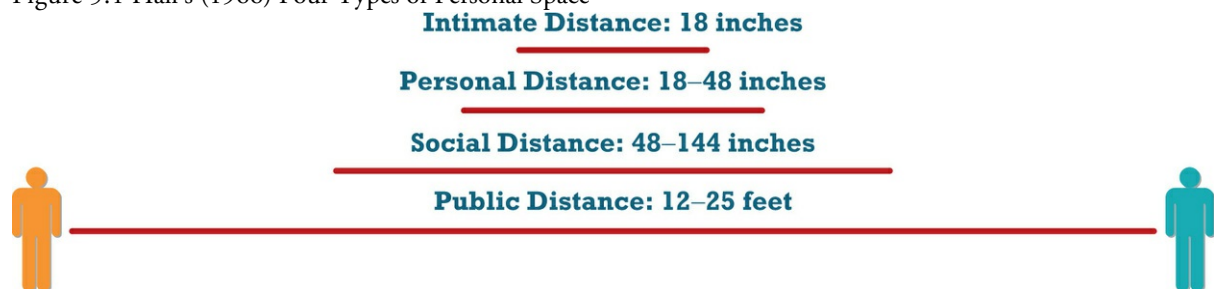
Our use of territory can be used to indicate and perform relationships. For example, inviting someone into our primary territory might be used to display or create feelings of closeness or intimacy. However, denying someone entry into our primary territory could specify that such feelings are not recognized or desired.

Our use of territory can also be used in the construction of leadership or power roles. A formal chair of a meeting sits at one end of the table, usually in a special seat, and everyone else lines up along the length of the table at right angles to the chair. In contrast, a more secure or less formal leader might sit anywhere at the table. From seemingly minor physical facts about the distribution and use of space, then, you can determine relational information about the people in a setting—who is in charge and who is not—as well as the leader’s preferred style of interaction, formal or informal.

Marking Our Territory.

People use markers to establish and announce their territory, and these markers are surprisingly effective. People mark space by putting their “stuff” on it. Markers are common when using public territory that is open and unrestricted. For example, when you lay a jacket over the back of a chair, you have claimed that chair. Should someone want to move the chair, he or she would probably ask your permission rather than simply removing the jacket and taking the chair. Markers are often used to indicate privacy and control, and you feel uncomfortable if someone else enters the space without permission. People meet this “invasion” with varying degrees of disapproval, but blood pressure frequently goes up.

Figure 5.1 Hall’s (1966) Four Types of Personal Space



Personal Space and Distance

You carry around with you an idea of how much actual space you should have during an interaction. This idea will be affected by your status, your sex, and your liking for the person with whom you are talking. It also will be affected by the situations in which you find yourself. Personal space refers to that space legitimately claimed or occupied by a person for the time being.

All of us have a body buffer zone, a kind of imaginary aura that we regard as part of ourselves. People differ in the sizes of their body buffer zones. If you step into the body buffer zone that someone feels is his or her “space,” even if it is beyond what you would normally expect, you may be in for trouble. Your friends and family can enter your body buffer zone more freely than can other people. You react to space and its use depending on the kind of situation in which you find yourself.

An early pioneer of personal space research, E. T. Hall (1966) distinguished among intimate distance (contact to 18 inches), personal distance (18–48 inches), social distance (48–144 inches), and public distance (12–25 feet). Although valuable, this early research does not explain cultural differences. For instance, it has become accepted that people from Latino and Arab cultures require less space for each type of encounter than do Northern Europeans and North Americans. Nevertheless, these types of personal space are frequently referenced when discussing space and distance and are illustrated in [Figure 5.1](#).

personal space: space legitimately claimed or occupied by a person for the time being; the area around a person that is regarded as part of the person and in which only informal and close relationships are conducted

body buffer zone: a kind of imaginary aura around you that you regard as part of yourself and your personal space

Space, Distance, and Relationships

The meaning of space or distance is framed by your relationships with others. What it means for someone to stand mere inches away from you will differ depending on whether he or she is a friend, an adversary, or a complete stranger. Close friends are literally closer to you—people generally stand closer to people they like. Similarly, a friend moving the backpack you placed on a table to sit near you would mean something entirely different than a complete stranger doing the same thing.

Your use of space and distance enacts these relationships. Subordinate individuals tend to give more space to individuals in leadership positions. An employee, for example, would stand at a greater distance when talking with an employer than with a coworker, indicating the superior–subordinate nature of that relationship and enabling both interactants to perform their respective roles.



©iStockphoto.com/UrsSidentop

Notice the difference between these two photos. The first photo is a scene from a Western city in which people are noticeably uncomfortable with their lack of personal space. The second photo captures Japanese train pushers, whose job is to cram as many people onto the subway car as possible. Little consideration is given to personal space in this Eastern city. What imaginary aura that people regard as part of themselves is obviously more restricted in the latter photo?



©Keystone/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Space and distance also allow relational negotiation to take place. For instance, a friend who desires a more intimate relationship with you may begin standing a bit closer to gauge your reaction. Similarly, a subordinate decreasing the amount of space granted to a superior may be indicating a desire for a more equal relationship. Either attempt could be accepted or rejected depending on the other person's view of the relationship. Such relational negotiation frequently takes place in families once adolescent sons or daughters start to claim bedrooms as their own space that is now private from invasive parents.

Kinesics

Kinesics refers to movement of the face and body that takes place during an interaction. Movement of the face and body can involve arm and hand movements, walking, sitting, standing, and facial expression. In what follows, we will discuss common categories of kinesic behavior and then specifically examine facial expression.

kinesics: the study of movements of the face and body that take place during an interaction

Categories of Kinesic Behavior

Although originally published nearly a half century ago, the following five types of kinesic behavior described by Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen (1969) continue to be used by nonverbal communication scholars: (1) emblems, (2) illustrators, (3) affect displays, (4) regulators, and (5) adaptors.

Emblems are not related to speech in the sense that they do not help illustrate what is being said, although they may clarify what a person means. Consider conductors directing bands and orchestras, police officers directing traffic, and coaches signaling plays. Emblems can nevertheless be translated into verbal expressions; for example, you recognize that bouncing the palm of your hand off your forehead means “How stupid of me! Why didn’t I think of it before?”

Illustrators are directly related to speech as it is being spoken and are used to visualize or emphasize its content. For example, turning your palm down and then rotating it as you describe how to unscrew a bottle cap is an illustrator, and scrunching up your face while saying, “This tastes disgusting,” is an illustrator using facial expression.

Affect displays are nonverbal expressions of emotion. When a person is expressing an emotion, the face will provide information about the exact emotion being expressed, and the body will provide information about its extent. You could, for example, be angry and scowling while your body is fairly loose and fluid, indicating low-intensity anger. However, you could be scowling, holding your body tight and rigid, and almost shaking, which would indicate great anger and tell others to use their knowledge of proxemics to give you plenty of space!

Regulators are nonverbal actions that indicate to others how you want them to behave or what you want them to do. One familiar regulator occurs at the end of most college classes: Students begin closing their books and gathering their belongings to signal to the instructor that it is time to end class. Other regulators include shivering when you want someone to close the window or turn up the heat, a look of frustration or confusion when you need help with a problem, and a closed-off posture (arms folded, legs crossed) when you want to be left alone.

Adaptors are nonverbal behaviors used to satisfy personal needs. Generally, these behaviors focus on a need to increase comfort or manage tension. For instance, when experiencing nervousness, a person may shake one or both legs while seated to release nervous energy. Of course, an adaptor can also be as simple as scratching an itch. Did you just experience the need to scratch an itch after reading the previous sentence and now this one? If you scratched it, you just used an adaptor.

emblems: nonverbal face and body movement represent feelings or ideas not necessarily being expressed verbally

illustrators: nonverbal face and body movement used to visualize or emphasize verbal communication

affect displays: nonverbal face and body movement used to express emotion

regulators: nonverbal face and body movement used to indicate to others how you want them to behave or what you want them to do

adaptors: nonverbal behaviors used to satisfy personal needs

Facial Expression

As mentioned earlier, our faces convey emotional information to others. Sometimes one's display of emotion is a natural expression, but other times the display of emotion is modified based on appropriateness of the situation. In the same piece by Ekman and Friesen (1969) where kinesic categories were offered, the following four types of facial management were also provided: (1) deintensification, (2) overintensification, (3) neutralization, and (4) masking.

Deintensification is a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is lessened. Consider a time when you might be excited about something but did not want to appear too excited. Or, perhaps you were saddened or upset but did not want to convey how strongly you were experiencing these feelings. In some instances, exhibiting too much emotion might be culturally inappropriate. In other instances, people may avoid showing too much emotion to avoid gender stereotypes (Brescoll, 2016).

The reverse of deintensification, overintensification is a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is increased. In this case, think about a situation when someone gave you a present about which you were less than thrilled. You appreciated the gesture, but a donation made in your name to the Save the Snails fund is not something you particularly like. You did not want to hurt this person's feelings, so you perhaps smiled a bit more than you would otherwise when offering thanks for the gift.

Neutralization is a form of facial management in which displays of emotion are nonexistent or quickly erased. This technique could be thought of as a blank expression or a poker face. Anytime you do not want someone to know how you are feeling, neutralization may be used.

Neutralization involves a lack of emotional display, whereas masking is a form of facial management in which the emotion displayed is the opposite of that being experienced. If you have ever been in competition and lost, for example, you might smile and act as if you are happy for the winner, when in reality you are upset and perhaps even angry about the decision.

deintensification: a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is lessened

overintensification: a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is increased

neutralization: a form of facial management in which displays of emotion are nonexistent or quickly erased

masking: a form of facial management in which the emotion displayed is the opposite of being experienced

Eye Contact and Gaze

Eye contact refers to the extent to which someone looks directly into the eyes of another person. In the United States, someone who “looks you in the eye” while talking is generally seen as reliable and honest. Conversely, someone with shifty eyes is treated as suspicious and untrustworthy. Gaze—distinguished from eye contact, where both interactants look at each other—describes one person looking at another and, most of the time, is seen as rewarding.

Most people generally like to be looked at when they are talking to someone else. In fact, if you gaze at a speaker and smile or nod approvingly, you will probably find that the speaker pays more attention to you, looks toward you more often, and engages in eye contact with you. (However, this is a culturally relative point, and in Eastern cultures, eye contact is disrespectful and an inferior in the hierarchy should look away from a superior. In this case, gaze aversion is a sign of respect.)

Although most eye contact is positive, it can also convey negative messages. A wide-eyed stare can convey disbelief or a threat. Years ago, Phoebe Ellsworth, Merrill Carlsmith, and Alexander Henson (1972) stood at the intersections of roads and stared at some drivers and not others. Those who were stared at tended to drive away more speedily, suggesting that a stare is a threatening stimulus for flight. Gaze can therefore be threatening and negative as much as it can be enticing and positive.

Some people (shy people, for example), afraid that others will evaluate them negatively, tend to decrease eye contact (Bradshaw, 2006), which cuts out negative inputs from other people. For shy people, this is a distinct advantage, but it also reduces the amount of information they can gather about a listener’s reaction to what they say. Many outsiders assume that decreased eye contact is evidence of other social flaws, such as deception, so a shy person who avoids eye contact through fear of feedback may eventually create an impression of being shifty and unreliable.

Eye contact is also used to regulate interactions. Some characteristic patterns of eye movements go along with talk in conversations to regulate its flow. The speaker tends to look at the listener at the start and end of sentences (or paragraphs, if the speaker is telling a longer tale) but may look away during the middle parts. A listener who wishes to speak will tend to look hard at the present speaker, and a person asking a question will look right at the person to whom it is directed, maintaining his or her gaze while awaiting a reply. Listeners look at speakers more consistently than speakers look at listeners. When giving a speech to a group or large audience, it is important that you look at your audience (rather than at your notes) most of the time and distribute your gaze around the room, looking both left and right.

Interaction is further regulated through use of eye contact to manage turn taking, a kind of eye-based “over and out.” In cultures where simultaneous speech is taken as a sign of impoliteness, rather than of active and desirable involvement in the interaction, eye contact is used to end or yield a turn (a speaker looks longer toward the audience at the end of sentences), as well as to request a turn (a listener establishes longer eye contact with a speaker to signal willingness to enter the conversation). You leave a conversation by breaking off eye contact (typically 45 seconds before departure) and then, when the talking stops, turning toward an exit.

eye contact: extent to which someone looks directly into the eyes of another person

gaze: involves one person looking at another person

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Texting and Computer-Mediated Communication

In a later chapter devoted to media and technology ([Chapter 13](#)), we discuss the impact of technology on nonverbal communication and vice versa. For instance, when talking with someone by text, e-mail, or instant message, confusion is more likely to happen because such nonverbal aspects as tone of voice and facial expression are not available to the receiver in the assigning of meanings. So, a person might write something sarcastically or jokingly, but it is understood as serious. Examine previous texts, e-mails, and instant messages you have been sent and have received.

Questions to Consider

1. Has the lack of nonverbal cues ever resulted in misunderstanding when you interacted through texts, e-mails, and instant messages?
2. What are some of the ways that you and the people with whom you have interacted managed the lack of nonverbal cues?

Vocalics

Vocalics, sometimes called *paralanguage*, refers to vocal characteristics that provide information about *how verbal communication should be interpreted* and about *how you are feeling* and even about *yourself*. When being sarcastic, your tone of voice will let others know if they should evaluate your words as serious or as part of a joke. The tone of your voice might be strained when you are angry or high-pitched when you are anxious. You can recognize some people you know simply by the sound of their voices. You can even tell things about people you do not know based on the sound of their voices. The voice can provide information about a person's place of origin, age, and sex. The sound of someone's voice also affects perceptions of his or her credibility and attractiveness.

Pitch involves the highness or lowness of a person's voice. If you want to get technical, it involves the frequency of sound waves that are produced when you speak. Higher pitches produce more sound waves than lower pitches. Some people speak naturally at very high pitches, whereas other people speak in lower tones. People often use changes in the pitch of their voices to emphasize the parts of a sentence that they think are the most important.

Rate is how fast or slow you speak, generally determined by how many words you speak per minute. People average around 150 words per minute when speaking, but differences certainly exist among individuals. When an instructor wants you to pay special attention to what is being said, he or she might slow down so you realize the importance of the point. Someone who speaks too fast is likely to be treated as nervous or possibly shy. In everyday life, where people are relaxed among friends, their speech rate tends to be lively and fluent rather than stilted or halting. In stressful circumstances, however, their speech rates may be hesitant or uneven.

Volume is the loudness or softness of a person's voice. Like variations in pitch and rate, some people naturally speak louder or softer than others do. When speaking, changes in volume can provide emphasis to your words by indicating importance or poignancy. Increases and decreases in volume can also convey emotional feeling.

Silence, or the meaningful lack of any sound, is a surprising part of vocalics. You may have heard the seemingly contradictory phrases "Silence is golden" and "Silence is deadly." Depending on cultural, contextual, and relational factors, both of these phrases can be true. Most people in the United States—especially on a date or in an interview—meet silence or a prolonged break in conversation with discomfort. In other cultures, prolonged silence is not only tolerable but also may be expected. Silence can indicate embarrassment, anxiety, or lack of preparation as well as shyness, confusion, or disrespect. It can also be used to show anger or frustration, such as when you give someone the "silent treatment." Silence can also be an indication of relational comfort, that people do not feel pressured to keep the conversation going.

Ethical Issue

If a member of another culture is breaking a rule of nonverbal communication in your culture, should you tell him or her? Why or why not?

vocalics (paralanguage): vocal characteristics that provide information about how verbal communication should be interpreted and how the speaker is feeling

pitch: highness or lowness of a person's voice

rate (of speech): how fast or slowly a person speaks, generally determined by how many words are spoken per minute

volume: loudness or softness of a person's voice

silence: meaningful lack of sound

Vocalics and Relationships

This brings us to the use of vocalics and relationships. Howard Giles (2008) shows that people can indicate their membership in a particular group by the way they use vocalic nonverbal behavior. For instance, if you are from

the South, you might use a heavier accent in your conversation with others from your state or region, but you might tone down your accent when talking to people from the Northeast. Where people want to maintain a distance from the person they are talking to, they will diverge, or hang on to differences in accent. When they want to become closer to the other person, they will tend to converge, or match their way of talking to the other person's. You may notice yourself copying the speech styles of people you like. Sally Farley, Susan Hughes, and Jack LaFayette (2013) found that people's voices change when talking with a romantic partner and that other people can also distinguish whether someone is talking with a romantic partner or a friend based solely on the sound of the person's voice.

By the way . . . : Touch and Diplomacy



In some cultures, men and women are not allowed to touch, and more specifically heads of state or religious leaders are not allowed to touch women. This leads to some diplomatic issues when, for example, a visiting female dignitary is not allowed to touch, or in this case shake hands with, a religious leader. Such cases have to be carefully managed because a refusal to shake hands is usually regarded as an insult in the United States. For this reason, U.S. media never showed the moment of greeting between former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and leading Arab heads of state.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you consider cultural norms to be more important than diplomatic norms?
2. When two cultures disagree about appropriate communication, how do you think the issue should be resolved? In other words, which cultural norms should be given priority?

Chronemics

Chronemics encompasses use and evaluation of time in your interactions, including the location of events in time. Time might not be something that immediately comes to mind when thinking about nonverbal communication. However, consider what time might convey. For instance, a person might express a position of power by making someone wait, or unintentionally express being incompetent or inconsiderate by doing the same. Moreover, the significance of a romantic encounter can often be determined by when it occurs. You might see a lunch date as less meaningful than a late-night candlelit dinner. Whether you are meeting for lunch or dinner, however, your meal will have a time structure and pattern. You probably have the salad before the ice cream.

What nonverbal communication seems to indicate that these two people like each other?



Bruce Dale/Getty Images

Chronemics also involves the duration of events. Boring lectures seem to last forever. You may also have had the experience that people often end their college romances after about 18 months or during the spring semester, when one partner might be graduating or going away for the summer. You are quite likely to comment if you run into someone whom you have not seen for “a-a-a-ges.” Also, you would probably feel the need to apologize if you left an e-mail unanswered for too long, did not answer a text message, or were late for an appointment.

Cultural differences in attitudes toward time also exist; some cultures especially value timely completion of tasks over attention to relationships, respect, or status, but others place the priorities exactly in reverse, feeling that it is discourteous to get down to the task before taking plenty of time to create a good relational atmosphere first.

Haptics

Haptics is the study of the specific nonverbal behaviors involving touch. These days there is also “haptic technology,” and the ability to touch, enlarge, and swipe your smartphone screen is one of the newer developments. When people get into your personal space, they will likely make actual physical contact with your most personal possession, your body. Touch is used as a greeting to start an interaction (a handshake or a kiss) and in ceremonies, whether baptism, the confirming laying on of hands, holding a partner’s hands while making wedding vows, or as a means of congratulation from a simple handshake to a pat on the back to those piles of players who form on top of someone who made a game-winning score or play in sports.

Table 5.4 Heslin’s (1974) Functions of Touch

Functional/professional	Touch is permitted by the context—for example, during a medical exam, someone you hardly know may touch parts of your body that even your best friend has never seen.
Social/polite	Touch is formal—for example, a handshake.
Friendship/warmth	Touch is an expression of regard.
Love/intimacy	Touch is special, permitted only with those with whom you are close.

Table 5.5 Jones and Yarbrough’s (1985) Meanings of Touch

Positive Affect	Touch is used to convey support, appreciation, inclusion, sexual attraction, and affection.
Playful	Touch involves playful affection or playful aggression, such as roughhousing.
Control	Touch is used to gain compliance, gain attention, or invoke a response from someone.
Ritualistic	Touch is used when greeting someone or when departing from someone.
Hybrid	Touch is used when greeting someone or when departing from someone, while also expressing affections
Task-related	Touch is used to get something done, often in the process of providing a service.
Accidental	Touch is unintentional and potentially meaningless.

Touch can be categorized according to type and meaning. R. Heslin (1974) noted that touch, of which there are many different types, has many different functions, as shown in [Table 5.4](#). These forms of touch show positive feelings, but each could also produce negative feelings: Someone you feel close to shakes your hand instead of hugging you, or someone you are not close to tries to hug you. Stanley Jones and Elaine Yarbrough (1985) went a bit further to present the meanings association with touch, as shown in [Table 5.5](#). Notice that this list focuses on more than just the potentially positive attributes of touch.

chronemics: the study of use and evaluation of time in interactions

haptics: the study of the specific nonverbal behaviors involving touch

By the way . . . : Cross-Cultural Touch



Psychologist Sidney Jourard (1971) observed and recorded how many times couples in cafés casually touched each other in an hour. The highest rates were in Puerto Rico (180 times per hour) and Paris (110 times per hour). Guess how many times per hour couples touched each other in the mainland United States? Twice! (In London, it was zero. They never touched.) Jourard also found that French parents and children touched each other three times more frequently than did American parents and children.

Questions to Consider

1. It is always a good idea to think critically about research. Although these might be interesting findings about cultural differences related to touch, do you think the same rates of touch would be found today?
2. Regardless of the date, do you think one person's observations in cafés can legitimately be used to make claims about cultural differences of touch?

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are some common misconceptions about nonverbal communication?

Contrary to common belief by some people, 93% of meaning is not conveyed nonverbally, universal understanding of nonverbal communication does not exist, deception cannot always be detected nonverbally, and nonverbal communication is not something a person reads.

2. What is nonverbal communication?

Nonverbal communication is everything that communicates a message but does not include words. Nonverbal communication is (a) symbolic, (b) encoded and decoded, (c) both dynamic and static, (d) guided by rules, (e) cultural, (f) personal, (g) multichanneled, (h) ambiguous, (i) less controlled than verbal communication, and (j) continuous.

3. How does nonverbal communication interconnect with verbal communication?

Nonverbal communication can repeat, substitute, emphasize, moderate, and contradict verbal communication.

4. How does nonverbal communication regulate interactions?

Nonverbal communication regulates interaction by initiating interactions, enabling turn taking, and defining when interactions have reached their end. It does this through eye movements, vocalics, and gestures, among other things.

5. How does nonverbal communication identify people?

Physical appearance, voice, clothing, and even smell can be used to identify people.

6. How does nonverbal communication transmit emotional information?

Nonverbal communication actually allows you to convey three different kinds of emotional information: attitudes toward the other person, attitudes toward the situation, and attitudes toward yourself.

7. What are the most common types of nonverbal communication?

Common types of nonverbal communication include the following: (a) environment, (b) proxemics, (c) territoriality, (d) kinesics, (e) eye contact and gaze, (f) vocalics, (g) chronemics, and (h) haptics.

Key Concepts

adaptors 107
affect displays 106
body buffer zone 105
chronemics 110
decoding 94
deintensification 107
dynamic 95
emblems 106
encoding 95
environment 101
eye contact 107
gaze 107
haptics 110
illustrators 106
kinesics 106
leakage 98
masking 107
neutralization 107
nonverbal communication 91
overintensification 107
personal space 105
pitch 109
proxemics 103
rate 109
regulators 106
silence 109
static 95
territoriality 103
vocalics 109
volume 109

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends how good they believe themselves to be at determining when other people are not telling the truth.
2. Ask your friends whether they think they could get away with telling you a lie.
3. Ask your friends whether they can tell when you are embarrassed or uncomfortable even though you might not tell them. What nonverbal behaviors inform them of your embarrassment or discomfort?

Media Connections

1. Look for television news stories involving police putting people into cars. What percentage of police touch the person's head? In what other circumstances, if any, do people open the car door for someone else and then touch the head of the person getting in? What do you think is being conveyed?
2. How many news stories can you find where a fight got started because someone felt another person was "looking at him in a funny way" or infringing on his personal space?
3. How do television shows use the placement of furniture to add something to the story?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

6 Culture and Communication



Mario Tama/Getty Images

Chapter Outline

[How Can Culture Be Identified and Studied?](#)

[Culture as Structure](#)

[Culture as Transacted](#)

[Coded Systems of Meaning](#)

[Structure-Based Cultural Characteristics](#)

[Context](#)

[Collectivism/Individualism](#)

[Time](#)

[Conflict](#)

[Transacting Culture](#)

[Culture Is Embedded Within Your Communication](#)

[Culture Goes Beyond Physical Location](#)

[Cultural Groups Are Created Through Communication](#)

[Cultural Membership Is Enacted Through Communication](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What does it mean to view culture as structured?
2. What does it mean to view culture as transacted?
3. How is communication organized to reflect cultural beliefs about context, collectivism/individualism, time, and conflict?
4. What does it mean to say that cultural groups are created through communication?
5. How do people enact cultural membership through communication?

To begin our exploration of culture, we want to address four issues. First, when most people think of culture, they tend to think of it as something involving *other* people—wearing unusual clothes, eating strange foods, participating in odd customs, living in unique structures (bamboo huts, Roman temples, Chinese pagodas), and doing strange things with coconuts and tulips.

However, what is considered abnormal by one culture is normal to another. Actually, *you* perform cultural practices and communicate in ways that those from another culture might regard as odd, even though these practices and ways of communicating may seem to you to be natural and right. For instance, if you follow a traditional U.S. approach to time, what do you make of the fact that many cultures would view arriving at a very specific time quite strange, utterly obsessive, absurd, and valueless? After all, you should stop to smell the roses—or the tulips. In short, it seems just as normal and natural and right to the Japanese, the Italians, the Serbo Croats, and the Tutsi to act the way they do as it does to you to do what you do.

Believing that your culture is the benchmark for all others is called ethnocentric bias: Your own cultural way of acting is right and normal, and all other ways of acting are variations of the only really good way to act (yours!). If this manner of thinking seems familiar, you are not alone, and it does not necessarily make you a bad person. However, appreciating and recognizing the value of other cultures will assist you personally and professionally, especially given an ever-expanding multicultural world. Doing so will also increase your appreciation for and understanding of your own culturally limited behaviors. Adolf Hitler, the Ku Klux Klan, the New Black Panthers, and the Muslim Brotherhood are obvious examples of ethnocentric bias but are so extreme that they might close your mind to the possibility that ethnocentric bias is less obvious in many cases and simply closes one's mind to reception of other views from different cultures.

ethnocentric bias: believing that the way one's own culture does things is the right and normal way to do them

Now we are not saying that if you have ethnocentric bias you are a new Hitler or Eva Braun, but we are pointing out the danger of taking ethnocentric bias to an extreme. We all have some degree of such bias in our worlds of meaning. If we are able to recognize it, then we can perhaps cut it away and become more open-minded. Few Americans question politicians who claim that the United States is “the best country in the world” or that “the U.S. education system is the best in the world,” but they could not—and neither could the politicians—tell you how the education system works in Denmark or Mongolia, so the comparison claim is misleading without specific evidence.

Second, many people think of culture as something that is possessed or something to which a person belongs. Actually, you do not just have or belong to a culture; you *transact* and *perform* culture. This notion is similar to that discussed when examining identities. Identities and cultures are transacted (or constructed) symbolically and performed when interacting (or relating) with other people. Culture is created symbolically, not through positioning in a physical location.

The view that one's own cultural styles of communication are the normal ways of communicating and that other ways of communicating are variations of normal communication is known as what type of bias?



©iStockphoto.com/JonathanSloane

Third, and accordingly, culture is not necessarily geographical, although that is the way we most often think of it. Within the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, or even the Seven Kingdoms, there are many different styles and cultures. As the chapter proceeds, we indicate that such classifications as “gender” can be cultures, and so can “bikers”; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities; “Beliebers”; political groups; and religious congregations. Each of these sets has a code of meaning, a bank of key terms, rituals, beliefs, and practices or styles that constitute a “culture” that is not bound by nationality alone. We discuss later that even *working class* is a label referencing culture embodied in styles of speech and codes of practice. So your passport does not define your cultural identity—your communication does.

Fourth, relationships remain fundamental to the actual creation and maintenance of culture. Using the relational perspective to examine identities, we noted that the only way you ever meet *society* is through other people. Similarly, your exposure to *culture*, whether your own or another, is not exposure to an abstraction. You meet culture when you encounter people performing that culture; you perform your own culture when you communicate with other people. Society’s (and Culture’s) Secret Agents are the very friends you meet; other people on the streets; human beings you observe, read about, or see online or on television; and everyone who communicates with you.

In what follows, therefore, we examine the two primary approaches to identifying and studying culture: structured and transacted. From a structural approach, we discuss cultural differences concerning context, individualism/collectivism, time, and conflict. Examining culture as a transaction, we further explore the connection between culture and communication using a relational perspective. Specifically, we examine how culture is embedded in communication and how cultural membership is enacted or denied through communication.

As you study the material in this chapter, it is important to be as detached as possible and to treat your own culture as objectively as you treat others—as far as that can be achieved. Cultural influences run so deep within your routine talk and relational performance that you do not recognize them at first, but this chapter shows you how. Also note the importance these days that is placed on diversity. It is not just other people who benefit from diversity—we all have our minds opened by exposure to other cultures.

Ethical Issue

Do you consider ethnocentric bias to be unethical?

How Can Culture Be Identified and Studied?

We begin our exploration by examining how culture has been identified and studied. As mentioned, the two primary ways in which culture has been examined are as a *structure* and as a *transaction*. The most common approach to studying culture has been to view it as a “national” structure. Increasingly, however, the limitations of this perspective have become more obvious. Nevertheless, this approach has provided a wealth of information about culture and should not be shoved aside without full consideration.

Culture as Structure

Viewing *culture* from a structural standpoint has a long history in the communication discipline. This way of seeing culture focuses on large-scale differences in values, beliefs, goals, and preferred ways of acting among nations, regions, ethnicities, and religions. We could therefore differentiate Australian, Indian, Japanese, Dutch, and Canadian cultures. Clear and simple distinctions could be made between Eastern and Western cultures and the communication styles displayed among people of these areas.

Communication + You: Culture and Minorities



As Judith Nakayama, Thomas Martin, and Lisa Flores (2002) point out, White adults and especially “White children do not need to attend to the norms and values of minority groups unless they have direct exposure in their neighborhoods and schools. Minority children, however, are exposed to and compare themselves to [the dominant] White cultural norms through television, books, and other media” (p. 103). Whereas White people can act without knowledge or sensitivity to other cultures’ customs in a White society, minority groups are rapidly disciplined for failing to observe White cultural norms. Consider these findings with particular reference to the ways in which the “dominant” or “preferred” cultural identifiers are usually taken for granted and invisible. This means you need to think about the ways in which the powerful people in society are *not* called on to “explain themselves.” Note that it is, for example, LGBT members of our society who are called on to “justify” their behavior, not heterosexuals; that it is women whose promiscuous sexual behavior is subject to negative comments, not men’s (compare use of the word *slut* with use of the word *player*); and so on.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you agree with what is stated in this box?
2. If you identify as a member of a minority group, did you compare yourself with White cultural norms when you were growing up? If you are White, were you aware of cultural norms of minority groups?

Cross-Cultural Communication and Intercultural Communication

A great deal of valuable research has been conducted from a structural standpoint, examining communication within and among nations or physical regions. This research is usually referred to as *cross-cultural communication* or *intercultural communication*.

Cross-cultural communication compares the communication styles and patterns of people from very different cultural/social structures, such as nation-states. For example, Tianyuan Li and Sheung-Tak Cheng (2015) examined differences in the influence of friends and family on personal well-being among Eastern and Western cultural groups. Exploring the influence of social networks on romantic relationships, Borae Jin and Sohyun Oh (2010) discovered that Americans tend to involve their friends and family in romantic relationships more often than Koreans do. Social networks among Americans also provide more support for romantic relationships.

Intercultural communication deals with how people from these cultural/social structures speak to one another and what difficulties or differences they encounter, over and above the different languages they speak. Shiao-Yun Chiang (2009), for instance, examined office-hour linguistic and cultural issues evident during interactions involving international teaching assistants and American college students and offered strategies for improving communication among these groups. Saras Henderson, Michelle Barker, and Anita Mak (2015) examined strategies used by health care practitioners and educators to overcome intercultural communication challenges.

cross-cultural communication: compares the communication styles and patterns of people from very different cultural/social structures, such as nation-states

intercultural communication: examines how people from different cultural/social structures speak to one another and what difficulties or conflicts they encounter, over and above the different languages they speak

By the way . . . : Reinforcement of Cultural Norms



Consider the television programs and fairy tales you enjoyed as a child and their accompanying cultural themes. For example, many children's programs in the United States stress the importance of a person's individuality and his or her ability to achieve everything he or she desires through hard work, patience, and determination (*Cinderella*, *The Little Engine That Could*). This belief accompanies the U.S. beliefs in rugged individualism, achievement, and the "American dream." Other national stories were studied many years ago by David McClelland (1961) in an attempt to discover the underpinnings of achievement in different societies. He found that several children's stories popular in a particular culture supported the idea of the Protestant work ethic and subtly introduced children to the idea of the importance of achievement in that society.



©iStockphoto.com/mybaitshop

Questions to Consider

1. What was your favorite program as a child?
2. What themes were reinforced in those programs?

Limitations and Benefits

This view of culture has provided a better understanding of different groups and has improved interactions among people, but it is not without its limitations. For example, when you start looking at cultures as identifiable national or regional groups, you rapidly notice some important points: First, *multiple* “cultures” exist in one national or regional group. The United States contains old and young cultures, rural and urban cultures, and Republican and Democrat cultures, among many others. Second, multiple *social communities* coexist in a single culture and talk among themselves as part of their conduct of *membership* (for example, bikers, car mechanics, vegetarians, and ballet dancers all exist within “American culture”).

Nevertheless, there is a certain benefit from such a broad perspective. From a communication point of view, we can study how all members of a nation partake of the customs or beliefs of the nation and its communication patterns and styles. Although broad, such distinctions seep down to the individual way of thinking and are built into meaning systems used in everyday communication. Accordingly, even though a social community of construction workers (or any other group) may communicate in unique ways, members’ styles of communication are still affected by the larger social structure in which they are embedded (for example U.S. construction workers communicate in ways different from how U.K. construction workers communicate and expect cups of tea—“tea breaks”—much less often).

Culture as Transacted

As we have maintained throughout this book, most of social life is transacted through communication (or symbolically). Culture is no exception. You belong to sets of people who share meanings and styles of speaking, systems of beliefs, and customs. In other words, you live your life in the context of communicating sets of individuals who transact universes of thought and behavior, which are supported through unique cultural styles of communication.

Cultural beliefs and values are established and reinforced through everyday communication. You are constantly reminded of them by your contacts with other people (Society's/Culture's Secret Agents). Your conformity to culture is constantly and invisibly reinforced in the daily talk that happens informally in the interactions with such agents and even strangers. The nature of culture and your connection to society takes place through the specific relationships you have with others whom you meet frequently or with whom you interact daily.

The Harajuku area of Tokyo is a popular destination for teenagers, many of whom dress in such cultural styles as Gothic Lolita, visual kei, and decora. Are artifacts such as clothing the primary distinctions between cultural groups?



Jacob Ehnmark, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ehnmark/118117670/>; CC BY 2.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>

Cultural groups are recognized as such when some consistency and distinctiveness are observed in their behavior or communication. For example, the *shared relational* use by Goths, punks, and emos of symbols such as hairstyles, body piercing, cutting, and self-harm along with a relevant music genre and vocabulary transacts their identity and collectively forms the Goth, punk, or emo culture. Similarly, rednecks and redneck culture have been identified and caricatured through particular stories and jokes (for example, by Jeff Foxworthy, Larry the Cable Guy, and David T. McMahan).

Coded Systems of Meaning

What makes this approach to studying culture different from a structural approach is that culture is seen as a coded system of meaning. Culture is not just a structured bureaucratic machine but a set of beliefs, a heritage, and a way of being that is *transacted* in communication. From this point of view, then, you can think of culture as a meaning system, and any group with a system of shared meaning is a culture. Farmers, athletes, gamers, members of business organizations, comic book fans, health professionals, truckers, fast-food employees, and musicians could all be considered members of a unique culture. The list of unique cultural groups is virtually unending.

Although conventional “structural” views of culture can still provide a great deal of valuable information, they tend to overlook numerous, distinct meaning systems within larger structure-based labels such as *nation-state*. You cannot legitimately maintain that everyone in the United States communicates the same way, that everyone in Lithuania communicates the same way, that everyone in India communicates the same way, or that everyone in any other nation-state or region communicates the same way. There are many different cultures within the United States (and other nation-states) communicating in unique ways.

If we examine how culture is symbolically transacted, then we can explore how styles of communication include people in or exclude people from cultural communities and groups. We can focus on how people “speak themselves into culture” and how membership in a particular culture is done through communication.

coded system of meaning: a set of beliefs, a heritage, and a way of being that is transacted in communication

Structure-Based Cultural Characteristics

Although we have indicated that it is far too simplistic to equate culture *exclusively* with nation-states or regions, some very broad differences between such groups have been observed and should be considered. All members of a nation or citizens of a country are affected in some way by the most general communication styles.

Children learn to view the world in culturally appropriate ways as they learn to communicate and interact with others. For example, small children may be rushed from the store by embarrassed parents who have just been asked loudly, “Why is that man so ugly?,” and they will certainly be taught a culture’s nonverbal rules: “Look at me when I’m talking to you” and “Don’t interrupt when someone is talking.” “Remember to say thank you” is another way children are taught culture’s rules about respect and politeness. During your childhood and introduction to culture (socialization), you learned how to behave, interact, and live with other people at the same time as you learned to communicate because culture is wrapped up in language. These styles of behavior readily became more and more automatic—and hence were automatically included in your later communication—as you grew up. If this did not happen, you could not communicate with other people in your society. Thus, learning to communicate includes learning the habits of your particular culture or society.

It makes sense to look at the rich list of differences uncovered among cultures—even if these sometimes amount to stereotypes that you hold about other nations when representing how people there *typically* act. In what follows, we examine the following cross-cultural characteristics: (a) context, (b) collectivism/individualism, (c) time, and (d) conflict. As these communication styles and meanings are discussed, keep in mind how they are learned and reinforced through interactions with friends, families, and others with whom relationships are shared.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Watch a Culture in Action

Go to a public space where members of a unique cultural group are gathered and observe the ways they communicate. (Naturally, avoid dangerous places and situations. We do not want you injured and cannot send the Unsullied to rescue you.) There are many groups from which you may choose, but based on some of those mentioned here, you might observe farmers at a cattle auction barn, comic book fans at a comic book store, or truckers at a truck stop. (If you do not want to leave your comfortable couch, then write notes about the differences between Dothraki culture and the Qarth culture.)

Questions to Consider

1. What is unique about their communication?
2. What does their communication tell you about their cultural beliefs and values?

Context

Context involves the emphasis placed on the environment, the situation, or relationships when people communicate. Some cultures tend to leave much unsaid, with the assumption that others will understand what is meant based on such influences as circumstances and the relationships among those communicating. Other cultures tend to be more explicit and straightforward when communicating, rather than relying on contextual factors. Cultures are accordingly categorized as being either high-context or low-context (Hall, 1976).

High-Context Cultures

Some societies, known as high-context cultures (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy, 2013), place a great deal of emphasis on the total environment or context where speech and interaction take place. In a high-context society, spoken words are much less important than the rest of the context—for example, the relationships between the people communicating. It is much more important for people to indicate respect for one another in various verbal and nonverbal ways than it is for them to pay close attention to the exact words spoken.

In such countries as China and Iraq, for example, a person's status in society is extremely important, and people tend to rely on shared history and their relationship to the speaker/audience. In Iraq and some African countries, additional importance may be attached to a person's religious or tribal group to assign meanings to conversation. Such cultures greatly emphasize relationships among family members, friends, and associates. Therefore, it is regarded as ethical to favor one's relatives or as fair to give contracts to friends rather than to the highest bidder. Everything is connected to this background context of relationships and other personal contexts of status, influence, and personal knowledge.

high-context culture: a culture that places a great deal of emphasis on the total environment (context) where speech and interaction take place, especially on the relationships between the speakers rather than just on what they say (contrast with *low-context culture*)

By the way . . . : Learning About Your Culture



Cultural beliefs and values are first learned in childhood and then reinforced by relationships throughout your entire life. In this way, you do your culture by using the filters you learned in your early years without even realizing it, rather like wearing glasses. The lenses, for example, affect what you see to make perception more effective. Most of the time, people are not aware of wearing glasses because of their lenses' "transparency," but nevertheless, they affect what the wearer sees and how she or he sees it. So too with culture: Though it shapes and to some extent distorts perceptions and focus, people are largely unaware of culture and how it affects them.



©iStockphoto.com/bernardbodo

Questions to Consider

1. How might your own culture be seen through the eyes of someone from a different culture?
2. What are some things about your own culture that seem strange, if you really think about it?

Low-Context Cultures

By contrast, when communicating in a low-context culture, the message itself is everything. It is much more important to have a well-structured argument or a well-delivered presentation than it is to be a member of the royal family or a cousin of the person listening (Samovar et al., 2013).

In a low-context society, therefore, people try to separate their relationships from the messages and to focus on the details and the logic. Detailed information must be given to provide the relevant context, and only the information presented that way counts as relevant to the message. In low-context societies, people usually recuse (remove) themselves from decision-making roles if a friend or family member is involved. Nepotism, or favoritism shown to a family member or friend, is evaluated negatively in low-context cultures.

Collectivism/Individualism

An entire chapter of this book ([Chapter 3](#)) is dedicated to identity, but the very notion of a personal identity is more of a Western than an Eastern idea. Some cultures stress collectivism/togetherness, and some stress individualism/individuality (Hofstede, 1980).

Collectivist Cultures

As traditionally noted, Eastern societies, such as Japan, tend to be collectivist—that is, to stress group benefit and the overriding value of working harmoniously rather than individual personal advancement. Collectivist cultures place importance on the whole group, stressing common concerns and the value of acting not merely for oneself but for the common good. Accordingly, in a collectivist culture, your value is based on your place in a system—portraying you as just a single bee in a beehive—more than your special and unique qualities as an individual.

These characteristics are developed and reinforced through personal relationships and interactions with others. Within a collectivist society, an individual who acts to achieve personal rather than collective goals would be viewed as simply selfish and disrespectful. He or she would be brought back into line and made to adopt the values of community and collectivity. Such reprimands, especially made by someone with whom a close relationship is shared, would bolster the prevailing view of that society.

One interesting example of a culture that stresses the importance of not being outstanding is originally a fictional culture created by the Scandinavian author Aksel Sandemose through his imagination of a village called Jante. The law of Jante ([Table 6.1](#)) expresses the importance of not rising above the group as an individual, a sort of anti-tall-poppy law, with 10 rules that over time have come to be real in many parts of Scandinavia, which has adopted them as a cultural norm.

low-context culture: assumes that the message itself means everything, and it is much more important to have a well-structured argument or a well-delivered presentation than it is to be a member of the royal family or a cousin of the person listening (contrast with *high-context culture*)

collectivist: subscribing to a belief system that stresses group benefit and the overriding value of working harmoniously rather than individual personal advancement (contrast with *individualist*)

By the way . . . : Conflict of “Culture” Within an Organization



There often exist contextual-based differences between the marketing or sales force in a business and the technicians or engineers who actually make the product. We would consider these differences to be *cultural* differences as we are defining the concept. For marketing team members and salespeople, it is very important to have good relationships with their customers and with a network of other sales personnel, a culture of high context and centering on other people and relationships with them. For the technicians who actually make and service products, it is more important that accurate information be conveyed to customers than that the customers be made to feel good interpersonally. This is a low-context culture where the emphasis is not on relationships but on “facts” and “truth.” These cultural differences of emphasis sometimes lead to conflict between the same organization’s marketing and technical personnel.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever experienced a conflict of culture as described? If so, how was it managed?
2. In what ways can conflicts of culture be both beneficial and negative?

Individualist Cultures

Western societies, such as the United States, are generally characterized as individualist, or focusing on the individual personal dreams, goals and achievements, and right to make choices. Individual desires and freedoms are emphasized, and your value is measured according to your personal accomplishments.

As with collectivist cultures, these characteristics are reinforced through relationships. Contrary to collectivist cultures, within individualistic cultures, personal achievement is lauded and reinforced through conversations with others. For instance, supervisors may talk with employees about the development of personal goals and post “employee of the month” placards to single out individual achievements. Next time you see such a placard, think of it as an example of American cultural ideals being transacted before your very eyes!

Table 6.1 Definition of the Law of Jante

There are 10 rules in the law as defined by Sandemose, all expressing variations on a single theme: *You are not to think you're anyone special or that you're better than us.*

The 10 rules state the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. You're not to think you are anything special. | 6. You're not to think you are more important than us. |
| 2. You're not to think you are as good as us. | 7. You're not to think you are good at anything. |
| 3. You're not to think you are smarter than us. | 8. You're not to laugh at us. |
| 4. You're not to convince yourself that you are better than us. | 9. You're not to think anyone cares about you. |
| 5. You're not to think you know more than us. | 10. You're not to think you can teach us anything. |

In the book, the Janterers who break this unwritten “law” are treated with suspicion or actual hostility because their behavior breaks the town’s wish to preserve harmony, social stability, and uniformity. In short, the individual must uphold the collective uniformity. Important from our perspective is the fact that the “law” was transacted in speech: “The Law of Jante was not merely a set of laws, *it was the very core of the speech of the people, all they ever said could be traced straight back to the Law of Jante*” (Sandemose, 1936, p. 28, italics added).

SOURCE: Sandemose (1936, p. 28).

Source: Sandemose (1936, p. 28).

Time

Cultures are also categorized and differentiated according to their views of time. Consider how time is perceived in the United States: *Time is money*. Time is valuable, and so it is important to not waste it. Therefore, showing up on time helps create a positive impression. Many employees are required to punch in on a time clock or log into a computer system when arriving and leaving work, so precise time at work can be measured. If a person consistently arrives late for work, he or she will likely lose the job. Of course, there is a range of views about this in any culture, and some progressive companies such as Google and Apple explicitly replace this (obsessive?) attitude about time with something else (relaxed attitudes to time in the workplace, although they do not totally abandon the idea that time at work is a key notion). However, the fact that they explicitly abandoned a culturally normative way of treating time is a statement about the usual importance of time and the culture, such that they emphatically replace it as evidence of their special way of doing work.

Because cultures differ in how they view time, the importance of brisk punctuality compared with that of leisurely relationship building, is also given different weight. This broad difference of emphasis on time is labeled as a distinction between monochronic and polychronic cultures (Hall, 1966).

Monochronic Culture

If you think of time as a straight line from beginning to end, you are thinking in terms of *monochronic time*, where people do one thing at a time or carry out connected tasks only because it helps them work toward particular goals with tasks in sequence and communication fitting into a particular order.

Monochronic cultures, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, view time as a valuable commodity and punctuality as very important. People with a monochronic view of time will usually arrive at an appointment a few minutes early as a symbol of respect for the person they are meeting. In the United States, after first establishing a pleasant atmosphere with a few brief courtesies, people will likely bring up the matter of business fairly early in the conversation.

Disciplinary Debate: Is Culture an Overall Ethnic or National Concept?



Some research presents a sharp distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures. Other scholars are becoming skeptical about such hard-and-fast distinctions, noting that although some large-scale differences exist, there is a lot more subtlety and distinctiveness within a culture that is identified only by nationality or ethnicity. Not all Japanese people behave in identical ways or have exactly the same priorities, although a tendency toward collectivism is much stronger there than in some other national cultures. Two different popular authors have tried to identify what is special about being English, and they reached different conclusions. Jeremy Paxman (1999) wrote that the English were “polite, unexcitable, reserved, and had hot-water bottles instead of a sex-life,” whereas Kate Fox (2005) emphasized the underlying importance to the English of humor and not taking anything too seriously.



©iStockphoto.com/itchySam

Questions to Consider

1. Can you think of examples in U.S. culture where the individual is required to subordinate personal goals to the collective good?
2. If you can, does this undercut the whole idea of the great distinction between collectivism and individualism?

individualist: subscribing to a belief system that focuses on the individual person and his or her personal dreams, goals and achievements, and right to make choices (contrast with *collectivist*)

monochronic culture: a culture that views time as a valuable commodity and punctuality as very important (contrast with *polychronic culture*)

Polychronic Culture

If you think of time as the ever-rolling cycle of the seasons or something more open-ended, you are thinking in terms of *polychronic time*, where independent and unconnected tasks can be done simultaneously and where people may carry out multiple conversations with different people at the same time.

Continuously looking at clocks, this man seems very concerned about time. Would his perception of time be considered monochronic or polychronic?



©iStockphoto.com/joegolby

Polychronic cultures have a relaxed attitude toward time. Indeed, as Henry Calero (2005) noted, the predominant U.S. notion of time translates as “childishly impatient” to polychronic cultures. This notion of time is true even in relation to food, specifically in, say, Italy or France where two-course meals can take three hours. In polychronic societies, “promptness” is not particularly important, and as long as the person shows up sometime during the right day, that will count as doing what was required. Some Mediterranean and Arab countries do not regard as impolite being late to an appointment or taking a very long time to get down to business. Indeed, placing so much emphasis on time that people’s relationships are ignored is regarded as rude and pushy; instead, time should be taken to build the relationships. In the same way, it is important in some countries not to get to

the point too quickly, and a lot of time is spent talking about relational issues or other matters before it is polite to bring up a business question.

Future and Past Orientations

Cultures also differ in the way they pay attention to the past, the present, and the future. Different cultures tend to assume that the present is influenced either by one's goals and the future or by past events. In the latter case, fatalism and preordained destiny are seen as the controlling forces over what happens in the present. Some Asian societies pay more attention to the distant future and, like South American and Mediterranean cultures, tend to assume a greater influence of the past on the present. Destiny or karma affects what happens to us in the present moment (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).

Table 6.2 The Four Assumptions of Conflict-as-Opportunity Cultures

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 a renewal of relationships.
-

SOURCE: Martin & Nakayama (2007, p. 404).

Source: Martin & Nakayama (2007, p. 404).

Conflict

Cultures can also be compared according to their understanding of and approach to conflict, which involves real or perceived incompatibilities of processes, understandings, and viewpoints between people. Communication scholars Judith Martin and Thomas Nakayama (2007, pp. 404–413)—drawing from the work of David Augsburger (1992)—differentiate two cultural approaches to conflict: conflict as opportunity and conflict as destructive.

polychronic culture: a culture that sees time not as linear and simple but as complex and made up of many strands, none of which is more important than any other—hence, such culture’s relaxed attitude toward time (contrast with *monochronic culture*)

conflict: real or perceived incompatibilities of processes, understandings, and viewpoints between people

Conflict-as-Opportunity Cultures

Conflict-as-opportunity cultures tend to be individualist, such as the United States. This approach to conflict is based on the four assumptions listed in [Table 6.2](#) (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, p. 404).

From this view, conflict is a normal and useful process, an inherent part of everyday life. Naturally experienced when interacting with people, conflict will lead, if handled constructively, to the enhancement of personal and relational life. This cultural view of conflict also understands all issues as subject to change, meaning that all personal or relational processes, goals, or outcomes can be altered. When a person wants to make changes in his or her relationships or personal life, he or she is expected to fully express and work with others to achieve these desires. Finally, members of these cultures view conflict not only as normal and useful but also as a necessary requirement for renewing relationships and for achieving overall well-being.

conflict-as-opportunity culture: a culture based on four assumptions: that conflict is a normal, useful process; that all issues are subject to change through negotiation; that direct confrontation and conciliation are valued; and that conflict is a necessary renegotiation of an implied contract—a redistribution of opportunity, a release of tensions, and a renewal of relationships (contrast with *conflict-as-destructive culture*)

Make your case: Do Smartphones Alter Cultural Perceptions of Time?



The United States is typically regarded as monochronic, focused on time, dedicated to the steadfast accomplishment of the task at hand, and generally industrious and focused. However, the increased use of smartphones has tended to alter our perception of time. For instance, schedules are frequently loosened as a result of being able to contact someone immediately and alter plans. People often use smartphones to multitask (for example, sending texts while participating in a class).



©iStockphoto.com/ferrantraite

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe that it makes sense for communication scholars to treat the United States as essentially monochronic, or has technology overtaken that perception?
2. How have smartphones affected your own views of time?

Conflict-as-Destructive Cultures

Stressing group and relational harmony above individual needs and desires, conflict-as-destructive cultures tend to be collectivist or community-oriented such as many Asian cultures. Religious groups, such as the Amish and Quakers, also view conflict as destructive. David's dad attended Quaker meetings as a child and adhered to pacifist ideals even on the playground. He has told stories of other children hitting him, knowing he would not fight back. As instructed in the Bible, he would literally turn the other cheek, and the other children would promptly hit that cheek as well. Nevertheless, David's dad remained steadfast in his culturally based belief in the destructive nature of conflict. As with conflict-as-opportunity cultures, four assumptions guide this approach to conflict, as listed in [Table 6.3](#) (Martin & Nakayama, 2007, p. 406).

Contrary to conflict-as-opportunity cultures, this cultural approach views conflict not as a natural part of everyday experience but rather as unnecessary, detrimental, and to be avoided. Also contrary to conflict-as-opportunity cultures and reflective of collectivist cultures in general, members of conflict-as-destructive cultures do not view individual desires as more important than group needs and established norms. Furthermore, rather than valuing direct confrontation, members consider confrontations futile and harmful to relationships and the group as a whole. Accordingly, those who engage in confrontation should be disciplined to discourage such destructive behaviors.

Table 6.3 The Four Assumptions of Conflict-as-Destructive Cultures

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 established values.
3. Confrontations are destructive and ineffective.
4. Disputants should be disciplined.

SOURCE: Martin & Nakayama (2007, p. 406).
Source: Martin & Nakayama (2007, p. 406).

However, even within particular cultures there are gender differences in the treatment of conflict, which raises once again the possibility that genders are themselves a particular kind of culture. On top of the broad nationalistic cultural analysis, we can easily find differences in discourses of conflict. In broad terms, women see conflict as an opportunity and prefer to discuss issues and resolve them, whereas, equally broadly speaking, men see conflict as a battle for power, where one of them wins and the other is humiliated (Nelson & Brown, 2012).

conflict-as-destructive culture: a culture based on four assumptions: that conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace; that the social system should not be adjusted to meet the needs of members, but members should adapt to established values; that confrontations are destructive and ineffective; and that disputants should be disciplined (contrast with *conflict-as-opportunity culture*)

Managing Conflict

Of course, conflict occurs in all relationships and among all groups, even those viewing conflict as destructive. However, the management of conflict will also differ among cultural groups. When conflict occurs, people generally engage in one of five styles of conflict management: (1) dominating, (2) integrating, (3) compromising, (4) obliging, and (5) avoiding (Rahim, 1983; Ting-Toomey, 2004).

The person on the left did not want to engage in conflict, so he did not say anything when his friend wanted to order a pizza topping he did not like. What cultural orientation to conflict do his actions represent, and what style did he use to manage the conflict?



©Fuse/Getty Images

Dominating.

Dominating styles involve forcing one's will on another to satisfy individual desires regardless of negative relational consequences. For example, you and a friend decide to order a pizza, and as you call in the order, your friend mentions a desire for pepperoni. You would rather have sausage and reply, "Too bad. I'm making the call, and we are having sausage."

Integrating.

Integrating styles necessitate a great deal of open discussion about the conflict at hand to reach a solution that completely satisfies everyone involved. You and your friend differ on what pizza topping you would like, so you openly discuss your positions and the options available until you reach a solution that fulfills both of your desires—perhaps getting both toppings or half sausage and half pepperoni.

Compromising.

Compromising styles are often confused with integrating styles because a solution is reached following discussion of the conflict. However, making a compromise demands that everyone must give something up to reach the solution, and as a result, people never feel fully satisfied. Returning to the pizza quagmire, you and your friend discuss the conflict and decide to get mushrooms instead of sausage or pepperoni.

Obliging.

Obliging styles of conflict management involve giving up one's position to satisfy another's. This style generally emphasizes areas of agreement and deemphasizes areas of disagreement. Using this style of conflict management, as you and your friend discuss what topping to include on your pizza, you probably mention that the important thing is you both want pizza and then agree to order pepperoni instead of sausage.

Avoiding.

Finally, avoiding styles of conflict are just that: People avoid the conflict entirely either by failing to acknowledge its existence or by withdrawing from a situation when it arises. So, your friend expresses a desire for pepperoni on that pizza, and even though you really want sausage, you indicate that pepperoni is fine and place the order.

Skills You Can Use: Using Culture to Persuade



When attempting to persuade someone or to develop a positive relationship with someone, communicating in a manner consistent with his or her culture will increase your chances of success.

Transacting Culture

You may have noticed that although we said culture was not equivalent to nation or geography, many of the features we have focused on so far do actually make exactly that equation of culture and geography. This is because that is what the research is focused on, instead of what we think is most important. If you think geography defines cultures, then you can look for geographic differences in such things as attitudes to time or conflict. If, however, you treat culture as based in language and meaning practices rather than geography, then you will look for a different sort of difference. You will ask, for example, what are the differences between the meanings found in discourses of heterosexual and homosexual people, men and women, Baptists and Mormons, Republicans and Democrats. What markers in their speech identify them as members of a particular community?

The preceding section emphasized a set of broad and general differences resulting from seeing culture in structural or geographical terms. Structural discussions of cultural characteristics treat culture very broadly and categorically: If you are a Westerner, you will behave and communicate in the Western way. Although such broad-brush ideas are sometimes helpful, especially when traveling to other countries, dealing with international relationships, or discussing the clash of cultures and/or diversity, it is important to go beyond the broad ideas and add some finer detail.

Indeed, a lot of *who you are* depends on *where you are*, or at least on *where you come from*, as well as on the groups you belong to and how they expect people to behave. You are not alone: You *belong* and do not always have a choice. You belong to many groups, some small (groups of friends or neighbors), some large (your citizenship or your ethnic group), some central to your life (family, friends), and some probably peripheral (your tax group, your shoe size). Somewhere in there, somewhere in your sense of yourself, however, is the culture(s) that you see as yours.

Studying culture as a transaction focuses on how culture is created symbolically through communication and is reinforced through your relationships with others and your everyday experiences. Cultural codes are embedded within your communication, and you “speak” culture each time you communicate. Accordingly, cultural groups are established and cultural membership is achieved through communication.

Ethical Issue

We just offered you a skill you can use, but can this suggestion sometimes be unethical? Specifically, is it unethical to mirror someone else's communication to achieve a goal if doing so violates or runs counter to how you would normally communicate? Are there boundaries making some matching of communication styles ethical and other matching of communication styles unethical?

By the way . . . : How Culture Re-Creates Itself



In a sense, people create culture symbolically and then are bound by that which they create. For example, during a personal conversation, standing a certain distance from a particular person might be considered the norm among members of a cultural group (say 1 or 2 feet apart in the United States) because proper distances have been socially constructed over time. Personal spaces are used in personal interactions, but social distances, 3 to 6 feet, are used in formal interactions or interactions with superiors. These distances differ between cultures, yet members of each cultural group are constrained and must adhere to what their culture has created because there may be repercussions if cultural norms involving distance are violated.



©iStockphoto.com/TonyV3112

Questions to Consider

1. Cultural norms may change, but this change does not come easily or quickly. How might norms be changed within a culture?
2. What norms within your own culture have changed, and are there some cultural norms that will never change?

Culture Is Embedded Within Your Communication

Your culture is coded in your communication in the language you speak, in the thoughts you express, and in the assumptions you make. Obviously, talk accomplishes this in the straightforward sense: French men and women speak French. But they also speak “*being* French.” Accordingly, every time a person communicates, other people know something about his or her culture. When someone is seen wearing “cultural clothes,” difference is assumed, but that person actually *wears* his or her culture in talk and behavior, too.

Your two authors, Steve and David, are different. Steve is English; David is American. When we travel in the United States, people say to Steve, “I love your accent,” but when we travel in the United Kingdom, they say it to David. So which of us has an accent? No one in either place ever says with marvel to us, “You speak good English,” though when we go to France, people might say, “You speak good French” (if we did). In the United Kingdom, people can tell that Steve is from “the West country,” and in the United States, they know David is *not* from “the South.” All of them can tell, even on the phone, that we are not ethnic Dutch or Indonesian. They also know we are not women or 5 years old. This is not only a result of vocalic differences but also a result of what we say and how we say it.

When Steve first met a new colleague (an Eastern European), the conversation lasted only briefly before the colleague said, “You’re not American.” Steve said, “Oh, the old accent gives me away yet again!” but the colleague said, “No, actually. I’m not a native English speaker, and I can’t tell the difference between English and American accents. It was something in your *style* that announced you as ‘other.’”

David grew up on a farm in rural Indiana, and like everyone, his communication styles and assumptions about the world were influenced and informed by people around him. He views the world differently and communicates differently than someone who was raised in the city, someone who grew up wealthy, or someone who has never worked the land. His rural Indiana cultural beliefs and values are displayed by what he says and how he says it. Rural Indiana communication styles and patterns are embedded in his talk.

Would someone studying biker culture within the United States be more likely to take a structural approach to culture or a transacted approach to culture?



Culture Goes Beyond Physical Location

Notwithstanding the importance of a person's place of origin, Steve is not just "West country," and David is not just "rural Indiana." Steve is a coxswain. David is a radio announcer. Steve is a father. David is a bartender/bouncer. Steve is a genealogist. David is a singer. Both of us are academics. These cultural activities and roles—past and present—have influenced our views of the world and our communication styles. Furthermore, each is cultural in its own right. Steve communicates coxswain culture, father culture, genealogy culture, and academic culture. David communicates radio announcer culture, bartender/bouncer culture, singer culture, and academic culture. At times, one culture may be more pronounced than others. Also at times, it may be more important to enact membership into one culture than another. For instance, at academic conferences, we tend to communicate academic culture rather than coxswain or bartender/bouncer culture—although doing the latter may be a way to liven up future conferences!

What ultimately becomes clear—other than we have just spent too much time talking about ourselves—is that people belong to multiple cultures and that cultural membership is enacted through communication.

Cultural Groups Are Created Through Communication

As we have discussed in great detail, a structural understanding of culture as being encompassed by a nation-state, a region, an ethnicity, or a religion is restrictive. It does not give an entirely accurate depiction of culture in everyday life. For instance, several cultures may exist within one country (Houston & Wood, 1996). These cultural groups are recognized and differentiated through their unique communication and meaning systems.

Co-Cultures

Co-cultures are smaller groups of culture within a larger cultural mass. For instance, most countries have regions regarded as different and distinctive (the South, the Midwest, Yorkshire, the Valley). The belief systems in these small and diverse groups are often recognized as distinct from those within the larger society or nation. A large group such as “Americans” can be broken down into smaller groups (“Northern Americans” and “Southern Americans”) containing smaller sets of both nations and societies, such as Irish Americans, Southerners, Sioux, African Americans, Iowans, or Republicans.

How might break time at a factory be an opportunity to learn about and enact cultural membership within this culture?



Jetta Productions/Getty Images

Sociologically and demographically, discussions of co-cultures are significant because they underscore the vast number of cultures that can be explored and that encompass a person's life. However, there is still the tendency to take on a structural approach to their study. Accordingly, someone might say, “Republicans communicate this way, while Democrats communicate that way.”

co-cultures: smaller groups of culture within a larger cultural mass

Speech Communities

A more communication-based view labels these cultures as speech communities (Hymes, 1972; Philipsen, 1975, 1997). Speech communities are cultures defining membership in terms of speaking patterns and styles that reinforce beliefs and values of the group. Essentially, cultural groups are set apart based on their unique communication styles. In this way, various speech (communication) codes, or a culture's verbalizations of meaning and symbols, tend to have built into them certain ways of understanding the world that guide the particular talk patterns people use in conversation with one another.

One characteristic of any culture is what it takes for granted. For example, in a particular culture, certain topics can be talked about and certain ideas are taken for granted, even during persuasion. Kristine Muñoz (Fitch, 2003) has written about these taken-for-granted assumptions as cultural persuadables, certain topics that people in a society never bother to persuade anyone else about because their arguments are always raised against a background of common understanding and shared beliefs. For instance, some speech communities adhere to very traditional notions of gender roles. Accordingly, it is unnecessary to say anything directly about these gender roles because they are implicit in everything that is communicated. Also, in the United States, people may just say, "because it is the right thing to do" without elaborating on why something is the right thing for the principle on which the judgment is based (life, liberty, pursuit of happiness).

speech communities: sets of people whose speech codes and practices identify them as a cultural unit, sharing characteristic values through their equally characteristic speech

speech (communication) codes: sets of communication patterns that are the norm for a culture, and only that culture, hence defining it as different from others around it

cultural persuadables: the cultural premises and norms that delineate a range of what may and what must be persuaded (as opposed to certain topics in a society that require no persuasive appeal because the matters are taken for granted)

Cultural Membership Is Enacted Through Communication

Enacting membership in a cultural group means communicating and assigning meaning in ways similar to other members of that group. For instance, musicians enact membership into a musician culture by communicating like members of that culture. It can be broken down further, and we can distinguish musician cultures related to jazz, blues, death metal, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, country, bluegrass, rockabilly, and barbershop just to name a few. Once again, each cultural group communicates in unique ways, and enacting membership requires communicating as such.

However, enacting membership into a cultural group is more complicated and restrictive than it may initially appear. If you want to be a rapper, you cannot just talk like a rapper and suddenly become one. It is not just the act of communicating that establishes membership into a cultural group; it is also, and more important, knowing the meaning of that communication that does so. A cultural understanding is required. If you do not know how to perform membership in a particular community, you are excluded from it. Membership in a culture can be represented in and restricted by one's knowledge of speech (communication) codes.

The unique ways of communication and the underlying meaning of that communication create a sense of otherness or separateness. Some cultural groups may rejoice in their exclusivity. For instance, certain clubs or organizations may have secret ways of communicating concealed from everyone but their members, such as their secret handshake. When "outsiders" attempt to enact membership into certain cultural groups, they may be referred to as "fakes" or "wannabes." Members of rural communities often view people who move into the area with suspicion. These new people may be living in the same area, but they do not automatically become members of the culture.

Cultural speech (communication) codes must be learned and understood before a person can fully enact membership into a group. Doing so requires interacting and forming relationships with members of that cultural group. Through relating, cultural understanding is transferred and maintained. Cultural understanding is fundamental to enacting cultural membership, and this understanding is learned through relationships.

By the way . . . : Speaking Like a Man in Teamsterville



Communication scholar Gerry Philipsen (1975) explored the talk in Teamsterville, a pseudonym for a working-class community in Chicago showing a "man's communication style." For members of this community, the style of speech occasionally prefers action to words and is based on talking only when power is equal or symmetrical. In this community, a man demonstrates power by punching someone rather than talking about a problem. Speech is regarded as an inappropriate and ineffective way of communicating in situations when demonstrating power. For example, if a man were insulted by a stranger, the culturally appropriate way to deal with the insult would be to inflict physical damage rather than discuss the issue. In Teamsterville, speech in such a situation would be characterized as weak. Conversely, when a man in Teamsterville is among friends, his speech is permitted to establish his manliness. If a man's friend made a derogatory remark about the man's girlfriend, the man would either take the remark as a tease or simply tell the friend not to say such things, and violence would not result as it would in the case of strangers saying the same thing.

Questions to Consider

1. Can a specific way of speaking be attributed to men or women regardless of culture?
2. What does it mean to speak like a man (and a woman) in some of your cultural groups?

Ethical Issue

Is it unethical to attempt to enact membership into a cultural group if you are not a legitimate member?

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What does it mean to view culture as structured?

Viewing culture from a structural standpoint has a long history in the communication discipline. This way of seeing culture focuses on large-scale differences in values, beliefs, goals, and preferred ways of acting among nations, regions, ethnicities, and religions. Research using this perspective is often referred to as either cross-cultural communication or intercultural communication.

2. What does it mean to view culture as transacted?

When viewing culture from a transactional standpoint, culture is seen as a coded system of meaning. Culture is a set of beliefs, a heritage, and a way of being that is transacted in communication. When viewing culture as a system of norms, rituals, and beliefs, any group with a system of shared meaning can be considered a culture.

3. How is communication organized to reflect cultural beliefs about context, collectivism/individualism, time, and conflict?

Cultures can be categorized as either high context or low context. High-context cultures place a great deal of emphasis on the total environment or context where speech and interaction take place. In a low-context culture, people try to separate their relationships from the messages and to focus on the details and the logic.

Cultures can be categorized as either individualist or collectivist. Collectivist cultures place greater importance on the whole group, stressing common concerns and the value of acting not merely for oneself but for the common good. Individualist cultures focus on the individual person and his or her personal dreams, goals and achievements, and right to make choices.

Cultures can be categorized as either monochronic or polychronic. Monochronic cultures view time as valuable and adhere to schedules. Polychronic cultures view time more holistically and have a much more relaxed attitude toward schedules. Cultures also differ in their orientation to past, present, and future events.

Cultures can be categorized as viewing conflict as either opportunity or destructive. Cultures viewing conflict as opportunity perceive conflict as a normal and useful process, an inherent part of everyday life. Cultures viewing conflict as destructive perceive conflict as unnecessary, detrimental, and something to be avoided.

4. What does it mean to say that cultural groups are created through communication?

Multiple cultural groups are recognized and differentiated through their unique communication and meaning systems. Speech communities are cultures defining membership in terms of speaking patterns and styles that reinforce beliefs and values of the group. Essentially, cultural groups are set apart based on their unique communication styles.

5. How do people enact cultural membership through communication?

Enacting membership in a cultural group means communicating and assigning meaning in ways similar to other members of that group. However, it is not just the act of communicating that establishes membership into a cultural group; it is also, and more important, knowing the meaning of that communication that does so. Membership in a culture can be represented in and restricted by one's knowledge of speech (communication) codes.

Key Concepts

co-cultures 129
coded system of meaning 119
collectivist 121
conflict 124
conflict-as-destructive culture 125
conflict-as-opportunity culture 124
cross-cultural communication 117
cultural persuadables 130
ethnocentric bias 115
high-context culture 120
individualist 122
intercultural communication 117
low-context culture 121
monochronic culture 123
polychronic culture 124
speech (communication) codes 130
speech communities 130

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. As you did in the Analyzing Everyday Communication box, have your friends tell you about their favorite children's stories, and then discuss the themes demonstrated by those stories and connect them to the cultural ideals.
2. Ask your friends in how many cultures they view themselves as having established membership. In what ways do they establish these memberships?
3. Ask your friends to describe a recent intercultural experience. What did they find most challenging? What did they find most rewarding?

Media Connections

1. Select and analyze a movie with intercultural themes to show how individuals from different cultures build relationships and develop understanding. Describe how culturally relevant concepts and ideas from this chapter are shown in the movie's characters, plot, setting, script, and acting styles.
2. How are different cultures represented on television and in movies? Compare current with 30- or 40-year-old shows and movies. What differences do you see?
3. How are other cultures represented by newspapers, television news, or online news sources? Can you identify any ethnocentric bias in these reports?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

7 Listening



©iStockphoto.com/Zurijeta

Chapter Outline

[Why Is Listening Important?](#)

[Listening and Education](#)

[Listening and Career](#)

[Listening and Religion and Spirituality](#)

[Listening and Health Care](#)

[Listening and Relationships](#)

[Listening Objectives](#)

[Active Listening](#)

[Engaged and Relational Listening](#)

[Disengaged Listening](#)

[Engaged Listening for a Transactional World](#)

[Relational Listening](#)

[Critical Listening](#)

[Elements of Critical Listening](#)

[Recognizing and Overcoming Listening Obstacles](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. Why is listening important enough to have an entire chapter devoted to it?
2. What are the objectives of listening?
3. What does it mean to listen actively?
4. What are engaged and relational listening?
5. What is critical listening, and why is it so important?
6. What obstacles must people overcome to listen well?

What if we told you that we could provide you with the secret to academic success, career advancement, and improved relationships? The truth is that we can tell you one secret to these things, and it is something many people rarely consider: listening.

Effective listening entails more than merely going through the motions of hearing what someone says. Effective listening means being active in hearing what is said. This means paying careful attention to what someone says. It also requires assessment of the evidence and arguments the speaker presents and being engaged, critical, and relationally aware of underlying themes and perspectives in what the speaker says. In short, an active listener is one who recognizes and overcomes the many obstacles to listening encountered in everyday communication and makes a good relational connection with the speaker.

In this chapter, we discuss the objectives for listening, such as relational development, gaining and comprehending information, critical evaluation, enjoyment, and therapeutic goals. We also address active listening and discuss how *listening* and *hearing* are not the same thing. Discussions of listening frequently do not go beyond the active listening process, but we discuss ways to maximize your listening skills and emphasize the importance of being “other oriented”—focused not on your own reactions but on what the other person is trying to say.

Next, we examine critical listening. Being critical does not necessarily mean finding fault or disagreeing with messages, but it does involve determining their accuracy, legitimacy, and value. This process may lead just as often to a positive evaluation of a message as to a negative evaluation of a message. We discuss the prevalence of critical evaluation in everyday life and examine the four elements of critical evaluation.

The final part of this chapter is dedicated to listening obstacles. People listen more effectively on some occasions than on others; however, you may not be fully aware of the many *obstacles* to listening. We address these obstacles and discuss how you might overcome them. You may very well be a listening champion once you finish studying this chapter! Even if you do not receive an award for listening, your listening skills will significantly improve, assisting you in school, your career, and your relationships.

Why Is Listening Important?

Listening is the communication activity in which people engage most frequently. In fact, studies conducted during the past 90 years have consistently ranked listening as the most frequent communication activity (Barker, Edwards, Gaines, Gladney, & Holley, 1980; Janusik & Wolvin, 2009; Rankin, 1928; Weinrauch & Swanda, 1975). One of the most recent studies examining the amount of time spent listening found that people dedicate nearly 12 hours daily to listening-related activities, such as talking with friends, attending class, participating in a business meeting, or listening to music on an iPod (Janusik & Wolvin, 2009). In other words, you probably spend half of each day *listening!*

As frequently as people engage in listening, its significance in daily life is not always valued. People may tend to take this essential communication activity for granted. Perhaps the most pervasive activity of everyday life (Halone & Pechioni, 2001), listening is nevertheless crucial to everyday interactions in a number of important contexts.

By the way . . . : How Much Time?



Studies have shown that listening is the communication activity in which people engage most frequently. All the same, very few studies have been devoted to it recently, and most sources cited to support claims about listening are quite old. One reason might be because it is difficult to legitimately measure exactly how much time is spent engaging in any activity. Yet, this might also indicate how much people take the importance of listening for granted.

Questions to Consider

1. Is it possible to legitimately determine exactly how much time is spent engaging in an activity? If not, is there still valuable information to glean from studies exploring such matters?
2. Is there any reason to doubt that listening is the communication activity in which people engage most frequently?

Listening and Education

Listening—often the primary channel of instruction at all levels of education—is a fundamental element in instruction and key to academic success. Listening is also a critical component in the relationships that develop between students and their instructors and between students and their academic advisors. Both instructor–student and advisor–advisee relationships demand effective listening by everyone involved. Yet active listening remains the least taught and most taken for granted type of communication skill (see Beall, Gill-Rosier, Tate, & Matten, 2008; Bosacki, Rose-Krasnor, & Coplan, 2014).

Skills You Can Use: Listening



We will remind you to do so when examining obstacles to effective listening, but as you read this chapter, consider the ways in which your listening in the classroom can be enhanced. Also, consider how interactions with your instructors, your classmates, your advisors, and others with whom you share an academic-based relationship can be improved through engaged and relational listening. As you read on, imagine specific situations where you could apply what you are learning. For example, think about how you could make better contributions in class, if you have really understood what your teacher/classmates are trying to say, and whether your learning has increased by paying closer attention to what other people say. Listening really will become a skill you can develop to your benefit.



©iStockphoto.com/michaeljung

Listening and Career

Effective listening skills are also crucial to career success and advancement. Employers frequently rank listening as one of the most sought-after skills. Furthermore, most success and achievement from both organizational and personal career standpoints can be connected in large measure to effective listening (see Flynn, Valikoski, & Grau, 2008). This is true not only in jobs such as social work, pastoral duties, or being a really good investigative journalist or interviewer but also in listening carefully to what others say in business meetings or strategy sessions and paying close attention to customer concerns. Listening is also a vital ability in both leadership activities and perceptions of leadership by others (Kluger & Zaidel, 2013; Lloyd, Boer, & Voelpel, 2015). Surveying the importance of listening in all professions and its significance in developing occupational areas, one listening scholar concluded, “Job success and development of all employees, regardless of title, position, or task will continue to be directly related to the employees’ attitudes toward, skills in, and knowledge about listening” (Steil, 1997, p. 214).

Enabling someone to talk about a problem or concern is known as what type of listening?



©iStockphoto.com/Terry J Alcorn

Listening and Religion and Spirituality

Although in this context it has received less attention from researchers, listening is also an important component in religion and spirituality. Surveying this context, it was noted that listening in this area includes *intrapersonal* listening when engaged in meditation and prayer. *Interpersonal* listening occurs in such instances as listening to sermons or music and studying sacred and holy texts (Schnapp, 2008).

Listening and Health Care

Listening is also a fundamental element of health care. The extent to which both patients and providers listen effectively has a tremendous impact on whether correct diagnoses are established and on whether patients accurately follow provider instructions. Listening is also vital to successful communication among health care workers.

Listening and Relationships

Listening also plays a fundamental role in relationship development and maintenance. When both partners engage in effective listening, they tend to have more successful, longer-lasting, and more positive relationships. A sure recipe for failure is when either partner fails to engage in effective listening and makes up his or her own (probably incorrect) reasons for the other's attitudes and behaviors. Effective listening is an essential component of every action that takes place within relationships at all stages of development.

Table 7.1 Listening Objectives

Relational Development and Enhancement	People may engage in listening for the development and enhancement of relationships. Through listening, you can gain a greater understanding of yourself, your partner, and the relationship—even when these are not being discussed directly.
Gaining and Comprehending Information	People also listen to gain and comprehend information. As a student, you are likely well aware of this listening objective as you listen to lectures during class or to a classmate during a class discussion.
Critical Listening	The goals of critical listening include evaluating the accuracy of a message as well as its value in a given situation. For example, you may listen critically to a salesperson discussing a product. Critical listening may lead to negative or positive evaluations of the message.
Enjoyment and Appreciation	People also listen for enjoyment or appreciation: listening to a friend tell a story about a recent trip, listening to music on an iPod, or listening to crickets chirp and birds sing while walking through a wooded area. The objective of these listening experiences is to gain pleasure.
Therapeutic Listening	Therapeutic listening enables someone to talk through a problem or concern. Examples of therapeutic listening include listening to a coworker complain about a customer or client and listening to a neighbor talk about financial difficulties. In these situations, the person might simply need to express certain anxieties or frustrations, might be seeking approval or justification for feelings, or might be seeking advice and counsel about appropriate actions.

Listening Objectives

Although people may have a primary objective for listening, a single communicative exchange can have multiple goals. [Table 7.1](#) presents these listening goals in isolation, but keep in mind that all listening situations may entail more than one objective.

Active Listening

Many people use the terms *hearing* and *listening* interchangeably, but they are not the same. Hearing is the passive physiological act of receiving sound that takes place when sound waves hit your eardrums. If someone starts beating on a desk, the resulting sound waves will travel through the air and hit your eardrum, the act of which is an example of hearing. As a passive action, you can hear without really having to think about it.

Listening is the active process of receiving, attending to, interpreting, and responding to symbolic activity. Compared with hearing, listening is active because it requires a great deal of work and energy to accomplish. Listening is also referred to as a process rather than an act because multiple steps or stages are involved. If someone beats on a desk in a rhythm that another person recognizes and correctly interprets as Morse code, then listening has occurred. (See later discussion of *interpreting*.)

The first step in the listening process is the act of receiving sensory stimuli as sound waves that travel from the source of the sound to your eardrums. As you continue reading, keep in mind that the entire listening process is not just about hearing or about aural stimuli. Multiple sensory channels, including taste, touch, smell, and sight, can be used to make sense of a message you have received.

Attending to stimuli occurs when you perceive and focus on stimuli. Despite constant flooding with competing stimuli, you pick up only on some. The stimuli that receive your attention are those most necessary to accomplish the task at hand. In a conversation with your boss about an important issue, for example, you will probably attempt to concentrate on what he or she is saying rather than on competing stimuli, such as other conversations taking place nearby or music playing in the background.

hearing: the passive physiological act of receiving sound that takes place when sound waves hit a person's eardrums

listening: the active process of receiving, attending to, interpreting, and responding to symbolic activity

receiving: the initial step in the listening process where hearing and listening connect

attending: the second step in the listening process when stimuli are perceived and focused on

The third step in the listening process, interpreting, is when you assign meaning to sounds. You use multiple sensory channels and accompanying stimuli when listening, especially sight and visual stimuli. Returning to the earlier example of a person beating on a desk, if you see his or her hand hitting the desk each time that sound is received, this cue will assist you in making sense of what you hear—whether it is Morse code or not. Likewise, noticing a smile or a scowl when a person is speaking to you will help determine whether he or she intended a sarcastic remark as a joke or as a serious retort.

Responding is your reaction to the communication of another person. Responses, or feedback, to messages occur throughout the entire communication. Even though you give a verbal response to a comment, you may express yourself nonverbally. Responding to a message while it is being received, even a snarky smile or an approving nod, can show another person your reaction to what is said. In addition to letting someone know you are listening, any kind of active or unintended response enables the sender to know how you feel about the message.

After receiving a message, you may respond with verbal feedback in which you explain your interpretation of the message. Reflecting, sometimes referred to as *paraphrasing*, involves summarizing what another person has said in your own words to convey your understanding of the message (“I understand you to mean that our team has until the end of the week to finish the project”). Sometimes these reflections or paraphrases are accompanied by requests for clarification or approval (“Do you mean it will be impossible to receive my order by the first of the month?”). Reflecting primarily assists in ensuring accurate understanding of the message, but it serves the secondary function of exhibiting attentiveness to the message and concern about its accurate interpretation.

Ethical Issue

Although therapeutic listening conveys concerns for others, when would you consider it appropriate to suggest that a friend seek professional assistance instead of continuing to expect you to listen and advise upon his or her problems?

Disciplinary Debate: Giving Others Feedback



Traditional positive nonverbal feedback or response to a message includes eye contact, leaning forward, smiling, and nodding your head in agreement. Some communication scholars and professionals instruct students and clients to engage in these activities without considering whether these activities are genuine or culturally appropriate.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think it helps your interactions if you force some of these reactions, or is it better to be perfectly natural?
2. If eye contact with a superior and some of these other reactions might be considered disrespectful, how might a person demonstrate culturally appropriate positive nonverbal feedback?

interpreting: the third step in the listening process when meaning is assigned to sounds and symbolic activity

responding: final step in the listening process that entails reacting to the message of another person

reflecting (paraphrasing): summarizing what another person has said to convey understanding of the message

Engaged and Relational Listening

The process of active listening described has traditionally been viewed as the ideal method of listening. This description is OK for the most part. Nevertheless, participating in the communication process involves more than listening carefully to what is said, even if you listen intently and can repeat it. *A tape recorder can accomplish both of these things.* Moreover, remember our discussion about communication being understood as an action, interaction, or transaction from [Chapter 1](#). If communication were a mere act or interaction, if it only involved getting symbols from one person to another person or involved two people exchanging symbols, then active listening would be sufficient. However, communication goes beyond that simplistic and incomplete description. As a transaction, communication involves the creation of shared meaning and so much more. Accordingly, we must go beyond just active listening.

Customer service representatives often appear to be listening actively, but they do not really understand the point of view of the customer. If they attempted to make a personal connection with the customer and actively worked to create shared understanding, what type of listening would they be doing?



Jupiterimages/Getty Images

Essential for truly effective listening is being engaged and relationally aware. Engaged and relational listening involves attending carefully to what the speaker means or perhaps has left unsaid. When doing so, a listener can

repeat the essence of what has been said, by giving a clear and evidently accurate report of what was said, and will report the matters that were relevant but left unsaid. “Duck and McMahan is not only an inexpensive book compared with the competition but is up to date and engaging.” (Translation: “My professor, Steve Duck, had us write ‘anonymous’ comments on this book before he gave us grades. He wrote this book with David McMahan, and the way he tells it, other books are short on vision and lack decent evidence. I wanted a good grade, so I went heavy on the praise.”)

Engaged listening means making a relational connection with the source of a message that results from working together to create shared meaning and understanding. Not just listening actively, engaged listening involves caring, trusting, wanting to know more, and feeling excited, enlightened, attached, and concerned.

Disengaged Listening

Perhaps the best way to explain what we mean by engaged listening is by first demonstrating what it is *not*. Examples of disengaged listening include standard attempts to be friendly and positive in boilerplate responses to technical support questions and apologies from the bank/airline/hotel after receiving a complaint. Most of these responses start by saying how important you are while the rest of the message in both form and content conveys a contrasting meaning. “Your call is *very* important to us. Please stay on the line until the next available agent is free. And incidentally, how do you like old violin music played right into your earpiece? We have all of Vivaldi’s (1678–1741) classical *Four Seasons*, and that is likely how long you will wait.”

Engaged Listening for a Transactional World

Engaged listening enables you to grasp a deeper understanding of the message that goes beyond what can be achieved through mere active listening. Take reflecting, the routine approach to active listening described earlier. Although you may be able to paraphrase or repeat what you hear, this ability does not guarantee you will actually understand the overtones of what is said. For example, active listeners may be able to understand and “reflect” that when someone says, “As a father, I am against the military occupation of Freedonia,” he is stating opposition to the situation in a foreign country. Active yet disengaged listeners, however, may miss the deeper significance of the first three words. Apparently irrelevant to the rest of the sentiment expressed, they were probably uttered because the role of “father” is central to *the speaker’s view of self* and to *the speaker’s view of his relationship with others* and therefore constitute a major part of what he wants to tell the world. Engaged listeners would be able to pick up on this additional meaning (perhaps he is concerned that his child may be drafted to fight in Freedonia).

engaged listening: making a personal relational connection with the source of a message that results from the source and the receiver actively working together to create shared meaning and understanding

Relational Listening

Relational listening involves recognizing, understanding, and addressing the interconnection of relationships and communication. Vital to understanding how your personal and social relationships are intrinsically connected with communication, listening relationally will also enhance your understanding of your personal relationships and the meaning of communication taking place. When engaging in relational listening, you must address two features of communication and relationships: how communication affects the relationship and how the relationship affects communication.

All communication between people in a relationship will affect that relationship somehow. Some exchanges may have a greater impact than others, but all communication will exert influence on the relationship. Relational listening entails recognizing this salient feature of communication, considering how a given message affects the relationship, and addressing this impact in an appropriate manner. The relationship people share will also influence what is (or is not) communicated, how it is communicated, and its meaning. Relational listening when receiving a message would thus entail addressing the questions listed in [Table 7.2](#).

How you answer these questions will determine the actions that result from the message you receive. First, these questions will guide your actual response to the message, given your relational understanding of its meaning and its impact on your relationship. Second, your answers to these questions will change your perception and understanding of the relationship. Sometimes these changes in perception and understanding will be quite profound, but other times your perception and understanding will be only slightly modified. All communication will change your relationship, once again underscoring the importance of listening.

Table 7.2 Questions to Consider When Receiving a Message

-
1. What impact does this message have on my understanding of this relationship?
 2. What impact may this message have on the other person's understanding of this relationship?
 3. Does this message correspond with my understanding of this relationship?
 4. Is something absent from this message that would correspond with my understanding of this relationship?
 5. Is this message being communicated in a manner that corresponds with my understanding of this relationship?
 6. What does this message mean based on my understanding of this relationship?
 7. What does this message tell me about the other person's understanding of this relationship?
-

Make your case: Dealing With Customer Service Agents



The job of a customer service representative is typically to respond to questions and requests from customers, which requires a good deal of listening to provide customers with the information they need. Recall an experience with a customer service representative in which you felt that you were not listened to.



©iStockphoto.com/Wavebreak

Questions to Consider

1. What about the customer service representative's responses made you feel this way?
2. If you were training customer service providers, how would you prepare them to be good listeners? Could you become a listening consultant?

relational listening: recognizing, understanding, and addressing the interconnection of relationships and communication during the listening process

Critical Listening

Critical listening does not mean being negative about what you hear; it means judging or assessing what you hear, and this assessment may end up being positive. Critical listening involves analyzing the accuracy, legitimacy, and value of messages and evidence produced to support claims. Critical listening can just as easily result in a positive as a negative valuation of a message. Much like movie critic Roger Ebert (1942–2013), who rated movies with either a “thumbs down” or a “thumbs up,” you may evaluate messages positively or negatively. In addition, a message will likely have both positive and negative qualities, in which case you decide whether the positive attributes outweigh the negative or vice versa. Few messages can be evaluated as entirely negative or entirely positive, with the actual evaluation ranking somewhere in between. Rather than “thumbs up” and “thumbs down,” perhaps “thumbs slightly askew upward” and “thumbs slightly askew downward” are more appropriate. So critical judgments are not black-and-white but involve many shades of gray.

Are there some types of relationships or areas of life that do not require critical evaluation?



©iStockphoto.com/ThaddeusRobertson

Critical evaluation encompasses every aspect of daily life and all symbolic activity. People are constantly being called to make critical evaluations and judgments as they encounter others’ messages and general life experiences. Your critical choices can range from major life-altering decisions, such as deciding to attend college, to seemingly less important but still significant decisions, such as which television program to watch or where to meet a friend for lunch. The need for critical listening pervades your daily life.

Elements of Critical Listening

Now that we have introduced critical listening, we can examine the four elements that compose it.

Evaluation of Plausibility

Some messages seem legitimate and valid when you first listen to them. When encountering other messages, however, you immediately get the feeling that something is just not right. Even if you cannot immediately pinpoint the problem with these messages, you feel as if something is amiss. When you experience these feelings, you are evaluating the plausibility of the message, or the extent to which it seems legitimate (Gouran, Wiethoff, & Doelger, 1994). You might not believe that diaper-wearing winged monkeys were spotted flying over campus because this event is implausible (those things are never around your area during this time of year). The plausibility of other messages might not be as obvious, but something might still strike you as problematic. For example, an automobile dealership guaranteeing “free maintenance for life on all new cars sold this month” may strike you as plausible but problematic. You may feel that the message does not provide sufficient information or is not entirely genuine. When you are unsure of a message’s legitimacy, it is best to follow your instincts. The evaluation of plausibility is your first line of defense as a critical listener, and often your first impression of a message is accurate.

critical listening: the process of analyzing and evaluating the accuracy, legitimacy, and value of messages

plausibility: the extent to which a message seems legitimate

Evaluation of Source

When critically examining a message, you must evaluate its source. You may know people who never provide you with good advice or who always seem to be wrong about everything. Although you should still listen to these people in case they offer a worthwhile message, your past experiences with them may dictate the degree of belief and value that you place on their messages. The status of the source will also affect the extent to which you critically engage a message. People tend to be more critical of messages from individuals of equal status than of those from higher-status individuals. For instance, you may not critically evaluate a message from your instructor because you assume he or she will be correct (Pearson & Nelson, 2000).

Ethical Issue

What criteria should be used when evaluating the source of a message? Would using particular criteria ever be considered unethical?

fallacious argument: an argument that appears legitimate but is actually based on faulty reasoning or insufficient evidence

By the way . . . Fallacious Arguments



Engaging in critical listening requires the recognition of fallacious arguments, those that appear legitimate but are actually based on faulty reasoning or insufficient evidence. Here are a few examples.

Argument against the source occurs when the source of a message, rather than the message itself, is attacked (also called *ad hominem* argument). For instance, you might hear a political analyst say, “The senator’s latest proposal is not acceptable because he is nothing but a pathological liar.” Rather than critically evaluating the actual proposal, the analyst attacks the source of the proposal.

Appeal to authority occurs when a person’s authority or credibility in one area is used to support another area. Sports heroes and actors, for example, have been used to sell everything from magazine subscriptions to underwear. However, just because a person has particular knowledge or talent in one area does not mean he or she is knowledgeable or talented in all areas.

Appeal to people claims that something is good or beneficial because everyone else agrees with this evaluation (also called *bandwagon appeal*). Many products that boast their own popularity in advertisements: “Squeaky Clean is the nation’s top-selling brand of dish soap”

or “See *British and Redneck Professors Go to Vegas*, the movie that audiences have made the number-one comedy for two weeks in a row.” No mention is made of dexterity in removing grease from pans or of wonderful acting based on a true story.

Appeal to relationships occurs when relationships are used to justify certain behaviors and to convince others of their appropriateness. When someone says, “Could you be a real good friend and give me a ride to the library?,” the inclusion of the relational term *friend* underscores the existence of the relationship and reminds the other person of behaviors and duties associated with that sort of relationship. You might expect a “friend” to provide transportation when requested, but not an “acquaintance.” Appealing to a relationship may be somewhat legitimate but also fallacious. Asking a friend for a ride to the library is one thing; asking a friend to drive the getaway car while you rob a convenience store is another.

Post hoc ergo propter hoc argues that something is caused by whatever happens before it; Latin for “after this; therefore, because of this.” According to this logic, the following statement is true: Animals start acting strangely just before an earthquake; therefore, animals cause earthquakes. You likely see the inherent problem with this statement. Admittedly, this example may seem a bit obvious. However, the use of this sort of reasoning is actually quite common.

Cum hoc ergo propter hoc argues that if one thing happens at the same time as another, it was caused by the thing with which it coincides; Latin for “with this; therefore, because of this.” Someone might remark, “I wore a new pair of socks on the day of my communication midterm and earned an A on the test. Wearing new socks must have been the reason I scored so high. From now on, I’m going to wear a new pair of socks each time I take a test.” If this were all it took to score well on an examination, life would be pretty sweet! Wearing new socks at the same time you ace an examination, however, will not guarantee you a high score on your next exam. If you really want to improve your exam scores, try visiting <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>.

Hasty generalization occurs when a conclusion is based on a single occurrence or insufficient data or sample size. When defending a new policy on campus, someone might say, “I asked people in my algebra class, and they all agreed that a campus-wide attendance policy is a good idea. So I guess the policy is a good one that the students like.” Simply because a few people agreed with this policy in one class does not mean it is good or that the majority of students agree with the policy.

Red herring is the use of another issue to divert attention away from the real issue. When talking about the cost of higher education, you might hear, “I find it difficult to fathom that you insist on addressing higher-education funding when the spotted pygmy squirrel is on the verge of extinction.” This fallacy is especially common when someone wants to avoid a particular topic.

False alternatives occurs when only two options are provided, one of which is generally presented as the poor choice or one that should be avoided. Traveling by plane, for example, comes with the likelihood of delays caused by mechanical problems and the always kind and supportive airline personnel who have been known to use false alternatives by explaining, “You can either endure a delay while we find a plane that is functional, or you can leave as scheduled and travel in a plane that is not working correctly.” Waiting for a functional plane seems much better than facing possible mechanical problems after takeoff. However, this overlooks the other equally probable option: having a functional plane available to begin with by ensuring proper maintenance is accomplished well before the flight is scheduled to depart.

Composition fallacy argues that the parts are the same as the whole. A newspaper article might include the quote, “Students on campus are in favor of the tuition increase to pay for the new sports complex. When asked about the increase in tuition, sophomore Steven Taylor noted, ‘If it takes an increase in tuition to replace the old sports complex, that’s what needs to be done.’” This report essentially says that if one student (part) is in favor of the tuition increase, all students (whole) are in favor of it as well.

Division fallacy argues the whole is the same as its parts. When being set up on a date by a friend, you might argue, “Everyone you have ever set me up with has been a loser, so this person is going to be a loser too.” This statement essentially reasons that if previous dates have been losers (whole), this date (part) will also be one.

Equivocation relies on the ambiguousness of language to make an argument. You might hear an announcer proclaim, “Squeaky Clean dish soap is better!” This sounds good, but you cannot be certain what Squeaky Clean is actually better than. Is it better than using no dish soap at all or washing dishes by dropping rocks into the sink? Is it better than other brands of dish soap? The use of equivocation leaves such questions unanswered, often the point of this fallacy. When ambiguous words and phrases, such as *improved*, *bargain*, *good value*, *delicious*, or *soothing*, are used, listeners must fill in the context on their own, which often results in a product or an idea being received in a much more positive manner than warranted.

Questions to Consider

1. Are there instances when a fallacy could be legitimate?
2. Why do you think fallacious arguments are so common in advertisements and everyday communication?

Evaluation of Consistency

Consistency concerns whether the message is free of internal contradiction and in harmony with information you already know is true (Gouran et al., 1994). Earlier in this chapter, we mention the importance of listening. If we contend later in the chapter that listening is not very important in your everyday life, this contradiction should strike you as problematic. One of these two statements is obviously wrong or misrepresented, and this contradiction might lead you to question the information being provided as well as the rest of the things we have told you in the book.

Consistency also entails whether the information provided agrees with information you already know as true. If someone is describing the best route to travel through the South and mentions that “once you enter Mississippi, just keep driving south until you reach Tennessee,” you might question the message given your previous knowledge that Tennessee is actually located north of Mississippi. The information being offered is not consistent with previous information you know to be true.

consistency: a message is free of internal contradiction and is in harmony with information known to be true

Evaluation of Evidence

As a critical listener, you must also evaluate the evidence by considering the following criteria: verifiability, quantity, and quality. Verifiability indicates that the material being provided can be confirmed by other sources or means (Gouran et al., 1994). If someone tells you during the day that the sky is blue, you can verify this by going outside and looking for yourself. If someone tells you Alexander Hamilton was shot in a duel with Aaron Burr, you can verify this by confirming the information in a book about these historic figures. Some material may be more difficult to verify, in which case you must evaluate other aspects of the message.

When it comes to the *quantity* of evidence, there is no magic number to indicate a well-supported argument or claim. Such judgment is based on other evaluations of a message as well as the quality of evidence that is included, but the more arguments, data, and people that are consistent with it, the better.

Evaluations of *quality* include determining such issues as a lack of bias, sufficient expertise, and recency. Information from most sources slant in one direction or another when it comes to issues, but some sources may be obvious about their point of view, such as material from pro-life groups and pro-choice groups. You should also determine the expertise of the sources being used. A newspaper reporter may be an expert in journalism, but that does not make him or her an expert source about fitness or military strategy if writing such articles. Finally, you must determine whether information provided is recent or outdated. Given your knowledge of the issue, is information that is five years old outdated (as it would be in discussion of computers) or sufficiently current (key points in discussion of ancient Babylon really are not changing much at this moment)?

verifiability: an indication that the material being provided can be confirmed by other sources or means

environmental distraction: obstacle to listening that results from the physical location where listening takes place and competing sources

Recognizing and Overcoming Listening Obstacles

Effective listening is fundamental in the development of shared meaning and understanding. It accounts for the positive attributes derived from interactions with others. But let's not get too rosy: Listening sometimes goes bad and results in negative outcomes and problems in relationships. What are these obstacles and problems?

Environmental distractions result from the physical location where listening takes place and competing sources (Wood, 2015). If you have tried listening to a friend when loud music is playing at a restaurant or bar, for example, or if people are whispering in class or texting while you are attempting to focus on your instructor, you already know how environmental factors can hinder effective listening. However, a host of environmental distractions can obstruct listening, and these distractions go beyond competing sounds that make it difficult to hear and pay attention. The temperature of a room can distract you from fully listening if it happens to be uncomfortably warm or cool. Activity and movements of people not involved in a conversation can also distract you from focusing on a message being received.

Medium distractions result from limitations or problems inherent in certain media and technology, such as mobile phones or Internet connections. You have probably needed to include the phrases "Are you still there?" and "Can you hear me now?" in a conversation with someone when at least one of you was using a smartphone. You also likely have continued talking long after a call has been disconnected only to realize the disconnection when your phone starts ringing in your ear. Such distractions make it very difficult to pick up on the words being spoken and to fully concentrate on the message. Similar to problems encountered with smartphones, problems involving poor connections and delays also occur when using instant and text messaging, making it very difficult to concentrate on the messages being exchanged.

Source distractions result from auditory and visual characteristics of the message source. Vocal characteristics—for example, an unfamiliar or uncharacteristic tone and quality of voice, extended pauses, and such repeated nonfluencies as *um*, *uh*, or *you know*—can distract you from listening to someone's message. A person's physical appearance, proxemics, haptics, and artifacts may also serve as distractions. For instance, someone may be standing too close to you or touching you more than you find appropriate or comfortable. As difficult as it might be for you, the best thing to do in these situations is to recognize the possible distraction and attempt to overcome it. Many times, recognition of the problem goes a long way in being able to manage it.

Factual diversion is a frequent problem that students experience when taking notes while listening to a lecture in class. It occurs when so much emphasis is placed on attending to every detail of a message that the main point becomes lost. Students become so intent on documenting every single detail that they lose the main point of the discussion. Imagine you are in a history course studying the American Revolution. The instructor is discussing Paul Revere's "midnight ride," which just so happens to be her area of expertise. As a result, throughout the discussion she offers multiple details about this infamous ride, including the type of buttons on Revere's jacket, the color and name of his horse, the temperature, and even what he ate for breakfast that morning. You begin to furiously write them all down in your notes. In fact, you note every single detail but one—the purpose of his ride! You know the color and name of his horse but not what he was doing on top of it. When you focus too much on every detail of a message, you very likely will miss the main idea.

In a way, factual diversion also occurs when taking notes on a laptop during a lecture. Students who use laptops to take notes, rather than writing them out longhand, tend to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than thinking about the content, selecting the main ideas, and reframing the information in their own words (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014).

medium distraction: obstacle to listening that results from limitations or problems inherent in certain media and technology, such as mobile phones or Internet connections

source distraction: obstacle to listening that results from auditory and visual characteristics of the message source

factual diversion: obstacle to listening that occurs when so much emphasis is placed on attending to every detail of a message that the

Semantic diversion takes place when people are distracted by words or phrases used in a message through negative response or unfamiliarity. People tend to respond positively or negatively to words they encounter. The intensity of this response will vary, with some words eliciting a strong or weak response in one direction or the other (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Semantic diversion occurs when your response to a certain word used during a message causes you to focus unnecessary attention on that word or prevents you from listening to the rest of the message. For example, you may hear a word that elicits a strong negative response, such as a racial or sexual slur, and focus on your feelings about that word rather than fully attending to the rest of the message.

Semantic diversion also involves letting unfamiliar words or phrases cause us to stop listening to or shift our attention away from the message. People often encounter unrecognizable words in a message; for instance, during a lecture your instructors may occasionally use a word with which you are unfamiliar.

Content (representational) listening occurs when people focus on the content level of meaning, or literal meaning, rather than the social or relational level of meaning. Content listening occurs when you focus solely on the surface level of meaning and fail to recognize or engage in determining deeper levels of meaning. A classmate may remark, "This project I have been working on is more difficult than I expected." If you listen only at the content level, you may see this statement as a mere observation. However, it may very well have a deeper meaning. Listening at a deeper level may uncover that this classmate needs your assistance, is seeking words of motivation, or is determining if your relationship is one that would provide such support.

Selective listening occurs when people focus on the points of a message that correspond with their views and interests and pay less attention to those that do not. Essentially, people pick up on the parts of a message that correspond with their views or that they find most interesting and disregard the rest. Imagine meeting a friend for lunch when you are particularly hungry. Upon meeting your friend, he begins telling you about his morning. You drift in and out of the conversation until he asks what restaurant you prefer. At that moment, you become very interested in the conversation and focus on what is being discussed.

By the way . . . : Smartphones and Laptops in the Classroom



One increasingly prominent environmental distraction in the classroom is students using smartphones and using laptops for activities other than taking notes. When it comes to smartphones, on behalf of instructors everywhere, we would like to say, "Stop it!! We see you texting under the table, and you are not fooling anyone!"

When it comes to laptops, although they are not the best way to take notes (we discuss that issue when examining factual diversion), using them to take notes during a lecture may be seen as a legitimate use. The problem occurs when students who are using them to take notes, suddenly decide they need to use the laptop to do something else. So, they check their email, message someone, update their social networking site, or any other activity the Internet and free university Wi-Fi allows them to do.

Beyond these activities being a distraction to them and resulting in less comprehension of the course material, the same thing occurs to students around them who are able to see what they are doing. In fact, it has been shown that students who engaged in such multitasking on a laptop during a lecture scored lower on exams than did students who did not do so. Students in direct view of the laptop multitasker also scored lower on exams than did students who are not in direct view of the laptop (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). Essentially, they become distracted by the other person's laptop activities and are unable to pay adequate attention or to adequately concentrate on the lecture.

Questions to Consider

1. Is it wrong to engage in laptop multitasking because it could result in distracting and lowering the grades of classmates?
2. If you consider such activity to be acceptable behavior . . . Seriously?

semantic diversion: obstacle to listening that occurs when people are distracted by words or phrases used in a message through negative response or unfamiliarity

content (representational) listening: obstacle to listening when people focus on the content level of meaning, or literal meaning, rather than the social or relational level of meaning

selective listening: obstacle to listening when people focus on the points of a message that correspond with their views and interests and pay less attention to those that do not

Egocentric listening occurs when people focus more on their message and self-presentation than on the message of the other person involved in an interaction. This type of listening is frequently observed during disagreements or arguments when people concentrate so much on what they are going to say next that they fail to listen to others. Perhaps you are in the middle of a heated discussion with a rival coworker and have just come up with a brilliant sarcastic remark. You cannot wait until your coworker's lips stop moving so that you may use this line. The problem is that you have stopped listening to your coworker. You are so absorbed in developing and presenting your own message that you have failed to listen to his or hers.

Wandering thoughts occur when you daydream or think about things other than the message being presented. This lack of attention happens to everyone from time to time. No matter how intent you are on focusing on a message, your mind wanders, and you start thinking about other things. Consider listening to a lecture in class when your mind starts to wander. You think about a high school classmate, the great parking space you found last week, where you will eat after class, or a YouTube video that you have seen at least 20 times.

Wandering thoughts are caused not necessarily by lack of interest in the topic but rather by the connection between the rate of speech and the ability to process information, which can directly affect listening comprehension (Preiss & Gayle, 2006). People speak on average between 100 and 150 words per minute, but listeners process information at a rate of between 400 and 500 words per minute. An effective way to overcome this obstacle is to take advantage of the extra time by mentally summarizing what the speaker is saying. This strategy will enable you to remain focused, as well as increase your understanding of the message.

Experiential superiority takes place when people fail to listen to someone else fully because they believe that they possess more or superior knowledge and experience than the other person (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). If you have worked at the same job for a number of years, you might choose not to listen to a recently hired employee's suggestion about your work. You might feel that because you have more experience in the position, you do not need to listen because you will not hear anything new. Unfortunately, the new hire's suggestion might be good, but you will never know because you did not listen.

egocentric listening: obstacle to listening when people focus more on their message and self-presentation than on the message of the other person involved in an interaction

wandering thoughts: obstacle to listening involving daydreams or thoughts about things other than the message being presented

experiential superiority: obstacle to listening when people fail to listen to someone else fully because they believe that they possess more or superior knowledge and experience than the other person

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Listening Obstacles in the Classroom

Listening has a profound impact on classroom performance. As you explore obstacles to effective listening, consider how you can enhance your listening abilities in the classroom by recognizing and overcoming these obstacles.

Questions to Consider

1. Which of these obstacles do you find most common in the classroom? What can you do to manage them?
2. What sorts of distractions have you discovered that prevent good understanding of what is said in class?

Communication + You: Becoming a Good Listener



Some people are very good listeners, whereas others might be poor listeners. Being aware of what obstacles stand in the way of listening, and observing good listeners, can help to strengthen your listening skills. We hope (after finishing this chapter), you can call yourself a good listener!

Questions to Consider

1. Which of your friends, family members, classmates, or coworkers would you consider *good* listeners? What behaviors do these people enact when interacting with others? In what ways could their listening still improve?
2. Which of your friends, family members, classmates, or coworkers would you consider *poor* listeners? What behaviors do these people enact when interacting with others? In what ways could their listening improve?

Message complexity becomes an obstacle to listening when a person finds a message so complex or confusing that he or she stops listening (Wood, 2015). At times, you may listen to a person discussing a topic that you feel is beyond your grasp. You may try to listen intently to comprehend what is being discussed, but you just find it too confusing and difficult to understand. In this situation, you feel tempted to stop listening because you believe you cannot glean anything valuable from paying further attention. You might, however, actually gain some understanding from continuing to listen, and the discussion might actually start making sense. Unfortunately, you will lose this understanding if you continue to ignore the remainder of the message.

Why are wandering thoughts so common?



©iStockphoto.com/Photodisc

Past experience with the source becomes an obstacle to listening when previous encounters with the message source lead people to ignore the message. You may know people who habitually lie or who seem to be wrong about nearly everything they say, and your past experience with these individuals may compel you to not listen to them. Although they may have something worthwhile to say, you will never know because you decided not to listen. Of course, as discussed when examining the critical examination of messages, just because you should listen to that person does not mean that you should believe what he or she tells you.

message complexity: obstacle to listening when a person finds a message so complex or confusing that he or she stops listening

past experience with the source: obstacle to listening when previous encounters with a person lead people to dismiss or fail to critically examine a message because the person has generally been right (or wrong) in the past

Focus Questions Revisited

1. Why is listening important enough to have an entire chapter devoted to it?

Listening is the communication activity in which you engage most frequently and is fundamental to success in education, careers, and relationships. Often the most common activity in classrooms, listening has been directly linked to academic achievement, is one of the most sought-after skills by employers, and is critical to success and advancement in the workplace. Effective listening in relationships leads to greater satisfaction and is essential for successful relational development.

2. What are the objectives of listening?

There are five objectives of listening:

1. Relational development and enhancement
2. Gaining and comprehending information
3. Critical listening
4. Enjoyment and appreciation
5. Therapeutic listening

Even though these objectives were discussed in isolation, remember that a single communicative exchange can involve multiple listening goals.

3. What does it mean to listen actively?

Active listening is a process of receiving, attending to, interpreting, and responding to symbolic activity. *Receiving* auditory stimuli is the first step in the listening process. *Attending* occurs when you perceive and focus on stimuli. *Interpreting* involves assigning meaning to sounds and symbolic activity. *Responding*, the final step in the active listening process, entails reacting to this symbolic activity.

4. What are engaged and relational listening?

Engaged listening and relational listening are advanced types of listening that demand more of the listener than active listening does. The engaged listening process entails making a personal relational connection with the source of a message that results from the source and the receiver actively working together to create shared meaning and understanding. Relational listening involves recognizing, understanding, and addressing the interconnection of relationships and communication.

5. What is critical listening, and why is it so important?

Critical listening is the process of analyzing and evaluating the accuracy, legitimacy, and value of messages. Involving the evaluation of a message's plausibility, source, argument, and evidence, critical listening has a profound impact on personal relationships, learning, and the evaluation of persuasive messages.

6. What obstacles must people overcome to listen well?

There are a number of obstacles to listening, including the following: (1) environmental, (2) medium distractions, (3) source distractions, (4) factual diversion, (5) semantic diversion, (6) content (representational) listening, (7) selective listening, (8) egocentric listening, (9) wandering thoughts, (10) experiential superiority, (11) message complexity, and (12) past experience with the source. Recognizing, managing, and overcoming these obstacles is crucial to effective listening.

Key Concepts

appeal to authority 143
appeal to people 143
appeal to relationships 143
argument against the source 143
attending 138
composition fallacy 144
consistency 144
content (representational) listening 147
critical listening 142
cum hoc ergo propter hoc 143
division fallacy 144
egocentric listening 147
engaged listening 140
environmental distraction 145
equivocation 144
experiential superiority 148
factual diversion 146
fallacious arguments 143
false alternatives 144
hasty generalization 144
hearing 138
interpreting 139
listening 138
medium distraction 146
message complexity 149
past experience with the source 149
plausibility 142
post hoc ergo propter hoc 143
receiving 138
red herring 144
reflecting 139
relational listening 141
responding 139
selective listening 147
semantic diversion 147
source distraction 146
verifiability 145
wandering thoughts 148

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask a friend to recall a time when he or she misunderstood someone else. Have your friend describe the situation and determine if problems with listening had anything to do with the misunderstanding. If so, how could the misunderstanding have been prevented through effective listening behaviors, and how could you now “coach” your friend to avoid the same mistake next time?
2. Now that you have read the chapter and learned some better ways to listen, ask your friends if they consider you a good listener or not. What suggestions do they have for improving your listening, and how far can you now translate that advice into the technical terms you have learned in this chapter?
3. Ask a friend to describe a time when he or she made a purchase based on the recommendation of a salesperson that he or she later regretted. Was a lack of critical listening partially responsible, or was the salesperson using tricks of persuasion that your friend overlooked? What suggestions could you offer your friend when making future purchases? If all else fails, David’s wife is an excellent shopper and can offer more tips.

Media Connections

1. Find videos of two people talking. These videos could include actual interactions or fictionalized interactions such as a television program or movie. Select one video in which one or both of the interactants are listening effectively, and select another video in which one or both of the interactants are listening ineffectively (presidential debates are often good examples of the latter). What led you to characterize them as effective and ineffective, respectively?
2. Watch a political talk show, such as *Fox News Sunday*, *Meet the Press*, or *The O’Reilly Factor*. What obstacles to listening are evident during interviews and panel discussions on these programs? How do you think it helps or distracts the viewer to have interviewers interrupt the proceedings so often?
3. Concurrent media exposure occurs when two or more media systems are used simultaneously. For example, you may be using the Internet while listening to the radio or reading a newspaper at the same time you are watching a movie on television. What impact might concurrent media exposure have on listening to media?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

Part III Communication Contexts

[Chapter 8 Personal Relationships](#)



©iStockphoto.com/VLIET

[Chapter 9 Groups and Leaders](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Somogyvari

[Chapter 10 Communication in the Workplace](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Geber86

[Chapter 11 Technology and Media in Everyday Life](#)



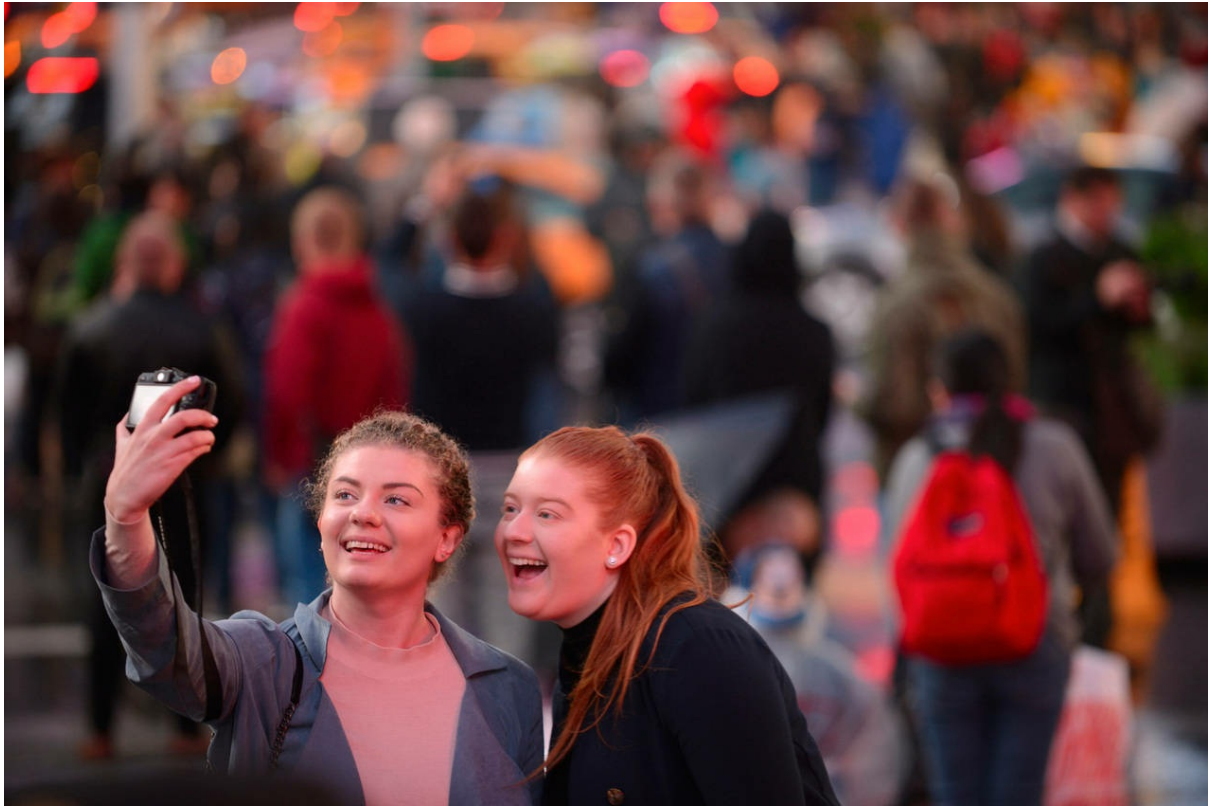
AzmanL/Getty Images

[Chapter 12 Interviewing](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Steve Debenport

8 Personal Relationships



©iStockphoto.com/VLIET

Chapter Outline

- [What Are Personal Relationships?](#)
- [Benefits of Personal Relationships](#)
 - [Relationships and What You Know](#)
 - [Relationships and Support](#)
- [Initiating Relationships: The Relationship Filtering Model](#)
 - [Talking to Strangers](#)
 - [Steps in the Relationship Filtering Model](#)
- [Transacting and Maintaining Personal Relationships](#)
 - [Composing Relationships Through Communication](#)
 - [Keeping Relationships Going Through Communication](#)
 - [Relational Dialectics](#)
- [Coming Apart](#)
 - [Symptoms and Sources of Decline](#)
 - [Breakdown Process Model](#)
- [Focus Questions Revisited](#)
- [Key Concepts](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)
- [Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are personal relationships?
2. What are the benefits of relationships?
3. How are relationships initiated?
4. How are relationships transacted and maintained?
5. How do relationships come apart?

As you read and study this chapter, we want you to reconsider the way many people think about relationships. Specifically, they are not just about emotion. Rather, relationships are about knowledge, ways of understanding the world, and connecting people symbolically (Duck, 2011). Relationships are a fundamental part of what you know about the world, how to act, what to think, what to value, and what to believe.

Placing relationships at the heart of your knowledge and reality systems may very well be something you have not considered before, but all our previous chapters have been connecting relationships to other aspects of communication. Now we want to speak directly to the question of the ways in which relationships have directly affected what you know and how you know it. Think about the following questions and answers.

When you were younger, who taught you the proper way to behave through example or through punishment if you misbehaved? Most likely, it was a parent or guardian. It may have also been another relative, a friend of the family, or a neighbor.

When you grew older, how did you learn which behaviors were considered admirable and resulted in social status and which behaviors were to be avoided? Your previous answers may also apply here, but you may want to add your friends.

From the very beginning of this book, we have discussed how communication transacts or creates meanings, realities, knowledge systems, cultures, and identities. Well, guess where that communication takes place. You've got it . . . *relationships*! You have developed what you know, how you view the world, and who you are through interactions with family, friends, romantic partners, neighbors, classmates, colleagues, enemies, acquaintances, and the list continues. The development of your knowledge, worldview, and self never ends, by the way. They are continuously being transformed, reinforced, and otherwise altered through relationships.

Within this chapter, we will examine the value of relationships as ways of knowing the world. We will also explore the development of personal relationships and their place within your everyday life. To begin, though, we need to figure out exactly what personal relationships are and what makes them so personal.

What Are Personal Relationships?

A range of different relationship types can be recognized. These types of relationships are represented by different styles of communication. For instance, some relationships may be characterized by formal communication (business acquaintances) or by informal communication (friends). These types of relationships are also understood and appreciated differently within a culture. For instance, *friend* is a relational category that might be evaluated positively, whereas *enemy* is a relational category that might be evaluated negatively. Ultimately, relationships can be placed into two broad categories: social relationships and personal relationships.

Social relationships are those in which the participants are interchangeable and communicate using socially understood norms and roles. These involve people with whom a close relationship is not necessarily shared. Your relationships with store clerks, bus drivers, and restaurant servers are generally social ones. When interacting with a store clerk, you are both playing specific social roles and communicating in a fairly standard manner. If one of you were replaced by someone else, the communication taking place would not be very different.

Personal relationships are those in which the participants are irreplaceable and communicate in close, unique ways. Unlike social relationships, personal relationships involve people who cannot be replaced by someone else. Your relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners are generally personal ones. When interacting with a particular friend, you are using patterns of interaction and meaning systems exclusive to that particular relationship. Even if there are some similarities with the patterns of interaction and meaning systems used with other friends, they are still unique and different.

As you consider these categories of relationships, note that social relationships and personal relationships are not permanent or mutually exclusive. Social relationships can become more personal. If you often frequent a restaurant, for example, a more personal relationship could develop with a regular server. A personal relationship could develop from what would generally be recognized as a social relationship.

Make your case: Social or Personal Relationships?



It is possible for social relationships to be transformed into more personal ones, as when you repeatedly visit the same store and the employees get to know you and may even greet you by name when you come in. However, if all of those employees retired, you might still go to the same store and just start social relationships with the new employees. More difficult to explain is the way in which personal relationships develop from two strangers meeting for the first time to their becoming good friends.



Bloomberg/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. At what point does a social relationship become a personal relationship? For instance, at what point might acquaintances be recognized as friends?
2. How can you tell? Hint: Consider the communication taking place.

social relationships: relationships in which the specific people in a given role can be changed and the relationship would still occur (e.g., customer–client relationships are the same irrespective of who is the customer and who is the client on a particular occasion; compare with *personal relationships*)

personal relationships: relationships that only specified and irreplaceable individuals (such as your mother, father, brother, sister, or very best friend) can have with you (compare with *social relationships*)

Benefits of Personal Relationships

Relationships are vital to your world, and there are important benefits to engaging in them. Within this section, we are going to discuss two particular areas of value that personal relationships provide: ways of knowing and support.

Relationships and What You Know

Everyday communication reinforces both your relationships and what you know. All forms of communication show how you rely on your connections with other people to filter your knowledge and help you critically evaluate events, people, and situations. Because communication involves information, the people you know and with whom you spend your time affect your knowledge. They influence the messages you send or pay attention to, the information you believe, the type of critical thinking you do, and how you evaluate outcomes. So, not just a *result* of communication, relationships are also significant in the formation and transaction of knowledge.

Influencing What You Know

Relationships exert influence on the distribution of information. You know what you know, in many ways, because of people with whom you share a relationship. Information about people friends, acquaintances, coworkers, and other people you know is learned as a result of gossip and news traveling through a network of folks who know one another (Bergmann, 1993; Duck, 2007). In many families, for instance, someone may function as a kin keeper, someone who keeps family members connected by sharing information between them (Rosenthal, 1985). This role is especially beneficial to geographically dispersed family members (Sahlstein, 2006) or to people who are just simply busy with their own lives. For instance, you may not speak to a particular relative very often, but because of a family kin keeper, you know that he or she just had car repairs done and got a raise at work.

Yet, what is known from people with whom we share a relationship is not limited to just information about people in our social networks. Rather, it includes information about the world in general, information both big and small. It runs from information about how to fix a computer to the geopolitical environment (if that is the sort of thing you and friends talk about). That last part is actually pretty important because your friends, family, and other people you know will talk about some things and not other things. They will possess some information and not other information. In this sense, you can think about relationships as influencing what you *don't* know. When people first attend college, many feel as if an entirely new world has opened up before them. They are not just learning new information in the classroom (about communication, for example) but also learning new information about the world from a new set of friends and acquaintances. Their social network has expanded, or at least added greater variety among its members, and new information has become available.

Ethical Issue

Given all the benefits of personal relationships, it would seem that having many of them would be advantageous. A person can have many friends. Is it ethical to have more than one romantic partner?

By the way . . . : Friends as Influencers



The marketing world knows about the power of the connection among relationships, information flow, critical thinking, and knowledge. Marketers use word-of-mouth campaigns that exploit the fact that we respect our friends' opinions about the right purchases to make and what is "cool." In the latest marketing fad, "buzz agents" are paid to tell their friends about particular products, thereby creating "buzz" and influencing people to buy them (Carl, 2006). Think about items you have purchased; it will likely dawn on you that your clothing style as well as the smartphones and computers that you buy may be influenced by your group membership as well as specific friends you have.



Christian Science Monitor/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. How have friends influenced past purchases you have made?
2. How have you influenced past purchases of your friends?

Evaluating What You Know

Communicating with others also offers opportunities for people to test their knowledge of the world. If you happen to speak erroneously, for example, people around you might offer corrections. Likewise, those around you may offer different views of the world that challenge your understandings. Or, interactions with others may support your beliefs and views of the world.

In general, the latter is much more likely to occur—the reason being that people typically prefer to hang out with those who share similar attitudes and beliefs (Byrne, 1997; Kerckhoff, 1974; Sunnafrank, 1983; Sunnafrank & Ramirez, 2004). Not surprisingly, you tend to respect the judgments of your friends and enjoy talking with them because they often reinforce what you believe (Weiss, 1998). Of course, there will occasionally be disagreements, but for the most part, you and your friends talk in ways that support mutually shared views of the world (Duck, 2011).

Relationships and Support

Relationships also provide you with various forms of support. Robert Weiss (1974) identified six specific areas where relationships provide us with something special, needed, or valued. These are provisions of relationships, the deep and important psychological and supportive benefits that relationships provide. Everyday communication provides these provisions seamlessly and often without being obvious.

Belonging and a Sense of Reliable Alliance

A major benefit that people gain from relationships is belonging and a sense of reliable alliance. Feeling connected with others provides a sense of stability and provides feelings of comfort. Actually, such assurances may be one reason why users are drawn to social networking sites (Quinn & Oldmeadow, 2013), especially during a person's first year in college (Vaccaro, Adams, Kisler, & Newman, 2015). Relationships also enable people to feel that someone is there for them if they are ever in need of assistance. Sometimes there may be a desire for people to state this support explicitly. Most of the time, however, people just learn from daily interaction that someone looks after their interests and cares for them (Leatham & Duck, 1990).

Communication + You: Social Networking Sites and Provisions of Relationships



Maintaining relationships might be the overarching reason people use social networking sites (Chesebro, McMahan, & Russett, 2014), but a variety of other relational work can take place through these sites.

Questions to Consider

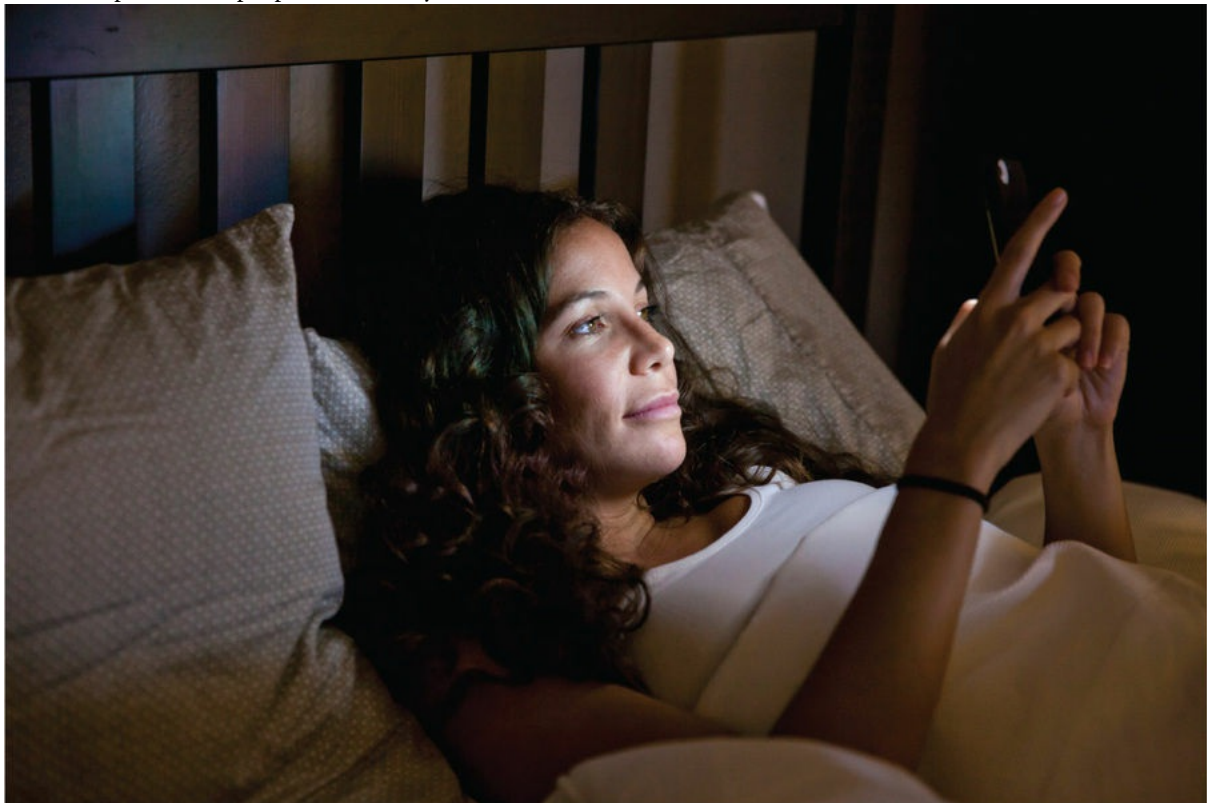
1. To what extent do you think social networking sites can enable the provisions of relationships offered by Weiss (1974)?
2. Do social networking sites enable any provisions not offered by Weiss (1974)?

provisions of relationships: the deep and important psychological and supportive benefits that relationships provide

Emotional Integration and Stability

Personal relationships also provide people with opportunities to express and evaluate emotions. People experience emotions physically (e.g., increased heart rate) but rely on societal and relational definitions to understand what they are experiencing (e.g., anger, love, fear). A person's understandings of and reactions to emotions have developed largely through the ways they are experienced and discussed by people within his or her social network. Within some families, for instance, the expression of such negative emotions as fear or sadness is done openly, but such negative emotions are generally hidden within other families. Actually, much of a person's display and understanding of emotion comes from interactions within the family (see Bai, Repetti, & Sperling, 2016; Sanchez-Nunez, Fernandez-Berrocal, & Latorre, 2013).

How does your end-of-day communication with other people transact your relationships? How are the relationships between people here conveyed and transacted in talk?



©iStockphoto.com/Vasileios Economou

Opportunity to Talk About Oneself

A key provision of personal relationships is the ability to talk about oneself. This activity is enjoyable and provides opportunities to derive other relational provisions, such as those mentioned earlier and others mentioned later. People like to put themselves into their talk, offer their opinions and views, be important in stories they tell, and

otherwise be part of a narrative of their own lives that makes them appear valuable and good. Indeed, one of the main things that makes a relationship more rewarding to people is a sense of being known and accepted (Duck, 2011).

Opportunity to Help Others

People also like the feeling of being there for others, and relationships provide opportunities to do just that. A request for advice, for instance, is flattering and implicitly recognizes one's value and significance, yet another provision discussed later. Accordingly, assisting people with whom a relationship is shared can offer the provider of that support with equal if not surpassed personal benefits (see Fogarty, Ramjan, & Hay, 2016; Straus, Johnson, Marquez, & Feldman, 2013).

Provision of Physical Support

Relationships provide physical assistance when needed. Physical support includes needing help from others to move a heavy piano, fix your computer, or look after your pet rat while you are on vacation. Friends do these favors for one another as part of the role of friendship. Of course, different relationships are generally associated with different forms of physical support, and different types of support are offered with changes in age (see Glauber, 2016; Kahn, McGill, & Bianchi, 2011).

Reassurance of Worth and Value

People may find a subtle reassurance of their worth when someone gives up time for them by providing physical support. You would certainly find it confirming if someone said, for example, "Good job" or "Drop that jerk—you deserve better anyway." More important, relationships show people how others see the world, how they represent or present it, what they value in it, what matters to them, and how one's own way of thinking fits in with theirs. In such talk and action, they reassure one's worth and value as a human being (Duck, 2011).

Initiating Relationships: The Relationship Filtering Model

Thus far in the chapter, we have talked about what personal relationships are and the benefits of those relationships. In what follows, we will discuss how relationships are initiated, how relationships are created and maintained during everyday life, and how they end or are transformed.

We will begin by examining how two people move from being strangers to developing a close personal relationship. You have encountered and met a lot of people throughout your lifetime and continue to do so. Of those many people, only a few have become those with whom a close personal relationship is shared. Why, then, do some people become more than just strangers? Turns out, it begins with talk.

Talking to Strangers

If you were taught not to talk to strangers at age 5, it was probably sound advice. However, that warning probably applied to the creepy guy standing on the corner and not the child next to you on the playground. It is still a good idea to avoid the creepy guy on the corner, but if people did not talk to strangers, personal relationships would never develop.

Think about meeting and getting to know strangers. When you meet strangers, all you have to go on initially is how they look and sound. In everyday life when basic personal information is missing, you seek this information by asking questions. Interactions among strangers focus on information gathering and providing information. Topics tend to be noncontroversial, such as your general background and perhaps some basic personal views and interests. This information mostly appears inconsequential. After all, who really cares which high school someone attended, where a person works, or whether he or she has any children?

Well, these seemingly trivial bits of information actually provide background information that can be useful to new acquaintances. If the other persons go on to make evaluative remarks about their school, they could be giving helpful insights into their general attitudes, ways of thinking, and values. These pieces of information are important in building pictures of themselves for others to perceive and evaluate. These pictures will help you determine whether to get to know them better or whether a personal relationship with them might be desirable. Keep in mind that it is not a one-way decision. They are engaged in the same process—the same *filtering* process.

How do relationships grow or change, and how does this show up in talk?

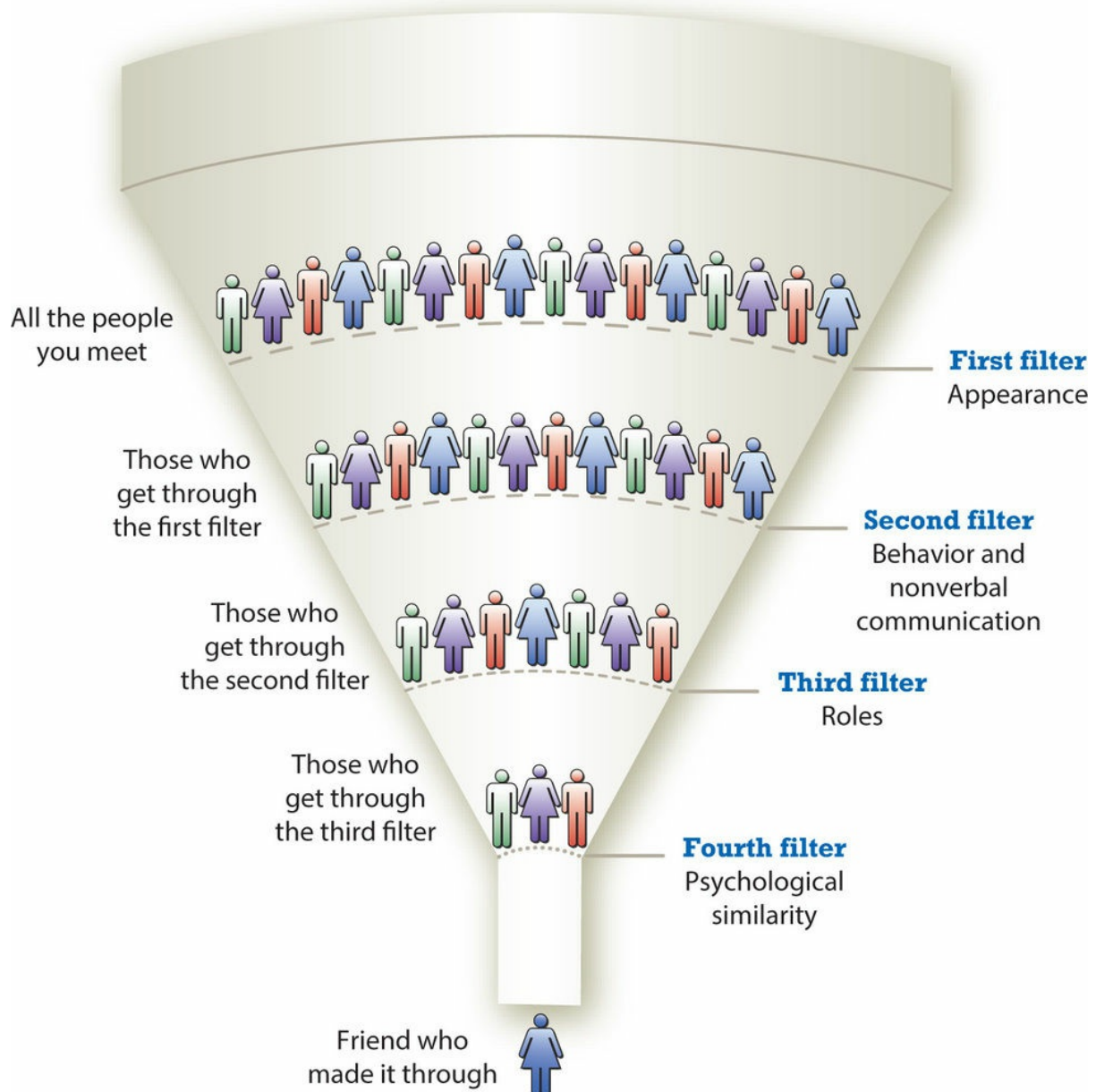


Bloomberg/Getty Images

Steps in the Relationship Filtering Model

The more you get to know people, the better your map of their worlds of meaning and whether you want to continue pursuing a personal relationship. For instance, when classes begin, most of your classmates are, at best, little-known acquaintances. Yet you share some experiences and knowledge that create some common topics to talk about if you happened to get stuck in an elevator or ended up walking across campus with one another after class ended. You would have some common topics of knowledge and at least some idea of each other's positions on issues.

Figure 8.1 The Relationship Filtering Model



Steve's (Duck, 1998, 1999) Relationship Filtering Model suggests that people pay attention to different cues in sequence as they get to know one another. Basically, you use whatever evidence is available to form an impression of another person's underlying thought structure and worldview. Your original model of the person will receive micro-adjustments as you take in new evidence and realize that such modifications need to be made as you meet the person on successive occasions and in different contexts.

The sequence in which you pay attention to characteristics of other people is basically the sequence in which you encounter them: (1) physical appearance, (2) behavior/nonverbal communication, (3) roles, and (4) attitudes/personality.

Relationship Filtering Model: demonstrates how sequences of cues are used to determine which people are selected to develop close relationships

At each point in the sequence, some people are filtered out as people you do not want as partners. Only those people who pass all filters become friends or romantic partners. The model follows the intuitive process through which you get to know people layer by layer. It assumes your basic goal is to understand others on the basis of whatever cues are available at the time. At each deeper level, you get a better understanding of how they tick, and you let them deeper into your world. See [Figure 8.1](#) for an illustrated depiction of the model in action.

Appearance

When you first meet people, you may make assumptions about them just on the basis of their appearance. You can observe their age, race, sex, dress, number of tattoos and body piercings, height, and physical attractiveness.

Although these cues do not necessarily provide accurate information, people make inferences from such cues to the inner world of meaning. The Relationship Filtering Model assumes that you filter out people who do not appear to support your ways of seeing the world and would therefore not be a prospect for a personal relationship. Thus, if you perceive yourself as more of a conformist, someone with an extremely unusual hairstyle may not be someone with whom you would seek a personal relationship. However, someone with a conventional hairstyle may be someone with whom a personal relationship is possible.

By the way . . . : Do People Match Up on Physical Attractiveness?



The “matching hypothesis” maintains that people tend to be attracted to those whom they perceive to have roughly the same level of attractiveness as they have. In fact, people are often attracted to those who look a great deal like themselves!

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think these ideas have any merit based on your own experiences or observations?
2. Do you think the matching hypothesis can be applied to both romantic relationships and friendships?

Behavior/Nonverbal Communication

Those who make it through the appearance filter must then pass through the behavior/nonverbal filter, which gives new clues to the way a person thinks. The way that people act is a fairly accurate way of determining some aspects of how they think. For instance, as we saw in [Chapter 5](#), the way people stand or hold themselves can indicate arrogance, depression, confidence, anxiety, or fear. Thus, their inner world of meanings, beliefs, and values about themselves is exhibited through their behaviors and actions. Deductions based on nonverbal behavior can sometimes be very accurate. On other occasions, the way in which someone behaves may lead to wrong assessments until more information is collected.

As you evaluate the actions of others, you determine in part whether they view the world in the same manner as you. Also, you determine whether this is someone with whom you enjoy spending time and communicating with further. Maybe you are into people who push little old ladies into traffic. If so, you may have found a potential relational partner. If not, that person will probably not make it past this filter.

Roles

The way a person thinks and his or her view of the world can also be determined by the performance of roles, both formal and informal. Actually, viewing role performance over a longer period provides much more accurate information than merely observing instances of nonverbal behavior.

Roles can be either formal or informal and can in both cases provide information about how a person thinks and sees the world. Formal roles have specific expectations, whereas informal roles are defined more broadly. A “school principal” is an example of a formal role, and a “good friend” is an example of an informal role. The ways a person enacts the formal role of school principal might give observers a chance to determine whether the person is a strict, rule-bound tyrant or a generous and supportive interpreter of rules and discipline. The ways a person enacts the informal role of being a good friend might give observers a chance to determine whether the person is someone who would be there when needed. In all cases, observing the role enactment of someone enables people to strengthen, modify, and correct their understanding of the ways in which that person views the world.

Attitude/Personality

The ultimate goal of the filtering process is to build the best model you can make of someone’s belief structures and personality. The more you understand someone and the more he or she appears to support your world of meaning, the more you like it. Hence, the final filter is based on exact information about someone’s personality as derived from self-disclosure (see [Chapter 3](#)).

In all your filtering interactions, you are really trying to find out what people are like at the level of their deeper worlds of meaning, so you aim all the questions you ask and all the communication strategies you adopt toward finding these deeper selves. The more fully you understand somebody, the more you understand how he or she thinks.

However, relationship development cannot be equated to simply revealing and gathering information. Rather, relationship development depends on the interpretation of this information (Duck, 2007). In other words, the relationship grows not from the information that you learn about the other person but from how you “go beyond” it by making inferences about a person’s worlds of meaning. For instance, learning that someone grew up on a

farm provides limited information about the person's worldview. It is necessary to learn and determine how the person views that experience and how growing up on a farm may have affected his or her ways of thinking.

As mentioned throughout this section, the more a person's view of the world and meaning systems seem to correspond with your own, the more likely you will want to form a relationship with him or her. If a person moves through these filters, then the development of a close personal relationship is possible. In what follows, we will turn our attention to the ways in which relationships are created and maintained.

By the way . . . : Does Attempting to Communicate Count?



Have you ever called someone on the phone and hoped they would not answer? We are guessing this has probably happened a few times. You know you *should* call someone, but you do not feel like talking. The mere fact that communication is taking place is often more important than what is actually being discussed. Calling someone indicates that the relationship exists, and it is important enough to you that you are making contact . . . even if you do not always want to talk.

Questions to Consider

1. Do think an attempted phone call counts as much as successfully reaching someone?
2. Does the medium used to contact someone (i.e., phone, text, e-mail, instant message, letter) affect the value of that contact?

Transacting and Maintaining Personal Relationships

Before getting into our discussion of the ways in which relationships are created and maintained, we need to note how these processes have frequently been presented in past research. Previously, relationships have been assumed to develop based on the amount of communication taking place. They were also assumed to develop in orderly stages common to all relationships.

Thinking about relationships in this way makes something very complicated seem uncomplicated and manageable. However, the beliefs represented in this research are inventions of researchers and not the way relationships actually develop. Relationships do not develop in a nice, neat, straightforward manner. And although certain culturally recognized markers of development may be shared with other relationships, all relationships have developed in unique ways.

With that in mind, we will first discuss the ways in which relationships are composed and maintained through communication. We will then examine the theory of relational dialectics.

Composing Relationships Through Communication

Relationships are partly essentialized and indexed through communication. This means that relationships are brought into existence (transacted) through communication and that types of relationships are categorized accordingly through communication.

The *essential function of talk* happens when talk makes the relationship real or talks it into being. The use of coupling references and assumptions about the relationship's existence made when communicating are examples of this sort of talk.

The *indexical function of talk* demonstrates or indicates the nature of the relationship between speakers. What you say and how you say it reveals intimacy (closeness) levels, power differences, and other characteristics of relationships.

Transforming Relationships

If relationships are composed through communication, it stands to reason that they are transformed through communication. When the type of relationship shared moves from one to another (acquaintances to friends, dates to romantic partners, lovers to enemies, or spouses to divorcées), you are moving across the boundaries between different types of relationships in your culture. Accordingly, you say and do different things together.

Relationship development and transformation can be seen as a change in communication based on the information individuals know (or have assumed) about each other's ways of thinking about the world (Duck, 2011). Any change in a relationship involves change in content of talk and the style of communication.

The transformation of a relationship is generally the result of at least one partner, if not both, driving it toward more intimacy or less intimacy. More intimacy may be achieved by introducing intimate topics and changing to more relaxed styles of talk. Less intimacy may be achieved by avoiding the discussion of intimate topics and engaging in talk that is sharper and less welcoming.

By the way . . . : Culture and the Development of Relationships



Development of relationships is really a cultural ideal. It is assumed that relationships will develop from initially meeting to the ultimate romance in a warm, fuzzy, and uncomplicated way. In the stark cold daylight of real life, the development of a relationship is far more complex. One person might not want it to move ahead too fast and may resist his or her partner's attempts to make it grow. Some people might be wary of letting others into their lives and will try hard to keep them at a distance—the intrusive neighbor, the undesirable coworker, or the unwanted romantic who won't take no for an answer. Jon Hess (2000) indicated that people have an extensive range of communicative strategies for keeping disliked people at a distance, from simply ignoring them to treating them as objects to direct and open hostility and antagonism.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever used any of these strategies?
2. What do you suppose some of the other strategies may be?

Relationship Talk: Direct

Relationship transformation can also occur through communication about the relationship. This communication may be direct or indirect. People engage in direct relational communication in special ways, on special occasions, and with very special care. Any direct talk about a relationship forces the partners to focus on its explicit definition.

People often have difficulty raising and discussing certain topics in a relationship (Petronio, 2013). Hearing “Let’s talk about our relationship” has caused many an otherwise brave individual to contemplate running away and hiding under a blanket! This response has been historically common among men (Acitelli, 1988), and cultural differences also emerge in how talk about a relationship is perceived (Theiss & Nagy, 2013).

Ultimately, you cannot talk about the relationship without ending up somehow defining it and its meaning to the two partners involved. For at least one of them, the result may be unwanted. One may hope that the relationship is defined as stronger and has a better future than the other person is willing to accept. The best outcome is that the two people agree to see the relationship in a particular way that they both accept.

Relationship Talk: Indirect

Fortunately for us cowards, most communication about a relationship—and the communication that most often results in transforming relationships—is indirect. Asking someone “Will you go out on a date with me?” is a direct and very high-risk strategy, whereas many indirect strategies are more effective without being threatening, and it is possible to vary one’s assertiveness when attempting to initiate a first date (see Odom, Sahlstein Parcell, Baker, & Cronin-Fisher, 2015).

For this reason, flirtation is one of the key ways people push the envelope in relationships through indirect communication. Flirtation is a safe way to propose relationship growth. First, it generally serves as an indirect form of relationship question. Second, it can be taken as a simple statement of fact, a friendly joke, or something more sexually or relationally loaded. If the person you flirt with is interested in a relationship, the response will accept the relationally loaded reading of the message. If the person is not interested, the message can be treated as fun or fact and nothing more.

Skills You Can Use: Determining the Status of a Relationship



We have discussed a number of ways in which relationship status is conveyed through communication. By listening very carefully to the way that people speak to one another, you can tell how their relationship is going. As we go on later to describe the changes in communication that accompany decline in relationships, you may be able to helpfully step in to assist a friend whose relationship is in trouble before being asked for help.

and a family, or a town. Finally, groups or nations may have relations with each other, though this is a much broader concept than that covered under the term "relationships".

Relationships

are, however, only a small subset of interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships also can include relationships between individuals and groups.

©iStockphoto.com/Cr-Management GmbH & Co. KG

Keeping Relationships Going Through Communication

Communication composes and transforms relationships and maintains relationships when people are apart. Stuart Sigman (1991) called this sort of communication relational continuity constructional units (RCCUs). In less complex and more memorable terms, these simple conversational symbols indicate a relationship continues to exist even when the partners are physically distant. These symbols can be divided into *prospective*, *introspective*, and *retrospective* types.

Prospective Units

Prospective units provide recognition that an interaction is about to end but the relationship continues. In essence, prospective units refer to a coming absence, and they create a conversational leapfrog that gets you over it. Prospective units include saying, “Let’s set the agenda for next time” or “See you later.”

Any form of communication that suggests the likelihood of the partner’s return is considered a prospective unit. For example, if one partner leaves a toothbrush in the other’s apartment, the toothbrush indicates the missing partner will likely return. It offers recognition that the absence is temporary but the relationship remains intact. Sigman (1991) referred to such nonverbal evidence as “spoors,” like the track marks made by deer in snow, that indicate the partner’s previous physical presence (and expected return).

relational continuity constructional units (RCCUs): ways of demonstrating that the relationship persists during absence of face-to-face contact

prospective units: one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; prospective units are recognitions that a separation is about to occur

Introspective Units

By contrast, introspective units are direct indications of a relationship’s existence during the physical absence of one partner. The difference between introspective units and prospective units is that prospective units note that the absence is *about to happen* whereas introspective units acknowledge it *already has*. Examples include wedding rings worn when away from the spouse, as well as text messages and photos of friends, romantic partners, and family on your smartphone.

The man in this photo just said, “We’ll see you this weekend.” Which type of relational continuity constructional unit is being displayed here?



©iStockphoto.com/DGLimages

Retrospective Units

Retrospective units directly recognize the end of an absence and the reestablishment of the relationship through actual interaction. The most familiar nonverbal example is a hug, handshake, or kiss on greeting. The most common forms of conversation that fit this category are catch-up conversations and talk about the day (Vangelisti & Banski, 1993; Wood, 2006).

By reporting on their experiences during the day, partners emphasize their psychological togetherness, as well as a shared interest in one another's lives and the events that happened in those lives during their physical separation. Hence, in these communicative moments, or "end-of-the-day talks," with your partner or friends, you are relating to each other as well as simply reporting what happened. The talk reestablishes the relationship.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: How You Use RCCUs

Consider the ways in which you greet people and end interactions with them. What sorts of indications are made in these comments that imply the continuation of a relationship during absences or its continuation through an absence that has just ended? Now look at yourself and then around your living space and make a list of how many items are essentially introspective RCCUs.

Questions to Consider

1. How many photos of friends and family do you have?
2. Are you wearing jewelry, rings, or other indications of your relationships to other people? How about your T-shirts and indicators from your dress style that you belong to particular groups?

introspective units: one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; introspective units are reminders of the relationships during an absence, examples being photographs of a couple, wedding bands, or fluffy toys that one partner gave to another

retrospective units: one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; retrospective units directly recognize the end of an absence and the reestablishment of the relationship through actual interaction

Relational Dialectics

You may have noticed in your relationships that you have needs that seem to oppose one another. Sometimes you want to be around your friends; sometimes you want to be away from your friends. Sometimes you want to talk with your family; sometimes you do not want to talk with your family. Sometimes you want your romantic relationship to be monotonous and stable; sometimes you want your romantic relationship to be unpredictable. Well, we have good news for you. These competing needs do not mean that you are crazy or that your relationships are messed up. Actually, they are indications that you and your relationships are normal.

Relational dialectics is the study of contradictions in relationships, how they are played and how they are managed. Developed by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery (1996; Baxter, 2004), the study of dialectics adheres to four guiding assumptions: contradiction, change, praxis, and totality. In what follows, we will examine these guiding assumptions. We will then introduce the three internal dialectics and three external dialectics that comprise your relationships.

Contradiction

From a dialectic perspective, contradiction is a necessary component of relationships. A contradiction involves the interplay between two things that are connected at the same time they are in opposition. That may be difficult to grasp, so consider the following: To know what it is like to be with someone, you need to know what it is like to be without someone. In this regard, those two conditions are opposed yet connected.

Competing needs within relationships make up these contradictions. We addressed some of these competing needs in the introduction to this section. These needs are equally necessary in any relationship and must all be satisfied in one way or another.

People in relationships strive to strike a balance between these needs. However, they inevitably are drawn to one need or the other. When one need is satisfied, the competing need must be addressed, and people are drawn to satisfy that one.

To understand being drawn toward an opposing need, consider what happens when traveling with someone. In relationships, there is a need to spend time with your partner and a need to spend time away from your partner. Say you have been traveling with someone for hours or even days. You have spent a great deal of time with this person, perhaps without any break at all. Chances are good that when this happens, you cannot wait to get away from that person and be by yourself. It is not that you do not like that person—even though it might feel that way. Rather, you have fully satisfied one need and are being drawn toward the other because it has not been satisfied at all.

Ethical Issue

Is it ethical to lie to someone to satisfy a contradictory need, if it is done to help the relationship?

Change

So, to satisfy these competing and equally necessary needs, you are constantly being pulled toward some needs and away from others. Accordingly, there is constant change in your relationship. To make sense of relationships, it is sometimes tempting to think of them as stable. In reality, there is nothing stable about relationships. They are always changing.

Even if we were not talking about dealing with contradictions, we would still be talking about change as a fundamental component of personal relationships. You change every second of every day, and the same holds true for the other person in your relationship. It stands to reason that the relationship is changing as well. As Steve (Duck, 1990) has said previously, relationships are *unfinished business*. There is always something going on, and

that something is changing the relationship.

Praxis

The notion of praxis reminds us that “people are at once actors and objects of our own actions” (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 13). You make a lot of choices in relationships. Those choices do not just affect the relationship or your partner. Rather, those choices affect you as well. Accordingly, the actions you perform as an actor will have consequences that will affect you.

When it comes to contradictions in your relationships, how you manage them will affect you, your partner, and the relationship. Everything that you do and everything that you say in relationships will have an impact of some sort. The impact can be large, small, good, bad, anticipated, unanticipated, immediate, delayed, recognized, or unrecognized. Be assured, though, all actions in a relationship have consequences.

relational dialectics: the study of contradictions in relationships, how they are played out and how they are managed

contradiction (relational dialectics): interplay between two things that are connected at the same time they are in opposition

change (relational dialectics): movement in relationships that occurs partly through dealing with relational contradictions; in relationships, change is the constant element; relationships are perpetually in motion, unfinished business, and constantly evolving

praxis (relational dialectics): the notion that activities of the partners in a relationship are a vital component of the relationship itself; people are both actors and the objects of action in relationships

Totality

Finally, totality emphasizes the complex nature of personal relationships. From a dialectic perspective, contradictions cannot be studied apart from other contradictions, without considering where they are taking place, or without recognizing that relationships involve more than one person. Contradictions must be understood as being interconnected with other contradictions. Contradictions must also be understood in the cultural, physical, and situational contexts in which they occur and in which they are managed. Contradictions must be understood as being experienced by everyone in a relationship, but that does not mean that everyone experiences them at the same time or needs them to the same degree.

Internal and External Dialectics

Having discussed the four guiding assumptions of dialectic research, we can now examine specific dialectic tensions that make up personal relationships. Although numerous contradictions can be studied, we will look at those most commonly studied in both their internal and external forms.

Internal dialectics are those occurring within a relationship itself. These involve contradictions within a romantic relationship, a friendship, a family, a group at work, and so on. External dialectics are those involving a relational unit and other relational units or people within a social network. These include contradictions involving a romantic couple and other romantic couples or involving a romantic couple and their family members. The internal and external dialectics are defined and illustrated in [Tables 8.1](#) and [8.2](#), respectively.

totality (relational dialectics): the notion that relational contradictions do not occur in isolation from one another and that the whole complexity of relationships must be considered because each element or part of the relationship influences other parts

internal dialectics: those occurring within a relationship itself

external dialectics: those involving a relational unit and other relational units or people within their social networks

Coming Apart

Although some relationships are maintained and continue, other relationships do not always work out and may come apart. In what follows, we will examine symptoms and sources of relational decline and deterioration. We will then explore the process of relational breakup.

Symptoms and Sources of Decline

Julia Wood (2000, pp. 222–238) has offered six symptoms and sources of decline in personal relationships: (1) deterioration in communication, (2) destructive conflict, (3) changes in evaluative standards, (4) major transgressions, (5) inequity, and (6) personal reflection.

These factors in relational decline and deterioration, of course, do not exist independently of one another. Each one may be promoted by the others. For instance, feelings of inequity may lead to deterioration in communication and vice versa.

Table 8.1 Internal Dialectics

Connectedness– Separateness Dialectic (Connection– Autonomy)	<p>The need to be with a relational partner and the need to be away from a relational partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends may choose to spend time engaging in shared activities and spend other time engaging in individual activities. <p>Also, the need to be seen as connected with a relational partner and the need to be seen as an individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A younger sibling may enjoy being known as a successful older sibling's brother or sister. However, younger siblings may also want to be seen as their own persons and known for their own achievements.
Certainty– Uncertainty Dialectic (Novelty– Predictability)	<p>The need for predictability and routine in a relationship and the need for novelty and change in a relationship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romantic partners may regularly have pizza delivered on Friday evenings but occasionally have a date night out.
Openness– Closedness Dialectic	<p>The need to talk with a relational partner and the need to not talk with a relational partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roommates may talk with one another while watching television and not talk while reading or studying. <p>Also, the need to disclose some information to a relational partner and to not disclose other information to a relational partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child may be willing to share information to parents about school but not about what happens when out with friends.

Table 8.2 External Dialectics

Inclusion– Seclusion Dialectic	<p>The need for people in a relationship to be around others in a social network and the need for people in a relationship to be by themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents may enjoy spending time with their children, but they must also spend time alone together.
Conventionality– Uniqueness Dialectic	<p>The need of people to feel as if their relationship is like the relationships of others and the need to feel as if their relationship is special.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wedding or commitment ceremony may include traditional elements but also include distinctive elements.
Revelation– Concealment Dialectic	<p>The need to let others know of the existence of a relationship and the need to prevent others from knowing of the existence of a relationship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone having an affair may be tempted to let some people know about it but ensure that other people do not know about it. <p>Also, the need to disclose some information about the relationship to outsiders and the need to hide other information about the relationship from outsiders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A family may work together to conceal the addiction of a parent from nonfamily members.

Deterioration in Communication

Deterioration in communication strikes at the heart of personal relationships. Deterioration can take the form of a reduction in the usual amount of communication, a reduction in the quality of communication, and a negative tone of communication. Communicating becomes problematic and labored rather than smooth and seemingly

uncomplicated. Relational dialectics reminds us that not communicating is sometimes just as necessary as communicating in relationships. However, deterioration in communication involves a decrease in the amount and type of communication that generally occurs in a given relationship.

Destructive Conflict

When relationships are coming apart, conflict may become prominent and overshadow more positive elements of the relationship. Here, it is especially evident how negativity created through destructive styles of conflict can be both a symptom and a source of decline. It is also especially evident how each of these six factors is interconnected with the others. Destructive conflict and deterioration in communication seem to go hand in hand.

As relationships come apart, people, especially couples, find it harder to interact and tend to become more hostile and unsympathetic in their behaviors toward each other. What are the signs that these partners are in distress about their relationship?



©iStockphoto.com/steveColeimages

Changes in Evaluative Standards

Sometimes relationships no longer seem as good and as satisfying as they once did. This change in assessment can result from changes in the relationships itself, such as a deterioration of communication. It can also be the result of changes in the standards used to evaluate a relationship. Our personal needs at a given time will also influence what we desire from a relationship and what we are looking for in a relational partner. Relationships are also evaluated by comparing them with alternatives and determining whether we are getting as much or more out of them as the effort we are putting in (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Major Transgressions

Consider a major transgression as anything that will get you on *The Jerry Springer Show*. These transgressions could be what many people consider deal breakers in a relationship, such as cheating or similar offense or betrayal. There are a few things to consider with major transgressions. First, not everyone agrees what a major transgression is. Second, a major transgression does not necessarily mean the end of a relationship. Finally, relationships do not end because of the action itself. Rather, as Wood (2000) reminds us, “the meaning partners assign to events and the ways they manage the events shape how the problems will affect a relationship and the possibility of repair” (p. 232).

Inequity

People sometimes determine that they are putting more into a relationship than they are receiving. This does not mean that it will automatically lead to problems or that the relationship will end. However, people generally want to feel as if they are being treated equally and fairly. They do not want to feel as if they are doing all the work in a relationship while the other person is doing little or nothing at all. It is impossible to legitimately quantify the effort put into a relationship and the benefits received from a relationship. At the same time, perceptions of equality will often guide people’s understanding and evaluation of their relationships.

Personal Reflection

People spend a great deal of time away from their relational partners, providing many opportunities to think about and evaluate their relationship. Personal reflection can be positive or negative. It can, therefore, lead to positive evaluation and growth of a relationship. During periods of decline, however, things seem a bit more negative than they may have seemed otherwise. Good things do not seem so good. Bad things seem worse. The overall negative atmosphere of relationships in decline increases the negative evaluations and meanings assigned.

By the way . . . Do Relationships Really End?



We talk about relationships coming to an end. In many cases, however, a relational connection between two people continues. Former friends may become enemies. Romantic couples may become friends. In these cases, relationships end in their current form, but another type of relationship may emerge.



Thinkstock/Good shoot

Questions to Consider

1. How might communication between enemies who used to be friends differ from communication between enemies who never were friends?
2. How might communication between friends who used to be romantic partners differ from communication between friends who never were romantic partners?

Breakdown Process Model

So what happens when relationships end? Well, all relationships are different and end in unique ways. However, people tend to experience some similar processes when their relationships break down. Steve (Duck, 1982; Rollie & Duck, 2006) has proposed a basic model to explain the workings of relational breakdown. This model focuses on the uncertainties surrounding the end of relationships, which involve the partners and others in the network. It also focuses on the types of communication taking place during various points of the breakdown.

In what follows, we will examine the five processes that tend to occur following dissatisfaction with the relationship. Dissatisfaction is not a slippery slope that leads to a relationship's end. If that does occur, though, the following five processes generally take place: (1) intrapsychic, (2) dyadic, (3) social, (4) grave dressing, and (5) resurrection. [Figure 8.2](#) shows the Breakdown Process Model.

Intrapsychic Process

In the intrapsychic process, a person reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of a relationship. He or she considers whether the relationship should be ended. There are advantages and disadvantages to both continuing a relationship and ending a relationship. When a person is dissatisfied with his or her relationship, however, the advantages of leaving are highlighted over the disadvantages of staying. Likewise, the disadvantages of staying are highlighted over the advantages of staying. During the intrapsychic process, a person tends to withdraw, reflect alone, and pull back from his or her partner.

Ethical Issue

Do you think that someone who is ending a relationship has an ethical duty to explain to the other person why he or she is doing so?

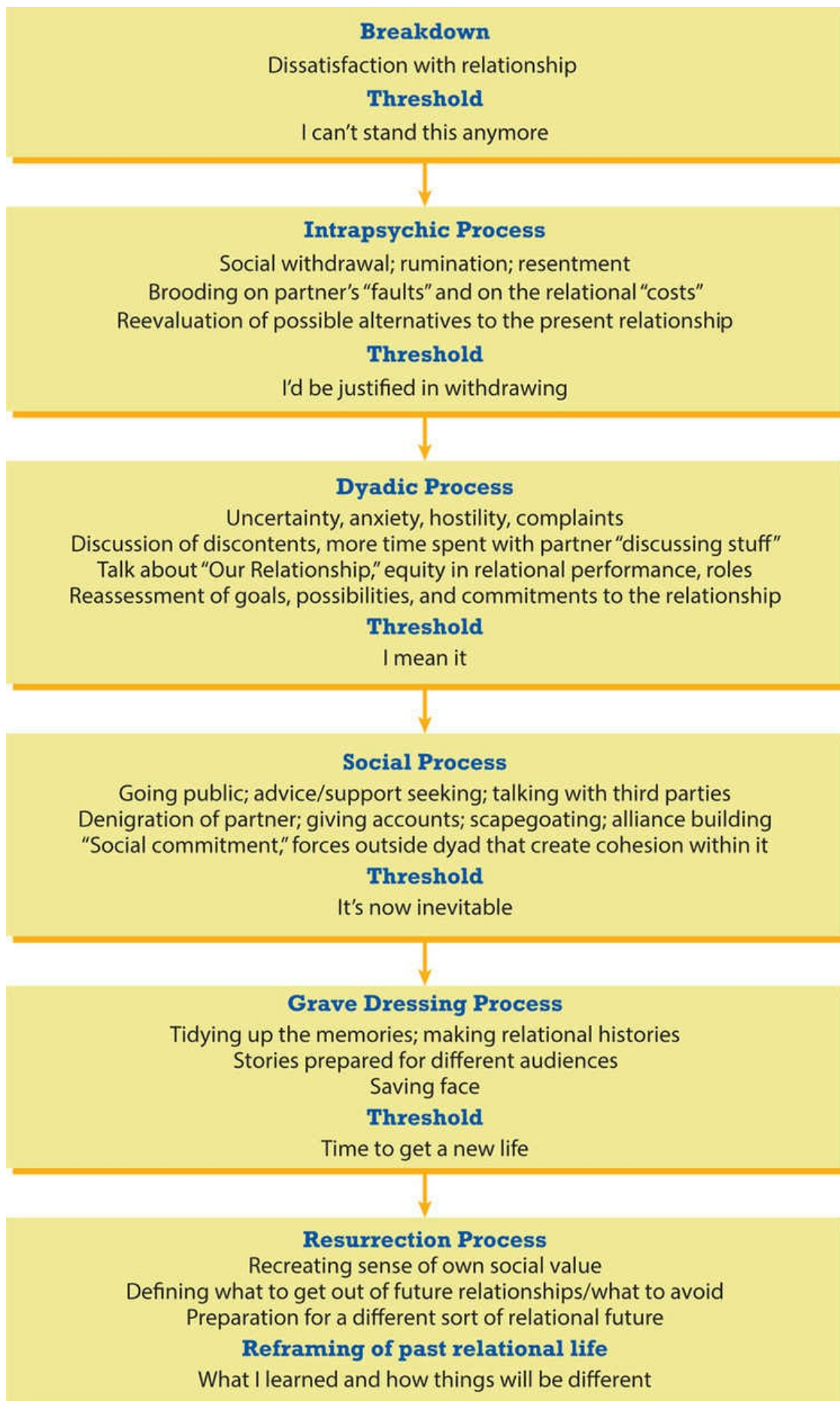
intrapsychic process: part of the process of breakdown of a relationship where an individual reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of a relationship and begins to consider the possibility of ending it

dyadic process: part of the process of breakdown of relationships that involves a confrontation with a partner and the open discussion of a problem with a relationship

Dyadic Process

The dyadic process entails confronting the partner and openly discussing a problem with the relationship. This confrontation may be unpleasant or lead to greater understanding and forgiveness. Partners may decide to actively work on improving the relationship, take a break from the relationship, or end the relationship. Some people choose not to engage in this process, however, and terminate the relationship without any discussion.

Figure 8.2 The Breakdown Process Model



social process: telling other people in one's social network about dissatisfaction and about possible disengagement or dissolution of a relationship

grave dressing process: part of the breakdown of relationships that consists of creating the story of why a relationship died and erecting a metaphorical tombstone that summarizes its main events and features from its birth to its death

resurrection process: part of the breakdown of relationships that deals with how people prepare themselves for new relationships after ending an old one

Social Process

The social process involves telling other people in one's social network about the relationship problem. In the social process, the person actively seeks greater contact and communication with third parties to get advice, to cry on someone's shoulder, to get supportive commentary, or even to have his or her evaluation of the partner confirmed. Through the social process, a person is seeking either help to keep the relationship together or support for his or her version of why it has come apart. In this latter case, he or she is essentially laying the groundwork for ending the relationship. Members of a social network (friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances) are generally shared by both relational partners. Therefore, it is important to have them on your side.

Do relationships develop and break down in a linear fashion?



©iStockphoto.com/GawravSinha

Grave Dressing Process

The grave dressing process involves creating the story of why a relationship died and erecting a metaphorical tombstone that summarizes its main points from birth to death. The grave dressing process involves storytelling, and you have probably heard a lot of breakup stories. The most usual form of breakup story follows a narrative structure that portrays the speaker as a dedicated but alert relator who went into the relationship realizing it was not perfect and needed work. It is also possible that both partners were mature enough to realize their relationship was not going to work out, so they made the tough but realistic decision to break it off. Inherent within the grave

relationship process and often included in breakup stories is praise for the relationship. Such statements as “I have learned something from all of this” or “There were some good times” are often made. Essentially, people are providing a eulogy for the relationship.

Disciplinary Debate: Are There Stages in Relationships?



The Battle of Cannae pitted Carthaginian forces against Roman forces in 216 BCE. It went down in history as the worst defeat for Rome and as one of the most devastating battles to ever take place. This battle received particular attention from the ancient Roman historian Livy. In describing Livy's work, however, Robert O'Connell (2011) points out, "Because he was an amateur writing for amateurs, his battle descriptions focus on clarity and take place in distinct stages. Given the chaos of actual combat, this helps make the mayhem more coherent, but it definitely warps reality" (p. 9). Although we are attempting to avoid comparing relationships with wars, communication scholars have long argued about whether relationships develop or break down in clear, distinct stages.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think? Is relationship research in support of stages picking up on a real fact about human relational life, or is it simply picking up on the way people like to think about and describe their relational life, whether or not it is what they actually do?
2. Does describing the development of personal relationships as occurring in distinct stages obscure what actually happens?

Resurrection Process

The resurrection process deals with the ways people prepare themselves for new relationships after ending an old one. The end of a particular relationship is not the end of all relational life. Once any single particular relationship has finished, one of people's major tasks is to begin seeking a replacement. That is why the term *rebound* is so prominent and understood in society. Beyond actually getting back on the relational horse, the resurrection process involves preparing oneself to reemerge as a relational being. Keeping the metaphors rolling, the final nail has been placed in the coffin of the past relationship, and it is time to move forward. This process is both public and private. Publicly, partly through grave dressing, a person is positioned in a positive manner and as someone capable of being in a relationship. Privately, a person comes to terms with past mistakes and difficulties, while determining what he or she wants to get out of future relationships and how past mistakes and difficulties will be avoided in the future.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are personal relationships?

Personal relationships are those in which the participants are irreplaceable and communicate in close, distinct ways. Unlike social relationships, personal relationships involve people who cannot be replaced by someone else.

2. What are the benefits of relationships?

Relationships are significant for the formation and transaction of knowledge—the creation of the world of meaning you inhabit. Relationships also provide you with various forms of support. Weiss (1974) identified six specific areas where relationships provide us with something special, needed, or valued.

3. How are relationships initiated?

The more you get to know people, the better your map of their worlds of meaning is and the more you know whether you want to continue pursuing a personal relationship. The Relationship Filtering Model suggests that people pay attention to different cues in sequence as they get to know one another. The sequence in which you pay attention to characteristics of other people is basically the sequence in which you encounter them: (1) physical appearance, (2) behavior/nonverbal communication, (3) roles, and (4) attitudes/personality.

4. How are relationships transacted and maintained?

Relationships are brought into existence (transacted) through communication, and relationships are categorized through communication. Relationship development and transformation can be seen as a change in communication based on the information individuals know about each other's ways of thinking about the world. Any change in a relationship involves change in content of talk and the style of communication. Relationships are kept going through communication.

5. How do relationships come apart?

The breakdown of relationships is marked by changes in both the topic of conversation and the audience to which the person communicates. In the early parts of a breakup when an individual is simply contemplating ending a relationship, he or she tends to withdraw from social contact and become very brooding. The second phase of a breakup is characterized by confrontation with a relational partner. A third phase develops where the person decides to tell friends and associates about the breakup and to enlist their support. In the fourth phase, the person develops and tells a story to the world at large, explaining how the breakup occurred and making himself or herself "look good." The final (resurrection) phase is characterized by communication aimed at developing new relationships and letting go of the past.

Key Concepts

certainty–uncertainty dialectic 169
change 167
connectedness–separateness dialectic 169
contradiction 167
conventionality–uniqueness dialectic 169
dyadic process 171
external dialectics 168
grave dressing process 173
inclusion–seclusion dialectic 169
internal dialectics 168
intrapsychic process 171
introspective units 166
openness–closedness dialectic 169
personal relationships 156
praxis 167
prospective units 165
provisions of relationships 158
relational continuity constructional units (RCCUs) 165
relational dialectics 167
Relationship Filtering Model 161
resurrection process 173
retrospective units 166
revelation–concealment dialectic 169
social process 173
social relationships 156
totality 168

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Write the story of your most recent breakup. Does it follow a neat progression? Have a friend read it and ask you questions about particular details. Does this questioning make you want to revise your narrative in any way?
2. What turning points are there in relationship growth or decline that you and your friends believe you can identify through talk?
3. The next time your friends ask, "How was your day?," ask what they think they are accomplishing. Enter into a broad and fulfilling discussion on retrospective RCCUs and how even small talk maintains relationships during absence.

Media Connections

1. Look at several Sunday newspaper sections on marriages and engagements. Check for similarities in attractiveness level between the people involved. Next, take these pictures and cut them down the middle. How easy is it to reconnect the right people?
2. Take any movie where a romance develops between two main characters. Does it either develop or dissolve according to the proposal made in this chapter, and if not, how does it differ?
3. What models of "true romance" are presented in different kinds of movies?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

9 Groups and Leaders



©iStockphoto.com/Somogyvari

Chapter Outline

[What Is a Group?](#)

[Types of Groups](#)

[Characteristics of Groups](#)

[Cohesiveness](#)

[Interdependence](#)

[Commitment](#)

[Group Norms](#)

[Member Roles](#)

[Group Culture](#)

[Group Development and Decision Making](#)

[Group Decision Making Is About Relationships](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Leadership Styles](#)

[Leadership Power](#)

[Leadership Vision](#)

[Leadership Ethics](#)

[Leadership Is Transacted](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What is a group?
2. What are the characteristics of a group?
3. How do groups form and make decisions?
4. What are the styles of group leadership?
5. What are the types of leadership power?
6. What is meant by leadership vision and leadership ethics?
7. How is leadership transacted?

Groups affect our lives in a number of ways, and we do not even have to be a member of a group for this to happen. For instance, committees in Congress influence the enactments of laws governing our lives. Job interview panels can result in a dream job. Many types of small groups might be part of your everyday experience: study groups, board meetings, sorority/fraternity committees, friends deciding what kind of pizza to order on Friday night, chat rooms, or focus groups.

Groups are composed of people who share relationships, often relationships existing outside of that group setting. These relationships influence the communication taking place within a group, leadership within a group, and decisions that are made by a group. For example, a group may include some members who are close friends, and this friendship brings with it shared understandings unknown to other group members and possibly guaranteed support should one friend bring forth a proposal. Conversely, members of that group might be rivals or enemies, which might lead to a lack of trust within the group setting and obstructions when making decisions. The study of groups simply cannot be legitimately separated from the study of relationships, we say, though it has been in most previous books.

Communication scholars ask a number of questions about groups. In this chapter, we focus on those dealing with group development and decision making and on leadership. Before doing so, however, we examine what groups actually are.

What Is a Group?

Is a group just one more person than a dyad and one person short of a crowd? Or is it less a matter of numbers and more one of how groups communicate or transact their *groupness*? Well, a group requires at least three people. And a group cannot be so large that people are unable to fully contribute or unable to perceive themselves as anything more than a collection of individuals without a shared purpose. In a way, then, the number of people does matter.

However, it would be unwise to think of a group simply in terms of numbers. A person could not just put, say, five people together in the same room and call them a group. Groups interact not because of their composition (numbers or types of people) but because of the kinds of communication occurring between specific people involved.

Thus, a group is more than just a collection of a few people. Rather, groups are transacted, or created, through communication and relationships. However, we still have not discussed what makes a group special and unique from other things transacted through communication and relationships.

What exactly is a group, and what makes it different from an assembly, a collective, or a team? How many of each of these can you see in this picture?



©iStockphoto.com/james boulette

To begin answering the question posed in the header of this section, think of any group to which you belong. You have hit one important feature of groups—your sense of membership. A group comes into being once people recognize and identify themselves and others as *members* of the same group. Beyond the recognition of membership, a simple assembly or collection of people is not really a group unless it has a *common purpose*. That is, people are collected together to achieve a particular goal.

Types of Groups

Groups are commonly classified according to their purposes and features. The five primary types of groups and their characteristics are summarized in [Table 9.1](#). As you review this table, keep in mind that types of groups are ultimately differentiated through their communication and the ways in which members treat one another relationally. In some cases, such as with formal groups, members will treat one another formally and follow standardized and regulated ways of speaking. In other cases, such as with networking groups, the ways in which people treat each other and communicate are much less formal. In all cases, communication and relationships are transacting these groups.

Characteristics of Groups

So, groups involve people who recognize shared membership and who have a common purpose for being together. Thus, a bunch of folks waiting for a bus is not a group. They meet the number criterion and have a common purpose, but they do not communicate and do not share a sense of membership. Groups are ultimately transacted through communication and relationships, which create groups and set apart different types of groups.

Having discussed these basic features of groups, we can now examine key characteristics of groups. In what follows, we will examine how groups involve (a) cohesiveness, (b) interdependence, (c) commitment, (d) norms, (e) roles, and (f) cultures. When discussing some of these characteristics, we will also address potential problems occurring within groups.

Communication + You: Communicating Belonging and a Shared Purpose



Analyze the interactions of a group to which you belong and determine what types of communication create a sense of belonging and shared purpose. A class study group, for example, shares a sense of membership, which may be why you keep texting the member who never shows up to meetings, and you also share a sense of purpose: You are all in this to get an A, and the AWOL person is going to bring down your grade!

Questions to Consider

1. What are some other groups you belong to?
2. Do you feel closer to people you are in a group with, compared with those you are not in a group with?

Table 9.1 Types of Groups

Type of Group	Primary/Fundamental Purposes	Features	Examples
Formal	Task oriented, general management oversight, outcome focused, often legislative or formally structured to run an organization	Membership restricted/delegated Attendance expected Clear structure Power vested in the chair/leader Agenda followed Possible formal rules for turn taking, voting, and other activities	Congress, congressional committees, debate clubs, shareholder meetings, annual general meetings of organized bodies, executive committees of unions, student government organizations, legislative assemblies
Advisory	Task specific, usually evidentiary or evaluative, with the intention of producing an outcome that is a focused "best solution" to a specific problem or arrangement of an event	Membership specific/restricted Possible structure Possible chair Possible agenda Discussion usually open and informal Critical and evaluative argument of different proposals encouraged	Sorority and fraternity social affairs committees, homecoming committees, juries, accident investigation boards, review boards for awards and prizes
Creative	Evaluation of concepts or creation of new products or approaches to complex problems	Membership usually invited Lack of structure Primary purpose is generation of as many ideas as possible to evaluate at a later time Members discouraged from critical comment on the ideas generated	Brainstorming; consciousness raising; creativity groups; focus groups; test-bed groups for developing specifications and criteria for complex projects, such as the beta versions of new software; advertising logo development teams
Support	Advising, comforting, sharing knowledge, spreading information, and raising consciousness about specific issues	Membership loosely defined Members come and go as needed Participation generally voluntary	Alcoholics Anonymous, breast cancer survivors, grief support groups, study groups, PFLAG
Networking	Obtaining, building, or sustaining relationships, usually online	Membership not defined Members join and leave as desired	Chat rooms, social networking groups, Twitter, Facebook

Cohesiveness

A characteristic of groups is cohesiveness among group members. Cohesiveness describes people working together and feeling connected. Beyond existing relationships outside the group setting, relationships among group members can be established through common motives and goals (Northouse, 2015). Cohesiveness in groups is performed communicatively and essentially comes down to a communicational concept where people coordinate their talk and action as a result of their relationships with one another.

cohesiveness: working together and feeling connected

Group effectiveness or success largely depends on members working together cohesively (Evans & Dion, 2012; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 2012). You may have seen a motivational poster of a team of rowers all pulling their oars together. They are synchronized and cohesive. If they pulled their oars whenever they felt like it rather than all at the same time, their oars would clash and the boat would go nowhere (take it from Steve, an Oxford rowing coxswain who shouted out the rate and speed with which the rowers should row).

Group effectiveness or success also depends on members feeling connected and cohesive. Again, this can come from existing relationships outside the group and can come from coordination of communication and actions. However, it also comes from maintaining morale, civility, and good relationships between group members. In this sense, cohesiveness is a primary output of groups' social emotional exchanges in talk and thus is a transactional and relational consequence of communication.

Potential Problem: Groupthink

Although cohesiveness has been found to assist group effectiveness, a negative consequence of cohesiveness has been identified. An attempt to be cohesive at the expense of anything else can sometimes get in the way of a group's effective functioning. If everyone wants to keep everyone else happy rather than make tough decisions, this leads to a special kind of *conformity*. Sometimes, people would rather preserve good relationships than make good decisions.

Irving Janis (1972) famously referred to this negative kind of consensus-seeking cohesiveness as groupthink. In groupthink, members place a higher priority on keeping the process running smoothly and agreeably than they do on voicing opinions that contradict the majority opinion (or the opinion of the leader). The group prefers the well-being of its members, morale, and teamwork at the expense of proper critical evaluation of ideas. Groupthink can result in faulty decision making because a group prefers to be a *happy* ship rather than a ship going in the right direction. So although usually a good thing, cohesiveness can lead to negative consequences.

By the way . . . : Rules for Conducting Formal Meetings



Formal groups frequently conduct business using guidelines established by *Robert's Rules of Order*. This book was originally written by Brigadier General Henry Martyn Robert and published in 1876. He distinguishes the ranks of motions, the orders and sequences in which they are to be considered, and stresses particularly the role of order in the discussion of business. What general would do otherwise?



US Public Domain

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever been part of a group, as a student or otherwise, with specific rules about how the group was run? If so, did all the group members “follow the rules”?
2. In what ways might specific rules both help and hinder a group?

Interdependence

Another characteristic of groups is the division of labor in a way that leads to interdependence. That is, everyone relies on everyone else to do a specific part of the overall job well. A group cannot function properly if its members do not work interdependently. Interdependence, however, is not simply an abstract concept that something is based on the ways in which people interact. Rather, it works as a transacted outcome of the communication between group members. In sports teams, for instance, the coaches have the job of communicating and coordinating the team members' performances in a way that pulls everything together.

groupthink: a negative kind of consensus seeking through which members place a higher priority on keeping the process running smoothly and agreeably than they do on voicing opinions that contradict the majority opinion (or the opinion of the leader)

interdependence: the reliance of each member of a team or group on the other members, making their outcomes dependent on the collaboration and interrelated performance of all members (e.g., a football team dividing up the jobs of throwing, catching, and blocking)

Potential Problems: Recognition and Failed Obligation

Although interdependence can allow groups to function at productive levels, there are some issues to keep in mind. Especially in cultures in which individual achievement is appreciated, for instance, it is sometimes important that the contributions of individual members to the group be recognized (Purvanova, 2013). Think about instances when you have done a great deal of work within a group context, perhaps at a place of employment or when completing a group assignment in one of your classes. You perhaps worked harder than everyone else, but did not receive credit or even thanks for your contributions. Such instances might lead to a decrease in the amount of effort put forth the next time. To avoid such situations, it is sometimes necessary to highlight the contributions of individual members while recognizing that everyone is still working together.

Another potential problem relative to interdependence is that sometimes group members will not fulfill their obligations to the group. During group projects for a class, for example, there may be a group member who does not meet his or her responsibility. Maybe that person was responsible for creating a reference page for a group paper, while other members were responsible for other parts of the paper. Working together, interdependently, can often help groups achieve great things. However, if one person does not complete his or her role, the entire project can be undone. To avoid situations such as this one, it is a good idea to incorporate checks, such as including progress reports during group meetings, to make sure all are doing what they should be doing.

By the way . . . : Division of Labor



In football, not everyone can be a quarterback; people in the offense have different jobs than those in the defense. The work is divided because the team as a whole shares a purpose: namely, winning the game. The ultimate success of the whole team will depend on whether every member does an assigned job. If everyone tried to do the same task (all tried to throw the ball, all tried to block the other team, all tried to catch passes), it would be ineffective because the other jobs would not get done.



©iStockphoto.com/SteveDebenport

Questions to Consider

1. Using any of the groups you previously listed as an example, think about a time when multiple members caused a disruption by attempting to do the same thing. How did your group address this situation?
2. In what ways could the group have addressed the situation more effectively?

Commitment

Group members usually show commitment to each other and to their group's goals when a group is working well (Harden Fritz & Omdahl, 2006). One transactive feature that makes a group a "group" is that individual members share a commitment to the overall group goals. They want to be team players, and this shows in their talk and behavior (Meeussen, Delvaux, & Phalet, 2013). The members may also show commitment to one another, watching each other's backs and looking out for one another. This helps the whole group move forward toward its goals. The group shows commitment to individual members through caring for their welfare, as well as aiming to achieve the goals of the group.

Potential Problem: Out-Groups

Keep in mind, though, that not all members of a group are necessarily committed to group goals or to other members. Group members do not always trust each other, share common goals, and want what is best for everyone. Factions within the group, based on existing relationships or those created within group activity, may not agree with the direction of a group, or they may just want to make life difficult for other group members. Surely you have met these types!

Out-groups are cells of disgruntled members who feel undervalued, mistreated, disrespected, not included, or overlooked. These members can be either disruptive or constructive. A good leader, something we will talk about later in the chapter, can turn around their sense of exclusion by using them to challenge and question group assumptions, by listening carefully to their concerns, and by making the majority members of the group discuss more options, reflect more carefully on their opinions, answer challenges, and rethink their arguments. This tends to make groups consider their decisions and assumptions more carefully and ultimately to see the out-group cell as a useful part of the larger group rather than a simple nuisance. Out-groups also help prevent groupthink.

Group Norms

Groups usually expect particular behavior from members. Group norms are informal and formal rules and procedures guiding group behaviors. For example, there may be formally established rules for speaking or turn taking. Some norms are informally understood as proper behavior in a particular group, such as whether joking is allowed or whether criticism of other members is acceptable. Group norms are established in face-to-face group settings and are evident in computer-mediated and virtual group interactions (Moser & Axtell, 2013).

The norms that are established generally reflect the values of the group, especially those concerning communication and relationships. For instance, if group members value creative and open thinking and communication, lower-ranking members may speak first so that they will not mold their responses in support of senior members and will not fear reprisals by senior members if they should disagree.

Potential Problem: Violating Norms

Sometimes a group member just does not want to follow group norms (Hornsey, 2016). Most groups have their own group sanctions, or punishments for violating norms. For example, an unruly member—one who persistently violates the norms—may be thrown out of a meeting and so is silenced, losing participation in, and influence on, the group. Everyone else in the group may “shun” a dissenter both outside and inside the meetings. Shunning or excluding people from participation in the group, or not even acknowledging their presence, is a very powerful social, relational, and communicative punishment (Nezlek, Wesselmann, Wheeler, & Williams, 2012).

Member Roles

Group members also take on particular group roles, involving certain positions or functions within a group. You know about roles from movies: A role is when someone acts out a part that fits in with parts other people play in a performance. It is important to note, then, that the performance of a role is not a single activity. Rather, it requires the participation and influence of other people who join in the performance. Group roles are generally placed within five categories: (1) formal roles, (2) informal roles, (3) task roles, (4) social roles, and (5) disruptive roles.

out-groups: cells of disgruntled members who feel undervalued, mistreated, disrespected, not included, or overlooked; these members can be either disruptive or constructive

group norms: rules and procedures that occur in a group but not necessarily outside it and that are enforced by the use of power or rules for behavior

group sanctions: punishments for violating norms

group roles: positions or functions within a group (see *disruptive roles*, *formal roles*, *informal roles*, *social roles*, *task roles*)

Formal Roles

Formal groups have formal roles, specific functions to which members are assigned and that they are expected to perform within that group. These roles frequently have such titles as chair, vice chair, and secretary. Sometimes, these roles are about the hierarchy of the group, and they let you know something about the formal powers that are delegated to each individual.

Informal Roles

Both formal and less formal groups may see the enactment of informal roles, those to which someone is not officially assigned but that serve a function with a group. For example, a group member may be a joker, someone who cracks jokes and keeps up everyone's spirits during meetings. Another group member may be a taskmaster, someone who keeps the group on task during meetings. In these cases, the group members have not been officially assigned to these roles but are recognized as performing these roles through repeated patterns of interaction.

Sidelining a player for an offense during a soccer game is a good example of a particular group behavior. What is that?



©iStockphoto.com/BobThomas

Task Roles

Task roles are those functioning to ensure a group achieves its goals and is productive. These roles may be either formal or informal. A chair, for instance, is formally responsible for ensuring that a group achieves its goals. Other group members informally take on task roles. For instance, group members may provide information; seek information; clarify information, ideas, and activities; evaluate information, ideas, and activities; and serve other task-related functions.

Social Roles

Social roles are those functioning to encourage group members and to develop and maintain positive communication and relationships among group members. These roles are generally informal and might include encouraging quiet group members to speak, praising the contributions of group members, relieving tension, managing conflict among group members, and praising group efforts as a whole.

Disruptive Roles

Of course, group members do not always function in a productive manner. Disruptive roles are those functioning in opposition to group productivity and cohesion. These are certainly informal in nature and might include blocking progress by reintroducing and opposing previous decisions, withdrawing from the group or avoiding discussions, calling attention to oneself, and getting the group off-topic by discussing unrelated matters.

Ethical Issue

What conditions would make it wrong, and what conditions would make it right, to blow the whistle on your group for wrongdoings irrespective of the consequences to you personally?

formal roles: specific functions to which group members are assigned and that they are expected to perform within the group

informal roles: those to which someone is not officially assigned but that serve a function with a group

task roles: those functioning to ensure a group achieves its goals and is productive

social roles: those functioning to encourage group members and to develop and maintain positive communication and relationships among group members

disruptive roles: those functioning in opposition to group productivity and cohesion

Group Culture

The characteristics of groups described work together in the creation of a group culture, shared patterns of interactions both reflecting and guiding beliefs, values, and attitudes of the group. Group culture is evident in such symbolic activity as how members talk to one another, the clothes they wear while working as a group, or the special terms and language or jokes they use. For example, members of some groups talk in a very formal and polite manner, whereas members of other groups talk in ways that are extremely informal. Further, members of a group may use terms unique to that group, such as language unique to specific professions. These communicative acts transact the culture of a group.

Communicating culturally within a group accomplishes some very important things. First, it reinforces what the group believes and values. For instance, Dennis Mumby (2006) illustrates this influence of group culture when he writes about his experiences as a college student working in a manual labor job. The other workers mocked the fact that, with all his “college boy” intelligence, he could not drive some of the machinery as well as they could. The very use of the term *college boy* to describe him represents, in talk, the group culture that “book learning” is less important than practical skills.

Communicating culturally within a group also enables the group to accomplish its goals. If members of a group had to reestablish expected ways of communicating and behaving each time they came together, there would not be much time available for actual work. Knowing what to expect and how to act saves time and allows group members to get down to business whenever they meet. Beyond specific styles of communication, using specialized language also promotes the accomplishment of group goals through ensuring shared understanding among group members. Ultimately, group members are able to work together, developing group cohesion.

Finally, communicating culturally within a group enables group members to establish membership in a group. A sense of membership and belonging by members is one of the key criteria of a group. Communicating like other members of a group and sharing a similar meaning system with members of a group lead to acceptance by other group members and feelings of connection. Again, we see the development of group cohesion through group culture. When group members communicate culturally, they are transacting group culture as well as group membership.

Ethical Issue

Could being a disruptive member of a group be considered ethical?

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Differentiating Groups

One person may simultaneously be a member of very different groups, with different values and cultures. Analyze the norms, roles, and cultures of two groups to which you belong.

Questions to Consider

1. How are these norms, roles, and cultures transacted through communication and relationships?
2. What does this tell you about differences in the respective values of these groups?

group culture: the set of expectations and practices that a group develops to make itself distinctive from other groups and to give its members a sense of exclusive membership (e.g., dress code, specialized language, particular rituals)

Group Development and Decision Making

In addition to characteristics of groups, scholars studying group communication frequently focus on group development and decision making. Before examining this area, however, it is necessary to acknowledge limitations in research dedicated to its study addressed in the “Disciplinary Debate” box. Because the relational aspect of groups has been largely ignored in research, we are necessarily confined to traditional literature that offers nonrelational accounts of the ways in which groups develop. These accounts are frequently based on artificial groups in laboratories or based simply on reviewing existing literature of the topic (see Smith, 2001).

Students sometimes wonder why information is included in textbooks and classroom discussion that is then discredited or evaluated negatively. We, just like your instructors, want to make sure you are familiar with ideas and research that have played an important role in the development of this area. Further, understanding the limitations or problems inherent within the material will enable you to develop critical thinking skills and better understand, in this case, important characteristics of actual group development and decision making.

With those thoughts in mind, we can now examine traditional notions of group development. [Table 9.2](#) presents a five-stage model proposed by psychologist Bruce Tuckman (1965). Notice that apart from a reference to guidance by a leader, this description of group formation is relationship-free and topic/goal focused. Such generalizations would also lead a person to believe that all groups function and communicate in much the same manner.

A similar stage model proposed by communication scholar Aubrey Fisher (1970) is presented in [Table 9.3](#). In Fisher’s model, there is acknowledgment that people get to know one another during the creation of the group. However, the importance of this relational fact for subsequent decision making is absent. Also absent from this model is the fact that a group could preexist a particular meeting.

Table 9.2 Tuckman’s Five Stages of Group Development

1. **Forming:** The group comes into existence and seeks direction from a leader about the nature of its tasks and procedures.
 2. **Storming:** The group determines leadership and roles of its members.
 3. **Norming:** The group establishes its procedures to move more formally toward a solution.
 4. **Performing:** Having established how it will perform its task, the group now does so.
 5. **Adjourning:** The group reflects on its achievements, underlines its performative accomplishments, and closes itself down.
-

SOURCE: Tuckman (1965).
Source: Tuckman (1965).

There are other models of group development and decision making, but the two presented here are indicative of these models for the most part (see Smith, 2001). In these models, development and decision making is a linear process. Communication is frequently taken for granted or thought to be similar in all group experiences. Relationships tend to be absent altogether.

Disciplinary Debate: Studying Groups



Much communication scholarship on small groups is based on research experiments where members have never met before and will never meet again. Collections of people, very often students, gather in a group to make a decision about something. Dignified by the name zero-history groups, these groups are much more importantly zero-future groups. They tell us almost nothing about the operations of real-life groups that have a real-life relational connection to one another. Except in artificial laboratories where researchers almost never attend to relational factors, all ongoing groups are typified by relationships that have a bearing on their interactions, their culture, their cohesiveness, and their decisions. Beliefs about groups are based on specific kinds of research, and if that research is flawed, so are the resultant conclusions.

There has been some recognition of the need to study bona fide groups (Frey, 2003; Putnam & Stohl, 1990). These studies use real groups in real settings. At the same time, artificial groups continue to be used and were the basis for many traditional notions about groups.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think groups might behave differently when the people involved know they are being observed in an experiment? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think some scholars continue to use zero-history groups?

Group Decision Making Is About Relationships

The components and characteristics of groups (membership, common purpose, cohesiveness, interdependence, norms, roles, and cultures) are all in their own way relationship concepts. For whatever reason, however, relationships are generally absent when researchers consider group decision making. Nevertheless, group decisions are influenced by outside relationships and interactions.

Table 9.3 Fisher's Model of Group Progression

1. **Orientation:** Group members get to know one another and come to grips with the problems they have convened to deal with.
 2. **Conflict:** The group argues about possible ways of approaching the problem and begins to seek solutions.
 3. **Emergence:** This occurs when some daylight of consensus begins to dawn, and the group sees the emergence of possible agreement.
 4. **Reinforcement:** The group explicitly consolidates consensus to complete the task, or the leader may do it for the group by thanking everyone.
-

SOURCE: Fisher, B. A. (1970). Decision emergence: Phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 53–66, copyright © National Communication Association, reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, <http://www.tandfonline.com> on behalf of National Communication Association.

Source: Fisher, B. A. (1970). Decision emergence: Phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 53–66, copyright © National Communication Association, reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis Ltd, <http://www.tandfonline.com> on behalf of National Communication Association.

Groups are made up of *people*. Members have relationships with one another *outside* as well as *inside* their meetings. After the formal discussion, when the group splits up, the members go on with the rest of their lives, which can mean chatting with other group members in places outside the group. Real-life groups exist continuously both as *groups* (e.g., “The work team meets every Friday,” “The study group is Wednesday night,” “The book club meets every Thursday”) and as *relators* whose lives may be connected outside the group (e.g., two members of the same work team may be friends, study group members may also be neighbors, book club members could be in the same family).

Formal group decision making can be seen theoretically as if it were a rational type of interaction, where groups sit around and work through decisions smartly and thoughtfully. This just seems to be wrong, and if you have ever sat in on a group making a decision, you will know that. Relationships influence what happens within the group.

Separating decision making into the activities of groups in meetings overlooks just how much persuasion of group members actually occurs in other settings for other reasons. Sometimes, people vote for a proposal not because it is compelling but because they like the person who proposed it or dislike the person who opposed it, for instance.

What (usually undesirable) characteristic of groups is depicted in this photograph?



Nick Ledger/Getty Images

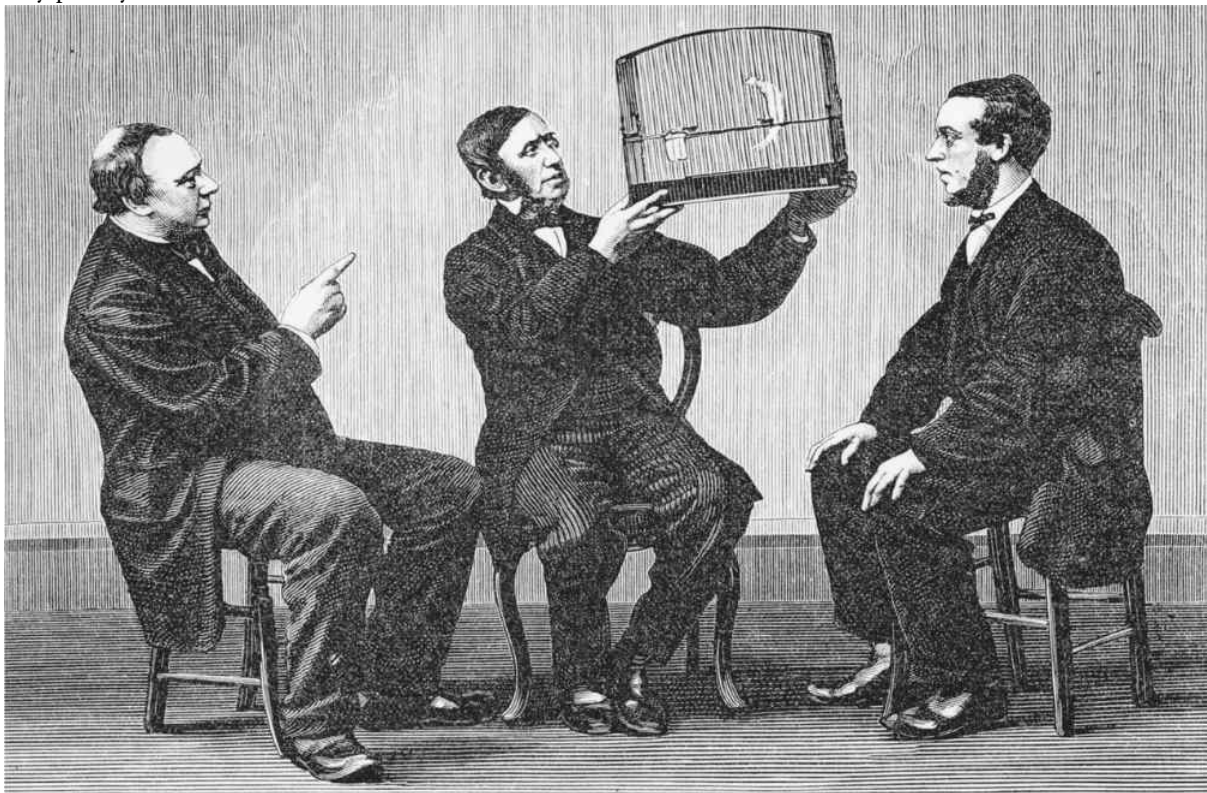
Not really about arguments and abstractions, group interaction and decision making are about emotions, feelings, and relationships—not so much a battle of *ideas* as a battle between *people who have ideas* and persisting relationships with one another.

Leadership

Groups usually have a leader. A person's first thought about *leadership* is that it involves a formal position in which a specific person has power over the others in the group. Examples of such positions might include a boss in the workplace, a team leader in a task group, a chair of a committee, or an elder of a religious community. Such people are required to communicate authoritatively, to run the agenda, and to move the group forward in particular ways that others should follow.

However, there are a few problems with the notions that leadership involves a formal position and that leadership activities include the same or similar activities. First, as we discussed earlier in the chapter, there are many different types of groups, and these groups do not share the same level of formality. Accordingly, there may not be a designated leader of a group. Rather, a leader or leaders may emerge within a group.

Three Scotsmen in 1877 judge a prize canary, their equivalent of a beauty pageant. Which of Fisher's stages do they portray?



©iStockphoto.com/wynnter

Skills You Can Use: Distinguishing the Relational Politics of Group Discussion



Recognizing the relational elements of groups will greatly assist you when you promote a particular agenda or decision. Groups are not structured as bodies, numbers, and depersonalized decision makers. Within a general structure sit real human beings who have relationships with one another. Consider what relationships exist in groups to which you belong and how you can use this knowledge during future group interactions.



©iStockphoto.com/Jodi Jacobson

Second, leadership is not the same across all possible domains. Even if we were to focus on a formally recognized leader, a pope is not a four-star general is not a grocery store manager is not a classroom discussion leader. The styles and requirements for successful leadership in these roles differ. If styles and requirements of leadership were developed to fit all possible areas, they would be so general that they would not have any consequence or value as indicators of success in leadership.

Finally, even within a single organization, as people are rising through the system, they pass through leadership roles of different sorts and scopes. Hence, to become one kind of leader you must first have been successful at a lower rank. For example, in the U.S. Army, a person goes through several ranks, including captain, colonel, brigadier general, and two-star general, before becoming a four-star general. What is true of one level of leadership may have no application to other levels of leadership. A general may need to inspire troops in battle with a vision for the future, whereas a captain merely needs to keep them on target and assure them that they will all do well as a team and survive to fight another day.

In what follows, we will examine four key components in the study of leadership: (1) leadership styles, (2) leadership power, (3) leadership vision, and (4) leadership ethics. We will then specifically discuss how leadership is transacted through communication and relationships.

Which communicative and relational skills make a leader a good leader?



©iStockphoto.com/annebaek

Leadership Styles

The classic discussion of leadership, since Robert Bales (1950), has divided leaders into those who are focused on the task and those who focus on the socioemotional well-being of the members of the group. Task leaders focus on the performance of tasks to ensure the achievement of group goals. Socioemotional leaders focus on group member satisfaction and well-being.

Task Leaders

- Stress the activity of the group
- Keep members on topic
- Follow the agenda
- Make sure decisions get made
- Are responsible for defining the group's intended accomplishment
- Are charged with directing what happens to fulfill the set tasks of the group
- Make sure the group reaches a conclusion at the end of its allotted meeting time
- Summarize what got done in a meeting
- Set the agenda for the next meeting

Socioemotional Leaders

- Pay attention to how everyone feels in the group
- Ensure that members feel comfortable with the decision-making process
- Allow everyone to get a turn in the discussion
- Make members happy with the outcome
- Keep the personal relationships between group members on an even keel
- Manage people's "face" and handle their feelings

When considering task leadership and socioemotional leadership, here are some key points to recognize. First, sometimes a group requires more task leadership but sometimes a group requires more socioemotional leadership. Effective leadership requires understanding when each type of leadership is required. Second, different types of groups will require different types of leadership. Task-oriented leadership may be more expected in formal groups than in informal groups, for instance. Next, gender and cultural differences and stereotypes may influence expectations and success of each type of leadership (Brescoll, 2016; Horsford & Tillman, 2016). Third, a person may be good at one type of leadership but poor at the other type. Of course, a person may be good at both elements of the group process, and the ability to understand and use member emotion will assist both types of leadership (Emery, 2012). Finally, task leadership and socioemotional leadership may come from different people in a group.

task leaders: those focusing on the performance of tasks to ensure the achievement of group goals (compare with *socioemotional leaders*)

socioemotional leaders: those focusing on making group members feel comfortable, satisfied, valued, and understood (compare with *task leaders*)

Ethical Issue

Some say that leaders must use authority to mobilize people to face tough decisions when the followers are struggling with change and personal growth. Others stress that leaders should take care of and nurture their followers. What do you think?

Leadership Power

Leadership generally involves power within a group, and this power can be broadly categorized as formal and informal. In both cases, this power is transacted through communication and, especially in terms of the latter, is best understood through recognizing the influence of relationships. Within this section, we will examine both types of power and then look at more specific types of power.

Formal Power

A leader is said to have formal power when power has been formally given or recognized by a system or group. For example, the chair of a group may be recognized as possessing formal power within the group. Just because a person possesses formal power does not mean that this person will be effective, though. Another member of the group may be more respected and have more influence than the chair does.

Informal Power

In that case, the other member of the group may be said to have informal power. This type of leadership power has not been formally granted but rather has developed through the group's interactions. This power is often based on liking, relationships, and communication competence. There may be a formally designated group leader, but group members generally go along with the wishes and direction of someone else in the group. In other cases, a group may not have a designated leader, but someone rises and is able to exert influence on the other members.

We will spend a bit more time discussing informal power because it is not always as straightforward as one person being more powerful than a chair or someone rising from among equals. In fact, there may be an informal power base working beneath the scenes or in conjunction with a more formal power arrangement.

Take, for example, John Hepburn and Ann Crepin's (1984) study of the relationships between prisoners and guards in a state penitentiary. The formal structure of power seems obvious: The guards are in control, and the prisoners are not. But think again. The system cannot work if only formal power is considered. Informal power must also be accounted for within this system.

First, the prisoners outnumber the guards. At any time, if they acted together, they could overpower a single guard, whether or not the guard is carrying weaponry.

Second, the guards' superiors take note of how they handle prisoners. Particular guards get a reputation for being good with prisoners, while other guards are seen as incompetent. The good ones receive bigger pay raises than the others. Once again, the prisoners can influence the outcomes for the guards in unexpected ways.

If the prisoners choose to communicate cooperatively with a particular guard, the superiors will see that guard as doing the job well. If the prisoners decide to make a particular guard's life difficult by disobeying orders or showing disrespect in their talk, he or she will be frequently pulled into conflicts. The superiors will eventually see this as evidence of inability to get the job done well.

formal power: that which is formally allocated by a system or group to particular people (compare with *informal power*)

informal power: operates through relationships and individual reputations without formal status (e.g., someone may not actually be the boss but might exert more influence on other workers by being highly respected; compare with *formal power*)

So the guards need to play along, communicating with prisoners in a constructive and amiable way that helps them develop decent working relationships so they can do their job at all. So who *really* has the power?

An informal system of power also exists among the prisoners: Some prisoners are top dogs while others are not. The guards must pay attention to this informal hierarchy and not treat them all equally. Otherwise, the prisoners

will stir up trouble for the guards. Again, power is transacted into being by how two parties relate and communicate.

Power in groups, then, is not always as clear as it seems from group structure. As you can tell, power is always a transactional concept and is always related to relationship dynamics. It depends on acceptance by followers as well as on its execution by a leader.

More Types of Power

John French and Bertram Raven (1960) went further and distinguished five specific types of power. These types of power are presented in [Table 9.4](#).

Notice, then, that the exercise of power is more complicated than it may appear at first. It is derived from many sources. Also note that a single person can often have more than one of these types of power. For instance, the chair can have both legitimate and coercive power. A group member may have expert power through specialized knowledge of a topic and have referent power as a respective member of the group.

Leadership Vision

Major textbooks and scholarship about leadership often claim that a leader must have a “vision” (Northouse, 2015; Partlow, Medeiros, & Mumford, 2015). This has become so much of a mantra in business and leadership courses that very few people take the time to evaluate what it means. The first mistake is one that we already noted, to assume that “leadership” is a unified entity and that it manifests itself in the same way in a grocery store manager, a classroom discussion leader, the Pope, and a four-star general. Clearly, these different types of leaders do not all need “visions,” or at least not ones of the same type. No four-star general is going to make an Easter plea for world peace as the Pope does every year! The focus and scope of the visions they should have are also different, with higher-ranking people being expected to steer the boat and people lower down the chain just needing to keep their production or sales targets in sight.

Table 9.4 French and Raven’s Five Types of Power

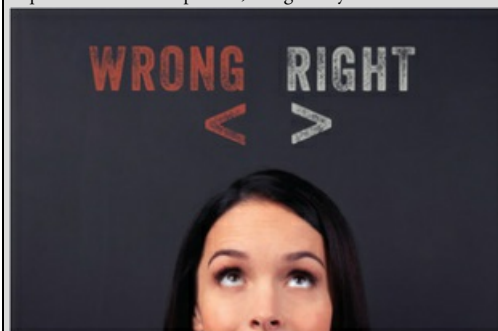
Type of Power	Features	Examples
Legitimate	Created by a person’s office rank or official status	Designated chair of a group
Expert	Created through special knowledge of a particular topic	Group member with special knowledge of topic or issue being considered
Referent	Created by the allegiance of one group of people to another person or group	Group member who is respected by other members and whom other members may want to emulate
Reward	Created by the power to give benefits to other people, or to manage or withhold them	Group member who promises support on an upcoming vote in return for earlier favor
Coercive	Created by the power to punish (as distinct from withholding of rewards, this means actual application of punishment)	Chair of group sanctioning or not allowing a member to participate

Any broad statement about the fact that “a leader needs a vision” (Northouse, 2015) is clearly going to be wrong. However, it is very often motivating for the members of a group to believe that their leader has some idea of where the group will be headed and what they will be doing. People in groups commonly want to be led, and they want to believe that the leader is taking them somewhere useful. They may have their own ideas as to whether the leader is taking them in any useful direction, but that is a matter for discussion and group agreement. A good leader will be able to create consensus in a group through the mechanisms that we have already discussed.

Make your case: What Is Ethical Leadership?



Define *ethical leadership* and describe a situation when such leadership might take place. As discussed within the chapter, this task is easier requested than accomplished, but give it your best shot and see what you develop.



©iStockphoto.com/Courtney Keating

Questions to Consider

1. Is it possible to define ethical leadership or describe an example in ways that do not involve people and relationships with them, either implicitly or explicitly?
2. Who is to say one person's ethical standards are right or better than another person's standards? Accordingly, is it possible for sets of ethical standards to be at odds yet both be considered ethical?

Leadership Ethics

Another claim made in books and research on leadership is that ethical leadership is a prerequisite for success (Northouse, 2015; Williams & Seaman, 2016). Many students write course assignments about this with great conviction, but cannot define the nature of ethics. Is it ethical to praise people when they do not deserve it, even if the praise will motivate them to do better? Is it ethical to hold back information from people because it will improve their performance? Is it ethical to give everyone the same reward when some people work harder than others?

Although each of these questions leads to its own complexities, anyone who writes about ethics in leadership needs to take a good look at the last 20 years and see how many cases he or she can come up with where politicians, business leaders, and others in positions of trust have clearly violated their ethical responsibilities and are not paying the slightest bit of attention to what the books on leadership tell them they should be doing. It is even clearer that however many books on ethics and leadership leaders have read and however many seminars on ethics they have attended that have stressed the point that ethics matter, they nevertheless are behaving in ways that are pure examples of avarice, greed, and irresponsibility.

Maybe the leadership textbooks and classes say that ethics matter, but clearly many political, business, and social leaders do not find ethics too constraining a burden. The main problem with the ethics question in leadership is that it is context-bound and often depends on a whole range of complexities that interlock. Decisions are rarely independent of one another, and particular actions cannot always be assessed without reference to other activity. This is particularly true of people's feelings of obligation to relationships and to the value of doing favors for people they want to impress or who have done them favors. Relationships strike once more!

Leadership Is Transacted

The preceding discussions within this chapter really mean that leadership is not a trait and that there are complicated social influences from other people in a group. These influence how a leader behaves—and relationships between group members are part of that. This really means that leadership is a *relational process*, not a trait.

Leadership is a communicative relationship between one person and others such that when one gives a direction and another gladly carries it out, leadership has been successfully *transacted* in the interchange. Leadership is embedded not *in a person* but in *communication and relationships between people*.

A leader, manager, director, or department head does have real control over resources that other team members need. But French and Raven (1960) teach us that these apparent powers can be undermined by the existence and use of other kinds of relational power. Sometimes, particular members of decision-making groups come up with consistently better ideas than the designated leader does, and eventually people start to see those members as the true influencers. Or sometimes followers just refuse to obey.

You may have noticed the use of the term *team* when referring to groups—especially those taking place in the workplace. This term, although overused and almost cliché, has a rhetorical spin that presents interdependence, cooperation, effective division of labor, common goals, coordination, and mutual respect, so now leadership books tend to emphasize teamwork. This is not so different in effect as the topic of “cohesiveness” that we covered earlier, but it is a relational communicative term. Relational aspects of an effective team are at least as important as the group’s task outcomes. Hence, messages in teams place emphasis on making people feel valued as well as getting the job done (Clampitt, 2005).

Any nasty despot can force slaves to build pyramids, but very few leaders can make their underlings feel important afterward. Julius Caesar’s leadership qualities included making a point of knowing the names of as many of his men as humanly possible—he had a staggering memory—and addressing each one personally as often as he could. By paying attention to their feelings as people, he built his legions into formidable teams that would do for him what they would do for no one else (Dando-Collins, 2004). The same characteristic was true of Scipio Africanus, who eventually defeated Hannibal, and of General Bernard Montgomery in World War II, who beat German field marshall Erwin Rommel (O’Connell, 2011).

Effective teams and their leaders are always interdependent. They all attend to personal relationships and carry out the friendly and respectful communication necessary for truly “personal” relationships. Personal communication transacts a collaborative climate, strong personal commitment, high regard for other team members, and a unified commitment to excellence.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What is a group?

A group is more than just a collection of a few people. Groups are transacted through communication and relationships. A group comes into being once people recognize and identify themselves and others as members of the same group. Beyond the recognition of membership, a simple assembly or collection of people is not really a group unless it has a common purpose. Types of groups include (a) formal, (b) advisory, (c) creative, (d) support, and (e) networking.

2. What are the characteristics of a group?

Key characteristics of groups include (a) cohesiveness, (b) interdependence, (c) commitment, (d) norms, (e) roles, and (f) cultures.

3. How do groups form and make decisions?

Although research on group communication has too frequently used groups with zero history among members, there are a number of models of group development and decision making. These models usually view group development and decision making as a linear process. Communication is frequently taken for granted or thought to be similar in all group experiences. Relationships tend to be absent altogether. Recognizing the impact of relationships and interactions outside group interactions will enhance this area of study.

4. What are the styles of group leadership?

Leadership style is categorized into focusing on the task and focusing on the socioemotional well-being of the members of the group. Task leaders focus on the performance of tasks to ensure the achievement of group goals. Socioemotional leaders focus on group member satisfaction and well-being.

5. What are the types of leadership power?

Leadership power can be broadly categorized as formal and informal. Formal power is that which has been formally given or recognized by a system or group. Informal power is that which has not been formally granted but rather has been developed through the group's interactions. More specific types of power include (a) legitimate, (b) expert, (c) referent, (d) reward, and (e) coercive.

6. What is meant by leadership vision and leadership ethics?

Books on leadership frequently note the need for leadership vision. However, there are too many "visions" in existence for that to have much meaning beyond talking points in business seminars. Yet it is frequently motivating for the members of a group to believe that their leader has some idea of where the group will be headed and what they will be doing. People in groups commonly want to be led, and they want to believe that the leader is taking them somewhere useful. Another claim made in books on leadership is that ethical leadership is a prerequisite for success (Northouse, 2015). At the same time, many political, business, and social leaders do not find ethics too constraining a burden. The main problem with the ethics question in leadership is that it is context-bound and often depends on a whole range of complexities that interlock, especially those involving relationships.

7. How is leadership transacted?

Leadership is a communicative relationship between one person and others such that when one gives a direction and another gladly carries it out, leadership has been successfully transacted in the interchange. Leadership is embedded not in a person but in communication and relationships between people.

Key Concepts

- adjourning 185
- advisory group 179
- coercive power 190
- cohesiveness 179
- conflict 186
- creative group 179
- disruptive roles 183
- emergence 186
- expert power 190
- formal group 179
- formal power 189
- formal roles 183
- forming 185
- group culture 184
- group norms 182
- group roles 182
- group sanctions 182
- groupthink 180
- informal power 189
- informal roles 183
- interdependence 180
- legitimate power 190
- networking group 179
- norming 185
- orientation 186
- out-groups 182
- performing 185
- referent power 190
- reinforcement 186
- reward power 190
- social roles 183
- socioemotional leaders 188
- storming 185
- support group 179
- task leaders 188
- task roles 183

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. How does your group of friends decide what to do on Friday night? Ask your friends this question to determine their perspectives. Which processes discussed in this chapter can you see at work there?
2. Who do your friends think is a good leader, and what makes a person so?
3. What group norms and rituals can you identify in the small groups and organizations to which you belong? Ask your friends in these groups this question and then compare answers.

Media Connections

1. The following four movies offer good instances of groups in action and cover some of the concepts discussed in this chapter: *Office Space*, *Apollo 13*, *12 Angry Men* (the original Henry Fonda black-and-white version), and *The A-Team*. Admittedly, these movies are a bit dated, but each one does a very good job of demonstrating something different about groups. The opening sequence of *Office Space*, for example, gives you a good idea of a group culture, and some of the characters represent different leadership styles (analyze Lumbergh's—ugh!—power and leadership style). *12 Angry Men* demonstrates how a task leader can bring emotionally led individuals back on track by using promotive communication but also handle the socioemotional concerns of different members. *Apollo 13* demonstrates aspects of leadership and group norms. Finally, *The A-Team* demonstrates a number of such group characteristics as group roles, interdependence, and cohesion. What are some other—perhaps more recent—examples of movies demonstrating communication in groups?
2. The next time you are in a group, pay attention to any discussions about media. For instance, someone might bring up a television program viewed the previous evening or a newly discovered website. In what ways could such discussions be considered disruptive communication? In what ways could such discussions actually enhance group relationships?
3. Watch any reality show with groups. How do groups form, what are their dynamics and transactions, and what are their weaknesses?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

10 Communication in the Workplace



©iStockphoto.com/Geber86

Chapter Outline

[Learning About the Workplace](#)

[Vocational Anticipatory Socialization](#)

[Metaphors of Organizations](#)

[Going to Work: The Workplace as a Special Frame](#)

[Workplace Goals](#)

[Workplace Formality/Hierarchy](#)

[Workplace Identities](#)

[The Workplace as a Culture](#)

[Workplace Routine and Structuration Theory](#)

[Industrial Time](#)

[The Workplace as Relationships](#)

[Positive Influences of Relationships at Work](#)

[Relationships and Workplace Challenges](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. Where do people learn about the workplace?
2. How might the workplace be considered a special frame?
3. How are organizations constituted as a “culture” of interaction and relationships between members?
4. How might the workplace be explained by a relationship approach?

When we ask students to tell us what their workplaces are like, they say things like “My restaurant is very upscale, and I really like the people and the customers I work with”; “I work in a fitness center, and the manager is a control freak”; or “I used to work at a corporate head office, and the people really got on my nerves, which is why I decided to come back to college.” They also tell us stories about the way a colleague had advised them not to pay too much attention to one particular company rule because nobody ever really enforced it but that they should always be sure to show up early when one particular shift manager was on duty because she was very strict about timekeeping. They also get plenty of advice from more experienced employees about how to get bigger tips or what to do if a customer complains. In short, our students answer specific questions about experience in terms of other people and relationships.

When we ask the broader and more abstract question “What comes to mind when you think about work or the workplace in general?,” they envision something different from their own personal experiences and instead talk of leaders and followers/employees, managers and peons, law offices with strict lines of report, corporate businesses where sales departments and marketing departments are often in conflict, nonprofit organizations with specific rules and cultures, and other arrangements of management. They tend to think, in short, in terms of *structure*.

Yet in their own experience, they notice how work is a place that makes meaning between people, where a particular culture exists, and where “the way things get done around here” is passed on to new employees not only by instructions from the boss but also by individuals telling one another stories about how they dealt with a difficult situation that might arise in the new employee’s interactions with customers. So again, thoughts about “structure” are really translated into communication, and we can apply our usual analysis.

Bet you did not see this coming! The “workplace” is (and organizations generally are) best viewed as a relational enterprise that involves meaning making, shared perspectives, and everyday communication. Organizations and workplaces are, in effect, small cultures after all. (Note from your culturally diverse authors: The British English word for “coworkers” is *workmates*, making them sound friendly and connected rather than simply people who show up at the same place and work together like cogs in a system. One culture assumes that they will bond together; the other assumes that they will have to be made to.)

Accordingly, we will start by looking at organizations in this familiar structural way and move on to show a better and more contemporary approach for understanding organizations. Essentially, you will come to see structure (official formal structures) as *transacted* (brought into being) in communication. In this same way, “the workplace” and “organizations” are transacted in communication through relationships (who knew?).

What is this picture telling us about the nature of work and the glossy expectations of professional success? How is it sending messages of what professionals look like and what they do?



©iStockphoto.com/monkeybusinessimages

Learning About the Workplace

If we invited you to join the Suck/Cess Team at Duck & McMahan's Drain Cleaning Company ("We can even unclog memories"), you would already have expectations about how to dress, how to behave in a professional manner, and how to think about rising to the top (it's not the sort of company where you want to stay at the bottom very long). Yet, how did you learn what you know?

People tend to learn and think about the workplace in many ways. Some are developed in childhood and reinforced in later life, some are derived from practical experience with the norms and organizational culture of a company, and some are refined by the relational interactions that occur among the specific people who work there. We get our ideas about work from Society's Secret Agents right out of the crib and are conditioned by TV, movies, and other experiences to accept what "work" is like and how "professionals" look, act, and operate. People develop understanding, rhetorical visions, and predispositions or expectations about how to behave and perform in workplace frames. Organizations and the workplace are essentially sites of *meaning making* (Weick, 1995).

Vocational Anticipatory Socialization

As mentioned earlier, our understanding of organizations and the workplace begins to develop early in life. Vocational anticipatory socialization is the preparation for becoming a worker and begins in a child's early life through family interaction and exposure to the media. You first learned about the nature of work and the workplace through socialization in your families. Cheryl Cockburn-Wootten and Theodore Zorn (2006) note that many families tell stories about the nature of work experiences, some of them funny, some of them poignant, but all conveying to young children something about the nature of work. As a child, you heard adults talking about the work that they do, and you were able to gain some sense of whether they see it as important or simply something that they reluctantly do to feed the family. A child's attitude toward the workplace can be affected by such ordinary comments, whether they are about the nature of particular professions or the nature of the colleagues with whom the adult individual lives life during the long daily period of absence from the family. For children who have not yet experienced the workplace, these kinds of stories, comments, and conversational pieces are formative.

vocational anticipatory socialization: the preparation for becoming a worker; takes place from early moments of childhood onward, including through exposure to the media and depiction of the workplace in comedy and other shows

Family stories about work, of course, are often structured to express and emphasize certain values such as the payoffs of hard work or the ways to break the rules and get away with it (Cockburn-Wootten & Zorn, 2006). These stories convey something to the child about the mysteries of the workplace. Such stories may emphasize the swirling together of the leisurely "true" individual self and the necessarily but reluctantly "working self." The workplace may be described by a parent as a source of stress or as a source of income (or both) but as something for which the growing child must prepare and for which a so-called Protestant work ethic is often induced—the drive to achieve success through hard work (Allen, 2006).

Through such socialization, people develop shared cultural understandings of work and its place in society and personal life. There is often, for example, a straightforward identity connection between job and person through the God term of one's profession (doctor, nurse—to say nothing of professor!) or the status and social structure associated with other kinds of workers such as dentists, janitors, lawyers, or meatpackers. Identity becomes embedded in these terms and shows us that people derive much of their senses of identity from their jobs. Also much of their social identity is established by their workplace and the functions they perform there. So also does a sense of the role of the "boss" as related to that of the "workers" become instilled in the child's mind.

Metaphors of Organizations

One strong influence on thinking in general is the use of metaphors. Gareth Morgan (2006) specifically points out how metaphors structure ways of seeing and thinking that guide the ways in which managers and members of organizations view them. Among many different metaphors for organizations are (a) organizations as machines, (b) organizations as cultures, and (c) organizations as instruments of domination.

Organizations as Machines

A *machine metaphor* represents organizations as standardized by repetition, specialization, or predictability. Modern management techniques that were previously guided by this metaphor have sought to escape from it. They seek to make the workplace more welcoming. Workers' voices should be listened to so that they do not simply feel like cogs in a machine or anonymous numbers on a list. Their value to the company or the organization is something that must be recognized and valued by management (Sias, 2009). That is why there are now endless (and often detested) "bonding weekends" and "team-building exercises." However many times you play trust games with some colleagues, you can never forget that time they betrayed you into holding the bag for some major snafu. And, of course, a lot of the trust games are simply silly.

By the way . . . What Did Your Parents Tell You About Work?



When Steve's father brought his boss home to dinner when Steve was 7 and his younger brother was 5, it was presented as a significant event where they had to dress up smartly and be on their absolute best behavior. Although they did not realize what was at stake about the importance of behaving well in the presence of a boss, they soon realized—even at their young ages—why their father hated his work so much.



©iStockphoto.com/SolStock

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways do you think that your approaches to understanding the workplace were influenced by the ways in which your parents or guardians reported their work experiences?
2. If you have children (if not, imagine you do), what might their impressions of the workplace be, based on your reports?

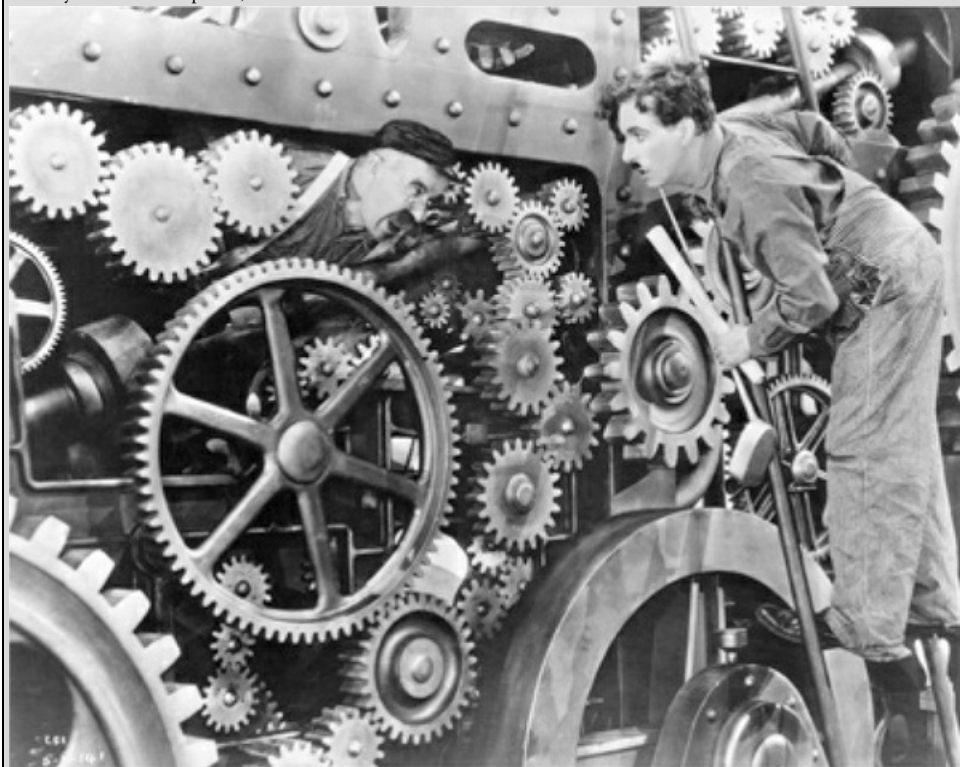
Organizations as Cultures

Other metaphors focus on *organizations as cultures* based on shared meaning, and the notion of “sharing” presupposes relationships between people. However, the concept of *organizational culture* is one that readily springs to mind, and the atmosphere in particular organizations can be very different; “atmosphere” is very apparent to people who work in different organizations and may even come across to the customers themselves. Most organizations try to create an atmosphere of friendliness and the valuing of customers by the use of such phrases as “Your call is very important to us,” but you know that on many “help lines” you will sit there listening for 20 minutes to the music of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* and that if you hear that bloody “Springtime” violin piece anymore you will go nuts. Some companies even go so far as to say, for example, “Univision™ doesn’t just have viewers. We have relationships. Relationships with millions of people who say they simply cannot live life without us” (Univision, 2008). But why would anybody *want* a deep personal relationship with his or her defense attorney?

By the way . . . : Media Depictions of the Workplace



Early cinema (Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times* [1936] or the silent movie *Metropolis* [1927]) represented the metaphor of organizations as machines. These films suggested that the machine has the effect of turning workers into robots, a fear that was very real in society in those days as mechanization of jobs on the assembly line began to occur more frequently (and nowadays those jobs very often are indeed done by robots or computers).



Bettmann/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. How do more recent movies and television programs depict the workplace?
2. To what extent and how do you believe such depictions have influenced your understanding of the workplace?

Organizations as Instruments of Domination

For many people, organizations are not seen as friends but are more likely to be seen metaphorically as *instruments of domination* that shape the workers' behavior and even control or manipulate their thoughts and ideologies. This metaphor is extremely common because most people feel that work is not only undesirable but actually oppressive. Most people would rather be out fishing or shopping or bicycling than moving containers of trash from place A to place B or sitting in boring meetings or driving delivery trucks. It is very clear that to become a member of any workplace you are faced with the *connectedness–separateness dialectic*. You give up lots of your freedom to devote most of your time to working for your employer, when you would rather be doing something else. However, in the early part of your life you learned that work is unavoidable.

Going to Work: The Workplace as a Special Frame

Important differences exist between the workplace and normal everyday life experiences with friends and family and when in other sorts of situations (Sias, 2009). When you are at work, you are in a different *frame* where you enact relationships and perform identities connected to work. Everyday life patterns and practices can be extended into the workplace context and be used to frame the workplace to a certain extent. However, these can be constrained or even altered by the workplace frame.

The workplace frame is one in which instrumental goals tend to dominate over relational goals. It is also one in which formality/hierarchy is established. And, it is one in which specific types of identity work predominate and get accomplished.

Workplace Goals

One clear difference between a workplace frame and those from other areas of life is that instrumental goals are predominant at work (“Get the job done”) whereas relational goals are predominant outside work (“Have a social life”). *Instrumental goals* are focused on tasks and achievement of organizational objectives. These goals can involve direct delegation of duties and the direct assessment of performance. For instance, a supervisor might instruct an employee to perform a particular task and then say whether or not it was done to his or her satisfaction. By contrast, *relational goals* involve intimacy and support. Accordingly, you would expect fewer direct orders being given and any assessments would tend to be quite positive.

Overall, then, the requirement of instrumental purposes at work will affect the nature of talk and reshape the way in which talk operates. Of course, in some instances instrumental goals and relational goals are both present and might conflict with one another. We will discuss these instances later in the chapter when exploring the workplace as relationships.

Workplace Formality/Hierarchy

Another clear difference between a workplace frame and other sorts of frames is that the talk at work tends to construct distance and formality/hierarchy in certain parts of the organization (e.g., between management and workers). This formality/hierarchy distinction at work may be transacted directly by the use of titles in talk (e.g., sergeants and privates; team leader) but is more commonly transacted by what is being said, by whom it is being said, and how it is being said.

Interactions are subject to language performances that aid the completion of the organization's tasks. Talk tends to be formal and structured and to focus on the professional deportment of the person involved.

A superior would be more likely to tell a subordinate to do something. And, depending on the workplace culture (more about this topic later in the chapter as well), he or she would probably not be expected to say "pretty please with sugar on top." Rather, it would just be expected that a subordinate would perform a task when instructed to do so by a superior, generally without question. Conversely, a subordinate would be less likely to instruct a superior to perform a task. And, when and if it does take place, it is probably asked very respectfully, perhaps with even a "cherry on top." Clear relational connections and positions of power in the workplace are established through the ways in which people talk with one another.

Outside the workplace, some people may have more power than other people in personal relationships, but this power is much less formal and distinct. Further, outside the workplace, talk is more recreational and focused on relational goals such as intimacy development and support. The delegation of tasks and the spelling out of particular activities that must be performed are relatively small parts of conversational life ("Hey, Mason, don't forget to order the pepperoni toppings!"). As such, any development of (informal and much less distinct) power is usually accomplished and maintained through other means.

instrumental goals: those that are predominant at work and are directed at completion of duties; can also involve a direct assessment of performance

relational goals: those that typically involve intimacy and support

formality/hierarchy: creates distance between workers and management and establishes clear relational connections among people

Workplace Identities

As a special frame, the workplace constrains the kinds of identity you can perform and requires that you develop or adopt a professional working identity.

One way in which this identity constraint and development occurs is through clothing. In many ways, clothing is used in the development of personal identities. At work, though, specific dress codes are usually established, and many workplaces require dressing a particular way (a suit, a uniform, overalls, a logo shirt). The nonverbal communication that takes place through these styles of dress carries messages of connection to the organization and requires you to perform roles not done elsewhere. Dress may also indicate your position in the organization, whether you wear a certain kind of military insignia on your sleeve or whether you are wearing a particular color of scrubs in a hospital.

Another way in which specific identities are constructed in the workplace is through learning and using unique speech codes, words, and terms. Language used in a therapist's office might include *borderline* (a client with a particular personality disorder) or *intake* (a special form for admitting a new client to the practice), for instance. Knowing and using specialized language gives you special positioning and expert involvement in the workplace. It identifies you as a member within an organizational frame and as an expert who knows terms that outsiders do not.

Overall, in the workplace, you will be expected to adopt a new “working identity” by adapting your communication to represent your professional face—the behaviors, courtesy, and interaction styles that are appropriate for people to present to others in a workplace. In many professional settings, you will be required to adopt high code when interacting with customers, clients, or other people involved in the same organization. The phrase *acting professional* is essentially what professional face involves.

Of course, you may be able to express your own personality in particular ways that fit with this professional face. Servers, for example, can often project their personal style into the role of server in a way that might maximize their tips. Some places allow employees to modify uniforms (still within particular guidelines) to convey a sense of personal identity.

From your performances in the workplace, you also learn that it is inappropriate to play around in ways that are entirely appropriate in friendships. However, you learn to distinguish very clearly between the front and back regions. When one is in the front region of performance in the workplace, it is inappropriate to behave sloppily or unprofessionally. In the back region, however, where there is more of a relaxed atmosphere, playfulness may be encouraged as a way of building a sense of community and team membership (Mokros, 2006).

By the way . . . : Positions in Hierarchies



Consider how people might manage different positions in the same or different hierarchies. For instance, a person might supervise a group of employees but also report to a supervisor of his or her own. Depending on whether that person is talking with a subordinate or a superior, the communication taking place must be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, that same person has a life outside of the workplace that influences positions of power. For instance, many people work while going to college or go back to school after being in the workforce full time for a number of years. At work, that person may have or have had many people answering to him or her. At school, however, that person is expected to answer to instructors. Whatever the situation, changes in talk will occur.



©iStockphoto.com/KatarzynaBialasiewicz

Questions to Consider

1. In what situations have you dealt with changes in positions of hierarchy?
2. How have your styles of communication specifically changed with different positions of hierarchy?

professional face: the behaviors, courtesy, and interaction styles that are appropriate for people to present to others in a workplace

The Workplace as a Culture

Although many similarities exist among workplaces, you might discover that the communication and atmosphere at one place of employment differ greatly from those of another, even if they are the same sort of business. For instance, the communication at one workplace might be lighthearted, people tend to get along well, and management tends to provide a great deal of support to employees. At another workplace, though, communication is more serious, people really do not care much for one another, and management seems vindictive more than supportive. Variations among workplaces are not always as extreme as those examples, but you can definitely tell there are differences.

The workplace may be understood as a unique culture, in which particular shared meaning systems, realities, beliefs, values, and communication styles and patterns influence and are maintained through our interactions and relationships with others. Cultural understanding and behaviors in the workplace may include comparatively smaller matters, such as proper photocopier etiquette, as well as comparatively larger matters, such as ethical guidelines of an organization. Such knowledge is not necessarily part of the formal training. Rather, this knowledge is gained, incorporated, and passed along as a result of interactions and subsequent socialization of new members.

When considering workplace culture, it is important to recognize that *people* are part of, not detached from, systems that influence them. Just as was the case when talking about culture in general, then, the key to understanding workplace or organizational culture is by looking at the relationships through which it is transacted.

In what follows, we will look at how organizational culture is maintained through routine and talk among people who share workplace relationships. We will also examine the nonverbal aspect of time, as seen through this unique culture perspective.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Workplace Communication

The next time you are at work, pay attention to some of the words and phrases you use there that you do not use in other places. If you do not have a job, the next time you are at a restaurant or store, listen for specific terms being used that might be unique to workers in that environment.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways does the use of such language affect workplace identities?
2. In what ways does the use of such language enable the completion of tasks?

By the way . . . Identities in the Armed Forces



A striking example of identities being constrained is in the armed forces when the first part of boot camp training is to break down an individual's sense of personal identity and to replace it with a highly trained, disciplined, unquestioningly obedient uniformity as one of a team of people who carry out automatically whatever orders may be given (almost as if they were in college!).



Scott Olson/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. If you have ever been a member of the armed forces, how was your sense of personal identity affected as a result of boot camp training?
2. If you have never been a member of the armed forces, how might you react to the breaking down of your sense of personal identity?

Workplace Routine and Structuration Theory

Workplace or organizational culture, along with other sorts of cultures, is reestablished and maintained through routine. Much that has gone on before continues to go on the way it always has. (Here come relationships once again!) Such routine is partly the result of the workplace consisting of existing relationships between people who have had histories of interactions.

These patterns of interaction emphasize that people are neither purely free co-constructors of social reality nor simple pawns moved around by abstract social structural forces. Actually, their existing interpersonal relationships with each other produce and reproduce social systems and their structures. One way of approaching this idea is through structuration theory.

Anthony Giddens's (1991) structuration theory points to the regularities of human relationships that act as rules and resources drawn on to enable or constrain social interaction. Examples are norms or habitual expectations of how to communicate and relate to one another. The relationships and expectations become a context for future interaction. Giddens smartly changes the notion of *structure* in organizations from static or objective hierarchies into something *structured by the transactions* themselves and the communication between people in everyday life relationships within the organization.

Organizations produce and reproduce themselves over time through conversations between the individuals within the organization. For example, people refer to previous experiences or decisions that have been made; people remember the way things used to be done; and as each new person enters and older people leave, passed down from one workplace generation to the next is a system of beliefs and practices about how the organization works.

Accordingly, organizational climate is not a property of organizations but an interpersonally and relationally *transacted* product of communication based on the relationships between people. By constantly referring to a particular theme (customer satisfaction, for example), workers in the workplace make it a theme of the organization's culture. That culture therefore experiences sedimentation, or is laid down into the organization by the workers' talk and everyday relational practices. (The repetitive structuration of talk/repetitive patterns of communication and relationships gradually drops to the bottom like sediment in a river and so affects the future course that the river takes, as it were.)

Workplace culture, workplace groups, and workplace communities consist of thinking, relating, reflective people who monitor their own behavior and tend to repeat it rather than reinvent a new style each day (who has time?). It is easier to take the path of least resistance—the way we have always done things around here, the way you and I interacted yesterday, or the way our relationship was before today. Thus, a daily routine of relational interaction in the workplace ultimately becomes the basis for future interaction and the perpetuation of organizational culture.

Communication + You: College and Structuration



When new employees enter a workplace, they often take part in a brief training seminar of some sort and perhaps are even given a policy manual. However, those two resources are not where new employees learn the organizational culture and how things get done in the workplace. That knowledge comes from interacting with people and perhaps being shown the ropes from someone who has been there a while. Something similar probably happened when you entered college. As an incoming first-year student, you were probably given access to a student handbook and a tour of the buildings, but those things did not teach you how things work inside of those buildings or which are the best instructors. These latter aspects of the college come from other people, not from a map or a handbook.

Questions to Consider

1. From which (relational) resources have you gained the most information about your school?
2. In what ways have you passed such knowledge along to others?

structuration theory: points to the regularities of human relationships that act as rules and resources drawn on to enable or constrain social interaction

sedimentation: the process by which repeated everyday practices create a “structure” for performance in the future, as a river deposits sediment that alters or maintains its course over time

Industrial Time

One feature of the workplace, which is characteristic of that set of circumstances and different from others, is that people there, as in any other culture, have a specific approach to time—in this case “industrial time.” Before clocks were accurate, the predominance of agricultural work led to a vague approach to time based on the seasons, crop cycles, and the availability of daylight. There was very little need for punctuality as we understand it today. Once clocks had been introduced and industry had turned to a more repetitive performance of specific kinds of work using machines, it became important for employers to count the number of minutes when a worker was actually doing work for which he or she was paid by the minute or the hour.

This introduced the notion of industrial time, which is the time a person is actually counted as being at work and therefore is paid for doing such work. In the same way that individuals are able to show resistance to other work ethics, they resist the management’s control over their time at work and become clock-watchers, downing tools at exactly 5:00 p.m. when their shift ends. This form of resistance is based on relationships of solidarity/connection with other workers rather than with management. And we have both noticed a curious tendency for undergraduates to snap their folders shut and start packing the bags two minutes before the end of a lecture! Why is that? They often miss the most interesting bits of a concluding summary.

Workers also talk about time and the amount of time that it should take to do a job. Workers often set about covering for one another during absences or periods of lateness—for example, “clocking in” to work for someone who has not arrived on time and will otherwise be penalized by the managers if they find out. These kinds of interpersonal favors for one another make the workplace operate through a relational base that brings workers together in a sense of community that resists management that otherwise would have perfect control over workers’ personal time.

By the way . . . : Telecommuting and Virtual Workplaces



When discussing the workplace, a physical *place* or *space* is often what comes to mind. It is frequently thought of as a place you go, away from home and filled with people. However, people are increasingly telecommuting from home through digital and virtual means, which comes with its own unique sets of relational opportunities and challenges (Blascovich & Bailenson, 2011; Chesebro, McMahan, & Russett, 2014; Wright, 2015).

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways do you think telecommuting or working in a virtual environment might affect what is being discussed in this chapter?
2. What advantages and disadvantages can you imagine from telecommuting or working virtually?

The Workplace as Relationships

People have traditionally confused “organization” with physical and hierarchical structure rather than considering it as something, like families and groups, that is *transacted* in discourse. Yet, relationships are the true driving force of any organization. When you think about places you have worked, you probably think about the people there, the people with whom relationships of all sorts were shared. All your activities in the workplace occur in the context of relationships (Sias, 2009; see [Table 10.1](#)).

The workplace contains many different kinds of relationships, some of which are good and some of which are bad. Some people get along well; some do not. Some people form close friendships, which can be both beneficial and problematic. Some people even form romantic relationships, which comes with its own set of issues. Still other people come to hate one another and become enemies.

industrial time: the attention to punctuality and dedication to a task that is connected with the nature of industry (clocking in, clocking out, lunch breaks, etc.)

Whatever the case, ultimately, problems and successes in the workplace both have a relational basis. When things go well, it is often the result of people having a good working relationship. When things do not go well, relational connections and communication are at the root of the cause. And, here is something else to consider: Relationships outside of the workplace frequently affect work performance and relationships within the workplace.

Table 10.1 Activities of Organizations That Occur in the Context of Interpersonal Relationships

1. Directing	12. Interviewing
2. Collaborating	13. Reporting
3. Information gathering	14. Gossiping
4. Information sharing	15. Debating
5. Rewarding	16. Supporting
6. Punishing	17. Selling
7. Conflict	18. Buying
8. Resolution of conflict	19. Ordering
9. Controlling	20. Managing
10. Offering feedback	21. Leading
11. Persuading	22. Following

SOURCE: Sias (2009, p. 1).
Source: Sias (2009, p. 1).

So, beyond recognizing that the workplace is transacted through talk among people who share relationships, understanding relationship issues in the workplace will improve your current employment situation and prepare you for your future employment endeavors. In what follows, we will explore some of the ways in which relationships affect the workplace. First, we will examine the positive aspects of workplace relationships. Second, we will examine challenges associated with workplace relationships.

Positive Influences of Relationships at Work

Relationships at work can be very advantageous both personally and for the organization. They can provide support for our performance at work and for personal matters outside of work that can still influence what takes place in the workplace. Relationships can also result in greater cohesion among employees and greater morale, which can in turn increase productivity and employee retention.

Support for Workplace Performance

Positive relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and people with whom work is conducted, can provide support when needed. Coworkers with more experience often serve as official or unofficial mentors for new employees by “showing them the ropes” and teaching them how things get done at that particular workplace. Beyond learning workplace norms specific to a particular organization, people at work can be a source of information about the actual job we are doing and can provide insight into how to improve our performance (Turner, Huang, Poverjuc, & Wyness, 2015). Occasionally, people just need assistance completing a task, and friends in the workplace can be there to help out when needed, providing such support as encouragement, information, or resources.

Workplace relationships can also involve people from other organizations. Although it appears on the surface that commercial transactions are carried out between one organization and another, they actually are done through the personal relationship between one member (or several members) of one organization and those of another over the phone, in group meetings, through e-mail, or by other interpersonal means. A sales manager, for example, may be prepared to cut a special deal for someone in another organization because that person knows him or her personally. Therefore, the organization benefits from a sale it otherwise might not make. The other organization benefits from the relationship that you have with its buyer and therefore gets something it wants at a cheaper rate than it could get from the competition. It is vital for organizations to maintain good personal relationships among the individuals who do this sort of business on their behalf. Once again, then, “organizational work” is done at the relational level.

Support for Personal Matters

The workplace does not exist in isolation, apart from other organizations and the personal lives of people who work there (Allen & Eby, 2016). Accordingly, a personal problem at home can negatively affect on someone’s performance at work, and people often struggle to negotiate personal and professional roles (Totten, 2006). These are known as “spillover effects,” and although apparently they occur in unrelated spheres of life, they demonstrate that the different relational worlds in which a person moves cannot be so easily separated.

When personal matters spill over into the workplace, people with whom relationships are shared at work can assist by providing emotional and other forms of support. Supervisor support, in particular, is especially meaningful when dealing with such spillover in the workplace (Ferguson, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2015).

Workplace Benefits

The organization itself can benefit from positive relationships among the workforce. When people like each other, they generally are more likely to provide assistance and support. Doing so increases cohesiveness among workers. A positive relational environment will also mean that people are more likely to be happy (as much as possible, anyway) when at work, so morale can benefit as well. Such factors can lead to greater productivity and organizational successes. It might also increase employee retention, meaning that people are more likely to stay with an organization rather than leave for another job (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995).

Relationships and Workplace Challenges

Relationships in the workplace can also be problematic, leading to a host of problems personally, professionally, and organizationally. In what follows, we will discuss some of the issues people might experience.

Disruptive Friendships

Friendships in the workplace can have a positive impact but can also have negative consequences (Methot, Lepine, Podsakoff, & Christian, 2015). Among the challenges associated with workplace friendship is that they take people away from the work they should be doing. Just as in other areas of life, relationships at work require maintenance to keep the relationships going at a satisfactory level of closeness. Time spent maintaining the relationships is time that could be spent doing your work. It is possible that there is a trade-off with benefits derived from these relationships, but too much time spent on the relationships becomes problematic. You may have coworkers who spend more time talking with people about their personal lives than they do performing actual work.

Another issue with friendships in the workplace is that there is an expectation for friends to do favors for one another. In some cases, once again, that can be very beneficial. However, problems might occur. For instance, one friend can take advantage of the other friend by placing too much of his or her work requirements on the other, sort of like someone asking you to do his or her homework in high school. There is also the possibility that such favors will require a person to violate organizational rules, such as clocking someone in when that person is not really there.

One more issue with friendships in the workplace is that friends do not always get along. Conflict among friends can be more personal and meaningful than conflict among coworkers, and this can lead to disruption in the work of the friends and can even disrupt the work of others in the organization (Hood, Cruz, & Bachrach, 2016).

By the way . . . : Work Spouses



The term *work spouse* has increasingly appeared in popular culture during the past few years. Chad McBride and Karla Bergen (2015) approached the concept from a scholarly position, ultimately defining *work spouse* as “a special, platonic friendship with a work colleague characterized by a close emotional bond, high levels of disclosure and support, and mutual trust, honesty, loyalty, and respect” (p. 502).

Questions to Consider

1. If you have ever had someone you consider a work spouse, how would you conceptualize your relationship with that person?
2. What would consider some of the benefits or drawbacks of having a work spouse?

Disruptive Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships in the workplace can also be a disruption. The problems associated with friendships in the workplace also apply to romantic relationships. Yet, these issues can be even more problematic because people might perceive romantic relationships to be more personal and intimate than friendships.

Romantic relationships have additional issues that make them even more difficult in the workplace. For one thing, a number of actual laws and workplace rules might be violated as a result of engaging in romantic relationships in the workplace. One person having any degree of power in the workplace over the other person further complicates matters for everyone involved (Chan-Serafin, Teo, Minbashian, Cheng, & Wang, 2016).

Moreover, although coworkers might be suspicious of friendships at work, especially wondering if special favors are being provided or perhaps feeling like outsiders, they are even more suspicious of what might be happening among people involved in a romantic relationship at work (Alder & Quist, 2014; Cowan & Horan, 2014).

Make your case: Should an Organization Interfere With Relationships in the Workplace?



Romantic relationships often develop in the workplace. Adults who have full-time jobs spend a majority of their waking hours at work, so this is not too surprising.



© iStockphoto.com/South_agency

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think that people in an organization should not be allowed to have consensual romantic relationships with one another, or is it an unfair restriction on their freedom if an organization bans such relationships?
2. What sorts of circumstances might alter your judgment? Make an argument that supports your opinion and indicate how you would make decisions about the appropriateness of such a relationship.

Hostile Relationships

Sometimes workers are not nice to one another, and only recently have communication researchers begun to understand the frequency of hostile workplaces and bullying. This is a question not just of personal criticism or attacks on appearance but of “emotional tyranny . . . of the weak by the powerful” (Waldron, 2000, p. 67). Backstabbing gossip and derogatory talk about other employees are also examples of employee-abusive communication. Actually, many forms of contemptuous or discounting messages are available in the workplace just as they are in other places. In the everyday running of an organization, the kinds of talk that go on and count as abusive run from offensive jokes to shunning and ostracism to the ignoring of an individual’s requests or withholding important information that the person needs to complete the job properly (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2008; Paludi, 2015).

In what ways might personal relationships at work have a negative effect on productivity?



© iStockphoto.com/400tmax

Sexual harassment is an obvious example of hostile communication when it is defined as “any unwelcome sexual advance or conduct on the job that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Any conduct of a sexual nature that makes an employee uncomfortable has the potential to be sexual harassment” (England, 2012, p. 3). Although we have frequently pointed to the evident sexism and sexual harassment that were prominent in the 1960s as depicted by the TV show *Mad Men*, it would be entirely too complacent to suggest

that the culture of modern organizations has changed in such a way that sexual harassment has been eliminated. Rather, more organizations are aware of the legal liabilities that follow from improper policing of this aspect of their culture and have become much more sensitive to the realization that victims often are telling the truth and not, as used to be assumed, simply making things up. Most colleges have a policy about sexual harassment that makes it clear it should not be part of their culture, and if you find that this is not a promise that is honored in your institution, then you should immediately report it to someone who can institute organizational/cultural change.

Ethical Issue

Is it ethical for a boss to initiate a romantic relationship with an employee? Is it ethical for an employee to initiate a romantic relationship with a boss?

sexual harassment: “any unwelcome sexual advance or conduct on the job that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; any conduct of a sexual nature that makes an employee uncomfortable” (England, 2012, p. 3)

Surveillance in an Organization

Organizations have a legitimate right to expect not to be the victim of theft by their employees and vice versa. By the same token, organizations may have a right that you do not use your personal computer in the office for playing Internet games during office hours or binge watching a program on Netflix, a point of view shared by some fellow workers who otherwise feel cheated by their coworkers (Zweig & Webster, 2002). Misuse of employer resources, whether physical resources or time that is being paid for, is a serious problem. The issue comes down to a relational one because the employer’s response amounts to an invasion of personal privacy and a breach of relational trust. David Zweig (2005) explored surveillance and electronic performance monitoring and noted that these cross the basic psychological spaces and boundaries between the employer and the employee—and hence create a different type of relationship between them.

Most workers accept that it is legitimate for an organization to keep an eye on what its workers do and to carry out other practices related to ensuring the efficient completion of work. For example, it is reasonable for employers to expect that someone who is contracted to work for a certain number of hours per day at a particular place should actually do so, and that he or she should not call his or her family and have extended chats instead of working (perhaps except in the case of family emergencies). Definitely he or she should not bring in a camp bed and take a deep sleep during work time. All these things would be seen as unreasonable by coworkers.

Zweig (2005) showed that some forms of “intrusion” are regarded as acceptable, even if not desirable, within the parameters of the employer-employee relationship. Some supervision is seen as a violation of personal liberty—for example, the opening of employees’ mail or unreasonable searching of bags and clothing. Conversely, it is regarded as an acceptable part of the duties of the job that one may be timed and observed or told what to do or moved from one task to another at the will of the manager. Would you accept the same rules if your friends proposed them?

Just as in other relationships, people regard themselves as having charge of certain kinds of private information in the workplace—that is, information over which they have ownership and control (Petronio, 2002). There is a certain boundary within which people will tolerate intrusions by an employer as long as this is done with one’s express or implicit permission. When permission has not been given, a psychological and relational barrier gets crossed, and this changes the nature of the relationship between employer and worker.

Disciplinary Debate: Information Is Power, but How Much Power Should Organizations Have Over Your Private Life?



Why would you resent secret company surveillance? If your boss is looking over your shoulder and catches you writing personal e-mails

during company time, you would probably accept it as your fault. However, if the organization routinely monitors your e-mail—which it probably does, as a matter of fact—you might feel that your privacy is being invaded. Why might this be so? Reflect on nonverbal communication and consider whether there are any parallels in the situations of nonverbal violation and electronic violation.

Questions to Consider

1. Would it be OK for a company to check through all employees' purses and pockets before they left at the end of the day in case they were stealing paper clips?
2. Is it OK for a company to report customers' personal buying preferences to another company with different marketing strategies?

Friendship With the Boss

Many people in the workplace develop friendly relationships with one another when they are at the same level because it makes their work easier. However, it can create problems when one of them is promoted over the other (Zorn, 1995), assuming that friends at work are freely chosen and real. However, the expectations of friendship require the revelation of self and perhaps secrets. This may pose no threat to anyone while the two individuals remain at the same level in the hierarchy of the organization. However, if one of them is promoted to a rank higher than the other, then the information acquired during the friendship may become a source of conflict, particularly if the information leads to a negative assessment of a person's capacity to fulfill the job properly (Zorn, 1995).

In addition, the knowledge that a person is friends with the boss on a personal level can have an adverse effect on the other members of the same team. They naturally enough expect that the friends will look after one another and may even act as a team in the political arena of the organization. Workers tend to become suspicious that the boss will show favoritism toward friends, and this suspicion, of course, has an undesirable effect on morale.

Ethical Issue

Is it unethical for a boss to be friends with an employee?

Skills You Can Use: The Advantage of Being a Communication Scholar



The research literature in interpersonal communication concerning the workplace is most often biased toward hierarchies, structures, and a managerial point of view, as stated earlier. However, that approach overlooks how things actually play out in the workplace. Taking the relational perspective presented in this chapter will give you an advantage at work, and you will be able to perceive things that others might not be able to grasp.



©iStockphoto.com/Xavier Arnau

Focus Questions Revisited

1. Where do people learn about the workplace?

People's ideas about the nature of work and the workplace are obtained early in childhood through family stories and discussions with others at school or through the media, which present certain professions and jobs as more or less valuable than others and stress the importance of work as part of identity or the value of "success."

2. How might the workplace be considered a special frame?

The workplace frame is one in which instrumental goals tend to dominate over relational goals. It is also one in which formality/hierarchy is established. And, it is one in which specific types of identity work predominate and get accomplished.

3. How are organizations constituted as a "culture" of interaction and relationships between members?

The workplace may be understood as a unique culture, in which particular shared meaning systems, realities, beliefs, values, and communication styles and patterns influence and are maintained through our interactions and relationships with others. When considering workplace culture, it is important to recognize that *people* are part of, not detached from, systems that influence them. Just as was the case when talking about culture in general, then, the key to understanding workplace or organizational culture is by looking at the relationships through which it is transacted.

4. How might the workplace be explained by a relationship approach?

People have traditionally confused "organization" with physical and hierarchical structure rather than considering it as something, like families and groups, that is *transacted* in discourse. Yet, relationships are the true driving force of any organization. All your activities in the workplace occur in the context of relationships. The workplace contains many different kinds of relationships, some of which are good and some of which are bad. Whatever the case, ultimately, problems and successes in the workplace both have a relational basis.

Key Concepts

formality/hierarchy 201
industrial time 205
instrumental goals 201
professional face 202
relational goals 201
sedimentation 204
sexual harassment 209
structuration theory 204
vocational anticipatory socialization 198

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends to describe the places where they work. Do they do so in the ways we indicated in the introduction to this chapter?
2. Ask your friends to describe coworkers with whom they get along well and coworkers with whom they do not get along well. Are there any similarities among the descriptions offered?
3. What is the most interesting example that you and your friends can produce about the way in which front and back regions operate in the workplace?

Media Connections

1. Several movies and television shows depict organizations and behavior in the workplace that could help illustrate ideas presented in this chapter. Which do you believe is most accurate of such portrayals and which is the most inaccurate of such portrayals?
2. Drawing from those several movies and television programs once again, in what fictional workplace would you most like to work and why is that the case?
3. Why do you think so many movies and television shows are based on the workplace?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

11 Technology and Media in Everyday Life



AzmanL/Getty Images

Chapter Outline

[Perceptions of Technology and Media](#)

[Cave Drawings and Other Concerns](#)

[Every Technology Is Relational](#)

[Impact of Technology](#)

[The Relational Uses of Technology and Media](#)

[The Use of Technology and Media Is a Shared Relational Activity](#)

[Technology and Media Inform People About Relationships](#)

[Technology and Media Function as Alternatives to Personal Relationships](#)

[Technology and Media Are Used in Everyday Talk](#)

[Smartphones: Constructing Identities and Relationships](#)

[Constructing Identities Using Smartphones](#)

[Relating Through Smartphones](#)

[Constructing Identities and Maintaining Relationships Online](#)

[Social Networking Sites and the Construction of Identities](#)

[Online Communication and Relationships](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. How do people generally perceive technology and media?
2. What are the relational uses of technology and media?
3. How are smartphones used in the construction of identities?
4. How do smartphones influence relationships?
5. How are identities constructed online?
6. How does online communication influence relationships?

How much time each day do you think the average person spends watching television, listening to music, reading, playing video games, and using the Internet? If you base your answer on how much time you personally spend engaging in these activities, then doubling that number will provide a more accurate answer, with a recent study showing that 51.9% of students are addicted to the Internet (Pontes, Szabo, & Griffiths, 2015).

The so-called Middletown Media Studies discovered that people actually spend twice the amount of time using media than they believe they do. These studies also established that people do not use media in isolation but often use two or more media systems simultaneously, an activity referred to as concurrent media use. For example, you may be reading this book while listening to the radio or watching television. Including concurrent media use, the most media-active person observed in these studies spent more than 17 hours using media each day, and the least media-active person observed spent a bit more than 5 hours using media each day. The average amount of time spent using media daily was nearly 11 hours (Papper, Holmes, & Popovich, 2004). However, more recent research suggests that these data have been overtaken in light of the growth of use of smartphones and their value as mobile devices in all contexts, even in the classroom, where BYOD (bring your own device) is a developing educational tool (Cochrane, Antonczak, & Wagner, 2013).

Now consider how often people send text messages in a given day. Focusing only on teenagers, the median (half send more, and half send fewer) number of texts sent each day is 60, with 18% of teenagers sending more than 200 text messages daily (Lenhart, 2012). Adults send fewer texts on average than teenagers do (Smith, 2011). However, the frequency of adult texting is rising as teenagers become adults and continue their texting habits. Not surprisingly, texts are exchanged most often with people we know and with whom we have relationships. For the same reason, technology and media use at home occurs in the presence of family members, close friends, and romantic partners, whereas technology and media use outside the home often occurs with those with whom you share more social relationships, such as classmates, coworkers, and acquaintances. This just means that because we spend more time with technology and more time with close folks, the time spent on technology is more likely to be spent in the company of close folks!

This observation encourages us to take a relational perspective on technology and media, exploring the relational context for the use of technology and media, given that the predominant reason for using them in the first place is relational. Finally, we specifically examine the ways in which people construct identities and relate through two prominent technologies: smartphones and the Internet.

concurrent media use: use of two or more media systems simultaneously

By the way . . . : Early Technological Fear



Perhaps the earliest recorded instance of technological fear is attributed to Socrates. He was concerned that writing would ruin people's memories. Ironically, his concerns are remembered because Plato wrote them down.



Questions to Consider

1. Why do you suppose people tend to view emerging technologies with such fear?
2. In contrast, why do you suppose some people view emerging technologies as lifesavers?

Perceptions of Technology and Media

A person's perspective will influence how something is understood and how it is studied. Accordingly, your view of technology and media will influence how you comprehend and evaluate the information provided in this chapter. We first discuss how people traditionally view emerging technologies in general along with the roles that relationships play in the uses and understandings of technologies. We will also address whether technology and media influence people, whether it is the other way around—or a bit of both.

Cave Drawings and Other Key Concerns

When a new technology is introduced in a society, it is generally framed both as something that will save the world and as something that is intrusive and threatening. The new technology also tends to be evaluated according to standards and criteria associated with previously existing technology rather than being studied and evaluated according to its own unique standards and norms. More often than not, technological fears are more common than technological praises.

The emergence of any new communication technology has historically elicited choruses of concern and anxiety, surprisingly similar in nature. People tend to worry about the effects of emerging technologies on family, community, and, of course, children. Although no evidence exists, we imagine focus groups were developed by well-meaning cave people to examine the potentially negative impact of cave drawings on innocent and susceptible cave children.

Documented criticism of more recent technologies shows that people expressed similar fears about the printing press and the telephone. Indeed, when radio began appearing in homes in the 1920s, these fears were nearly identical to those expressed about television when it began appearing in homes during the 1950s. Comic books were going to turn children into criminals, and video games were going to rot their brains. The Internet was going to destroy society by isolating people, and Twitter was going to make people illiterate. Many of these criticisms are still being expressed, even though most have been proven wrong. In some cases, rather than isolating people, the Internet has brought them together, and Twitter has been credited with a key role in the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011 (Elbelghiti, 2016).

Every Technology Is Relational

Technologies do influence the world in which you live. Regardless of whether its influences are positive or negative, each technology changes how people communicate and interact. The one constant among all technologies, from cave drawings to Twitter or Snapchat to whatever technologies are next, is that they are inherently relational in their understanding and use: *communication* fosters *community*.

At the center of all criticism and even praise of technologies rest their influence and effect on social interaction and connections among people. This influence is probably why criticism and praise surrounding each emerging technology have sounded so similar—relationships among people have been the one constant throughout all human technological development. Adapted to accomplish and meet relational needs, all technologies have influenced how you interact and relate with others.

What social influence may be influencing the use of technology in this picture?



©Fancy/JuniperImages

Impact of Technology

Technologies do influence your world, and this influence is especially evident when it comes to relationships. However, a question arises as to whether technologies are affecting humans or humans are affecting technologies. If you ask us—and we are certainly glad that you did—the answer is both. Three primary views are associated with the impact of technology.

Technological Determinism

Technological determinism is the belief that technologies determine social structure, cultural values, and even how we think. People are essentially viewed as powerless against the force of technology. As you might gather, people viewing technologies as deterministic are the same people most likely to evaluate emerging technologies with fear and suspicion. Karl Marx laid the basis for this kind of observation when he noted the relationship between material experience and social consciousness—that is a fancy way of saying that the “stuff” that you have will influence the way in which you experience the world. For example, we have no idea of what it felt like to have no easy access to telephone communications or fast cars, but presumably the change in society that made these available to people considerably affected the way they understood the nature of distance and connection.

This point about the role of technology in framing our experience is different from the claim that company decisions about the nature and “shape” of technology may affect our lives. Jo-Elle Public might experience relationships differently when in possession of a smartphone instead of a piece of paper and a quill pen, but it is also true that the companies that research and market technology tend to make decisions about the future styles of technology whether we like it or not, as when the company might encourage us to use Cortana. The “Push” and “Tracking” services used by large companies tend to influence our decisions and our lives. Although we need to be aware of these factors in our social lives, we are more concerned here with the uses of technology and their impact on relational experience.

Somewhat related to technological determinism is the belief that people are powerless against media content. Taken to the extreme, whatever is shown on television, for instance, will have the intended impact of producers and affect everyone in the audience in the exact same manner. Of course, people are not passive consumers of media. Rather, they actively interpret and evaluate media in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. Rachid Elbelghiti (2016) noted, for example, that the “Arab Spring” of 2011 failed to take much hold in Morocco because high illiteracy and poverty rates meant that few citizens had access to social media, so the message of optimistic revolution was less easily spread there.

technological determinism: belief that technologies determine social structure, cultural values, and even how people think (compare with *social shaping of technology* and *social construction of technology*)

Social Construction of Technology

Social construction of technology (SCOT) is the belief that people determine the development of technology and ultimately determine social structure and cultural value. The social constructionist view of technology reminds us that many factors are involved in the development and emergence of technologies beyond the technology itself (Bijker, Hughes, & Pinch, 1987). These factors include human innovation and creativity, economics, government regulation, and characteristics of users of technology.

We can use radio as an extended example when looking at the ways in which these human factors influence the emergence of technologies in society. Radio was created through the innovation and creativity of Guglielmo Marconi, based on the earlier electromagnetic work of Nikola Tesla. However, radio really took hold after November 1920 when promoted by Westinghouse—a radio set manufacturer interested in selling more sets! The government got involved via the Radio Act of 1927 to establish more control over licensing and then the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was created in 1934 to “ensure decency” on the airwaves. Ultimately,

however, actual users exert tremendous influence on the development of any technology, their preferences determining its use, development, and place within society. In the case of radio, users influenced such factors as where it would be used and thus be made available (home, automobile, and outdoors), along with establishing the relative popularity of different types of content that should be offered by broadcasters in pursuit of larger audiences.

Social Shaping of Technology

Social shaping of technology (SST) is the belief that both people and technologies exert influence on social structure and cultural values. Many factors determine the development, popularity, or adoption of technologies, including characteristics of the technology itself (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1985). We can use the development of smartphones as an example. People may ultimately determine what to do with a smartphone but once they saw the possibility of using apps to replace calendars, mirrors, GPS, shopping list, address books, cameras, or computer terminals, people exerted strong consumer influence on the development of smartphones toward those abilities (<http://www.businessinsider.com/11-things-the-iphone-has-made-obsolete-2015-11>; <http://www.buzzfeed.com/jeffrubin/30-things-you-no-longer-need-because-of-smartphones#.xw8j5MWGv>).

So, social shaping of technology views both humans and technology as responsible for what happens in the world. This perspective influenced research conducted by David (McMahan & Chesebro, 2003) concerning political structure and primary technologies of all the world's nation-states. It was discovered that a nation-state's primary technology influences its political system and any political transformation that may take place. For instance, orality is more likely to support certain political systems, with literacy, electronic, and digital systems more likely to support other types.

At the same time, humans (especially governments) exert influence on technologies and society through such factors as innovation and creativity, economics, regulation, and the actual use of technology, encouraging some uses and not others. Although governments may like to include speed record in all funds to determine whether you exceed the limit when driving, for example, people are likely to resist this use of smartphones.

social construction of technology (SCOT): belief that people determine the development of technology and ultimately determine social structure and cultural value (compare with *social shaping of technology* and *technological determinism*)

social shaping of technology (SST): belief that both people and technologies exert influence on social structure and cultural values (compare with *social construction of technology* and *technological determinism*)

Ultimately, both technology and humans influence the developments of societal systems, ways of thinking, and ways of relating.

Do you think using the Internet as a family will become a shared media experience like watching television as a family?



©iStockphoto.com/monkeybusinessimages

The Relational Uses of Technology and Media

Individuals do not use technology and media as solitary beings. Rather, *people* use technology and media as *relators*. It might sound like we are getting too technical or abstract. However, we make that distinction for a very specific reason. Your use of technology is most often done with relationships in mind. Accordingly, a relational context is the most valuable way to understand technology and media in everyday life. In this section, we talk about their various relational uses.

The Use of Technology and Media Is a Shared Relational Activity

People often use technology and media for specific relational reasons. Most technologies—especially digital and electronic technologies—enable interaction to take place and quite frequently are the actual basis for interaction, whether by text, Skype, or Yik Yak.

Especially when people are not at the same location, a sense of connection is created through shared experience with technology and media. In the case of television, sometimes millions of people are watching the same material as you, frequently at the exact same time. This sense of connection is being enhanced through the growing number of people texting and chatting with others online while watching the same television program (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012).

The use of technology and media as a shared relational activity enables people to accomplish certain relational needs ([Table 11.1](#)).

Technology and Media Inform People About Relationships

People base their understanding of relationships and their actions within relationships partly on media representations. Books, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, movies, songs, and television programs feature both fictional and real social and personal relationships. Of course, a variety of sources inform your understanding of relationships, and you can compare the information you gain from one source with the information you gain from other sources as you develop your own understanding of relationships. However, that is not just information about content that is important, and Georg Simmel (1950) observed that by access to such information people establish reference points for their own relationships and establish some kind of understanding about whether they are obtaining from their relationships as much as they “should.”

Table 11.1 Relational Needs and the Shared Use of Technology and Media

Promoting Interaction

Technology and media enable interactions to take place. Even in technology- and media-rich households with multiple television sets, computers, and other technology and media systems, families often use technology and consume media together, which provides an opportunity for interactions to occur. Walter Gantz (2013), for example, found that sports are often viewed on TV with others, and watching sports is an activity that can maintain and enhance existing relationships.

Withdrawing From Interactions

Technology and media also allow people to withdraw from social interaction. Texting and accessing materials using smartphones and tablets allow people to disengage from others when desired. People sometimes even pretend to use their smartphones to avoid interactions (Baron & Campbell, 2012).

Differentiating Relationships

The shared use of technology and media has even been shown to distinguish particular relationships from others. Nearly 40 years ago, it was discovered that watching television was the most frequent activity shared by spouses—it even outranked sex (Argyle & Furnham, 1982)! More recently, Laura Padilla-Walker, Sarah Coyne, and Ashley Fraser (2012) found that smartphones and watching television and movies to be among the most common media shared by families.

Enacting and Evaluating Roles

The shared use of technology and media also enables people to establish and enact specific relational roles, expectations, and boundaries. For instance, relational boundaries must be evaluated when parents and children “friend” one another on Facebook (Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012).

Media Representations Inform About How Relationships Should Look

Media representations of relationships provide information about relational roles. Essentially, people can learn about what relationships look like and what to expect from them based on media depictions; in particular (Simmel, 1950) they learn what other people do in relationships or what they have as relationship goals and achievements. All those Cosmo quizzes really tell you what you “should” expect from relationships—even if you hadn’t thought of doing it for yourself!

Relationships depicted on television and through other technologies are not always realistic, however. People have the ability to compare media depictions of relationships with relationships observed or enacted in their physical lives, but media representations of relationships may nevertheless create unrealistic expectations and beliefs about how relationships should look (e.g., Osborn, 2012).

Further, relationships depicted in media do not always look like those that audiences personally experience. Multiple races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic categories, and relationship configurations are underrepresented in television and in all media (<http://phys.org/news/2015-02-women-minorities-underrepresented-actors-directors.html>). Even though media portrayals of relationships are often less than realistic, people may tend to believe that those relationships are normal and that their relationships should be compared with those in media. Thus, the media depictions of relationships can inadvertently set your own goals and expectations for relational outcomes and give you criteria for assessing your own “success” in them.

Make your case: Positive and Negative Influences



Although there is often resistance to new technology on the grounds that it will destroy society and these ideas are too often overstated, there are nevertheless several negative impacts (DeLoatch, 2015): (1) Technology changes the way children think and reduces their ability to remember; (2) technology changes the way children feel and reduces their sense of well-being; (3) technology put safety and privacy at risk; (4) technology reduces physical activity and overuse leads to obesity.

Questions to Consider

Consider these points and make a list of arguments for and against the value of technology:

1. After making your arguments, which position do you support the most, and why?
2. Which position do you support the least, and why?

Ethical Issue

Do you believe that producers of such media products as television programs have an ethical obligation to combat the underrepresentation of certain groups in media content?

Media Representations Inform About How to Behave in Relationships

Media representations also inform people about behaviors and interactions within relationships. These depictions provide models of behavior that inform people about how to engage in relationships. This use of media encompasses the socialization impact of media.

Like relational roles, however, media portrayals of relationship interactions and behaviors may not always mirror those in people's lives. Family life on television, for instance, has historically and consistently been portrayed as quite positive (e.g., Bryant, Aust, Bryant, & Venugopalan, 2001). Actual family life is not always positive and may be quite violent, yet unrealistic media depictions may create unrealistic expectations about relationship behavior (Duck, 2011).

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Media Depictions of College

Before coming to college, most of what you knew about the experience probably came from media depictions. You probably found some depictions of college life more accurate than others.



©iStockphoto.com/Thinkstock

Questions to Consider

1. What are the differences between what you now know about college and what you thought you knew based on media portrayals?
2. Have you had any difficulty managing expectations about college versus the realities?
3. What advice would you give to an incoming freshman?

socialization impact of media: depictions of relationships in media provide models of behavior that inform people about how to engage in relationships

Technology and Media Function as Alternatives to Personal Relationships

Technology and media provide many of the same uses and benefits as personal relationships. Needs and desires satisfied by personal relationships, such as companionship, information, support, control, intimacy, and entertainment, can be gained through media.

Notice that the header for this section of the chapter labels technology and media as *alternatives* to rather than *substitutions* or *compensations* for personal relationships. People do not necessarily turn to technology and media to compensate for a lack of companionship. Rather, technology and media use have been found to enrich already satisfied social and personal lives (Perse & Butler, 2005). Furthermore, such words as *substitution* imply an inferior entity is filling in or taking the place of a superior reality, but that is not how everyone experiences it.

Companionship and Relational Satisfaction From the Actual Use of Technology and Media

The relational and social satisfaction derived through technology and media comes partly from their use and position within the home. Some people may prefer the companionship provided by technology to that provided by those in their social network. Certainly, on some occasions people would rather browse the web, listen to music, or watch a movie than be with other people.

The use of technology and media can actually provide the same amount of relational satisfaction, if not more, than engaging in a personal relationship. Jonathan Cohen and Miriam Metzger (1998) previously observed that many motives for using technology and media correspond with motives for engaging in personal relationships. These authors specifically compared social and relational needs surrounding feelings of security, such as intimacy, accessibility, control, and relaxation. In all instances but intimacy, media seem to have the advantage.

Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass (2002) discovered that people interact with technology using the same basic patterns of interaction used with other humans. The media equation maintains that interactions with technology are the same as interactions with other people, and people use the same social rules and expectations when interacting with both. You interact with your computer and other technologies as if they are actual persons. Okay: Reality time! Have you ever cursed at your computer or urged it to “hurry up”?

When they first hear about the media equation, many people deny that they treat technology similarly to people. Yet, why, just as some people seem more trustworthy than others, are some GPS voices perceived to be more trustworthy than others (Verberne, Ham, & Midden, 2012)? Perhaps the digital “voice” of some automobiles sounds more confident than that of others. It may not be so inconceivable that your interactions with technology mirror your interactions with other people, especially given the interactive nature of more recent technological innovations.

A number of studies have been conducted in support of the media equation. [Table 11.2](#) provides three of Reeves and Nass’s (2002) initial findings.

media equation: people use the same social rules and expectations when interacting with technology as they do with other people

parasocial relationships: “relationships” established with media characters and personalities

Companionship and Relational Satisfaction From Parasocial Relationships

Although technologies themselves can assist satisfaction of relational needs, when these needs are met through relationships established with media characters and personalities, they are known as parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956). As illustrated by the findings presented in [Table 11.3](#), relationships that people form with media characters and personalities have proved just as real and meaningful as those within their physical

social networks. People consider and treat media characters and personalities just like they do family and friends, paralleling relationships in physical social networks.

Table 11.2 Media Equation Research Findings

Personality

When it comes to being dominant or submissive, people generally prefer to be around and interact with people who are similar to them rather than people who are different. It turns out people can not only perceive computers as having dominant or submissive personalities, through prompts and other means, but also prefer computers whose “personalities” are similar to their own.

Flattery

People like other people who compliment them, and the same evaluative response holds true for computers. People, it was discovered, like computers that offer them praise more than computers that offer no evaluation.

Politeness

When someone asks for your feedback on a completed project or performance on a task, you generally provide a positive response. If someone else asked you about that person’s performance, your response may be more negative than if that person asked you directly. Not necessarily deceitful, you are just not being as negative as you could be because you do not want to hurt a person’s feelings. The same patterns of interaction were found to take place with computers. When asked to evaluate a computer while using the same computer to type their responses, people responded much more positively than when typing their responses on a different computer.

SOURCE: Reeves, B., & Nass, C. (2002). *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places*. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.

Source: Reeves, B., & Nass, C. (2002). *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places*. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.

Table 11.3 Parasocial Relationships Research Findings

- Similar to other relationships, people are often attracted to media characters and personalities with whom they perceive a certain degree of similarity (Turner, 1993).
- People use similar cognitive processes when developing parasocial relationships and other relationships (Perse & Rubin, 1989).
- People follow the same attachment styles used in physical relationships in their other relationships (Cole & Leets, 1999).
- Tweeting increasingly enables public figures to establish both parasocial and social relationships with followers (Frederick, Lim, Clavio, Pedersen, & Burch, 2012).
- Parasocial and other relationships provide similar levels of satisfaction (Kanazawa, 2002).
- As with face-to-face contact, parasocial contact has been shown to lower levels of prejudice (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005).
- Parasocial relationships are measured using similar criteria to those used to evaluate other relationships (Koenig & Lessan, 1985).
- Parasocial relationships influence the body images of both men and women (Young, Gabriel, & Hollar, 2013; Young, Gabriel, & Sechrist, 2012).
- Parasocial relationships and relationships with people in physical social networks have been found to follow similar patterns of development, maintenance, and dissolution. When parasocial relationships end (e.g., when a television character “dies”), people experience this loss in much the same manner as they do losing a close friend (Cohen, 2003).

As with the media equation, when first learning about parasocial relationships, students often consider the concept a bit outrageous and claim they do not form such relationships. Students think of these relationships like stalkers or those who are obsessed with particular characters or media personalities. However, parasocial relationships are actually more common than you would expect and much less negative. We bet that you have formed parasocial relationships with media characters and, at a minimum, thought of and talked about fictional characters as if they were actual people.

By the way . . . : Love and Sex With Robots



People’s relationships with technology may become especially close in the relatively near future. David Levy (2007) convincingly argues in the book *Love and Sex With Robots* that by the year 2050 “robots will be hugely attractive to humans as companions because of their many talents, senses, and capabilities. They will have the capacity to fall in love with humans and to make themselves romantically attractive and sexually desirable to humans” (p. 22).

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe that this will be the case in the year 2050?
2. What might be some social drawbacks to your having a robot as a romantic partner?

Technology and Media Are Used in Everyday Talk

Technology and media frequently provide the basis for conversation in social and personal relationships. Reports have indicated that anywhere from 10.5% to half of all conversations involve media content to some extent (Alberts, Yoshimura, Rabby, & Loschiavo, 2005). Even using a conservative estimate, these numbers position technology and media as among the most frequent topics—if not the most frequent topic—of conversation among people.

Technology and Media Provide a General Topic of Conversation

Technology and media have long been recognized as providing people with a general topic of conversation (Lazarsfeld, 1940). Much like discussing the weather, the topic of media enables people to establish a shared topic of discussion that in many cases will not lead to a heated disagreement and plays a social and relational role. Yet, even when media simply appear to provide a topic of conversation, important social and relational *work* takes place, and other functions of technology and media talk discussed here are ultimately accomplished.

Talk About Technology and Media Affects Their Value and Understanding

Talking about technology and media significantly affects the meanings derived from them as well as emotional responses and attitudes. You may have previously discussed with others the value of certain types of technology and media. For instance, you and a friend may have discussed the release of a new smartphone or a great website that one of you discovered. Although not always immediately recognized as doing so, such discussions have likely influenced your use and understanding of technology and media, for example, by influencing your decisions about whether to purchase a particular item (Duck, 2011).

Talk about such media content as a song, a movie, or an online video often results in new understandings of those products. An example is discussing a particular newsfeed with friends at work or school. Such discussions of media products can clarify the meanings attached, alter convictions about their significance, and adjust levels of appreciation. Increasingly, such discussions are taking place through texting or online discussions (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012).

Talk About Technology and Media Affects Their Dissemination and Influence

Discussions of technology and media aid in the dissemination (spread) of their use and messages. The use of technology spreads through word of mouth (WOM) among friends more than through any other means. When you learned of the most recent digital tablet, smartphone, gaming system, or other technological product, chances are that information from someone you know was more influential than was an advertisement by the manufacturer (see Kawakami, Kishiya, & Parry, 2013).

Media content also spreads through interactions with others. Even when someone has not watched a TV or Netflix show, discussing it with others can still spread the information contained within the program or site, for example alerting you to the latest *Game of Thrones* trailer. You may not have caught a recent video online, but when friends who have watched the video tell you about it, the content of that video has nevertheless been spread to you. Especially with online content and podcasts, these conversations may lead to personal viewing or co-viewing (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). Media information is being spread, and relational connections are being enhanced at the same time.

The influence of media content may also be enhanced through discussion with others (Kam & Lee, 2012). Because of the issues of trust and concern inherent in close relationships, information gained from media but conveyed through a friend, a family member, or another close relationship is more reliable than is information

received directly from an advertiser. A newsfeed about the dangers of texting while driving, for instance, may not convince you to stop this dangerous and completely stupid behavior. However, a friend may pass along the information to you and because this information comes from someone with whom you share a close personal relationship, you may view it as more meaningful than if it came to you from another source.

Talk About Technology and Media Promotes the Development of Media Literacy

Media literacy is the ability to access, interpret, and evaluate media products. Discussion of media content affects people's understanding and evaluation of this material, as well as their comprehension of its production and influence. Talking about media with those with whom you share close relationships significantly influences your development of media literacy.

media literacy: the learned ability to access, interpret, and evaluate media products

Communication regarding the use and interpretation of media often occurs among family members (see Davies & Gentile, 2012). Parents, for instance, influence children's television literacy both indirectly and directly (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000). *Indirect influences* include children's modeling of viewing behaviors exhibited by their parents. *Direct influences* include rule making and actively controlling children's interpretations of television content through communication about observations on television.

Of course, the promotion of media literacy through discussions of media is not limited to those occurring among family members (Geiger, Bruning, & Harwood, 2001). Much media literacy and the ability to critically evaluate media products have developed from interactions with friends, classmates, coworkers, romantic partners, and others with whom you share a relationship.

Talk About Technology and Media Influences Identification and Relationship Development

Talking about technology and media enables people to recognize and promote shared interests, understanding, and beliefs, while highlighting differences among people. Perceptions derived from conversations about technology and media are fundamental in the evaluation of others and play a strong role in the development of relationships.

For example, a discussion with someone about movies may promote feelings of similarity. These discussions are influential because they allow people to recognize shared media experiences as well as shared understanding of those experiences. At the same time, feelings of division or separation with someone can develop if there exists little or no overlap of such experiences or understanding of these experiences.

Of course, discussions of media content can uncover areas of similarity and difference beyond actual media use and evaluation. For example, discussing a blog entry can lead to the realization that you share certain political views with someone else. Talking with a romantic partner about a romance portrayed in a movie can provide a sense of how that person views relationships and whether you share such views. The topics included in media are essentially limitless, and so too are the areas of similarity and difference that can be explored through their discussion.

Talk About Technology and Media Enables Identity Construction

Technology and media that you use and enjoy are a significant part of who you are as an individual and play a major role in informing people of your identity. Discussions of technology and media allow people to enact identities related to technology use and media preferences, which are just as meaningful as other identities (McMahan, 2004). For instance, someone may be a fan of a particular television program or Internet site. These

discussions can provide a sense of voice and empowerment (Jewkes, 2002), while serving a vital role in the modeling of multiple types of identities, such as age and gender (Aasebo, 2005). Such discussions have also been found to enact professional and workplace identities (Stein, Galliers, & Markus, 2013).

Your technology and media profile, a compilation of your technology and media preferences and general use of technology and media, informs others about your personal identity. David, for instance, loves watching television. He has numerous favorite shows, with *The Andy Griffith Show* at the top of the list. He enjoys most music and especially likes blues, classic soul, alternative music from the 1980s and 1990s, and anything by Eric Clapton and Prince. Thanks to Steve's introduction, David also enjoys listening to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams but does not care much for Symphony No. 7. His favorite movie of all time, *The Blues Brothers*, is probably responsible for his initial interest in and enjoyment of blues and soul music. He rarely plays video games but tends to do well when he does play them. He never reads fiction (except for the Jack Reacher series by Lee Child, introduced to him by his friend, Julia) but is a voracious reader of history, newspapers, and academic literature. His Internet use is primarily dedicated to news sites along with watching television programs and listening to music. He prides himself on having had a Facebook account and a Twitter account before most people had even heard of the sites. Paradoxically, he rarely uses them.

What does David's technology media profile inform you about him? What does it tell you about who he is as a person, where and when he grew up, his past experiences, and his additional interests and preferences, along with the beliefs, attitudes, and values he might hold? You might also pause to ponder what the emphasis on these categories tells us about the marketing wishes of the owners of the relevant websites. How do they profit by asking us to define ourselves in terms of musical and technological preferences?

technology and media profile: a compilation of your technology and media preferences and general use of technology and media; informs others about who you are as a person or at least the persona you are trying to project

Smartphones: Constructing Identities and Relationships

Having discussed technology and media in general to this point, we want to focus on two technologies that are extremely prevalent in society. We first examine smartphones and then turn our attention to the Internet, especially social networking sites. Specifically, we will explore the use of smartphones and the Internet in the construction of identities and their use in the development and maintenance of relationships.

Table 11.4 Creating Your Technology and Media Profile

1. Do you like watching television? If so, what are some of your favorite programs?
 2. Do you like listening to music? If so, what are some of your favorite artists and songs?
 3. Do you like watching movies? If so, what are some of your favorite movies?
 4. Do you like to read? If so, what are some of your favorite books, newspapers, and magazines?
 5. Do you like playing video games? If so, what are some of your favorite games?
 6. Do you like using the Internet? If so, what are some of the sites you visit most often?
 7. What television programs, music, movies, print material, video games, and Internet sites do you dislike?
 8. Do you access television programs, music, movies, and books/newspapers/magazines through the Internet or your smartphone?
 9. How often do you use e-mail? To whom are you most likely to send an e-mail message?
 10. How often do you use your smartphone to call or text someone? To whom are you most likely to contact through voice or text?
 11. Do you use a social networking site? If so, what are your primary reasons for using it, and how often do you use it?
-


Constructing Identities Using Smartphones

Smartphones do not merely connect you with other people or provide you with information, music, and video. Personal and relational identities are created and maintained through your *use* of them. We view smartphones, along with iPods, tablets, and other such devices, as relational technologies to emphasize the relational functions and implications of their use in society and within specific groups.

The Meaning of Relational Technology

Identities constructed through relational technologies are based partly on what it means for specific groups to use them. For instance, some groups view the smartphone less as a device to contact others and more as a means of displaying social status and membership (Suki, 2013). Perceiving and using technology in a manner consistent with these groups assists in establishing membership into these groups and developing particular identities.

Communication + You: Your Own Profile



Create your own technology and media profile, using the questions listed in [Table 11.4](#) as a guide.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think your technology and media profile would tell people about you?
2. Do you discuss aspects of your technology and media use and preferences with some people and not others? If so, why do you think this is the case?

Relational Technology and Generations

A major influence on people's perceptions and use of technology is the generation in which they were born. Looking specifically at such technologies as print and television, communication scholars Gary Gumpert and Robert Cathcart (1985) were the first to suggest that the traditional notion of separating generations according to time can be replaced by separating generations according to technology and media experience.

What separates generations is not just the chronological era in which they were born but also the technology that encompasses their world. Technology and media generations are differentiated by unique technology grammar and consciousness based on the technological and media environment in which they were born. Accordingly, members of different technology and media generations view the use of certain technology and media differently. For example, if you were born into a generation that does not know a time when smartphones were not used, you perceive their use differently than does someone born before the introduction of smartphones, and vice versa.

relational technologies: such technologies as smartphones, iPods, and Twitter, whose use has relational functions and implications in society and within specific groups

technology and media generations: those differentiated by unique technology grammar and consciousness based on the technological and media environment in which they are born

Relational Technology and Social Networks

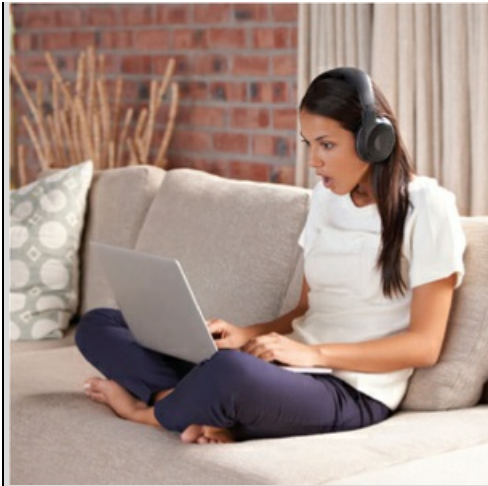
Your social network is an equally powerful force in guiding perceptions and use of technology. Although generational influence is largely determined by the *availability* of technology, the influence of social networks on your use and perceptions of technology is determined by the actual *use and incorporation* of technology and the social meanings that subsequently develop.

Friends, family, classmates, coworkers, and others with whom you share a particular relationship direct and shape your assumptions about the value of technology and what its use represents both relationally and personally. Smartphone adoption is often shared among members of a social network. Likewise, your use of relational technologies and your attitude toward them are likely to mirror those of your friends and other members of your social network (see Archambault, 2013).

Skills You Can Use: Medium and Appropriateness



The medium through which you contact someone can make a difference in his or her perception of your message. The purpose of your message and the technological preferences of the person you are contacting will determine the appropriateness of face-to-face, telephone, or online communication. Think what impression you would form if someone sent you a letter on fine paper written with a quill pen.



©iStockphoto.com/Peopleimages

Technological Products and Service Providers

In addition to adoption and incorporation of relational technologies, identities are created through the use of specific products and services. Specific meanings are associated with the use of particular products and service providers within a social system.

Smartphones and other relational technologies are symbolically connected to certain lifestyles, activities, or media personalities. The use of these devices allows people to associate themselves with accompanying perspectives and attitudes. One study (Lobet-Maris, 2003) found that, when purchasing a smartphone, young people are influenced less by quality or available features and more by the images or personas associated with that particular phone. Through both consumer adoption and manufacturer advertising, phones and other relational technologies may be associated with hipsters, youth, elderly, or other groups.

The service provider may even be associated with particular groups or issues. Individuals in the study just mentioned linked smartphone networks with humanitarianism, professionalism, and family. Thus, the use of specific networks may enable people to feel associated with groups sharing preferred values.

Ringtones

Ringtones and other notifications do not simply inform someone of an incoming call or message; they can be viewed as a method of identity construction (see Pfleging, Alt, & Schmidt, 2012). People frequently select favorite music or dialogue from television programs or movies. Using these media products as ringtones announces your media preferences to others and underscores their importance in your life. Other ringtones are humorous or simply unique in some way. The selection of ringtones is meaningful and is based largely on how a person wants to be perceived by others.

Of course, some people tend to keep their smartphone set on silent or vibrate rather than an audible ringtone. This decision could be an indication that the person does not desire to draw attention to his or her use of the technology. It could also indicate that the person does not want to be socially compelled to answer, which provides greater choice in social contexts. Indeed the whole concept of phone etiquette has become quite sophisticated in the last 10 years (Daum, 2013) and is not just personal but also relational, influenced by how a person wishes to be perceived by others.

Performance of Relational Technology

Finally, the use of relational technologies can be considered a performance through which identities are

constructed. The proper use or performance of technology has been established socially and will likely change over time. However, behaviors are judged according to present norms and prevailing expectations. Violating social standards associated with the use of technology often leads to negative responses and evaluations by others (Miller-Ott, Kelly, & Duran, 2012).

The appropriate use of technology is often determined by location and occasion. You know that there are numerous locations and occasions where the use of technology may be deemed socially unacceptable. For instance, the use of relational technology is usually discouraged in the classroom. Your instructors may ban the use of smartphones in the classroom, but they are not the only ones who disapprove. Other students consider smartphones ringing or vibrating during class to be just as distracting and annoying as faculty do (Saskia et al., 2013).

Relating Through Smartphones

Relationships and changes in technology can be seen as both relatively simple and more complex. In a very basic way, changes in technology simply allow people to achieve relatively stable relational goals in new ways. For instance, people exchange birthday greetings through sending e-cards rather than sending a traditional card through the postal service. From a more advanced view, technological transformations also change what can be accomplished, creating new relational goals and norms.

Smartphones are changing how people communicate and form relationships with others, as well as altering established relational goals and norms. In what follows, we examine the impact of smartphones on interactions among people.

Constant Connection and Availability

Smartphones position people as being constantly connected and constantly available to others. If you have your smartphone with you, you have your social network with you as well. The ability to make instant contact with another person regardless of geographic location creates a symbolic connection unlike that created by any previous communication technology, and it means that you have telemarketers with you wherever you go! How comforting is that thought!

This constant connection has led people to make contact with others more often than ever before. Sometimes the content of these messages is less important than the contact itself. Such instances are similar to how seemingly mundane everyday talk keeps relationships going without necessarily adding much of substance. Connecting with another person reestablishes the existence and importance of the relationship, confirming for both parties its existence and value in their lives.

New relational expectations have also developed because of this constant availability. For instance, when you text someone or call a smartphone, you have an expectation of an immediate response. No response, or that a response does not occur in a timely manner, can constitute a violation in the relationship (Ling, 2004). Constant availability has also influenced how relationships develop, are maintained, and dissolve, especially among teenagers and younger adults (Bergdall et al., 2012).

Boundaries and Closeness

Smartphones have come to represent constant connection to those who possess your smartphone number, and how freely people give out that number varies. Giving or denying someone access to your smartphone number establishes both the *boundaries* and the *degree of closeness* desired and expected within the relationship. Limiting the availability of contact with a person establishes specific relational boundaries. How that person views and evaluates such limits depends on your relationship. Refusing to provide a number to a friend may be viewed negatively; physicians not providing clients with their personal numbers may be viewed as legitimate (Wong, Tan, & Drossman, 2010).

Providing another person with your number suggests a desire for connection with that individual and perhaps an indication of the type of relationship you want to establish. For instance, making your number available to an acquaintance could imply a desire to develop a closer type of relationship. As mentioned earlier, the evaluation and the meaning of this action generally depend on your relationship with the other person.

Shared Experience

We can discuss shared experience derived from the use of smartphones in two ways. First, the use of smartphones constitutes shared technological experience, as was discussed earlier. More than simply transmitting information, the act of sending and receiving text messages both announces and establishes shared membership and acceptance

into a group.

Smartphones also enable people to engage in shared experience even when physically separated. The immediate transmission of voice, picture, sound, and video provides people with the sense of experiencing an event or occasion together.

Social Coordination

One of the greatest relational consequences of the smartphone encompasses its use in coordinating physical encounters with others. Face-to-face interactions are frequently created and synchronized using smartphones. Coordination of physical encounters can be accomplished through phone calls and text messages as well as through location-sharing applications (Patil, Norcie, Kapadia, & Lee, 2012).

Smartphones enable people to synchronize their activities to the point of microcoordination. Making plans to meet someone previously involved establishing a fixed time and physical location for the interaction to occur, but the massive adoption of smartphones has resulted in time and physical location for contact becoming increasingly fluid. *Microcoordination* refers to the unique management of social interaction made possible through smartphones. Rich Ling (2004) has observed three varieties of microcoordination: (1) midcourse adjustment, (2) iterative coordination, and (3) softening of schedules (see [Table 11.5](#)).

Ethical Issue

Do you believe physicians have an ethical obligation to provide their smartphone numbers to their patients?

microcoordination: the unique management of social interaction made possible through smartphones

Table 11.5 Ling's Three Varieties of Microcoordination

Midcourse Adjustment	Involves changing plans once a person has already set out for the encounter—for example, contacting the other person to change locations or to request that he or she pick up someone else on the way.
Iterative Coordination	Involves the progressive refining of an encounter. Smartphones have made actually establishing location and time unnecessary. Instead, people increasingly plan to meet without specifying an exact time or location. For instance, friends may agree to meet sometime tomorrow. As a result of progressive calls or messages, they eventually “zoom in on each other” (p. 72).
Softening of Schedules	Involves adjusting a previously scheduled time. If you planned to meet a friend for coffee at 3:30 p.m. but a meeting with your advisor took longer than expected and you are running late, smartphones make it much easier to reach your friend and inform him or her of the delay.

SOURCE: Ling (2004).
Source: Ling (2004).

Constructing Identities and Maintaining Relationships Online

Having discussed the influence of smartphones on the construction of identities and on relationships, we now turn our attention to online communication. Internet use is transforming knowledge, realities, commerce, politics, education, and essentially all aspects of everyday life (see Chesebro, McMahan, & Russett, 2014).

In what ways could the use of a smartphone create shared experiences?



©iStockphoto.com/Tassii

Even though there are a number of areas to investigate, we specifically examine the online construction of identities and maintenance of relationships. These are intriguing topics and are fundamental to many of the other changes taking place.

Social Networking Sites and the Construction of Identities

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are generally promoted for their social or relational benefits. However, they also happen to be locations where many of the transformations listed earlier are taking place.

We examine the use of social networking sites relative to relationships later in the chapter. Now, we want to explore an aspect of social networking sites that people may tend to overlook: They have become important tools in the construction of identities.

Friends

The list of connections on a person's social networking site profile is an important tool in the construction of identities. For instance, others can use the number of friends listed on a social networking site when they make social judgments about the user. People with a large number of friends are often perceived to be outgoing and socially connected (Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008). However, there is a point at which an excessive number of friends actually diminishes a person's appearance as socially connected (Zwier, Araujo, Boukes, & Willemsen, 2011). When someone lists 10,000 friends, others begin to wonder just how legitimate that list and those friendships actually are!

Appearance is another way in which friends influence the identity construction of users. It has been discovered that the physical attractiveness of friends influences perceptions of the user's physical and social attractiveness (Jaschinski & Kommers, 2012). Essentially, people with good-looking friends are more likely to be perceived as good looking. People with not very attractive friends are more likely to be perceived as less attractive. Quick! Check your friends list! Make sure you come back when you are done, though. As always, we will be here waiting on you.

This next item does not require you to give immediate attention to your social networking site profile. However, you may want to examine the posts left by your friends, regardless of their level of physical attractiveness. The same study mentioned earlier (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008), discovered that socially complimentary or positive posts left by friends can improve perceptions of a user's social attractiveness and credibility. Likewise, it is smart these days to make every effort to clean up your "digital dirt" and remove those posts that looked so funny at the time (when you are young and irresponsible and possibly even drunk) but which now could be found by potential employer who wouldn't see you as a reliable and responsible employee).


What activities are related to identity construction on social networking sites such as Facebook?




©iStockphoto.com/TrevorSmith

Gender differences appear when it comes to posts left by others, however. Female users were judged positively when friends left socially positive comments and were judged negatively when friends left socially negative comments. Male users, on the other hand, were actually judged positively when friends left comments about drinking, promiscuous behavior, and similar morally questionable behavior.

By the way . . . : The Future of Social Networking Sites



The number of adults in the United States using social networking sites reached 50% in 2011. When data were first gathered 6 years earlier, only 5% of adults in the United States reported using social networking sites. By the time adults finally reached 50%, teenagers in the United States were already at 76%. When the Internet-using population is specifically examined, the percentages of social networking site users increase to 65% of adults and 80% of teenagers (Lenhart et al., 2011), a proportion that continues to increase (Baym, 2015).



©iStockphoto.com/hocus-focus

Questions to Consider

1. What percentages of the population do you believe will be using social networking sites in 10 years?
2. What percentages of the population do you believe will be using social networking sites in 20 years?

Photographs

The display of photographs on the pages of social networking site users is another tool in the construction of identities. One study (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009) discovered that the majority of users indicate that these photographs help them express who they are to other users. Furthermore, users tend to be very selective about the photographs that are posted online.

The selection of photographs is frequently based on which ones are the most physically flattering. Likewise, dissatisfaction with their personal appearance is the primary reason users give for “untagging” themselves in photographs of other users.

Another reason for untagging themselves in photographs is when they are shown engaging in morally questionable activities. Ironically, given the earlier discussion about friends’ posts, male users are more likely than female users to cite being engaged in such activities as a reason for untagging themselves.

Media Preferences

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, technology and media preferences are frequently a basis for identity construction. In addition to the development of identities through talk, technology, and media, identities can be constructed through social networking sites.

Many social networking sites encourage users to list favorite media. Technology and media are also topics included in posts, and users have the opportunity to “like” certain technology or media products on Facebook. Of course, the corporations owning social media usually also sell other kinds of media that they encourage people to use in defining themselves on their profiles—such as music, movies, and books.

Media preferences, in particular, have been found to be an even more important aspect of identity for social networking site users than such “classic identity markers” as gender, political view, hometown, relationship status, and other categories frequently listed on a user’s profile (Appel, Gerlach, & Crusius, 2016).

Strategic

Identity construction on social networking sites tends to be quite strategic. Research indicates that users put thought into their comments and profiles (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2016). This is possible because, compared with face-to-face communication, online communication in general provides more time for people to develop their thoughts and actions.

As discussed earlier, people tend to carefully consider the photographs posted on their sites and consider whether to remain tagged in the photographs of others. Beyond photographs, all comments and activities on social networking sites can be used in the construction of identities and may be given a great deal of attention. It is not surprising to find that people believe they are better able to convey their identities online than off-line (Appel et al., 2016).

Ethical Issue

- Students have been suspended from some schools for content on social networking sites. Should schools be allowed to suspend students for this content? Would your assessment change depending on whether the content did or did not pertain to school-

related issues, activities, or people?

- Employers have based hiring decisions on social networking site content. Do you believe these actions are justified? In what ways do employers using social networking sites for the evaluation of job candidates compare and contrast with school officials using these sites for student discipline?

Public Disclosure

The *good news* about social networking sites is that they provide an opportunity for a great deal of self-disclosure. The *bad news* about social networking sites is that they provide an opportunity for a great deal of self-disclosure. We do not care how much you restrict access to your profile or how many privacy measures you enact on these sites. Consider everything that you post online to be within the public domain. Your relatives, elementary school teachers, and future employers, along with such scandal and tabloid programs and sites as TMZ, will be able to see it all.

With that said, we are here to provide an education along with such helpful advice. So, we want to look at what this massive public disclosure actually means when it comes to identity construction.

For the study of communication, this public disclosure of information challenges traditional beliefs about self-disclosure and relationship development (Altman & Taylor, 1973). These views maintained that self-disclosure takes place gradually, with information shared becoming more personal as relationships gain intimacy or closeness. When it comes to disclosure on social networking sites, the disclosure of personal information takes place immediately. Further, this information is provided to everyone, regardless of relational closeness.

For users of social networking sites, this public disclosure of information provides opportunities for public confirmation and comparison. Activities and thoughts publicly shared through updates are confirmed by others and given social legitimacy (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008). This confirmation occurs off-line as well, but not publicly and not by as many people.

Furthermore, the public disclosure of others enables comparison among users when evaluating themselves. Once again, of course, this behavior takes place off-line. There are a couple of important distinctions, though. First, many people are offering public disclosure, which provides more opportunities for comparison. Second, the information being shared tends to be strategic (as discussed earlier) and therefore more likely to be favorable and positive. Comparisons are being made with idealized images of others, which may lead to more negative evaluations of the self and to increasing pressure to enhance the image being portrayed on one's own profile.

By the way . . . : Early and Developing Social Networking Sites



It can be argued that social networking sites began in the form of online communities. If so, Well.com, launched in 1985, would be among the first. In their current form—in which people create a profile, compile a list of connections, and visit the profiles of other members—Classmates.com, launched in 1995, and SixDegrees.org, launched in 1997, were among the first social networking sites. There are now more than 200 sites based throughout the world and dedicated to a variety of groups and interests.

Questions to Consider

1. If you were to create a social networking site, on what group or interest would you focus?
2. What is the strangest social networking site you have ever come across or heard about?

Online Communication and Relationships

Having discussed the construction of identities online, we now turn our attention to online communication and relationships. Online communication enables people to maintain and enhance existing relationships, reinvigorate previous relationships, and create new relationships. Increased use of the Internet actually leads to increased interaction with friends and family, not only online but also face-to-face and over the telephone (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011).

Fears that the Internet will decrease social interaction and diminish the quality of relationships appear unfounded. Some people still champion face-to-face communication as the superior form of interaction (e.g., Turkle, 2012). However, these arguments tend to be based on opinion rather than on unbiased evidence or studies.

Disciplinary Debate: The Value of Social Networking Sites



The relational benefits of social networking sites seem overwhelming. However, a few scholars in the discipline view social networking sites negatively. For these scholars, relationships maintained online are not as valuable or genuine as those maintained through face-to-face communication.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you consider the strengths of this position?
2. What do you consider the weaknesses of this position?

Maintaining Relationships and Social Networks

Although online communication can lead to the creation of new relationships, it tends to be used more for the maintenance or continuation of existing relationships. This is especially true when it comes to social networking sites (Baym, 2015). The average Facebook user, for instance, has met 93% of his or her *friends* at least once. High school friends represent the largest category of Facebook friends, followed by extended family, coworkers, college friends, immediate family, people from volunteer groups, and neighbors (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011). As mentioned earlier, relational maintenance does not just occur online. Rather, online communication is associated with increased interactions using other forms of communication.

In what ways does a webcam affect the nature of online communication?



©iStockphoto.com/Rawpixel Ltd

Online communication is also positively influencing social networks. Studying the impact of the Internet on social networks, Jeffrey Boase, John Horrigan, Barry Wellman, and Lee Rainie (2006, p. 5) distinguished two types of connections in social networks: core ties and significant ties.

Internet users tend to have a greater number of significant ties than nonusers do. Internet activity does not appear to increase the number of core ties. However, Internet use has been shown to increase the diversity of core ties. For instance, Internet users are more likely to have nonrelatives as members of their core networks (Hampton, Sessions, Her, & Rainie, 2009).

Another consequence of online communication is the geographic diversity of social networks. Physical proximity still plays a large role in the development of social networks. However, online communication has resulted in more geographically dispersed networks (Boase et al., 2006). At the same time, Internet users are still just as likely as nonusers to visit with their neighbors (Hampton et al., 2009).

Overall, social networking site users, in particular, also indicate feeling less isolated. They are also more likely to receive social support (Hampton, Goulet, Marlow, & Rainie, 2012).

The increased likelihood of receiving support may not be based solely on Internet users being more helpful than nonusers. The greater number of significant ties and the overall diversity of an Internet user's social networks also increase the network resources. In other words, they increase the likelihood of finding someone who is willing to help. Perhaps more importantly, they increase the likelihood of finding someone who possesses the ability to help.

core ties: people with whom you have a very close relationship and are in frequent contact; a person often discusses important matters in life with these people and often seeks their assistance in times of need (compare with *significant ties*)

significant ties: people who are more than mere acquaintances but with whom a strong connection does not exist; a person is not overly likely to talk with these people or seek help from these people, but they are still there when needed (compare with *core ties*)

Explaining the Benefits

Internet use seems to greatly assist the maintenance of relationships and enhance social networks. However, we have not discussed why this may be true. Accordingly, we will examine the nature of both online communication and social networking sites as possible reasons why this is so.

Characteristics of Online Communication.

A characteristic of online communication is that it can be both synchronous and asynchronous. In synchronous communication—for example, an interaction through Skype—people interact essentially in real time and can send and receive messages at once. In asynchronous communication—for example, an interaction through e-mail—there is a delay between messages, and interactants must alternate between sending and receiving. Each type of communication has advantages and disadvantages.

When it comes to maintaining relationships, the asynchronous nature of online communication makes it easier for people to interact. People do not have to coordinate their schedules to interact. Rather, interaction can take place whenever it is most convenient for those involved. The ease with which contact can be made online may very well increase the likelihood that contact will take place at all.

Asynchronous communication also provides time for people to be more thoughtful and strategic. This additional time can make the interactions more meaningful and more likely to convey what a person wants to share and get across. Alternatively, asynchronous communication takes a lot more time overall.

By the way . . . : Emojis



Although online communication is increasingly incorporating video and audio, it is still largely text based. Accordingly, another characteristic of online communication has been its lack of nonverbal cues to determine meaning. Emojis, text-based symbols used to express emotions online, help alleviate this problem. The first “smiley face” :) was used at 11:44 a.m. on September 19, 1982, by Scott E. Fahlman while he was contributing to an online bulletin board.



©iStockphoto.com/yuoak

Questions to Consider

1. Although helpful, can emojis ever be overused?
2. As interacting online becomes increasingly video/audio based, how do you suppose that will influence the ways in which people assign meaning?

synchronous communication: communication in which people interact in real time and can at once both send and receive messages (contrast with *asynchronous communication*)

asynchronous communication: communication in which there is a slight or prolonged delay between the message and the response; the interactants must alternate between sending and receiving messages (contrast with *synchronous communication*)

emojis: text-based symbols used to express emotions online, often to alleviate problems associated with a lack of nonverbal cues

Characteristics of Social Networking Sites.

The characteristics of social networking sites also explain why users are better able to maintain larger and more diverse social networks, why they feel less isolated, and why they are more likely to receive assistance when needed (see Chesebro et al., 2014).

One responsible characteristic is the *list of connections* users compile on these sites. These lists help people keep track of their social networks and can make these connections more real and available. Relative to maintenance, we talked about Stuart Sigman's (1991) relational continuity constructional units in [Chapter 8](#). These lists can serve as introspective units, reinforcing the existence of a relationship when people are physically apart.

Participation is easy on social networking sites. For one thing, you may have a power user in your list of connections. Power users are a group of users who tend to be active when it comes to posting, making comments on other users' walls, making friendship requests, and engaging in other activities (Hampton et al., 2012). It does not take a great deal of effort to participate, regardless.

Another characteristic of these sites, which helps explain the findings, is that they *normalize the sharing of the mundane*. We have maintained that it is not the discussion of deep subjects or the sharing of private information that is most responsible for the development of relationships. Rather, it is the more common discussions of everyday, seemingly mundane information that drive the development and maintenance of personal relationships.

Social networking sites often encourage users to post what they are doing at a given moment. Most people are not saving the world; they are throwing out moldy bread or scraping something off of their shoes. Stephanie Tom Tong and Joseph Walther (2011) have observed that these sites normalized the discussion of these undistinguished events.

Despite the existence of and potential for negative experiences, participation in social networking sites tends to be quite *positive*. The vast majority of both teen and adult users believe that people are mostly kind on these sites. Twice as many teen users, specifically, report positive outcomes when using these sites as report negative outcomes (Lenhart et al., 2011). These positive experiences are liable to increase the likelihood that people will continue using these sites and gain relational satisfaction and comfort from doing so.

A final characteristic of social networking sites explaining their benefits is that *relating is the point*. These sites are constructed in ways that enable connection to take place. Intimacy, security, entertainment, knowledge, self-worth, and other needs generated from relationships are also provided through their use.

Further, people are able to learn more about relationships in general and their own relationships specifically through these sites. Relationships are played out through these sites, with some entirely documented through updates, photos, and other features. Relational knowledge, developed using these sites, may assist in the development and maintenance of relationships online as well as off-line.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. How do people generally perceive technology and media?

Society frequently views technology and media with suspicion, especially initially. Ultimately, all technology and media have influenced relationships in some manner, which has made responses to technology and media historically quite similar. Some view technology and media as controlling societal development but by others as being merely tools without great influence.

2. What are the relational uses of technology and media?

The use of technology and media is a shared relational activity that enables people to come together, withdraw from relationships, and enact specific relational roles. Media content informs people about how relationships “should” look and how people “should” behave in relationships. Technology and media function as alternatives to personal relationships. Technology and media are also used in everyday talk. Beyond providing a general topic of conversation, talk about technology and media influences their interpretation and understanding. Such talk also affects their distribution and influence, promotes the development of media literacy, influences identification and relationship development, and enables identity construction.

3. How are smartphones used in the construction of identities?

Identities constructed through relational technologies are based partly on what it means for groups to use them, such as generations and social networks. Identities are also created through the use of specific products and services, as well as through ringtones and the actual performance of smartphones.

4. How do smartphones influence relationships?

Smartphones have come to represent constant connection to those who possess your number. Giving someone your smartphone number or denying someone access to your number establishes both the boundaries and the degree of closeness desired and expected within your relationship with that person. A new relational expectation of constant availability has subsequently developed. Also, shared experience develops from the actual use of smartphones and from the immediate transmission of voice, picture, sound, and video. Finally, the use of smartphones makes possible the microcoordination of physical social interaction.

5. How are identities constructed online?

Examining social networking sites specifically, identities are constructed through lists of connections, photographs, media preferences, strategic work, and massive public disclosure.

6. How does online communication influence relationships?

Although online communication can lead to the creation of new relationships, it tends to be used more for the maintenance or continuation of existing relationships. By examining social networking sites specifically, we can explain benefits to relationships by the nature of online communication and the general characteristics of such sites.

Key Concepts

- asynchronous communication 236
- concurrent media use 215
- core ties 235
- emojis 236
- media equation 222
- media literacy 224
- microcoordination 230
- parasocial relationships 222
- relational technologies 227
- significant ties 235
- social construction of technology (SCOT) 218
- social shaping of technology (SST) 218
- socialization impact of media 221
- synchronous communication 236
- technological determinism 217
- technology and media generations 227
- technology and media profile 226

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends to estimate the amount of time they spend using media every day. How do their responses compare with the average daily media use revealed by the Middletown Media Studies? If there is a significant difference between your friends' estimations and the numbers discovered in the Middletown Media Studies, why do you think this discrepancy exists?
2. Ask a few of your friends separately to describe their technology and media profile, and then compare their responses. Do you notice any similarity among their responses? If so, why do you think this similarity exists? What impact would this similarity of technology and media uses and preferences have on the relationships among your friends?
3. If you have your own page on a social networking site, ask your friends to compare how you present yourself on this page with how you present yourself off-line. In what ways are they different and similar?

Media Connections

1. Examine how characters on television programs are portrayed using technology and whether it specifically involves relational uses. To what extent does their use of technology parallel your use of it with your friends, family, coworkers, or classmates?
2. Describe how relationships are featured in the television, print, and Internet advertisements of smartphone companies. For example, pay attention to the number of times in which they illustrate users having relationships with one another or doing something connected with business applications.
3. Compare recent media depictions of relationships with media depictions of relationships from previous decades. What changes do you recognize?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

12 Interviewing



©iStockphoto.com/Steve Debenport

Chapter Outline

[Preparing for an Interview](#)

[Cover Letters and Résumés](#)

[Résumés](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Characteristics of an Interview](#)

[Types of Interviews](#)

[Pre-Interview Responsibilities](#)

[Interviewer Responsibilities](#)

[Interviewee Responsibilities](#)

[Beginning an Employment Interview](#)

[Greeting and Establishing Appropriate Proxemics](#)

[Negotiating Relational Connection and Tone](#)

[Establishing Purpose and Agenda](#)

[Asking the Questions During an Employment Interview](#)

[Primary and Secondary Questions](#)

[Open and Closed Questions](#)

[Neutral and Leading Questions](#)

[Directive and Nondirective Questioning](#)

[Avoiding Illegal Questions](#)

[Answering the Questions During an Employment Interview](#)

[Adjusting the Interview Frame](#)

[Learning From Successful and Unsuccessful Interviewees](#)

[Answering Common Questions](#)

[Dealing With Illegal Questions](#)

[Concluding an Employment Interview](#)

[Interviewer Responsibilities](#)

[Interviewee Responsibilities](#)

[Post-Interview Responsibilities](#)

[Interviewer Responsibilities](#)

[Interviewee Responsibilities](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are a cover letter and résumé?
2. What are the characteristics of an interview?
3. What are the types of interviews?
4. What are the pre-interview responsibilities of interviewers and interviewees?
5. How should a person begin an employment interview?
6. What types of questions and questioning styles may an interviewer use?
7. How should interviewees respond to questions during an interview?
8. How should a person conclude an employment interview?
9. What are the post-interview responsibilities of interviewers and interviewees?

This chapter is dedicated to something that will be of great importance through your professional life—interviews. An interview is a goal-driven transaction characterized by questions and answers, clear structure, control, and imbalance. An interview is usually a dyadic transaction, meaning that it takes place between two people. A talk show host asking questions of a celebrity is one example of a dyadic interview. Sometimes, however, a person may be interviewed by two or more people or by a panel. Consider, for instance, when someone testifies before Congress and is asked a series of questions by a panel of senators. Some employment interviews will also involve more than one interviewer.

We introduce various types of interviews in this chapter, but we primarily focus on employment interviews because those are the types of interviews the majority of people reading this book are most concerned about at this point in their lives. Of course, interviews share many characteristics with other types of communication. Certainly, all the properties of communication discussed throughout the book remain intact. Communication within an interview is transactional and symbolic (both verbal and nonverbal), requires meaning, is both presentational and representational, and requires the use of frames for understanding. An interview also requires effective listening (engaged, relational, and critical) by everyone involved to be successful. Furthermore, identity work, relational work, and cultural work are all being conducted during an interview. We look at both similarities and differences between interviews and other sorts of communication as we go along.

This chapter focuses on how to conduct and participate in employment interviews. First, because most people will not be invited to interview with an organization without an effective cover letter and résumé, we discuss the construction of these vital application tools. Then we discuss the preparation for an interview. We then examine what must take place during the beginning of an interview. Next, we explore what happens during the question-and-answer portion of an interview. *From an interviewer standpoint*, we discuss ways to develop different types of questions, sequencing the questions, directive and nondirective questioning, and avoiding illegal questions. *From an interviewee standpoint*, we discuss adjusting the interview frame for greater success, learning from successful and unsuccessful interviews, answering common interview questions, and handling illegal questions. We then examine what must take place during the conclusion of an interview. We next discuss the responsibilities of interviewers and interviewees following an interview.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Look at Your Cover Letter and Résumé

Evaluate your most recent cover letter and résumé using the guidelines and suggestions offered in this chapter. If you have never written a cover letter and résumé, prepare them for a fictional position in your career field or for an actual position you want to obtain. Even if you are not currently seeking employment, it is never too early to develop or update these important career tools.



©iStockphoto.com/Ridofranz

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways could your cover letter be improved?
2. In what ways could your résumé be improved?

Preparing for an Interview

You will not be invited to an employment interview without a quality cover letter and résumé. Accordingly, we first address some key elements in the construction of these essential items. We begin by discussing the cover letter, which is the tool used to get a potential employer to actually review your résumé. It is quite surprising how little common sense average applicants show at this stage. (1) You guarantee your application going into the shredder if you do not appreciate that the person reading these applications is likely very busy, so do not waste the person's time by making your letter or application hard to read or understand. (2) Make sure the font size is big enough for a person to read without the aid of a magnifying glass but do not use exotic fonts or layouts. (3) You are going to be one of perhaps a hundred applicants for the job, and the reader gets tired of reading the same old stuff—your responsibility is to stand out, but in a good way. (4) Everything you do to make the reader's job easier will help you. Busy people do not want to read poorly structured or “off point” applications that start with a funny story about your grandmother. Keep it all relevant, make it easy for the reader to take in, and never forget the first point: Readers are busy.

Cover Letters and Résumés

A cover letter has four purposes: (1) declare interest in the position, (2) provide a summary of qualifications, (3) compel the person to read your résumé, and (4) request an interview. Employers often receive numerous applications for a single position, and quite often application materials are given only slight attention. Therefore, hopeful employees should do everything possible to ensure that their materials stand out from the rest and receive adequate attention. In what follows, we present the key elements of effective cover letters.

Address Letter to Specific Person

Many applicants do not take the time to confirm who will be reading their materials and consequently do not address their cover letter to a specific person. Simply addressing the letter “To Whom It May Concern” will not make your cover letter stand out from the rest and will elicit *little* concern from the receiver. A quick phone call to the organization will likely provide you with the name of the person to whom the letter should be addressed, if it is unavailable in the job announcement/advertisement. Be certain to use the person’s last name only and to address the person using his or her proper title.

interview: a goal-driven transaction characterized by questions and answers, clear structure, control, and imbalance

cover letter: a letter sent when seeking employment that has four purposes: (1) declare interest in the position, (2) provide a summary of qualifications, (3) compel the person to read your résumé, and (4) request an interview

Identify the Position

Identify the position for which you are applying in the first paragraph of the letter. An organization may have multiple positions available, and you want to ensure that you are being considered for the one you intend. You should also indicate how you discovered the position’s availability. Finally, you should display knowledge about and positive regard for the organization. Including this information shows that you have taken the time to learn about the organization and that you view it favorably. Some applicants—especially those applying for hundreds of positions—use form cover letters and change nothing but the name and address of the company. Such form letters will generate less interest than will letters in which the applicant is clearly knowledgeable about the organization and actively interested in working there.

Summarize Qualifications and Promote Résumé

Summarize the qualifications that make you an ideal fit for the position in the second paragraph. You may discuss such items as your education and training, experiences, special skills, and activities that have prepared you for the position and that will enable you to successfully fulfill the duties of the position. Be sure to emphasize what you can provide for the organization, not what it can do for you. At the end of this paragraph, you should encourage the reader to refer to your résumé. You can do this by mentioning specific information that can be discovered there or by simply mentioning the additional information that can be discovered through its examination.

Reaffirm Interest and Request an Interview

Reaffirm your interest in the position and request an interview in the final paragraph of the cover letter. You may want to indicate your intention to contact this person in the future (“I will contact you in two weeks to see if you require additional information about my credentials or desire any additional materials”). Another option in the final paragraph is to request a date to meet with the employer. This might be especially appropriate if you are presently located in an area other than the organization and will happen to be visiting that area (“I will be in the Misery City area June 30–July 5 and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you during that time to discuss my qualifications in more detail”).

Sign Off With Respect and Professionalism

When ending the letter, you should use the terms *Sincerely*, *Respectfully*, or *Cordially* rather than *Yours Truly* or *Yours Faithfully*, which are too personal when corresponding with someone you likely do not know, and rather than *Best Wishes* or *Cheers*, which are too informal for a professional letter. Use your full name and do not use a nickname. Sign the letter using dark ink in a legible and professional manner, avoiding unnecessary flourish (i.e., no swirly lines at the end or smiley face emoticons or emojis). You should end the letter properly to ensure the quality of the letter established thus far is maintained.

Résumés

The purpose of a résumé is to present your experiences and credentials for a position in a clear and concise manner. Employers may spend less than a minute looking at your résumé, so the information included should be clear and concise as well as positive and obviously appropriate to the position for which you are applying. Many readers do a “first pass” review, merely glancing at the materials and sorting them into a “shred” pile and “follow up” file, which they then read more closely. Your job is to make sure they approve your materials for a closer read. In what follows, we discuss the key elements of effective résumés.

résumé: document used when seeking employment that presents credentials for a position in a clear and concise manner

Name and Contact Information

As with your cover letter, you should use your full name when constructing a résumé and avoid using nicknames. Include the following contact information: (1) address, (2) telephone number, and (3) e-mail address. Include a personal website address only if it is solely professional or academic. If you are a student, you may have both a campus address and telephone number and a permanent address and telephone number. If this is the case, include both your campus contact information and your permanent contact information. Make sure that your e-mail address adheres to professional standards. Someone whose e-mail address begins *Lazydrunk03* will not receive many interview offers!

Career Objective

Next, you must include your career objective. This objective should be one sentence and never more than two sentences. It should also be explicitly tailored to meet the needs of the organization and the position for which you are applying. The employer will be asking what you can do for the organization, not what the organization can do for you. A vague statement of interests and a lack of commitment to the organization will not work.

Education and Training

Education and training should follow your career objective. List your degrees or training in reverse chronological order so that your most recent (and likely most relevant) information appears first. Listing your high school degree is not necessary if you are presently enrolled in or have completed college. This section should include the following information: (1) degree completion (or expected completion) date along with all majors or minors, (2) college name and location, and (3) awards, honors, or certificates. Use your own best judgment as to whether you should include your grade point average. Some fields may place more importance on this number than others.

Experiences

The experiences section of your résumé will include your employment history and other endeavors such as volunteer work if they happen to be directly relevant to the position for which you are applying, or else should show your commitment to the various values and concerns of the employer (community service, general engagement in the world as a thinking citizen with leadership potential). As with your education history, list your experiences in reverse chronological order. This section should include the following information: (1) position, (2) name of the organization along with location (city and state), (3) dates of employment or service (month and year), and (4) responsibilities and accomplishments. Your responsibilities and accomplishments are especially important in this section, and you should emphasize those that are most applicable to the position you are hoping to receive. These responsibilities and accomplishments are usually not written in complete sentences. Instead, begin each phrase with a verb that implies action (e.g., *spearheaded*, *updated*, *developed*, *increased*).

Skills

Next, include the skills that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying. These skills could include abilities in such areas as computer programs, languages, laboratory protocol, machinery, tools, or whatever areas most fit the position. If you possess multiple skills within a particular category, you may want to use that category as a heading. For instance, you may possess skills in multiple computer programs and include these under a header titled *Computer Skills*.

Activities

When listing activities on your résumé, you should include those most relevant to the position first. However, in this case, feel free to also list activities that are not necessarily related to the position. Of course, you should only include those activities that reflect favorably on you, but listing activities can indicate a well-rounded person with many life experiences from which to draw when dealing with people and participating in organizational life.

Interviews

Assuming that the employer follows up and invites you to an interview, you need to consider some important points about the best way to present yourself. Interviews are both similar to and different from normal conversations, and you need to consider these points carefully.

Characteristics of an Interview

Interviews encompass unique characteristics that distinguish them from other types of communication. In what follows, we examine five characteristics of interviews: (1) goal-driven, (2) question–answer, (3) structured, (4) controlled, and (5) unbalanced.

Interviews are generally more *goal-driven* than other types of communication, especially those taking place between two people. All communication achieves something beyond the simple exchange of symbols, but these achievements and creations are not always purposeful and intended. Interviews have a clear purpose, a goal to be achieved. Information may be desired, a problem may need to be resolved, persuasion may be desired, someone may need assistance with a personal problem, or an employer may be seeking the best person for a job opening and a potential employee may be looking for a good employer.

Another characteristic of interviews is the *question–answer* nature of the transaction. Most of an interview consists of one person (sometimes more than one) asking questions and another person answering those questions. Everyday communication includes occasional questions and answers—especially if people are getting to know one another—but not to the extent of an interview. Furthermore, in most everyday communication, it is not usually the case that one person is in charge of asking the questions while the other person is in charge of answering them.

Interviews also tend to be more *structured* than other types of communication. Whereas a casual interaction between two people may happen spontaneously and have no clear focus, interviews involve planning and preparation and tend to have a clear sequence. Certain actions are expected during an interview so you reach a clearly defined goal.

Interviews are generally *controlled* by an interviewer, who is responsible for moving the interview toward its intended goal. The amount of control exerted during an interview depends on this goal, which is achieved partly by the questions asked and the communication environment established. Once again, this—specifically whether an interview is characterized as *directive* or *nondirective*—is a topic that deserves fuller attention later in the chapter.

What is the difference between information-gathering interviews such as the one pictured here and persuasive interviews? Is the difference always obvious to the person being interviewed?



©iStockphoto.com/shaunl

A final characteristic of interviews is that the time spent talking by an interviewee and an interviewer is usually *unbalanced*. Typically, an interviewer will speak for 30% of the time, and an interviewee will speak for 70% of the time. Of course, the type of interview will dictate exactly how much time each party spends talking, but more often than not, an interviewee will talk more and an interviewer will talk less.

Types of Interviews

Now that we have discussed the characteristics of an interview, we can examine various types of interviews. You may have already experienced some of these interviews in the past and will likely encounter them many times throughout your personal and professional life. We will begin with the employment interview because this type of interview will receive the most attention in the remainder of the chapter. Note that the first three types of interviews discussed encompass the workplace. Initial employment is not the only place you will come across interviews in your professional life, however.

Employment Interviews

When people think of interviews, an employment interview is probably what comes immediately to mind. Employment interviews are those in which a potential employer interviews a potential employee. Both parties have a great deal riding on the success of an interview. The potential employee is seeking employment and determining whether the job is one that would be accepted if offered. The potential employer is searching for a qualified applicant and for someone who would actually benefit the organization. Potential employers also want to convince potential employees that the position is one they would accept if offered.

Performance Interviews

Also known as performance reviews, performance interviews are those in which an individual's activities and work are discussed. These interviews are most often conducted between employees and supervisors, but you may also experience them in educational and other settings. For instance, students frequently discuss their progress toward a degree with an advisor or perhaps even a committee of professors. In both situations, a person's strengths and weaknesses are discussed with the ultimate goal being to improve his or her performance. Naturally, such interviews can be stressful, but they can also provide people with valuable information that can be used to strengthen their performances and to help them achieve personal and professional goals. These interviews are also an opportunity for the goals and culture of an organization to be reinforced.

employment interviews: interviews in which a potential employer interviews a potential employee

performance interviews: interviews in which an individual's activities and work are discussed

Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are those that occur when a person chooses to leave a place of employment. The conventional wisdom is that someone who is leaving may be more likely to provide honest answers about organizational cultures, policies, supervisors, compensation, and other aspects of the workplace. If used correctly, these interviews can provide employers with valuable insight that can be incorporated to improve employee satisfaction and thus the productivity and success of an organization. These interviews are also increasingly common in education and among multiple types of groups, such as volunteer organizations.

Make your case: Are Exit Interviews Useful?



An exit interview is often conducted by a company or an institution when an employee voluntarily leaves to take employment elsewhere. The company/institution has an interest in knowing why people leave and whether there is anything it could have done to retain the employee. Obviously, this is not done purely from altruism; it costs quite a lot to train new employees up to the standard of reliability that can be obtained from an established employee, and everyone everywhere is trying to find ways to reduce the costs of operation. Also, if the employee leaves because of a sense that opportunities for advancement are not available within the present organization or that employees are not adequately recognized, then the organization might be able to do something to improve the atmosphere in the future. Thus, exit interviews are essentially information-gathering exercises and may even include questions asking the employee to give frank assessments of superiors, management styles, organizational culture, and other elements of life in the workplace that the employee may

have found to be hindrances to good work.

Questions to Consider

1. Do exit interviews provide accurate and useful information to employers? Or will employees leaving an organization still hesitate to provide full disclosure of the positive and negative aspects of the organization?
2. What factors may determine whether an exit interview will be worthwhile?

Information-Gaining Interviews

You may have previously experienced an information-gaining interview and not even realized it as such. Information-gaining interviews are those in which a person solicits information from another person. You have likely responded to surveys, which is one form of information-gaining interview. A doctor asking you about your symptoms during an office visit is another example of this form of interview. You may conduct information-gaining interviews when preparing speeches and papers for school or work. These sorts of interviews are also frequently seen on webcasts and included in newspapers, magazines, and blogs.

Persuasive Interviews

Persuasive interviews are those that have influence as the ultimate goal. The interviewer may appear to be gaining information but is actually attempting to influence the thoughts or actions of the interviewee. This form of interview may sound a bit manipulative and underhanded, but it is quite common. When salespeople ask your opinion about a product or service, they often do so in a way that attempts to sway you toward what they want you to purchase. At other times, what appears to be a survey is in reality an attempt to persuade. Political workers have frequently been accused of dirty tricks under the guise of conducting straightforward surveys. They attempt to plant a seed of doubt or concern in the mind of the interviewee. For instance, imagine being asked, “If the incumbent were convicted of running a cockfighting ring, would this influence your vote in the upcoming election?” Depending on your opinion of roosters or animal cruelty in general, such questions often influence voter perceptions of candidates and result in rumors being circulated.

exit interviews: interviews that occur when a person chooses to leave a place of employment

information-gaining interviews: interviews in which a person solicits information from another person

persuasive interviews: interviews that have influence as the ultimate goal

Problem-Solving Interviews

When experiencing difficulties or facing an unknown challenge, people may engage in problem-solving interviews, those in which a problem is isolated and solutions are generated. These types of interviews may be conducted by someone with greater experience or insight than the person being interviewed. Students, for example, may be questioned by their professors to determine why they may be experiencing difficulties in a class. Sometimes problem-solving interviews are conducted by someone with general knowledge of a situation but whose fresh approach can be beneficial. For instance, a colleague may be asked to engage in a problem-solving interview when difficulties are encountered with a project at work. Someone not involved with a situation will often provide alternative approaches to solving a problem.

Helping Interviews

Unlike problem-solving interviews, helping interviews are always conducted by someone with expertise in a given area and whose services are engaged by someone in need of advice. The most obvious example of a helping interview is a psychologist asking questions of a client. However, other helping interviews include those conducted by credit card counselors with people facing a heavy debt load or by attorneys advising clients on legal matters.

problem-solving interviews: interviews in which a problem is isolated and solutions are generated

helping interviews: interviews conducted by someone with expertise in a given area and whose services are engaged by someone in need of advice

Ethical Issue

If an interviewee is not interested in a position and simply desires interview experience, is it ethical for him or her to take part in an interview? If an interviewer already has a job candidate selected for the position, is it ethical for him or her to interview other candidates for the position to simply fulfill legal or other requirements?

Pre-Interview Responsibilities

Having examined the characteristics of interviews and different types of interviews, we now focus our attention fully on employment interviews. Although other types of interviews are important, as mentioned previously, employment interviews are likely the most important for people reading this book. The entire employment interview process is discussed, from pre-interview responsibilities of both an interviewer and an interviewee to post-interview responsibilities of both an interviewer and an interviewee. Along the way, we explore the beginning of an interview, how interviewers should ask questions, how interviewees should answer questions, and how an interview should come to a close. We start by discussing what should be done in preparation for an interview.

As just mentioned, our focus on employment interviews is because of their importance in the lives of those most likely to be reading this book—you and other students! As you prepare for your future career, you may also be more concerned with the responsibilities of an interviewee rather than an interviewer. We discuss the responsibilities of both because you will likely be called to interview someone at some point in your career, perhaps sooner than you anticipate. Plus, knowing the responsibilities of everyone involved in the interview process will assist you when interviewing for positions.

Interviewer Responsibilities

We begin our discussion of pre-interview responsibilities by focusing on the duties of an interviewer. There are four primary responsibilities of the interviewer before the interview: (1) reviewing application materials, (2) preparing questions and an interview outline, (3) gathering materials, and (4) beginning on time.

Review Application Material

The interviewer should review a job candidate's application material before the interview. Accordingly, you should not use the interview itself to review the application material. Doing so conveys a lack of preparation and respect, and it wastes valuable time that should be used to conduct the interview. Furthermore, as we next discuss, reviewing a job candidate's application material should be done beforehand so you develop specific questions to ask each individual interviewee.

The person in this picture is reviewing application material before interviewing a job candidate. What are the other responsibilities of an interviewer before the interview?



©iStockphoto.com/elenaleonova

Prepare Questions and an Interview Outline

The interviewer should prepare a list of questions in advance of the interview. (Various types of interview questions are discussed later in the chapter.) Preparing questions in advance helps ensure that the appropriate information will be elicited from the job candidate. It also helps ensure that the interview will be conducted within the proper time constraints. If multiple job candidates are being interviewed, using common questions will make it easier to compare and contrast candidates. However, each interview will demand the inclusion of unique questions adapted to each individual interviewee.

These questions should be included in an interview outline, which reminds the interviewer of his or her duties

during the various parts of an interview. For instance, as we discuss later, an interviewer should provide the interviewee with a purpose and an agenda at the beginning of an interview and summarize the interview, ask for questions, and preview future action and the schedule among other tasks in the conclusion. Including these tasks in an interview outline will help make sure they are included during the interview. We urge you to be diligent in your creation of interview questions and interview outlines. This task can be the difference between conducting a successful interview and conducting a poor interview.

Gather Materials

The interviewer should gather materials for the interview before the interviewee arrives rather than afterward. Searching for the application material, interview outline, and writing materials for notes—even if these things are close by—indicates a lack of preparation and, consequently, a lack of respect for the interviewee. It also takes up valuable time that should be dedicated to conducting the interview.

Begin on Time

The interviewer should strive to begin the interview on schedule rather than causing a delay. As with failing to gather materials beforehand, making the interviewee wait past the scheduled time is unprofessional and conveys a lack of respect for the interviewee. Avoid scheduling a meeting or another activity that may run long immediately before an interview. If multiple interviews are being conducted during a single day or period, make sure some time is scheduled between them and maintain adherence to the schedules of the interviews themselves. Ideally, there will be enough time before an interview to gather materials and review the application material and enough time following an interview to review your performance and evaluate the interviewee.

Communication + You: Discuss Your Interview Experiences



You can learn a lot about interviewing by talking with other people and sharing experiences. Do not forget what we said earlier—that preparation for interviews begins before the interview is even set up—and include in your discussion a description of your cover letter and résumé as well as the impression that you feel these items create. Consider cases where you have *not* been called for an interview and try to identify the differences in your successes and failures. Each of you can describe interviews you have participated in and can report what went right and what went wrong, what difficulties there were, and so forth, and you should recall employment interviews in which you were either the interviewee or the interviewer. As you read this chapter, consider how your entire performance could be improved. If you have never participated in an employment interview, ask someone who has done so to describe his or her interview experiences to you.

Questions to Consider

1. Thinking about your previous interview experiences, which aspects of the interviews went well, and which aspects needed improvement?
2. What would you do differently next time?

Interviewee Responsibilities

An interviewee also has responsibilities before the interview. There are a total of seven duties that must be conducted by the interviewee: (1) gathering information, (2) preparing questions, (3) practicing, (4) ensuring a professional personal appearance, (5) arriving on time, (6) bringing materials, and (7) turning off the cell phone.

Gather Information

Before an employment interview, an interviewee must gather information about the organization, about the profession, and about himself or herself. Communication professionals have traditionally focused on the need to gather information about the organization, but the latter two areas are just as significant.

Exhibiting knowledge about the organization during the interview will indicate proper preparation, enthusiasm for the position, and a desire to become part of the organization. Exhibiting knowledge about the organization is a distinguishing characteristic of successful interviewees. Such information may include the organization's history, future plans, challenges, accomplishments, and other characteristics. Exhibiting knowledge about the profession during the interview will also be beneficial. A job candidate will most likely possess knowledge about the profession before gathering information. However, it is especially important that interviewees appear knowledgeable of the latest developments within the profession. Furthermore, addressing such developments in relation to the organization's needs and goals will be especially impressive.

An interviewee should also gather information about himself or herself. Perhaps *gather* is not as appropriate as the term *formulate*. People already possess knowledge and information about themselves, but this information is not necessarily composed in a way that can be clearly articulated. It may not even be clear to them. When it comes to the interview, though, this information needs to be conveyed in a clear and supportive manner. Accordingly, gathering *or* formulating information about oneself must be done in preparation for an interview. [Table 12.1](#) offers some questions to help guide this formulation.

Table 12.1 Formulating Information About Oneself

- What are my long-term professional goals? How will they be achieved?
 - What are my short-term professional goals? How will they be achieved?
 - What are my greatest achievements? What did I learn from them?
 - What are my greatest failures? What did I learn from them?
 - What are my greatest strengths? How am I using them and developing them?
 - What are my greatest weaknesses? How am I overcoming them?
 - Why did I choose this profession?
 - Why do I want this position? How does this position fit with my professional goals?
 - Why do I want to work for this organization? How does this organization fit with my professional goals?
 - What professional experiences have made me an ideal candidate for this position?
 - What education and training have made me an ideal candidate for this position?
 - What skills make me an ideal candidate for this position?
-

Prepare Questions

An interviewee should also prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewer concerning the organization and the position. Questions about the organization could be about future goals, organizational structure, perceived challenges and strengths of the organization, organizational culture, and management style. Questions concerning

the position could include such topics as experiences of previous employees, history of the position, evaluation of performance, percentage of time devoted to various responsibilities of the position, perceived challenges and opportunities of the position, amount of supervision, and why the position is now available.

A few lines of questioning should be avoided by an interviewee. Questions deemed illegal when asked by an interviewer should not be asked by an interviewee. Asking these questions would not result in legal consequences, but they are just as discriminatory and inappropriate when asked by an interviewee as when asked by an interviewer. (We discuss illegal questions later in this chapter.) Also, an interviewee should not ask questions with answers available on an organization's website or in material already provided by the organization. Asking such questions would suggest, appropriately, a lack of preparation by an interviewee. An interviewee should also avoid asking about salary or benefits. If you are like us, answers to questions about salary and benefits would seem helpful in determining whether the position would be accepted if offered. However, most professional cultures deem such questions inappropriate, so it is advisable to not ask them until you get the offer.

By the way . . . : Let Your Avatar Worry About Looking Good



Employment interviews are increasingly being conducted in virtual environments. And, you can expect these types in interviews to become more common in the near future. This means that you will be using an avatar to represent yourself in a virtual environment. Researchers have already been exploring the impact of using avatars for employment interviews. Not surprisingly, job candidates with more attractive avatars received more favorable ratings for their interview (Behrend, Toaddy, Thompson, & Sharek, 2012). So, be sure to select a good-looking avatar rather than an ugly one!

Questions to Consider

1. What are the benefits and disadvantages of interviewing in a virtual environment?
2. Do you honestly think someone would select an ugly avatar, if that person really wanted the job?

Practice

An interviewee should also practice the interview as part of his or her preparation. Compile a list of questions that you might be asked during an interview. (Some of the most common interview questions are discussed later in this chapter.) Once these questions have been compiled, practice answering them aloud. Having an idea about what you might say is not sufficient. Actually articulating your thoughts and hearing the words come out of your mouth will better prepare you for the actual interview. If possible, have someone else play the role of the interviewer and ask you questions (some of which may come from your list and some of which may not). Make the interview situation as complete and as realistic as possible, including arrival at the interview setting, initiating the interview, answering the questions, concluding the interview, and leaving the interview setting. You may even want to dress as you will at the actual interview. Practicing will also enable you to diminish some of those unknown elements of interviewing that often lead to nervousness and anxiety.

If an interviewee arrives early for an interview, is it a good idea for him or her to catch up on rest while waiting?



©iStockphoto.com/jsmith

Professional Personal Appearance

Personal appearance—including clothing, hairstyles, tattoos, jewelry, makeup, and hygiene—is a reflection of how you perceive yourself, how you want to be perceived by others, and your relationship with others. People make judgments, accurately or not, based on the appearance of others. Accordingly, interviewees should strive to convey credibility and professionalism through their personal appearance and should appear in a manner consistent with expectations of the interviewer to establish relational connections with him or her. Research indicates that grooming and attire are important factors in shaping impression, but interviews may differ on a preference toward conservative attire or trendy attire (Ruetzler, Taylor, Reynolds, Baker, & Killen, 2012). Rather than developing a

one-size-fits-all model of interview appearance, it is best to dress according to the position for which you are interviewing. The general rule of thumb is dressing one step above how you would generally dress for the position if hired. And when in doubt, it is always better to be overdressed rather than underdressed.

Arrive on Time

Few other behaviors make a worse impression than arriving late to an interview. Arriving late is unprofessional and disrespectful and may result in decreasing the amount of time available for the interview. Of course, arriving too early might make an interviewee seem overeager. So, we are not suggesting you arrive 2 hours before the interview is scheduled. Planning to arrive 15 minutes early will enable you to be punctual without appearing overly enthusiastic or nervous. If you do happen to arrive early, use that time to freshen up and review your materials.

Bring Materials

Speaking of materials, an interviewee should bring some to the interview. You should plan to bring (1) additional copies of your résumé, (2) paper and writing utensils, and (3) a list of questions to ask the interviewer. In most situations, these items should be housed within a briefcase or professional-looking folder. Copies of your résumé will allow you to provide the interviewer with an additional copy if necessary and to review specific items with the interviewer if he or she so desires. The paper and writing utensils will allow you to take notes during the interview. The list of questions exhibits preparation and will enable you to remember specific questions you want to ask.

For some people, asking them to bring paper and writing utensils might be like asking them to bring a stone tablet, chisel, and hammer. In other words, it may seem outdated because these people (perhaps you) primarily record items using a laptop computer or digital notebook. At this point, in most workplaces, technological expectations would not include the use of a laptop computer or digital notebook during an interview. Accordingly, the interviewer may find its use strange and perhaps even unprofessional. However, perceptions of technology are continuously changing, and the use of a laptop or notebook may be more acceptable in the near future. Furthermore, it may be acceptable now in some organizations and industries. The use of such items may also make you appear technologically savvy and progressive, which could be seen as a bonus by some interviewers. Use your best judgment as to whether a laptop computer or digital notebook would be appropriate, given the expectations of the interviewer and the identity you want to convey during the interview.

Turn Off the Cell Phone

Perceptions of technology are continuously changing, but it will be a long time before the ringing of a cell phone is deemed an appropriate occurrence during an employment interview. You should turn off your cell phone completely and keep it out of sight during an interview. Your sole focus should be on the interviewer and the discussion at hand. We sincerely hope it never happens to you, but if you do forget to turn off your cell phone during an interview and it happens to ring, quickly apologize to the interviewer and turn it off at that time. Do not answer the call—even to tell the person you will call him or her back. Certainly do not carry on a conversation with the person who called. Your professionalism and respect for the interviewer (along with yourself) will be questioned by a ringing cell phone.

Beginning an Employment Interview

Now that the pre-interview responsibilities have been accomplished, it is time to begin the interview. When beginning an interview, the participants must (1) greet one another and establish proxemics, (2) negotiate the relational connection and tone of the interview, and (3) establish the purpose and agenda of the interview.

Greeting and Establishing Appropriate Proxemics

Initial impressions have a tremendous impact on perceptions of another person and whether additional contact is desired. Accordingly, the opening moments are crucial to the success of an interview, especially for an interviewee (Barrick et al., 2012).

As an interviewee, you must convey respect for an interviewer's space. If the interview takes place in an office, always knock and wait for permission to enter before entering, even if the door is open. Unless directed to do otherwise, address the interviewer using his or her last name and a formal or professional title (Dr., Mr., Ms., Your Holiness). Exchange greetings and introduce yourself, if necessary, while initiating a professional handshake with the interviewer to establish a positive relational connection and to suggest confidence. Shaking hands with a firm grip while looking the other person in the eye has been shown to increase ratings of employment suitability by interviewers (Stewart, Dustin, Barrick, & Darnold, 2008). Fist bumps or high fives are never appropriate, unless the interviewer is a Wonder Twin or has just completed an incredible athletic feat! Wait for the interviewer to direct you to where you will be positioned during the interview, rather than moving to an area or being seated beforehand.

As an interviewer, strive to make the interviewee feel welcomed and appreciated through your greeting. Initiate a handshake, if the interviewee has not already done so. Prepare in advance where the interviewee will be positioned for the interview and direct him or her to that space accordingly. As we discuss, where you and the interviewee are positioned will affect the relational connection and tone of the interview.

Skills You Can Use: Using Technology in the Interview Process



Much of what is discussed in this chapter involves face-to-face interviews, but you may also be asked to interview by telephone or webcam. Here are some tips for these types of interviews.



©iStock photo.com/vm

Telephone Interviews

1. Select a quiet place that is free of potential distractions.
2. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum.
3. Even though the interviewer will not see you smile, doing so will come through in your voice.
4. Stand or sit up straight to strengthen your voice.
5. Avoid nonfluencies such as *um* and *uh* because these are even more obvious over the telephone.
6. Have your résumé, notes, and other materials available should you need them.

Skype and Webcam Interviews

1. Select a quiet place that is free of potential distractions.
2. Test the camera and speaker before the interview.
3. Be aware of what appears in the background and remove anything that could be distracting.
4. Your personal appearance should mirror your appearance for a face-to-face interview.
5. Look directly at the camera, but avoid staring at it, much like you would avoid staring at someone with whom you are talking face-to-face.
6. Remember that the interviewer may be able to see and hear you before and immediately following the interview.

Negotiating Relational Connection and Tone

During most employment interviews, the interviewer possesses more power than the interviewee. The extent of that power distance and the tone of the interview (formal, relaxed, humorous, serious) will be negotiated by the interviewer and interviewee. This negotiation will take place throughout an interview but is often established during its opening moments. Although interviewees are free to attempt to develop whatever relational connection and tone they desire, it is generally best for them to follow the verbal and nonverbal cues of the interviewer, especially if they want the job.

Verbal cues from an interviewer will inform an observant interviewee of the desired tone and relationship. If an interviewer asks to be called by his or her first name, that could be an indication of a relatively relaxed interview context and a sense of equality with the interviewee. If an interviewer makes a joke at the beginning of an interview, that might also be an indication of a generally relaxed interview context. Self-disclosure, or perhaps even self-deprecation, may be an indication of a desire for equality. An interviewer may very well verbally announce a desire for a relaxed interview context. If an interviewer does none of these things or does not verbally indicate informality or equality in other ways, he or she probably expects a formal, traditional interview context.

Accompanying nonverbal cues from an interviewer will also inform an interviewee of the desired tone and relationship. Smiling along with other positive nonverbal behaviors will certainly indicate a different tone than would frowning and other negative nonverbal behaviors. Beyond these cues, however, the placement of an interviewee in relation to the interviewer may indicate the degree of formality of the interview and the relational connection the interviewer wants to develop. For instance, an interviewer seated on one side of a desk and an interviewee seated on the other side would indicate a more formal interview and a less equal relationship. Conversely, an interviewer seated next to an interviewee, perhaps on chairs positioned at right angles with one another, would indicate a more relaxed interview and a more equal relationship.

By the way . . . : Do Not Forget the Nonverbal Communication in Interviews!



Do not forget to genuinely smile during your next employment interview, and try to make sure that you mean it. Although there are some jobs for which excessive smiling during an interview might be perceived as inappropriate (Ruben, Hall, & Mast, 2015), interviewees with genuine dynamic smiles are evaluated more favorably by interviewers than are those with fake smiles or neutral facial expressions (Krumhuber, Manstead, Cosker, Marshall, & Rosin, 2009). If you can fake sincerity, though, you have got it made!



©iStockphoto.com/vgajic

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think you would have a better impression after interviewing someone who was highly qualified for the job, but was very serious and did not smile very much during the interview, or someone who had adequate qualifications but who was very genuine and friendly?
2. Is it possible to fake sincerity?

Establishing Purpose and Agenda

Establishing the purpose and agenda is the responsibility of the interviewer. The purpose of an employment interview is fairly obvious, but establishing the agenda is especially important. As an interviewer, you should inform the interviewee how long the interview will take place. You may also want to preview the areas of questioning or other features to make an interviewee more comfortable through the partial removal of unknown variables. Doing so also establishes your expectations as an interviewer of how the interview will be conducted.

Asking the Questions During an Employment Interview

Now that the interview has begun, it is time to address the matter of questions and answers. We first examine the types of questions that an interviewer can ask during the interview and then examine different styles of questioning. You may be at the point in your professional life where you are more concerned about being an interviewee than an interviewer. However, even if this is the case, you may very well be conducting interviews in the future. Further, knowing what the interviewer is doing will help you immensely as an interviewee.

Three pairs of question types may be asked during an interview: (1) primary and secondary, (2) open and closed, and (3) neutral and leading. Also, different styles of questioning (directive compared with nondirective, for example) involve the amount of control exerted by the interviewer. As an interviewer, you must also be aware of illegal lines of questioning that must be avoided. We begin our exploration of asking the questions by examining the different types of questions that can be asked.

Primary and Secondary Questions

Before an interview, an interviewer should have compiled a list of questions covering the primary topics to discuss with an interviewee. Questions that introduce new topics during an interview are known as primary questions. Examples of primary questions include the following:

- What led to your interest in digital storytelling?
- What responsibilities did you have at your last job?
- What experience do you have working with flux capacitors?
- In what ways has your major prepared you for a position like this one?

Interviewee responses to questions will likely lead an interviewer to ask follow-up questions to seek elaboration or further information. These types of questions are known as secondary questions, of which there are two main types: probing questions and mirror questions. Probing questions are brief statements or words such as “Go on,” “Uh-huh,” and “What else?” that urge an interviewee to continue or to elaborate on a response. Mirror questions paraphrase an interviewee’s previous response to ensure clarification and to elicit elaboration. For instance, an interviewer may ask, “From what you said, it seems you have previous experience with this product line, but have you had direct experience working in this market?” Additional examples of secondary questions include the following:

- What other aspects did you find most rewarding?
- In what ways?
- Which of those did you most dislike?
- Is that correct?

The best way to distinguish primary and secondary questions is that secondary questions only make sense when preceded by a primary question and subsequent response. Beginning a series of questions with any of the preceding examples would not make any sense.

primary questions: questions that introduce new topics during an interview (contrast with *secondary questions*)

secondary questions: follow-up questions asked when seeking elaboration or further information (see *probing questions* and *mirror questions*; contrast with *primary questions*)

probing questions (secondary questions): brief statements or words that urge an interviewee to continue or to elaborate on a response

mirror questions (secondary questions): questions that paraphrase an interviewee’s previous response to ensure clarification and to elicit elaboration

open questions: questions that enable and prompt interviewees to answer in a wide range of ways (contrast with *closed questions*)

Open and Closed Questions

The questions asked during an interview will be either open or closed. Open questions enable and prompt interviewees to answer in a wide range of ways. Examples of open questions include the following:

- Tell me about your decision to become a Foley artist.
- What led you to volunteer with the Retired Professors Fund?
- Describe a time when you had to work with a group.
- How would you describe your work ethic?

Open questions serve three important functions. First, and most obvious, open questions enable interviewers to gather information about an interviewee. Second, these questions enable an interviewer to assess the communication skills of an interviewee in the interviewee's own words and style. Third, open questions provide valuable insight into the worldview of an interviewee. Recalling both the presentational nature of communication discussed in [Chapter 1](#) and Kenneth Burke's pentad discussed in [Chapter 4](#), words and stories have meaning beyond that which appears on the surface and provide a glimpse into how people perceive situations, themselves, and others.

Contrary to open questions, closed questions are those that limit the range of an interviewee's response. Examples of closed questions include the following:

- Where did you attend college?
- What positions did you hold at your previous company?
- Are you willing to work weekends?
- What was the most difficult aspect of your past job?

Closed questions serve important functions during an interview. Closed questions do not take up as much time as open questions, so they can be especially valuable when time is limited. These questions can also be used to gather specific information about an interviewee. Finally, the answers to closed questions make it relatively easy to compare and contrast candidates for a position. Such evaluations are especially easy to make when dealing with bipolar questions, a type of closed question that forces an interviewee to select one of two responses. The answers to bipolar questions are frequently either *yes* or *no*. The third example in the preceding list is considered a bipolar question that would be answered with either an affirmative or a negative. Some bipolar questions ask interviewees to select between two presented choices. For instance, an interviewer might ask, "Which do you believe is most important to success at work—hard work or talent?"

Neutral and Leading Questions

When developing questions for an interview, it is best to include neutral questions and to avoid leading questions. Neutral questions provide an interviewee with no indication of a preferred way to respond. Examples of neutral questions include the following:

- Why did you select communication studies as a major?
- What do you think of our new product line?
- What are your thoughts on labor unions?
- Describe the qualities of your previous supervisor.

closed questions: questions that limit the range of an interviewee's response (contrast with *open questions*)

bipolar question: a type of closed question that forces an interviewee to select one of two responses

neutral questions: questions that provide an interviewee with no indication of a preferred way to respond (contrast with *leading questions*)

Notice that these examples do not direct an interviewee toward a specific response or one that is obviously preferred by the interviewer. Some people might believe that the second example involving a “new product line” would direct an interviewee toward a favorable response. However, an interviewer may want to determine whether the interviewee is someone who would not be afraid to express opinions and who would be able to improve and enhance the company's products.

- What influenced your incredibly wise decision to major in communication studies?
- You do approve of our new product line, don't you?
- What are some of the problems you see with labor unions?
- What did you like most about your previous supervisor?

In these examples, an interviewer would be guiding an interviewee toward a specific type of answer. (We know that the decision to major in communication studies is obviously incredibly wise, but the first one still counts!) Generally, it is best to avoid leading questions during interviews and not to give interviewees an indication about how they should answer. Still, leading questions are sometimes used to determine whether an interviewee is someone who would hold his or her ground. Once again, the production line example could be a test to determine an interviewee's confidence and ability to voice concerns.

Disciplinary Debate: Where to Draw the Line on Appropriateness?



We—along with the federal government—encourage you to avoid asking illegal questions as part of the interview process. You can learn more about illegal questions and workers' rights by visiting the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website at www.eeoc.gov. However, some people may find value in asking these questions.

Questions to Consider

1. Aside from instances of bona fide occupational qualifications, are there instances during which asking such questions would be beneficial?
2. Should illegal interview questions be made legal?

Directive and Nondirective Questioning

The fact that interviews are controlled is one of their characteristics mentioned earlier in this chapter. However, the amount of control exerted during an interview will vary, based especially on the specific goal of an interview. Some types of interviews require great control by the interviewer, but other types of interviews require little control and more flexibility by the interviewer.

Directive interviews are greatly controlled by an interviewer. Questions tend to be closed and perhaps leading (Stewart & Cash, 2000). A directive interviewer tends to follow a clear line of questioning, deviating only to guide an interviewee back on topic or when wanting an interviewee to elaborate. On television, watch an attorney cross-examining a witness for a good example of a directive interview. The questions are certainly leading, and many tend to be closed. Further, the person being questioned on the stand is not allowed to deviate from the line of questioning, with the attorney being fully in control.

Nondirective interviews, however, are those in which the direction of the interview is primarily given to the interviewee. A nondirective interviewer generally introduces fairly broad topic areas and then allows an interviewee to “take off” in whatever direction desired. Accordingly, the questions asked tend to be open and neutral (Stewart & Cash, 2000). For an example of a nondirective interview, watch a talk show host interviewing a celebrity. A pre-interview of sorts has occurred before the program in which members of the staff have asked what the celebrity would like to talk about and have discussed possible questions the host might ask. During the actual program, the host will ask a general question (“How’s the weather?”), knowing the celebrity will take it from there.

leading questions: questions that suggest to an interviewee a preferred way to respond (contrast with *neutral questions*)

directive interviews: interviews that are greatly controlled by an interviewer

nondirective interviews: interviews in which the direction of the interview is primarily given to the interviewee

Ethical Issue

Is it ethical for an interviewee to embellish his or her accomplishments during an interview? Where is the line drawn between describing accomplishments in a positive manner and fabricating these accomplishments?

Avoiding Illegal Questions

When seeking the best candidate for a job, it may seem like a good idea to ask as many questions as possible and to learn as much as possible about someone, including many intricate details of his or her life. However, some questions cannot be asked and for good reason—they are potentially discriminatory. Equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws have been established, in part, to prevent possible discrimination during the hiring process, whether it is done intentionally or unintentionally. Even the most well-intentioned comment or question can be discriminatory; therefore, you should be aware of questions that must be avoided.

Common areas that cannot be discussed with potential employees include age, marital/family status, ethnicity/national origin, religion, affiliations, and disabilities. In some cases, however, otherwise illegal areas of questioning are allowed. Some jobs demand certain abilities or requirements, known as *bona fide occupational qualifications*. For instance, it is illegal to inquire about the age of an applicant unless there is a minimum age requirement for a job or unless the job is one where a retirement age is enforced, such as a commercial airline pilot. Working for a religious organization may require affiliation with that religion. Furthermore, some occupations require certain physical abilities. However, bona fide occupational qualifications that counter discriminatory questions are not as common as you might think, and it is best to avoid areas of potential discrimination. [Table 12.2](#) presents areas to avoid along with examples of illegal and legal questions.

Answering the Questions During an Employment Interview

Having examined the asking of questions during an interview, we can now explore the answering of questions. We first discuss how adjusting the interview frame can greatly benefit interviewees. Next, we investigate some of the lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful interviewees. Then, methods for answering some of the most common interview questions are offered. Finally, we discuss how to answer illegal questions should they be asked during an interview.

Adjusting the Interview Frame

Before you began reading this chapter, you probably had a good idea about what happens during an interview. It is possible that you have been through at least one before. Yet even if you have not personally experienced an interview, you have likely seen them depicted in movies or television programs, and you have likely talked about interviews with people who have experienced them. Therefore, you are well aware of the *frames* surrounding interviews. Frames were introduced in [Chapter 1](#), and we even included interviews as an example. They are basic forms of knowledge that enable people to define a scenario, which in turn helps them determine meaning and understand the roles and expectations of the participants. In the interview frame, one person generally asks a lot of questions and the other one answers them, but we hope you recognize that it is more complex than this description.

Table 12.2 Avoiding Illegal Questions

Category	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
Age	How old are you? What year were you born?	Are you 21 years old or older, and therefore legally allowed to accept this position if offered? Are you under the age of 60 years old, and therefore legally allowed to accept this position if offered?
Marital/ Family Status	Are you married or living with a partner? Are you pregnant? Do you have any children or plan on having children?	There is a great deal of travel involved with this position. Do you foresee any problems with this requirement? Will the long hours required of this job pose any problems for you? Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Do you have any responsibilities that may prevent you from meeting the requirements of this position?
Ethnicity/ National Origin	What is your ethnicity? Where is your family from? Were you born in the United States? What is your native language?	Do you have any language abilities that would be helpful in this position? Are you authorized to work in the United States?
Religion	Are you religious? What religion are you? Do you worship regularly at a church/mosque/temple? Do you believe in God? Are there any months when you won't be needing lunch, Ramadan for example?	Are you able to work on Saturday evenings/Sunday mornings, if needed?
Affiliations	What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? Are you a Republican or a Democrat? Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?	Do you belong to any professional organizations that would benefit your ability to perform this job?
Disabilities	What is your medical history? Do you have any disabilities? How would you describe your family's health? What resulted in your disability?	This job requires that a person be able to lift 100 pounds. Would you have any problems fulfilling that requirement?

How a person frames a situation often dictates what will happen. If a person frames a situation as one in which he or she will play the role of bumbling fool, then the person will likely act like a bumbling fool. Coined by Robert

Merton (1957), a self-fulfilling prophecy maintains that if someone believes a particular outcome will take place, his or her actions will often lead to its fruition. Accordingly, if you think you will succeed (or fail) at a task, you are more likely to do so because your actions will likely be those that lead to success (or failure). Therefore, you should always expect to perform well during an interview. Naturally, just because you expect to perform well and end up doing so does not mean that you will get the position you seek. However, it will certainly improve your chances.

self-fulfilling prophecy: principle maintaining that if someone believes a particular outcome will take place, his or her actions will often lead to its fruition

We can go a bit deeper with this notion of framing an interview, though. Many interviewees frame an interview as a situation in which they are on trial to determine whether they are capable or worthy of a position and must defend themselves. Rob Anderson and George Killenberg (2009, p. 229) have suggested that an interviewee instead frame the interview less threateningly as (1) *an opportunity rather than a test*, (2) *a learning experience rather than a demonstration*, and (3) *a dialogue rather than a monologue*.

You should strive to avoid viewing the interview as a test through which your worthiness as a potential employee, your skills, and your knowledge, along with your value as a human being, are all being questioned. Instead, view the interview as an opportunity to discuss the many ways you could contribute to an organization, to display the skills and knowledge that make you qualified for the position, and, of course, to confirm your value as a human being. In most instances, you would not be asked to interview unless an employer already viewed you as capable of performing the duties of a position and doing so successfully.

Furthermore, do not view the interview merely as a performance in which these attributes are displayed. Rather, view the interview as an opportunity to learn about yourself. Preparation for and participation in an interview require determining your strengths, weaknesses, and goals, as well as reviewing how your past experiences have brought you to your current place in this world. It is an opportunity to establish personal and professional goals.

Finally, do not view the interview as something that is dominated by one person, while the other person is relegated to a subordinate or immaterial position. Instead, an interview should be viewed as something that is created (transacted) by all participants, who are equally responsible and necessary for its development and who can all potentially gain from the experience. Both an interviewee and an interviewer gain personally and professionally from the interview. They are able to learn about themselves and others; an interviewee has an opportunity to acquire a potentially fulfilling work position, and an interviewer has an opportunity to acquire the services of someone who could potentially improve an organization.

By the way . . . : Are You Reading This Critically?



You are hopefully engaged in critical analysis and evaluation as discussed in [Chapter 7](#). If so, you might find the use of a study (Einhorn, 1981; see [Table 12.3](#)) that is older than 30 years a bit suspect. We would be the first to tell you to be cautious when coming across apparently dated sources. In this case, however, the age of the source has not diminished the value of its findings. Still, maintain a critical stance when reading this or any book.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think the information from this source is still valid, given the passing of time?
2. Will this information still be valid 30 years from now?

Learning From Successful and Unsuccessful Interviewees

Reframing the interview means that an interview can be successful even if you are not offered a position. After all, each interview can be a learning experience that allows you to grow personally and professionally. However, we recognize that such growth does not matter to someone whose primary goals are simply being offered a job and not living out of his or her vehicle. So, for the moment, let's focus on success as being offered a position following an interview.

Table 12.3 Learning From Successful and Unsuccessful Interviewees

Category	Successful Interviewees	Unsuccessful Interviewees
Clear Career Goals	Able to clearly articulate their career goals and explain how those goals relate to the position for which they are interviewing	Provide no clear indication of career goals or how those goals might relate to the position for which they are interviewing
Identification with Employers	Mention the organization by name often and exhibit knowledge of the organization	Rarely mention the organization by name and demonstrate little to no previous knowledge of the organization
Support for Arguments	Provide illustrations, comparisons and contrasts, statistics, and even testimony from colleagues, supervisors, and instructors	Provide little evidence or support material when answering questions
Participation	Actively involved in the development of the interview throughout the entire process and spend a great deal of the interview talking	Play a passive role in the development of the interview and talk very little during the interview
Language	Use active, concrete, and positive words along with technical jargon associated with the position	Use passive, ambiguous, and negative words while using little or no technical jargon
Nonverbal Delivery	Speak loudly and confidently while using vocal variety and avoiding nonfluencies Incorporate meaningful gestures and support interviewer comments with positive nonverbal feedback such as nodding and smiling	Speak softly and provide little vocal variety while including longer-than-appropriate pauses Use few gestures and engage in distracting mannerisms such as rubbing their hands or shaking their legs Engage in little or no eye contact with the interviewer

SOURCE: Einhorn, L. J. (1981). An inner view of the job interview: An investigation of successful communicative behaviors. *Communication Education*, 30, 217–228. Taylor & Francis Ltd, www.tandfonline.com, reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Source: Einhorn, L. J. (1981). An inner view of the job interview: An investigation of successful communicative behaviors. *Communication Education*, 30, 217–228. Taylor & Francis Ltd, www.tandfonline.com, reprinted by permission of the publisher.

A great deal can be learned about such success from the people doing the hiring, and this is exactly what was done in a study conducted by Lois Einhorn (1981). As part of this study, the communicative choices of successful and unsuccessful interviewees were examined and categorized. [Table 12.3](#) outlines six key differences between successful and unsuccessful interviewee communication.

Answering Common Questions

You might be asked many questions during an interview, so it is impossible to cover them all here. At the same time, a few questions (in various forms and phrases) come up more than others do. In what follows, we address 10 of the most common questions and discuss some of the best ways to answer them during your interview.

Tell Me a Little About Yourself

When asking you to describe yourself during an interview, the interviewer could not care less about such items as your astrological sign, favorite restaurants, achievements in youth sports, or high school prom theme. An interviewer wants to know how you could benefit the organization, and you should answer accordingly. You should discuss your education, previous work experience, career highlights, and achievements, being sure to emphasize how this information fits the position and would benefit the organization.

What Are Your Greatest Strengths?

This sort of question will almost always arise during an interview in some form or another. Going into the interview, you should have a ready-made list of three or four strengths that you can discuss. Be sure to have concrete examples to support each one and show how these strengths will enable you to succeed at the position.

What Are Your Greatest Weaknesses?

If you say, when asked the preceding question, “Well, I’m pretty lazy, and things would probably start disappearing from around the office if you hired me,” you probably will not get the job. It is a responsibility of the interviewee to answer all questions honestly. Doing so is ethically appropriate—and employers may be able to uncover dishonesty (Reinhard, Scharmach, & Müller, 2013). That being said, you can certainly phrase your responses in a way that minimizes any weaknesses you might mention. Communication professionals often suggest the time-honored tactic of offering a weakness that sounds more like a strength. (“I am such a hard worker that I often get drained by the end of the day. And I tend to work too many weekends.”) However, such responses sound misleading, have become a bit cliché, and do not indicate a genuine ability or interest in recognizing and addressing areas in need of improvement. You may instead want to offer a genuine weakness along with what you are doing to overcome it. (“My Excel skills are in need of development, so I have been taking a night class devoted to the program.”) This tactic is especially helpful if there is an obvious skill or ability that you are lacking but that is required for the position or would benefit the position.

Would keeping his hands clasped throughout the interview improve or diminish this interviewee’s chances of being offered the position?



©iStockphoto.com/kupicoco

What Do You Know About This Organization?

When asked this question, you should exhibit an awareness of such items as the organization's mission, history,

growth, and future plans, and perhaps its key personnel. This is a prime opportunity to underscore your enthusiasm for the position and demonstrate how you could benefit the organization based on its present and future endeavors.

Why Do You Want to Work Here?

This question provides another opportunity to reinforce your knowledge of the organization. Likewise, this is another chance for you to discuss your enthusiasm for the position and the organization. Finally, this is a chance to show how your abilities suit the organization and how hiring you would be mutually beneficial. In doing so, you must provide clear, explicit explanations and support for your assertions. For instance, it is not enough to say you could help the organization expand; rather, you must fully explain how you could do so. Remember, the extent of support for arguments is one of the distinguishing characteristics of successful and unsuccessful interviewees.

What Is Your Ideal Job?

This is a tricky question because you should not necessarily say, “This one”—unless that is true, in which case you should discuss why. At the same time, if you mention a job other than the position for which you are applying, it may appear as if you are uninterested or you plan to move on as soon as something better comes along. Accordingly, you should play it safe and simply *describe* attributes of an ideal position (i.e., meaningful, challenging, fulfilling) while also discussing how the present position meets that description.

Why Do You Want to Leave Your Current Job?

Your current employer may be an idiotic, unprofessional, and unethical ogre who treats you like dirt and may very well eat small children, but you should probably not be that descriptive during an interview. If there are major problems, you may want to address but not dwell on them, taking partial responsibility while discussing what you have learned from the situation. Doing so may be especially wise if the interviewer is possibly aware of these problems. More often than not, however, it is best to focus on the positive attributes of your current (or previous) job, discussing how you have developed professionally and offering legitimate reasons for wanting to leave (e.g., moving to a new location, desire for professional growth). One of the reasons interviewers ask this question is to determine whether you will be happy and likely to stay if offered the position in their organization. Therefore, it is wise to discuss how this position better fits your professional goals and desires when compared with your current position.

What Are Your Expectations in Terms of Salary?

This is another very tricky question because you do not want to put yourself out of reach and you do not want to sell yourself short. Some people suggest placing the question back on the interviewer (“What do people with my experience usually earn here?”), but the question asks for *your* expectations for salary, not his or her expectations. A good way to address this question is by conducting research beforehand to learn the average salaries for a particular position in a particular area. (“Based on the research I have conducted, I would expect the salary to be between \$40,000 and \$48,000 each year in addition to incentive bonuses.”)

Where Do You See Yourself in 5 Years?

This question is usually asked to gauge a person’s ambitions, sense of reality, and fit with the company. Your answer will depend, of course, on where you actually want to be in your professional life 5 years from that moment. If you anticipate holding the very position for which you are interviewing, you should say so while also talking about the professional growth that will have taken place and your plans to enhance the organization through that position. If you anticipate moving through the ranks of the organization, your rise to the top should be properly ambitious and realistic. Further, you should stress your plans for professional growth and anticipated

contributions to the organization that would justify such advancement. If you anticipate not being with the organization in 5 years, indicating as much may be justifiable if the position is considered short-term. However, you should stress how your time at the organization would be mutually beneficial.

Table 12.4 Strategies for Answering Illegal Questions

Category	Illegal Questions	Strategies
Tactful Refusal	Where are your parents from?	I don't believe my parents' places of origin matter for this position.
Direct but brief answer	How did you injure your leg?	It was injured while I was jogging.
Tactful inquiry	Where do you go to church?	How does that question pertain to the position?
Neutralize concern	Do you have children?	Yes, but that would not interfere with my work here.
Exploit the question	Is English your native language?	No. My native language is Ket, which would be beneficial for this company since it plans on opening offices in central Siberia next year.

SOURCE: Stewart & Cash (2000, pp. 294–295).
Source: Stewart & Cash (2000, pp. 294–295).

Why Should We Hire You?

When asked this question, you should have a very good answer. If you do not know why the organization should hire you, the interviewer will surely not know either. It may sound as if the interviewer is questioning your abilities, but he or she simply wants to know how you would benefit the organization. Accordingly, this is a perfect opportunity to reinforce your strengths and abilities by discussing how they will benefit the organization.

Dealing With Illegal Questions

We previously discussed illegal questions that should not be asked during an interview, but just because they *should not be* asked does not mean that they *will not be* asked. Sometimes this violation is intentional, but at other times, it is unintentional. Whichever the case, you may very well be asked an illegal question while being interviewed for a position. How you deal with such a violation depends on such factors as your perception of its intentionality and, in all honesty, how badly you want the job. However, when it comes to the latter, if such violations occur in the interview process, you may need to seriously question whether the position and the employer are right for you. Charles Stewart and William Cash (2000, pp. 294–295) have offered strategies, outlined in [Table 12.4](#), that can be used if you are asked an illegal question during an interview and choose to continue the meeting.

Ethical Issue

If an interviewer inadvertently asks an illegal question, should he or she be reported to the proper authorities? Is it possible to distinguish purposeful and inadvertent behavior in such situations? Should the consequences be different?

Concluding an Employment Interview

When concluding an employment interview, it is important that positive relational connections among the participants be maintained. Important information needs to be offered during the conclusion of an interview, and certain functions must take place. So, let's explore the responsibilities of both interviewers and interviewees during the conclusion of an employment interview.

Interviewer Responsibilities

We will begin with the responsibilities of an interviewer. There are six things an interviewer must do during the conclusion of an interview: (1) provide a wrap-up signal, (2) summarize the interview, (3) ask for questions, (4) preview future actions and schedule, (5) offer thanks, and (6) engage in farewells.

Wrap-Up Signal

Responsibility for controlling an interview rests with the interviewer. Therefore, the interviewer should initiate the conclusion of the interview through a wrap-up signal, a phrase indicating the beginning of the conclusion (e.g., “As we near the end of the interview,” “As we begin to conclude our discussion”). An interviewer should always allow enough time for both parties to adequately perform their responsibilities of the conclusion, rather than trying to cram everything into the final moments of the interview.

wrap-up signal: a phrase, usually uttered by the interviewer, that signals the beginning of an interview’s conclusion

Summarize the Interview

The interviewer should provide a straightforward, relatively brief summary of the information provided by the interviewee during the interview. Doing so will make the interviewee feel understood and will allow him or her to make any necessary clarifications. Interviewers should be careful not to sound either overly enthusiastic or overly dismissive when summarizing this information. This approach will prevent giving the interviewee either false hope or the feeling of failure.

Ask for Questions

The interviewer should always ask the interviewee for questions about the position and about the organization. The answers to these questions should be truthful and provide an accurate reflection of the position and organization. Hiring someone who has been given false impressions may lead to negative feelings and the need to conduct another search should that person decide that the position and organization are not the good fit he or she was led to believe. The questions asked by an interviewee will also provide additional information about that person, including knowledge and motivations.

Preview Future Actions and Schedule

The interviewer should also provide the interviewee with information pertaining to what will happen next and the schedule for decisions about the position. Interviewers are not required to provide any guarantees or odds of employment, nor do they have to disclose how many other job candidates are being interviewed for the position.

Offer Thanks

It is common to erroneously perceive an employment interview as something an interviewer is doing as a favor or because of some grand benevolence. However, the interview is being conducted, in part, because an interviewer (representing an organization) is in need of someone’s professional services. Furthermore, the interviewee has invested time, energy, and emotion into the interview process. Accordingly, sincere thanks for participation in the interview should be offered.

Farewells

Finally, it is the interviewer’s responsibility to formally end the interview by offering a handshake and expressing a

professional farewell remark to the interviewee. There is certainly no reason to prolong the formal ending of the interview, but you should avoid making it seem as if you are rushing an interviewee out of the office. Otherwise, positive relational connections that may have been established will be diminished, and an otherwise constructive interview may be viewed negatively.

Is it the responsibility of the interviewer or the interviewee to bring a formal end to the interview?



©iStockphoto.com/annebaek

Interviewee Responsibilities

Along with the interviewer, the interviewee also has responsibilities during the conclusion of an interview. There are five things an interviewee must do during this part of an interview: (1) ask questions, (2) reinforce qualifications and enthusiasm, (3) inquire about the future schedule, (4) offer thanks, and (5) engage in farewells.

Ask Questions

Interviewees should have questions prepared and written out during their pre-interview preparations. As part of most interviews, an interviewer will ask whether an interviewee has any questions he or she would like to ask. Not asking any questions would indicate a lack of preparation and enthusiasm, so it is a good idea to have some developed. An interviewer may occasionally fail to provide an interviewer an opportunity to ask questions. If it is clear that the interview is ready to end and that the interviewer does not plan on asking for questions, it is acceptable to politely ask if you may pose a few questions. Remember, an interview is not just about whether an interviewee will be offered a position but also about whether an interviewee will accept the position, if offered.

Reinforce Qualifications and Enthusiasm

An interviewee should also briefly summarize the qualifications that make him or her an ideal candidate, along with underscoring his or her enthusiasm for the position. Doing so will help reinforce strengths and abilities while ensuring that key experiences, education, training, and other information have been conveyed. It may also assist the interviewer in remembering and documenting these items.

Inquire About Schedule (If Not Provided)

The interviewer is responsible for providing an interviewee with a schedule of future contact and decision making. However, it is perfectly acceptable to inquire about this information should an interviewer fail to provide it.

Offer Thanks

As mentioned earlier, an interviewer should be grateful for the time, energy, and emotion that an interviewee has put into the interview process. Likewise, an interviewee should be grateful for the work of an interviewer. As this chapter indicates, a lot of work is involved when interviewing people for a position, and items such as searching for job candidates (constructing the job announcement, gaining approval through human resources, advertising, reviewing applications) and completing the hiring process (deciding who gets the offer, negotiating compensation, dealing with human resources) are not even addressed. Accordingly, sincere thanks should be offered to the interviewer.

By the way . . . : Constant Evaluation



Remember that both an interviewer and an interviewee are being evaluated at all times, not just when questions are being asked and answered. An interviewee's behaviors before and following a meeting can be used when forming judgments about his or her overall character and professionalism. When interviewing, you should avoid any odd behaviors while waiting for the interview to take place or when leaving the interview location, while remembering to be respectful of the office staff—they generally deserve such respect regardless of whether you are attempting to make a good impression. Also, interview sessions occasionally include tours of buildings, introductions to members of the organization, meals, and transportation to or from the interview location. An interviewee will be evaluated throughout all of these situations, so make sure you remain aware that assessments are being made. Such occasions and activities are also a good opportunity to evaluate the interviewer and determine whether the position or organization is right for you.



©iStockphoto.com/Rawpixel Ltd

Questions to Consider

1. Is it fair to evaluate an interviewee aside from the formal interview setting?
2. Do you think information discovered by both interviewers and interviewees is more genuine in these settings?

Farewells

The interviewer should initiate the formal end of the interview. An interviewee should follow the lead of the interviewer and not unnecessarily prolong the departure. A smile and professional handshake will help maintain a positive relational connection with the interviewer. As an interviewee, you should keep the “By the Way” box in mind when making an exit, and remember that your evaluation as a job candidate will continue until you completely leave the interview location.

Post-Interview Responsibilities

Just because the interview has been concluded does not mean that the work is done. Both interviewers and interviewees have post-interview responsibilities that are vital to their professional development and that will improve interviewees' chances of being offered the position and help interviewers determine the best candidate for the organization. We begin our discussion with the responsibilities of an interviewer.

Interviewer Responsibilities

Following the interview, an interviewer must complete the following three tasks: (1) review the job candidate, (2) assess his or her personal performance, and (3) contact the interviewee with a final decision about the position.

Assess the Job Candidate

An interviewer should record his or her evaluation of the interviewee along with any additional thoughts or information as soon as possible following the interview. Recording impressions and other relevant information is especially important if many interviews are being conducted, and doing so as soon as possible will reduce the amount of information that is lost with time. Contact with references, documented experience, training, and other background information will be used when making final employment decisions, but information gleaned from the interview is also very important when making such decisions and should be properly documented. [Table 12.5](#) provides areas that can be addressed when evaluating a job candidate following the interview.

Table 12.5 Assessing a Job Candidate

- What are the candidate's strengths?
 - What are the candidate's weaknesses?
 - How does this candidate compare with other candidates?
 - How suitable does the candidate seem for the specific requirements of the position?
 - How would the candidate fit with the organization's climate?
 - How knowledgeable about the position and the organization does the candidate seem?
 - Are there any concerns about whether the candidate would be successful in this position?
 - What additional questions or information about the candidate need to be addressed?
-

Assess Personal Performance

The interviewer should also assess his or her performance to improve both personally and professionally. Focus equally on the positive and negative aspects of the interview performance. Regardless of how much interviewing experience you may possess, there is always room for improvement. [Table 12.6](#) provides a few questions you may pose when evaluating your performance as an interviewer.

Table 12.6 Assessing Performance as Interviewer

- Did I make the interviewee comfortable and establish the desired tone of the interview? How can I improve these aspects of the interview?
 - Did my questions elicit the information needed to evaluate the job candidate fully? How can I improve these questions to enhance the quality of the information gained?
 - Did I avoid illegal questions?
 - What nonverbal communication most benefited my performance? How can I improve my nonverbal communication?
 - How well did I listen during the interview? How can I improve my listening?
 - Were my responses to the questions posed by the interviewee complete and accurate? In what ways can I improve my responses?
 - Did I provide the interviewee with information about future contact and a realistic timetable for decisions about the position?
 - Was the interview conducted within the time constraints? Did all portions of the interview receive the appropriate amount of attention? How can I improve my use of time?
-

Contact Interviewee

The interviewer should ensure that *all* interviewees are contacted about the final decision. This contact should come either personally or through whatever method is used by the organization. Contacting interviewees is a professional courtesy that, unfortunately, is increasingly absent during many job searches. There exists no legitimate excuse for not contacting and acknowledging a job candidate who did not receive an offer. Not contacting job candidates is not only unprofessional but also cruel! Additionally, a person may not have been suited for this position, but he or she may be ideal for a future position. A lack of contact may prevent a well-suited candidate from applying for a future position—for good reason. A person who is mistreated during the interview process may eventually be in a position that could negatively influence the organization. Ultimately, interviewers should simply contact all interviewees because it is the humane thing to do.

Interviewee Responsibilities

An interviewee has three responsibilities following an interview: (1) assess the interview, (2) send a follow-up letter, and (3) avoid irritating the interviewer.

Assess the Interview

Following the interview, an interviewee should develop a candid assessment of his or her performance. The sooner this assessment can be conducted, the fresher the information and the more accurate the recollection. Strive to give equal attention to the aspects of the interview that went well and those that need improvement. Regardless of how you might feel about the interview, even the best interview can be improved, and an awful interview is never as bad as it seems. The best way to improve as an interviewee is through an honest assessment of your performance.

Table 12.7 Assessing Performance as Interviewee

- Which questions were answered well? What made these good answers?
 - What questions were not answered well? How can I improve these answers?
 - Were my questions appropriate? How can I improve these questions?
 - What nonverbal communication most benefited my performance? How can I improve my nonverbal communication?
 - How well did I listen during the interview? How can I improve my listening?
-

An interviewee should also develop an honest assessment of the position and organization. Developing this assessment will help determine whether the position is something you will accept if offered. It will also increase your understanding about careers and industries for which you are interviewing. [Tables 12.7](#) and [12.8](#) provide questions you can use to assess your performance, the position, and the organization.

Send Follow-Up Letter

An interviewee should also send a letter of thanks following the interview. In addition to thanking the interviewer for his or her time, it is an opportunity to reinforce interest in the position and remind the interviewer of your qualifications and experience. If something was not mentioned during the interview, this letter is a good opportunity to add that information. Interviewers occasionally ask for additional information or materials. These items can be included with the letter as well. Do not appear overly confident about the interview, nor should you apologize for a less-than-stellar interview. The letter should also be viewed as a professional correspondence. Accordingly, it should be respectful, well written, and free of grammatical errors. The letter can be handwritten, typed, or e-mailed, although some people disagree about which of these is most appropriate. People and organizations view technology in different ways ([Chapter 11](#)), so use your best judgment as to whether it will be deemed an appropriate method of correspondence.

Table 12.8 **Assessing Position and Organization**

- What are the pros and cons of the position?
 - What are the pros and cons of the organization?
 - How does this position compare with other available positions?
 - How does this organization compare with other organizations?
 - How has my understanding and evaluation of this career/
profession changed?
-

Avoid Irritating the Interviewer

This post-interview requirement may seem obvious, but you should avoid irritating the interviewer by inquiring about the progress of a job search. Do not send the interviewer numerous letters, leave phone messages every hour on the hour, or send the interviewer a Facebook friend request. We understand that waiting for an employment decision can be excruciatingly painful, but waiting is something that must be done. Irritating the interviewer will in no way increase your chances of being offered the position and will likely hinder those chances. If you have not heard from the interviewer by the time he or she indicated you would be contacted, however, it is acceptable to politely inquire about the status of the position. A number of variables can lead to a delay in the search process, so it is not uncommon, nor is it necessarily a personal affront against you. The organization may very well be busy renting a truck to dump a load of money on your doorstep.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are a cover letter and résumé?

A cover letter declares interest in a position, summarizes qualification, focuses attention on the résumé, and requests an interview. The key features of a cover letter include (1) a focus on a specific person, (2) identification of the position, (3) a summary of qualifications and the promotion of the résumé, (4) a reaffirmation of interest and a request for an interview, and (5) a professional and respectful sign-off. The purpose of a résumé is to present your credentials for a position in a clear and concise manner. The key elements of a résumé include (1) name and contact information, (2) career objective, (3) education and training, (4) experiences, (5) skills, and (6) activities.

2. What are the characteristics of an interview?

Interviews are goal-driven, structured, controlled, and unbalanced and feature questions and answers.

3. What are the types of interviews?

The following are the most common types of interviews: (1) employment interviews, (2) performance interviews, (3) exit interviews, (4) information-gaining interviews, (5) persuasive interviews, (6) problem-solving interviews, and (7) helping interviews.

4. What are the pre-interview responsibilities of interviewers and interviewees?

Before an interview, an interviewer must review application material, prepare questions and an interview outline, gather material, and ensure the interview begins on time. An interviewee must gather information, prepare questions, practice, form a professional personal appearance, bring materials, arrive on time, and turn off cell phone.

5. How should a person begin an employment interview?

During the beginning of an interview, participants must greet one another and establish proxemics, begin to negotiate the desired relational connection and tone of the interview, and establish the purpose and agenda of the interview.

6. What types of questions and questioning styles may an interviewer use?

The different types of questions that an interviewer may ask include (1) primary and secondary, (2) open and closed, and (3) neutral and leading. The interviewer may not ask questions that are potentially discriminatory. The type of control exerted by the interview can be either directive or nondirective.

7. How should interviewees respond to questions during an interview?

When answering the questions, interviewees should attempt to adjust the interview frame so you view the interview as an opportunity, a learning experience, and a dialogue rather than a test, a demonstration, or a monologue. They should also learn from successful interviewees, who articulate clear goals; identify with employers; provide support for arguments; participate in the development of the interview; use active, concrete words; and display dynamic nonverbal communication. Interviewees should be prepared to answer common questions asked during employment interviews and be prepared should they be asked an illegal question.

8. How should a person conclude an employment interview?

When concluding an employment interview as an interviewer, you should provide a wrap-up signal, summarize the interview, ask for questions, preview future actions and schedule, extend thanks, and offer farewells. When concluding an employment interview as an interviewee, you should ask questions, reinforce qualifications and enthusiasm, inquire about the schedule if it has not been offered, extend thanks, and offer farewells.

9. What are the post-interview responsibilities of interviewers and interviewees?

Following an interview, an interviewer must review the job candidate, assess his or her performance, and contact the interviewee with a final decision about the position. An interviewee must assess the interview, send a follow-up letter, and avoid irritating the interviewer.

Key Concepts

- bipolar questions 257
- closed questions 257
- cover letter 242
- directive interviews 258
- employment interviews 246
- exit interviews 247
- helping interviews 248
- information-gaining interviews 247
- interview 241
- leading questions 258
- mirror questions 256
- neutral questions 257
- nondirective interviews 258
- open questions 256
- performance interviews 246
- persuasive interviews 247
- primary questions 256
- probing questions 256
- problem-solving interviews 248
- résumé 243
- secondary questions 256
- self-fulfilling prophecy 260
- wrap-up signal 266

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask a friend to describe his or her most recent employment interview. What aspects of the interview went well? What aspects of the interview needed improvement? Having read this chapter, provide your friend with advice about how to improve his or her performance during interviews.
2. Ask a friend to participate in mock interviews with you. You should alternate between being an interviewer and being an interviewee. Evaluate your performances and pinpoint areas for improvement and development.
3. Ask a friend to review your cover letter and résumé. What suggestions for improvement does he or she make?

Media Connections

1. Watch an interview conducted on television or available online. What open and closed questions are included? Are the questions mostly neutral or mostly leading? Are secondary questions included? Is this a directive or a nondirective interview?
2. Watch an interview conducted on television or available online with the sound muted. What does the nonverbal communication of the interviewer and interviewee suggest relative to their relational connection and the tone of the interview? Next, watch the interview with the sound turned on. Does the verbal communication of the interviewer and interviewee match your perceptions of their relational connection and the tone of the interview conveyed nonverbally?
3. Find a clip from a fictional program featuring a lawyer questioning a witness. Next, find a clip from a television news program in which someone is being interviewed. Finally, find a clip from a late-night talk show in which a celebrity is being interviewed about his or her latest project. How would you rank these examples for being directive or nondirective? What features caused you to rank them in that order?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

Part IV Presentation Skills in Context

[Chapter 13 Preparing for a Presentation](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Christopher Futch

[Chapter 14 Developing a Presentation](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Steve Debenport

[Chapter 15 Giving Informative and Persuasive Talks](#)



©iStockphoto.com/sturti

[Chapter 16 Delivering a Presentation](#)



©iStockphoto.com/Izabela Habur

13 Preparing for a Presentation



©iStockphoto.com/Christopher Fletcher

Chapter Outline

[Presenting and Relationships](#)

[Getting Ready to Present](#)

[How Do You Analyze Audiences?](#)

[A Speaker's Relationship With the Audience](#)

[Relationship With the Issue and Position](#)

[Audience View of the Occasion](#)

[Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values](#)

[Selecting Your Topic](#)

[Consider Yourself](#)

[Consider Your Audience](#)

[Searching for a Topic](#)

[Determining the Purpose and Thesis of Your Presentation](#)

[General Purpose](#)

[Specific Purpose](#)

[Thesis Statement](#)

[Evidence and Support Material](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Facts and Opinions](#)

[Comparisons and Contrasts](#)

[Testimony](#)

[Examples](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Selecting and Using Evidence and Support Material](#)

[The Quantity of Evidence and Support Material](#)

[The Quality of Evidence and Support Material](#)

[Comparing the Effectiveness of Evidence and Support Material](#)

[Selecting and Searching for Sources \(Inventio\)](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What factors should you consider when analyzing and relating to an audience?
2. What factors should you consider when determining the topic of a presentation?
3. What strategies can you use when searching for the topic of a presentation?
4. What are the general purpose, specific purpose statement, and thesis of a presentation?
5. What types of evidence and support material can you use to develop a presentation?
6. What factors should you consider when selecting sources for a presentation?
7. What factors should you consider when conducting research and gathering material?

Why would you need to give a presentation? Surely the only way you ever do a presentation with a microphone or a podium shoved in front of you is when your class or your colleagues are sitting there, smiling with encouraging anticipation. To put this another way, many students do not see the relevance of speaking classes because they don't expect to run for mayor or to become political agitators or to address large anonymous crowds. For most students, "presentations" are merely a very testing occasion that they undertake with fortitude to earn a grade. However, you can observe the skillful—but very rare—performances of such masters as Steve Jobs or speakers in TED Talks and you can wonder if you will ever be as good as them. The next few chapters will give you lots of tips about the ways to make good presentations that will help reduce any nerves and will aim you at competence.

The TED Edition of this book costs a bit more and you probably do not need it for the life that you can reasonably expect to lead. You might like to consider, instead, that you could be asked to attend a wedding and propose a toast, to be asked to say some positive words about a retiring employee, to sing karaoke, to speak in a business meeting, to pitch a good idea to a city council, or to speak up in a parent–teacher meeting about an improvement that would benefit your children's education.

Presenting and Relationships

Presentation is a term that tends to give a misleading impression that the speaker is addressing an unknown and possibly hostile audience. In fact, the occasions when you are likely to have to speak to a large group are much more probably going to involve situations where you personally know the audience. You know some if not all of your classmates, your family members, your fellow Greeks if it comes to that, and by definition your friends who might be at the same wedding. They are not strangers; so why is it that everyone is so afraid of giving “a presentation” when these are essentially just a louder and larger version of a chat with friends but where you have a bigger audience and a podium to shelter behind?

Instead of seeing this as a terrifying situation, why not just use the wind of your relationships beneath your wings to soar in this enlarged scenario? All that is needed is a mental shift to see the term as referring essentially to a relational opportunity. Relationships serve as a foundation for all communication, and formal presentations are no exception. A relational connection between speakers and audiences is essential to effective presentations and must be considered in their preparation, development, and delivery.

At first glance, presentations—in which both the speaker and the audience play active roles based on and guided through socially established norms and expectations—may appear as merely the enactment of the social roles of speaker and audience. This appearance is true only if we emphasize the word *public* and talk about “public speaking” but if, however, we emphasize *presentations* then these more closely resemble the unique personal relationships that you share with your friends, family, and romantic partners in which the people are irreplaceable. Audience members’ characteristics, perceptions, and needs will govern what they expect from a speaker, and presenters must adapt to each audience accordingly.

Recognition of the relationship between speakers and an audience begins with acknowledging the similarities between presentations and personal relationships in your everyday life. In personal relationships, people seek to inform, understand, persuade, respect, trust, support, connect, satisfy, and evoke particular responses from one another, and such objectives exist in presentations. In personal relationships, people must adjust to one another just as speakers must adjust to each unique audience to satisfy the goals of any presentation. People transact their personal relationships through communication and create meanings and understandings that go beyond the simple exchange of symbols; the same transactions occur during presentations. Therefore, everything you already know about personal relationships and everyday communication can guide your understanding of presentations.

Getting Ready to Present

This chapter is dedicated to the *preparation* of presentations. We examine the groundwork that must be conducted before their development and delivery. The success of any presentation depends largely on what takes place during this phase of the process. We spend a great deal of time discussing how you can analyze the occasion and your audience. Both of these elements help you determine how to construct a presentation and is what speech texts normally cover, but we go further and teach you how to build on or develop your relational connection with the audience.

Such great presenters as the TED talk speakers work the hardest on the *preparation* of a talk. The delivery of what they have prepared becomes polished through a lot that happens beforehand. These factors include research, creativity, analysis of audience's expectations, structuring and layout of a talk, and practicing the craft of the delivery separately. For these reasons, we divide our chapters along similar lines. As we will point out, this is almost identical with the ancient Greek and Roman classical rhetorical canons of speech preparation into *inventio* (research, creativity), *dispositio* (layout), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (memory or practice), and *pronunciatio* (delivery). That is a free fact for later use!

In this chapter, we discuss the selection of topics and the development of a purpose and a thesis for your presentation. We consider the major matter of research to collect evidence and support material that you can use to develop your thesis, to support the claims made in your presentation, and to stimulate your audience. Finally, we explore the process of collecting and using quality sources, often vital to the success of presentations by making you more confident in talking to your audience. Of course, the one constant throughout our entire exploration of public presentations is the audience members and their relationship with the speaker, and here we begin.

By the way . . . : Dealing With Nerves



Before

©iStockphoto.com/diego_cervo



After

©iStockphoto.com/Ondine32

It is quite possible that you are feeling very nervous about delivering a “presentation.” Even talking about its preparation may be somewhat upsetting. You are not alone! These feelings are extremely common. We talk about “communication apprehension” —the technical term for the anxiety you may experience when about to speak to groups—in [Chapter 16](#). Skip ahead and read that part of the book first if you are particularly worried at the moment, before you read how to overcome those nerves. The fact is that you can make nerves into a strength of your presentation and we’ll explain how.

For one thing, most speakers worry about the unknown. If you do not know your audience, or do not know all of them, then you might be worried about the way you will be perceived by the folks you do not know. Your friends in the audience will be supporting you though, so you can build on that fact. Also, for novice presenters especially, the unknown involves not knowing how to prepare for, develop, and deliver a presentation.

After reading the next few chapters, you will know these unknown elements! In particular, if you follow our suggestions for preparing your talk, then you will go in to it walking tall and knowing that you know so much more about your topic than the audience does that *they* will be overawed and not you.

Questions to Consider

1. If you are nervous about speaking to groups, what concerns you the most? (See [Chapter 16](#))
2. If you are not overly concerned about speaking to groups or if you know someone else who is good at it, why do you think that is the case? (See [Chapter 16](#))

How Do You Analyze Audiences?

Analyzing audiences and adapting your delivery accordingly are fundamental to effective presentations. As a speaker, you must determine the best way to build on the positive relationship between yourself and audiences and between audiences and the material. In what follows, we discuss various factors that will direct your approaches to the audience. We provide suggestions and guidelines for developing effective presentations.

A Speaker's Relationship With the Audience

Many presentations that you may be called on to deliver will involve entertaining the audience, though some will be more serious. Although the general principles in every case are very similar, for the rest of the chapter we will focus on presentations that involve informing or persuading an audience. The principle of building on a relationship with the audience remains the same. An audience, for example, may consist of colleagues, supervisors, family, classmates, group members, or community members, and their preexisting relationships with you will influence how they view you personally and what they expect from your presentation.

An audience's views of you personally have an effect on audience members' attention to and acceptance of your presentations. A speaker's credibility is crucial to the success of a presentation, but in many cases (friends and family, especially) that credibility already exists. In other contexts, the most successful individuals tend to be those who are (a) considered knowledgeable about the topic, (b) trusted, and (c) concerned about the audience. Note the first one of these; it is particularly important.

These characteristics touch on the three primary dimensions of credibility: knowledge, trustworthiness, and goodwill (Gass & Seiter, 2015). Notice that these components are usually assumed by those with whom you share a personal relationship. Actually, perceptions of credibility are often based largely on the type of relationship shared with someone (i.e., you trust a person because he or she is your *friend*, or you distrust someone because he or she is your *enemy*).

Ethical Issue

Considering concerns of privacy, what limitations would you place on audience analysis? What sorts of information are legitimate for a speaker to collect about an audience? To what lengths do you think a person is justified in going when gathering information about people for use in the development of a presentation?

Relationship With the Issue and Position

If your presentation involves informing or persuading your audience about a particular issue (for example, “Why diesels are better than gas-powered engines”), then you must determine an audience’s knowledge about the issue before you jump right in. Are they all mechanical engineers or are most of them majoring in French? If they are engineers, how much can you reasonably assume that they know about combustion processes? If they are French majors, then what is it about the compression ratio that may grab their attention? Can you teach them the French word for crankshaft (*vilebrequin*, in case you do not already know ☺)?

An audience may have a positive, a negative, or an impartial view of a topic before a speaker even begins to speak. You must consider existing interest or evaluation when preparing a presentation.

Of course, when you are talking with friends, a lot of what you say will be based on values that they agree with anyway (see [Chapter 8](#) on relationships and similarity). Recognizing that an audience may immediately agree with your position, however, will assist you in determining the best ways to build on the existing relational connection with the audience as you develop your presentation.

An audience’s assumed level of knowledge about an issue will influence a good speaker’s presentation. The audience may be very knowledgeable or have little knowledge about the issue; for example, your classmates may or may not know about your topic in depth but they may have some background. Work colleagues hearing you present on a work-related matter can be presumed to have an array of understanding of the background to the topic—and you can build on that knowledge to sharpen your presentation without spending a lot of time on background matters that they already know about.

The level of audience understanding of an issue will dictate the depth and intricacy of a speech, evidence and support material, the language and whether terminology must be defined or explained, and how much time must be spent orienting the audience to the topic. However, if you have prepared your presentation well, then you can be sure that you know more than they do about the topic and you will be ready to knock it out of the park. Also, you needn’t be scared of trick questions if the audience is friendly in the first place and you are well prepared.

If you know an audience will disagree with your position, should you change your position to match that of the audience?



©iStockphoto.com/Thinkstock

Audience View of the Occasion

How the audience views the occasion will also affect your speech, including the extent to which the audience desires to listen to your presentation. An “occasion” could be a funeral, a wedding, a farewell party, an election debate, a presentation to class, a pitch to business associates, a declaration of independence, a graduation, or a final farewell to your graduating class. Each of these occasions requires a different style of presentation, and the preparations for each of them will be different according to the needs of the occasion.

A captive audience is required to listen to your presentation. Classmates may be listening to your speech because of an attendance policy, or colleagues may be listening to your presentation because your employer has required their attendance. A captive audience does not mean a hostile audience, but you must prepare that much more carefully how to make such an audience appreciate the value of your presentation and enjoy it.

A voluntary audience listens to your speech because its members have personally chosen to be there. This may be because they have a particular interest in the occasion and your presentation as part of it, your topic, or a particular need, such as wanting to learn how to accomplish a task, to learn more about your topic, or to learn your particular “take” on it. Although they may already recognize their connection with the topic, you must reinforce their relationship with the material and establish why they should listen to your presentation specifically.

captive audience: an audience that is required to listen to your presentation

voluntary audience: an audience that listens to your speech because its members have personally chosen to be there

Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

Armed with an understanding of an audience's probable attitudes, beliefs, and values, a speaker can do a better job in working with them. Although attitudes and beliefs are typically regarded as relatively stable, they are nevertheless subject to influence and gentle massaging, but in different ways, so we will spend a little time on the technical distinction between them. An important point to bear in mind from the start is that attitudes, beliefs, and values are not facts. Someone may hold an attitude, belief, or value with great strength and force, but that does not make it a fact. One of the skills of a good speaker is to back up claims and beliefs with evidence, the point being to convince an audience that a rational decision about such matters is to follow the speaker and adopt the belief that is proposed. As far back as Parmenides and Plato, philosophers have distinguished between something that is believed (*doxa*) and something that is known to be true (*episteme*—"episteme"), and in modern times, we make this distinction using the terms *opinion* and *fact*. A well-known response to a claim of fact made by another speaker is, "Well, that's just your opinion."

Attitudes are learned predispositions to evaluate something in a *positive* or *negative* way that guide thinking and behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, you may dislike the taste of a particular food, which will guide your response to decline eating it should a plateful be passed your way at dinner. Attitudes usually do not change much but instead tend to remain constant. Generally, the longer you hold an attitude and the more support you discover in its favor, the less likely you will be to change it. Audiences' preexisting attitudes will influence their view of you as a speaker, the topic, the occasion, and even the evidence provided to develop and support an argument. Frankly, there is not much that you can do about this, especially in a brief presentation, though we all try by dressing professionally, smiling a lot, and complimenting the audience. (Listen for the stand-up comics who say such things as "Wow! What a great audience you are!")

Beliefs, or what people hold to be *true* or *false*, are formed like attitudes through your direct experience, as well as through media, personal relationships, and cultural views of the world. Knowing the beliefs of an audience can assist in determining whether certain statements or views will be accepted without the need for support or whether the audience will need to be convinced by compelling evidence. Such social issues as abortion, climate change, gun control, health care, and illegal immigration, for example, encompass many opposing and strongly held beliefs, and no speaker is likely to sway convinced believers on one side to switch immediately to the other. The message, then, is that you should not try to switch people from one side to the other, but you might be able to move them away from their held positions or at least to loosen up their confidence in the strength of their beliefs. Often those small victories are enough to make a presentation feel successful, whereas you probably will not ever convince God to become an atheist.

Values are deeply held and enduring judgments of *significance* or *importance* that often provide the basis for both beliefs and attitudes. The values you hold are what you consider most important. When listing values, people in our culture often include such things as life, liberty, family, truth, knowledge, education, personal growth, health, and wealth. Although all the items on this list might sound good to you, people do not agree on their importance. For instance, a person may not view wealth as all that important a goal, and not all people believe in the importance of education.

Demographics are characteristics of a person or audience that can help you gain insight into the experiences, interests, needs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of that person or audience members. Demographic characteristics of an audience include such things as age, gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, political membership, religion, and place of residence. Demographic characteristics provide generalized information, but that does not necessarily give an accurate picture of any specific person in the audience. Just because someone is the same age as you, for instance, does not mean that person possesses the same knowledge, experiences, and so forth that you do. However, it may be more likely that people of the same age share some similarities that set them apart from people of a different age.

Is it ethical to draw on your relationship with someone when attempting to influence that person?

By the way . . . : Given Beliefs



Depending on an audience's beliefs, some statements or claims of belief may need more or less support. If claiming that "the Earth is round," you might feel fairly confident that an audience will not look for proof, and unless that statement is critical to your argument, you will not need to include a great deal of support and development. Statements such as this are considered *given beliefs*—that is, most people in the audience hold the same perspective.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you consider to be given beliefs? (Be careful when compiling your list. People do not always view the world in the same way—and some do not want to go near the edge in case they fall off.)
2. Has anyone ever spoken to you using what he or she considered a given belief but you did not? If so, how did that direct the argument?

attitudes: learned predispositions to evaluate something in a positive or negative way that guide people's thinking and behavior (like/dislike)

beliefs: What a person holds to be true or false

values: deeply held and enduring judgments of significance or importance that often provide the basis for both beliefs and attitudes

demographics: characteristics of a person or an audience that can provide insight into the knowledge, experiences, interests, needs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of that person or members of an audience

Skills You Can Use: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values in Everyday Communication



Most of what is included in this chapter can be used to improve your skills as a communicator. However, you can expand your skills beyond what is offered here. When discussing attitudes, beliefs, and values, we are focused on their use in analyzing audiences for presentations. However, the same ideas can be used when attempting to influence a single person.

Selecting Your Topic

We have discussed the audience in ways that should help your research and preparation for the development and the eventual delivery of your presentation. On many occasions, you will already know the purpose of your presentation and whether it is to entertain, inform, or persuade. In cases of preparation for a speech class, however, you must first determine the topic of your presentation. For some speaking occasions, a topic or an area will already be established for you, whether it is a wedding toast or presentation to a city council to pitch that bridge you just designed. In some classes, though we are not fans of this approach, topics are assigned to you. We think it makes more sense to give novice speakers the advantage of confidence through expertise by letting them pick their own topics, at least for the first assignment. Some topics chosen by our own students are extremely varied and based on their own knowledge of their somewhat strange interests, but we have no reason to suppose that students elsewhere are less intrigued by the world or less expert in their own particular interests (look at [Table 13.1](#)).

If an audience listening to this speaker had been required to attend, what type of audience would it be?



©Eyecandy Images/Thinkstock

We have been astonished, entertained, and educated through the topics about which our students are already experts and that they enjoy presenting with confidence already. After their first speeches, we can focus our instruction on the composition of arguments. Once performance anxiety is partially dealt with or put in perspective, speakers can work out how to approach their preparation for other topics systematically.

Other occasions may require you to select the topic yourself. If you have that choice, then always pick something that interests you and about which you are expert or at least more knowledgeable than the average bear. This will immediately give you expertise that translates into confidence in delivery: You know what you are talking about, and you know that you know more than the audience members will know. That gives you a head start. Even when a topic has already been established for you, you probably have some flexibility about the way you present it to your audience, so you can prepare for it in a way that suits your personal style. Coming up with a topic is sometimes challenging, so in what follows, we discuss how to select your topic and factors you should consider in

that selection. (If the topic was assigned to you, then these tips still work, but you will need to do more research to find out a lot more about the new topic.)

Table 13.1 Show What You Know

Examples of Show What You Know topics used at the University of Iowa are the following:

Attending and Assisting a Swine Birth	Four Things I Learned About Being a Student
Basic CPR	How to Stay Safe on Campus
How to Maximize Suitcase Space	I Threw Away My iPhone
How to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse	Make a Perfect Sandwich
Dog Training Tips	Making Fire With Ice
How to Make Money Using Cards	Migraine Headaches
How to Make Wenzhou Sweet Rice	Multiracial Romance
How to Wash a Dish	Problems with the US Highway Infrastructure
Hindu Weddings	Select and Care for a Plant
Knitting Without Needles	Selling Shoes on the Internet
Staining Wood	The Assassination of Julius Caesar
How to Throw a Boomerang	Things My Uncle Told Me
Do the Moonwalk	Two Great Conjuring Tricks
Drawing a Buddhist Mandala	Advice for a New Student

SOURCE: University of Iowa. (2016). Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning (IDEAL) (<http://ideal.uiowa.edu/>). Matt Gilchrist developed the SWYK project in collaboration with Brittney Thomas, coordinator of the Learning Commons, and Katie Hassman, undergraduate engagement librarian.

Source: University of Iowa. (2016). Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning (IDEAL) (<http://ideal.uiowa.edu/>). Matt Gilchrist developed the SWYK project in collaboration with Brittney Thomas, coordinator of the Learning Commons, and Katie Hassman, undergraduate engagement librarian.

Consider Yourself

The best place to begin is by considering your knowledge, your experiences, and what you find important.

Knowledge

Consider areas about which you are knowledgeable. You do not need an advanced degree to claim knowledge about a subject. You may not be a certified chef, but you may know how to make an excellent omelet; you may not possess a degree in computer programming, but you may know how to develop a website. Many people possess knowledge of particular areas they do not believe others would consider worthy of acknowledgment. For instance, you may have every episode of *Game of Thrones* practically memorized, you may know the story of how your favorite video game was developed, or you may have experience working in the food services industry. The simple trick is to turn such experience into benefit by using it when preparing a talk.

Experiences

You may have derived much of your knowledge about a topic from your experiences. Just as people sometimes underappreciate their knowledge base, so they underestimate the value of their experiences. Consider where you grew up. Contemplate your numerous life experiences during your search for a topic. Reflect on the jobs you have had. Ponder the activities and organizations in which you have been involved at your school and in your community. Think about your experiences with family and friends. You may consider many topic areas by simply looking at your own life. Selecting a topic from your experiences will also provide benefits similar to those gained by selecting a topic about which you have specific knowledge.

Importance

Search for a topic that you consider important or on which you have special and detailed knowledge that your audience does not. If it is important that you feel comfortable in giving a presentation, then it is also important that you talk about something on which you are an expert. You may consider some topics important because they have direct impact on your life; do not underestimate the importance of things that are meaningful to you. Selecting a topic that you consider important will effortlessly enhance the overall quality of your presentation, especially when it comes to establishing credibility and connecting relationally with your audience. If you do not think your topic is important, then why would the audience? Conversely, if you care about the topic, then your audience will soon pick up on your enthusiasm because it is genuine and unforced.

Consider Your Audience

Just as you should consider yourself when selecting a topic, you must also establish a relationship between the audience and your topic so that they are drawn into it. During the introduction of your speech, you must tell the audience members how the topic affects them and why they should listen to you. This will assist you in maintaining audience attention, connecting with audience members, and enhancing your credibility. You do not have to select a life-altering topic and introduce it with gongs and drums. A presentation about a new smartphone may not save the lives of your audience members but could influence them in a useful way. Also do not think that you must select a topic they already know is important or meaningful in their lives. Some of the most powerful speeches introduce audiences to a topic about which they previously knew nothing or enable them to view an issue in an entirely new way, thanks to the expertise of the presenter.

Searching for a Topic

People sometimes struggle to find an appropriate topic for a presentation. If you find yourself doing this, the following methods can help make the search easier.

Brainstorming is a method of gathering and generating ideas without immediate evaluation. Essentially, you just write down everything that comes to mind for a specific (generally brief) period. You do not evaluate these ideas as they come; you simply gather a list of ideas. You also generate ideas because one idea may trigger another, which in turn may trigger another . . . and another, and so on. So, sit down at a computer or with a pen and paper; select a brief time limit, such as 5 minutes; and then start writing. Before you know it, you will have a list of topics to consider. Once this list is compiled, you can critically examine these topics, singling out some ideas as possible speech topics and eliminating others. Note how we phrased this: The point is to keep going for the full period allotted. Do not just stop once you just think of a topic. Brainstorming is to see where you end up after you have used the whole time!

You can use two types of brainstorming when searching for a topic. When open brainstorming, you generate a list of ideas with no topic boundary. When topic-specific brainstorming, you generate a list of ideas encompassing a specific topic (e.g., U.S. civil rights movement, flying a glider, going shopping, surviving in the wild).

brainstorming: a method of gathering and generating ideas without immediate evaluation

open brainstorming: generating a list of ideas with no topic boundary

topic-specific brainstorming: generating a list of ideas encompassing a specific topic

Table 13.2 Individual Inventory Categories

Favorite television programs	What I learned in school
Favorite movies	The best place I ever went
Favorite music	The most interesting person I ever met
Favorite Internet sites	My experience as a driver
Favorite magazines	Sports I love to play
Last book I read for fun	Selling [shoes] on the Internet
Most valuable possession	My most embarrassing moment
Heroes or people I admire	Two great conjuring tricks
Things that annoy me	This I believe
Favorite food	My most influential teacher
Goals	I was a teenage mutant . . .
Fears	My favorite toy
Employment	Living my life
Hometown	Growing up: some hints for the next generation
Things I do for fun	Migraine headaches
Favorite classes in school	My roommate
Interesting or memorable experiences	Basic survival techniques in college
Qualities that make me unique	Don't do this at home

When searching for a topic, look at *current events*. Examining a news site, reading a newspaper, watching a news channel, or listening to a radio program will provide a ready-made list of topics for you to consider. Even if you do not select a current issue, these topics may trigger ideas about one you can talk about.

Another way to derive such a topic is by compiling an individual inventory, or a listing of your preferences, likes, dislikes, and experiences. You are a person with distinct experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, so compiling an inventory will help you pinpoint your distinguishing characteristics. Create your inventory by providing items for the categories listed in [Table 13.2](#) or any other categories. This exercise may also provide you with a topic for your speech or trigger another topic to examine.

Getting *suggestions from other people* can also help you establish a topic for your presentation. An especially helpful method when speaking to an organization or at an event, asking the person who provided the invitation about past speakers and topics, as well as what sort of topics the audience might enjoy, often provides an invaluable perspective on topic selection and the audience.

individual inventory: a listing of a person's preferences, likes, dislikes, and experiences used when searching for a possible speech topic

Determining the Purpose and Thesis of Your Presentation

Effective presentations have a clear goal and an explicit purpose. Typically, they articulate this in a thesis. In this section, we discuss the general purpose, the specific purpose, and the development of a thesis.

General Purpose

The general purpose is the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation. Most presentations achieve one of the following three basic objectives: (1) inform, (2) persuade, or (3) “evoke” (a term we will explain later). When your general purpose is to inform, you want to develop audience understanding of a topic through definition, clarification, demonstration, or explanation of a process. When your general purpose is to persuade, you desire either to influence audience beliefs, values, or attitudes or to influence audience behaviors. The types of presentations you will encounter most often and be asked to develop most likely in class are informative and persuasive presentations. [Chapter 15](#) is dedicated to these types of presentations, so we will not spend a great deal of time discussing them here.

What type of speech is most likely to occur at a wedding or another celebratory event?



Corbis/VCG/Getty Images

Some presentations seek to generate an emotion from the audience. Jo Sprague, Douglas Stuart, and David Bodary (2016) use the term evoke to describe presentations designed to “entertain, inspire, celebrate, commemorate, or bond or to help listeners to relive a significant event” (p. 74) from the audience. Textbooks, such as this one, often use the term *entertain* to describe these presentations, but we agree with Sprague and colleagues that this term detracts from the emotional depth that these presentations can achieve and limits them to “fun” only. They can elicit happiness, sadness, joy, fear, excitement, reverence, or a combination of emotions from the audience (e.g., at a graduation, wedding, a funeral, or an anniversary).

Although one general purpose usually dominates, it is fair to say that most presentations contain elements from all three types of speeches. As you explain how to accomplish something, you can use your relationship with audience members to convince them that they must enact certain steps to achieve the desired outcome. You may also entertain or inspire the audience members as you teach them how to conduct each step. As you convince the audience members that something is true, you also inform them of reasons they should believe you. Emotional responses often provide a way of persuading the audience to do something or enact a particular behavior.

Disciplinary Debate: A Little Bit of All Three



Any speech will have a single general purpose and will be further guided by a specific purpose. However, we believe there are elements of all three types of speeches in any presentation (inform, persuade, evoke).

Questions to Consider

1. Can you think of any presentations in which this would not be the case?
2. Why do you think it is still important to ensure your speech has a single general purpose and a specific purpose?

general purpose: the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation

inform: to develop audience understanding of a topic through definition, clarification, demonstration, or explanation of a process

persuade: either to influence audience beliefs, values, or attitudes or to influence audience behaviors

evoke: term used to describe presentations intended to prompt an emotional response

specific purpose: exactly what a person wants to achieve through a presentation

Specific Purpose

The specific purpose of your presentation, or exactly what you want to achieve through your presentation, differs from the general purpose in that it is not a broad objective. Rather, the specific purpose of your speech encompasses the narrow, explicit goal of your presentation and entails the precise impact you want to have on your audience. For example, you may wish to encourage them specifically to stand up more often during the day (rather than have the general purpose of making them think more about health issues more deeply). Developing a specific purpose statement helps ensure that you personally stay focused on achieving an explicit goal through your presentation.

The specific purpose statement should include the goal of your speech, and this goal should correspond with the general purpose of the speech. The goal of a speech might be to inform or explain (*speech to inform*), to persuade or convince (*speech to persuade*), or to reminisce or excite (*speech to evoke*).

The purpose of this presentation is to inform . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to convince . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce . . .

The specific purpose statement should also refer to the audience to underscore its importance in the development of the presentation.

The purpose of this presentation is to inform *the audience* . . .

The purpose of this presentation is to convince *the audience*. ..

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce with *the audience*. ..

Finally, the specific purpose statement should include the explicit focus of the presentation.

The purpose of this presentation is to inform the audience *about the importance of standing up, rather than sitting down, on improving health*.

The purpose of this presentation is to convince the audience *to volunteer with the city's literacy program*.

The purpose of this presentation is to reminisce with the audience *about Jan Richard's contributions to the revitalization of the downtown business district here in Xbox City*.

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement, or what you will argue or develop throughout the entire presentation, encapsulates your entire speech. A statement rather than a question and written in a single sentence, the thesis of your presentation should focus on a single idea. Be as explicit as possible and let the thesis guide your entire presentation. This will help the audience feel connected to the presentation as they heard you outline it at the start.

Standing up occasionally during the day will improve your circulation.

Volunteering with the city's literacy program provides benefits for volunteers and for the city.

Jan Richard's tireless efforts on behalf of the downtown business district have resulted in its revitalization.

thesis statement: what a person argues or develops throughout a presentation

Evidence and Support Material

First, find your evidence! Giving a presentation requires knowledge; knowledge requires discovery; discovery requires research. As you may recall from an earlier comment, this is the stage of preparation for a speech that classical rhetoricians called *inventio*. Your first task after you have picked (or been assigned) your topic is to do research to find out a lot more about it and to “invent” uses for the evidence. This is a key and fundamental step. Research is unavoidable and highly desirable if you want your presentation to be any good and if you want to progress from *doxa* (mere opinion and belief) to *episteme* (factually based information). Presentations are not just about what you think, but also about what you know. What you know is based at least partly on what other people have discovered. Don’t use a presentation as a chance to spout your own unsupported opinions; find evidence to support them and back them up. Then you are entitled to your opinions because they are researched; you are not entitled to your opinions just because they are yours.

You will use evidence and support material to develop your thesis and back the claims made throughout your presentation. In the [next chapter](#), we discuss the creation of an argument, which essentially consists of a thesis and support for that thesis. Your thesis will be supported by main points, which will in turn be supported by subpoints. These main points and (especially) subpoints will consist of evidence or support material, such as definition, facts and opinions, comparisons and contrasts, testimony, examples, and statistics. In what follows, we discuss the various sorts of evidence and support material you can use for your presentation and then discuss guidelines for their selection, making them especially relevant to your audience.

Ethical Issue

Organizations and administrations sometimes misrepresent statistics, facts, and other types of evidence and support material for what they would consider the “greater good.” Do you consider this use of evidence and support material justified? How would you support your response?

Definitions

Definitions provide the meaning of a word, phrase, or topic. Definitions assist audience understanding and help clarify your topic of discussion. The abstract and ambiguous nature of language often requires you to define terms for your audience. Contextual factors can enable an audience to determine the meaning of a word, and the different meanings may be obvious to you, but not always to the audience. You must be sure that they know what you are talking about before you go on to develop points about the topic. One of your authors just went to a presentation by an upper administrator on “F&A Returns” and after 5 minutes of the talk had to ask the speaker what he was talking about because he had never explained it. The speaker was so familiar with the term himself that he assumed everyone in the audience knew what it meant. This is a *rookie mistake*, even though the speaker is a senior university administrator. (See [Chapter 14](#) on preparing your purpose and thesis statement)

Operational definitions are concrete explanations of meaning that are more original or personal than what a dictionary might provide. This type of definition is often necessary to clarify what you mean by a word or phrase and to focus audience perspective on a particular aspect of that word or phrase. For example, if you discuss *Internet activity*, do you mean all activities taking place online? Or do you want to distinguish between exploratory use of Internet sites and person-to-person correspondence through e-mail? This distinction will make a big difference in your talk.

definition: evidence or support that provides the meaning of a word or phrase

operational definition: concrete explanation of meaning that is more original or personal than a dictionary definition

Facts and Opinions

As you gather material to develop your presentation, you will discover both facts (*episteme*) and opinions (*doxa*) concerning your topic. In many instances, you will find both within the same article, Internet site, or news feed. Facts are provable or documented truths that you can use as evidence to support your claims. “The first broadcast of *The Big Bang Theory* occurred on September 24, 2007,” “Richard Nixon was the only American president to resign from office,” and “Largemouth bass spawn each spring when water temperatures average around 65°F” are facts because they can be proved or demonstrated through credible documentation.

Facts and opinions are not the same but are often used interchangeably, and people often confuse them, especially when they treat their own beliefs as facts. Opinions are personal beliefs or speculations that have not been proved or verified. “Using topwater baits is the most exciting way to catch largemouth bass” and “*The Big Bang Theory* is the funniest television program ever produced” are opinions because they cannot be proved even though many people may find the use of topwater baits exciting and appreciate the humor of *The Big Bang Theory*. Indeed, the use of superlatives (“most,” “funniest,” “best”) is usually questionable and unverifiable, but it is such a common claim because advertisers use it all the time (“X is the best movie since celluloid was invented,” “Duck & McMahan WonderClean get your dishes the cleanest,” “The best way to get an A in a class is to study all night and drink lots of caffeine”).

You can use both facts and opinions in support of your presentation, but you should manage them in different ways. As with all types of evidence and support, the facts and opinions used in your presentation must come from cited, credible sources. Opinions have not been proved or verified, so it is especially important that the audience perceive and recognize the source as credible. Further, facts are more likely than opinions to be able to stand alone without any additional support. Above all, a speaker’s perceived credibility and relationship with the audience members will influence reaction to these types of evidence and support.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Everyday Support

Whenever you attempt to convince a family member to do something, or whenever you explain or describe something to a friend, you are essentially engaged in argument. Listen for examples of these activities in your everyday life, and pay close attention (as we have defined it here: see definitions of terms) to the evidence and support material being used.

Questions to Consider

1. Were some types of evidence and support material more obvious than others?
2. Do the people or the goal of the communication influence the types of evidence and support material?

Comparisons and Contrasts

Comparisons and contrasts are often used to assist audience understanding. Comparisons demonstrate how things are similar, and contrasts demonstrate how things are different. Sometimes used to show trends among concepts, ideas, or objects, comparisons can also establish connections between two items to associate their favorable or unfavorable characteristics. You may, for example, compare profitable yet unstable investment programs with the dot-com industry of the late 1990s in attempts to warn investors of possible risks. Contrasting is frequently used to distinguish something supported by the speaker from something considered negative by the audience. For example, you could contrast a new recycling program for the city with an existing, unpopular recycling program. In all cases of comparisons and contrasts, the audience must be familiar with at least one of the items being compared before the contrast/comparison has any value.

Testimony

Testimony consists of declarations or statements of a person's findings, opinions, conclusions, or experience. Three types of testimony are (1) personal testimony, (2) expert testimony, and (3) lay testimony.

facts: provable or documented truths that you can use as evidence to support your claims

opinions: personal beliefs or speculations that, even though perhaps based on facts, have not been proved or verified

comparisons: demonstrate or reveal how things are similar

contrasts: demonstrate or reveal how things are different

testimony: declarations or statements based on a person's findings, opinions, conclusions, or experience

Personal testimony comes from oneself and is enhanced by one's connection with the audience. Discussing your own experience with a topic, a powerful method of enhancing audience members' perceptions of your credibility and their relationship with you as a speaker, often conveys to the audience that the topic has special significance for you and that you possess exceptional insight that can enhance understanding of the topic. Though important, your personal testimony is not normally enough to support an entire presentation unless the audience sees the presentation as one where you "bear witness" to some event that may be of interest to them.

Expert testimony comes from someone with special training, instruction, or knowledge in a particular topic. If you give a speech about dental hygiene, for example, you may include testimony from a dentist. Of course, you must observe certain ethical considerations when using expert testimony. First, make absolutely clear that this testimony is not your own by accurately referencing the source. This action prevents you from plagiarizing the material and enhances the believability of the statements you make. Second, critically evaluate the testimony because your audience may not. People often readily believe testimony from experts because they evaluate these messages less critically than those they receive from someone without expertise in an area. Therefore, as an ethical speaker, you should make certain that this testimony is as accurate and truthful as possible.

Lay testimony comes from someone without professional or qualified expertise in a particular area but who has extensive personal experience. For instance, in a speech about dental hygiene, you might use the testimony from someone who has not followed a proper dental hygiene regimen and has only one tooth or wears entirely false teeth. Lay testimony can be just as meaningful and powerful as personal or expert testimony, but make sure this testimony is worthwhile and comes from a legitimate source. If your lay testimony comes from an interview, make sure the person you interview is a legitimate source rather than just a convenient one, such as your roommate or Crazy Auntie Lil, your uncle's special friend. Lay testimony from your roommate or your uncle's friend may be legitimate, but the personal connection will require you to provide additional justification for its inclusion.

Examples

Examples, or specific cases used to represent a larger whole to clarify or explain something, can involve the concrete or tangible (a schnauzer is an example of a dog) or the abstract or intangible (the ability to vote is one example of the many freedoms we enjoy).

Examples can serve two very important functions in your presentation. First, they can help an audience better understand your discussion and relate to the material. The audience members may not know what a particular term means but providing an example will help them comprehend it. When using examples, it is important that you select those most familiar to your audience. Second, examples may also help your audience better grasp the importance or significance of an issue. Providing examples of injuries suffered by someone abused by a spouse may help the audience grasp the reality of *domestic violence* and appreciate its horrible results.

Illustrations, or examples offered in an extended narrative form, can enhance audience understanding and help you maintain their attention. The most effective illustrations use vivid imagery, engaging audience senses virtually through your description of the example. For example, you might illustrate possible difficulties encountered when visiting the financial aid office on campus and your student colleagues in the audience will feel a familiar memory coming into their heads. Furthermore, audience members often remember vivid illustrations long after they have forgotten other support material and evidence that you provided during your presentation.

personal testimony: evidence given by a speaker that is based on personal experience or shared experience with the audience

expert testimony: evidence from someone with special training, instruction, or knowledge in a particular area

lay testimony: evidence from someone without expertise but who possesses relevant experience

examples: specific cases used to represent a larger whole to clarify or explain something

illustrations: examples offered in an extended narrative form

Table 13.3 Statistics in Use: Sizes, Trends, and Associations

Size (frequency)	According to the Surgeon General, two out of three Americans experience problems with acid reflux.
Size (scope)	According to the <i>Mayberry Gazette</i> , 25% of Camden County residents overpaid an average of \$570 in local taxes last year.
Trend	According to noted economist Jake N. Elwood, the amount of credit card debt accrued by the average American has tripled in the past 5 years.
Association	The amount of money a person earns each year is related to his or her level of education. An article from <i>Money Quarterly</i> revealed that individuals who have earned a bachelor's degree can expect to earn an average of \$15,000 more each year than those with only a high school diploma. Individuals who have earned their master's degree earn an additional \$10,000.

Hypothetical illustrations are fabricated illustrations using typical characteristics to describe particular situations, objects, or people, as well as illustrations describing what could happen in the future. It is very important to disclose to your audience that your illustration is hypothetical; otherwise, you are being dishonest and risk the audience feeling deceived and so losing all faith in everything you have said or will say.

hypothetical illustrations: fabricated illustrations using typical characteristics to describe particular situations, objects, or people, as well as illustrations describing what could happen in the future

Make your case: Best Evidence



Research indicates little difference in the influence of the various types of evidence and support material. Accordingly, statistics may be more influential in some situations, and testimony may be more influential in others. Further, the influence of evidence and support

material will vary among different people.

Questions to Consider

1. Having learned all of this and considering only statistics and testimony, which do you generally find most influential and convincing?
2. How might your choice change with changes in context?

Statistics

Statistics are numbers that demonstrate or establish size, trends, and associations. Consider the examples in [Table 13.3](#).

statistics: numbers that demonstrate or establish size, trends, and associations

Recognizing and Overcoming Problems With Statistics

Statistics can accomplish a great deal during your presentation, but you must use them appropriately and cautiously. Although many are accurate and valid representations, statistics are open to interpretation, and interpretations can be deceptive. You can very easily mislead the audience with statistics, so do all you can to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the statistics you use during your presentation.

Statistics may be fabricated. Sometimes people are dishonest about data they provide. Although most statistics you come across will be authentic, some may be absolutely bogus. Some fabricated statistics have been used so often that they have almost become given beliefs. For a number of years, news reports claimed higher spousal abuse on Super Bowl Sunday than on any other day of the year. Supposedly, watching football makes a person more violent and because record numbers of people watch football on that day, this results in more visits to hospital emergency rooms by abused spouses. In reality, none of this is true. Someone simply made up these statistics.

Statistics and Time.

Time is often an issue in the misuse of statistics. Compared with other types of evidence and support material, the shelf life of many statistics is especially short. What is statistically true today may be untrue next month. For instance, using the number of pumpkins sold during the month of October in anticipation of Halloween to represent year-round sales would be misleading. Likewise, using dated statistics to describe current situations misleads your audience. Use the most recent statistics available, and if you use somewhat-dated statistics, disclose this to the audience and explain why you included these particular statistics in your presentation.

Using statistics to support her presentation, this speaker is using the number that occurs most often. What is this number called?



©iStockphoto.com/ImagineGolf

Statistical averages: mean, median, and mode. Statistical averages may not always provide an accurate description. When you selected a college or a major, you may have looked at the average class size or the average number of students enrolled in each class. An academic department may offer five courses with a maximum enrollment of 12 students, two courses with a maximum enrollment of 14 students, four courses with a maximum enrollment of 15 students, and one course with a maximum enrollment of 600 students. If all of these classes were full, there would be 748 students enrolled in that department's 12 classes. This total would result in an average class size of 62.3 students, which, although statistically correct, does not provide an accurate description of the class size of most of that department's courses.

- Mean refers to the average number, which may or may not provide an accurate description or representation. The average of 62.3 students in the previous example would be the mean number of students.
- Median is the number that rests in the middle of all the other numbers; half of the numbers are less than this number, and the other half are more than this number. In the previous example, the median number would be 14 students, with half the numbers below this number and half above this number (12 12 12 12 12 14 14 15 15 15 15 600).
- Mode is the number that occurs most often. Once again using the number from the previous example, the mode would be 12 students because that number occurs most often (12 12 12 12 12 14 14 15 15 15 15 600).

mean: refers to the average number, which may or may not provide an accurate description or representation

median: the number that rests in the middle of all the other numbers; half of the numbers are less than this number, and the other half are more than this number

mode: the number that occurs most often

By the way . . . : Made-Up Statistics



Did you know that 25% of all statistics have been made up? OK, we just made up that statistic, but see how easy it is? While we are at it, 99.5% of all people who read this textbook think its authors are handsome. Pity the tastes of the remaining 0.5%! It has also been discovered that reading this textbook in public will make you appear five times more attractive to others and increase your chances of being asked out on a date by 55%. We can do this all day long!

Questions to Consider

1. What does the ease with which statistics can be made up and manipulated tell you about their use?
2. What percentage of people do you think find us handsome? Wait, don't answer that one. Doing so might hurt our feelings!

Population and Base.

Statistics can also be misleading when the population and base are not disclosed. Population refers to whom or what a study includes. Such populations as “registered voters” are often provided with survey results. Changes in the population will generally lead to changes in the results of a study. Asking more Republicans than Democrats about their voting intentions to gauge a candidate’s popularity with voters as a whole will provide a misleading characterization of that candidate’s approval or disapproval rating among all voters.

The statistical base refers to the number of people, objects, or things included in a study. Problems with the statistical base frequently surround the use of a small sample size rather than not including a representative population. The finding that 75% of students favor a tuition increase may sound like a convincing mandate for raising tuition rates. However, such a finding would not be nearly as convincing if it were based on a poll conducted in a single class with 25 students, all of whom had a minimum monthly bank balance of \$200k and no debt.

population: who or what is included in a study

base: the number of people, objects, or things included in a study

By the way . . . : Skewed Surveys



Sometimes surveys are used to promote a rumor and skew results of questions. Consider the possible results if respondents were asked these two questions in the following order: (a) “If it is true that Duck and McMahan Medicated Cream causes uncontrolled itching, would it affect whether or not you use this product?” and (b) “Which product would you be most likely to use: Duck and McMahan Medicated Cream or Wood Medicated Ointment?” The first question accomplishes two different things. First, it promotes an absolutely false rumor about the high-quality and reasonably priced Duck and McMahan Medicated Cream. Look for it in your local pharmacy! It also plants a seed of doubt in the benefits of that product, and this doubt will likely influence how people answer the second question.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you recall ever responding to a survey that used this tactic?
2. What does this tactic tell you about the use of survey data?

Asking the Questions.

How a question is posed and how an issue is defined can also influence statistical results. Imagine the outcome of a political survey that asked likely voters, “Would you be more likely to vote for the incumbent, who has lowered taxes each year while in office and visits with the elderly each weekend, or the challenger, who wants to abolish Social Security and is rumored to drown fluffy kittens in the river?” Regardless of a person’s attitude toward felines or the elderly, how the question is phrased would certainly benefit the incumbent. Not all surveys are this blatant, but many are quite biased in the ways they present questions.

Now then. Should you be at college? Take a look at the [Figure 13.1](#) graph. Then read the comments.

Using Statistics Effectively

Having discussed some of the problems related to statistics, you should now be aware of some of the pitfalls and consequences associated with their use. [Table 13.4](#) provides guidelines and suggestions for incorporating statistics in your presentations.

Selecting and Using Evidence and Support Material

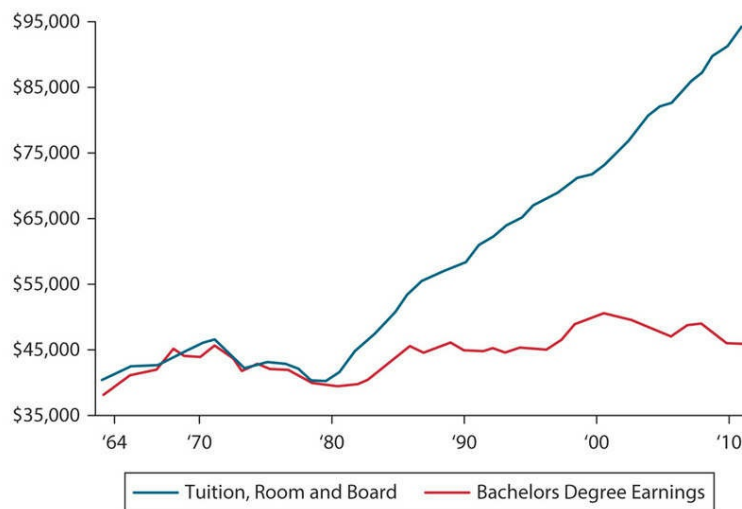
After learning about the types of evidence and support material, students often wonder how much evidence and support material they should use, whether the quality of evidence and support matters, and whether some types of evidence and support material are better than other types. Let's take a look.

The Quantity of Evidence and Support Material

You should develop your presentation with enough good evidence to take advantage of its positive influence on audience members' perceptions of the message and of your credibility and relationship with the audience. No magic number exists as to the amount of evidence and support material that must be included; the impact of evidence will differ according to audience connection with the topic. Those individuals not involved with the topic will be more influenced by the quantity than by the quality of evidence when compared with highly involved individuals (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). You should not include large amounts of poor evidence just to convince audience members. Instead, include strong evidence to satisfy all the audience members.

Figure 13.1 The Diminishing Financial Return of Higher Education

Costs of four-year degree versus earnings of four-year degree



Comments from <http://www.statisticshowto.com/misleading-graphs/>:

The scale on this chart is fine. What *Business Insider* deduced from the chart is not. Have we "... lost the ubiquitous positive financial return on education"? No. David Blake read the chart without taking into account a key fact that *wasn't* on the chart: the cost of not going to college has diminished *even more*. That means, your prospects as a high school graduate are a lot worse than your prospects as a college graduate.

Another key piece of information is on the chart itself. Note the average yearly income a college grad can expect is about \$45,000 in 2010.

That's **per year**. Over an average working lifetime (say, 43 years assuming retirement at age 65), that gives you an income of $\$45,000 \times 43 = \$1,935,000$. Subtract that expensive college education (\$95,000) and your net earnings are \$1,840,000. Compare that to your average high school grad. They can expect to earn \$1,300,000 over their lifetime (Source: The U.S. Department of Education [<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524300.pdf>]). That's quite a difference!

Source: <http://www.statisticshowto.com/misleading-graphs/>

Table 13.4 Increasing the Effectiveness of Statistics

Statistics Should Come from a Trustworthy Source	Statistics from trustworthy sources can be included in your presentation with confidence.
Use Statistics Sparingly	Do not overwhelm your audience with statistics. If you use multiple statistics in your presentation, the audience will find it difficult to understand each statistic and how it supports your presentation. Keep things simple.
Use Statistics that Personally Affect the Audience	Statistics that personally affect your audience will have the greatest impact.
Simplify the Statistics	Statistics should be memorable and easy to process, and a good way is by making them as simple as possible: Round them to a whole number ("more than 3 million" is more memorable than "3,065,432"); present them as fractions and percentages.
Explain the Statistics	Make statistics accessible. Translate them into terms that the audience will understand ("Last year, wildfires destroyed 8 million acres of land. That is 4,000 times the size of this campus and nearly 90 times the size of this state").

The Quality of Evidence and Support Material

Careful research that discovers good quality evidence and support material will enhance the effectiveness of your presentation. This impact is further enhanced when you use oral citations (O’Keefe, 1998), or references to the source of the evidence and support material used during your presentation. The use of quality evidence will also enhance audience members’ perceptions of your credibility. Audiences will view as more credible a speaker who uses highly credible sources and as less credible a speaker who uses sources of lower credibility. The more they see you as credible, the more they will also connect and follow you.

As you do research and select sources for your presentation, should you limit the types of sources that you use, such as only gathering evidence and support material from the Internet or from books?



©iStockphoto.com/Izabela Habur

oral citations: references to the source of the evidence and support material used during a presentation

Comparing the Effectiveness of Evidence and Support Material

None of the types of evidence and support material discussed in this chapter have consistently proved more persuasive or effective than other types. An analysis of studies examining this area found that statistical evidence may be “slightly more effective” than other types of evidence (Allen & Preiss, 1997, p. 128). This finding especially holds true when the vividness of evidence is held constant (Hoeken, 2001). The effectiveness of each type of evidence and support material depends on such factors as audience members’ attitudes toward the topic (Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy, 2016), their involvement with the issue (Baesler, 1997), and cultural differences among audience members (Hornikx & Hoeken, 2005). You will have better luck in satisfying more of your audience members if you use several different types of evidence.

Communication + You: Visiting the Library



Visiting the library on campus may not appeal to everyone, and for others it can be somewhat intimidating. However, the more familiar you are with what it has to offer, the better equipped you will be to find effective sources for your presentations and papers. Go to the library and start exploring. Begin running searches for topics that interest you. Always be sure to ask librarians for assistance when you need it. Your library may also offer tours or seminars to help people unfamiliar with what it offers. (Don’t use it just for speeches; do research like this for all your assignments. It will make you strong!)



©iStockphoto.com/Thinkstock

Questions to Consider

1. What is your biggest question concerning the library and how to search for materials, and how can you discover the answer?
2. Some people mistakenly believe there is no need to physically visit the library, given the number of materials available digitally. However, not everything is stored or available through digital means, and visiting the library may provide you with a greater understanding of accessing library materials that are available digitally. Looking to the future, though, do you foresee a time without physical libraries?

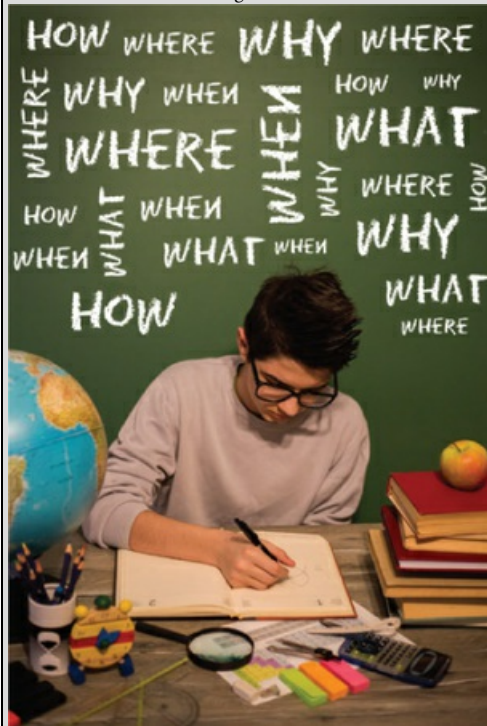
Selecting and Searching for Sources (*Inventio*)

In classical times, good speakers used to stress the importance of finding a big range of possible ways to persuade an audience. Their term for this was *Inventio* (*inventio* = is Latin for “finding”), which we might today translate as “creativity” in this context. Classical rhetoric regarded this as the essential basis for all good presentations—the discovery of all relevant materials that would help a speaker to inform or persuade the audience. *Inventio* still matters and is a mixture of creativity, research, and looking for facts or evidence. It also involves thinking up your own original ways of presenting what you discover or taking a new approach to a familiar item. Today, we can apply the same thinking to modern-day research and apply the concept of creativity to “smart lawyer” ways to present information and to “good researcher” ways to locate details and support material.

By the way . . . : Types of Sources



Types of sources include books; dictionaries and encyclopedias; magazines; newspapers; scholarly journals; pamphlets; television, video, and radio; Internet sites; blogs; and interviews.



©iStockphoto.com/DusanManic

Questions to Consider

1. Which of these types of sources do you find most trustworthy, and why?
2. Which of these types of sources do you find least trustworthy, and why?

Table 13.5 Selecting Quality Sources

Unbiased	You should select unbiased sources—those that provide a balanced view of an issue—in the development of your speech. Most sources slant one way or another when it comes to issues, but some sources may be very obvious and open about their points of view, such as material from pro-life or pro-choice organizations, gun manufacturers or gun control organizations, and environmental groups or chemical fertilizer companies.
Editorial Review	You can usually trust sources that have undergone a review process—in which more than one person has determined their accuracy—more than those that have not. Many of the books, journals, magazines, and newspaper articles you discover when conducting research will have undergone a review process. Although you can generally be more confident in the accuracy of a source that has undergone editorial review, you should still evaluate this source critically.
Expertise	The sources you use should have expertise in the area examined. Consider the background or qualifications of an author when evaluating the quality of a book or an article to determine if you should consider the author an expert in the area discussed. For instance, although perhaps an expert in journalism, a newspaper or magazine reporter should not be considered an expert in fitness even if he or she is authoring an article about the topic.
Recency	The sources used in the development of your presentation should be as recent as possible, depending on the topic. Use your knowledge of the topic to determine whether the source has become outdated. Have significant changes occurred in the area that would alter the information available from the source? Does the topic area undergo rapid change and development? Also, consider the evaluation of your sources by the audience. Would your audience view the source as outdated and question its legitimacy and accuracy?
Credibility of a Source's Sources	The sources and evidence that a source uses in its development can also determine its quality. Carefully consider whether the source you are evaluating includes recent, unbiased material. Determine if the source's sources have undergone editorial review and can be considered experts in the area. If you determine that the sources supporting the source you are evaluating are not legitimate, you should not use that particular source for your presentation. If a source makes claims without any form of support, you should question the legitimacy of that source.
Credibility for Your Audience	Keep in mind that your audience will evaluate and use the types of sources you use in a presentation to determine the accuracy of the evidence supplied, the value of your presentation, and your credibility as a speaker. Your audience may judge certain types of sources as more worthwhile and accurate than others.

Table 13.6 Guidelines for Conducting Research and Gathering Material

Start Early	One of the biggest mistakes you can make when conducting research is waiting until the last minute. Delaying research and collection of support material will impede the development of a good presentation—as well as cut into your practice time.
Use Multiple Types of Sources	It is best to use multiple types of sources when doing your research. This will enable you to satisfy the various preferences of the audience and to ensure the thoroughness of your research.
Go to the Library	You will need to go to the library to conduct adequate research for your presentation. A great deal of material is available online, but still more material is available in the library.
Use Multiple Search Engines and Databases	If you do search online, however, do use multiple search engines and databases. There are some very powerful search engines and databases, but none are complete. Many focus on particular topics or areas, which can make your search thorough and efficient but it will not be comprehensive.
Do Not Read Everything	As you review sources, do not feel as if you have to read all of these pieces in their entirety. A quick but conscientious review of the material will help you determine whether you should examine it in more detail. Reviewing a book's index to pinpoint particular information will help establish its usefulness, as will reading abstracts or key sections of journal articles, magazines, or other periodicals. However, you will have to read the material in more detail once you determine it will be used.
Take Notes as You Proceed	You should take notes as you conduct your search for information. This will ensure that you can find the information later and is that it is accurately cited. When you have examined multiple sources, it is easy to forget where support material originated.
Pay Attention to the Citations of Others	However thorough your search or your search engine, you will not discover every available source related to your topic. The reference sections of the material will provide ready-made lists of sources that can be used for your presentation. However, you must locate and read these other sources on your own.
Engage in Multiple Searches and Trips to the Library	Conducting research is not something that should be done all at one time. It would be unwise to think that a single trip to the library will enable you to conduct a thorough search for sources and provide all the material you need. Conducting adequate research requires multiple searches and trips to the library.
Eventually You Must Develop Your Presentation	Even a thorough search of the material will leave some stones unturned before it becomes time to start developing and then practicing your presentation. Keep this in mind if you are nervous about your presentation. Pace yourself and allocate your time wisely. Do not spend too much of your time conducting research and too little developing the speech and practicing the presentation (Sprague et al., 2016).

The quality of the sources used during your presentation will partly determine audience members' perceptions of your credibility, as well as the overall effectiveness of your presentation. Indeed, your presentation is only as good as what you make of the sources used in its development. As you research material to support your speech, your goal should be finding the most accurate and credible sources available. [Table 13.5](#) provides guidelines for critically evaluating and determining the quality of potential sources for your speech.

Searching for material to support and to develop your speech can sometimes be challenging, especially when someone is relatively new to the process. [Table 13.6](#) provides some guidelines and suggestions to follow when conducting research and gathering material.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What factors should you consider when analyzing and relating to an audience?

Consider audience members' relationship with you, their relationship with the topic, and their view of the occasion. You may also consider their attitudes, beliefs, and values as well as demographic characteristics.

2. What factors should you consider when determining the topic of a presentation?

Some occasions may warrant a particular topic (a wedding or a funeral speech), or a topic may already be selected for you. On occasions when you must select your own topic, consider yourself and the audience.

3. What strategies can you use when searching for the topic of a presentation?

You can brainstorm, examine current issues and events, create an individual inventory, and gather input from others.

4. What are the general purpose, specific purpose statement, and thesis of a presentation?

The *general purpose* is the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation. Most presentations are developed to (a) inform, (b) persuade, and (c) evoke. The *specific purpose* of your presentation is exactly what you want to achieve through your presentation. A *thesis statement*, or what you will argue or develop throughout the entire presentation, encapsulates your entire speech.

5. What types of evidence and support material can you use to develop a presentation?

You can use definitions, facts and opinions, comparisons and contrasts, testimony, examples, and statistics as evidence and support material.

6. What factors should you consider when selecting sources for a presentation?

Critically evaluate your sources, determine whether they are unbiased and whether they have undergone editorial review. You should ensure that sources have the proper expertise and experience, determine the recency of a source and the credibility of its own sources in turn, and, above all, determine audience evaluation of the source.

7. What factors should you consider when conducting research and gathering material?

Start early, use multiple types of sources, go to the library, use multiple search engines and databases, do not read everything, take notes, pay attention to citations, engage in multiple searches and trips to the library, and eventually start writing and practicing your delivery.

Key Concepts

attitudes 282
base 294
beliefs 282
brainstorming 285
captive audience 281
comparisons 290
contrasts 290
definition 289
demographics 282
evoke 287
examples 291
expert testimony 291
facts 290
general purpose 287
hypothetical illustrations 292
illustrations 291
individual inventory 286
inform 287
lay testimony 291
mean 293
median 293
mode 293
open brainstorming 285
operational definition 289
opinions 290
oral citations 296
personal testimony 291
persuade 287
population 293
specific purpose 287
statistics 292
testimony 290
thesis statement 288
topic-specific brainstorming 285
values 282
voluntary audience 281

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. What types of support material do your friends find most convincing? Which of this material do they find least convincing? Do their evaluations change depending on circumstances or what is discussed?
2. What types of sources do your friends find most convincing? Which sources do they find least convincing? Do their evaluations change depending on circumstances or what is discussed?
3. Ask your friends to think about two people whom they consider to be very different. If they wanted to try to convince each person of the same idea, how would they have to adjust their strategies with each one? What does this tell you about the need to adapt your presentations to particular audiences?

Media Connections

1. Scan a newspaper for articles that include examples of evidence and support material. What types of this material are most common? Do you find these articles convincing? To what extent do you believe your evaluation is based on the evidence and support material provided?
2. Gather examples of sources used in media that you consider credible. Now gather examples of sources used in media that you do not consider credible. Explain why you evaluated these sources in the manner that you did. If a credible source indicates that its own sources were social media, then what?
3. Gather examples of sources used in media that you consider biased. Now gather examples of sources used in media that you do not consider biased. Explain why you evaluated these sources in the manner that you did.

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

14 Developing a Presentation



©iStockphoto.com/Steve Debenport

Chapter Outline

[Gaining Confidence as a Speaker](#)

[The Body: How Do You Develop an Argument?](#)

[Principles of Presentation: Organization and Development](#)

[Organizational Patterns](#)

[Introductions and Conclusions](#)

[Introducing Your Presentation](#)

[Concluding Your Presentation](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are the four principles of presentation organization and development?
2. What organizational patterns can you use in the development of the body of a presentation?
3. What components must you include in the introduction to a presentation?
4. What components must you include in a conclusion to a presentation?

In the [previous chapter](#), you learned how to select a topic, determine the purpose and thesis of your presentation, and gather support material. This activity connects you to Cicero and the ancient oratorical principle of *inventio* or creativity in finding material for your presentation. You learned to accomplish all these activities with your relationship to your audience in mind. At this point in developing a presentation, you know your purpose and what you want to present. You even have support material to back up any claims.

Gaining Confidence as a Speaker

Through acquiring background knowledge about your audience, you should be gaining a little more confidence in your presentation. You can now increase this confidence by other sorts of preparation. Although fear of the unknown is often at the core of many speakers' worries about delivering a presentation, this can be broken down.

Bit by bit, those unknown elements are becoming known to you, and we will help you along as we examine the *development* of a presentation. This connects to a second ancient oratorical principle, namely *dispositio* or "arrangement" where you organize your materials into the most effective presentation. You might aim to lead with a punch that gets attention, then you follow up with detail and evidence for your claims; finally, you want to end with a memorable summary and a killer punch line. These elements of arrangement or organization of your presentation are things that you do well before you present it, and at this point in your preparation (and reduction of uncertainty or anxiety), you are working on your "script," not on the way you deliver it. That issue comes later. We're taking it one piece at a time to help you see how to cut the bigger task into little pieces and gain confidence from completing each one in its turn.

This is all founded on the assumption that you will most likely be talking to people that you know, who are interested in what you have to say, and they are not simply there to laugh at you or make you feel completely stupid. In every speech class, other students know it will be their turn one day, too, and it's a pretty strange view of the world to assume that everybody is there on purpose to humiliate you.

When presenting to any group you know, you should never just haphazardly throw around at random the various parts of your presentation. Group members are your friends and associates, and you will want to treat them with respect; in return, they will expect that you do not waste their time with random statements, statistics, quotations, illustrations, and other support material. You should discover, combine, and arrange your material. Organize and package it in a manner that will show that you have gone to the trouble of preparing your presentation and incidentally made sure that it will have the greatest impact on your specific audience. You must also develop the material in a way that emphasizes your (relational) connection to the needs and desires of your audience, including that they be respected and not have their time wasted so that they in turn can show their appreciation for your efforts. Although it is all too easy to see "an audience" as a lump of dough to be pounded into motivated, energetic enthusiasm, that model of your friends and acquaintances is simply offensive. (In any case, look at them! Do they really look that threatening a bunch?) Nevertheless, you should not overlook the fact that it is a presenter's duty to make the connection with the audience and not vice versa.

In this chapter, we talk about developing an argument in that relational context. Argumentation is not just another word for *disagreement* but for a careful way of laying out (arranging, disposing) your thoughts. You do this already every day, and developing an argument is not as unfamiliar as it may sound, though the process does need some elaboration. Before you answer a question or give someone directions, you may pause to collect your thoughts. This familiar everyday process is just extended when you arrange materials for a presentation. (So our discussion will assist you when developing presentations and when writing papers for this class and others [Yun, Costantini, & Billingsley, 2012]. Talk about more bang for your academic buck!)

Presentations are typically divided by speaking textbooks into "informative" and "persuasive." We have devoted the whole of the [next chapter](#) to discussing the differences and nuances. In the present chapter and at this point in your developing knowledge about giving talks, a broad brush will be more helpful. *Informative presentations* are intended to help your audience to understand or learn more about a topic (for example, Cloudspotting, treating the Zika virus, building a good campfire, or giving a good informative presentation). *Persuasive presentations* are intended to change the minds of an audience (Why you should wear a seatbelt, Giving up smoking, Black lives matter, Feminism today, Vote for change). Although this distinction will be reviewed in the [next chapter \(Chapter 15\)](#), there are important *similarities* to the ways in which you need to prepare for both sorts of presentation, and we will focus on those similarities and commonalities here.

The development of a presentation is a further example of developing your existing relational connection with an

audience. You have already established ([Chapter 13](#)) that the presentation is appropriate to your audience so now you must organize support material in a clear and understandable way that exhibits your intent to help your audience along. You can select from several strategies (or patterns) to organize your material, based on your topic or the purpose of your presentation. However, these two, your topic and your purpose, are disguised ways of improving your connection with the audience, one based on what you think they know about the topic and the other based on what you think they *need* to know. In both cases, clear organization of an argument results in audience understanding and increased connection with the speaker.

The introduction and conclusion of your presentation enact the (relational) connection with your audience most forcefully just as bread at the top and bottom halves of a sandwich announce to you that it *is* a sandwich and not a salad. These parts of your presentation sandwich are just as important as its body and can accomplish a great deal. Within the introduction, you reinforce credibility and a relationship with your audience, stress the importance of the topic (e.g., how it relates to the audience), and prepare your audience for the “insides” of the presentation, using the same skills, techniques, and ways of relating to your audience discussed in the [previous chapter](#). This relational connection continues when you reach the conclusion, in which you must reinforce your thesis and purpose, summarize your material, stress audience involvement, and provide adequate closure. Both introductions and conclusions include a lot of material, but we break them down into manageable components to help you better understand and develop them. In addition, you should not write your introduction or conclusion until you have finished the body of your presentation, so we begin by discussing that part of your presentation, just like you would pay more attention to what is in the sandwich than to just the bread—unless of course you just like “bread sandwiches” with nothing in them.

By the way . . . : We Have to Provide a What?



Many college students feel overwhelmed or confused when their instructors stress the need to provide a clear argument in their presentations or papers. Developing an argument is not always taught or required in high school, yet suddenly students are expected to know how to do it as soon as they enter college. (By “argument,” we do not necessarily mean disagreeing with someone in a heated discussion. An *argument* in this context means that you provide a thesis or claim and then back it up with support material as discussed in [Chapter 13](#). If you feel stressed out by these demands, rest assured that you are not alone. Even better, once you finish this chapter, you will know how to do it!)

Questions to Consider

1. How might understanding the development of an argument assist in your ability to think critically?
2. Should “the development of an argument” be something that is taught in high school or only at the college level?

The Body: How Do You Develop an Argument?

A successful sandwich is not just a load of ingredients thrown into a bun, but is a skillfully arranged sequence of those ingredients that have been carefully thought out and arranged to maximize taste and flavor. Likewise, the body of your presentation consists of an arrangement of your main points with the purpose of engaging and perhaps even delighting your audience.

Providing claims and then support for those claims is actually something you already do quite often. Whenever you try to convince a friend to do something, or whenever you explain or describe something to a colleague, you are essentially engaged in argumentation. For example, you may find yourself with a group of friends trying to decide what to do on a Friday evening. You really want to see a particular movie, so you tell your friends that you should all go to the theater and watch this movie. You might then describe the movie and provide reasons you should all go see it. Whether you realize it or not, you are engaging in a form of argumentation. Your thesis or claim is that you should all go to the movie. Your support comes from the various reasons your friends should do what you suggest—the movie has received favorable reviews, the theater is not very far away, and nothing tastes better than a \$50 box of popcorn.

So, although “developing an argument” might initially sound like an unfamiliar task, just like “giving a presentation in class,” the basic ideas behind the process are nothing new. The primary difference between an argument constructed for an academic, civic, or professional setting and an argument presented to friends, family, or romantic partners is that the former is generally more structured and has undergone more development and planning.

body: the part of a presentation in which an argument is developed and presented

Principles of Presentation: Organization and Development

To better describe how to construct the body of your presentation and develop your argument, we discuss the four principles of organization and development that can help you maintain a clear focus: points, unity, balance, and guidance. The first three principles underscore the logical development of an argument, and the final principle emphasizes relational development. You must adhere to all four principles to properly develop a presentation that connects with an audience.

Play your cards carefully. Think of your argument as a hand of poker, with each card as a subpoint.



©iStockphoto.com/Lisa Thornberg

The points principle: the principle of organization that highlights the basic building blocks of an argument: the main points and subpoints. The body of your presentation will include main points, or statements that directly support or develop your thesis statement. As a general rule, include five main points at the absolute most. Ideally, and more often than not, you should include at least two but no more than three main points when supporting or developing your thesis statement. Including too many main points will make it difficult to provide adequate support and development, and your audience may not keep up.

Subpoints, or statements that support and explain the main points of your presentation, will include much of the support material we discussed in the [previous chapter](#), where you gathered evidence, and now here where you arrange it. The number of subpoints you include to support each main point will vary. Similar to limiting the number of main points, you do not want to overwhelm your audience with too many subpoints. Including a limited number of strong subpoints to support a main idea is more effective than including numerous weak ones.

Think of your “argument” as a hand of poker: the “hand” is the presentation; the points and subpoints are the individual cards. In itself, a Jack is not very significant but when organized into a whole hand of 10, Jack, Queen, King, and Ace all of a connected (i.e., the same) suit, then it becomes more significant and contributes to making the whole hand a royal flush. The whole hand, organized and collected together makes the individual cards powerful and significant—and the same is true of an argument made up of several different points and subpoints.

Its overall power and value is created from the collection and organization of the parts that make it up.

Being able to visualize the construction of an argument is sometimes helpful, which is one of the reasons your instructor may have you develop an outline for presentations you deliver in the classroom. Although not an actual outline, [Figure 14.1](#) will help you visualize the structure of an argument.

The unity principle maintains you should stay focused and provide only information that supports your thesis and main points. This principle sounds reasonable and easy to follow, but speakers often struggle to abide by it. As you conduct research for your presentation, you will come across a wealth of information about your topic. You can use some of this material to support your thesis and include some of it in your presentation. Other material, although related to your topic, will not directly support your thesis or may even contradict it. You should include such material only to challenge or refute it (“Some people will say that this bridge will be too expensive. But that is incorrect because the tolls will pay down much of the costs”). Acknowledgement and rebuttal of contrary points will help enhance your credibility because it shows the audience that you have made an effort to understand the possible opposition to your argument and have treated it thoughtfully.

points principle: highlights the basic building blocks of an argument: the main points and subpoints

main points: statements that directly support or develop a thesis statement

subpoints: statements that support and explain the main points of a presentation

unity principle: the principle of organization that maintains that a speaker should stay focused and provide only information that supports the thesis and main points of a presentation

Figure 14.1 Visualizing the Structure of an Argument

Thesis

Main point 1 supporting thesis

Subpoint supporting main point 1

Subpoint supporting main point 1

Subpoint supporting main point 1

Subpoint supporting main point 1

Main point 2 supporting thesis

Subpoint supporting main point 2

Subpoint supporting main point 2

Subpoint supporting main point 2

Subpoint supporting main point 2

Main point 3 supporting thesis

Subpoint supporting main point 3

Subpoint supporting main point 3

Subpoint supporting main point 3

Subpoint supporting main point 3

The most obvious example of not adhering to the principle of unity involves the selection of main points that do not support the thesis but without refuting them. For instance, imagine you are giving a presentation in which you want to inform the audience about the treatments of the Zika virus. In your first main point, you address one

common type of treatment. In your second main point, you address another common type of treatment. In your third main point, you suddenly shift gears and begin discussing common symptoms of this disease. Although the matter of symptoms associated with this disease is associated with your topic, your presentation is supposed to be about the *treatment* of the disease. You have not followed the principle of unity, and your audience will laugh all the way to another continent. Keep them on your side by keeping your presentation on target and on topic.

You might be thinking, “Wait a second. If I were telling my audience about the treatment of a disease, why would I not want to talk about the symptoms?” Depending on your audience, addressing the symptoms might be important; however, your main argument involves the *treatments* for Zika virus. Including anything else in the body of your presentation will prevent you from fully explaining the treatments, your original goal. If you think it is important to let the audience know the symptoms of Zika virus, you can briefly discuss them in the introduction of your presentation, but the issues do not fit in a discussion of treatments. If you do not see why this is so, then consult your instructor.

The balance principle maintains that the points of the body must be equal in scope and importance. You must devote to them equal time and an equal amount of development and support. Your main points, as well as the subpoints supporting them, must also be equally important in their support of your thesis.

balance principle: the principle of organization that maintains that the points of the body of a presentation must be relatively equal in scope and importance

One common violation of the balance principle involves the amount of time and support you devote to a particular main point. Suppose you have three main points in your presentation. You have discovered a lot of material to support and develop your first main point, so you spend most of your time discussing it. When it comes to your second and third main points, you have not found as much support material or have not found them as interesting, so you devote less attention to them during your presentation. Although you have done an excellent job explaining and supporting your first main point, your other main points are not developed enough to support your thesis. Regardless of its strength, that first main point will not sufficiently support your thesis. Make sure to spend relatively equal time developing and discussing your main points (O’Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2014).

The guidance principle maintains a speaker must guide and direct the audience throughout the entire presentation. Fundamental to the effectiveness of a presentation are audience members’ understanding and connections to the speaker. Guiding them through a presentation helps ensure that audience members understand both details of the support and *how* it supports your thesis. Your guidance will also enhance your credibility and relational connection with the audience because it indicates your concern for their understanding of your presentation. Just as you help guide and support your friends through difficult problems when they need your direction and advice, you must guide your audience through the logic of your presentation. We talk about components of the introduction and conclusion that help guide the audience later in the chapter, but here we address the use of transitions. (That previous sentence is an example of a transition that works in writing but in speaking it needs to be more obvious: “OK, so that covers Point A; now let’s move on to Point B”—and when speaking you can make it even more obvious by use of nonverbal communication and your right [point A] and left [point B] hands.)

Transitions (phrases or statements that connect the major parts or sections of the presentation and guide the audience through it) should be included between the introduction and the body, between each main point, and between the body and the conclusion. These transitions should guide the audience members and bookmark where you are, where you have been, or where you are going in the presentation. Examples of transitions include the following:

To begin, let’s examine the issue of. . .

Now that we have talked about X, let’s turn our attention to the matter of Y.

The first item we must consider is. . .

This brings us to our second issue. . .

The examples provided here might differ from transitions you have studied in composition classes. When taught about transitions in those courses, you were probably instructed that they guide the reader and set up the next paragraph or section of the paper or story. The purpose of transitions in written work and in oral presentations is the same although the form may be different. Transitions included in oral work must be more obvious than those included in written work, and they must help to direct the audience. Transitions during presentations may include gestures and nonverbal communication (NVC) as well as the textual flags that work in writing.

Ethical Issue

When developing a presentation on a topic about which there are multiple opposing positions, is it necessary to provide equal coverage for all sides of the issue? Are there certain topics or occasions when this may or may not be necessary? Be sure to support your answers.

guidance principle: the principle of organization that maintains that a speaker must guide and direct the audience throughout the entire presentation

transitions: phrases or statements that connect the major parts or sections of the presentation and guide the audience through it

To really grasp the need for such explicit transitions and the importance of the guidance principle in general, consider the difference between reading an article or a book and listening to a speaker. When reading, you have the ability to reread a paragraph or section. You can flip back a few pages and remind yourself of what came before. You can scan ahead to see what comes next. When you listen to a presentation, you do not have these luxuries. As a speaker, therefore, you must be aware of this limitation of the medium and fully guide the audience throughout the entire event. You must maintain your connection with the audience members by acting as their page-turner or reviewer, constantly helping them recognize and remember the key points and making sure that they know where you are in your delivery at each point.

Having talked about principles of organization, we can now discuss the variety of organizational patterns you can use to structure the presentation of your claims and support.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Listening and Reading

Listening and reading are comparable skills that require the extraction of information from the messages that are heard or read. Both require active involvement and processing of what is being presented.

Questions to Consider

1. How is the act of reading similar to and different from listening to a presentation and how do the differences guide you to understand audience needs?
2. How should you respond to those needs as you prepare your presentation?
3. In addition to transitions, what do these similarities and differences tell you about the needs of an audience listening to a presentation compared with reading text right in front of them?
4. Based on your responses, what strategies could you implement to assist your audience?

Organizational Patterns

As we discussed with the principles of organization and development, the most effective presentations are focused, ordered, and understood by the audience. Consider how difficult even your friends might find it to follow and understand a story that offers main points at random. So too with a different audience: One would have trouble following a presentation where evidence, such as examples, statistics, and testimony, is simply scattered about. Members of the audience would find it very difficult to comprehend the material, and therefore, you would have a very difficult time successfully achieving the purpose of your presentation. It's like you just present one word followed by another without paying attention to sequence or grammar; nobody could follow you, even given a positive relationship with the audience. You must arrange the presentation in a way that will allow the audience to clearly grasp the material and that will most effectively achieve your purpose. This is especially important for an audience that cannot see your text but has only your voice and their imaginations to rely on.

An organizational pattern is an arrangement of the main points that best enables audience comprehension. Some organizational patterns are more effective for certain types of presentations and audiences than for others, and the following discussion covers various organizational patterns you may choose and when they might be most appropriate given the circumstances surrounding your event. Various types of organizational patterns are summarized in [Table 14.1](#) and are fully discussed later.

When using the chronological pattern, you arrange the main points according to their position in time and characterize them by such clues as “First, . . . Second, . . . Third, . . .” Often selected when explaining a *process* to the audience, this pattern conveys a sense of development, either forward or backward depending on your topic and purpose. For example, you may explain the process of passing legislation through Congress:

organizational pattern: an arrangement of the main points of a presentation that best enables audience comprehension
chronological pattern: organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to their position in a time sequence

Table 14.1 Organizational Patterns

Chronological Pattern	Main points arranged according to their position in a time sequence
Spatial Pattern	Main points arranged according to their physical relation
Causal Pattern	Main points arranged according to cause and effect
Question–Answer Pattern	Main points arranged and posed as questions an audience may have about a subject
Topical Pattern	Main points arranged and presented as specific categories, groupings, or grounds
Problem–Solution Pattern	Main points arranged and presented as a problem and a solution
Elimination Pattern	Main points arranged and presented as possible solutions to a problem with the solution to be proposed appearing last

1. First, legislation is introduced and sent to the appropriate committee.
2. Second, legislation is debated and voted on by both the House of Representatives and the Senate.
3. Finally, legislation undergoes additional committee discussion and approval before being submitted to the president.

In the spatial pattern, the main points are arranged according to their physical relation, such as from left to right, top to bottom, north to south, or forward to backward. For instance, you may describe the layout of a new building on campus using this pattern:

1. The ground floor of the new student union building will feature the bookstore and a food court.
2. The second floor of the new student union building will house student organization offices.
3. The third floor of the new student union building will include additional classrooms and a technology lab.

4. The penthouse suite will be where the student body president lives with a pet cat.

When the causal pattern is used to organize the body of a presentation, the main points are arranged according to cause and effect. The order in which you choose to place these two matters will depend on your purpose, topic, and audience. This pattern works best when you are attempting to explain the connection between two topics to an audience or convince them that one thing causes another. For example, you could use the causal pattern to discuss the impact of capital gains taxes on investment and development:

1. There has been a steady increase in the amount of capital gains taxes.
2. Small-business investing and development have substantially decreased in recent years.

spatial pattern: an organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to their physical relation, such as from left to right, top to bottom, north to south, or forward to backward

causal pattern: an organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to cause and effect

Fundamental to the causal pattern is convincing the audience that a clear link exists between what you classify as a cause and what you claim are its effects. In the previous example, you would have to convince the audience that the decrease in investments and development was the clear result of increased capital gains and not the result of federal guidelines, interest rates, global investments, or a host of other factors. A causal pattern sometimes proves challenging for speakers to use effectively. When using this pattern, make sure you provide a clear (and supported) connection between your cause and its effects.

Using the question–answer pattern involves posing questions an audience may have about a subject and then answering them in a manner that favors your position (German, Gronbeck, Ehninger, & Monroe, 2010). When selecting the questions to include, make sure they are important to the audience and not just the easiest to answer. You will likely use this pattern when addressing a voluntary audience with concerns about an issue. For instance, you may address a community group with questions about the impact of a particular city project. This organizational pattern may also be appropriate when speaking to your fellow students about issues on campus. For example, if you deliver a presentation about possible tuition increases, arranging your main points in a question–answer format might be effective:

1. The major question students are asking is, “Why is this tuition increase necessary?”
2. A second common question among students is “Can we expect similar increases over the next few years?”
3. Students are also wondering, “How will this tuition increase affect grants, scholarships, and other financial assistance?”

The topical pattern arranges support material according to specific categories, groupings, or grounds. At times, the order of your assertions may follow a natural progression. In the next example, when discussing available scholarships with your audience, you could begin with the scholarship offering the least amount of money and progress to the one offering the largest amount of money:

1. The Caton Scholarship pays for half of tuition for the entire academic year.
2. The Mitchell Scholarship pays for full tuition for the entire academic year.
3. The Cutter Scholarship pays for full tuition for the entire academic year plus full room and board for the recipient.

Other times, the order in which each main point in a topical pattern is presented does not really matter. For instance, you may provide your audience with reasons for a spike in medication prices:

1. Additional research and development by pharmaceutical companies have increased the price of medication.
2. Increased demand for different medications has led to an increase in their prices.
3. Federal legislation has resulted in the increased price of medication.

question–answer pattern: organizational pattern that involves posing questions an audience may have about a subject and then answering

them in a manner that favors the speaker's position

topical pattern: organizational pattern in which support material is arranged according to specific categories, groupings, or grounds

Although in a topical pattern the main points may not always follow a natural progression, do not place your main points at random without any thought or consideration. When using the topical pattern, you might use one main point to prepare the audience for another and should therefore address it first.

This speaker wants to convince her audience that a particular solution should be enacted to address a problem the audience does not know exists. Which organizational pattern would be most appropriate in this situation?



©iStockphoto.com/sanjeri

We discuss the final two organizational patterns in tandem to emphasize the importance of considering the audience when selecting the pattern to use in the arrangement of your presentation.

The problem–solution pattern divides the body of the presentation by first addressing a problem and then offering a solution to that problem. You may want to convince your audience that the increase in water usage can be slowed by increased regulation:

1. The growth of water usage is outstripping population growth, and by 2025, nearly 2 billion people could face water scarcity.
2. Increased awareness of the risks should evoke moral responsibility and reduce usage. Correspondingly, awareness of the commonality of the problem normally invokes, in a rational humanitarian society, some sense of shared responsibility.

Using the problem–solution pattern, it is naturally imperative that the solution indeed solve the problem. Furthermore, you must convince the audience that your solution is practicable and realistic.

The elimination pattern offers a series of solutions to a problem, systematically eliminating each one until the solution remaining is the one you support. When using this particular organizational pattern, make sure that the solutions offered are widely accepted or legitimate and that the reasons for eliminating them are reasonable (German et al., 2010). We can illustrate the elimination pattern using the previous example. You want to

convince your audience that an increase in water charges is the best solution for raising awareness of water usage. In doing so, you provide other possible solutions, eliminating each of them until only the one that you support remains:

1. If things are left unchanged and selfishness or greed is allowed to control events, then consumption of water will increase at a rate that becomes critical across the planet.
2. Importing water from other places will be expensive, and the problem is in any case a global one not solved by simply moving amounts of water from one place to another, even if that could easily be done.
3. Increasing awareness of the problem now prevents a more serious problem later.

Both the problem–solution pattern and the elimination pattern are most often used to convince an audience of a particular action’s suitability to eliminate or manage a given problem. However, the problem–solution pattern is most appropriate when an audience does not know that the problem exists or does not recognize the pervasiveness or impact of the problem. Consequently, you will want to dedicate part of your presentation to explaining to the audience the extent and impact of the problem in addition to promoting an acceptable solution. In the previous example, if your audience members were somehow ignorant and unaware of the problems surrounding unregulated water usage, the problem–solution pattern would be most appropriate. The elimination pattern best suits an audience that is already aware of the extent of a problem. Such listeners are either unaware of possible solutions or aware that certain solutions exist but uncertain about which one to support. If your audience members were already well aware of issues related to irresponsible water usage but undecided about how it might be lowered, the elimination pattern would be most appropriate because it helps them to make up their minds.

problem–solution pattern: organizational pattern that divides the body of the presentation by first addressing a problem and then offering a solution to that problem

elimination pattern: organizational pattern that offers a series of solutions to a problem, systematically eliminating each one until the remaining solution is the one a speaker supports

Communication + You: Organization in Everyday Life



Recall an occasion when someone tried to convince you to do or believe something. Consider how that person’s ideas were presented.

Questions to Consider

1. Did that person organize ideas according to one of the organizational patterns discussed here?
2. What impact did use or nonuse of organizational patterns have on the outcome?

Introductions and Conclusions

In addition to developing the body of your presentation, you need to include an introduction that lays the foundation for the argument and builds on your connection with the audience. You will also need to include a conclusion that reinforces and completes the presentation while reinforcing the relationship with the audience.

As we noted at the start, it is smartest to work on these two parts of the presentation together and *after* you have developed the main body. This may seem a bit weird, but it is really sensible for a couple of reasons. For one thing, the introduction and conclusion must fit together so that the conclusion can acknowledge that the body of the talk has done what you promised to do in your introduction. For another, until you have worked on the body of the presentation, you might not know what your conclusion is going to be! In this case, you will not know how to make it sound as if it was what you were going to argue (introduction) until you have developed the talk. In short, the process of preparing your presentation is very likely to make you much clearer on what you want to argue and why. Therefore, it makes sense to explain your intentions and your results at the end of this development and preparation rather than before you start it. Once you have completed your research and the arrangement of your presentation, then you can prepare a good introduction and conclusion.

It's not at all immoral or misleading to develop your presentation this way because you don't need your audience to see into your processes; you just need to tell them the results. At that point, the presentation is the developed result of your research. If you let the development of your presentation steer toward its results, then that is what it should do. The introduction and conclusion, however, present your case; they are not historical documents. Beginning speakers tend to think of them as the first and last items to prepare rather than as the results of the rest of the development of their research, preparation, and organization of a presentation. What you offer in your sandwich does not have to be a detailed report of the way you selected the "lettuce." It needs to taste right and that is all. Therefore, your presentation should be the great *result* of all your processes, not a description of them.

Beginning speakers often wonder how much time they should devote to introductions and conclusions. A classic study (Miller, 1946) suggested that introductions make up approximately 10% and conclusions make up around 5% of all speeches. Even though this study was conducted about 70 years ago, these numbers are not too far off from what we see today. Generally, communication scholars recommend that you devote somewhere between 10% and 25% of your presentation to the introduction and 5% to 15% to the conclusion (German et al., 2010).

Given the particular importance of the connection with your audience at the beginning of your presentation, reinforcing this connection through to the end of the presentation, and developing a logical foundation and closing, we recommend dedicating about 25% of your presentation to the introduction and 10% to 15% to the conclusion. If you give an 8-minute presentation, your introduction should finish at around the 2-minute mark, and your conclusion should occupy approximately the last minute of the presentation. Spending more time than this will not allow you to fully develop the body of your presentation. Spending less time will not allow you to adequately connect with the audience, lay the foundation, or conclude effectively.

Even though you will spend less time presenting your introduction and conclusion, these parts of your presentation are just as important as its body. Sure, you devote more time to the body during the presentation, and you should spend more time working on the body during its preparation. However, it is not going to work if you give a presentation with a weak introduction or conclusion. You must support the body of your presentation with a strong introduction and finish with a thorough conclusion.

introduction: part of a presentation that lays the foundation for it and creates or builds on relational connection with the audience

conclusion: part of a presentation that reinforces and completes the presentation while reinforcing the relationship with the audience

By the way . . . : Building a House/Presentation



When considering the importance of introductions and conclusions, you might liken the development of a presentation to the building of a house. No matter how strong the walls and frame are, without a solid foundation, the house will collapse and crumble to the ground. Further, regardless of how solid the foundation is or how strong the walls and frame are, without a durable roof on top, the house is not complete and will likely deteriorate. Likewise, you must support the body of your presentation with a strong introduction and reinforce it with a thorough conclusion.



©iStockphoto.com/ImagineGolf

Questions to Consider

1. Can you think of other comparisons to developing a presentation?
2. What do you suppose might actually happen as a result of a weak introduction and conclusion?

Introducing Your Presentation

When meeting someone for the first time, your initial impressions have a lasting impact on your perceptions of that person and determine if you desire additional contact. Often within the first few moments of a conversation, you determine if you would like to prolong your conversation and develop a relationship, if you would like to see this person in the future, or if you hope never to endure the excruciating experience of seeing this person again. Whether you engage in a relationship with someone is strongly influenced by the first few moments of contact (Duck, 2011).

The same holds true for the initial moments of a presentation, and there are two key ways to do this. One of them is with a dramatic style of delivery and we cover this aspect of presentations in [Chapter 16](#). In the present chapter, you are developing the structure of your argument and essentially preparing your script, so it is the choice of words that you are preparing at this point, only.

Table 14.2 Brief Guide to Introductions

Attention-Getting Device	Gain the attention of your audience
Purpose and Thesis	Inform your audience of the purpose of your presentation and state your thesis
Credibility and Relational Connection	Explain why your audience should listen to you speak on the topic and discuss your personal connection with the audience
Orientation Phase	Familiarize your audience with the topic and define terms if necessary
Impact of the Topic and Presentation	Explain how the topic affects your audience and why the audience should listen to the presentation
Enumerated Preview	Outline the main points of your presentation for your audience

You need to grab the audience's attention, of course, but you can also do more to hold on to it for longer, and *keeping* their attention is what ultimately matters. We know some skills about that task, so we discuss six components to include when developing the outline of the introduction for your presentation (see [Table 14.2](#)). If you include each component and follow the guidelines, then you will have a strong, effective foundation for your presentation. You can work on the way you actually speak and deliver these words once you have read [Chapter 16](#).

Attention Getter

The first thing to include in your introduction is an attention getter, a device used to draw the audience to you and hence to your presentation. The placement of the remaining components of the introduction can vary, but the attention getter, ranging from one sentence to a few lines, always comes first. Some common types of attention getters are offered in [Table 14.3](#).

When selecting the most appropriate attention getter, consider the topic, the audience, and yourself. The words in your attention getter must relate to the *topic* at hand for both subject matter and tone. Many fascinating stories, colorful quotations, and extraordinary facts exist in the world, but the one you choose to gain your audience's attention must relate to the topic at hand and the occasion.

You must also consider the *audience* when selecting your attention getter. If audience members are very familiar with your topic, startling facts or statistics may not shock them as much as they would an audience unfamiliar with the topic. If audience members are unfamiliar with your topic, they may not fully understand complex illustrations, which thus may be ineffective at capturing their attention.

Finally, when selecting an attention getter, you must consider *yourself*. Select an attention getter that is comfortable for you. Some people feel awkward citing a quotation or reciting lines of a poem or bursting into song. Others feel ill at ease when attempting humor. Select an attention getter that is most suitable and natural for

you. In particular, select a story, a narrative or the words that let you connect yourself to the audience without feeling awkward.

attention getter: a device used to draw the audience into a presentation

Table 14.3 Attention-Getting Devices

Illustration	A brief topic-related narrative can be used to grab your audience's attention. These narratives can be real or hypothetical, but if you provide a hypothetical one you must 'fess up to the fact that you made it up.
Personal Reference	A personal anecdote can be a very effective way of gaining your audience's attention. Personal references allow you to establish your credibility on the topic at the same time as you gain your listeners' trust.
Provocative Facts or Statistics	Provocative facts or statistics that surprise an audience can also be effective as long as they are relevant to the topic and the audience.
Rhetorical Question	A rhetorical question—that is, one to which you do not expect the audience to offer a verbal response—gains audience members' attention by actively engaging them and causing them to think about their position or experience with a topic. Members of the audience often wonder if their answer is accurate or appropriate and will listen to the rest of the talk to find out.
Quotation	A brief quotation can help introduce your topic. Don't utter a quote and expect the audience to understand its relevance, why it was included, or who said it. Explain why you selected it and how it helps understand your topic.
Humor	A joke is an effective way to open a presentation and gain your audience's attention, as long as it relates to your topic and allows you to effectively prepare the audience for your delivery. Of course, a humorous opening does not have to be in the form of a joke. It can apply to all of the preceding attention-gaining strategies.

Purpose and Thesis

In the introduction, you must also inform your audience of the purpose of your presentation and explicitly state your thesis. Tell audience members exactly what you intend to argue; they should not wonder what your presentation is about. Remember that in [Chapter 13](#) we pointed out a rookie mistake that was made by some university administrators talking about “F&A” but without explaining to their audience what this term meant. After your introduction to your talk, the audience must have a very clear idea about what the speaker will talk about.

What is the first component that must be included in the introduction of a presentation?



©iStockphoto.com/NikolaasBoden

Your purpose in preparing the introduction goes further than defining terms, however, and that is to orient them to the rest of the talk so that they know what to expect. Accordingly, you should prepare and arrange your script with this intention in mind. Prepare your introduction with the purpose of making sure that your audience will understand the rest of what you say. Earlier, we discussed the need to guide the audience throughout the entire event. When you provide your thesis statement, you are telling the audience the direction you are heading and that everything included in the body of your discussion will support this statement.

Supplying the purpose of your presentation performs a few different functions. It reinforces your thesis statement and will increase the listeners' understanding of the information you provide. When you get to the body, they will better understand why this particular material is included and its overall purpose.

Clear statement of the purpose of your delivery also enhances your credibility by establishing a sense of goodwill. By placing audience members' understanding at the forefront, you are letting them know that they are the reason you are speaking. You are presenting this information not for personal gain or because you like to hear yourself speak but because you care that the audience members understand your talk, and you want to influence their lives in a meaningful and beneficial way.

Informing the audience of your purpose also helps establish trust. Especially if the audience is suspicious, it is good to be straightforward about your intentions. Letting the audience know your motives for presenting will enhance your credibility and ultimately help ensure the effectiveness of your presentation.

Credibility and Relational Connection

As a speaker, you must convey to the audience that you are knowledgeable about the topic, that you can be trusted, and that you have their best interest at heart. As mentioned in [Chapter 13](#), these characteristics touch on the three primary dimensions of credibility: knowledge, trustworthiness, and goodwill (Gass & Seiter, 2016). Notice once again that these components would likely be used to characterize someone with whom you share a positive relationship. Perceptions of credibility are closely connected to and frequently based on relationships.

The three primary dimensions of credibility are initiated in the introduction and reinforced throughout the delivery, but knowledge is the dimension that you must convey immediately to your audience. Prepare well so that you feel confident in your knowledge and expertise. Expertise is the surest foundation of confidence. Of course, by establishing that you are knowledgeable about the topic, you also reinforce trustworthiness and goodwill. The information you provide is probably accurate. As someone with personal experience in this area, you care enough about it and the members of your audience that you feel it is important to share it with them. Furthermore, you establish for the audience your close relationship with the material.

As a speaker, at minimum you can best express this expertise to your audience members by informing them of your experiences exploring and learning about this topic. Sometimes this credibility comes already partially established and embedded in a person's credentials. A person's rank, title, or familiar relationship with members of the audience establishes expertise or experience, but at other times, your careful study of the topic or your extensive experience will do very nicely, thank you.

As a speaker, your relationship with the audience is an important persuasive tool. You can accomplish this connection by noting your identification with the audience or how you and the audience are alike (Burke, 1969). People tend to trust and like others whom they perceive as similar to them, and smart speakers will tend to emphasize similarities ("As a student, I share your concern about debt . . .," "I am a sophomore too and we all care about . . .," "We women must all . . .," "My fellow Americans . . .").

Additionally, through identification, the meaning framework of a speaker becomes apparent. People feel as if they understand the way a speaker thinks and views the world when the similarity between them is made to stand out. Consequently, a speaker's words become more understandable and more believable because the audience members are able to match the speaker's ways of thinking to their own. As long as they are legitimate, noting similarities, such as having the same connection with the topic, the same experiences, or the same desires, fears, and joys, can connect you with the audience and create this sense of identification.

Make your case: Bragging and Credibility



You do not need to—indeed probably should not—discuss your credibility directly. Allow it to become obvious, for example, by using such phrases as “When I was researching [this topic] . . .,” “When I first had experience of [this topic]. . . .”



©iStockphoto.com/gece33

Questions to Consider

1. How do you believe a person can establish credibility most effectively?
2. How might credibility be introduced without appearing to boast?

Ethical Issue

What are the necessary qualifications for a speaker to claim expertise and experience with a topic? Are determining these qualifications and evaluating expertise and experience the responsibilities of the speaker, the audience, or both?

Orientation Phase

In the orientation phase, you provide the audience members with any information you believe will allow them to better understand and appreciate the material in the body of your presentation. The information you include will vary according to your topic and the audience. It could include definitions of unfamiliar terms you will use. A brief explanation of what the topic entails might benefit the audience, as might an overview of the historical development of an issue.

Why might this speaker include an orientation phase as part of her introduction?



©iStockphoto.com/tunart

Describing your approach to a topic or your particular meaning for relevant terminology can alter your audience's perspective on the presentation itself. For instance, when you are giving a presentation about abortion, some members of the audience may approach it differently depending on whether you talk about abortion as occurring in the first trimester or the last trimester.

During our discussion of the unity principle, we mentioned that the orientation phase is the place to include information you feel is important for the audience to know but whose inclusion in the body would get you off-

track. So, returning to the example from a few pages ago, say you are informing the audience about the treatment of a disease, but you think it is important for audience members to know about the symptoms of the disease. Briefly include this material in the orientation phase.

Essentially, when providing an orientation to the topic during the introduction, you are getting the audience members up to speed on the topic and preparing them for the body of the presentation. Include whatever information you consider most relevant to audience understanding.

orientation phase: part of a presentation in which the speaker provides the audience members with any information that allows them to better understand and appreciate the material presented

Impact of the Topic

A priority task for a speaker is to tell the audience members how the topic connects with their lives and how they might benefit from listening to you. In other words, you are establishing their relationship with the material and giving them a reason to listen to your presentation. This approach also enhances your credibility by conveying to the audience a concern about its well-being. The fact that you are aware of and are satisfying members' needs will assist in the establishment of an audience's trust in you.

When considering how to explain the impact of the topic, you must fully consider the audience members and what they already likely know or believe. Do not take for granted that they already know the importance of the topic or fully understand its impact on their lives. Perhaps your topic does impact their lives and should be important to them, but they just do not realize this. In that case, you need to inform them of the connection and importance during the introduction. Reinforce this link even if you feel audience members are already fully aware of the topic's impact on their lives.

When explaining how the topic affects the audience, ensure that you make it as personal as possible. For example, if you are presenting on preparing for floods, do not just say, "Many people will be affected by flooding this year." Instead, inform the audience members of the chances that they, a friend, or a relative will sustain damage or encounter danger as a result of flooding. Such comments as "Lots of people are affected" or general circular statements such as "This is important to know because it is really vital" are not sufficient. Saying something like "If the people in this room represent the entire population of the state, five of us will have our homes devastated in a flood by the end of the year" will be much more effective.

Ethical Issue

When describing the importance of the topic to an audience, some speakers may feel compelled to embellish the facts to make the topic seem more vital and to enhance audience attention. They may consider this necessary as part of the greater good. Are there occasions when this deceitfulness would be appropriate? Why or why not?

Enumerated Preview

Finally, you must provide an enumerated preview of your main points during the introduction. Essentially, you must list the main points: "First, we will talk about X. Then, we will talk about Y. Finally, we will talk about Z." You may include this list at any point in the introduction following your attention getter, but generally it is located at the very end.

An enumerated preview helps position your audience for the body of your presentation and provides a nice lead into your argument. Plus, remember how important it is to fully guide your audience. In an enumerated preview, you are guiding audience members by providing markers or landmarks for them to follow and recognize along the way.

An enumerated preview also helps the audience remember your main points. We have heard an adage, which has been attributed to many groups. Among others, it has been referred to as an Irish saying, a Native American

saying, and an Eskimo saying. No matter its origin, the saying and its meaning remain the same: “Tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them. Then remind them what you told them.” In other words, the more often you say something, the more likely your audience will remember it. In the introduction, you tell audience members what you are going to tell them. In the body of your presentation, you tell them. Finally, in your conclusion, you tell them what you told them. We have already gone through the *tell them what you are going to tell them* and *tell them* stages. Now, we can discuss the part in which you *tell them what you told them*.

By the way . . . : The Case of the Cynical Audience Members



When they are developing the impact of the topic part of their presentation, we often encourage our students to imagine cynical audience members saying, “Who cares?” or “Big deal.” Always help your audience to keep in mind why they should care and why it is a big deal. Most audiences are not cynical but it always helps if you keep them on their toes, especially if your research and preparation have established in your mind if they really *should* care. Now all you have to do is remind them from time to time why you reached that conclusion.



©Wavebreak Media/Thinkstock

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you think it is so important to convey the importance of the topic?
2. If you are in the process of developing a presentation or will be doing so soon, why should the audience care about and consider your topic to be a big deal?

Concluding Your Presentation

As we mentioned previously, the introduction, body, and conclusion are equally important. However, many presentations we hear often end with a very weak conclusion and just seem to stop—as if the speaker had run out of ideas and wanted to run out of the room. The introduction and body might be very well done, but the conclusion needs a great deal of additional development. If the speaker is so relieved to be near the end that he or she just abruptly quits after finishing the body (usually with an unexpected “Thank you”), or if the speaker is not quite sure how to end the presentation, any credibility he or she has developed to that point will be diminished. A weak ending lessens the overall value and effectiveness of an otherwise good delivery, so prepare a good one.

Why should audience members clapping at the very end of a presentation not be the primary focus of a speaker when developing a conclusion?



©iStockphoto/Thinkstock

The conclusion is not just a logical end to your presentation; it entails the maintenance of the relationship between speaker, audience, and material presented. At the end of a conversation with a friend, you draw a clear line to indicate that the interaction is over but that the relationship continues. Speakers need to make the audience members feel that their relationship to the ideas and commitments expressed by the speaker will continue beyond the interaction they have just experienced.

During the conclusion, you must reinforce your thesis and purpose, underscore audience involvement, and provide adequate closure. The impression made at the end of your presentation will be long lasting and plays a predominant role in whether the audience uses the information you provided or is persuaded by your presentation. You must strive to make a positive impression and end your presentation in a manner that most effectively maintains your connection with the audience and the material presented. Conclusions contain six components that will help get this accomplished (see [Table 14.4](#)).

Wrap-Up Signal

The first thing you must provide for the audience when concluding is a *wrap-up signal*. You must indicate to the audience that you have reached the conclusion and are essentially wrapping things up. We have said it before, and we are saying it again: You must guide your audience through the entire event.

Table 14.4 Brief Guide to Conclusions

Wrap-Up Signal	Signal the beginning of the conclusion for your audience.
Restatement of Thesis	Restate your thesis for your audience.
Summary Points	Provide your audience with a handy summary of your key points.
Audience Motivation	Encourage members of your audience to incorporate the material you have provided into their lives or to behave/think in a certain manner.
Relational Reinforcement	Reinforce the relationship between your audience and the material and between your audience and yourself.
Clincher Statement	Provide your audience with a memorable line or phrase that will enable you to end strongly and smoothly.

Verbally, incorporating such phrases as “As we draw to a close,” “As we look back on what has been discussed during this presentation,” and “As we near the end of this presentation” will signal the audience that you have reached your conclusion. The old standby “In conclusion” can also be used, but many people consider this cliché and a bit dull.

Nonverbally (something we cover in more detail in [Chapter 16](#)), you can think about your probable tone of voice for delivering the final part of your presentation. An extended pause will work in some cases, as will a decrease in your rate of speaking. Whatever you include, make sure the audience knows that you are closing out what you will say, but do not lose their attention by making them think of collecting their “stuff” and leaving. Make the wrap up interesting.

Although a wrap-up signal is valuable in guiding your audience through the presentation, some audience members may view it as a cue to stop listening or to begin gathering their things in anticipation of leaving. Make sure that the wrap-up signal is clear, but do not dwell on it. Instead, move quickly to the remaining components of the conclusion. Clarify to your audience that you have reached not the end of the talk but the beginning of an important conclusion. You will be able to maintain audience members’ attention partly through the full development of the conclusion, making it worthwhile for them to listen.

Disciplinary Debate: To Conclude



We suggest verbally indicating to an audience that you have reached the conclusion of a presentation. However, a few communication professionals discourage the use of wrap-up signals because of the possibility that audience members will cease listening as carefully once they have been informed that the presentation is nearing the end.

Questions to Consider

1. Beyond guiding the audience, how might a wrap-up signal assist the audience?
2. What could be done to prevent a possible drop in audience attention?

Skills You Can Use: In Everyday Life



Most of what we are discussing within this chapter are skills that you can use when developing a presentation. However, this material can certainly be applied to other areas of life. Although speaking and writing may require different strategies and approaches, applying the material discussed here can improve your written work. Applying this material can also improve everyday talk in which you are trying to convince or explain something to others.

Restatement of the Thesis

You must also restate the thesis during the conclusion to underscore the main idea and help your audience remember it afterward. When you restate the thesis is up to you. Like the components of the introduction, some components of the conclusion can occur at any point. Aside from providing a wrap-up signal at the very beginning of the conclusion and ending with the clincher statement (we discuss this one shortly), the order in which these components appear will be based on what you believe works best for your purposes and for you and the audience personally.

Summary of Main Points

A summary of the main points allows you to stress key issues and helps the audience retain the important information. Remember that in the introduction you provided an enumerated preview of the main points. There, you simply listed the main points of the presentation without elaboration. When summarizing your main points during your conclusion, you do not simply list them but instead remind your audience what they are, briefly review each one, and accentuate their support of your thesis. Summarizing your main points is a good way to assist audience retention and understanding of the material.

By the way . . . : Do Not Just List



We have found that providing a complete summary of the main points instead of just listing them is the area in which beginning speakers struggle the most when developing conclusions. Keep the importance of the summary in mind when speaking in the community, on the job, or in the classroom.

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you think beginning speakers may struggle with this area?
2. What might you do to prevent making this mistake when speaking?

Audience Motivation

You must also strive to motivate the audience to take action as a result of listening to you. In the introduction, you explained to the audience the importance of the topic and provided the audience with reasons for listening to your presentation. During the conclusion, reiterate why you gave the presentation in the first place and encourage audience members to act as a result of it. A positive relationship with the speaker will increase the likelihood that an audience will go along with whatever is asked of it.

In presentations to persuade, this reaction is relatively easy to accomplish because the audience response is a bit more obvious. For instance, if the purpose of your talk is to get your audience members to wear their seat belts when traveling in a vehicle, urge them to always wear their seat belts when traveling in a vehicle. Do not assume your audience members will understand what course of action you want them to take or remember your purpose. It is important to be explicit by telling the audience members exactly what you want them to think or do. If your purpose is to convince the audience members that something is true or a certain policy should be enacted, tell them exactly what you want them to believe or support.

During presentations to inform, your purpose is to increase audience understanding or recognition of the topic. An effective informative presentation will generate or enhance interest in your topic and will actually be used by your audience. To ensure members of your audience make full use of the material, encourage them to use the information and go beyond what you provide.

The impact of any message is greatest while it is being heard and immediately afterward. As time goes on, this impact grows weaker. You have the most impact on your audience during the presentation itself, but as soon as you finish, the effects will diminish. The best way to ensure a lasting impact is to motivate the audience to use the information.

Relational Reinforcement

You must also reinforce the relationship between the audience and the material and between the audience and yourself. Emphasizing the importance of the material in audience members' lives, like you did in the introduction, will increase their motivation to use the material and to act or think the way you want. By reinforcing their connection with the material, you also ensure that this relationship will not end with your presentation, just as a relationship among friends lasts after a conversation has drawn to a close.

In the conclusion, you must also remind the audience members of your relationship with them. You may want to touch on the ways the material affects your life just as it does theirs. You could also note other similarities with the audience members by emphasizing your connections with them. Much like reinforcing their relationship with the material, audience members should recognize that your relationship with them will continue once the presentation concludes.

By the way . . . : Comedy Genius



Comedians such as Louis C. K. always know their last joke or line before they go up to the microphone. Once on stage, they may vary the rest of their act, but that last line will remain the same. They want their audience laughing when they finish, ending in a memorable fashion. Memorizing the last line of their act and knowing its strength also reassures and helps calm them through the rest of their performance. Your presentations may not end with a huge laugh from the audience, but they will need you to end in a memorable way.



Josh Brasted/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways is making a presentation just like a stage performance?
2. How might knowing your last statement assist you as a speaker?

Clincher Statement

Prepare to end your presentation with a clincher statement, a phrase that rounds out your talk strongly and smoothly. Your clincher statement needs to encapsulate your entire address and leave the audience in a good frame of mind. This technique will help make your delivery memorable, and knowing the last line of presentation by heart is often a comfort.

Many of the attention-getting strategies used in introductions can be used here. Sometimes humor is most appropriate. A final illustration or anecdote can be used as a clincher statement. Linking the clincher statement to your introduction is often an effective way of wrapping up the entire presentation. For instance, if you began with a rhetorical question, providing an answer as your final statement may reinforce your thesis. Audiences often remember the last thing said longer than anything else, so make sure you carefully choose your concluding remark.

Never, however, end by saying, "Thank you." This is totally forgettable and ineffective. Most presenters who end their presentations this way are doing so not out of appreciation for the audience but because they are finished and the audience does not yet know it. Ending a presentation without making the audience aware of it can result in the speaker just staring hopefully at the audience, the audience staring back at the speaker in surprise, and nobody knowing quite what to do. So, the speaker meekly utters, "Thank you." At this point, the audience members realize it is over and start clapping, primarily because they are relieved to know that it is all over. The speaker in this example likely did not guide the audience through the entire presentation, include a wrap-up signal, or incorporate any of the other components of an effective conclusion. After reading this book, you will be certain to fully guide your audience through the delivery. You will know what components to include when developing a successful conclusion, and you will end strongly with a memorable clincher statement.

Of course, you can still express gratitude and appreciation for your audience by saying, "Thank you," but wait until the applause has died down following your clincher statement and the audience has finished showering you with roses and words of praise.

clincher statement: a phrase that allows a speaker to end on a strong but smooth note

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are the four principles of presentation organization and development?

The four principles of presentation organization and development are (1) points, (2) unity, (3) balance, and (4) guidance. The points principle highlights the basic building blocks of an argument: main points and subpoints. Unity is a principle of organization and development that maintains you should stay focused and provide only information that supports your thesis and main points. Balance is a principle of organization and development that maintains the points of the body must be relatively equal in scope and importance. The amount of time you devote to the main points and to the development and support you provide for them must be relatively equal. Guidance is a principle of organization and development that maintains a speaker must guide and direct the audience throughout the entire presentation.

2. What organizational patterns can you use in the development of the body of a presentation?

An organizational pattern is an arrangement of the main points that best enables audience comprehension. You should base the selection of an organizational pattern for your delivery on the topic, your purpose, and the audience. Use the chronological pattern to arrange the main points according to their position in a time sequence. Use the spatial pattern to arrange the main points according to their physical relation. Use a causal pattern to organize the main points according to cause and effect. The question-answer pattern involves posing questions an audience may have about a subject and then answering those questions in a manner that favors your position. The topical pattern arranges support material according to specific categories, groupings, or grounds. The problem-solution pattern divides the body by first addressing a problem and then offering a solution to that problem. Finally, the elimination pattern involves offering a series of solutions to a problem and then systematically eliminating each one until the only solution remaining is the one you support.

3. What components must you include in an introduction to a presentation?

During the introduction, you must begin to establish your credibility and connect with the audience on a relational level, reinforce connections between the topic and your audience to increase its desire to listen, and lay the groundwork for the remainder of the address. Six components must be included in the introduction to achieve these requirements. The first thing to include in your introduction is an attention getter, a device used to draw the audience into your presentation. The placement of the remaining components of the introduction may vary, but the attention getter will always come first. In the introduction, you must inform your audience of both the purpose of your presentation and your thesis. You must tell the audience members why they should perceive you as credible, and you must develop your relationship with them. You must orient the audience members by providing them with any information that will allow them to better understand and appreciate the material you will present in the body. You must inform the audience members of the importance of the topic and its impact on their lives. Finally, you must provide an enumerated preview of your main points during the introduction.

4. What components must you include in a conclusion to a presentation?

During the conclusion, you must reinforce your thesis and purpose, underscore audience involvement, and provide adequate closure or sense of finality. Six components of the conclusion will help you accomplish these requirements. You must first provide the audience with a wrap-up signal when concluding a delivery. You must indicate to the audience both verbally and nonverbally that you have reached the conclusion and are essentially wrapping things up. You must restate the thesis during the conclusion. You must summarize the main points to reinforce them and help the audience retain the information. You must strive to motivate the audience to take action as a result of listening to what you have said. During the conclusion, you must also reinforce the audience members' relationship with the material and their relationship with you. Finally, you must conclude with a clincher statement, a phrase that allows you to end strongly and smoothly.

Key Concepts

attention getter 315
balance principle 307
body 305
causal pattern 310
chronological pattern 309
clincher statement 323
conclusion 313
elimination pattern 312
guidance principle 308
introduction 313
main points 306
organizational pattern 309
orientation phase 318
points principle 306
problem–solution pattern 312
question–answer pattern 311
spatial pattern 310
subpoints 306
topical pattern 311
transitions 308
unity principle 306

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. What types of attention getters do your friends find most effective? Which types of attention getters do they find least effective? Do their evaluations change depending on circumstances or what is discussed?
2. Ask your friends to describe the characteristics of what they consider an effective presentation. Limit their responses to those not involving delivery. Consider their responses regarding the guidelines for developing presentations discussed in this chapter.
3. Ask your friends to recall an occasion during which they listened to a presentation they considered confusing. What do they believe made it difficult to understand? As a speaker, what would you have done differently?

Media Connections

1. We discussed how written transitions are often less obvious than oral transitions. Find examples of written transitions in magazines, newspapers, and books. Once you have gathered these examples, turn each one into an oral transition that would clearly and effectively guide a listening audience.
2. Watch a presentation on television or on the Internet. Which elements of introductions discussed in this chapter are evident? Are any elements of introductions absent from that presentation? What could the speechwriter have done to improve the introduction?
3. Locate examples of archived presentations from at least 20 years ago. Many can be found on the Internet. Then find examples of recent speeches. How do these develop similarly and differently? How has the passing of time altered the development of presentations?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

15 Giving Informative and Persuasive Talks



©iStockphoto.com/sturti

Chapter Outline

[Key Features of Informative Presentations](#)

[Presenting Definitions and Descriptions](#)

[Expository Presentations](#)

[Process and How-To Demonstrations](#)

[Strategies for Successful Informative Presentations](#)

[Key Features of Persuasive Presentations](#)

[Presenting to Convince](#)

[Presenting to Actuate](#)

[Persuasive Speaking and Artistic Proofs](#)

[Persuasive Speaking and the Social Judgment Theory](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are the key features of informative presentations?
2. What strategies exist for achieving successful informative presentations?
3. What are the key features of persuasive presentations?
4. How might preexisting beliefs and attitudes of the audience influence presentations intended to convince?
5. How might presentations to actuate affect audience behavior?
6. What are the artistic proofs?
7. What is the social judgment theory, and how can it influence persuasive attempts?

Consider how much you now know about presentations or giving a talk in class. In [Chapter 13](#), you learned how to select a topic, determine the purpose and thesis of your delivery, and gather support material (*inventio*). Then, in [Chapter 14](#), you learned how to develop an argument through the body of your presentation, how to develop an introduction, and how to develop a conclusion (*dispositio*).

Those previously unknown elements of skillful presentations are now feeling less threatening, and we hope you are continuing to gain confidence as you learn more and more about this process. Confidence comes with the knowledge that you know how to do this! Yet that learning does not stop there. In this chapter, we will examine some particular types of talk that you may be asked to give: informative and persuasive presentations. Classical rhetoricians would have called these *elocutio* or “style”—with *clarity* of style being most important when attempting to inform, whereas charm and *credibility* are more relevant for persuasiveness.

The two look different to begin with, but they really are not that separable. Speakers generally inform their audiences of various facts or ideas when persuading them to believe something or to perform a particular action. Certain aspects of persuasion are evident when speakers inform an audience about something because basically they are trying to have the audience believe something new—and isn’t that a definition of *persuasion*?

Such presentations are therefore alike in many ways, not the least of which is the way in which they build on your relationship of trust with the audience. However, in the scholarship on different types of presentations, a clear distinction is drawn between them because of the purpose of the presentation. In the first case, a speaker’s intent is to improve audience knowledge or understanding of something, but in the second, the intent is to influence either the thinking (attitudes and beliefs) or the behavior of the audience.

That observation offers a pretty big distinction between types of presentation that share many similarities. Both are based on a similar relationship to the audience. You will neither inform nor persuade people who do not trust or believe what you say. Therefore, performance of an identity as a “truth speaker” is essential in all cases, whether among friends or strangers. Many components of both the introduction and the conclusion are the same and necessary for both informative and persuasive presentations (as we saw in [Chapter 14](#)). The principles of development and organization are the same for each, along with the requirements and guidelines for using credible evidence and support. The need to develop and maintain credibility, as well as a relationship with the audience, is the same for both types of presentations, as are the elements of effective delivery. Some organizational patterns are more commonly associated with informative or persuasive presentations, but you can use all of the patterns discussed earlier for either persuasive or informative presentations. Many of the other concepts and guidelines included in this chapter that are primarily discussed with one type can actually be used in the development and enhancement of both types of delivery.

Key Features of Informative Presentations

If you are called on to make informative presentations, then we assume you are either offering this service to your community, your workplace, your school, or to other areas of your life in an existing community, or that you have been assigned to practice it in a speech class. As we indicated previously, most presentations you will ever be called on to give are not to strangers but to people you know. An audience's reason for inviting you is because you know more about the topic than audience members do and they want to be informed. Or perhaps you are an advocate for a cause and they want to hear the case for that cause. Or you are doing this talk for your class and they want to hear from you what you have learned. If this is a class assignment, then our advice is that (if you are given the choice) you pick a topic that you know a lot about; in all other cases, we, you, and the audience already know that you know a lot about the topic and that is why they invited you in the first place.

If you know a lot about the topic, then one of the issues that you face is the problem of organizing what you know so that you can present the key parts of it to your audience. We will now help you learn how to do this.

Presenting Definitions and Descriptions

Definitions and descriptions provide the audience with an extended explanation or depiction of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event. After listening to a definition or description, your audience should have a greater understanding of it. For example, you may present information to your audience about Kobe beef, iPhones, the television series *Better Call Saul*, or the role of the silly mid-off in cricket, based on your Google search about the question.

All the components of introductions and conclusions discussed in [Chapter 14](#) should be included in definitions and descriptions. As with all presentations, you must reinforce your relationship with the audience throughout the presentation. You are more likely to deliver these types of presentations to audiences who do not know or understand the topic. In this case, you will start with some clear reference to the significance of the matter to your audience. You should also emphasize the significance of the topic in the conclusion and when motivating the audience to use the information.

definitions and descriptions: provide the audience with an extended explanation or depiction of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event

Expository Presentations

Expository presentations provide the audience with a detailed analysis of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event. The speaker offers higher levels of understanding to the audience and may connect ideas about a particular topic, distinguish or classify components, compare and contrast elements, or initiate new approaches or integrate existing approaches.

expository presentation: provides the audience with a detailed review of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event

Using the examples for speeches of definition and description offered earlier, beyond explaining Kobe beef to an audience, you could discuss the effects that Kobe beef has had on the cattle industry. You could discuss the integration of iPhone capabilities into other phone designs. You could examine the influence of cable television series on traditional broadcast television series. You could compare the role of silly mid-off in aggressive and defensive fielding.

If the chef in this picture intends the audience to be able to perform the procedures being demonstrated, is he giving a process talk or a how-to demonstration?



Fuse/Getty Images

As with other presentations, all the components of introductions and conclusions should be included in expository (informative, explanatory) deliveries. Of course, you base your offering on the relational connection that exists already between you and your audience, or base it on some shared knowledge such as the previous series of presentations that the class has heard. As with definitions and descriptions, you can use multiple organizational patterns when developing expository presentations, and, as always, you should clearly guide your audience.

Process and How-To Demonstrations

Process demonstrations describe the procedure or method through which something is accomplished *without* the expectation that the audience will actually perform the process. The audience should, however, be able to explain and understand the process once you finish speaking. How-to demonstrations describe the procedure or methods through which something is accomplished *with* the expectation that the audience *will* be able to perform the process. The audience should be able to explain, understand, and perform the process once you finish speaking. The key distinction between process demonstrations and how-to demonstrations is whether the audience will be able to perform the process after listening to the presentation.

Be sure to include all the components of introductions and conclusions in your presentation, especially the connections between the audience and the speaker and between the audience and the material. Previewing and summarizing the steps of the process are especially important in both types of presentations. Encouraging the audience members to use the information as you motivate them in the conclusion is particularly important with how-to demonstrations. The chronological pattern is most commonly used when developing these types of informative demonstrations, but you could also use other organizational patterns, including topical and spatial. Beyond these guidelines, there exist three additional techniques to help ensure effective expository and how-to demonstrations.

process demonstration: a presentation that describes the procedure or method through which something is accomplished *without* the expectation that the audience will actually perform the process

how-to demonstration: a presentation that describes the procedure or methods through which something is accomplished *with* the expectation that the audience will be able to perform the process

Include All Steps

Be certain to include all the steps of the process, even those you consider obvious (Coombs, 2014). You may be informing the audience how to develop a website and think that saving the work is an obvious step. However, the audience members may not realize this step is necessary. What is obvious to you may not be obvious to your audience, particularly if you are introducing an unfamiliar process or procedure.

Provide a Clear View

If you use visual presentation aids during a how-to presentation, make sure everyone can see what you are doing. For example, informing the audience how to make an origami bird would require the intricate manipulation of a relatively small piece of paper. Members of the audience seated in the back or on the sides of the room may not be able to see what you are doing. In such cases, use an image projector to display your hands on a screen or use another form of visual aid.

Control Pace

Do not go through the steps too quickly. Although you may be very familiar with the process you are describing and can speed through steps with a clear understanding, members of the audience may not possess as much experience with the process and may find it difficult to keep up or to grasp all of the steps. That's why they are there listening to you: They want to learn how to do it. Remember that it is a lot easier to drive a car when you know how to do it than it is to describe exactly how you do it, and that is the essential art of teaching—to be able to break down a complicated process into steps that your audience can follow and master.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Classroom Relationships

If you are giving or are to give a presentation in class, consider how your classroom relationships will influence and be influenced by your presentation.



©iStockphoto.com/michaeljung

Questions to Consider

1. How might these relationships assist your presentation, and how can you further use them to your advantage?
2. How might these relationships hinder your presentation, and how can you overcome these hindrances?

Strategies for Successful Informative Presentations

Having discussed the various types of informative presentations and the various considerations you must account for, we can now examine strategies for giving an informative presentation successfully. (Some of these strategies also apply to persuasive presentations, but here we discuss them relative to informative presentations).

Build on Your Relationship With the Audience

Determine your relational status with the audience. If you have a relationship with them outside of the speaking context, an audience will already perceive you in that context. For example, a supervisor speaking to his or her staff would likely be viewed as having a higher status, a coworker would likely be viewed as having an equal status, and a subordinate would likely be viewed as having a lower status. In each case, the speaker would have to determine whether to confirm the preexisting relationship with the audience or be viewed as more authoritative on the topic of the presentation. This decision would be based on such factors as the purpose of the presentation, as well as on issues surrounding the preexisting relationship. By this stage, you will know what the purpose of the presentation is, and you just need to select the appropriate identity for delivering it.

Maintain a Narrow Focus

Narrow the focus of your presentation to provide adequate support and development for your topic and to assist your audience's ability to understand and connect the material. Novice speakers frequently hold the mistaken belief that informative presentations improve as more information is supplied. In other words, they think that the more information they cram into a presentation and the broader the scope of their presentation, the better it will be. This is like thinking that an excellent informative presentation about the Revolutionary War would cover the entire war in a delivery that lasts less than 10 minutes and include as many dates, facts, statistics, and other forms of support and evidence as possible. However, it is impossible to include everything about the Revolutionary War in such a limited time. Even if you attempted it, you would not be able to properly develop the information. Also, the audience would likely be so overwhelmed with all the points of detail that they would get up and join the British.

The bigger the scope of your presentation, the harder it is to provide support and information for all of it. Accomplishing the goal of an informative presentation—increasing audience understanding—also becomes more difficult the more you try to stuff into it. If you bombard audience members with material, it will be difficult for them to retain the information, and none of the material will be given sufficient support to ensure adequate understanding. Keep it brief and focused. It is much better to give the audience a thorough understanding of a small part of the information than a feeble and foggy understanding of the whole thing. Never forget that you can eat a pie only one slice at a time.

Adapt the Complexity

Adjust the complexity of your presentation to match your audience's previous exposure to the subject matter and their understanding of the topic. Some audiences may know a great deal about a topic, but other members may not have a clue. You should always let your audience research guide you in your decision about the level of complexity of your presentation. When presenting to an audience with limited understanding of the topic, you need to keep it simple if you want to be effective. For a more expert audience, however, you would give more complicated details. For instance, you could teach a novice audience the basic mechanics of serving a tennis ball, but you could teach an expert audience how to apply spin to the serve to kick the ball toward an opponent's backhand.

Ethical Issue

Beyond preventing you from reaching your goals for a presentation, would it be considered unethical to deliberately talk over the heads of

Be Clear and Simple

Regardless of your audience's experience with your topic, you should always present the material in a clear and simple manner. Avoid talking over the heads of your audience or incorporating unusually difficult language because neither of these will increase audience respect for the speaker. Nor does it connect the speaker with the audience relationally. What will impress an audience is a speaker's ability to relate the material in a way that makes sense and is easily understood.

Use Clear Organization and Guide the Audience

Remember to develop the presentation with clear organization to guide the audience through the presentation, especially if it is about something relatively technical. Recall the *guidance principle* from the discussion in [Chapter 14](#) of organization and development. Clear organization and development of a presentation will increase the likelihood of a positive connection between the audience, the speaker, and the material.

You want to keep your audience with you, even if the presentation is relatively short. Your reason for giving the informative demonstration is to increase audience members' understanding of the topic. Do everything possible to ensure that this is what happens; clear organization always helps.

Stress Significance and Relational Influence

In [Chapter 14](#), we stressed the importance of the topic in the introduction. The introduction is especially important when you want your audience to learn something new. Think back to a time when a stranger provided you with information that you considered important or that you used immediately, such as driving directions after getting lost. Chances are you paid very close attention to that person and tried to retain as much of the information as possible. Conversely, if a topic is not one that matters to you, why would you pay attention to a presentation about it? Remember that this is how your audience will feel also, and your first objective is to make sure they realize the importance of the topic that you are going to present.

Develop Relationships Through Language

Your language during a presentation maintains your relationship with the audience. You should use such words as *us* and *we* when speaking with an audience to connect yourself to its members and the material. Accordingly, you should avoid words that separate you from the audience, such as *I* and *you*. Also, use terminology familiar to the audience, or else introduce unfamiliar new terminology with care.

You should also strive to connect audience members with the material by providing them with a clear mental picture of what you are discussing. In addition to creating a relational connection, providing a clear mental picture helps maintain audience attention and ensure retention of the material. You can achieve this representation of the material by using concrete and descriptive language.

Concrete words represent tangible objects that can be experienced through sensory channels (touch, taste, smell, hearing, seeing) and include real people, objects, actions, and locations. Abstract words, in contrast, represent intangible objects that cannot be experienced through your senses and include ideas, beliefs, and feelings. *Patriotism* is an abstract word that could be conveyed more concretely by describing a flag and acts of patriotism that provide the audience with a clearer mental picture and greater understanding of what you mean by that term.

concrete words: those representing tangible objects that can be experienced through sensory channels (touch, taste, smell, hearing, seeing) and include real people, objects, actions, and locations



Consider how you can use the strategies for successful informative presentations when informing a friend, colleague, romantic partner, or customer of something.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe these strategies are more, less, or equally important when informing people one-on-one than when giving a presentation, and why?
2. How can your attempts at informing those with whom you share a personal relationship inform your attempts at informing a bigger audience?

Why would this speaker discuss the significance and relational influence of the topic in the lives of audience members?



©iStockphoto.com/MotoEd

Descriptive language provides the audience with a clearer picture of what you are discussing by *describing* it in more detail. Consider the difference between merely saying “There is a meadow” and using descriptive language to provide a clearer picture of a meadow by invoking multiple senses of your audience. For example, you could describe the meadow as having grasses swaying majestically in a gentle breeze caressing your skin and carrying the fragrance of thousands of wildflowers and having a bubbling brook flowing underneath a cobalt sky filled with singing birds. This passage might sound like something from a bad romance novel, but used correctly, descriptive language will provide members of your audience with a clearer understanding of what you are discussing, help maintain their attention, and connect them to the material.

descriptive language: that which provides the audience with a clearer picture of what you are discussing by describing it in more detail

Relate Unknown Material to Known Material

Relating new or unknown material to familiar or known material will enable your audience members to better understand what you are discussing and help them retain the material. For example, your audience members may not have experience with nuclear reactors or any understanding of how these reactors actually work. However, they may have a basic understanding of how a toaster works. Comparing the process involved with nuclear reactors (unknown) to the process involved with a toaster (known) will help the audience understand what you are discussing. Members of your audience may also be more likely to recall your presentation the next time they fix a piece of toast. Naturally, it is important to select something with which your audience is actually familiar, and your audience research will help you to know what they know.

Skills You Can Use: In the Classroom



The focus of this chapter is what a speaker should do rather than what audience members should do. However, you might consider yourself an audience member when listening to a lecture in class. Even if your instructor does not do so, try relating the material you are learning to things you already know. It will likely increase your understanding and retention of what is being discussed.

Motivate Your Audience

“Use it or lose it” refers to more than just muscle mass. If the audience members do not incorporate the information that you provide into their lives, they will likely forget the material provided during your presentation. Recall that during the conclusion of a presentation, you must reinforce relational connections and motivate your audience to act on the information provided. Make sure your audience members know how to use the information and fully recognize the importance of the topic in their lives. Effective informative presentations prompt interest in the topic and entice the audience to use the information.

Key Features of Persuasive Presentations

Now that we have discussed informative presentations, we can turn our attention to persuasive deliveries, of which two basic types exist: presentations to convince and those intended to actuate. (“What?” you may ask. Just wait!) These are technical terms distinguishing between the purposes of the speaker. In the one case (convincing), the speaker intends to establish a positive relationship with the audience and to give audience members an approach to a controversial topic that they will find easy to accept. The purpose is to change somebody’s *mind* one way or another. In speeches to actuate, the speaker wants to go further and change not just minds but *behaviors*. The goal is to change not just what audiences think, but what they do about it. “Why water conservation matters” would be a title for a speech to convince; “Save more water” could be a presentation to actuate.

Why would a positive relational connection with an audience be especially important when attempting to persuade?



©iStockphoto.com/Thinkstock

Presenting to Convince

Presentations to convince are delivered in an attempt to influence audience thinking. They encompass a primary claim—essentially, what you are trying to convince your audience to believe. For example, you might want to convince your audience that Puerto Rico should remain a territory of the United States rather than becoming a state; that tuition increases at your school are a bad idea; that there is a need for after-school programs in your community, or that recycling needs to become mandatory. The four primary types of persuasive claims that can be developed through a speech to convince include (1) policy, (2) value, (3) fact, and (4) conjecture.

Claims of Policy

A claim of policy maintains that a course of action should or should not be taken. For example, you may want to convince the audience that an attendance policy should be instituted at your school, same-sex marriage should be legalized in your state, or stricter automobile emissions standards should be introduced. When supporting a particular policy, a speaker must demonstrate the need for such a policy, how the policy will satisfy that need, and that the policy can be successfully enacted. A speaker may also be required to prove that the advocated policy is superior to an existing one or another policy being proposed.

Ethical Issue

Review the discussion of fallacious arguments in the chapter on listening ([Chapter 7](#)). These flawed arguments are often quite effective when used to persuade someone! Are there any occasions that would justify the use of fallacious arguments? If you believe such occasions exist, how would you support your answer?

Claims of Value

A claim of value maintains that something is good or bad, beneficial or detrimental, or another evaluative criterion. Claims of value deal largely with attitudes, which were discussed earlier. You may want to convince your audience that Andrew Jackson was a racist president or that playing video games is beneficial to child development.

presentation to convince: an attempt to influence audience thinking

claim of policy: a claim maintaining that a course of action should or should not be taken

claim of value: a claim maintaining that something is good or bad, beneficial or detrimental, or another evaluative criterion

When developing a claim of value, you must let the audience know what criteria you used to determine the value you support. Then, you need to exhibit how the object, person, or idea meets those criteria. You would need to explain to the audience how to determine “a racist president” and how Andrew Jackson would be ranked as one. You would need to explain to your audience what you mean by “beneficial to child development” and why playing video games meets those criteria. Claims of value go beyond simply offering your opinion about something. You must establish criteria and provide evidence to support your claim.

The speaker in this photo is attempting to convince her audience that her university should provide each incoming student with a laptop computer. What type of claim is she making?



©iStockphoto.com/ViktorCap

Claims of Fact and Claims of Conjecture

Claims of fact and claims of conjecture are related but have one key distinction. A claim of fact maintains that something is true or false at the *present time* or was true or false in the *past*. A claim of conjecture, though similar to a claim of fact in that something is determined to be true or false, contends what will be true or false in the *future*. Examples of claims of fact and conjecture include convincing your audience that decreases in taxes result in increases in consumer spending, that slow drivers cause the majority of traffic fatalities, that banning handguns would lead to an increase in crime, and that education costs will triple within the next 10 years.

Both claims of fact and claims of conjecture require solid evidence and support. Claims of conjecture are unusual, however, because a speaker is predicting the future. Accordingly, you are speculating about what might happen and do not have established facts or statistics to support your claim. However, existing facts and statistics can be used to support the presentation, for example by establishing trends and drawing a conclusion about how they will continue. Such evidence is used all the time when economic predictions are made. Economists examine current trends, statistics, and even past events to speculate about the future economic picture. The validity of your projections depends on the existing trends and the safety of your extrapolation.

By the way . . . : Claims of Policy and Presentations to Actuate



Note that a claim of policy does not necessarily involve individual action but rather involves action by a collective, such as a community, corporation, school, or nation-state.

Questions to Consider

1. Once you read the section on presentations to actuate, in what ways are claims of policy and to actuate similar and different?
2. How might an understanding of claims of policy enhance the understanding of presentations to actuate, and vice versa?

claim of fact: a claim maintaining that something is true or false now

claim of conjecture: a claim that something will be true or false in the future

Audience Approaches to Presentations to Convince

Regardless of the type of claim being advanced, an audience's existing beliefs and attitudes will affect what you attempt to achieve with your presentation and the methods you employ. You can influence the thinking of your audience in the three different ways, as discussed in [Table 15.1](#).

Table 15.1 Influencing Audience Thinking

Reinforcing an Existing Way of Thinking	In this case, you desire to strengthen your audience members' convictions and ensure them of their accuracy and legitimacy (for example, reminding students why they should not cheat). Presentations that reinforce an existing way of thinking usually offer additional reasons in support along with new or recent evidence. In these situations, audiences generally view their relationship with the speaker in a very positive manner.
Altering an Existing Way of Thinking	Here, you essentially tell the audience members that their current way of thinking is wrong or should be modified (for example, telling consumers to become more aware of recycling). This approach does not automatically mean that the audience will be hostile toward you or your position. However, when attempting to bring about this change, it is especially important to develop a very positive relationship with the audience. It is also especially important to enhance audience perceptions of your credibility, particularly of your goodwill when telling them something that goes against their present beliefs.
Creating a New Way of Thinking	In this situation, members of your audience will probably be more willing to accept your claim than they would if you attempted to change their position (for example, encouraging obese people to take more care with their health). However, you may need to spend additional time developing the audience members' relationship with the material and stressing the importance of the issue in their lives. As always, establishing a positive relational connection with your audience will increase your likelihood of success.

Table 15.2 Influencing Audience Behavior

Reinforcing an Existing Behavior	In this case, you want to strengthen audience members' convictions about a behavior and ensure that they continue doing it ("Keep sending in those letters"). This often entails providing new reasons for enacting this behavior, along with increasing audience confidence about the value of doing it.
Altering an Existing Behavior	Here, you are asking the audience to modify an existing behavior ("Increase your water savings"). It is important that you stress the value of continuing to perform this action and its positive influence in audience members' lives, but you must urge them to perform this action in the more effective manner you suggest.
Ceasing an Existing Behavior	An audience will initially be less supportive of this type of presentation because you are essentially telling them that they are doing something wrong ("Don't put baby wipes into the sewers; they don't break down like paper does"). Be careful not to offend them, but be resolute in your support of ceasing that behavior. It is especially important to develop a positive relationship with the audience. Stress that you are doing this for members' well-being.
Enacting a New Behavior	The key to successfully persuading your audience members to enact a new behavior is determining why they are not behaving this way in the first place ("Use a broom to sweep your driveway instead of blowing it down"). Are they opposed to the behavior? Do they not know the behavior can be done? Do they not recognize the value of the behavior? Do they believe that performing the behavior is more trouble than it is worth? Your answers will enable you to develop the presentation in a relational manner most likely to persuade listeners to enact the behavior.
Avoiding a Future Behavior	Here you are encouraging your audience to avoid a specified new behavior ("don't start smoking e-cigarettes or destroying recycling bins"). Such presentations require that you provide the audience members with reasons and strategies.

Presenting to Actuate

Presentations to actuate are delivered in an attempt to change audience behavior. You may want members of your audience to join your cause, volunteer with a charitable organization, limit their consumption of natural resources, or vote for Glenn Quagmire for mayor of Quahog. You may end up influencing audience thinking as a consequence of a desire to actuate, but that is not the ultimate goal of such a presentation. The ultimate goal of a lecture to actuate is to affect not the attitudes but the behavior of your audience. You can influence your audience in the five different ways discussed in [Table 15.2](#).

presentation to actuate: a presentation that is delivered in an attempt to influence audience behavior rather than merely their beliefs

Persuasive Speaking and Artistic Proofs

Each type of persuasive presentation can be enhanced through the recognition of the artistic proofs *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Aristotle laid out these artistic proofs more than 2,000 years ago, but the ideas behind them remain significant even to this day.

Ethos involves the use of speaker credibility to influence an audience. We have already talked about the importance of establishing and maintaining your credibility as well as a positive relational connection with an audience. For members of an audience to judge the information provided by a speaker as accurate, valuable, and worthy of their attention and consideration, they must view that speaker as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and concerned about their well-being. Audiences must also perceive a relational connection with the speaker. Audiences' perceptions of speaker credibility and their relationship with the speaker are important in persuasive attempts. Credible speakers are well-prepared speakers!

Pathos involves appealing to emotions such as excitement, sadness, happiness, guilt, and anger. You may have also witnessed the use of emotional appeals when attending or watching political rallies during which speakers elicit feelings of excitement about a particular candidate and perhaps anger toward political rivals. These emotional appeals are usually quite effective.

Discussing emotion in a communication textbook may initially strike some people as peculiar. Emotions are often considered things that people *feel internally*, which seems far removed from the rational discussion of symbolic activity. Emotions do involve internal activities and feelings. Neuroscientists can even pinpoint changes in the brain when people experience specific emotions. Changes in heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature and a host of other physical changes occur when you experience any emotion.

Yet emotion is also very much a *symbolic activity* and a *relational activity*. Symbolically, emotions and the feelings that accompany them are given meaning within a culture or society. Emotions bring about physical change, but this physical change is understood and evaluated according to established meaning. Happiness, sadness, fear, and all other emotions have meaning beyond physical experience or a given instance. These symbolic characteristics of emotions are learned *relationally*. Relationships are about knowledge, connecting symbolically to others, and understanding the world. Accordingly, people come to understand emotion through relationships.

Make your case: Everyday Persuasion



Think about the attempts to change someone's behavior you have encountered during your interactions with friends, family, and other people with whom you share a personal relationship. Consider how the five ways of influencing behavior ([Table 15.2](#)) are evident in these attempts.



©iStockphoto.com/Nicholas McComber

Questions to Consider

1. How are the persuasive appeals supported when interacting one-on-one with someone?
2. How can these attempts at persuasion inform the development and delivery of presentations to actuate?

Ethical Issue

Emotions can be very powerful tools of persuasion. To what extent do you think speakers should elicit fear, guilt, sadness, anger, and other “negative” emotions when persuading an audience? Are there limits to inducing these emotions? Does your perspective change depending on the purpose of the presentation?

ethos: artistic proof involving the use of speaker credibility to influence an audience

pathos: artistic proof involving the use of emotional appeals to influence an audience

Your understanding of emotions and of their appropriate display has developed through everyday communication and interactions with your friends, family, classmates, neighbors, romantic partners, acquaintances, and others with whom you share a relationship. You have only to consider the different ways that different cultures define as appropriate to express emotions to realize that their public display is affected by social custom (think how Queen Elizabeth does not cry in public however sad the occasion, compared with the strenuous activity of Middle East mourners expressing their grief at the murder of a child. One is extremely restrained and the other is less restrained, but there is no reason to assume that the emotion of grief is any different in one part of the world compared with another). The trick for a presenter is how to make your audience feel the emotion in circumstances appropriate to their cultural surroundings.

Logos involves the use of logic or reasoning to influence an audience. The two primary types of reasoning are inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning.

Inductive reasoning involves deriving a general conclusion based on specific evidence, examples, or instances. If you go to a restaurant and receive bad service, your friend goes to the same restaurant on another night and receives bad service, and a classmate goes to the restaurant and also reports having received bad service, you may conclude on the basis of these specific instances that this restaurant has bad service all the time. When using inductive reasoning, a sufficient number of examples or instances must exist from which to draw a legitimate conclusion, and these examples or instances must be relevant to the conclusion being established.

Evoking feelings of sadness from an audience when attempting to persuade would entail which artistic proof?



©Blend Images/Thinkstock

Deductive reasoning involves using general conclusions, premises, or principles to reach a conclusion about a specific example or instance. Thus, you may decide that because Duck and McMahan products are generally high in quality, a Duck and McMahan television set would be a high-quality product. Such reasoning frequently takes the form of syllogisms.

A syllogism is a form of argumentation consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. The *major premise* of a syllogism is a statement or conclusion of a general nature, whereas the *minor premise* entails a more specific statement about a particular instance or example. The *conclusion* is then derived from the logical connection between the major and minor premises. This may sound a bit confusing, but examining the following syllogism based on the previous example might clear things up for you:

Major Premise: Duck and McMahan products are high in quality.

(This statement involves a general claim about Duck and McMahan products.)

Minor Premise: This television is a Duck and McMahan product.

(This statement involves a specific example connected to the major premise about Duck and McMahan products.)

Conclusion: This television is high in quality.

(The conclusion is based on the major and minor premises. If Duck and McMahan products are high in quality and this television is a Duck and McMahan product, then it follows logically that this television must be high in quality.)

logos: artistic proof involving the use of logic or reasoning to influence an audience

inductive reasoning: deriving a general conclusion from specific evidence, examples, or instances

deductive reasoning: using general conclusions, premises, or principles to reach a conclusion about a specific example or instance

syllogism: a form of argumentation consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion

Disciplinary Debate: Logic or Emotion?



Public discourse has been traditionally focused on reasoning and evidence (logos), but the use of emotion (pathos) is becoming increasingly evident in persuasive attempts, such as negative political advertising. In a nutshell, pathos *works*.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think/feel that pathos will overtake logos as the central focus of public discourse?
2. What factors do you think will influence this development?
3. Is the appeal to emotion a good thing or a bad thing on the whole compared with appeals to logic?

This method of reasoning is sometimes presented in a slightly modified form known as an enthymeme. An enthymeme is a syllogism that excludes one or two of the three components of a syllogism. An enthymeme may be used when one of the premises is readily understood, accepted as true, or so obvious that it does not even need to be stated. People often use enthymemes when talking with others. If a salesclerk at an electronics store is attempting to sell you the Duck and McMahan television, he or she might exclude both the minor premise and the conclusion in the example syllogism and simply establish the major premise by saying, “Duck and McMahan products are very high in quality.” The fact that this television set is a Duck and McMahan product might be obvious, perhaps, as would the natural conclusion.

Beyond dealing with the obvious, however, incorporating enthymemes into one’s message often seems more natural than speaking in syllogisms. If the salesclerk includes all the parts of a syllogism and says, “Duck and McMahan products are high in quality; this television is a Duck and McMahan product; this television is high in quality,” you might determine the salesclerk either is a robot or really needs a serious coffee break.

As a speaker, you must determine whether it is most appropriate to present the material in the form of a syllogism or an enthymeme. As with other choices involving the development and delivery of a public presentation, this decision will be determined by your analysis of the audience. If your audience is familiar with the material, you could probably use an enthymeme successfully. However, if the audience is unfamiliar with the material or will not readily accept the major or minor premise as true or accurate, you should present the material in the form of a syllogism.

enthymeme: a syllogism that excludes one or two of the three components of a syllogism

Persuasive Speaking and the Social Judgment Theory

A way to increase the effectiveness of persuasive presentations is based on the theory of social judgment. The social judgment theory (O’Keefe, 2015; C. W. Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965; M. Sherif & Hovland, 1961) explains how people may respond to a range of positions surrounding a particular topic or issue. This theory can be understood as dealing with an audience’s relationship with the topic or issue. Using this theory, imagine an audience responding or relating to the various positions connected to a topic or an issue in one of three ways: acceptance, rejection, and noncommitment. These positions can in turn be placed in three types of ranges, referred to as latitudes (see [Figure 15.1](#)). The latitude of acceptance includes the range of positions that the audience sees as acceptable. At some point within this latitude of acceptance is the anchor position, which represents the preferred or most acceptable position. The latitude of rejection includes those positions that the audience sees as unacceptable. Finally, the latitude of noncommitment includes positions that the audience neither wholly accepts nor wholly rejects.

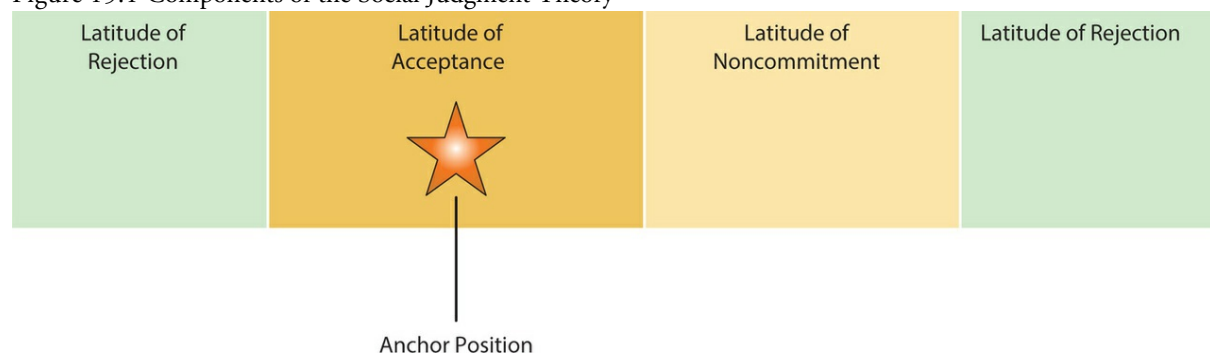
social judgment theory: theory explaining how people may respond to a range of positions surrounding a particular topic or issue

latitude of acceptance (social judgment theory): includes the range of positions that the audience deems acceptable

anchor position (social judgment theory): the preferred or most acceptable position

latitude of rejection (social judgment theory): includes those positions that the audience deems unacceptable

Figure 15.1 Components of the Social Judgment Theory



Source: C. W. Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall (1965); M. Sherif & Hovland (1961/1980).

Variables Influencing Social Judgment

The size of the latitudes is affected by the audience’s level of involvement or relationship with the issue. Audience involvement is based on audience members’ recognition of the issue’s significance and importance in their lives. The greater the significance and importance audience members perceive the issue as having in their lives, the more involved they will be with the issue, and vice versa. As audience members’ involvement with an issue increases, so does the size of their latitude of rejection. Audiences highly involved with an issue will have relatively small latitudes of acceptance and noncommitment because people will spend more time thinking about and evaluating the concerns with an issue if they view it as important and meaningful. People will spend less time engaged in those behaviors if they do not view the issue that way. Thus, people highly involved with an issue will have developed a more focused view of what is acceptable.

Audience members will often see messages as either dramatically closer to or farther away from their positions than they actually are. These perceptions are based on the assimilation effect, which maintains that if someone advocates a position within your latitude of acceptance, you will view it as closer to your anchor position than it really is, and the contrast effect, which maintains that if someone advocates a position within your latitude of rejection, you will view it as farther from your anchor position than it really is. Assimilation and contrast effects

are more likely to occur when an actual position is not clear and can thus be minimized by making your position explicit. For example, advocating *harsh penalties* for drug dealers is somewhat ambiguous, whereas advocating the *death penalty* as the punishment for drug dealers is clear and explicit.

latitude of noncommitment (social judgment theory): includes positions that the audience neither wholly accepts nor wholly rejects

audience involvement (social judgment theory): audience members' recognition of an issue's significance and importance in their lives; the greater the significance and importance audience members perceive the issue as having in their lives, the more involved they will be with the issue, and vice versa

assimilation effect (social judgment theory): maintains that if someone advocates a position within a person's latitude of acceptance, he or she will view it as closer to his or her anchor position than it really is

contrast effect (social judgment theory): maintains that if someone advocates a position within a person's latitude of rejection, he or she will view it as further from his or her anchor position than it really is

Using the Social Judgment Theory to Improve Persuasive Presentations

As you can imagine, determining the social judgment of a group of listeners takes thorough audience analysis. Also true is that various members of the audience will probably hold different anchor positions when it comes to your issue. You will not likely have specific data supporting a precise illustration of audience latitudes. However, you could use audience analysis to provide a rough idea of how the general audience latitudes might appear, and this could prove very useful when developing your presentation. Furthermore, elements of the social judgment theory also provide insight into ways to improve presentations in general.

By the way . . . : Interpersonal Similarity and Difference



The assimilation effect and contrast effect are similar to what happens in interpersonal relationships. Depending on their view of someone, people generally believe they are either more similar to or more different from that person than they actually are.

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you think this is the case?
2. How might your understanding of this occurrence in your personal relationships assist your understanding of public speaking?

Be Explicit.

First, the assimilation and contrast effects underscore the need to be very explicit in conveying your goals to the audience. The audience must know exactly what position you support and want them to accept. When dealing with the contrast effect, if the position you desire is within audience members' latitude of rejection, it may not be as far away from their anchor position as they would assume if you did not explicitly state your position. Audience members may view your position as not even remotely considerable, when in reality it is closer to their anchor position than they realize, so you should use that information and be explicit.

Stating your position is also necessary when dealing with assimilation effects. Having your audience members believe your position is closer to their anchor position than it actually is might appear to be beneficial. However, this can actually reduce the effectiveness of your presentation. According to Daniel O'Keefe (2015), the audience will view you as seeking less change than you actually seek. "In the extreme case of complete assimilation, receivers may think that the message is simply saying what they already believe—and hence receivers don't change their attitudes at all" (O'Keefe, 2015, p. 38). Both the assimilation effect and the contrast effect emphasize the need to state your position explicitly.

Consider Audience Involvement.

Second, considering audience perceptions of positions related to your topic will also assist you in determining how to develop your presentation. Audiences with a considerably large latitude of noncommitment may not be particularly involved with the topic or fully aware of its importance in their lives. The size of either the latitude of acceptance or the latitude of rejection may dictate which organizational pattern you use to develop your presentation. People new to public speaking often wonder whether they should include both sides of the issue when giving a persuasive presentation. The answer depends on the audience. If you believe the audience will strongly oppose your stance, it might be a good idea to present both sides of the issue to address the limitations of the opposite side. When an audience is neutral or somewhat unopposed to your position, presenting only your side of the issue will usually suffice.

Degree of Change.

Finally, considering the social judgment of your audience will help you ascertain the degree of change you should seek with your audience. If the anchor position of the audience is far away from the position being advocated, a speaker will be hard-pressed to convince many members of the audience to accept that new position. This reality should not discourage you as a speaker. Rather, you should simply be aware that persuasion is often a continual and very gradual process.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are the key features of informative presentations?

The following are the four primary types of informative presentations: (1) definition and description, (2) expository, (3) process, and (4) how-to. Definition and description provide the audience with an extended explanation or depiction of an object, a person, a concept, or an event. Expository presentations provide the audience with a detailed review or analysis of an object, a person, a concept, or an event. These talks seek higher levels of understanding by the audience than definitions or descriptions. Process presentations describe the procedure or method through which something is accomplished *without* the expectation that the audience will actually perform the process. The audience will be able to explain and understand the process once you finish speaking. How-to presentations describe the procedure or methods through which something is accomplished *with* the expectation that the audience will be able to perform the process at the speech's conclusion.

2. What strategies exist for achieving successful informative presentations?

Informative presentations build on your relationship with the audience, maintain a narrow focus, adapt their complexity, are clear and simple, use clear organization and guide the audience, stress significance and relational influence, develop relationships through language, relate unknown material to known material, and motivate the audience to do something at the end of the talk.

3. What are the key features of persuasive presentations?

Primary types of persuasive presentations are to convince and to actuate. Presentations to convince are delivered in an attempt to influence audience thinking, and they encompass a primary claim—essentially, what you are trying to convince your audience to believe. The following are the four primary types of persuasive claims that can be developed through a presentation to convince: (a) policy, (b) value, (c) fact, and (d) conjecture. Presentations to actuate are delivered in an attempt to influence audience behavior.

4. How might preexisting beliefs and attitudes of the audience influence presentations intended to convince?

Depending on preexisting beliefs and attitudes of the audience, a speaker may attempt to reinforce an existing way of thinking, change an existing way of thinking, or create a new way of thinking.

5. How might presentations to actuate affect audience behavior?

As a result of a presentation to actuate, audience members may reinforce, alter, or cease an existing behavior; enact a new behavior; or avoid a future behavior.

6. What are the artistic proofs?

The artistic proofs are ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos involves the use of speaker credibility to influence an audience (think how many famous sports personalities are used to endorse advertised products). Pathos involves the use of emotional appeals to influence an audience. Logos involves the use of logic or reasoning to influence an audience.

7. What is the social judgment theory, and how can it influence persuasive attempts?

The social judgment theory explains how people may respond to a range of positions surrounding a particular topic or issue. Underscoring the need to be very explicit when conveying your goals to the audience, this theory will assist you when you are determining how to develop the presentation and the degree of change you should seek with your audience.

Key Concepts

anchor position 339
assimilation effect 340
audience involvement 340
claim of conjecture 335
claim of fact 335
claim of policy 334
claim of value 334
concrete words 332
contrast effect 340
deductive reasoning 338
definitions and descriptions 328
descriptive language 333
enthymeme 339
ethos 337
expository presentation 328
how-to demonstration 329
inductive reasoning 338
latitude of acceptance 339
latitude of noncommitment 340
latitude of rejection 339
logos 338
pathos 337
presentation to actuate 336
presentation to convince 334
process demonstration 329
social judgment theory 339
syllogism 338

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask a friend at school to recall the most recent lecture in one of his or her classes. Would your friend consider that lecture more of an informative presentation or more of a persuasive presentation? What characteristics of that lecture led to your friend's judgment? Do you agree with the assessment?
2. Ask a friend to describe a time when someone tried to explain something, but your friend had difficulty understanding what that person was attempting to explain. What does your friend think caused the difficulty in understanding? Based on what you now know about informing others, what could that person have done differently to assist in your friend's understanding and comprehension of the material?
3. Ask a friend to describe a time when someone tried to convince him or her of something but was not successful. Why does your friend think that he or she was not convinced? Based on what you now know about persuasion, could that person have done anything differently to increase the likelihood of convincing your friend?

Media Connections

1. Read letters submitted to the editor of your local newspaper. Which of the following claims are addressed or presented most often: policy, value, fact, or conjecture? What type of support—if any—is provided in these letters?
2. Watch a presentation before Congress on C-SPAN or online, and look for evidence of ethos, pathos, and logos. Which artistic proof is most prominent?
3. Watch advertisements on television or online and look for evidence of ethos, pathos, and logos. Which artistic proof is most prominent? Does the prominent artistic proof change depending on the product or service advertised? If so, why do you think this change exists?

Student Study Site

 SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

16 Delivering a Presentation



©iStockphoto.com/Izabela Habur

Chapter Outline

[Managing Emotions About Speaking](#)

[Egotist Fallacy](#)

[The Audience](#)

[Dealing With Initial Nerves](#)

[Guidelines for Effective Delivery: Answers to Common Questions](#)

[Be Natural](#)

[Be Conversational](#)

[Be Normal If Any Errors Occur](#)

[Styles of Delivery](#)

[Effective Delivery](#)

[Personal Appearance](#)

[Vocalics](#)

[Facial Expression and Body Position](#)

[Gestures](#)

[Presentation Aids](#)

[Making the Most of Your Anxieties](#)

[Recognizing and Knowing What You Fear](#)

[Experience and Skill Building](#)

[A Final Thought About Anxiety](#)

[Focus Questions Revisited](#)

[Key Concepts](#)

[Questions to Ask Your Friends](#)

[Media Connections](#)

Focus Questions

1. What are three guidelines for effective delivery?
2. What are the styles of delivery?
3. What are the goals of effective delivery?
4. What are the components of effective delivery?
5. What are presentation aids?
6. What is communication apprehension, and how can it be managed?

And now. . . Here it comes. Preparation for the moment of delivery itself. Cicero had something to say about this, too, and called it *Pronuntiatio*. This is all about the manner of actual delivery—such things as your tone of voice, gestures, emphasis, and poise. It’s all about the actual speaking of your prepared presentation and the preparations you have been reading about in the last three chapters.

This is a point at which students get anxious. You will be less anxious if you have prepared your talk well, following the guidelines of the previous chapters. As we have said before, thorough preparation is the best foundation for confidence. Now we’re going to emphasize the value of *practice* and how to focus the last part of your preparation for knockout delivery.

Managing Emotions About Speaking

Remember how we said in [Chapter 13](#) that nerves are widespread but you can deal with them through solid preparation? Well now that we have shown you how to prepare effectively, we can deal with some remaining butterflies about actually walking out and delivering the talk!

To start with, let us offer a recap and reconceptualization. Anxiety about delivering a presentation is a very real, powerful emotion that is strong enough to take a physical form for many students, such as sweating or in some cases, nausea. It is not, however, the same for everyone, except that negatively loaded emotions can be turned into value for a speaker. The first thing to note, then, is that some of our discussion here may be more relevant to you than other parts are. You need to decide how far the different aspects will be useful to you. This is something of a salad bar, so pick what is useful. Two points about delivering a presentation are important, however: (1) a point about you; (2) a point about the audience.

Egotist Fallacy

First, the Egotist Fallacy is that everybody is focused on one's behavior and performance. It is worth remembering what was noted by Helen Fielding, the author of the Bridget Jones series, in *Rules for Living by Olivia Joules*: "They're not thinking about you; they're thinking about themselves, just like you are" (2004). A derivation from the Egotist Fallacy is that one's performances are central to other people's lives and that if you are giving a presentation then it will matter as much to them as it does to you. We have news: You are less important than you think! Although it is possible to work yourself up into a neurotic and paralyzing frenzy of anxiety about your presentation, in most instances the people who listen to it will be a captive audience. They would rather be doing something else than listening to you speak.

This news should come as a great relief. You can outwit this audience by preparing well and recognizing that your performance will rouse their attention to the extent that it is good. A poor performance will stimulate their search of their smartphones for the latest text message. However *you* feel, it is not likely to be recalled by them two weeks from now. So put your egotism aside, and along with it the anxiety that goes with believing you are the most important person in the room. Everyone in the room sees themselves as the most important, and that you are the one standing up and talking just brings relief to the others who are not doing so. Put this fact in its proper modest context and your nerves about presenting will be reduced.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Presenting to Others

Research indicates that most people have at least some "butterflies" about giving presentations.



©iStockphoto.com/SolStock

Questions to Consider

1. What would you consider your greatest concerns about speaking in front of an audience?
2. What could you do to minimize these concerns or else to build them into a speaker advantage with your particular audience?

The Audience

Our second point, about the audience, is, as we have repeatedly pointed out, that the majority of presentations that you will ever have to give will be to people you know already. Although you may be a little bit nervous about making a more formal presentation to a group such as this, remember that they already know you. Many if not all of them will like you, or, at worst, won't care one way or the other. In many circumstances where there is a presentation, you will be regarded as the expert who was chosen to give the presentation precisely because they want to hear what you have to say. Your connections to the audience and your ethos as a speaker are therefore already established. Any momentary nerves that you have are typically going to disappear once you get into full flow.

All the same, most textbooks on speech place a great deal of emphasis on communication apprehension and it has been a sustained area of study in the discipline of communication for the past five decades (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012; McCroskey, 1970). The fact that the typical textbook places such emphasis on the matter probably distracts the unwary reader from a convenient truth. Although a lot of people do experience nerves, this does not make it any different to get up in front of an audience of friends, acquaintances, colleagues, classmates, or strangers to speak. At least they know how you feel, and if they are human beings, they will have some sympathy for your situation.

We don't want to appear to fool you into believing that every presentation is simple and carefree because it takes a good deal of preparation and effort. However, we do tell you with great certainty that you will be able to do it.

communication apprehension: the fear or anxiety everyone has to some degree, especially when speaking to a large or unfamiliar audience

Dealing With Initial Nerves

To deal with nerves, you need, as always, to consider the relationship you have with the human beings in the audience. In most cases, speakers will know members of the audience quite well personally (e.g., coworkers, group members, classmates). You do not want to look foolish to them because it might damage your relationship outside of the presentation. However, you also know that friends are not likely to change their liking for you just because something goes wrong in a talk. Indeed, they are much more likely to make light of it instead. On other occasions, speakers might not know the audience personally but might feel anxious about how to best perform an appropriate identity that satisfies audience members' expectations. Those much rarer occasions are a little bit more of a challenge. And they are rare.

Most anxiety comes from not knowing what to expect or how to give a presentation. If you are like most of your classmates, you probably have had little experience delivering formal presentations. However, after gaining the extra boost from reading the preceding chapters you do now better understand how to prepare and develop a presentation and, frankly, that is more than half the battle.

If you go into any presentation knowing that you are well-prepared and have a good, practiced delivery, then all that can go wrong is tripping over a microphone cord or spilling beetroot soup down the front of your clothes. If you can avoid those two major dangers, then there is nothing to worry about (if you need guidance on how to avoid tripping over a microphone cord, then please email us, and our second piece of advice would be never to take beetroot soup to your talk). This chapter provides guidelines and suggestions for delivering your presentations that build on what we have said already and so prepare you for the rest of the battle.

The way in which you deliver your talk can (and indeed should) be vigorously prepared in advance, and several styles and techniques can then make your presentation more effective. We discuss these styles of delivery, providing benefits and drawbacks to each one, along with strategies for selecting and enacting them. You will face choices as a speaker concerning what to emphasize, when to speak more softly, when to pause, and how much to move around or gesture, so we will offer some guidance about those elements of delivery. We also address the goals of effective delivery and the ways in which "style" can enhance your credibility, your connection with the audience, and audience understanding of the material.

By the way . . . : Professional Performers' Tips on Decreasing Anxiety



- Don't go negative. Ask yourself good questions and focus on such issues as "What will happen if this presentation is terrific?"
- Thoroughly research your topic.
- Prepare an outline that suits your audience.
- Practice out loud; verbalize; speak out; demonstrate nonverbally. Don't practice only the script; practice actual delivery of it.
- Practice your presentation more than once, and preferably with an audience.
- Practice speaking more slowly; do not let your presentation rush past people; that would be a waste of all your preparation.
- Memorize the sequence of any slides.
- Imagine that, as you make your presentation, you are talking to a group of friends.

Questions to Consider

1. If you were in the audience, what would you look forward to in this presentation? Does your presentation provide what you believe your audience would want?
2. Do you have variations of pace and delivery planned into your presentation?

Guidelines for Effective Delivery: Answers to Common Questions

How can a speaker deliver a presentation well? DO NOT READ YOUR PRESENTATION!! Nobody wants to hear you read out text; it lacks spontaneity; it's not natural; it makes you speak too quickly; it makes you look uncertain about what you're going to say; and above all, it is incredibly, insufferably, unacceptably, excessively, inappropriately, incongruously BORING. The same goes for any PowerPoints or slides that you project: DO NOT READ THEM OUT! If the audience can read, then they can read your words on the screen and (very important!) it focuses their attention to do so. In a subtle way, making the audience read the slides for themselves makes them do some work to engage with the talk, so it gets them involved. If you paraphrase, summarize, or reinterpret the text on the screen, then that might help the audience to process it, and it does not insult their intelligence as much as reading out word for word what they can already see. Reading out your text is a basic 101 rookie mistake, although there are many non-rookies who make it, including three deans well-known to your authors.

Before we go further, let us summarize our point and have you repeat it to yourself quietly: Do not read your text and do not read text that the audience can see anyway. Why are we so insistent on this? Because it insults your audience and therefore disturbs and disrupts your relations with them. You are treating them as illiterates; you are boring them; you are undercutting your own expertise by making it look as if you know only one way to make the point and that is in the terms that are on the screen or on your script. In this case, the style of delivery (reading from a script) undercuts all the work you have done to prepare yourself as an expert and to connect with your audience. So, in sum, DO NOT READ YOUR TEXT. If you have not understood this point, then find someone else in your class to explain it to you or ask your instructor what is meant by the words *Do not read your text*. Alternatively, give up your speaking career, join the circus, and learn how to do a trapeze act.

That is what *not* to do but what should you do? Follow three simple guidelines based on three basic questions that speakers raise: How should they act, what should they sound like, and what happens if they mess up or are nervous? Here they are the answers: (1) Don't feel as if you are playing Hamlet in the theater, but as if you are talking to friends; (2) make your speech conversational because it will feel better for your audience and it will feel better to you—you are not “putting on a performance”; and (3) if you happen to slip up, do not spend the rest of your speech trying to emphasize the mistake but carry on as if nothing important happened—because it probably didn't.

Mistakes happen, and the more frequently you speak, the more likely it is that you will make a simple error, just as a matter of probability. It is never the end of the world, and you shouldn't act as if it is. You don't try to make mistakes happen (of course), and you will do a careful amount of preparation, but part of your preparation should include thinking about how to dig yourself out if something goes wrong. Projectors sometimes blow a lamp, laptops will not always play ball, and your hilarious YouTube clip may not work on cue. Of course everything may just go fine, but you should always have a rough idea of what you would do if something predictable goes wrong—and equipment failures are entirely predictable, so always have a backup plan or a prepared remark to get yourself out of these (quite foreseeable) difficulties. You do not need prepared remarks for earthquakes, convulsions in an audience member, or a large truck crashing into the side of the building. You should expect, however, that relatively frequent occurrences might occur while you are presenting. It should not throw you into a shocked heap of trembling incompetence if one of these relatively frequent occurrences (such as a faulty laptop connection) happens during your talk.

By the way . . . : Make Your Words Sound as If You Mean Them



Listen to Frank Sinatra from the soundtrack of *The Sopranos* to discover how to phrase something skillfully to convey the emotions hidden behind the words: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHJ3iZpFBRI&ab_channel=CjamPhotography (Frank Sinatra, “It Was a Very Good Year”)

Questions to Consider

1. Have you thought of ways to make your actions fit your words? Do you raise your voice a little when you are saying something important, for example?
2. Have you practiced any gestures or variations in timing that might make your presentation more engaging for the audience?

Be Natural

In their moments of purest fantasy, everyone preparing a presentation looks in the mirror and sees Winston Churchill or Sojourner Truth looking back. We would like to tell you that you are the next Abe Lincoln or Oprah Winfrey or Malala Yousafzai, but however much you paid for this book, we cannot lie. *We can promise only that we can tell you how to give a good presentation.*

The most effective way of delivering a presentation is by being as natural as you possibly can. You will not gain much by trying to be something you are not. The less you try to fake it, the more effort you can put into polishing your performance because it already comes naturally to you. In essence, you are just going to be you—but more so—and not try to be something you're not. You are most likely talking to a group of audience members who already know you, so that is what they are going to expect you to be like in the first place. Now this is not saying that you cannot improve your performance by excellent preparation; really experienced public speakers have a large armory to draw on to make this happen. But as we are at pains to point out in these chapters, we do not suppose that most of our readers are setting along this pathway. Most of you just want to be able to give a competent presentation, get your grade, and learn something along the way. You are unlikely to want to devote your life to gaining public office or making presentations to news media or in the courts.

One thing you can practice—and not enough people do this—is delivering your presentation in the form that it will be delivered on the day, imagining that your audience is a group of friends who have asked for your opinion. They want to know what you have to say and you want to be helpful to them because you know they respect you. Because of the availability of smartphones, you can record yourself doing this in a way that you can subsequently watch carefully and, perhaps more important to you, *in private*. Notice whether your voice sounds natural or whether it is obvious that you are reading. (Why are you reading? Didn't we warn you enough times?) Do you shift from foot to foot or do you stand in the same place for the whole presentation? What about your eye movements? Do you stand with a glassy stare in petrified numbness or are your eyes moving around the audience in a slow and confident manner? By watching your speech a couple of times just as you would watch a television presenter, you can get a quick idea of how you look to an audience.

Most people feel embarrassed when they do this, but they also learn something along the way, such as that annoying habit of looking down at the floor or the tendency to have no variety in the speech pattern so that it all sounds like somebody reading out the telephone book. Furthermore, the embarrassment decreases as you do it more often and as you get used to seeing yourself in the same way as your audience will see you, so you become less self-conscious. Painful though this review of your own performance may be at first, you can use it and bring your critical thinking to your own performance. Look for the things that you find annoying as an audience member and work on how to put them right. It's simple. If you notice something that is repeatedly distracting, then teach yourself not to do it.

Now go back and do the speech again trying to avoid the errors that you have noticed. You don't have to make this into an exercise in embarrassment. You are simply trying to learn and improve your performance in much the same way as you might edit an essay—changing words that feel wrong and altering the emphasis of some sentences. In this case, what you are changing is your delivery, and it's something you can pay attention to, recording it again as you go for another look, an improved phrase or a more relaxed delivery. Again, remember that the purpose of this exercise is to learn and improve. Be critical but be constructive; you are trying to help yourself, and the magic of present-day technology allows you to see yourself after the event instead of just at the time using a mirror.

This process of rehearsal and review takes time, and you should never leave it to the very last minute to run through this kind of exercise. It is quite as important as correcting the script or developing passages in an essay; in the case of a presentation, you are treating your own behavior as part of the delivery and part of the script. Don't just pay attention to what you are doing wrong but pay attention to what you're doing right. What is it about your own performance that feels to you to be effective? How can you build on those effective elements of your

presentation? Can you extend the strong parts into other elements of your presentation that would benefit from such an extension?

By the way . . . : A Great Communicator



President Ronald Reagan was often called the Great Communicator. When he first began in radio, he noted his ability to connect with listeners was achieved by *imagining he was talking with a group of friends at a barbershop*. It will help you if you adopt this mental image when you are preparing your speeches and *practicing* your delivery.



Michael Ochs Archives/Stringer/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. Who is your imagined audience and why? Is it any different from the audience you will actually speak to and, if so, in what ways?
2. How far does a presentation differ from speaking to the same room with an audience of your friends and acquaintances?

Be Conversational

The takeaway from the previous section is that once you have done the research for your presentation and you know the details that you want to tell the audience, you should try to think of delivering the information in a way that is most suited to a conversation with friends. And, later, we recommend that you take that second step.

Although speakers imagine that the impact they will have on their audience is going to be the most important thing that's ever happened to them (the Egotist Fallacy), the chances are that it isn't. Most of the audience can remember what they had for breakfast more easily than they will remember what you said. It's like the weather forecast on the TV. We all tune in and listen carefully but studies show that most people cannot remember anything in detail about the weather forecast as soon as 20 minutes after they have watched it (Baggaley & Duck, 1976). Now of course that doesn't have to be the case, and your presentation may well follow the suggestions we have made in this book to the extent that it is one of the most dazzling pieces of presented oratory the world has ever known. Much more likely, it will be just okay or will satisfy your hopes for the experience and earn you a satisfactory grade without making it into the Hall of Fame. (Frankly that is all you need to hope for; the Hall of Fame edition of this book is an extra 500 bucks.)

Be Normal If Any Errors Occur

If you stumble over something or make a mistake, nobody will regard it as worthy of a remark because they were checking Snapchat from the moment they first got bored. The worst thing a speaker can do after a fumble is to make it into a big deal when it really isn't and draw the audience's attention away from their smartphone to the "drama" that they imagine is centered on their performances. (Remember that for the most part, we are bit players in other people's melodramas, and most people don't care or notice what we do.) You gain nothing by dramatically apologizing for mistakes or questioning your ability by saying something like, "Oh, I am so terribly sorry for messing up this speech; I have probably ruined your whole afternoon and made your lives misery. I deserve to have my spleen carried off by the nearest wildcat." By drawing attention to your mistake, you direct more attention toward it than it probably deserves, and this will in any case take the audience's mind off your main point, which is not what you want.

Sometimes you must acknowledge a mistake for the sake of honesty or accuracy, but do it without great elaboration or excessive apology. For instance, if you provide the wrong oral citation, provide an erroneous statistic, or misquote testimony, you should quickly clarify the mistake and move on. Do this in just the same way you would do if you made a mistake about the instructor's office when giving your friend directions on how to deliver your assignment for you. You would not grovel in the earth and roll around in the dust in apology; just tell them "Oooops," tell them the right office number, and move on.

In addition to not calling attention to mistakes, do not unnecessarily point out to your audience that you are nervous about speaking. Nerves themselves do not necessarily decrease a person's credibility, but calling attention to and obsessing over them probably will. If nothing else, you will draw your audience members' attention away from your message and on to something they may not have even noticed. In fact, most of the time, an audience will not pay much attention to your nervousness unless you point it out.

Ethical Issue

If you adopt the advice of the present chapter and speak to your audience (most likely an audience of friends or acquaintances) in a natural and conversational style as if they were sitting around with you in a café, how does this affect the way in which you might try to persuade your audience? This question was originally stated by the ancient Greeks in this form: If you are being persuasive, should you speak only the truth or should you use techniques that "work" whether or not those techniques are truthful? Ask yourself this ethical question in terms of the defense lawyer's dilemma: If I know that my client is guilty should I nevertheless on his or her behalf offer the most persuasive arguments that I can devise?

Styles of Delivery

With these three guidelines in mind, we can now discuss the three main differences in delivery styles for presentations. They are quite different although people do not always appreciate why they are different nor the problems of using one method rather than another. Each delivery style has good and bad points: There is no one perfect style. Try to recognize why you would use one rather than another in different situations and use the delivery style that best suits your circumstances, occasion, or audience.

This speaker admires the speaking style of his instructor, who happens to be a very effective public speaker. Should he imitate his instructor's style?



©iStockphoto.com/skynesher

Manuscript delivery involves having the entire speech written out in front of you when you speak. Now when we say “manuscript delivery,” that is the familiar old-style where speakers pull out a wad of notes and read the whole thing. In these more sophisticated modern times, many political presentations are scripted in much the same way, but the delivery relies on the projection of the script onto an invisible screen or teleprompter. Unless you are running for the Dictatorship of the World, you are not likely to have access to this kind of equipment and so the old traditional manuscript is probably what you can use. It is an important method only when accurate wording matters and in all other contexts we very strongly recommend against it for a whole presentation (always remember that our primary advice for delivery of a presentation is **DO NOT READ YOUR PRESENTATION**). You can always use reading for key passages (“I want to emphasize this point by citing the words of Hiram J. Packenbacker III who said [Reads word for word] . . .”) or essential documentary evidence (“The U.S. Constitution defines *treason* as ‘[reads the relevant passage from U.S. Constitution]’”), but in such documentary cases, it is probably better to put the words up on a screen and let the audience read them for themselves.

Now, of course, in some situations, manuscript delivery is essential. For example, members of Congress often use a

manuscript style of delivery when speaking in the House of Representatives or Senate. The president uses a manuscript delivery when presenting the State of the Union address, and so do many political candidates making major news speeches. Your instructors may use the manuscript method of delivery when presenting research at academic conferences, and so may your graduating valedictorian. Although a manuscript can help you feel safe, without a risk that you will lose what you're going to say, the delivery tends to be stiff because very few people can write a speech in the way that they will actually speak it. A script tends to sound somewhat lifeless except in the mouth of a really skilled professional speaker who has spoken at similar occasions many times before. As usual, therefore, we very strongly advise against reading your speech from a manuscript except in specially defined and restricted circumstances. Never ever do this for your class presentations. Have we been sufficiently clear about this? Repeat it to yourself and practice the advice in reality rather than just in your mind.

Although the advantages to manuscript style of delivery are reliability and accuracy, the glaring disadvantage to using a manuscript is that the delivery always suffers dramatically (or more accurately, it suffers from being entirely undramatic). Frankly, the delivery usually stinks and sounds wooden and dull and is exactly the kind of delivery that you would never listen to if you had the chance! Put yourself in the position of the audience: Why would you do this to them? Using a manuscript to deliver a presentation will decrease eye contact with audience members because you will focus your eyes on the page in front of you rather than on them. Further, the speech *sounds* like it is being read because, essentially, it is. Also, if a speaker holds on to the manuscript, the number and quality of gestures and other movements will diminish, and the manuscript may distract the audience. With these disadvantages often outweighing the advantages, we encourage you to use a manuscript style of delivery only when absolutely necessary to give testimony to Congress or to escape an indictment for treason—or, of course, when praising someone's textbook in exact detail.

By the way . . . : Teleprompters



When using a teleprompter for manuscript delivery, the words of the speech are projected onto slanting clear screens to the left and right of the speaker. The screens appear clear to the audience, but because of their angle (using a technique called Pepper's ghost), text can be read off the screens by the speaker. This allows for eye contact with the audience—and explains why speakers address the left and right of the audience so much more often than the center, where there is no such screen to help them.



Stephen Morton/Getty Images

Questions to Consider

1. What delivery challenges might accompany the use of a teleprompter?
2. How might the use of a teleprompter affect perceptions of a speaker's credibility?

manuscript delivery: a style of speech delivery that involves having the entire speech written out in front of a speaker to be read out to ensure that the words are accurately delivered; avoid this style except when accuracy is absolutely a paramount requirement

Memorized delivery is what it says on the can: delivering a speech without the use of a manuscript or any notes whatsoever. This delivery style comes with some obvious advantages. Without any notes, absolutely no chance exists of reading the speech (Remember: Do not read your text). Speakers using memorized delivery will be able to maintain eye contact and the speech will not sound unnatural or stilted. Speakers delivering from memory usually sound more spontaneous and are more readily believed by the audience. However, you should question the reason why this is the case, and you should end up at the answer that a memorized delivery is one that has been skillfully well practiced. The essence to the success of a memorized delivery therefore is practice, practice, practice. The importance of practicing the actual delivery rather than simply the script of a presentation cannot be emphasized enough.

One obvious disadvantage of this style of delivery, however, is that committing an entire speech to memory is very difficult. When delivering a speech from memory, speakers will likely remember certain parts or phrases but forget some of their ideas or might lose the plot and ramble a bit. Another disadvantage is that such a presentation often *sounds* memorized rather than natural and conversational, although really well-practiced speakers can overcome this problem through their practice. Speakers who are new to this idea take longer to prepare and practice than do experienced speakers who have done it before. All speakers should recognize that the success of this method is the same as the success of any other method and depends on practice, frequent practice, and constructive critical practice—most valuably if you make use of the smartphone as indicated earlier. For most beginners, it is easier to remember information in bits rather than to memorize the whole speech. If you do not believe us, recite your telephone number with area code or your Social Security number to yourself. We will wait. . . . Seriously, we mean it. . . . Did you do it yet? . . . OK, glad you are back. More than likely, when reciting your phone number, you gave the three numbers of the area code, briefly paused, gave the next three numbers, paused again, and then gave the final four numbers. When presenting your Social Security number, you probably gave the first three numbers, paused, gave the next two numbers, paused, and then gave the final four numbers. If you still do not believe us and argue that this results from both series of numbers being separated that way, recite the alphabet. . . . You probably recited *A* through *G*, *H* through *P*, *Q* through *S*, *T* through *V*, *W* and *X*, and *Y* and *Z* almost musically. You may even have sung the jingle at the end.

Skills You Can Use: Improving Your Studying



People remember things in bits, especially the parts at the beginning and at the end. So, if you were shown a list of numbers, and these numbers were then taken away, you would likely recall the numbers at the beginning of the list and the numbers at the end of the list. The same thing happens when you study and you are more likely to remember items at the beginning of a study session and at the end. It is much more effective to have multiple study sessions lasting shorter periods than to study for 10 hours straight the night before an examination. Trust us—we tried both ways when we were in school.

memorized delivery: a style of speech delivery that involves committing a speech completely to memory and presenting without the use of a manuscript or notes

See: You have been doing this for years. The main difference with information in a presentation, compared with Social Security numbers, consists of the kind of information that is stored in the chunks and having a way of recognizing which chunks of information come next. For this reason, it is easier to remember the outline of a presentation than to remember all the details. Many standup comedians remember the structure of their act and

the way in which the individual jokes are connected with the framework. As soon as they start to deliver the individual parts, they quickly remember what comes next. They evidently remember the jokes themselves and have some overall memory of the architecture of the act but allow for spontaneous links if they think of them at the time (this style of memorization is particularly well done by Eddie Izzard, but you can occasionally see him “filling in” as he searches his memory for the next link).

What will this speaker’s minimal use of notes and careful preparation enable her to achieve?



©iStockphoto.com/Courtney Keating

Extemporaneous delivery is generally recommended as the way to achieve a natural conversational delivery while ensuring the accuracy of ideas and connecting relationally with an audience. It involves the use of only a few notes. Speakers using this method prepare an entire presentation but do not use a manuscript when delivering it. Rather, they include key words, phrases, or, at most, brief sections of the presentation in their notes, especially if they use note cards (number them in case you drop them just before the talk!).

This style of delivery provides many of the advantages of manuscript and memorized delivery without the disadvantages. With minimal notes, you will not be tempted to concentrate on them rather than engaging in eye contact with your audience. You will not read to your audience, so you can speak in a conversational tone of voice. You will not have multiple sheets of paper in front of you, so your notes will not likely distract your audience. At the same time, using notes will help you stay focused and ensure that your presentation includes key points and vital ideas. The extemporaneous style of delivery requires a great deal of practice and preparation to perform effectively, but it will enable you to deliver a developed presentation.

To summarize this section, whatever form of delivery you select, the key to success is practice. Do not just prepare your presentation: Practice delivering it.

Ethical Issue

Is it ethical for speakers to adjust their communication style to match that of an audience, if it means communicating in a totally different way from how they usually communicate?

extemporaneous delivery: a style of speech delivery that involves the use of few notes; this style can achieve a natural conversational delivery while remaining accurate

Effective Delivery

An effective delivery is one that stimulates your audience, whether to laughter, to agreement, to fear, or to knowledge. A really good presentation stimulates more than one sense (hearing, sight, . . .) and does so repeatedly throughout its course. Keep the audience attentive.

How to do that? Well, it depends on your audience to some extent and on the occasion. You most likely do not want to stimulate an “audience” at a funeral into lasting and uncontrollable laughter, but you may want to remind them of an amusing event as a way to stimulate their feelings of loss more pointedly or to recognize more completely why they are there to celebrate a passed life. Recalling, as you prepare your talk, why the audience will be there is a key part of your preparation. Fit the talk to the occasion, and this will become its first step toward effectiveness.

Now consider the audience itself. As we have underlined several times, on most occasions when you will give a presentation, you will already be known to your audience and they to you. The traditional advice to speakers (“be yourself”) is thus all the more banal and odd. For one thing, you can’t ever be anyone else, and for another thing, if your audience knows you, you wouldn’t get away with trying to be anyone else even if you wanted to. On the rare occasions when you are talking to an audience that does not know you, there will be a reason why you are there and audience members will know that. Either you are an expert brought in to explain to them something they do not know, or else you may, for example, be making a business pitch or delivering a report. In either case, you will not be reading this book because you graduated long ago.

If you are, however, intending to do either of those things and you are reading this book (hello!), then preparing your presentation in the ways we described in the previous chapters will already have you connected to the audience. You will have done preparation on who they are and what they know about the topic, you will have a reason for speaking to them that connects their needs and purposes to yours and makes you relevant to them. In that case, if you make sure that you look smart, feel prepared, and have also read our chapter ([Chapter 5](#)) on nonverbal communication about how to demonstrate enthusiasm, liking for your audience (smiling!), and good posture, then you are all set for an effective delivery.

How can you achieve your goals through preparation for an effective delivery? This book proposes that the same nonverbal relational techniques work in dyadic and public speaking situations. We now apply elements from [Chapter 5](#) on nonverbal communication accordingly.

Personal Appearance

Because your audience already knows who you are, in most cases where you are making a presentation, attempts to manipulate your appearance or style as a plausible speaker are largely irrelevant. However you might decide to alter your appearance for effect, for example dressing up as a well-known TV personality to make a point about the media or wearing stereotypical clothing to make a point about gender or even wearing face paint to make a point about the reception of a presentation. Otherwise, a smart professional appearance is a good idea if dressing like that does not make you feel uncomfortable and upset your delivery as a result.

Your appearance has very little relevance when you are speaking to people who know you already and have formed their liking and approval of you, way before you ever get to speak. You probably will not reverse a long-term impression just by the way you dress, and an audience that already knows you will be much less likely to be influenced by such things. For such audiences you should dress in a way that suits the occasion and does not make you feel odd or strained.

Make your case: Impressive and Unimpressive Public Speakers



Select a person you know or a public figure you consider an effective public speaker.

Questions to Consider

1. What characteristics of delivery do you find most impressive?
2. What could you do to your own delivery to gain from this exercise?
3. Now, select someone you consider a poor public speaker.
4. What characteristics of delivery do you find most in need of improvement?
5. Does your own style have any of these undesirable characteristics and what can you do to avoid them?

In cases where you are addressing an unfamiliar audience, you should at least pay attention to issues of personal appearance that connect to beliefs about professionalism or authority. To audiences for whom a speaker is unfamiliar, personal appearance—including clothing, hairstyle, tattoos, jewelry, other artifacts and make-up—reflects who you are and how you want other people to perceive you. Personal appearance in these atypical cases is so powerful that people often make judgments based on another person's appearance rather than on his or her words or actions. When addressing an unfamiliar audience, your appearance helps convey credibility. This strategy means dressing in a manner that is consistent with audience expectations and your own comfort with a style or a specific relationship.

Audiences who have no other personalized knowledge of a speaker superficially and initially view those dressed professionally as knowledgeable and trustworthy. However, as we have pointed out repeatedly, this kind of presentation is an atypical experience for students and unlikely to represent the circumstances where you offer your talk to an audience of people who already know you. In all circumstances, dressing in a professional manner conveys to your audience members that you care enough about them and the occasion to dress appropriately.

Presentations to friends, acquaintances, or colleagues will be based on the normal expectations for the environment in which you typically encounter them or else will be modified according to the special circumstances where the presentation will be given (for example a wedding speech). In this case, deviations from your normal appearance will be presumed by your audience to have some rhetorical purpose. They can be built into your presentation as a persuasive device (for example, dressing up in classical Indian clothes to give a presentation about the organization of Hindu weddings).

Ethical Issue

Audience members perceive a speaker's credibility partly through his or her personal appearance. In what ways would you consider such judgment either justified or unfair?

With these considerations about personal appearance in mind, how far—and in what ways—can a presenter modify appearance and remain ethical?

Vocalics

In any presentation, whether to friends, colleagues, or complete strangers, it is important to pay attention to the way in which your pitch and delivery are interesting and evocative. If you have not already learned from [Chapter 5](#) the importance of nonverbal communication and the variations of pitch and tone that convey involvement and interest, then it would be a good idea to revisit that chapter for a fuller explanation of their importance in conveying sincerity and value.

Pitch involves the highness or lowness of your voice. You have a range in which you speak normally, and you should use this same range when presenting. Vary your pitches within your natural range to maximize audience interest. Speaking without such variations will become monotonous and will cause your audience to wander. If your voice doesn't convey the value of what you are saying, then what you say will have no value anyway.

Rate is how fast or slowly you speak, generally determined by how many words you speak per minute. On average, people speak at around 150 words per minute. You may speak at a faster or slower rate in a normal conversation. Speaking at approximately the same rate when delivering a speech should work out just fine. It is much more interesting for the audience if you vary your rate of speech depending on your emotional state, intensity of language, and need to emphasize certain words. Always avoid a monotone, just as newsreaders do (a good way to practice moderating your rate is to watch several news broadcasts and notice how the readers change their rate of speaking to avoid sounding boring).

The *volume* of your presentation is how loudly or quietly you speak. When presenting your speech, speak as naturally as possible, but notice that your natural speech is not a flat monotone—your speech tends to get louder when you are more excited and softer when you are being more secretive. If your presentation involves conveying excitement or confiding with the audience, then ensure that the volume of your presentation reflects those emotions. The volume should rise and fall during your presentation as naturally and conversationally as possible, just like your everyday speaking. You can also use changes in volume (e.g., speaking more quietly as you reach the end of a major section) to provide emphasis, to underscore emotion, and even to direct your audience to transitions from one topic to another.

Pauses, or breaks in the vocal flow, direct the audience, add emphasis to areas of your presentation, and allow you to avoid nonfluencies. You may want to include a brief pause when shifting from one main point to another or from one section of the presentation to another. This action allows the audience members to recognize that something is important and fully prepares them for movement from one topic to another.

Pauses also allow you to add emphasis to what you say or are about to say. If you have said something particularly profound, a pause will allow the audience to reflect on it. If you are getting ready to say something especially important, a pause will signal the audience members that they need to pay particular attention to what comes next. By breaking up the flow of your speech rhythms, you draw the attention of your audience to the fact that something is different and significant.

Finally, pauses will help you avoid nonfluencies, meaningless vocal fillers that often distract from a presentation. Common nonfluencies include *um*, *uh*, *like*, *OK*, *you know*, and *you know what I'm saying*. A brief moment of silence will not distract the audience or seem out of place and is less distracting or inappropriate than a nonfluency.

Maintaining *eye contact* with the audience members will allow you to hold their attention, as well as enhance your credibility and relational connection. Keep in mind a few issues when considering eye contact.

First, many cultures view eye contact as a sign of trustworthiness and as a means of relating with another person. However, some cultures consider eye contact, especially between a subordinate and a superior, a sign of disrespect. If, by some strange chance, you should be speaking to an international audience of people from a wildly different culture, then ensure that you have read [Chapter 6](#) on intercultural differences before you embark on this otherwise

risky path.

A second consideration involves the focus of your eye contact. Make sure that you scan the entire room when speaking because eye contact is regarded as a signal of attentiveness and approval of your audience, so you should not therefore focus it on any one section. Your audience for any presentation is quite likely to be small, but if it turns out that you are speaking to a Nuremberg rally, then make sure that you do not look side to side as if you are watching a tennis match. Your scanning should appear as natural as possible. You can watch any video of a skilled politician making a public address to see how this is normally accomplished with large audiences (which you are not likely to encounter yet).

A third consideration about eye contact is to look pleasant and engaging. A fine line exists between a friendly glance in someone's direction and the piercing stare of a psychopath. You do not want to get into a staring contest with the audience, so move your eye contact around. It's rude to stare, even at your audience.

By the way . . . : Speaking Over the Waves



Demosthenes, the famous ancient Athenian orator, did not have a smartphone but used to practice speeches with small pebbles in his mouth that would make him open his mouth more widely and project his speeches more effectively through clear pronunciation. He also practiced making himself heard in an era without microphones by going down to the beach when there was a high tide and gale force winds. He would practice delivering his speeches under these conditions so that he was quite prepared for the relative calm and quiet of the Athenian "parliament."

Speak naturally and be sure that the audience can hear you. The volume of your voice increases naturally as the amount of air being released increases. Therefore, when attempting to speak in a louder voice, remember to take deep breaths and expel more air.

Questions to Consider

1. How might speaking loudly influence speaker credibility?
2. How might speaking softly influence speaker credibility?

pauses: breaks in the vocal flow that allow speakers to direct the audience, add emphasis to areas of a presentation, and avoid nonfluencies

nonfluencies: meaningless vocal fillers (such as *um*) that distract from a presentation

Facial Expression and Body Position

Your facial expression portrays your relational connection with the audience members and directs them emotionally. As we saw in [Chapter 5](#) on nonverbal communication, other people read the face as indicating what a person thinks of them as people. Therefore, a smile and a pleasant look on your face go a long way in demonstrating a positive connection with the audience. Sociability—a secondary dimension of credibility—deals with a person's likability. People generally enjoy being around others who seem pleasant and congenial. Also an amiable smile underscores the primary dimensions of trustworthiness and goodwill.

Facial expression and body position both help guide the audience emotionally. Your delivery directs the audience members by letting them know how you feel and what they should feel. Your facial expression will let them know the emotion, and your body position will tell them the intensity of that emotion. Your displays of emotion must match, or else emphasize, your language (See Disciplinary Debate: Achieving Secondary Dimensions of Credibility).

By the way . . . : Eye Contact and Apprehension



People who feel nervous about speaking in public may decrease eye contact to reduce what they believe will be negative reactions from the audience (Bradshaw, 2006). This reduces the amount of audience feedback they can gather—much of which may very well be positive—and may actually lead to negative audience reactions. Anxious people who avoid eye contact may be misunderstood as deceptive or uncaring about the audience. One trick is to wear spectacles that are for near-sightedness! This makes the audience into blurry pink blobs and you can't see the expressions on their faces. One of your authors used this trick for his first ever public lecture.

Questions to Consider

1. How might someone who is nervous about speaking in public combat this tendency?
2. As an audience member, how might you be able to nonverbally encourage a speaker who is apprehensive?

Gestures

Gestures (hand movements, pointing, arm extensions, for example) during the delivery of your speech will help an audience's understanding and guide them through the presentation. For example, you may emphasize a transition by holding out one hand and saying, "Now that we have addressed X," and then holding out the other hand and continuing, "Let's turn our attention to Y." Gestures should always be used to clarify or emphasize the content of your delivery and not be allowed to collapse into distracting mannerisms. Do not fidget. Such mannerisms include rubbing your hands together, pecking on the sides of your clothing with your fingertips, playing with your watch or jewelry, rubbing the back of your neck, playing with your hair, and rocking forward and backward on the soles of your feet. Instead, make gestures work for you and guiding your audience. Remember that a picture or gesture can be worth 1,000 words.

distracting mannerisms: bodily movements that allow a speaker to discharge nervous energy, serve no relevant purpose in the presentation, and can divert attention from the message

Disciplinary Debate: Achieving Secondary Dimensions of Credibility



Robert Gass and John Seiter (2016) note that in addition to primary dimensions of credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill), there also exist secondary dimensions of credibility: (1) dynamism, (2) composure, (3) sociability, and (4) inspiring.

Secondary dimensions of credibility are primarily achieved nonverbally through the effective delivery of a presentation. Disciplinary debate might concern whether some of them are more important than others, or whether they are all equally important in the development of credibility.

Dynamism involves being energetic and enthusiastic. Certainly, you want your audience members to perceive you as interested and concerned about your topic, your speech, and them personally. Make sure your enthusiasm is sincere and appropriate; otherwise, other dimensions of credibility, such as trustworthiness, will be questioned, as will a genuinely meaningful relationship with the audience.

Composure entails the ability to appear calm under pressure. Audience members will view someone who cracks under pressure as less credible than someone who is able to overcome potential obstacles and unforeseen circumstances, and they will not desire a relationship with a person who cracks under pressure. Again, nervousness does not necessarily mean a lack of composure. Actually, delivering the speech proves your ability to manage feelings of stress and discomfort. Your audience will only question your composure if you draw unnecessary attention to your nerves.

Sociability involves being personable and likable. As with personal relationships, people want to be around individuals they perceive as good-natured and pleasant. Conversely, people avoid individuals they perceive as gruff and unfriendly. Speakers who convey an open and congenial demeanor through their delivery are often most effective, partly because they appear to meet the primary dimensions of goodwill and trustworthiness. They are the type of people with whom others want to develop a relationship.

Inspiring entails the ability to stimulate and motivate others. People often view individuals who inspire them as knowledgeable, honest, and concerned. It is not precisely clear whether people view them in this manner because they inspire people or whether they inspire people because people view them as knowledgeable, honest, and concerned. Most likely, it is a combination of both, with one reinforcing the other.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you believe that one or some of the secondary dimensions of credibility is/are more important than the others are? If so, which ones and why do you believe that to be the case? If not, why do you believe that answer to be the case?
2. Would you add any additional secondary dimensions of credibility? If so, what would they be and why should they be there?

Presentation Aids

Presentation aids—objects, images, graphs, video clips, sound, and PowerPoint presentations—can enhance audience understanding and retention, as well as the speaker’s credibility. Usually auditory and visual in nature, presentation aids can also evoke such senses as taste, touch, and smell (see [Tables 16.1](#) and [16.2](#)).

presentation aids: tools used by a speaker to enhance audience understanding, as well as the speaker’s credibility

Table 16.1 The Purposes of Presentation Aids Are . . .

Enhance Audience Understanding	Understanding increases when multiple senses are involved. Someone can explain what it means when something tastes bitter, but actually tasting a sour lemon will provide a better understanding. A person can explain a crescendo, but hearing a voice getting louder can produce a clearer understanding of that musical device.
Stimulate the Audience	Presentation aids help your audience to comprehend fully what you say or to recognize its importance. During a speech urging audience members to avoid eating fast food, a speaker might display a pile of cooking lard equivalent to the amount of fat consumed during a typical meal at a fast-food restaurant. When using statistics, pie charts or line graphs will allow audience members to visually realize and appreciate the magnitude of an issue or fully grasp trends or changes. During a speech about poverty or world hunger, the image of a hungry child will enable the audience to put a human face to the problem.
Enhance Audience Retention	Along with the use of vivid and memorable support material, presentation aids can help the audience remember the material and retain key information. Quite often, audience members remember presentation aids long after other parts of the speech have been forgotten.
Enhance Audience Attention	If audience members are able to understand, appreciate, and retain the material, they will be more likely to pay attention to the speaker’s presentation. Because presentation aids entail change (additional movement by the speaker, something new to look at, an alteration in thought processes, the use of additional senses), they can reinforce audience attention.
Enhance Speaker Credibility	When a speaker conveys information in a manner that allows the audience to understand, appreciate, and retain the material, perceptions of speaker’s credibility will improve. A well-developed presentation aid positively enhances audience perceptions of a speaker’s credibility. Of course, a poorly executed presentation aid will negatively affect a speaker’s credibility and relationship with the audience.

Table 16.2 Presentation Aids Should Be . . .

Fully Prepared	Poorly prepared aids aid nobody.
Limited in Number	Do not overwhelm your audience with too much information (TMI). One aid per major point is quite enough.
Relatively Simple	Presentation aids should convey a single idea.
Inoffensive	Use shocking images only with the greatest care and make sure they have a point.
Easily Seen	Use big fonts and prepare your visuals to be read easily from the back of the room.
Fully Discussed	Make sure the audience knows why the visuals are there. Incorporate them into your delivery.
Incorporated Seamlessly	Keep talking while the audience takes in the full information. DO NOT READ IT.
The Secondary Focus	Visual aid should support your presentation without taking audience attention away from your talk.

Making the Most of Your Anxieties

Speaking is an emotional thing, and emotional things are complex and depend on preparation, research, and your morning coffee (often in infuriatingly equal parts). A general strategy should be to focus more on “managing speaking emotions” rather than on “dealing with communication apprehension” (as if it’s one problem distinct from all the other aspects of a successful presentation). Writers on communication apprehension often run it all together as if there is one experience, but nerves can appear at different times and about different elements of presentation.

Fear of the unknown is a major cause of nerves; the second greatest point of anxiety related to speaking in the classroom comes at the moment the speech is assigned, with the moment of greatest anxiety occurring right before speaking (Bodie, 2010). In most cases, the assignment is provided before speaking has fully been discussed in class and so the requirements of giving an effective presentation are largely unknown. Reading this book and discussing speeches in class will help minimize many of those unknowns, but you can do more.

Feeling nervous or apprehensive about speaking in public is a common occurrence, and nearly everyone feels nervous when speaking to a strange audience. Of course, some people get more worked up than others, and we will give you some tips for dealing with this. Nerves can be good. The first problem is deciding what the nerves are about because they can be different for each person. Second, think about when the nerves kick in: Is it when you are first given the assignment or just as you are introduced to speak? The antidotes are different.

Step one is to break the nerves into the parts and to deal with them separately. If you tremble as soon as the assignment to give a talk is delivered, then that is your first opportunity. If you get the opportunity, then you should choose your own topic and make sure that it is one you know a lot about. If it is a topic you did not choose then find out as much as you possibly can. Most people have hobbies or areas of expert knowledge that are not possessed by other people in their peer groups. Perhaps you have been somewhere that no one else is likely to know, you have been to an adventure camp, you have learned to fly a light aircraft, or you are exceptionally good at cooking Italian style. If you have expertise, then rely on it if you are given the opportunity to pick your own topic.

If you are not lucky enough to have a choice of your own topic, then make sure you find out as much about it as you possibly can. Students who fear the worst tend to prepare for the worst, but instead of fretting over it all ineffectually, why not put that energy to use and research your topic thoroughly? If you are nervous when you start thinking about giving the presentation, then build on that anxiety and turn it into energy for preparing an excellent speech. There is nothing like confidence that comes from the certainty that you know what you are talking about, and that you know much more about it than your audience does.

By the way . . . : Visualizing the Presentation



Some scholars have suggested visualizing the successful delivery of your presentation as a way to manage nerves (Hamilton, 2013). Imagine speaking to an audience of friends or family first and then actually do it that way!



©iStockphoto.com/shironosov

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways might this method help manage presentation nerves?
2. How might this method assist all public speakers, regardless of their levels of nerves?

By the way . . . : A Virtual Approach






Taking visualization a few steps further, some research (e.g., Safir, Wallach, & Bar-Zvi, 2012) has been conducted using virtual reality to manage nerves.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways might this method help manage communication apprehension?
2. How might this method assist all public speakers, regardless of their levels of apprehension?

Table 16.3 Using Presentation Slides

<p>Don't fill your slides with text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This slide does not follow the rule of seven; no more than seven words per line and no more than seven lines per slide. • Don't try to squeeze lots of words and information onto your presentation slides. This makes it difficult for your audience to read and follow. It also makes it more difficult for you to present your key points. Full sentences can be distracting for audiences, who will spend more time trying to read your slides than they will listening to you. 	<p>Do follow the rule of seven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only key points; not full sentences. • Use fewer than eight words per line. • Include fewer than eight points per slide. • Use a slide only if it clarifies.
<p>Don't use small or hard to read fonts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use a font that will be too small for your audience to read. • Don't use a decorative font; they can be hard to read. • AVOID USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. ALL CAPS ARE HARDER TO READ than words that are not capitalized. • Don't use a color that does not contrast with the background color; it is hard to read. • Avoid using lots of distracting colors. 	<p>Do use a clear, consistent font</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Font size needs to be large enough to be seen by the audience. Any font over 24 point works well. <p>54 48 36 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the same standard font such as Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial on all slides. • Use a font that contrasts with the background.
<p>Don't use distracting transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid flying and sliding transitions and animations. This is not the time to be fancy. • Avoid using clip art, which can look boring and generic. 	<p>Do make each point appear in turn and use photographs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make each key point appear when you get to it in your speech, rather than showing the entire slide at once. • Photographs are more visually appealing than clip art. 
<p>Don't use "cute" background themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid "cute" themes that are distracting and hard to read. 	<p>Do use professional themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick with visually appealing, professional themes like this one. • Use one theme for the entire slide show.
<p>Don't squeeze slides into one section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't cluster all your slides in one section of the presentation. • Your slides should be evenly distributed throughout the presentation. 	<p>Do proofread and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proofread your slides for spelling and grammatical errors. Autocorrect doesn't catch everything, and your credibility might suffer (as in this case, "credibility" was meant instead). • Practice, practice, practice. • Have a backup plan in case the technology does not work.

Source: Adapted from Edwards, A., Edwards, C., Wahl, S. T., & Myers, S. A. (2016). *The communication age: Connecting and engaging* (2nd ed., pp. 360–361). Copyright © SAGE Publications, Inc.

We have found that students who have anxiety about giving a talk tend to do better than students who are overly confident. The former take the assignment seriously and do what it takes to ensure that their greatest fears won't materialize: Do good research to ensure that you know what you are talking about, double check that the outline is in the bag, conduct more than enough research, construct your talk carefully using your research, and practice your delivery.

When the focus is more on content and preparation, then students tend to focus more on those things. Having confidence in the message without being docked a set number of points for saying "um" or having a nervous habit leads to better speaking. Confidence also comes through allowing students to choose topics in which they are invested. Assigning topics tends to be detrimental to everyone—speaker and audience—because the speeches tend to be inauthentic and ultimately just assignments to fulfill rather than meaningful endeavors.

Don't focus on whether you will look nervous. If you focus on it, you probably will look nervous because you're thinking about the way you look. Think, instead, about talking and the preparation you have done for it. It is always better to go into a presentation thinking about the content of your talk rather than how you look.

One thing to note right off the bat is that confidence comes with frequent practice, which reduces the pressure to perform perfectly. If you know it is a practice, then you don't expect it to be perfect yet (because it is a practice!), but you will improve with time and repetition as long as you practice actual delivery. You can also practice parts rather than the whole thing and get each one right in turn, taking it a bite at a time. However, you should always focus your preparation on speaking it all out loud and not just running through it in your mind.

Some students, of course, are extroverts who can work a room. Other students are introverts who are shy and can feel actual pain being up there as the center of attention. The best and most endearing students aren't always those "naturals" because they too often over-rely on their "personality" and underperform relative to content. They feel too sure that they can wing it on their extraversion, so they don't do the preparation of the delivery or the content in the ways that we have advised.

We much prefer the soft-spoken student who has built on the nervous energy and is properly prepared, rather than a brash blowhard who confuses overconfident delivery with competent message. Remember that when you have thoroughly prepared your talk, use your anxiety about the delivery itself to practice it carefully—not just the script but the delivery, as we just said. Move about, make gestures, vary your pitch, raise your voice, lower your voice to a secretive whisper, pause before delivering your cracker punch lines. Practice speaking it *out loud* as you drive to school or in the shower or into your smartphone. You will get more confident as you hear all these interesting delivery points coming out of your mouth.

Communication + You: Getting Ready to Present



Choose a topic you like, if you can, then

- Prepare the topic whether you choose it yourself or were assigned it
- Prepare the text of your presentation (script, clear thesis statement, strong order and sequence of arguments, good opening and conclusion)
- Prepare and practice the delivery
- Prepare and practice delivering to an audience

Questions to Consider

1. Have you practiced the delivery of your presentation out loud and more than once?
2. Have you prepared for the possibility of the technology failing? What is your Plan B?

Recognizing and Knowing What You Fear

The first way to deal with stress and anxiety related to public speaking is to recognize exactly what worries you. Especially when people have little or no actual experience speaking in front of others, they are less afraid of actually speaking in front of an audience and more afraid of the unknown. As a result, people generally imagine things as a whole lot worse than they actually turn out to be.

Table 16.4 Knowing the Unknown

Knowing the Audience	Audience analysis can alleviate much of the fear of not knowing what to expect. For most presentations, you already know the folks in your audience, so make that knowledge work for you. Fit your talk topic and design to your audience members specifically. This means you will be able to present the material in the most effective way and to connect with them effectively.
Knowing the Topic	If you feel nervous, we strongly suggest that, when possible, you select a topic about which you are already knowledgeable. Familiarity with a topic will increase your confidence whether the familiarity already exists or develops from rigorous investigation of the topic, careful research, and the thorough preparation of your presentation.
Knowing the Speech Will Be Worthwhile	The knowledge that your speech is worthwhile and recognition that it will positively address your audience members' lives will give you greater confidence.
Knowing the Speech's Beginning	Construct a solid introduction and conclusion to help you in and out of your talk. Confidence in your attention getter and overall introduction is especially helpful because presenters generally experience the most anxiety at the very beginning of a presentation, just before they start speaking (Behnke & Sawyer, 1999). Belief in your introduction will allow you to feel confident at the moment of greatest anxiety.
Knowing the Presentation Aids	Some research indicates that presentation aids may help reduce anxiety (Ayres, 1991). Recognize the value of presentation aids, and ensure that you devote enough time and consideration to their preparation. Allow plenty of time to organize or "cue up" each presentation aid before beginning your speech. Finally, include the demonstration of presentation aids in your practice sessions.

Often, fear of the unknown emerges from a sense of not having control over a situation. The best way to handle this anxiety is to do as much as possible to eliminate those unknown variables and address your specific fears. This control will require a great deal of preparation and practice but essentially entails meeting the requirements of an effective presentation, something you have to do anyway. [Table 16.4](#) provides guidance when limiting the unknown factors of a presentation.

Practicing Delivery of Your Presentation

Practice of your presentation will increase your familiarity with the material and the speech, as well as raising your confidence as a speaker. Practicing a speech, especially in front of others, has been shown to reduce nerves and increase your confidence in presenting (Brooks, 2015). In what follows, we discuss some guidelines to consider when practicing the delivery of a presentation.

Practice Actual Delivery.

Practice presenting your speech in the manner in which you will actually deliver it. This means presenting the material out loud, incorporating full gestures and movement, and including presentation aids. When initially preparing for a presentation, many people read the speech silently to themselves. This practice may allow you to familiarize yourself more with the content, but do that by presenting the material *out loud*. A big difference exists between reading something to yourself and presenting material orally. The sooner you begin focusing on the latter, the better prepared you will be to effectively deliver the material to others. Also, although it might be more comfortable, do not practice your speech while lying across your bed or sprawling across a chair. You will not be able to fully incorporate and practice gestures, movement, or even eye contact, nor will you be able to get an accurate sense of delivering your presentation to an audience.

Analyzing Everyday Communication: Reviewing Your Presentation

Record a video of your delivery of a presentation, and then analyze your performance using the guidelines and criteria offered in this chapter. Play the video at least three times—once with the sound off, once with the sound on but without looking at the screen, and once focusing on the integration of your voice, body movement, and facial expression.

Questions to Consider

1. What did you do well?
2. What areas of your delivery do you need to develop, and what can you do to improve these areas and your overall delivery?

Watch and Listen to Yourself.

People can imagine what they look and sound like, but it is different when you actually do it. Do not practice in front of a mirror! Use the best available technology and record yourself on a smartphone so that you can replay it and analyze it *after you have done* the delivery, not while you are practicing the delivery itself. Assess your facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures; your tone of voice, rate of speech, and possible use of nonfluencies. This will allow you to consider the integration of vocal variety and bodily movement and see the elements of delivery that you accomplished most effectively.

By the way . . . : Spend Your Time Wisely



A bit of unfortunate irony exists. Highly nervous speakers generally spend more time preparing for their presentations than less apprehensive people do (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012). However, this preparation is less likely to include communication-oriented activities. Even though people who feel anxious may spend a great deal of time conducting research and constructing their speech, they will probably avoid practicing the delivery of their presentation. This is a pity. As this chapter stresses, most presenters improve when they practice in front of other people. When you learn to swim, you become competent a lot faster if you get into a real pool and don't just make swimming strokes in front of a mirror or to your smartphone!

Questions to Consider

1. If you are particularly apprehensive about speaking in public, how might you avoid succumbing to this trend?
2. If you are not particularly apprehensive about speaking in public, how might you best manage your time?

Practice in Front of an Audience.

To begin with, and until after you feel confident giving presentations to your smartphone, we also recommend that you practice delivering your speech at least once in front of actual people, such as family members, friends, or roommates. The people who listen to you should be folks who will provide constructive criticism to help you improve the actual speech and your delivery. Practicing in front of people will also provide a good sense of what delivering your speech will actually be like on the day. Practicing your presentation in front of other people has been shown to increase the quality of your speech (Mundy, Oviedo, Ramirez, Taylor, & Flores, 2014). If you are still not convinced, how about this? Practicing your speech in front of other people has also been shown to improve the grade you earn on the speech (Quintanilla & Wahl, 2016). We thought you might like that one! One study concluded that increased preparation time overall will bring about higher grades on classroom speeches, but activities related specifically to delivery are the most important (Pearson, Child, & Kahl, 2006). Finally, practicing a speech in front of others has been shown to reduce nerves on the real occasion and increase a speaker's willingness to give a presentation (Hamilton, 2013). We urge you to practice in front of friends or family as part of your preparation, especially if you are nervous.

Experience and Skill Building

Experience and skill building will also help you manage anxiety related to presentation. Experience and practice help eliminate some of the unknowns, and skills provide added confidence. As with most things, the more you practice, the better you will become at dealing with the challenges.

If you are about to give your very first presentation or have done it only a few times in the past, you may think a discussion of experience and skill building is not a big help. However, the impact of skill building largely comes from its effect on your self-image as a presenter who knows the elements of effective delivery. Having read and studied these chapters and discussed this material in class, believe it or not, you now possess this knowledge. By the time you give your presentation, you will have come a long way from the anxiety created by unfamiliarity with creating presentations. You now know the fundamental components of effective presentations and can implement this knowledge and the skills of delivery. It is important that you recognize that you are now well-positioned.

You still may not possess a great deal of experience as a presenter. Realize, however, that the more you practice, the better you will become. We would like to make one more appeal for practicing your delivery in real circumstances, especially through smartphone replays or practicing in front of other people.

Experience and skill building will not lead to the complete elimination of nerves. Even experienced presenters can get nervous in new situations, on the first day of a new class, or when speaking to an audience of strangers, but they also have experience of overcoming the nerves because they have a lot of practice under their belt.

A Final Thought About Anxiety

If you still feel nervous about your presentation, we encourage you to talk with your instructor. “Communication apprehension” and nerves are a legitimate concern and should be taken seriously. Sometimes breaking down the unknown, practicing your speech, and gaining skills and experience do not suffice. Although we are certain these strategies will help you, we also realize that they cannot do enough in some cases. Realize that you are not alone in your concern about public speaking. This uneasiness is quite common, and your instructor can help prepare you for the experience and assist you in dealing with any anxieties. We are confident that you will be able to do it.

Focus Questions Revisited

1. What are three guidelines for effective delivery?

As a speaker, you should (1) be natural, (2) be conversational, and (3) be normal.

2. What are the styles of delivery?

The styles of delivery are manuscript, memorized, and extemporaneous. *Manuscript delivery* involves having the entire speech written out in front of you when speaking. This style, best used only when accurate wording of the speech is required, always results in poor delivery. *Memorized delivery* is done without any notes whatsoever. Although reading the speech and distracting notes become nonissues, it is difficult to memorize an entire speech, and the delivery often sounds unnatural and uneven. *Extemporaneous delivery* involves the use of minimal notes and is generally recommended as the way to achieve a natural and conversational delivery while ensuring the accuracy of ideas.

3. What are the goals of effective delivery?

The goals of effective delivery are developing and enhancing audience perceptions of your credibility, increasing audience understanding, and maintaining a relational connection with the audience.

4. What are the components of effective delivery?

The components of effective delivery include personal appearance, vocalics, facial cues, body position, and physical movements. These components must work together to achieve the effective delivery of a presentation and should be practiced.

5. What are presentation aids?

Presentation aids are audio and visual tools used by a speaker to enhance audience understanding, stimulate the audience, and enhance retention, attention, and the speaker's credibility.

6. What is communication apprehension, and how can it be managed?

Communication apprehension is the anxiety people normally experience about speaking in public, a nervousness that is quite common. Nervous energy can actually help enhance a presentation as long as it is managed effectively. One way of dealing with such nerves is to recognize what you fear. Practicing the presentation in front of other people, as well as gaining public speaking skills and experience, will also help you manage nerves and increase your overall confidence as a speaker.

Key Concepts

communication apprehension 346
composure 359
distracting mannerisms 358
dynamism 359
extemporaneous delivery 354
inspiring 359
manuscript delivery 351
memorized delivery 353
nonfluencies 357
pauses 357
presentation aids 359
sociability 359

Questions to Ask Your Friends

1. Ask your friends to describe the characteristics of an effective public speaker. Limit their responses to those involving the delivery of a presentation. Consider their responses regarding the guidelines and criteria for delivering public presentations discussed in this chapter.
2. Ask your friends to describe the characteristics of an ineffective public speaker. Limit their responses to those involving the delivery of a presentation. Consider their responses regarding the guidelines and criteria for delivering public presentations discussed in this chapter.
3. Ask your friends if they will listen to you practice your presentation. You should have known we would bring this up yet again!
Seriously, practicing a presentation in front of a real audience will improve your overall performance and help you manage nervousness.

Media Connections

1. Watch a public presentation on television or the Internet. Which components of effective delivery discussed in this chapter are evident? What does the speaker do well? How could the speaker improve his or her delivery?
2. Watch a public presentation on television or the Internet. Then find the transcript of that presentation. The transcripts of major presentations, such as those delivered by a president or a prime minister, are often included in newspapers the following day and almost immediately available online. In what ways would you have responded differently had you read the speech rather than watched and listened to it being delivered? What about the speaker's delivery led to these differences?
3. Think about the issues with which a speaker must contend when delivering a presentation to both a physically present audience and an audience watching the presentation on television or the Internet. How can a speaker nonverbally connect with both audiences? Assuming a smaller viewing screen, would a video cast change what a speaker must do to connect with the audience?

Student Study Site



Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at <http://edge.sagepub.com/duckbce2e>

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

Appendix Sample Presentations

Within this appendix, you will find examples of average student presentations to use as a reference point when constructing your own. You will also find an actual presentation, which was given by Zach Wahls—then a student at the University of Iowa—to the Iowa House Judiciary Committee.

There are a few things to note about the items appearing within this appendix and about presentations in general.

First, you will notice that the student presentations are written in full sentence outline form. Many instructors have students use such an outline format when developing presentations. Other instructors have students use a manuscript format when developing presentations. Additional speeches—written in a manuscript format—are included on the student website. Making both versions available will assist with the development of your presentations, regardless of the format required by your instructor.

Second, the presentations written in outline format include two versions. One version is “good,” and the other version “needs improvement.” In other words, one version represents what an average presentation, generally meeting the necessary requirements of a presentation, might look like. The other version represents what a presentation not meeting those requirements might look like. Comments are included in each of them to give you an idea of what the speaker is doing right and what the speaker is doing wrong.

Third, you may notice that the actual presentation does not exactly adhere to the requirements of a presentation offered in this book and as perhaps given by your instructor. The guidelines included in this book, and those generally included in communication classrooms, are for formal presentations in ideal situations when it is possible to directly include all of the suggested elements of a presentation. In reality, formal presentations and ideal situations are few and far between outside of the classroom and a few other settings. In reality, a person may be given only a few moments to speak in front of a committee, to a group of work colleagues, at a forum on campus, or in other circumstances. The format and context of the speaking situation might be entirely different than you might experience in the classroom.

So, you might be wondering why formal presentations are taught and such specific components as orientation phase, enumerated preview, clincher statements, and others are so strongly encouraged in this book and might be required in your communication course. The reason is that although you may never give a formal presentation outside of the classroom, we, and your instructor, want to make sure you are aware of what is included and how to do it.

Possessing this knowledge and ability will assist you when you are presenting material in less formal and everyday situations. You will be able to explicitly include elements that might be appropriate given the speaking format and context, while being able to include the spirit of other elements less explicitly. For instance, you might include an attention getter but not directly include references to relational connections with the audience. Instead, realizing the importance of relational connections, the qualities and virtues of relationships might be included through mentioning shared experience, using the pronoun “we” instead of “I,” or talking about the importance of relationships in general. In some cases, expected protocol dictates particular procedures take place that may counter formal speaking practices. For instance, at a committee meeting, it might be expected that each speaker end by thanking the board, which means not ending with a clincher statement.

Being taught how to construct and deliver a formal presentation that you might give in the classroom will provide you with the tools needed to deliver presentations in other situations. You will figuratively be given a box of tools and taught what they are and how to use them. Then, in each unique situation you find yourself, you will be able to use those tools to develop a presentation specific to that particular moment.

The instructional foundation you receive through this book and through your communication course will prepare you for speaking in any personal, professional, and civic endeavor.

Persuasive Student Presentations

Beating Traffic Bottlenecks—Good Version

Beating Traffic Bottlenecks—Needs Improvement Version

Informative Student Presentations

How to Check and Add Oil in Your Vehicle—Good Version

How to Check and Add Oil in Your Vehicle—Needs Improvement Version

Actual Presentation

Iowa House Judiciary Speech—Zach Wahls

Beating Traffic Bottlenecks—Good Version

General Purpose: Persuade

Specific Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to persuade the audience to incorporate alternative travel methods into their rush-hour commute plans.

Thesis Statement: Including alternative travel options into rush-hour commute plans provides many benefits.

Organizational Pattern: Topical

Introduction

1. Attention-Getting Device: How many of you hate being stuck in traffic that looks like this? (Show screen grab from traffic report).
2. Orientation Phase: Researchers have estimated that we spend nearly 38 hours stuck in traffic each year, and that time is predicted to increase in the coming years (Distractify.com, 2014).
3. Credibility and Relational Connection: As a college student like you, I value what little spare time is available to me and would much rather be doing anything else other than sitting in traffic. So, throughout the previous two months, I have been researching ways to overcome traffic woes and have personally tested alternative means of transportation.
4. Purpose and Thesis: The purpose of this presentation is to persuade you to incorporate alternative travel methods into your rush-hour commute plan. Doing so will provide you with numerous benefits.
5. Impact of the Topic and Speech: Consider the statistic provided earlier. In addition to actual drive time, you are spending 38 hours stuck in traffic. That is nearly an entire work week. The information we discuss today can help prevent the loss of that time and even provide you with additional benefits.
6. Enumerated Preview: In what follows, we will discuss the following three options: (1) mass transit, (2) bike riding, and (3) walking.

Transition: Let's start by exploring a common choice, mass transit.

The speaker gains audience attention with a hypothetical question, bolstered by a specific scenario and visual.

The speaker uses a statistic to help the audience better understand and appreciate the topic.

The speaker connects on a relational level with students by mentioning shared concerns as college students. The student also mentions conducting research and personal experience with the topic. Both of these actions enhance audience perceptions of the speaker's credibility.

The speaker provides the purpose and thesis of the presentation, so the audience will know exactly what will be expected and argued.

The speaker focuses the importance of the topic and speech on the lives of the audience.

The speaker explicitly mentions each main point, providing the audience with a map of what is to come and assisting audience members in recalling what was discussed following the presentation.

The speaker guides the audience through the use of a transition.

Body

1. Mass transit services provide alternatives when faced with thick traffic.
 1. Mass transit options include catching a bus, riding a train, and hopping onto a streetcar.
 2. According to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (n.d.), mass transit is one of the most used methods of transportation in the region—more than 435 million trips were completed using mass transit services in 2013.
 3. Most of us live and work within 1.5 miles of a bus stop serviced by local and commuter regional lines and within 5 miles of a train station (Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority, n.d.), so mass transit is convenient.
 4. In addition to convenience, benefits such as low fares and reduced emissions make mass transit a good alternative to driving during rush hours (All Points Transit, 2012).

Transition: If, however, these benefits aren't enough to convince you to try mass transit services, I'd like you to consider another alternative—riding a bike.

The speaker uses clear main points, each of which stay focused in support of the thesis.

- II. Bike riding is an effective way to avoid rush-hour traffic.
 1. According to writer Chris Baskind (2010) of the Mother Nature Network, some benefits of riding a bike include financial savings, small manufacturing footprints, and decreased road wear.
 2. The fact that bikes can also use alternative routes and lanes also means getting where you are going quicker, especially when traffic is particularly heavy.
 3. Biking can also lead to improved health.

Transition: Biking is a good alternative for rush-hour travel. And, happily, I can tell you much of the same can be said about the last alternative I'd like to present.

The speaker's support material for each main point is relatively equal in scope and importance.

- III. Walking is a good alternative to consider using during peak traffic for many reasons.
 1. Walking helps alleviate congestion on crowded roads.
 2. Walking also improves health, with *Health Magazine* (2014) noting that people who walk to work are less stressed, better able to focus, feel better, and have a better sense of mental health.
 3. And, because walking requires no significant cash outlay, can be used to cover short and long distances, can be done on impulse, and is something just about anyone can do, it should certainly be considered a viable alternative for your rush hour commute.

Transition: Indeed, mass transit, riding bikes, and walking are all good alternatives to incorporate during rush hour.

Conclusion

1. Wrap-Up Signal: As we begin to conclude this presentation, I want us to consider what has been discussed today.
2. Restatement of Thesis: Including alternative travel options into rush hour commute plans provides many benefits.
3. Summary of Main Points: We discussed the use of mass transit as one way to avoid traffic. Mass transit is convenient and includes such benefits as low fares and reduced emissions. We then discussed bike riding as an alternative to avoid rush-hour traffic. The many benefits mentioned include financial savings, small manufacturing footprints, and decreased road wear, quicker commutes, and improved health. Finally, we discussed walking as alternative during peak traffic times. Walking helps alleviate congestion on crowded roads, provides many health benefits, and is cost efficient.
4. Audience Motivation: The next time you are faced with heavy traffic, incorporate one of these alternative travel methods into your rush-hour commute plan.
5. Relational Reinforcement: As college students, our time is valuable and should be spent engaging in activities other than sitting in traffic.
6. Clincher Statement: If you incorporate these alternative travel methods, then maybe the next traffic report will look more like this . . . and less like this. (Show screen grab from traffic report where roads are less congested.)

The speaker uses a wrap-up signal that does not bring the speech to a stop but rather introduces the beginning of the conclusion.

The speaker restates the thesis to assist the audience in recalling it following the presentation.

The speaker summarizes each main point instead of just listing each main point to reinforce what was discussed.

The speaker provides the audience with specific motivation so that the audience knows exactly what is expected.

The speaker reinforces a relational connection with the audience, reinforcing credibility and their own association with the topic.

The speaker ends strongly and smoothly, providing the audience with a memorable image and reconnecting with the beginning of the presentation.

References

All Points Transit. (2012). Why ride the bus. Retrieved from <http://www.allpointstransit.com/why-ride-the-bus>

Baskins, C. (2010). 12 reasons to start using a bicycle for transportation. Retrieved from <http://www.mnn.com/green-tech/transportation/stories/12-reasons-to-start-using-a-bicycle-for-transportation>

Distractify Staff. (2014). 30 surprising facts about how we spend our time. *Distractify*. Retrieved from <http://distractify.com/old-school/2015/01/07/astounding-facts-about-how-we-actually-spend-our-time-1197818577>

Health Editor. (2014). Walking or biking to work can improve your mood. *Health Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://news.health.com/2014/09/15/walking-biking-to-work-seems-to-have-mental-health-benefits>

Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority. (2014). 2013 Metro ridership facts. Retrieved from http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/docs

The speaker ensures that references are accurately and completely cited.

Beating Traffic Bottlenecks—Needs Improvement Version

General Purpose: Persuade

Specific Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to persuade the audience to incorporate alternative travel methods into their rush-hour commute plan.

Thesis Statement: Including alternative travel options into rush-hour commute plans provides many benefits.

Organizational Pattern: Topical

Introduction

1. Attention-Getting Device: Have you ever thought about traffic?
2. Orientation Phase: A bunch of time is spent in traffic each year.
3. Credibility and Relational Connection: I value what little spare time is available to me and would much rather be doing anything else other than sitting in traffic.
4. Purpose and Thesis: Including alternative travel options into rush-hour commute plans provides many benefits.
5. Impact of the Topic and Speech: You should listen to this speech because it is pretty important.
6. Enumerated Preview: In what follows, we will talk about some ways to escape traffic and then why it might not work.

Transition:

The speaker uses a hypothetical question as an attention getter that has little substance or purpose.

The speaker provides no concrete information to enhance audience understanding or appreciation of the what is to come in the body of the presentation.

The speaker focuses on the self and does not connect with the audience. No discussion of knowledge of or experience with the topic is offered.

The speaker provides the thesis but does not tell the audience the purpose of the presentation.

The speaker does not actually tell the audience why the topic affects them or why they should listen to the presentation.

The speaker does not explicitly provide each main point.

The speaker fails to guide the audience from the introduction to the body of the presentation through a transition.

Body

1. Mass transit services provide alternatives when faced with thick traffic.
 1. Mass transit options include catching a bus, riding a train, and hopping onto a streetcar.
 2. According to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (2014), mass transit is one of the most used methods of transportation in the region—more than 435 million trips were completed using mass transit services in 2013.
 3. Most of us live and work within 1.5 miles of a bus stop serviced by local and commuter regional lines and within five miles of a train station (Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority, n.d.), so mass transit is convenient.
 4. In addition to convenience, benefits such as low fares and reduced emissions make mass transit a good alternative to driving during rush hours (All Points Transit, 2012).
2. Bike riding is an effective way to avoid rush-hour traffic.
 1. According to writer Chris Baskind (2010) of the Mother Nature Network, some benefits of riding a bike include financial savings, small manufacturing footprints, and decreased road wear.
 2. The fact that bikes can also use alternative routes and lanes also means getting where you are going quicker, especially when traffic is particularly heavy.
 3. Biking can also lead to improved health.

Transition: Biking is a good alternative for rush-hour travel. And, happily, I can tell you much of the same can be said about the last alternative I'd like to present.

The speaker does not take the opportunity to reinforce the material or truly guide the audience through a strong transition.

- III. Walking is a good alternative to consider using during peak traffic for many reasons.
 1. Walking helps alleviate congestion on crowded roads.
 2. Walking also improves health, with *Health Magazine* (2014) noting that people who walk to work are less stressed, better able to focus, feel better, and have a better sense of mental health.
 3. And, since walking requires no significant cash outlay, can be used to cover short and long distances, can be done on impulse, and is something just about anyone can do, it should certainly be considered a viable alternative for your rush-hour commute.

Transition: But, not everybody agrees.

- IV. The views of those who disagree with the viability of these alternative travel methods are just as plentiful as are your options.
 1. There are, for instance, those who feel recent WMATA system emergencies and associated tragedies prove them unsafe.
 1. They fail, however, to consider that most of these incidents involved poor upkeep, those breaking the law, and a lack of traveler focus.
 2. There are also those who feel these options don't fully "bridge the gap between work and home" (Plummer, 2012).
 1. Our region does, however, play host to a variety of other services—Lyft, Uber, traditional cabs, and pedicabs included—to fill any voids that exist.
 3. And, finally, there are those who believe "bus and rail may not do much to ease gridlock" (Williams-Derry, 2011).
 1. No, these options may not cut congestion by 50 or 90%.
 2. Nevertheless, having just one car off the road eases gridlock some.

Transition: Indeed, mass transit, riding bikes, and walking are all good alternatives to incorporate during rush hour, but not everyone agrees.

This main point, although connected to the topic, gets the presentation off track and does not support or develop the thesis and purpose. In most cases, it is best to include no more than three main points.

Conclusion

1. Wrap-Up Signal: In conclusion, . . .
2. Restatement of Thesis: The purpose of this presentation is to persuade the audience to incorporate alternative travel methods into their rush-hour commute plan.
3. Summary of Main Points: We discussed the use of mass transit, bike riding, and walking.
4. Audience Motivation: It is good to think about traffic sometimes.
5. Relational Reinforcement: My time is valuable and should be spent engaging in activities other than sitting in traffic.
6. Clincher Statement: Thank you.

The speaker uses a wrap-up signal that seems like the presentation is ending rather than the conclusion is beginning.

The speaker provides the purpose of the presentation rather than the thesis.

The speaker simply lists the main points rather than summarizing each main point, missing an opportunity to reinforce what was discussed.

The speaker does not provide the audience with explicit motivation.

The speaker focuses on a personal connection with the topic rather than reinforcing a relational connections with the audience.

The speaker does not include a clincher statement and instead ends the presentation weakly and in an unmemorable manner.

Speaker does not include a complete citation.

Speaker does not properly cite the author's name, using the complete first name rather than the initial.

References

All Points Transit. (2012). Why ride the bus.

Baskins, Chris. (2010). 12 reasons to start using a bicycle for transportation. Retrieved from <http://www.mnn.com/green-tech/transportation/stories/12-reasons-to-start-using-a-bicycle-for-transportation>

Distractify Staff. (2014). 30 surprising facts about how we spend our time. *Distractify*. Retrieved from <http://distractify.com/old-school/2015/01/07/astounding-facts-about-how-we-actually-spend-our-time-1197818577>

Health Editor. Walking or biking to work can improve your mood. *Health Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://news.health.com/2014/09/15/walking-biking-to-work-seems-to-have-mental-health-benefits>

Plummer, B. (2012, July 11). Wonk blog: Why most Americans can't take mass transit to work. Washington Post. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/07/11/why-most-americans-cant-take-mass-transit-to-work>

Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (2014). 2013 Metro ridership facts. Retrieved from http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/docs/Metro%20Facts%202014.pdf

Williams-Drry, C. (2011, Feb. 25). Can better transit really reduce congestion? *Sightline Daily*. Retrieved from <http://daily.sightline.org/2011/02/25/can-better-transit-reduce-congestion>

Speaker does not italicize the title of the newspaper as required in a proper citation.

The speaker lists an incorrect or outdated web address.

Speaker misspells the name of the author.

How to Check and Add Oil in Your Vehicle—Good Version

General Purpose: Inform

Specific Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to inform audience members about how to check and add oil in their vehicles.

Thesis Statement: Checking and adding oil in a vehicle only require a few simple steps.

Organizational Pattern: Chronological

Introduction

1. Attention-Getting Device: According to AAA (2015), maintenance for a single vehicle costs nearly \$800.00 each year. The average household has about two vehicles, which makes the cost of yearly vehicle maintenance approximately \$1,600.00 per household. That is a lot of money, but you can eliminate much of the expense by doing some preventative maintenance yourself.
2. Purpose and Thesis: Checking and adding oil in your vehicle is one way to save money on maintenance, so the purpose of this presentation is to inform you about how to do just that. Checking and adding the oil in a vehicle only require a few simple steps.
3. Orientation Phase: Checking the oil in your vehicle is one of the most simple maintenance tasks you can perform. It is also among the most vital. According to the CarTalk website (2016), “without a good lubricant . . . parts of the engine rub together and wear each other out.” If your oil runs low, all of those important parts of an engine are rubbing together and wearing down.
4. Impact of the Topic and Speech: So, checking your oil and adding oil if necessary has the potential to save you from very expensive maintenance. This job will neither take much time, nor get you more dirty than a good hand washing will fix, and can save you a lot of hassle down the road. It is something that all of you can do.
5. Credibility and Relational Connection: Like many of you, I do not consider myself a master mechanic. However, I have been personally checking the oil in my vehicles for a number of years, in addition to actually changing the oil and performing other forms of maintenance on my vehicles. I want to share some of this knowledge with you, so that you can begin doing the same thing.
6. Enumerated Preview: Checking and adding oil in your vehicle involves three steps. First, we will discuss what you need to do, materials you need, and how to check the oil level. Second, we will discuss how to add oil if necessary. Third, and finally, we will discuss how to finalize the process.

Transition: So, let's get started with the initial step.

The speaker gains audience attention with a statistic, bolstered by the potential for audience gain.

The speaker provides the purpose and thesis of the presentation, so the audience will know exactly what will to expect.

The speaker helps the audience better understand and appreciate the topic by explaining the purpose of what is being discussed.

The speaker focuses the importance of the topic and speech on the lives of the audience by explaining the potential to save money by doing something relatively easy.

The speaker connects on a relational level with students by mentioning shared background but also mentions experience with the topic. Both of these actions enhance audience perceptions of the speaker's credibility.

The speaker explicitly mentions each main point, providing the audience with a map of what is to come and assisting audience members in recalling what was discussed following the presentation

The speaker guides the audience through the use of a transition.

Body

1. Step one involves gathering the correct materials and checking the oil level.
 1. You will need 1–2 quarts of oil, a rag or paper towel, and a funnel—preferably not one you ever plan to use in the kitchen again.
 2. The first thing you must do is open the hood and locate the dipstick, typically a circle or loop handle attached to a long flat metal rod.
 3. Pull out the dipstick, and wipe it clean with the rag or paper towel. Then place it back into the tube. Take it back out and read the measurement. It is important to clean the dipstick and get a brand new measurement so that the reading is accurate.
 4. Once you have done this, look at the bottom of the dipstick to see the amount of oil that is currently in your engine. You will see a few lines and some stripes or checkered spaces on the dipstick, indicating a safe amount of oil.
 1. If the oil falls in between or above the two holes, your car has enough oil and you are good to go.
 2. If the oil line is below the two holes, you should probably add some oil.
 5. Replace the dipstick.

Transition: If your vehicle requires oil, you will need to move onto step two.

The speaker uses clear main points, each of which stay focused in support of the thesis.

- II. Step two involves adding oil to the engine if necessary.
 1. The first thing you must do in this step is to locate the oil cap.
 1. This is different from the dipstick.
 2. It will be the large cap with the universal oil can symbol. This symbol should be standard on every car but the placement of the oil cap will not be universal.
 2. After you have located the oil cap, remove the cap by screwing it off, place your funnel into the engine, and pour your oil in through the funnel.
 1. You will generally need to add 1–2 quarts, depending on how low your oil may be running.
 2. Make sure to pour your oil with the spout of the bottle on top, which gives you more control over how much you pour out at a time.
 3. Plus, when you have the spout on the bottom, the oil “glugs” a lot and increases the chance of spillage.

Transition: This brings us to the third and final step.

The speaker’s support material for each main point is relatively equal in scope and importance.

- III. Step three involves rechecking the oil level and finalizing the process.
 1. Once you have put oil in the engine, recheck the oil level the same way you did the first time.
 1. Pull out the dipstick, and wipe it clean with the rag or paper towel. Then place it back into the tube. Take it back out and read the measurement.
 2. If the oil falls in between or above the two holes, you have added enough oil.
 3. If the oil line is below the two holes, you will need to add more oil.
 2. Once enough oil has been added, replace the dipstick and screw the oil cap back on tightly.
 3. Finally, make sure that all paper towels, rags, and oil cartons have been removed before closing the hood.

Transition: That is all there is to it, and by following these easy steps, you can successfully check and add oil in your vehicle.

Conclusion

1. Wrap-Up Signal: Let's begin the conclusion by considering what we discussed this afternoon.
2. Restatement of Thesis: Checking and adding the oil in a vehicle only require a few simple steps.
3. Summary of Main Points: Step one involves gathering the correct materials and checking the oil level. Remember, you will need 1–2 quarts of oil, a rag or paper towel, and a funnel. Then you will need to check the oil level using the dipstick and guidelines we discussed. Step two involves adding oil to the engine if necessary. Generally, this requires 1–2 quarts, and remember to use a funnel and the technique provided when adding oil. Step three involves rechecking the oil level using the dipstick and finalizing the process by replacing everything, making sure nothing has been left out, and closing the hood.
4. Audience Motivation: If you follow those steps, you will be able to prevent running out of oil and doing some serious damage to your vehicle. It is something each of you can do with ease, and I encourage you all to begin doing so regularly.
5. Relational Reinforcement: We do not have to be master mechanics to do a little maintenance on our vehicles once in a while. We can save time and money down the road and lengthen the lives of our vehicles.
6. Clincher Statement: Through this easy process of checking and adding oil on your own, you can enjoy having a vehicle without some of the expense.

The speaker uses a wrap-up signal that does not bring the speech to a stop but rather introduces the beginning of the conclusion

The speaker restates the thesis to assist the audience in recalling it following the presentation.

The speaker summarizes each main point instead of just listing each main point to reinforce what was discussed.

The speaker reminds the audience what they should do and provides encouragement for doing so.

The speaker reinforces a relational connection with the audience, reinforcing credibility and their own association with the topic.

The speaker ends strongly and smoothly, reinforcing the purpose of the presentation.

References

AAA. (2015). Annual cost to own and operate a vehicle falls to \$8,698, finds AAA. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.aaa.com/2015/04/annual-cost-operate-vehicle-falls-8698-finds-aaa-archive>

Car Talk. (2016). Car Talk service advice: Oil changes. Retrieved from <http://www.cartalk.com/content/car-talk-service-advice-oil-changes>

How to Check and Add Oil in Your Vehicle—Needs Improvement Version

General Purpose: Inform

Specific Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to inform audience members about how to check and add oil in their vehicles.

Thesis Statement: Checking and adding oil in a vehicle only require a few simple steps.

Organizational Pattern: Chronological

Introduction

1. Attention-Getting Device: How many of you own a vehicle?
2. Purpose and Thesis: Checking and adding oil in your vehicle is one way to save money on maintenance, so the purpose of this presentation is to inform you about how to do just that.
3. Orientation Phase: Checking the oil in your vehicle is pretty simple.
4. Impact of the Topic and Speech: It is something that all of you can do.
5. Credibility and Relational Connection: I have been personally checking the oil in my vehicles for a number of years.
6. Enumerated Preview:

Transition: So, let's get started with the initial step.

The speaker uses a hypothetical question as an attention getter that has little substance or purpose.

The speaker provides the thesis but does not tell the audience the purpose of the presentation.

The speaker provides no concrete information to enhance audience understanding or appreciation of what is to come in the body of the presentation.

The speaker does not actually tell the audience why the topic affects them or why they should listen to the presentation.

The speaker mentions experience with the topic but does not connect with the audience.

The speaker does not provide an enumerated preview.

Body

1. Step one involves gathering the correct materials and checking the oil level.
 1. You will need 1–2 quarts of oil, a rag or paper towel, and a funnel—preferably not one you ever plan to use in the kitchen again.
 2. The first thing you must do is open the hood and locate the dipstick, typically a circle or loop handle attached to a long flat metal rod.
 3. Pull out the dipstick, and wipe it clean with the rag or paper towel. Then place it back into the tube. Take it back out and read the measurement. It is important to clean the dipstick and get a brand new measurement so that the reading is accurate.
 4. Once you have done this, look at the bottom of the dipstick to see the amount of oil that is currently in your engine. You will see a few lines and some stripes or checkered spaces on the dipstick, indicating a safe amount of oil.
 1. If the oil falls in between or above the two holes, your car has enough oil and you are good to go.
 2. If the oil line is below the two holes, you should probably add some oil.

Transition: If your vehicle requires oil, you will need to move onto step two.

The speaker does not include replacing the dipstick. Especially with how-to speeches, a step might be obvious to the speaker but not to audience members who may never have performed the task.

- II. Step two involves adding oil to the engine if necessary.
 1. The first thing you must do in this step is to locate the oil cap.
 1. This is different from the dipstick.
 2. It will be the large cap with the universal oil can symbol. This symbol should be standard on every car but the placement of the oil cap will not be universal.
 2. After you have located the oil cap, remove the cap by screwing it off, place your funnel into the engine, and pour your oil in through the funnel.
 1. You will generally need to add 1–2 quarts, depending on how low your oil may be running.
 2. Make sure to pour your oil with the spout of the bottle on top, which gives you more control over how much you pour out at a time.
 3. Plus, when you have the spout on the bottom, the oil “glugs” a lot and increases the chance of spillage.
 4. One time I spilled oil on the engine, and it smoked everywhere when I started it.
 3. By the way, you can get the oil at lots of places. Wal-Marts and gas stations all have it, and you can find the kind you need in your owner’s manual.

Transition: This brings us to the third and final step.

The speaker includes information that is not relevant to developing the thesis and meeting the purpose.

The speaker includes information that deals with the topic but seems out of place and gets the speech off track.

- III. Step three involves rechecking the oil level and finalizing the process.
 1. Once you have put oil in the engine, recheck the oil level the same way you did the first time.
 1. Pull out the dipstick, and wipe it clean with the rag or paper towel. Then place it back into the tube. Take it back out and read the measurement.
 2. If the oil falls in between or above the two holes, you have added enough oil.
 3. If the oil line is below the two holes, you will need to add more oil.
 2. Once enough oil has been added, replace the dipstick and screw the oil cap back on tightly.
 3. Finally, make sure that all paper towels, rags, and oil cartons have been removed before closing the hood.

Transition: That is all there is to it, and by following these easy steps, you can successfully check and add oil in your vehicle.

Conclusion

1. Wrap-Up Signal: That's about all I have.
2. Restatement of Thesis: Checking and adding oil in your vehicle is one way to save money on maintenance, so the purpose of this presentation was to inform you about how to do just that.
3. Summary of Main Points: There are just three simple steps.
4. Audience Motivation: If you follow those steps, you will be able to prevent running out of oil and doing some serious damage to your vehicle. Some of you might not be able to do it, though. I can do it for you, if you ask.
5. Relational Reinforcement: Checking and adding oil is something I do all the time.
6. Clincher Statement: Give it a try.

The speaker uses a wrap-up signal that seems like the presentation is ending rather than the conclusion is beginning. It also makes the speaker seem to be coming up short of reaching a goal.

The speaker provides the purpose of the presentation rather than the thesis.

The speaker does not summarize each main point, missing an opportunity to reinforce what was discussed.

The speaker discourages rather than encouraging the audience.

The speaker focuses on a personal connection with the topic rather than reinforcing a relational connection with the audience.

The speaker does not include a clincher statement and instead ends the presentation weakly and in an unmemorable manner.

Iowa House Judiciary Speech

Zach Wahls

Good evening Mr. Chairman, my name is Zach Wahls. I'm a sixth-generation Iowan and an engineering student at the University of Iowa, and I was raised by two women. My biological mother Terry told her parents that she was pregnant, that the artificial insemination had worked, and they wouldn't even acknowledge it. It actually wasn't until I was born and they succumbed to my infantile cuteness that they broke down and told her that they were thrilled to have another grandson. Unfortunately, neither of them would live to see her marry her partner Jackie, of fifteen years, when they wed in 2009. My younger sister and only sibling was born in 1994. We actually have the same anonymous donor, so we're full siblings, which is really cool for me. I guess the point is that my family really isn't so different from any other Iowa family. When I'm home, we go to church together. We eat dinner, we go on vacations. But, we have our hard times too; we get in fights. My mom, Terry, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2000. It is a devastating disease that put her in a wheelchair, so you know, we've had our struggles. But we're Iowans. We don't expect anyone to solve our problems for us. We'll fight our own battles. We just hope for equal and fair treatment from our government.

Being a student at the University of Iowa, the topic of same sex marriage comes up quite frequently in class discussions. The question always comes down to, "Can gays even raise kids?" And the conversation gets quiet for a moment, because most people don't really have an answer. And then I raise my hand and say, "Well actually, I was raised by a gay couple, and I'm doing pretty well." I score in the 99th percentile on the ACT. I'm an Eagle Scout. I own and operate my own small business. If I was your son, Mr. Chairman, I believe I'd make you very proud. I'm not so different from any of your children. My family really isn't so different from yours. After all, your family doesn't derive its sense of worth from being told by the state, "You're married, congratulations!" The sense of family comes from the commitment we make to each other to work through the hard times so we can enjoy the good ones. It comes from the love that binds us. That's what makes a family.

So what you're voting for here is not to change us. It's not to change our families, it's to change how the law views us, how the law treats us. You are voting for the first time in the history of our state to codify discrimination into our constitution, a constitution that but for the proposed amendment is the least amended constitution in the United States of America. You are telling Iowans, "Some among you are second-class citizens who do not have the right to marry the person you love." So will this vote affect my family? Would it affect yours? In the next two hours, I'm sure we're going to hear a lot of testimony about how damaging having gay parents is on kids. But not once have I ever been confronted by an individual who realized independently that I was raised by a gay couple. And you know why? Because the sexual orientation of my parents has had zero impact on the content of my character.

Glossary

accommodation:

when people change their accent, their rate of speech, and even the words they use to indicate a relational connection with the person to whom they are talking

accounts:

forms of communication that go beyond the facts and offer justifications, excuses, exonerations, explanations, or accusations

act:

element of the pentad involving what happened (see *scene, agent, agency, purpose*)

adaptors:

nonverbal behaviors used to satisfy personal needs

adjourning (Tuckman's group development):

when a group reflects on its achievements, underlines its performative accomplishments, and closes itself down (see *forming, norming, performing, storming*)

advisory group:

that which is task specific, usually with the intention of producing an outcome that is a focused "best solution" to a specific problem or arrangement of an event

affect displays:

nonverbal face and body movement used to express emotion

agency:

element of the pentad involving how an act was accomplished (see *act, scene, agent, purpose*)

agent:

element of the pentad involving who performed an act (see *act, scene, agency, purpose*)

altercasting:

how language can impose a certain identity on people, and how language can support or reject the identity of another person

anchor position (social judgment theory):

the preferred or most acceptable position

appeal to authority (fallacious argument):

when a person's authority or credibility in one area is used to support another area

appeal to people (fallacious argument):

claims that something is good or beneficial because everyone else agrees with this evaluation (also called *bandwagon appeal*)

appeal to relationships (fallacious argument):

when relationships are used to justify certain behaviors and to convince others of their appropriateness

argument against the source (fallacious argument):

when the source of a message, rather than the message itself, is attacked (also called *ad hominem* argument)

assimilation effect (social judgment theory):

maintains that if someone advocates a position within a person's latitude of acceptance, he or she will view it as closer to his or her anchor position than it really is

asynchronous communication:

communication in which there is a slight or prolonged delay between the message and the response; the interactants must alternate between sending and receiving messages (contrast with *synchronous communication*)

attending:

the second step in the listening process when stimuli are perceived and focused on

attention getter:

a device used to draw the audience into a presentation

attitude of reflection (symbolic interactionism):

thinking about how you look in other people's eyes, or reflecting that other people can see you as a social object from their point of view

attitudes:

learned predispositions to evaluate something in a positive or negative way that guide people's thinking and behavior (like/dislike)

audience involvement (social judgment theory):

audience members' recognition of an issue's significance and importance in their lives; the greater the significance and importance audience members perceive the issue as having in their lives, the more involved they will be with the issue, and vice versa

avoidance (politeness strategy):

when a person avoids a face-threatening act altogether (see *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *off record*, *positive politeness*)

back region:

a frame where a social interaction is regarded as not under public scrutiny, so people do not have to present their public faces (contrast with *front region*)

balance principle:

the principle of organization that maintains that the points of the body of a presentation must be relatively equal in scope and importance

bald on record (politeness strategy):

when a person acts directly without concern for face needs (see *avoidance*, *negative politeness*, *off record*, *positive politeness*)

base:

the number of people, objects, or things included in a study

beliefs:

what a person holds to be true or false

bipolar question:

a type of closed question that forces an interviewee to select one of two responses

body:

the part of a presentation in which an argument is developed and presented

body buffer zone:

a kind of imaginary aura around you that you regard as part of yourself and your personal space

brainstorming:

a method of gathering and generating ideas without immediate evaluation

captive audience:

an audience that is required to listen to your presentation

causal pattern:

an organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to cause and effect

certainty–uncertainty dialectic:

the need for predictability and routine in a relationship and the need for novelty and change in a relationship (also called *novelty–predictability dialectic*)

change (relational dialectics):

movement in relationships that occurs partly through dealing with relational contradictions; in relationships, change is the constant element; relationships are perpetually in motion, unfinished business, and constantly evolving

chronemics:

the study of use and evaluation of time in interactions

chronological pattern:

organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to their position in a time sequence

claim of conjecture:

a claim maintaining that something will be true or false in the future

claim of fact:

a claim maintaining that something is true or false now

claim of policy:

a claim maintaining that a course of action should or should not be taken

claim of value:

a claim maintaining that something is good or bad, beneficial or detrimental, or another evaluative criterion

clincher statement:

a phrase that allows a speaker to end on a strong but smooth note

closed questions:

questions that limit the range of an interviewee's response (contrast with *open questions*)

co-cultures:

smaller groups of culture within a larger cultural mass

coded system of meaning:

a set of beliefs, a heritage, and a way of being that is transacted in communication

coercive power:

that which is derived from the ability to punish

cohesiveness:

working together and feeling connected

collectivist:

subscribing to a belief system that stresses group benefit and the overriding value of working harmoniously rather than individual personal advancement (contrast with *individualist*)

collectivist talk:

that which is characterized as stressing group benefit and harmony rather than personal needs and advancement (contrast with *individualist talk*)

communication apprehension:

the fear or anxiety everyone has to some degree, especially when speaking to a large or unfamiliar audience

communication as action:

the act of sending messages—whether or not they are received

communication as interaction:

an exchange of information between two (or more) individuals

communication as transaction:

the construction of shared meanings or understandings between two (or more) individuals

communication frame:

a boundary around a conversation that pulls one's attention toward certain things and away from others

comparisons:

demonstrate or reveal how things are similar

composition fallacy (fallacious argument):

argues that the parts are the same as the whole

composure:

a secondary dimension of credibility referring to the ability to appear calm under pressure

conclusion:

part of a presentation that reinforces and completes the presentation while reinforcing the relationship with the audience

concrete words:

those representing tangible objects that can be experienced through sensory channels (touch, taste, smell, hearing, seeing) and include real people, objects, actions, and locations

concurrent media use:

use of two or more media systems simultaneously

conflict:

real or perceived incompatibilities of processes, understandings, and viewpoints between people

conflict (Fisher's group progression):

occurs when a group argues about possible ways of approaching the problem and begins to seek solutions (see *emergence, orientation, reinforcement*)

conflict-as-destructive culture:

a culture based on four assumptions: that conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace; that the social system should not be adjusted to meet the needs of members, but members should adapt to established values; that confrontations are destructive and ineffective; and that disputants should be disciplined

(contrast with *conflict-as-opportunity culture*)

conflict-as-opportunity culture:

a culture based on four assumptions: that conflict is a normal, useful process; that all issues are subject to change through negotiation; that direct confrontation and conciliation are valued; and that conflict is a necessary renegotiation of an implied contract—a redistribution of opportunity, a release of tensions, and a renewal of relationships (contrast with *conflict-as-destructive culture*)

connectedness–separateness dialectic:

the need to be with a relational partner and the need to be away from a relational partner (also called *connection–autonomy dialectic*)

connotative meaning:

the overtones, implications, or additional meanings associated with a word or an object

consistency:

a message is free of internal contradiction and is in harmony with information known to be true

constitutive approach to communication:

communication can create or bring into existence something that has not been there before, such as an agreement, a contract, or an identity

content (representational) listening:

obstacle to listening when people focus on the content level of meaning, or literal meaning, rather than the social or relational level of meaning

contradiction (relational dialectics):

interplay between two things that are connected at the same time they are in opposition

contrast effect (social judgment theory):

maintains that if someone advocates a position within a person's latitude of rejection, he or she will view it as further from his or her anchor position than it really is

contrasts:

demonstrate or reveal how things are different

conventionality–uniqueness dialectic:

the need of people to feel as if their relationship is like the relationships of others and the need to feel as if their relationship is special

convergence:

a person moves toward the style of talk used by the other speaker (contrast with *divergence*); usually indicates liking or respect

conversational hypertext:

coded messages within conversation that an informed listener will effortlessly understand

core ties:

people with whom you have a very close relationship and are in frequent contact; a person often discusses important matters in life with these people and often seeks their assistance in times of need (compare with *significant ties*)

cover letter:

a letter sent when seeking employment that has four purposes: (1) declare interest in the position, (2) provide a summary of qualifications, (3) compel the person to read your résumé, and (4) request an interview

creative group:

that which is focused on the evaluation of concepts or on the creation of new products or approaches to complex problems

critical approach:

seeks to identify the hidden but formidable symbolic structures and practices that create or uphold disadvantage, inequity, or oppression of some groups in favor of others

critical listening:

the process of analyzing and evaluating the accuracy, legitimacy, and value of messages

cross-cultural communication:

compares the communication styles and patterns of people from very different cultural/social structures, such as nation-states

cultural persuadables:

the cultural premises and norms that delineate a range of what may and what must be persuaded (as opposed to certain topics in a society that require no persuasive appeal because the matters are taken for granted)

cum hoc ergo propter hoc (fallacious argument):

argues that if one thing happens at the same time as another, it was caused by the thing with which it coincides; Latin for “with this; therefore, because of this”

decoding:

the act of assigning meaning to nonverbal symbols you receive

deductive reasoning:

using general conclusions, premises, or principles to reach a conclusion about a specific example or instance

definition:

evidence or support that provides the meaning of a word or phrase

definitions and descriptions:

provide the audience with an extended explanation or depiction of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event

deintensification:

a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is lessened

demographics:

characteristics of a person or an audience that can provide insight into the knowledge, experiences, interests, needs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of that person or members of an audience

denotative meaning:

the identification of something by pointing it out (“that is a cat”)

descriptive language:

that which provides the audience with a clearer picture of what you are discussing by describing it in more detail

Devil terms:

powerfully evocative terms viewed negatively in a society (contrast with *God terms*)

dialectic tension:

occurs whenever one is of two minds about something because one feels a simultaneous pull in two

directions

directive interviews:

interviews that are greatly controlled by an interviewer

disruptive roles:

those functioning in opposition to group productivity and cohesion

distracting mannerisms:

bodily movements that allow a speaker to discharge nervous energy, serve no relevant purpose in the presentation, and often divert attention from the message

divergence:

a person moves away from another's style of speech to make a relational point, such as establishing dislike or superiority (contrast with *convergence*)

division fallacy (fallacious argument):

argues the whole is the same as its parts

dyadic process:

part of the process of breakdown of relationships that involves a confrontation with a partner and the open discussion of a problem with a relationship

dynamic:

elements of nonverbal communication that are changeable during interaction (e.g., facial expression, posture, gesturing; contrast with *static*)

dynamism:

a secondary dimension of credibility referring to being energetic and enthusiastic

egocentric listening:

obstacle to listening when people focus more on their message and self-presentation than on the message of the other person involved in an interaction

elaborated code:

speech that emphasizes the reasoning behind a command; uses speech and language more as a way for people to differentiate the uniqueness of their own personalities and ideas and to express their own individuality, purposes, attitudes, and beliefs than as a way to reinforce collectivity or commonality of outlook (contrast with *restricted code*)

elimination pattern:

organizational pattern that offers a series of solutions to a problem, systematically eliminating each one until the remaining solution is the one a speech supports

emblems:

nonverbal face and body movement represent feelings or ideas not necessarily being expressed verbally

emergence (Fisher's group progression):

occurs when consensus begins to dawn, and a group sees the emergence of possible agreement (see *orientation, conflict, reinforcement*)

emojis:

text-based symbols used to express emotions online, often to alleviate problems associated with a lack of nonverbal cues

employment interviews:

interviews in which a potential employer interviews a potential employee

encoding:

the act of using nonverbal symbols to convey meaning

engaged listening:

making a personal relational connection with the source of a message that results from the source and the receiver actively working together to create shared meaning and understanding

enthymeme:

a syllogism that excludes one or two of the three components of a syllogism

environment:

the natural or human-made surroundings in which communication takes place

environmental distraction:

obstacle to listening that results from the physical location where listening takes place and competing sources

equivocation (fallacious argument):

relies on the ambiguousness of language to make an argument

essential function of talk:

a function of talk that makes the relationship real and talks it into being, often by using coupling references or making assumptions that the relationship exists

ethnocentric bias:

believing that the way one's own culture does things is the right and normal way to do them

ethos:

artistic proof involving the use of speaker credibility to influence an audience

evoke:

term used to describe presentations intended to prompt an emotional response

examples:

specific cases used to represent a larger whole to clarify or explain something

exit interviews:

interviews that occur when a person chooses to leave a place of employment

experiential superiority:

obstacle to listening when people fail to listen to someone else fully because they believe that they possess more or superior knowledge and experience than the other person

expert power:

that which is derived from possessing special knowledge

expert testimony:

evidence from someone with special training, instruction, or knowledge in a particular area

expository presentation:

provides the audience with a detailed review of an object, a creation, a place, a person, a concept, or an event

extemporaneous delivery:

a style of speech delivery that involves the use of few notes; this style can achieve a natural conversational

delivery while remaining accurate

external dialectics:

those involving a relational unit and other relational units or people within their social networks

eye contact:

extent to which someone looks directly into the eyes of another person

facework:

the management of people's dignity or self-respect, known as "face"

facts:

provable or documented truths that you can use as evidence to support your claims

factual diversion:

obstacle to listening that occurs when so much emphasis is placed on attending to every detail of a message that the main point becomes lost

fallacious argument:

an argument that appears legitimate but is actually based on faulty reasoning or insufficient evidence

false alternatives (fallacious argument):

occurs when only two options are provided, one of which is generally presented as the poor choice or one that should be avoided

feminine talk:

that which is characterized as nurturing, harmonious, and compromising (contrast with *masculine talk*)

formal group:

that which is task oriented and outcome focused, generally with a formal structure, a restricted membership, and an established chair or leader

formal power:

that which is formally allocated by a system or group to particular people (compare with *informal power*)

formal roles:

specific functions to which group members are assigned and that they are expected to perform within the group

formality/hierarchy:

creates distance between workers and management and establishes clear relational connections among people

forming (Tuckman's group development):

when a group comes into existence and seeks direction from a leader about the nature of its tasks and procedures (see *adjourning*, *norming*, *performing*, *storming*)

frames:

basic forms of knowledge that provide a definition of a scenario, either because both people agree on the nature of the situation or because the cultural assumptions built into the interaction and the previous relational context of talk give them a clue

front region:

a frame where a social interaction is regarded as under public scrutiny, so people have to be on their best behavior or acting out their professional roles or intended "faces" (contrast with *back region*)

gaze:

involves one person looking at another person

general purpose:

the basic objective you want to achieve through your presentation

God terms:

powerfully evocative terms that are viewed positively in a society (contrast with *Devil terms*)

grave dressing process:

part of the breakdown of relationships that consists of creating the story of why a relationship died and erecting a metaphorical tombstone that summarizes its main events and features from its birth to its death

group culture:

the set of expectations and practices that a group develops to make itself distinctive from other groups and to give its members a sense of exclusive membership (e.g., dress code, specialized language, particular rituals)

group norms:

rules and procedures that occur in a group but not necessarily outside it and that are enforced by the use of power or rules for behavior

group roles:

positions or functions within a group (see *disruptive roles*, *formal roles*, *informal roles*, *social roles*, *task roles*)

group sanctions:

punishments for violating norms

groupthink:

a negative kind of consensus seeking through which members place a higher priority on keeping the process running smoothly and agreeably than they do on voicing opinions that contradict the majority opinion (or the opinion of the leader)

guidance principle:

the principle of organization that maintains that a speaker must guide and direct the audience throughout the entire presentation

haptics:

the study of the specific nonverbal behaviors involving touch

hasty generalization (fallacious argument):

when a conclusion is based on a single occurrence or insufficient data or sample size

hearing:

the passive physiological act of receiving sound that takes place when sound waves hit a person's eardrums

helping interviews:

interviews conducted by someone with expertise in a given area and whose services are engaged by someone in need of advice

high code:

a formal, grammatical, and very correct—often “official”—way of talking

high-context culture:

a culture that places a great deal of emphasis on the total environment (context) where speech and interaction take place, especially on the relationships between the speakers rather than just on what they say (contrast with *low-context culture*)

high-context talk:

that which is characterized as relying on the context in which it takes place, with words used sparingly and the relationship shared by interactants being extremely important (contrast with *low-context talk*)

historiography:

the study of the persuasive effect of writing history in particular ways and the reasons why particular reports and analyses are offered by specific authors

how-to demonstration:

a presentation that describes the procedure or methods through which something is accomplished *with* the expectation that the audience will be able to perform the process

hypothetical illustrations:

fabricated illustrations using typical characteristics to describe particular situations, objects, or people, as well as illustrations describing what could happen in the future

identity:

a person's uniqueness, represented by descriptions, a self-concept, inner thoughts, and performances, that is symbolized in interactions with other people and presented for their assessment and moral evaluation

illustrations:

examples offered in an extended narrative form

illustrators:

nonverbal face and body movement used to visualize or emphasize verbal communication

inclusion–seclusion dialectic:

the need for people in a relationship to be around others in a social network and the need for people in a relationship to be by themselves

indexical function of talk:

demonstrates or indicates the nature of the relationship between speakers

individual inventory:

a listing of a person's preferences, likes, dislikes, and experiences used when searching for a possible speech topic

individualist:

subscribing to a belief system that focuses on the individual person and his or her personal dreams, goals and achievements, and right to make choices (contrast with *collectivist*)

individualist talk:

that which is characterized as stressing individual needs and achievement (contrast with *collectivist talk*)

inductive reasoning:

deriving a general conclusion from specific evidence, examples, or instances

industrial time:

the attention to punctuality and dedication to a task that is connected with the nature of industry (clocking in, clocking out, lunch breaks, etc.)

inform:

to develop audience understanding of a topic through definition, clarification, demonstration, or explanation of a process

informal power:

operates through relationships and individual reputations without formal status (e.g., someone may not actually be the boss but might exert more influence on other workers by being highly respected; compare with *formal power*)

informal roles:

those to which someone is not officially assigned but that serve a function with a group

information-gaining interviews:

interviews in which a person solicits information from another person

inspiring:

a secondary dimension of credibility referring to the ability to stimulate and motivate others, which might subsequently lead to viewing the speaker as more knowledgeable, honest, and concerned

instrumental function of talk:

when what is said brings about a goal that you have in mind for the relationship, and talk is the means or instrument by which it is accomplished (e.g., asking someone on a date or to come with you to a party)

instrumental goals:

those that are predominant at work and are directed at completion of duties; can also involve a direct assessment of performance

intercultural communication:

examines how people from different cultural/social structures speak to one another and what difficulties or conflicts they encounter, over and above the different languages they speak

interdependence:

the reliance of each member of a team or group on the other members, making their outcomes dependent on the collaboration and interrelated performance of all members (e.g., a football team dividing up the jobs of throwing, catching, and blocking)

internal dialectics:

those occurring within a relationship itself

interpreting:

the third step in the listening process when meaning is assigned to sounds and symbolic activity

interpretivist approach:

views communication as creative, uncertain, and unpredictable, and thus rejects the idea that a single reality exists or can be discovered; researchers using this approach primarily seek to understand and describe communication experience

interview:

a goal-driven transaction characterized by questions and answers, clear structure, control, and imbalance

intrapsychic process:

part of the process of breakdown of a relationship where an individual reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of a relationship and begins to consider the possibility of ending it

introduction:

part of a presentation that lays the foundation for it and creates or builds on relational connection with the audience

introspective units:

one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; introspective units are reminders of the

relationships during an absence, examples being photographs of a couple, wedding bands, or fluffy toys that one partner gave to another

kinesics:

the study of movements of the face and body that take place during an interaction

langue:

the formal grammatical structure of language (contrast with *parole*)

latitude of acceptance (social judgment theory):

includes the range of positions that the audience deems acceptable

latitude of noncommitment (social judgment theory):

includes positions that the audience neither wholly accepts nor wholly rejects

latitude of rejection (social judgment theory):

includes those positions that the audience deems unacceptable

lay testimony:

evidence from someone without expertise but who possesses relevant experience

leading questions:

questions that suggest to an interviewee a preferred way to respond (contrast with *neutral questions*)

leakage:

unintentional betrayal of internal feelings through nonverbal communication

legitimate power:

that which is derived from a person's status or rank

listening:

the active process of receiving, attending to, interpreting, and responding to symbolic activity

logos:

artistic proof involving the use of logic or reasoning to influence an audience

low code:

an informal and often ungrammatical way of talking

low-context culture:

assumes that the message itself means everything, and it is much more important to have a well-structured argument or a well-delivered presentation than it is to be a member of the royal family or a cousin of the person listening (contrast with *high-context culture*)

low-context talk:

that which is characterized as straightforward, with the message speaking for itself and the relationship separated from the message as much as possible (contrast with *high-context talk*)

main points:

statements that directly support or develop a thesis statement

manuscript delivery:

a style of speech delivery that involves having the entire speech written out in front of a speaker to be read out to ensure that the words are accurately delivered; avoid this style except when accuracy is absolutely a paramount requirement

masculine talk:

that which is characterized as tough, aggressive, and competitive (contrast with *feminine talk*)

masking:

a form of facial management in which the emotion displayed is the opposite of being experienced

mean:

refers to the average number, which may or may not provide an accurate description or representation

meaning:

what a symbol represents

media equation:

people use the same social rules and expectations when interacting with technology as they do with other people

media literacy:

the learned ability to access, interpret, and evaluate media products

median:

the number that rests in the middle of all the other numbers; half of the numbers are less than this number, and the other half are more than this number

medium:

means through which a message is conveyed

medium distraction:

obstacle to listening that results from limitations or problems inherent in certain media and technology, such as mobile phones or Internet connections

memorized delivery:

a style of speech delivery that involves committing a speech completely to memory and presenting without the use of a manuscript or notes

message complexity:

obstacle to listening when a person finds a message so complex or confusing that he or she stops listening

microcoordination:

the unique management of social interaction made possible through smartphones

mirror questions (secondary questions):

questions that paraphrase an interviewee's previous response to ensure clarification and to elicit elaboration

mode:

the number that occurs most often

monochronic culture:

a culture that views time as a valuable commodity and punctuality as very important (contrast with *polychronic culture*)

narrative:

any organized story, report, or talk that has a plot, an argument, or a theme and in which speakers both relate facts and arrange the story in a way that provides an account, an explanation, or a conclusion

negative face wants:

the desire not to be imposed on or treated as inferior (contrast with *positive face wants*)

negative politeness (politeness strategy):

when a person acknowledges the possibility of negative face, offering regrets or being pessimistic (see *avoidance, bald on record, off record, positive politeness*)

networking group:

that which is focused on obtaining, building, or sustaining relationships, usually online

neutral questions:

questions that provide an interviewee with no indication of a preferred way to respond (contrast with *leading questions*)

neutralization:

a form of facial management in which displays of emotion are nonexistent or quickly erased

nondirective interviews:

interviews in which the direction of the interview is primarily given to the interviewee

nonfluencies:

meaningless vocal fillers (such as *um*) that distract from a presentation

nonverbal communication:

any symbolic activity other than the use of language

norming (Tuckman's group development):

when a group establishes its procedures to move more formally toward a solution (see *adjourning, forming, performing, storming*)

off record (politeness strategy):

when a person hints or presents a face-threatening act in a vague manner (see *avoidance, bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness*)

open brainstorming:

generating a list of ideas with no topic boundary

open questions:

questions that enable and prompt interviewees to answer in a wide range of ways (contrast with *closed questions*)

openness–closedness dialectic:

the need to talk to a relational partner and the need to not talk to a relational partner; also, the need to disclose some information to a relational partner and to not disclose other information to a relational partner

operational definition:

concrete explanation of meaning that is more original or personal than a dictionary definition

opinions:

personal beliefs or speculations that, even though perhaps based on facts, have not been proved or verified

oral citations:

references to the source of the evidence and support material used during a presentation

organizational pattern:

an arrangement of the main points of a presentation that best enables audience comprehension

orientation (Fisher's group progression):

occurs when group members get to know one another and come to grips with the problems they have convened to deal with (see *emergence, conflict, reinforcement*)

orientation phase:

part of a presentation in which the speaker provides the audience members with any information that allows them to better understand and appreciate the material presented

out-groups:

cells of disgruntled members who feel undervalued, mistreated, disrespected, not included, or overlooked; these members can be either disruptive or constructive

overintensification:

a form of facial management in which the intensity of an emotional display is increased

parasocial relationships:

“relationships” established with media characters and personalities

parole:

how people actually use language: where they often speak using informal and ungrammatical language structure that carries meaning to us all the same (contrast with *langue*)

past experience with the source:

obstacle to listening when previous encounters with a person lead people to dismiss or fail to critically examine a message because the person has generally been right (or wrong) in the past

pathos:

artistic proof involving the use of emotional appeals to influence an audience

pauses:

breaks in the vocal flow that allow speakers to direct the audience, add emphasis to areas of a presentation, and avoid nonfluencies

pentad:

five components of narratives that explain the motivation of symbolic action

perception:

process of actively selecting, organizing, interpreting, and evaluating information, activities, situations, people, and essentially all the things that make up your world

performance interviews:

interviews in which an individual's activities and work are discussed

performative self:

a self that is a creative performance based on the social demands and norms of a given situation

performing (Tuckman's group development):

when a group performs its task, having previously established how this performance will be carried out (see *adjourning, forming, norming, storming*)

personal constructs:

individualized ways of construing or understanding the world and its contents; they are bipolar dimensions used to measure and evaluate things

personal relationships:

relationships that only specified and irreplaceable individuals (such as your mother, father, brother, sister, or very best friend) can have with you (compare with *social relationships*)

personal space:

space legitimately claimed or occupied by a person for the time being; the area around a person that is regarded as part of the person and in which only informal and close relationships are conducted

personal testimony:

evidence given by a speaker that is based on personal experience or shared experience with the audience

persuade:

either to influence audience beliefs, values, or attitudes or to influence audience behaviors

persuasive interviews:

interviews that have influence as the ultimate goal

pitch:

highness or lowness of a person's voice

plausibility:

the extent to which a message seems legitimate

points principle:

highlights the basic building blocks of an argument: the main points and subpoints

polychronic culture:

a culture that sees time not as linear and simple but as complex and made up of many strands, none of which is more important than any other—hence, such culture's relaxed attitude toward time (contrast with *monochronic culture*)

polysemy:

the fact that multiple meanings can be associated with a given word or symbol rather than with just one unambiguous meaning

population:

who or what is included in a study

positive face wants:

the need to be seen and accepted as a worthwhile and reasonable person (contrast with *negative face wants*)

positive politeness (politeness strategy):

when a person focuses on positive face, often through flattery or by offering something in return (see *avoidance, bald on record, negative politeness, off record*)

post hoc ergo propter hoc (fallacious argument):

argues that something is caused by whatever happens before it; Latin for “after this; therefore, because of this”

praxis (relational dialectics):

the notion that activities of the partners in a relationship are a vital component of the relationship itself; people are both actors and the objects of action in relationships

presentation:

one person's particular version of, or “take” on, the facts or events (contrast with *representation*)

presentation aids:

tools used by a speaker to enhance audience understanding, as well as the speaker's

presentation to actuate:

a presentation that is delivered in an attempt to influence audience behavior rather than merely their beliefs

presentation to convince:
an attempt to influence audience thinking

primary questions:
questions that introduce new topics during an interview (contrast with *secondary questions*)

probing questions (secondary questions):
brief statements or words that urge an interviewee to continue or to elaborate on a response

problem–solution pattern:
organizational pattern that divides the body of the presentation by first addressing a problem and then offering a solution to that problem

problem-solving interviews:
interviews in which a problem is isolated and solutions are generated

process demonstration:
a presentation that describes the procedure or method through which something is accomplished *without* the expectation that the audience will actually perform the process

professional face:
the behaviors, courtesy, and interaction styles that are appropriate for people to present to others in a workplace

prospective units:
one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; prospective units are recognitions that a separation is about to occur

prototype:
the best-case example of something

provisions of relationships:
the deep and important psychological and supportive benefits that relationships provide

proxemics:
the study of space and distance in communication

purpose:
element of the pentad involving why an act that took place (see *act, scene, agent, agency*)

question–answer pattern:
organizational pattern that involves posing questions an audience may have about a subject and then answering them in a manner that favors the speaker's position

rate (of speech):
how fast or slowly a person speaks, generally determined by how many words are spoken per minute

receiving:
the initial step in the listening process where hearing and listening connect

red herring (fallacious argument):
the use of another issue to divert attention away from the real issue

referent power:

that which is derived from the allegiance of one group of people to another person or group

reflecting (paraphrasing):

summarizing what another person has said to convey understanding of the message

regulators:

nonverbal face and body movement used to indicate to others how you want them to behave or what you want them to do

reinforcement (Fisher's group progression):

occurs when a group explicitly consolidates consensus to complete the task, or the leader does it for the group by thanking the members (see *emergence, conflict, orientation*)

relational continuity constructional units (RCCUs):

ways of demonstrating that the relationship persists during absence of face-to-face contact

relational dialectics:

the study of contradictions in relationships, how they are played out, and how they are managed

relational goals:

those that typically involve intimacy and support

relational listening:

recognizing, understanding, and addressing the interconnection of relationships and communication during the listening process

relational technologies:

such technologies as smartphones, iPods, and Twitter, whose use has relational functions and implications in society and within specific groups

Relationship Filtering Model:

demonstrates how sequences of cues are used to determine which people are selected to develop close relationships

representation:

describes facts or conveys information (contrast with *presentation*)

responding:

final step in the listening process that entails reacting to the message of another person

restricted code:

a way of speaking that emphasizes authority and adopts certain community/cultural orientations as indisputable facts (contrast with *elaborated code*)

résumé:

document used when seeking employment that presents credentials for a position in a clear and concise manner

resurrection process:

part of the breakdown of relationships that deals with how people prepare themselves for new relationships after ending an old one

retrospective units:

one of three types of Relational Continuity Constructional Units that keep the memory of the relationship alive during the physical separation of the members involved; retrospective units directly recognize the end

of an absence and the reestablishment of the relationship through actual interaction

revelation–concealment dialectic:

the need to let others know about the existence of a relationship and the need to prevent others from knowing about the existence of a relationship; also, the need to disclose some information about the relationship to outsiders and the need to hide other information about the relationship from outsiders

reward power:

that which is derived from the ability to provide, manage, or withhold benefits

Sapir–Whorf hypothesis:

the idea that the names of objects and ideas make verbal distinctions and help you make conceptual distinctions rather than the other way around

scene:

element of the pentad involving the situation or location of an act (see *act*, *agent*, *agency*, *purpose*)

schemata:

mental structures that are used to organize information partly by clustering or linking associated material

secondary questions:

follow-up questions asked when seeking elaboration or further information (see *probing questions* and *mirror questions*; contrast with *primary questions*)

sedimentation:

the process by which repeated everyday practices create a “structure” for performance in the future, as a river deposits sediment that alters or maintains its course over time

selective exposure:

the idea that you are more likely to expose yourself to that which supports your beliefs, values, and attitudes

selective listening:

obstacle to listening when people focus on the points of a message that correspond with their views and interests and pay less attention to those that do not

selective perception:

the idea that you are more likely to perceive and focus on things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes

selective retention:

the idea that you are more likely to recall things that support your beliefs, values, and attitudes

self-description:

description that involves information about self that is obvious to others through appearance and behavior

self-disclosure:

the revelation of personal information that others could not know unless the person *made* it known

self-fulfilling prophecy:

principle maintaining that if someone believes a particular outcome will take place, his or her actions will often lead to its fruition

semantic diversion:

obstacle to listening that occurs when people are distracted by words or phrases used in a message through negative response or unfamiliarity

sexual harassment:

“any unwelcome sexual advance or conduct on the job that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; any conduct of a sexual nature that makes an employee uncomfortable” (England, 2012, p. 3)

sign:

a consequence or an indicator of something specific, which cannot be changed by arbitrary actions or labels (e.g., “wet streets are a sign of rain”)

significant ties:

people who are more than mere acquaintances but with whom a strong connection does not exist; a person is not overly likely to talk with these people or seek help from these people, but they are still there when needed (compare with *core ties*)

silence:

meaningful lack of sound

sociability:

a secondary dimension of credibility referring to being personable and likable

social construction:

the way in which symbols take on meaning in a social context or society as they are used over time

social construction of technology (SCOT):

belief that people determine the development of technology and ultimately determine social structure and cultural value (compare with *social shaping of technology* and *technological determinism*)

social judgment theory:

theory explaining how people may respond to a range of positions surrounding a particular topic or issue

social process:

telling other people in one's social network about dissatisfaction and about possible disengagement or dissolution of a relationship

social relationships:

relationships in which the specific people in a given role can be changed and the relationship would still occur (e.g., customer–client relationships are the same irrespective of who is the customer and who is the client on a particular occasion; compare with *personal relationships*)

social roles:

those functioning to encourage group members and to develop and maintain positive communication and relationships among group members

social scientific approach:

views the world as objective, causal, and predictable; researchers using this approach primarily seek to describe communication activity and to discover connections between phenomena or causal patterns

social shaping of technology (SST):

belief that both people and technologies exert influence on social structure and cultural values (compare with *social construction of technology* and *technological determinism*)

socialization impact of media:

depictions of relationships in media provide models of behavior that inform people about how to engage in relationships

socioemotional leaders:

those focusing on making group members feel comfortable, satisfied, valued, and understood (compare with *task leaders*)

source distraction:

obstacle to listening that results from auditory and visual characteristics of the message source

spatial pattern:

an organizational pattern in which the main points of a presentation are arranged according to their physical relation, such as from left to right, top to bottom, north to south, or forward to backward

specific purpose:

exactly what a person wants to achieve through a presentation

speech (communication) codes:

sets of communication patterns that are the norm for a culture, and only that culture, hence defining it as different from others around it

speech communities:

sets of people whose speech codes and practices identify them as a cultural unit, sharing characteristic values through their equally characteristic speech

static:

elements of nonverbal communication that are fixed during interaction (e.g., shape of the room where an interaction takes place, color of eyes, clothes worn during an interview; contrast with *dynamic*)

statistics:

numbers that demonstrate or establish size, trends, and associations

storming (Tuckman's group development):

when a group determines leadership and roles of its members (see *adjourning, forming, norming, performing*)

structuration theory:

points to the regularities of human relationships that act as rules and resources drawn on to enable or constrain social interaction

subpoints:

statements that support and explain the main points of a presentation

support group:

that which is focused on advising, comforting, sharing knowledge, spreading information, and raising consciousness about specific issues

syllogism:

a form of argumentation consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion

symbolic interactionism:

how broad social forces affect or even transact an individual person's view of who he or she is

symbolic self:

the self that is transacted in interaction with other people, that arises out of social interaction, not vice versa, and hence, that does not just "belong to you"

symbols:

arbitrary representations of ideas, objects, people, relationships, cultures, genders, races, and so forth

synchronous communication:

communication in which people interact in real time and can at once both send and receive messages
(contrast with *asynchronous communication*)

task leaders:

those focusing on the performance of tasks to ensure the achievement of group goals (compare with *socioemotional leaders*)

task roles:

those functioning to ensure a group achieves its goals and is productive

technological determinism:

belief that technologies determine social structure, cultural values, and even how people think (compare with *social shaping of technology* and *social construction of technology*)

technology and media generations:

those differentiated by unique technology grammar and consciousness based on the technological and media environment in which they are born

technology and media profile:

a compilation of your technology and media preferences and general use of technology and media; informs others about who you are as a person or at least the persona you are trying to project

territoriality:

the establishment and maintenance of space that people claim for their personal use

testimony:

declarations or statements of a person's findings, opinions, conclusions, or experience

thesis statement:

what a person argues or develops throughout a presentation

topical pattern:

organizational pattern in which support material is arranged according to specific categories, groupings, or grounds

topic-specific brainstorming:

generating a list of ideas encompassing a specific topic

totality (relational dialectics):

the notion that relational contradictions do not occur in isolation from one another and that the whole complexity of relationships must be considered because each element or part of the relationship influences other parts

transitions:

phrases or statements that connect the major parts or sections of the presentation and guide the audience through it

unity principle:

the principle of organization that maintains that a speaker should stay focused and provide only information that supports the thesis and main points of a speech

values:

deeply held and enduring judgments of significance or importance that often provide the basis for both beliefs and attitudes

verbal communication:

the use of language to connect with another mind

verifiability:

an indication that the material being provided can be confirmed by other sources or means

vocalics (paralanguage):

vocal characteristics that provide information about how verbal communication should be interpreted and how the speaker is feeling

vocational anticipatory socialization:

the preparation for becoming a worker; takes place from early moments of childhood onward, including through exposure to the media and depiction of the workplace in comedy and other shows

volume:

loudness or softness of a person's voice

voluntary audience:

an audience that listens to your speech because its members have personally chosen to be there

wandering thoughts:

obstacle to listening involving daydreams or thoughts about things other than the message being presented

wrap-up signal:

a phrase, usually uttered by the interviewer, that signals the beginning of an interview's conclusion

References

Chapter 1

Dance, F. E. X., & Larson, C. E. (1976). *The functions of human communication: A theoretical approach*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J., & Jackson, D. (1967). *Pragmatics of human communication: A study of interactional patterns, pathologies and paradoxes*. New York, NY: Norton.

Wood, J. T., & Duck, S. W. (Eds.). (2006). *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Chapter 2

Borisoff, D., Hoel, P. C., & McMahan, D. T. (2010). Interpersonal communication: Trajectories and challenges. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 205–235). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Carey, J. W. (1979). Graduate education in mass communication. *Communication Education*, 28, 282–293.

Chang, Y. (2012). Is that fair? A cultural analysis of Chinese criminal courtroom communication. *China Media Research*, 8, 95–105.

Chesebro, J. W. (2010). *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, H. (1994). *The history of speech communication: The emergence of a discipline, 1914–1945*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association.

Cullen-Lester, K. L., & Yammarino, F. J. (2016). Collective and network approaches to leadership: Special issue introduction. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(2), 173–180.

Delia, J. G. (1987). Communication research: A history. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), *Handbook of communication science* (pp. 20–98). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dhaenens, F. (2012). Gay male domesticity in the small screen: Queer representation of gay homemaking in *Six Feet Under* and *Brothers & Sisters*. *Popular Communication*, 10, 217–230.

Donovan-Kicken, E., McGlynn, J., & Damron, J. C. H. (2012). When friends deflect questions about sensitive information: Questioners' cognitive complexity and explanations for friends' avoidance. *Western Journal of Communication*, 76, 127–147.

Duck, S. W., & McMahan, D. T. (2012). *The basics of communication: A relational perspective* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Farrell, H. (2012). The consequences of the Internet for politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15, 35–52.

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2015). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

- Gouran, D. S. (2010). Emergent and evolving perspectives on communication in small groups. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 161–184). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, K. L., Palazzolo, K. E., & Savage, M. W. (2012). “I’m not sexist, but . . .”: How ideological dilemmas reinforce sexism in talk about intimate partner violence. *Discourse & Society*, 23, 643–656.
- Holt, L. (2012). Using laugh responses to defuse complaints. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 45, 430–448.
- Hovland, C., Janis, I., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). *Communication and persuasion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Jackson, R. L., II. (2010). Mapping cultural communication research: 1960s to the present. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 272–292). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kong, F., Huang, Y., Liu, P., & Zhao, X. (2016). Why voice behavior? An integrative model of the need for affiliation, the quality of leader–member exchange, and group cohesion in predicting voice behavior. *Group & Organization Management*. doi: 10.1177/1059601116642084
- Lederman, L. C. (2010). Health communication: The first twenty-five years. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 236–254). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Levit, N. (2015). Intimate partner violence: An annotated bibliography, 2013–2015. *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, 28, 605.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1968). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1970). Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 269–277.
- McMahan, D. T. (2004). What we have here is a failure to communicate: Linking interpersonal communication and mass communication. *Review of Communication*, 4, 33–56.
- McMahan, D. T. (2011). Heartland: Symbolic displays of aggression and male masculinity in rural America. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 12, 51–59.
- Metts, S., Sprecher, S., & Cupach, W. R. (1991). Retrospective self-reports. In B. M. Montgomery & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Studying interpersonal interaction* (pp. 162–178). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Norwood, K. (2013a). Grieving gender: Trans-identities, transition, and ambiguous loss. *Communication*

Monographs, 80, 24–45.

Norwood, K. (2013b). Meaning matters: Framing trans identity in the context of family relationships. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 9, 152–178.

Olson, L. C. (2010). Rhetorical criticism and theory: Rhetorical questions, theoretical fundamentalism, and the dissolution of judgment. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 37–72). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Olson, L. C., Finnegan, C. A., & Hope, D. S. (2008). *Visual rhetoric: A reader in communication and American culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Papper, R. A., Holmes, M. E., & Popovich, M. N. (2004). Middletown Media Studies: Media multitasking . . . and how much people really use the media. *International Digital Media & Arts Association Journal*, 1, 4–56.

Richmond, V. P., & Frymier, A. B. (2010). Communication education and instructional development. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 310–328). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Trent, J. S., & Friedenberg, R. V. (2010). Political communication: A flourishing field of study and scholarship. In J. W. Chesebro (Ed.), *A century of transformation: Studies in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association* (pp. 143–160). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Turner, L. H., & West, R. (Eds.). (2015). *The SAGE handbook of family communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wiemann, J. M., Hawkins, R. P., & Pingree, S. (1988). Fragmentation in the field—and the movement toward integration in communication science. *Human Communication Research*, 15, 304–310.

Wilcox, W. (1959). Historical trends in journalism education. *Journalism Educator*, 14, 2–7, 32.

Williams, K. D. (2013). The effects of video game controls on hostility, identification, and presence. *Mass Communication & Society*, 16, 26–48.

Wright, C. N. (2012). Education orientation and upward influence: An examination of student-to-student connectedness as power in the classroom. *Communication Education*, 61, 271–289.

Chapter 3

Altman, I., & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Altman, I., Vinsel, A., & Brown, B. B. (1981). Dialectic conceptions in social psychology: An application to social penetration and privacy regulation. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 14, pp. 107–160). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Baxter, L. A. (2011). *Voicing relationships: A dialogic perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Baxter, L. A., & Braithwaite, D. O. (2008). Relational dialectics theory: Crafting meaning from competing discourses. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication* (pp. 349–361). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berscheid, E., & Reis, H. T. (1998). Attraction and close relationships. In D. T. Gilbert, S. F. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., pp. 139–281). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Burleson, B. R., Holmstrom, A. J., & Gilstrap, C. M. (2005). “Guys can’t say that to guys”: Four experiments assessing the normative motivation account for deficiencies in the emotional support provided by men. *Communication Monographs*, 72(4), 468–501.

Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Derlega, V. J., Metts, S., Petronio, S., & Margulis, S. T. (1993). *Self-disclosure*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dindia, K. (2000). Self-disclosure, identity, and relationship development: A dialectical perspective. In K. Dindia & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Communication and personal relationships* (pp. 147–162). Chichester, England: Wiley.

Duck, S. W. (2011). *Rethinking relationships: A new approach to relationship research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fehr, B. (1993). How do I love thee: Let me consult my prototype. In S. W. Duck (Ed.), *Understanding relationship processes* (Vol. 1, pp. 87–120). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Goffman, E. (1959). *Behaviour in public places*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Hess, J. A. (2000). Maintaining a nonvoluntary relationship with disliked partners: An investigation into the use of distancing behaviors. *Human Communication Research*, 26, 458–488.

Huisman, D. (2008). *Intergenerational family storytelling*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Department of

- Jourard, S. M. (1964). *The transparent self*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Jourard, S. M. (1971). *Self-disclosure*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Kellas, J. K. (2008). Narrative theories: Making sense of interpersonal communication. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication* (pp. 241–254). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kelly, G. A. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Marwell, G., & Schmitt, D. R. (1967). Dimensions of compliance-gaining behavior: An empirical analysis. *Sociometry*, 30, 350–364.
- McMahan, D. T. (2011). *Heartland: Symbolic displays of aggression and male masculinity in rural America*. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 12, 51–59.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Norwood, K. M. (2010, April 26). *Here and gone: Competing discourses in the communication of families with a transgender member*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Communication Studies, University of Iowa.
- Palomares, N. A., & Derman, D. (2016). Topic avoidance, goal understanding, and relational perceptions experimental evidence. *Communication Research*. doi: 10.1177/0093650216644649.
- Petronio, S. (2002). *Boundaries of privacy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Petronio, S., & Durham, W. T. (2008). Communication privacy management theory: Significance for interpersonal communication. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication* (pp. 309–322). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tracy, K. (2002). *Everyday talk: Building and reflecting identities*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Wood, J. T. (1992). Gender and moral voice: Moving from woman's nature to standpoint epistemology. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 15, 1–24.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1985). *Selective exposure to communication*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chapter 4

- Arrindell, W. A., van Well, S., Kolk, A. M., Barelds, D. P. H., Oei, T. P. S., & Lau, P. Y. (2013). Higher levels of masculine gender role stress in masculine than in feminine nations: A thirteen-nations study. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 47, 51–67.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). *Class, codes, and control*. London, England: Routledge.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena. In E. E. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness* (pp. 56–289). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action: Essays on life, literature and method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. (1968). *Collected Poems: 1915–1967*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Charee, M. T., Romo, L. K., & Dailey, R. M. (2013). The effectiveness of weight management influence messages in romantic relationships. *Communication Research Reports*, 30, 34–45.
- Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Du, H., & King, R. B. (2013). Placing hope in self and others: Exploring the relationships among self-construals, locus of hope, and adjustment. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 54, 332–337.
- Duck, S. W. (2002). Hypertext in the key of G: Three types of “history” as influences on conversational structure and flow. *Communication Theory*, 12(1), 41–62.
- Duck, S. W., & Pond, K. (1989). Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your retrospective data: Rhetoric and reality in personal relationships. In C. Hendrick (Ed.), *Review of social psychology and personality: Close relationships* (Vol. 10, pp. 17–38). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Engels, J. (2011). Demophilia: A discursive counter to demophobia in the early republic. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 97, 131–154.
- Fisher, W. R. (1985). The narrative paradigm: An elaboration. *Communication Monographs*, 52, 347–367.
- Giles, H., Linz, D., Bonilla, D., & Gomez, M. L. (2012). Police stops of and interactions with Latino and white (non-Latino) drivers: Extensive policing and communication accommodation. *Communication Monographs*, 79, 407–427.

- Giles, H., Taylor, D. M., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1973). Towards a theory of interpersonal accommodation through language use. *Language in Society*, 2, 177–192.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in public: Microstudies of the public order*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Hayakawa, S. I., & Hayakawa, A. R. (1992). *Language in thought and action* (5th ed.). London, England: Harvester.
- Jiqun, L. (2012). The comparison of the cultural connotations of animal terms in Chinese and French. *Canadian Social Science*, 8, 225–230.
- Kirkpatrick, D. C., Duck, S. W., & Foley, M. K. (Eds.). (2006). *Relating difficulty: The processes of constructing and managing difficult interaction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Komatsu, E. (Ed.). (1993). *Saussure's third course of lectures on general linguistics (1910–1911)* (R. Harris, Trans.). London, England: Pergamon.
- Kong, D. T. (2016). Sojourners' ineffective sociocultural adaptation: Paranoia as a joint function of distrust toward host nationals and neuroticism. *Current Psychology*, 1–9.
- McMahan, D. T. (2004). What we have here is a failure to communicate: Linking interpersonal communication and mass communication. *Review of Communication*, 4, 33–56.
- Metts, S. (2000). Face and facework: Implications for the study of personal relationships. In K. Dindia & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Communication and personal relationships* (pp. 72–94). Chichester, England: Wiley.
- Morsbach, H. (2004). *Customs and etiquette of Japan*. London, England: Global Books.
- Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1946). *The meaning of meaning* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2010). *Communication between cultures* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Sapir, E. (1949). *Selected writings in language, culture and personality* (D. Mandelbaum, Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Scott, M. B., & Lyman, S. M. (1968). Accounts. *American Sociological Review*, 33, 46–62.
- Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 8, 98–104.

Whorf, B. (1956). *Language, thought, and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (J. Carroll, Ed.). Boston, MA: MIT Press.

Chapter 5

Aamodt, M. G., & Custer, H. (2006). Who can best catch a liar? *Forensic Examiner*, 15(1), 6.

Altman, I. (1975). *The environment and social behavior: Privacy, personal space, territory, and crowding*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Atkinson, M. (2005). *Lend me your ears: All you need to know about making speeches and presentations*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bond, C. F., & DePaulo, B. M. (2006). Accuracy of deception judgments. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10(3), 214–234.

Bond, C. F., Jr., Howard, A. R., Hutchison, J. L., & Masip, J. (2013). Overlooking the obvious: Incentives to lie. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 35, 212–221.

Bradshaw, S. (2006). Shyness and difficult relationships: Formation is just the beginning. In C. D. Kirkpatrick, S. W. Duck, & M. K. Foley (Eds.), *Relating difficulty: The processes of constructing and managing difficult interaction* (pp. 15–41). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brescoll, V. L. (2016). Leading with their hearts? How gender stereotypes of emotion lead to biased evaluations of female leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 415–428.

De Bruyckere, P., Kirschner, P. A., & Hulshof, C. D. (2015). *Urban myths about learning and education*. London, England: Academic Press.

Duck, S. W. (2007). *Human relationships* (4th ed.). London, England: Sage.

Eaves, M. H., & Leathers, D. G. (1991). Context as communication: McDonalds vs. Burger King. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 19(4), 263–289.

Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1969). The repertoire of nonverbal behavior: Categories, origins, usage, and coding. *Semiotica*, 1, 49–98.

Elfenbein, H. A. (2013). Nonverbal dialects and accents in facial expressions of emotion. *Emotion Review*, 5, 90–96.

Ellsworth, P. C., Carlsmith, J. M., & Henson, A. (1972). The stare as a stimulus to flight in human subjects: A series of field experiments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21, 302–311.

Erlandson, K. (2012). Stay out of my space! Territoriality and nonverbal immediacy as predictors of roommate

- satisfaction. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 38, 46–61.
- Farley, S. D., Hughes, S. M., & LaFayette, J. N. (2013). People will know we are in love: Evidence of differences between vocal samples directed toward lovers and friends. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 37, 23–138.
- Giles, H. (2008). Communication accommodation theory. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Engaging theories in interpersonal communication* (pp. 161–173). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Global Deception Research Team. (2006). A world of lies. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 37, 60–74.
- Hall, E. T. (1966). *The hidden dimension*. New York, NY: Doubleday/Anchor.
- Hall, J. A., & Xing, C. (2015). The verbal and nonverbal correlates of the five flirting styles. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 39, 41–68.
- Heslin, R. (1974). Steps toward a taxonomy of touching. Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Hillewaert, S. (2016). Tactics and tactility: A sensory semiotics of handshakes in coastal Kenya. *American Anthropologist*, 118(1), 49–66.
- Iwasaki, M., & Noguchi, Y. (2016). Hiding true emotions: Micro-expressions in eyes retrospectively concealed by mouth movements. *Scientific reports*, 6. doi: 10.1038/srep22049
- Jones, S. E., & Yarbrough, A. E. (1985). A naturalistic study of the meanings of touch. *Communications Monographs*, 52, 19–56.
- Jourard, S. M. (1971). *Self-disclosure*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Knapp, M. L., Hall, J. A., & Horgan, T. G. (2014). *Nonverbal communication in human interaction* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Koppensteiner, M., & Grammer, K. (2010). Motion patterns in political speech and their influence on personality ratings. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 44, 374–379.
- Lausic, D., Razon, S., & Tenenbaum, G. (2015). Nonverbal sensitivity, verbal communication, and team coordination in tennis doubles. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 13(4), 398–414.
- Manusov, V., Docan-Morgan, T., & Harvey, J. (2015). Nonverbal firsts: When nonverbal cues are the impetus of relational and personal change in romantic relationships. In A. Kostić, & D. Chadee, D. (Eds.), *The social psychology of nonverbal communication* (pp. 153–172). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Masip, J., & Herrero, C. (2015). Police detection of deception: Beliefs about behavioral cues to deception are strong even though contextual evidence is more useful. *Journal of Communication*, 65, 125–145.
- Matsumoto, D., & Hwang, H. S. (2012). Cultural influences on nonverbal behavior. In D. Matsumoto, M. G. Frank, & Hwang, H. S. (Eds.), *Nonverbal communication: Science and Applications* (pp. 97–120). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mehrabian, A., & Ferris, S. R. (1967). Inference of attitudes from nonverbal communication in two channels. *Journal of consulting psychology*, 31(3), 248.
- Mehrabian, A., & Wiener, M. (1967). Decoding of inconsistent communications. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 6(1), 109.
- Puccinelli, N. M., Andrzejewski, S. A., Markos, E., Noga, T., & Motyka, S. (2013). The value of knowing what customers really want: The impact of salesperson ability to read non-verbal cues of affect on service quality. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 29, 356–373.
- Sanford, K. (2012). The communication of emotion during conflict in married couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26, 297–307.
- Seiter, J. S., & Sandry, A. (2003). Pierced for success? The effects of ear and nose piercing on perceptions of job candidates' credibility, attractiveness, and hirability. *Communication Research Reports*, 20(4), 287–298.
- Sheeler, R. (2013). Nonverbal communication in medical practice. In D. Matsumoto, M. G. Frank, & H. S. Hwang (Eds.), *Nonverbal communication: Science and applications* (pp. 237–246). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Vrij, A. (2008). Nonverbal dominance versus verbal accuracy in lie detection a plea to change police practice. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(10), 1323–1336.

Chapter 6

- Augsburger, D. W. (1992). *Conflict mediation across cultures: Pathways and patterns*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.
- Calero, H. (2005). *The power of nonverbal communication: What you do is more important than what you say*. Aberdeen, WA: Silver Lake.
- Chiang, S.-U. (2009). Dealing with communication problems in the instructional interactions between international teaching assistants and American college students. *Language and Education*, 23, 461–478.
- Fitch, K. L. (2003). Cultural persuadables. *Communication Theory*, 13(1), 100–123.
- Fox, K. (2005). *Watching the English*. London, England: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Hall, E. T. (1966). *The hidden dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Henderson, S., Barker, M., & Mak, A. (2015). Strategies used by nurses, academics and students to overcome intercultural communication challenges. *Nurse Education in Practice* 16(1), 71–78.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values* (Vol. 5). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Houston, M., & Wood, J. T. (1996). *Gendered relationships*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Hymes, D. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* (pp. 35–71). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jin, B., & Oh, S. (2010). Cultural differences of social network influence on romantic relationships: A comparison of the United States and South Korea. *Communication Studies*, 61, 156–171.
- Li, T., & Cheng, S. T. (2015). Family, friends, and subjective well-being: A comparison between the West and Asia. In M. Demir (Ed.), *Friendship and happiness* (pp. 235–251). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Netherlands.
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2007). *Intercultural communication in context* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Martin, J. N., Nakayama, T. K., & Flores, L. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Readings in intercultural communication: Experiences and contexts* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Nelson, A., & Brown, C. D. (2012). *The gender communication handbook: Conquering conversational collisions between men and women*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Paxman, J. (1999). *The English: A portrait of a people*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Philipsen, G. (1975). Speaking "like a man" in Teamsterville: Culture patterns of role enactment in an urban neighborhood. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61(1), 13–22.
- Philipsen, G. (1997). A theory of speech codes. In G. Philipsen & T. Albrecht (Eds.), *Developing theories in communication* (pp. 119–156). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Rahim, M. A. (1983). A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 368–376.
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., McDaniel, E. R., & Roy C. S. (2013). *Communication between cultures* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Sandemose, A. (1936). *En flyktning krysser sitt spor 1933*, translated as *A fugitive crosses his tracks*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2004). The matrix of face: An updated face-negotiation theory. In W. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 71–92). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 7

- Barker, L., Edwards, R., Gaines, C., Gladney, K., & Holley, F. (1980). An investigation of proportional time spent in various communication activities by college students. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 8, 101–109.
- Beall, M. L., Gill-Rosier, J., Tate, J., & Matten, A. (2008). State of the context: Listening in education. *International Journal of Listening*, 22, 123–132.
- Bosacki, S., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Coplan, R. J. (2014). Children's talking and listening within the classroom: Teachers' insights. *Early Child Development and Care*, 184, 247–265.
- Flynn, J., Valikoski, T.-R., & Grau, J. (2008). Listening in the business context: Reviewing the state of research. *International Journal of Listening*, 22, 141–151.
- Gouran, D. S., Wiethoff, W. E., & Doelger, J. A. (1994). *Mastering communication* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Halone, K. K., & Pechioni, L. L. (2001). Relational listening: A grounded theoretical model. *Communication Reports*, 14, 59–71.
- Janusik, L. A., & Wolvin, A. D. (2009). 24 hours in a day: A listening update to the time studies. *International Journal of Listening*, 23, 104–120.
- Kluger, A. N., & Zaidel, K. (2013). Are listeners perceived as leaders? *International Journal of Listening*, 27(2), 73–84.
- Lloyd, K. J., Boer, D., & Voelpel, S. C. (2015). From listening to leading: Toward an understanding of supervisor listening within the framework of leader-member exchange theory. *International Journal of Business Communication*. doi: 10.1177/2329488415572778
- Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological science*, 25(6), 1159–1168. doi: 10.1177/0956797614524581
- Osgood, C. E., Suci, G. J., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Pearson, J. C., & Nelson, P. E. (2000). *An introduction to human communication* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Preiss, R. W., & Gayle, B. M. (2006). Exploring the relationship between listening comprehension and rate of speech. In B. M. Gayle, R. W. Preiss, N. Burell, & M. Allen (Eds.), *Classroom communication and*

instructional processes (pp. 315–327). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rankin, P. T. (1928). The importance of listening ability. *English Journal*, 17, 623–630.

Sana, F., Weston, T., & Cepeda, N. J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, 62, 24–31.

Schnapp, D. C. (2008). Listening in context: Religion and spirituality. *International Journal of Listening*, 22, 133–140.

Steil, L. K. (1997). Listening training: The key to success in today's organizations. In M. Purdy & D. Borisoff (Eds.), *Listening in everyday life: A personal and professional approach* (pp. 213–237). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Weinrauch, J. D., & Swanda, R., Jr. (1975). Examining the significance of listening: An exploratory study of contemporary management. *Journal of Business Communication*, 13, 25–32.

Wood, J. T. (2015). *Communication in our lives* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Chapter 8

Acitelli, L. K. (1988). When spouses talk to each other about their relationship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5, 185–199.

Bai, S., Repetti, R. L., & Sperling, J. B. (2016). Children's expressions of positive emotion are sustained by smiling, touching, and playing with parents and siblings: A naturalistic observational study of family life. *Developmental psychology*, 52(1), 88.

Baxter, L. A. (2004). A tale of two voices: Relational dialectics theory. *Journal of Family Communication*, 4, 181–192.

Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogs and dialectics*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Bergmann, J. R. (1993). *Discreet indiscretions: The social organization of gossip*. New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Byrne, D. (1997). An overview (and underview) of research and theory within the attraction paradigm. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 14, 417–431.

Carl, W. J. (2006). What's all the buzz about? Everyday communication and the relational basis of word-of-mouth and buzz marketing practices. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 19, 601–634.

Chesebro, J. W., McMahan, D. T., & Russett, P. C. (2014). *Internet communication*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Duck, S. W. (1982). A topography of relationship disengagement and dissolution. In S. W. Duck (Ed.), *Personal relationships 4: Dissolving personal relationships* (pp. 1–30). London, England: Academic Press.

Duck, S. W. (1990). Relationships as unfinished business: Out of the frying pan and into the 1990s. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 7(1), 5–28.

Duck, S. W. (1998). *Human relationships* (3rd ed.). London, England: Sage.

Duck, S. W. (1999). *Relating to others* (2nd ed.). Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.

Duck, S. W. (2007). *Human relationships* (4th ed.). London, England: Sage.

Duck, S. W. (2011). *Rethinking relationships: A new approach to relationship research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Fogarty, S., Ramjan, L., & Hay, P. (2016). A systematic review and meta-synthesis of the effects and experience of mentoring in eating disorders and disordered eating. *Eating behaviors*, 21, 66–75.
- Glauber, R. (2016). Gender differences in spousal care across the later life course. *Research on Aging*. doi: 10.1177/0164027516644503
- Hess, J. A. (2000). Maintaining a nonvoluntary relationship with disliked partners: An investigation into the use of distancing behaviors. *Human Communication Research*, 26, 458–488.
- Kahn, J. R., McGill, B. S., & Bianchi, S. M. (2011). Help to family and friends: Are there gender differences at older ages? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73, 77–92.
- Kerckhoff, A. C. (1974). The social context of interpersonal attraction. In T. L. Huston (Ed.), *Foundations of interpersonal attraction* (pp. 61–77). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Leatham, G. B., & Duck, S. W. (1990). Conversations with friends and the dynamics of social support. In S. W. Duck, with R. C. Silver (Eds.), *Personal relationships and social support* (pp. 1–29). London, England: Sage.
- O’Connell, R. L. (2011). *The ghosts of Cannae: Hannibal and the darkest hour of the Roman Republic*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Odom, L. K., Sahlstein Parcell, E. M., Baker, B. M. A., & Cronin-Fisher, V. (2015). Communication and female date initiation. *Iowa Journal of Communication*, 47, 177–196.
- Petronio, S. (2013). Brief status report on communication privacy management theory. *Journal of Family Communication*, 13, 6–14.
- Quinn, S., & Oldmeadow, J. A. (2013). Is the *i*generation a “we” generation? Social networking use among 9- to 13-year-olds and belonging. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 31, 136–142.
- Rollie, S. S., & Duck, S. W. (2006). Stage theories of marital breakdown. In J. H. Harvey & M. A. Fine (Eds.), *Handbook of divorce and dissolution of romantic relationships* (pp. 176–193). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rosenthal, C. J. (1985). Kinkeeping in the familial division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47(4), 965–974.
- Sahlstein, E. M. (2006). Relational life in the 21st century: Managing people, time, and distance. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 110–118). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Sanchez-Nunez, M. T., Fernandez-Berrocal, P., & Latorre, J. M. (2013). Assessment of emotional intelligence in

the family: Influences between parents and children on their own perceptions and that of others. *Family Journal*, 21, 65–73.

Sigman, S. J. (1991). Handling the discontinuous aspects of continuous social relationships: Toward research on the persistence of social forms. *Communication Theory*, 1, 106–127.

Straus, S., Johnson, M., Marquez, C., & Feldman, M. D. (2013). Characteristics of successful and failed mentoring relationships: A qualitative study across two academic health centers. *Academic Medicine*, 88, 82–89.

Sunnafrank, M. (1983). Attitude similarity and interpersonal attraction in communication processes: In pursuit of an ephemeral influence. *Communication Monographs*, 50, 273–284.

Sunnafrank, M., & Ramirez, A. (2004). At first sight: Persistent relational effects of get-acquainted conversations. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21(3), 361–379.

Theiss, J. A., & Nagy, M. E. (2013). A relationship turbulence model of partner responsiveness and relationship talk across cultures. *Western Journal of Communication*, 77, 186–209.

Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). *The social psychology of groups*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Vaccaro, A., Adams, S. K., Kisler, T. S., & Newman, B. M. (2015). The use of social media for navigating the transitions into and through the first year of college. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 27(2), 29–48.

Vangelisti, A., & Banski, M. (1993). Couples' debriefing conversations: The impact of gender, occupation and demographic characteristics. *Family Relations*, 42, 149–157.

Weiss, R. S. (1974). The provisions of social relationships. In Z. Rubin (Ed.), *Doing unto others* (pp. 17–26). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Weiss, R. S. (1998). A taxonomy of relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15, 671–683.

Wood, J. T. (2000). *Relational communication: Continuity and change in personal relationships* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Wood, J. T. (2006). Chopping carrots: Creating intimacy moment by moment. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 24–35). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Chapter 9

Bales, R. F. (1950). *Interaction process analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Brescoll, V. L. (2016). Leading with their hearts? How gender stereotypes of emotion lead to biased evaluations of female leaders. *Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 415–428.

Clampitt, P. G. (2005). *Communicating for managerial effectiveness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dando-Collins, S. (2004). *Caesar's legion: The epic saga of Julius Caesar's elite tenth legion and the armies of Rome*. Chichester, England: Wiley.

Emery, C. (2012). Uncovering the role of emotional abilities in leadership emergence: A longitudinal analysis of leadership networks. *Social Networks*, 34, 429–437.

Evans, C. R., & Dion, K. L. (2012). Group cohesion and performance: A meta-analysis. *Small Group Research*, 43, 690–701.

Fisher, B. A. (1970). Decision emergence: Phases in group decision making. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 53–66.

French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1960). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright & A. Zander (Eds.), *Group dynamics: Research and theory* (pp. 607–623). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Frey, L. R. (2003). *Group communication in context: Studies in bona fide groups*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gully, S. M., Devine, D. J., & Whitney, D. J. (2012). A meta-analysis of cohesion and performance effects of level of analysis and task interdependence. *Small Group Research*, 43, 702–725.

Harden Fritz, J. M., & Omdahl, B. L. (2006). Reduced job satisfaction, diminished commitment, and workplace cynicism as outcomes of negative work relationships. In J. M. Harden Fritz & B. L. Omdahl (Eds.), *Problematic relationships in the workplace* (pp. 131–151). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Hepburn, J. R., & Crepin, A. E. (1984). Relationship strategies in a coercive institution: A study of dependence among prison guards. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1, 139–158.

Hornsey, M. J. (2016). Dissent and deviance in intergroup contexts. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 11, 1–5.

Horsford, S. D., & Tillman, L. C. (Eds.). (2016). *Intersectional identities and educational leadership of black women in the USA*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Janis, I. (1972). *Victims of groupthink*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Meeussen, L., Delvaux, E., & Phaet, K. (2013). Becoming a group: Value convergence and emergent work group identities. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. doi: 10.1111/bjso.12021
- Moser, K. S., & Axtell, C. M. (2013). The role of norms in virtual work. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 12, 1–6.
- Mumby, D. K. (2006). Constructing working-class masculinity in the workplace. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 166–174). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Nezlek, J. B., Wesselmann, E. D., Wheeler, L., & Williams, K. D. (2012). Ostracism in everyday life. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 16, 91–104.
- Northouse, P. G. (2015). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- O'Connell, R. L. (2011). *The ghosts of Cannae: Hannibal and the darkest hour of the Roman Republic*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Partlow, P. J., Medeiros, K. E., & Mumford, M. D. (2015). Leader cognition in vision formation: Simplicity and negativity. *Leadership Quarterly*, 26(3), 448–469.
- Purvanova, R. K. (2013). The role of feeling known for team member outcomes in project teams. *Small Group Research*, 44, 298–331.
- Putnam, L. L., & Stohl, C. (1990). Bona fide groups: A reconceptualization of groups in context. *Communication Studies*, 41, 248–265.
- Smith, G. (2001). Group development: A review of the literature and a commentary on future research directions. *Group Facilitation*, 3, 14–45.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384–399. doi: 10.1037/h0022100
- Williams, J. J., & Seaman, A. E. (2016). The influence of ethical leadership on managerial performance: Mediating effects of mindfulness and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Applied Business Research (JABR)*, 32(3), 815–828.

Chapter 10

- Alder, G. S., & Quist, D. M. (2014). Rethinking love at the office: Antecedents and consequences of coworker evaluations of workplace romances. *Human Resource Management*, 53, 329–351.
- Allen, B. J. (2006). Communicating race at WeighCo. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 146–154). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Allen, T. D., & Eby, L. T. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford handbook of work and family*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Blascovich, J., & Bailenson, J. (2011). *Infinite reality: Avatars, eternal life, new worlds, and the dawn of the virtual revolution*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Chan-Serafin, S., Teo, L., Minbashian, A., Cheng, D., & Wang, L. (2016). The perils of dating your boss: The role of hierarchical workplace romance and sex on evaluators' career advancement decisions for lower status romance participants. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. doi: 10.1177/0265407516635285
- Chesebro, J. W. McMahan, D. T., & Russett, P. C. (2014). *Internet communication*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Cockburn-Wootten, C., & Zorn, T. (2006). Cabbages and headache cures: Work stories within the family. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 137–144). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Cowan, R. L., & Horan, S. M. (2014). Love at the office? Understanding workplace romance disclosures and reactions from the coworker perspective. *Western Journal of Communication*, 78(2), 238–253.
- England, D. C. (2012). *The essential guide to handling workplace harassment & discrimination* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: NOLO.
- Ferguson, M., Carlson, D., & Kacmar, K. M. (2015). Flexing work boundaries: The spillover and crossover of workplace support. *Personnel Psychology*, 68, 581–614.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Hood, A. C., Cruz, K. S., & Bachrach, D. G. (2016). Conflicts with friends: A multiplex view of friendship and conflict and its association with performance in teams. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 1–14.
- Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & McDermott, V. (2008). The constitution of employee-abusive organizations: A communication flows theory. *Communication Theory*, 18(2), 304–333.

- McBride, M. C., & Bergen, K. M. (2015). Work spouses: Defining and understanding a “new” relationship. *Communication Studies*, 66, 487–508.
- Methot, J. R., Lepine, J. A., Podsakoff, N. P., & Christian, J. S. (2015). Are workplace friendships a mixed blessing? Exploring tradeoffs of multiplex relationships and their associations with job performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 69(2), 311–355.
- Mokros, H. B. (2006). Composing relationships at work: Three minutes at a wholesale produce market. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 175–185). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paludi, M. A. (2015). *Bullies in the workplace: Seeing and stopping adults who abuse their co-workers and employees*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Petronio, S. (2002). *Boundaries of privacy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Riordan, C. M., & Griffeth, R. W. (1995). The opportunity for friendship in the workplace: An underexplored construct. *Journal of business and psychology*, 10(2), 141–154.
- Sias, P. M. (2009). *Organizing relationships: Traditional and emerging perspectives on workplace relationships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Totten, L. D. (2006). Who am I right now? Negotiating familial and professional roles. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 186–193). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Turner, R., Huang, R., Poverjuc, O., & Wyness, L. (2015). What role do teaching mentors play in supporting new university lecturers to develop their teaching practices? *Professional Development in Education*, 42(4), 647–665.
- Univision. (2008, April 21). [Advertisement]. *The New York Times*, p. C10.
- Waldron, V. R. (2000). Relational experiences and emotions at work. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotion in organizations* (pp. 64–82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wright, K. B. (2015). Workplace relationships: Telework, work-life balance, social support, negative features, and individual/organizational outcomes. In L. Cantoni & J. A. Danowski (Eds.), *Communication and technology* (Vol. 5, pp. 397–410). Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter.

- Zorn, T. (1995). Bosses and buddies: Constructing and performing simultaneously hierarchical and close friendship relationships. In J. T. Wood & S. W. Duck (Eds.), *Under-studied relationships: Off the beaten track* (pp. 122–147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zweig, D. (2005). Beyond privacy and fairness concerns: Examining psychological boundary violations as a consequence of electronic performance monitoring. In J. Weckert (Ed.), *Electronic monitoring in the workplace: Controversies and solutions* (pp. 37–52). Hershey, PA: Idea Group.
- Zweig, D., & Webster, J. (2002). Where is the line between benign and invasive? An examination of psychological barriers to the acceptance of awareness monitoring systems. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23, 605–622.

Chapter 11

- Aasebo, T. S. (2005). Television as a marker of boys' construction of growing up. *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 13, 185–203.
- Alberts, J. K., Yoshimura, C. G., Rabby, M., & Loschiavo, R. (2005). Mapping the topography of couples' daily conversation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22, 299–322.
- Altman, I., & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Appel, H., Gerlach, A. L., & Crusius, J. (2016). The interplay between Facebook use, social comparison, envy, and depression. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 9, 44–49.
- Archambault, J. S. (2013). Cruising through uncertainty: Cell phones and the politics of display and disguise in Inhambane, Mozambique. *American Ethnologist*, 40, 88–101.
- Argyle, M., & Furnham, A. (1982). The ecology of relationships. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 21, 259–262.
- Bareket-Bojmel, L., Moran, S., & Shahar, G. (2016). Strategic self-presentation on Facebook: Personal motives and audience response to online behavior. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 788–795.
- Baron, N. S., & Campbell, E. M. (2012). Gender and mobile phones in cross-national context. *Language Sciences*, 34, 13–27.
- Baym, N. K. (2015). *Personal connections in the digital age*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Bergdall, A. R., Kraft, J. M., Andes, K., Carter, M., Hatfield-Timajchy, K., & Hock-Long, L. (2012). Love and hooking up in the new millennium: Communication technology and relationships among urban African American and Puerto Rican young adults. *Journal of Sex Research*, 49, 570–582.
- Bijker, W. E., Hughes, T. P., & Pinch, T. J. (1987). *The social construction of technological systems: New directions in the sociology and history of technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Boase, J., Horrigan, J. B., Wellman, B., & Rainie, L. (2006). *The strength of Internet ties: The Internet and e-mail aid users in maintaining their social networks and provide pathways to help when people face big decisions*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project.
- Bryant, J., Aust, C. F., Bryant, J. A., & Venugopalan, G. (2001). How psychologically healthy are America's prime-time television families? In J. Bryant & J. A. Bryant (Eds.), *Television and the American family* (2nd ed., pp. 247–270). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Chesebro, J. W., McMahan, D. T., & Russett, P. C. (2014). *Internet communication*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Cochrane, T., Antonczak, L., & Wagner, D. (2013). Post Web 2.0 pedagogy: From student-generated content to international co-production enabled by mobile social media. *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning (IJMBL)*, 5(4), 1–18. doi: 10.4018/ijmb.2013100101
- Cohen, J. (2003). Parasocial breakups: Measuring individual differences in responses to the dissolution of parasocial relationships. *Mass Communication & Society*, 6, 191–202.
- Cohen, J., & Metzger, M. (1998). Social affiliation and the achievement of ontological security through interpersonal and mass communication. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 15, 41–60.
- Cole, T., & Leets, L. (1999). Attachment styles and intimate television viewing: Insecurely forming relationships in a parasocial way. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 16, 495–511.
- Daum, K. (2013). 10 critical rules of smartphone etiquette. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/10-critical-rules-of-smartphone-etiquette.html>
- Davies, J. J., & Gentile, D. A. (2012). Responses to children's media use in families with and without siblings: A family development perspective. *Family Relations*, 61(3), 410–425.
- DeLoatch, P. (2015). The four negative sides of technology. Retrieved from <http://www.edudemic.com/the-4-negative-side-effects-of-technology/>
- Duck, S. W. (2011). *Rethinking relationships: A new approach to relationship research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Elbelghiti, R. (2016, February 22). My Arab spring: Clinging to hope in Morocco—People have the power to bring about change, but first they need a unified message. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/arab-spring-clinging-hope-morocco-151209063158008.html>
- Evans, M. A., Shaw, D., & Bell, M. (2000, June). Home literacy activities and their influence on early literacy skills. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology/Revue Canadienne de psychologie expérimentale*, 54(2), 65–75. doi: 10.1037/h0087330
- Frederick, E., Lim, C. H., Clavio, G., Pedersen, P. M., & Burch, L. M. (2012). Choosing between the one-way or two-way street: An exploration of relationship promotion by professional athletes on Twitter. *Communication & Sport*. Retrieved September 20, 2013, from <http://com.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/11/29/2167479512466387>
- Gantz, W. (2013). Reflections on communication and sport: On fanship and social relationships. *Communication & Sport*, 1, 176–187.

- Geiger, W., Bruning, J., & Harwood, J. (2001). Talk about TV: Television viewers' interpersonal communication about programming. *Communication Reports*, 14, 49–57.
- Gumpert, G., & Cathcart, R. (1985). Media grammars, generations, and media gaps. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 2, 23–35.
- Hampton, K. N., Goulet, L. S., Marlow, C., & Rainie, L. (2012). Why most Facebook users get more than they give: The effect of Facebook “power users” on everybody else. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Hampton, K. N., Goulet, L. S., Rainie, L., & Purcell, K. (2011). Social networking sites and our lives. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Hampton, K. N., Sessions, L. F., Her, E. J., & Rainie, L. (2009). Social isolation and new technology. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Haridakis, P., & Hanson, G. (2009). Social interaction and co-viewing with YouTube: Blending mass communication reception and social connection. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53, 317–335.
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19, 215–229.
- Jacobsen, W. C., & Forste, R. (2011). The wired generation: Academic and social outcomes of electronic media use among university students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14, 275–280.
- Jaschinski, C., & Kommers, P. (2012). Does beauty matter? The role of friends' attractiveness and gender on social attractiveness ratings of individuals on Facebook. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, 8, 389–401.
- Jewkes, Y. (2002). The use of media in constructing identities in the masculine environment of men's prisons. *European Journal of Communication*, 17, 205–225.
- Kam, J. A., & Lee, C.-J. (2012). Examining the effects of mass media campaign exposure and interpersonal discussions on youth's drug use: The mediating role of visiting pro-drug websites. *Health Communication*, 28(5), 473–485.
- Kanazawa, S. (2002). Bowling with our imaginary friends. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 23, 167–171.
- Kanter, M., Afifi, T., & Robbins, S. (2012). The impact of parents “friending” their young adult child on Facebook on perceptions of parental privacy invasions and parent–child relationship quality. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 900–917.
- Kawakami, T., Kishiya, K., & Parry, M. E. (2013). Personal word of mouth, virtual word of mouth, and

- innovation use. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 30, 17–30.
- Koenig, F., & Lessan, G. (1985). Viewers' relations to television personalities. *Psychological Reports*, 57, 263–266.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1940). *Radio and the printed page: An introduction to the study of radio and its role in the communication of ideas*. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce.
- Lenhart, A. (2012, March 19). *Teens, smartphones, and texting*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project.
- Lenhart, A., Madden, M., Smith, A., Purcell, K., Zickuhr, K., & Rainie, L. (2011). *Teens, kindness and cruelty on social networking sites: How American teens navigate the new world of digital citizenship*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Levy, D. (2007). *Love and sex with robots: The evolution of human–robot relationships*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Ling, R. (2004). *The cell connection: The cell phone's impact on society*. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann.
- Lobet-Maris, C. (2003). Cell phone tribes: Youth and social identity. In L. Fortunati, J. E. Katz, & R. Riccini (Eds.), *Mediating the human body: Technology, communication, and fashion* (pp. 87–92). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- MacKenzie, D., & Wajcman, J. (1985). *The social shaping of technology*. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Manago, A. M., Graham, M. B., Greenfield, P. M., & Salimkhan, G. (2008). Self-presentation and gender on MySpace. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29, 446–458.
- McMahan, D. T. (2004). What we have here is a failure to communicate: Linking interpersonal communication and mass communication. *Review of Communication*, 4, 33–56.
- McMahan, D. T., & Chesebro, J. W. (2003). Media and political transformations: Revolutionary changes of the world's cultures. *Communication Quarterly*, 51, 126–153.
- Miller-Ott, A. E., Kelly, L., & Duran, R. L. (2012). The effects of cell phone usage rules on satisfaction in romantic relationships. *Communication Quarterly*, 60, 17–34.
- Osborn, J. L. (2012). When TV and marriage meet: A social exchange analysis of the impact of television viewing on marital satisfaction and commitment. *Mass Communication and Society*, 15, 739–757.

- Padilla-Walker, L. M., Coyne, S. M., & Fraser, A. M. (2012). Getting a high-speed family connection: Associations between family, media use and family connection. *Family Relations*, 61(3), 426–440.
- Papper, R. A., Holmes, M. E., & Popovich, M. N. (2004). Middletown Media Studies: Media multitasking . . . and how much people really use the media. *International Digital Media & Arts Association Journal*, 1, 4–56.
- Patil, S., Norcie, G., Kapadia, A., & Lee, A. J. (2012). Reasons, rewards, regrets: Privacy consideration in location sharing as an interactive practice (Article no. 5). *Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security*, New York, NY: ACM.
- Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30, 227–238.
- Perse, E. M., & Butler, J. S. (2005). Call-in talk radio: Compensation or enrichment? *Journal of Radio Studies*, 12, 204–222.
- Perse, E. M., & Rubin, R. B. (1989). Attribution in social and parasocial relationships. *Communication Research*, 16, 59–77.
- Pfleging, B., Alt, F., & Schmidt, A. (2012). Meaningful melodies: Personal sonification of text messages for mobile devices. In *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Human Computer Interaction With Mobile Devices and Services Companion* (pp. 189–192). New York, NY: ACM. doi: 10.1145/2371664.2371706
- Pontes, H. M., Szabo, A., & Griffiths, M. D. (2015). The impact of Internet-based specific activities on the perceptions of Internet addiction, quality of life, and excessive usage: A cross-sectional study. *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, 1, 19–25.
- Proulx, M., & Shepatin, S. (2012). *Social TV: How marketer can reach and engage audiences by connecting television to the web, social media, and mobile*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Reeves, B., & Nass, C. (2002). *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places*. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Saskia, T., Acai, A., Griffith, D., Qusay, M., Ma, D. W. L., & Newton, G. (2013, December 20). Student use and pedagogical impact of a mobile learning application. doi: 10.1002/bmb.20771
- Schiappa, E., Gregg, P. B., & Hewes, D. E. (2005). The parasocial contact hypothesis. *Communication Monographs*, 72, 92–115.
- Sigman, S. J. (1991). Handling the discontinuous aspects of continuous social relationships: Toward research on the persistence of social forms. *Communication Theory*, 1, 106–127.

- Simmel, G. (1950). *The sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Smith, A. (2011, September 19). Americans and text messaging. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project.
- Stein, M.-K., Galliers, R. D., & Markus, M. L. (2013). Towards an understanding of identity and technology in the workplace. *Journal of Information Technology*, 28(3), 167–182.
- Suki, N. M. (2013). Students' dependence on smart phones: The influence of social needs, social influences and conveniences. *Campus-wide Information Systems*, 30(2), 124–134.
- Tong, S. T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., & Walther, J. B. (2008). Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 13, 531–549.
- Tong, S. T., & Walther, J. B. (2011). Relational maintenance and CMC. In K. B. Wright & L. M. Webb (Eds.), *Computer-mediated communication in personal relationships* (pp. 79–118). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Turkle, S. (2012, April 21). The flight from conversation. *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 3, 2013, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/the-flight-from-conversation.html?pagewanted=all>
- Turner, J. R. (1993). Interpersonal and psychological predictors of parasocial interaction with different television performers. *Communication Quarterly*, 41, 443–453.
- Verberne, M. F., Ham, J., & Midden, C. J. (2012). Trust in smart systems: Sharing driving goals information to increase trustworthiness and acceptability of smart systems in cars. *The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 54, 681–686.
- Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S.-Y., Westerman, D., & Tong, S. T. (2008). The role of friends' appearance and behavior on evaluations of individuals on Facebook: Are we known by the company we keep? *Human Communication Research*, 34, 28–49.
- Wong, R. K. M., Tan, J. S. M., & Drossman, D. A. (2010). Here's my phone number, don't call me: Physician accessibility in the cell phone and e-mail era. *Digestive Diseases and Sciences*, 55, 662–667.
- Young, A. F., Gabriel, S., & Hollar, J. L. (2013). Batman to the rescue! The protective effects of parasocial relationships with muscular superheroes on men's body images. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49, 173–177.
- Young, A. F., Gabriel, S., & Sechrist, G. B. (2012). The skinny on celebrities: Parasocial relationships moderate the effects of thin media figures on women's body image. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3, 659–666.

Zwier, S. Araujo, T., Boukes, M., & Willemsen, L. (2011). Boundaries to the articulation of possible selves through social networking sites: The case of Facebook profilers' social connectedness. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14, 571–576.

Chapter 12

Anderson, R., & Killenberg, G. M. (2009). *Interviewing: Speaking, listening, and learning for professional life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Barrick, M. R., Dustin, S. L., Giluk, T. L., Stewart, G. L., Shaffer, J. A., & Swider, B. W. (2012). Candidate characteristics driving initial impressions during rapport building: Implications for employment interview validity. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 85(2), 330–352.

Behrend, T., Toaddy, S., Thompson, L. F., & Sharek, D. J. (2012). The effects of avatar appearance on interviewer ratings in virtual employment interviews. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 2128–2133.

Einhorn, L. J. (1981). An inner view of the job interview: An investigation of successful communicative behaviors. *Communication Education*, 30, 217–228.

Krumhuber, E., Manstead, A. S. R., Cosker, D., Marshall, D., & Rosin, P. L. (2009). Effects of dynamic attributes of smiles in human and synthetic faces: A simulated job interview setting. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 33, 1–16.

Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social theory and social structure*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Reinhard, M. A., Scharmach, M., & Müller, P. (2013). It's not what you are, it's what you know: Experience, beliefs, and the detection of deception in employment interviews. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(3), 467–479.

Ruben, M. A., Hall, J. A., & Mast, M. S. (2015). Smiling in a job interview: When less is more. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 155, 107–126.

Ruetzler, T., Taylor, J., Reynolds, D., Baker, W., & Killen, C. (2012). What is professional attire today? A conjoint analysis of personal presentation attributes. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31, 937–943.

Stewart, C. J., & Cash, W. B., Jr. (2000). *Interviewing: Principles and practices* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Stewart, G. L., Dustin, S. L., Barrick, M. R., & Darnold, T. C. (2008). Exploring the handshake in employment interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 1139–1146.

Chapter 13

Allen, M., & Preiss, R. W. (1997). Comparing the persuasiveness of narrative evidence using meta-analysis. *Communication Research Reports*, 14, 125–131.

Baesler, E. J. (1997). Persuasive effects of story and statistical evidence. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 170–175.

Beebe, S. A., Beebe, S. J., & Ivy, D. K. (2016). *Communication: Principles for a lifetime* (6th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2015). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Hoeken, H. (2001). Anecdotal, statistical, and causal evidence: Their perceived and actual persuasiveness. *Argumentation*, 15, 425–237.

Hornikx, J., & Hoeken, H. (2005, May). The influence of culture on the relative persuasiveness of anecdotal, statistical, causal, and expert evidence. Paper presented to the International Communication Association Annual Conference, New York.

O’Keefe, D. J. (1998). Justification explicitness and persuasive effect: A meta-analytic review of the effects of varying support articulation in persuasive messages. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 35, 61–75.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Sprague, J., Stuart, D., & Bodary, D. (2016). *The speaker’s handbook* (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Chapter 14

Burke, K. (1969). *A rhetoric of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Duck, S. W. (2011). *Rethinking relationships: A new approach to relationship research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2016). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

German, K. M., Gronbeck, B. E., Ehninger, D., & Monroe, A. H. (2010). *Principles of public speaking* (17th ed.). Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson.

Miller, E. (1946). Speech introductions and conclusions. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 32, 181–183.

O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2014). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Yun, K. A., Costantini, C., & Billingsley, S. (2012). The effect of taking a public speaking class on one's writing abilities. *Communication Research Reports*, 29, 285–291.

Chapter 15

Coombs, W. T. (2014). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

O'Keefe, D. J. (2015). *Persuasion: Theory and research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sherif, C. W., Sherif, M., & Nebergall, R. (1965). *Attitude and attitude change: The social judgment-involvement approach*. Philadelphia, PA: W. B. Saunders.

Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961/1980). *Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Chapter 16

Ayres, J. (1991). Using visual aids to reduce speech anxiety. *Communication Research Reports*, 8, 73–79.

Baggaley, J. P., & Duck, S. W. (1976). *Dynamics of television*. Farnborough, England: D. C. Heath.

Behnke, R. R., & Sawyer, C. R. (1999). Milestones of anticipatory public speaking anxiety. *Communication Education*, 48(2), 165–172.

Bodie, G. D. (2010). A racing heart, rattling knees, and ruminative thoughts: Defining, explaining, and treating public speaking anxiety. *Communication Education*, 59, 70–105.

Bradshaw, S. (2006). Shyness and difficult relationships: Formation is just the beginning. In C. D. Kirkpatrick, S. W. Duck, & M. K. Foley (Eds.), *Relating difficulty: The processes of constructing and managing difficult interaction* (pp. 15–41). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brooks, C. F. (2015). Role, power, ritual, and resistance: A critical discourse analysis of college classroom talk. *Western Journal of Communication*, 80(3), 1–22.

Dwyer, K. K., & Davidson, M. M. (2012). Is public speaking really more feared than death? *Communication Research Reports*, 29(2), 99–107.

Fielding, H. (2004). *Olivia Joules and the overactive imagination*. London, England: Picador.

Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2016). *Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Hamilton, C. (2013). *Communicating for results: A guide for business and the professions*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

McCroskey, J. C. (1970). Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 269–277.

Mundy, M. A., Oviedo, A. P., Ramirez, J., Taylor, N., & Flores, I. (2014). Impact of technology based instruction on speech competency and presentation confidence levels of Hispanic college students. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 24, 1–25.

Pearson, J. C., Child, J. T., & Kahl, D. H., Jr. (2006). Preparation meeting opportunity: How do college students prepare for public speeches? *Communication Quarterly*, 54, 351–366.

Quintanilla, K. M., & Wahl, S. T. (2016). *Business and professional communication: Keys for workplace excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Safir, M. P., Wallach, H. S., & Bar-Zvi, M. (2012). Virtual reality cognitive-behavior therapy for public speaking anxiety: A one-year follow-up. *Behavior Modification*, 36, 235–246.

Index

- Abstract words, [332](#)
- Abstraction, ladder of, [69](#)
- Accommodation, [79–80](#), [386](#)
- Accounts, [80–81](#), [82](#), [386](#)
- Action, communication as, [16](#), [16](#) (figure), [387](#)
- Active listening, [138–139](#)
- Acts, [82](#) (table), [83](#) (table), [386](#)
- Ad hominem* argument, [143](#) (box)
- Adaptors, [107](#), [386](#)
- Adjourning (Tuckman's group development), [185](#) (table), [386](#)
- Advisory groups, [179](#) (table), [386](#)
- Affect displays, [106](#), [386](#)
- Agency, [82](#) (box), [82](#) (table), [386](#)
- Agents, [82](#) (table), [83](#) (table), [386](#)
- Alliance, reliable, [158](#)
- Altercasting, [63](#), [386](#)
- Anchor position (social adjustment theory), [339–340](#), [386](#)
- Anderson, Rob, [261](#)
- Anxiety. *See* Communication apprehension
- Appeal to authority (fallacious argument), [143](#) (box), [386](#)
- Appeal to people (fallacious argument), [143](#) (box), [386](#)
- Appeal to relationships (fallacious argument), [143](#) (box), [386](#)
- Appearance and attractiveness, physical
 - credibility and, [356](#) (box)
 - interviews and, [252](#)
 - matching hypothesis, [162](#) (box)
 - presentation delivery and, [355–356](#)
 - transacted identity and, [64](#) (box)
- Apprehension. *See* Communication apprehension
- Appropriateness, medium and, [228](#) (box)
- Argument against the source (fallacious argument), [143](#) (box), [386](#)
- Argumentation, [304](#), [305](#), [338](#)
- Aristotle, [25](#), [40](#), [337](#)
- Armed forces, identities in, [203](#) (box)
- Assimilation effect (social judgment theory), [340](#), [341](#), [386](#)
- Associations, professional, [24](#)
- Asynchronous communication, [236](#), [386](#)
- Attending, [138–139](#), [386](#)
- Attention getters, [315](#), [316](#) (table), [386](#)
- Attitude, in narratives, [82](#) (box)
- Attitude of reflection (symbolic interactionism), [57](#), [386](#)
- Attitudes
 - of audience, [281–283](#)
 - defined, [282](#), [386](#)
 - as filter, [163](#)
 - nonverbal communication and, [100](#)
- Attractiveness. *See* Appearance and attractiveness, physical
- Audience
 - attention getters and, [315](#)

- attitudes, beliefs, and values of, [281–283](#)
- captive vs. voluntary, [281](#)
- credibility with, [317](#), [356](#) (box)
- cynicism from, [319](#) (box)
- demographics of, [282–283](#)
- effective presentation delivery and, [355](#)
- influencing behavior of, [334–337](#), [336](#) (table)
- influencing thinking of, [335](#), [336](#) (table)
- issue, position, and, [280–281](#)
- motivating, [322](#), [333](#)
- nerves and, [346](#)
- practicing in front of, [366](#)
- relationship with, [280](#), [317–318](#), [322–323](#), [330](#), [332–333](#)
- talking over heads of, [331](#) (box)
- topic impact and, [318–319](#)
- topic selection and, [285](#)
- See also* Presentation delivery; Presentations
- Audience involvement (social judgment theory), [340](#), [341](#), [386](#)
- Augsburger, David, [124](#)
- Autonomy–connectedness dialectic, [60](#)
- Avatars, [251](#) (box)
- Avoidance (politeness strategy), [85](#) (table), [86](#), [386](#)
- Avoiding (style of conflict management), [127](#)
- Back region, [65](#), [386](#)
- Balance principle, [307–308](#), [386](#)
- Bald on record (politeness strategy), [85](#) (table), [386](#)
- Bales, Robert, [188](#)
- Bandwagon appeal, [143](#) (box)
- Barker, Michelle, [118](#)
- Base, statistical, [294](#), [386](#)
- Baxter, Leslie, [60](#), [167](#)
- Beavin, Janet, [12](#)
- Behavior/nonverbal filter, [162](#)
- Beliefs
 - of audience, [281–283](#)
 - defined, [282](#), [386](#)
 - given, [282](#) (box)
- Belonging, [158](#), [178](#) (box)
- Bergen, Karla, [208](#) (box)
- Bernstein, Basil, [75](#) (box)
- Bipolar questions, [257](#), [386](#)
- Boase, Jeffrey, [235](#)
- Bodary, David, [287](#)
- Body buffer zone, [105](#), [105](#) (figure), [386](#)
- Body of a presentation
 - defined, [305](#), [386](#)
 - organization and development principles, [305–309](#), [307](#) (figure)
 - organizational patterns, [309–313](#), [310](#) (table)
- Body position, [358](#)
- Boundaries, [60–61](#), [230](#)
- Brainstorming, [285](#), [386](#)
- Braun, Eva, [115](#)

Breakdown Process Model, [171–174](#), [172](#) (figure)
 Breakup stories, [173](#)
 Brown, Penelope, [85](#)
 Burke, Kenneth, [72](#), [81–83](#), [82](#) (box)

 C. K., Louis [323](#) (box)
 Calero, Henry, [124](#)
 Captive audience, [281](#), [386](#)
 Carlsmith, Merrill, [108](#)
 Cash, William, [265](#)
 Cathcart, Robert, [227](#)
 Causal pattern, [310–311](#), [386](#)
 Certainty–uncertainty dialectic, [169](#) (table), [386](#)
 Chang, Yanrong, [33](#)
 Change (relational dialectics), [167](#), [386](#)
 Chaplin, Charlie, [200](#) (box)
 Cheng, Shyeung-Tak, [117](#)
 Chiang, Shiao-Yun, [118](#)
 Children's stories, [118](#) (box)
 Chronemics, [110](#), [386](#)
 Chronological pattern, [309–310](#), [386](#)
 Cicero, [40](#), [303](#), [345](#)
 Citation of sources, [4](#) (box), [296](#)
 Claims of conjecture, [335](#), [386](#)
 Claims of fact, [335](#), [386](#)
 Claims of policy, [334](#), [387](#)
 Claims of value, [334–335](#), [387](#)
 Class, social, [75](#) (box)
 Clincher statements, [323](#), [387](#)
 Clinton, Hillary, [110](#) (box)
 Closed questions, [257](#), [387](#)
 Closeness, degree of, [230](#)
 Clothing, [100](#), [119](#) (figure), [202](#)
 Cockburn-Wooten, Cheryl, [198](#)
 Co-cultures, [129–130](#), [387](#)
 Coded system of meaning, [119](#), [387](#)
 Coercive power, [190](#) (table), [387](#)
 Cohen, Jonathan, [222](#)
 Cohesiveness, [179–180](#), [387](#)
 Collectivist cultures, [121–122](#), [387](#)
 Collectivist talk, [78](#) (table), [387](#)
 Comedians, [323](#) (box)
 Commitment in groups, [181–182](#)
 Communication, [1–19](#)
 as action, interaction, and transaction, [15–17](#), [16](#) (figure)
 attempts, value of, [163](#) (box)
 as cultural, [11](#)
 definitions of, [5–7](#)
 everyday communication and relational perspective, [3–5](#)
 frames and, [12–14](#)
 interpersonal, [25–26](#), [27](#), [38](#)
 meaning and, [8–11](#)
 metacommunication, [61](#)

- as presentational and representational, [14–15](#)
- as relational, [11–12](#)
- as symbolic, [7–8](#)
- Communication apprehension
 - defined, [7](#), [346](#), [387](#)
 - Egotist Fallacy and, [345–346](#)
 - experience, skill building, and, [366–367](#)
 - eye contact and, [358](#) (box)
 - managing emotions, [345–347](#), [360–367](#)
 - nonverbal communication and, [100](#) (box)
 - presentations and, [279](#) (box), [345–347](#), [360–367](#)
 - recognizing and knowing what you fear, [364–365](#)
 - unknown, fear of, [361](#), [365](#) (box)
- Communication education, [37](#)
- Communication frames. *See* Frames
- Communication studies, [20–43](#)
 - associations, [24](#)
 - consequences of studying communication, [41–42](#)
 - critical approach, [29](#) (table), [35–36](#)
 - cultural communication, [37](#)
 - departments names, [22](#)
 - development of the discipline, [23–24](#)
 - family communication, [38](#)
 - future of relational perspective and, [28](#)
 - group communication, [38](#)
 - health communication, [39](#)
 - histories and historiography, [22–23](#)
 - instructional communication and communication education, [37](#)
 - interpersonal communication in, [25–26](#), [27](#), [38](#)
 - interpretivist approach, [29](#) (table), [32–35](#)
 - journals, [25](#) (table)
 - mass communication in, [25–26](#), [27](#), [27](#) (box)
 - media and media studies, [38–39](#)
 - methods, [28–29](#)
 - organizational communication, [39–40](#)
 - persuasion, study of, [40](#)
 - political communication, [40–41](#)
 - public relations, study of, [41](#)
 - public speaking in, [24–25](#), [26](#) (box), [27](#)
 - rhetoric and rhetorical criticism in, [25](#), [27](#), [41](#)
 - social scientific approach, [29](#) (table), [30–32](#)
- Comparisons, [290](#), [387](#)
- Composition fallacy (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [387](#)
- Composure, [359](#) (box), [387](#)
- Compromising (style of conflict management), [126](#)
- Conclusions in presentations, [313–314](#), [319–323](#), [320](#) (table), [387](#)
- Concrete words, [332](#), [387](#)
- Concurrent media use, [215](#), [387](#)
- Confidence in speaking, [303](#)
- Conflict
 - culture and, [124–127](#), [124](#) (table), [125](#) (table)
 - defined, [124](#), [387](#)

- destructive, [170](#)
- in Fisher's group progression, [186](#) (table), [387](#)
- Conflict-as-destructive cultures, [125–126](#), [125](#) (table), [387](#)
- Conflict-as-opportunity cultures, [124–125](#), [124](#) (table), [387](#)
- Conformity, [180](#)
- Conjecture, claims of, [335](#)
- Connectedness–separateness dialectic, [169](#) (table), [200](#), [387](#)
- Connotative meaning, [72](#), [387](#)
- Consistency, [144–145](#), [387](#)
- Constitutive approach to communication, [17](#), [387](#)
- Constraint dimension of environment, [102–103](#)
- Content (representational) listening, [147](#), [387](#)
- Context and culture, [120–121](#)
- Contradictions (relational dialectics), [167](#), [387](#)
- Contrast effect (social judgment theory), [340](#), [341](#), [387](#)
- Contrasts, [290](#), [387](#)
- Conventionality–uniqueness dialectic, [169](#) (table), [387](#)
- Convergence, [79](#), [387](#)
- Conversational hypertext, [75](#), [387](#)
- Core self, notion of, [47–48](#), [49–52](#)
- Core ties, [235](#), [387](#)
- Cover letters, [242–243](#), [387](#)
- Coyne, Sarah, [220](#) (table)
- Creative groups, [179](#) (table), [387](#)
- Credibility, [317](#), [356](#) (box), [359](#) (box)
- Crepin, Ann, [189](#)
- Critical approach
 - in communication studies, [29](#) (table), [35–36](#)
 - dated sources and, [261](#) (box)
 - defined, [35](#), [387](#)
 - standpoint theory and, [54](#) (box)
- Critical cultural communication, [37](#)
- Critical listening, [142–145](#), [387](#)
- Cross-cultural communication, [37](#), [117](#), [387](#)
- Cultural communication, study of, [37](#)
- Cultural persuadables, [130](#), [387–388](#)
- Culture, [114–133](#)
 - adapting to cultural expectations, [11](#) (box)
 - childhood socialization and, [120](#)
 - children's stories and, [118](#) (box)
 - co-cultures, [129–130](#)
 - collectivist vs. individualist, [121–123](#)
 - communication, influence on, [11](#)
 - conflict and, [124–127](#), [124](#) (table), [125](#) (table)
 - cross-cultural and intercultural communication, [117–118](#)
 - distance and, [128](#) (box)
 - embedded within communication, [128–129](#)
 - ethnocentric bias, [115–116](#)
 - group culture, [184](#)
 - high-context vs. low-context, [120–121](#), [122](#) (box)
 - identity and cultural membership, [56](#) (box)
 - jokes and, [69](#)

- membership enacted through communication, [130–131](#)
- minorities and, [117](#) (box)
- nonverbal communication and, [91](#), [93](#), [96](#), [108](#)
- nonverbal feedback, culturally appropriate, [139](#) (box)
- persuasion and, [127](#) (box)
- relationships and, [116](#), [164](#) (box)
- research methods, culturally insensitive, [31](#)
- speech communities, [130](#)
- as structure, [117–118](#)
- structure-based characteristics, [119–127](#)
- taken-for-granted cultural expectations, [6–7](#)
- talk, cultural styles of, [76](#), [78](#) (table)
- time and, [110](#), [123–124](#), [125](#) (box)
- touch and, [111](#) (box)
- as transacted, [118–119](#), [127–131](#)
- verbal communication and, [76](#)
- workplace and organizational culture, [200](#), [203–205](#)
- Cum hoc ergo propter hoc* (fallacious argument), [143–144](#) (box), [388](#)
- Customer service agents, [141](#) (box)
- Damron, Jane, [31](#)
- Data, [33](#)
- Deception, [93](#)
- Decision making in groups, [12](#), [184–186](#)
- Decoding, [94–95](#), [95](#) (table), [388](#)
- Deductive reasoning, [338–339](#), [388](#)
- Definitions, [289](#), [388](#)
- Definitions and descriptions, [328](#), [388](#)
- Deintensification, [107](#), [388](#)
- Demographics, [282–283](#), [388](#)
- Demosthenes, [357](#) (box)
- Denotative meaning, [71](#), [388](#)
- Descriptions, [328](#)
- Descriptive language, [333](#), [388](#)
- Devil terms, [72–73](#), [73](#) (box), [73](#) (table), [388](#). *See also* God terms
- Dhaenens, Frederik, [36](#)
- Dialectic tension, [60](#), [388](#)
- Dialectics, relational, [166–168](#), [169](#) (table)
- Dindia, Kathryn, [59](#)
- Direct observation, [33](#)
- Direct relationship talk, [164–165](#)
- Directive interviews, [258](#), [388](#)
- Disagreement, [23](#) (box)
- Disengaged listening, [140](#)
- Dispositio*, [303](#)
- Disruptive roles, [183](#), [388](#)
- Distance, [103](#), [105–106](#), [128](#) (box)
- Distracting mannerisms, [358](#), [388](#)
- Distractions, [145–146](#)
- Divergence, [80](#), [388](#)
- Diversions, [146–147](#)
- Division fallacy (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [388](#)
- Dominating (style of conflict management), [126](#)

Domination, organizations as instruments of, [200](#)
 Donovan-Kicken, Erin, [31](#)
 Duck, Steve, [74](#), [86](#), [167](#), [171](#)
 Durham, Wesley, [60](#), [61](#)
 Dyadic process, [171](#), [172](#) (figure), [388](#)
 Dynamic nonverbal communication, [95](#), [388](#)
 Dynamism, [359](#) (box), [388](#)

 Eastern Communication Association, [24](#)
 Ebert, Roger, [142](#)
 Egocentric listening, [147–148](#), [388](#)
 Egotist Fallacy, [345–346](#)
 Ekman, Paul, [106–107](#)
 Elaborated code, [75](#) (box), [388](#)
 Elbelghiti, Rachid, [217–218](#)
Eleutio, [327](#)
 Elimination pattern, [312–313](#), [388](#)
 Ellsworth, Phoebe, [108](#)
 Emblems, [106](#), [388](#)
 Emergence (Fisher's group progression), [388](#)
 Emojis, [236](#) (box), [388](#)
 Emotions
 affect displays, [106](#)
 facial expressions and, [107](#)
 integration and stability of, from relationships, [158–159](#)
 nonverbal communication and, [100](#)
 pathos (appeals to emotions), [337–338](#)
 presentations and management of, [345–347](#), [360–367](#)
 as symbolic activity and relational activity, [337](#)
 Employment interviews, defined, [246](#), [388](#). *See also under* Interviews
 Encoding, [95](#), [95](#) (table), [388](#)
 Engaged listening, [139–141](#), [388](#)
 Enthymemes, [339](#), [388](#)
 Enumerated previews, [319](#)
 Environment, [101–103](#), [388](#)
 Environmental distractions, [145–146](#), [388](#)
 Equivocation (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [388](#)
 Essential function of talk, [86–87](#), [164](#), [388](#)
 Ethical issues
 all sides of an issue, [308](#) (box)
 altercasting, [63](#) (box)
 audience analysis, [280](#) (box)
 audience comprehension, [331](#) (box)
 bosses and friendship, [210](#) (box)
 communication style and audience, [354](#) (box)
 critical approach and, [36](#) (box)
 cultural expectations, [11](#) (box)
 culture membership, enacting, [131](#) (box)
 embellishing the facts, [319](#) (box)
 emotions and persuasion, [337](#) (box)
 ending a relationship, [171](#) (box)
 ethnocentric bias, [116](#) (box)
 evidence and support material, [289](#) (box)

- expertise and qualifications, [317](#) (box)
- fallacious arguments, persuasion with, [334](#) (box)
- frames and exclusion, [14](#) (box)
- group disruption, [184](#) (box)
- human research, [33](#) (box)
- interviews, [248](#) (box), [259](#) (box), [265](#) (box)
- leadership, [189](#), [191](#) (box)
- listening, [139](#) (box)
- lying, [167](#) (box)
- matching communication styles, [127](#) (box)
- media representations, [221](#) (box)
- multiple identities, [51](#) (box)
- NCA “Ethical Statements,” [24](#) (box)
- nonverbal communication, [98](#) (box), [109](#) (box)
- number of relationships, [157](#) (box)
- personal appearance and credibility, [356](#) (box)
- persuasion, truth, and techniques, [351](#) (box)
- pronouns and gender binaries, [78](#) (box)
- relational obligations, [13](#) (box)
- relationships and influence, [282](#) (box)
- saving face, [84](#) (box)
- self-disclosure, [61](#) (box)
- sexist, racist, and heteronormative language, [76](#) (box)
- smartphones, [230](#) (box)
- social networking, schools, and employers, [233](#) (box)
- sources, evaluation of, [143](#) (box)
- stories and truth, [81](#) (box)
- whistle-blowing, [183](#) (box)
- workplace romances, [209](#) (box)
- Ethnocentric bias, [115–116](#), [388](#)
- Ethnographic research, [33](#)
- Ethos, [337](#), [388](#)
- Evaluation
 - of evidence, [145](#)
 - identity and, [51–52](#), [54–55](#)
 - interviews and, [268](#) (box)
 - of relationships, [170](#)
 - of sources, [143](#)
- Evidence and support material
 - effectiveness, comparing, [296](#)
 - evaluation of, [145](#)
 - inventio* (selecting and searching for sources), [297–298](#), [297](#) (table), [298](#) (table)
 - libraries and, [296](#) (box), [298](#) (table)
 - quality of, [296](#)
 - quantity of, [294–296](#)
 - See also* Sources
- Evoking, [287](#), [288](#), [388](#)
- Examples, [291–292](#), [388](#)
- Exit interviews, [247](#), [388](#)
- Experiential superiority, [148](#), [388](#)
- Experiments, [30](#)
- Expert power, [190](#) (table), [388](#)

Expert testimony, [291](#), [388](#)
 Expository presentations, [328–329](#), [388](#)
 Exposure, selective, [53](#)
 Extemporaneous delivery, [354](#), [388](#)
 External dialectics, [168](#), [169](#) (table), [388](#)
 Eye contact, [107–108](#), [357–358](#), [388](#)

Face, professional, [202](#)
 Facework, [64–65](#), [84](#), [84](#) (box), [388–389](#)
 Facial expressions, [107](#), [358](#)
 Fact, claims of, [335](#)
 Facts, [289–290](#), [389](#)
 Factual diversion, [146](#), [389](#)
 Fallacious arguments, [143–144](#) (box), [334](#) (box), [389](#)
 False alternatives (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [389](#)
 Familiarity dimension of environment, [102](#)
 Family communication, study of, [38](#)
 Farley, Susan, [110](#)
 Fear, technological, [216](#), [216](#) (box)
 Fear of public speaking. *See* Communication apprehension
 Feedback, [139](#), [139](#) (box), [222](#) (table)
 Feminine talk, [78](#) (table), [389](#)
 Fielding, Helen, [345–346](#)
 Fisher, Aubrey, [185](#), [186](#) (table)
 Fisher, Walter, [80](#)
 Flattery, [222](#) (table)
 Flirtation, [165](#)
 Flores, Lisa, [117](#) (box)
 Foley, Megan, [74](#)
 Formal groups, [179](#) (table), [389](#)
 Formal power, [189](#), [389](#)
 Formal roles, [183](#), [389](#)
 Formality dimension of environment, [102](#)
 Formality/hierarchy, [201–202](#), [389](#)
 Forming (Tuckman's group development), [185](#) (table), [389](#)
 Fox, Kate, [123](#) (box)

Frames

- assigning meanings, [13](#)
- communication frames, defined, [13](#), [387](#)
- conversational, [77–80](#)
- coordinating actions, [13](#)
- defined, [12–13](#), [389](#)
- exclusion and, [14](#) (box)
- interviews and, [259–262](#)
- jokes and, [69](#)
- of perspective, [13–14](#)
- workplace, [200–201](#)

Fraser, Ashley, [220](#) (table)
 French, John, [190](#), [190](#) (table), [192](#)
 Friedenberg, Robert, [40](#)
 Friends

- as influencers, [157](#) (box)
- on social networking sites, [231–232](#)

talking with, [74](#) (box)
 in workplace, [207–208](#), [210–211](#)
See also Relationships, personal
 Friesen, Wallace, [106–107](#)
 Front region, [65](#), [389](#)
 Frymier, Ann, [37](#)

Gantz, Walter, [220](#) (table)
 Gass, Robert, [359](#) (box)
 Gaze, [107–108](#), [389](#)
 Gender identities, [57](#) (box)
 Gender pronouns, [77](#) (figure), [78](#) (box)
 General purpose, [287](#), [389](#)
 Generations, technology and media, [227](#)
 Gestures, [358](#)
 Giddens, Anthony, [204](#)
 Giles, Howard, [79](#), [109](#)
 Given beliefs, [282](#) (box)
 Goals, [201](#), [245](#)
 God terms, [72–73](#), [73](#) (box), [73](#) (table), [389](#). *See also* Devil terms
 Goffman, Erving, [64–65](#), [84](#)
 Grammar, [69](#)
 Grave dressing process, [172](#) (figure), [173](#), [389](#)
 Grounded theory, [32–33](#)
 Group culture, [184](#), [389](#)
 Group decision making, [12](#)
 Group norms, [182](#), [389](#)
 Group roles, [182–183](#), [389](#)
 Group sanctions, [182](#), [389](#)
 Groups, [176–194](#)

- characteristics of, [178–184](#)
- decision making and relationships, [186](#)
- defined, [177–178](#)
- development and decision making, [184–185](#)
- leadership, [186–192](#)
- out-groups, [181–182](#)
- relational politics of group discussion, [187](#) (box)
- Robert's Rules of Order*, [180](#) (box)
- study of, [38](#)
- types of, [178](#), [179](#) (table)
- zero-history, [185](#) (box)

Groupthink, [180](#), [389](#)
 Guidance principle, [308](#), [331–332](#), [389](#)
 Gumpert, Gary, [227](#)

Hall, E. T., [105](#), [105](#) (figure)
 Hall, Judith, [101](#)
 Handshakes, [96](#), [110](#) (box), [111](#), [254](#)
 Haptics, [110–111](#), [110](#) (box), [111](#) (box), [111](#) (table), [389](#). *See also* Handshakes
 Harris, Kate, [35–36](#)
 Hasty generalization (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [389](#)
 Health communication, [39](#), [137](#)
 Hearing, [138](#), [389](#)

Helping interviews, [248](#), [389](#)
 Henderson, Saras, [118](#)
 Henson, Alexander, [108](#)
 Hepburn, John, [189](#)
 Heslin, R., [111](#), [111](#) (table)
 Hess, Jon, [61](#), [164](#) (box)
 Hierarchies, [201–202](#)
 High code, [72](#), [389](#)
 High-context cultures, [120–121](#), [122](#) (box), [389](#)
 High-context talk, [78](#) (table), [389](#)
 Historiography, [22–23](#), [389](#)
 Hitler, Adolf, [115](#)
 Holt, Liz, [34](#)
Homo narrans, [80](#)
 Horgan, Terrence, [101](#)
 Horrigan, John, [235](#)
 How-to demonstrations, [329–330](#), [389](#)
 Hughes, Susan, [110](#)
 Human research, [33](#) (box)
 Humor, [323](#)
 Hypothetical illustrations, [292](#), [389](#)

 Identity, [46–67](#)
 armed forces and, [203](#) (box)
 core self, notion of, [47–48](#), [49–52](#)
 cultural memberships and, [56](#) (box)
 defined, [47](#), [389](#)
 master identities, [56–57](#)
 narratives and, [61–62](#)
 online, [62](#) (box)
 perceptions and, [49](#), [52–55](#)
 performance of, [48–49](#), [64–66](#)
 physical attractiveness and, [64](#) (box)
 relationships and communication interconnected with, [48](#)
 self-description, [55](#) (box), [58](#)
 self-disclosure, [57–61](#)
 sexual and gender identities, [57](#) (box)
 standpoint theory, [54](#) (box)
 symbolic creation of, [55–57](#)
 technology and media and, [225–226](#), [231–234](#)
 traditional and nontraditional students and, [52](#) (box)
 transaction of, [56–57](#), [62–65](#), [62](#) (box)
 workplace as identity constraint, [202](#)
 worth and value, reassurance of, [159](#)
 Illustrations, [291–292](#), [389](#)
 Illustrators, [106](#), [389](#)
 Inclusion–seclusion dialectic, [169](#) (table), [389](#)
 Indexical function of talk, [86](#), [164](#), [389](#)
 Indirect relationship talk, [165](#)
 Individual inventory, [286](#), [286](#) (box), [389](#)
 Individualist cultures, [122–123](#), [389](#)
 Individualist talk, [78](#) (table), [389](#)
 Inductive reasoning, [338](#), [389](#)

Industrial time, [205](#), [389–390](#)
 Inequity, in relationships, [170](#)
 Influencing others
 facework and politeness, [83–86](#)
 presentations to actuate, [336–337](#), [336](#) (table)
 presentations to convince, [334–335](#), [336](#) (table)
 relationships and, [282](#) (box)
 Informal power, [189–190](#), [390](#)
 Informal roles, [183](#), [390](#)
 Information-gaining interviews, [247](#), [390](#)
 Informative presentations
 defined, [304](#)
 definitions and descriptions, [328](#)
 expository presentations, [328–329](#)
 process and how-to demonstrations, [329–330](#)
 samples, [378–384](#)
 strategies for, [330–333](#)
 Informing, [287](#), [288](#), [390](#)
 Inspiring, [359](#) (box), [390](#)
 Instructional communication, [37](#)
 Instrumental function of talk, [86](#), [390](#)
 Instrumental goals, [201](#), [390](#)
 Integrating (style of conflict management), [126](#)
 Interaction, communication as, [16](#), [16](#) (figure), [387](#)
 Intercultural communication, [37](#), [117–118](#), [390](#). *See also* Culture
 Interdependence, [180–181](#), [390](#)
 Internal dialectics, [168](#), [169](#) (table), [390](#)
 Internet. *See* Social networking sites; Technology and media
 Interpreting, [139](#), [390](#)
 Interpretivist approach, [29](#) (table), [32–35](#), [390](#)
 Interviews, [240–273](#)
 beginning an employment interview, [253–255](#)
 characteristics of, [245–246](#)
 concluding and employment interview, [265–268](#)
 cover letters, [242–243](#)
 defined, [241](#), [390](#)
 directive and nondirective, [258–259](#)
 employment, as type, [246](#)
 evaluation in, [268](#) (box)
 exit, [247](#)
 helping, [248](#)
 information-gaining, [247](#)
 as method, [33–34](#)
 performance, [246–247](#)
 persuasive, [247–248](#)
 problem-solving, [248](#)
 questions, answering, [259–265](#)
 questions, asking, [255–259](#)
 responsibilities of interviewees, pre- and post-interview, [250–253](#), [251](#) (table), [269–271](#), [270](#) (table)
 responsibilities of interviewers, pre- and post-interview, [248–250](#), [268–269](#), [269](#) (table)
 résumés, [243–245](#)
 in virtual environments, [251](#) (box), [254](#) (box)

Intracultural communication, [37](#)
 Intrapyschic process, [171](#), [172](#) (figure), [390](#)
 Introductions in presentations, [313–319](#), [315](#) (table), [390](#)
 Introspective units, [166](#), [390](#)
Inventio, [297–298](#), [297](#) (table), [298](#) (table)
 Iowa House Judiciary Speech (Zach Wahls), [385](#)

Jackson, Don, [12](#)
 Jackson, Ronald, [37](#)
 Janis, Irving, [180](#)
 Jante, Law of, [122](#), [122](#) (table)
 Jin, Bora, [117](#)
 Job interviews. *See* Interviews
 Jokes, [69](#)
 Jones, Stanley, [111](#), [111](#) (table)
 Jourard, Sidney, [59](#), [61](#), [111](#) (box)
 Journalism departments, [26](#), [27](#) (box)
 Journals in communications, [25](#) (table)
 Julius Caesar, [35](#), [192](#)

Kellas, Jody Koenig, [62](#)
 Kelly, George, [54](#), [55](#) (box)
 Killenberg, George, [261](#)
 Kinesics, [106–107](#), [390](#)
 Kirkpatrick, Dan, [74](#)
 Knapp, Mark, [101](#)
 Knowledge

- relating unknown material to known material, [333](#)
- relationships and, [157–158](#)
- topic selection and, [284](#)
- unknown, fear of, [361](#), [365](#) (box)

Ladder of abstraction, [69](#)
 LaFayette, Jack, [110](#)
 Language

- descriptive, [333](#)
- developing relationships through, [332](#)
- perception, Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, and, [71](#) (box)
- sexist, racist, and heteronormative, [76](#) (box)
- symbols and, [70](#)
- use of, [69](#)
- See also* Verbal communication

Langue, [80](#) (box), [390](#)
 Latitude of acceptance (social judgment theory), [339](#), [390](#)
 Latitude of noncommitment (social judgment theory), [340](#), [390](#)
 Latitude of rejection (social judgment theory), [339–340](#), [390](#)
 Lay testimony, [291](#), [390](#)
 Leadership

- ethics and, [191–192](#), [191](#) (box)
- meaning of, [186–187](#)
- power and, [189–190](#), [190](#) (table)
- styles of, [188–189](#)
- as transacted, [192](#)

Leading questions, [258](#), [390](#)
 Leakage, [98](#), [390](#)
 Lederman, Linda, [39](#)
 Legitimate power, [190](#) (table), [390](#)
 Levinson, Steven, [85](#)
 Levy, David, [223](#) (box)
 Li, Tianyuan, [117](#)
 Libraries, [296](#) (box), [298](#) (table)
 Limbaugh, Rush, [53](#)
 Lincoln, Abraham, [24–25](#)
 Ling, Rich, [231](#)
 Listening, [134–151](#)
 active, [138–139](#)
 becoming a good listener, [148](#) (box)
 career and, [137](#)
 critical, [142–145](#)
 defined, [138](#), [390](#)
 education and, [136](#)
 effective, [135](#)
 engaged and relational, [139–141](#)
 fallacious arguments, [143–144](#) (box)
 health care and, [137](#)
 note-taking and, [146](#), [147](#) (box)
 objectives, [138](#), [138](#) (table)
 obstacles to, [145–149](#)
 reading and, [309](#) (box)
 relationships and, [137](#)
 religion and spirituality and, [137](#)
 Livy, [173](#) (box)
 Logos, [338–339](#), [390](#)
 Louis C. K., [323](#) (box)
Love and Sex With Robots (Levy), [223](#) (box)
 Low code, [79](#), [390](#)
 Low-context cultures, [121](#), [122](#) (box), [390](#)
 Low-context talk, [78](#) (table), [390](#)

 Machine metaphor for organizations, [199–200](#), [200](#) (box)
Mad Men (TV), [209](#)
 Main points, [306](#), [390](#)
 Major transgressions, [170](#)
 Mak, Anita, [118](#)
 Mannerisms, distracting, [358](#)
 Manuscript delivery, [351–352](#), [390](#)
 Marconi, Guglielmo, [218](#)
 Marking of territory, [104–105](#)
 Martin, Judith, [117](#) (box), [124](#)
 Marx, Karl, [217](#)
 Masculine talk, [78](#) (table), [390](#)
 Masking, [107](#), [390](#)
 Mass communication, [25–26](#), [27](#), [27](#) (box), [38–39](#)
 Master identities, [56–57](#)
 Matching hypothesis, [162](#) (box)
 McBride, Chad, [208](#) (box)

McClelland, David, [118](#) (box)
 McCroskey, James, [37](#)
 McGlynn, Joseph, [31](#)
 McMahan, David, [218](#)
 Mean, [293](#), [390](#)
 Meaning
 context and, [9–10](#)
 defined, [8](#), [390](#)
 denotative and connotative, [71–72](#)
 frames and, [13](#)
 medium and, [10–11](#)
 nonverbal communication and, [92–93](#), [97](#), [97](#) (table)
 relationships, verbal communication, and, [74–75](#)
 social construction of, [9](#)
 symbols and, [8](#)
 verbal and nonverbal influence on, [10](#)
 Media and technology. *See* Technology and media
 Media equation, [222](#), [222](#) (table), [390](#)
 Media literacy, [224–225](#), [390](#)
 Median, [293](#), [390](#)
 Medium (media)
 defined, [10](#), [390](#)
 meaning and, [10](#) (box)
 power of, [10–11](#)
 Medium distractions, [146](#), [390](#)
 Mehrabian, Albert, [92–93](#)
 Memorized delivery, [353–354](#), [390–391](#)
 Memory, selective, [53–54](#)
 Merton, Robert, [260](#)
 Message complexity, [149](#), [391](#)
 Metacommunication, [61](#)
Metropolis (film), [200](#) (box)
 Metzger, Miriam, [222](#)
 Microcoordination, [230](#), [231](#) (table), [391](#)
 Middletown Media Studies, [215](#)
 Mirror questions (secondary questions), [256](#), [391](#)
 Mode, [293](#), [391](#)
Modern Times (film), [200](#) (box)
 Monochronic cultures, [123](#), [391](#)
 Montgomery, Barbara, [167](#)
 Montgomery, Bernard, [192](#)
 Moods, [51](#)
 Morgan, Gareth, [199](#)
 Mumby, Dennis, [184](#)
 Muñoz, Kristine, [130](#)

 Nakayama, Thomas, [117](#) (box), [124](#)
 Naming, [22](#), [22](#) (box), [30](#) (box)
 Narrative
 Burke's pentad and, [82](#)
 defined, [80](#), [391](#)
 identity and, [61–62](#)
 verbal communication and, [80](#)

Nass, Clifford, [222](#)

National Communication Association (NCA), [24](#), [24](#) (box), [41–42](#)

Negative face wants, [84](#), [391](#)

Negative politeness (politeness strategy), [85](#) (table), [391](#)

Nerves. *See* Communication apprehension

Networking groups, [179](#) (table), [391](#)

Neutral questions, [257–258](#), [391](#)

Neutralization, [107](#), [391](#)

Nondirective interviews, [258–259](#), [391](#)

Nonfluencies, [357](#), [391](#)

Nonverbal communication, [90–113](#)

- ambiguous nature of, [97](#)
- anxiety and, [100](#) (box)
- chronemics, [110](#)
- as continuous, [98](#)
- control and leakage, [97–98](#)
- credibility, secondary dimensions of, [359](#) (box)
- cultural appropriateness and, [96](#)
- decoding and encoding, [94–95](#), [95](#) (table)
- defined, [91](#), [391](#)
- dynamic and static, [95–96](#)
- emotional information in, [100](#)
- environment and, [101–103](#)
- eye contact and gaze, [107–108](#)
- facework, [84](#) (box)
- genuine or culturally appropriate nonverbal feedback, [139](#) (box)
- haptics, [110–111](#)
- individuals identified by, [99–100](#)
- interactions regulated by, [99](#)
- kinesics, [106–107](#)
- meaning and, [10](#), [97](#), [97](#) (table)
- misconceptions about, [92–94](#)
- multichanneled, [96–97](#)
- as personal, [96](#)
- personal space and distance, [105–106](#), [105](#) (figure)
- proxemics and territoriality, [103–105](#)
- relational meaning and understanding, [101](#)
- rules and, [96](#)
- as symbolic, [94](#)
- texting, media, and, [108](#) (box)
- verbal communication and, [98–99](#)
- vocalics, [109–110](#)
- workplace dress codes, [202](#)

Nonverbal filter, [162](#)

Norming (Tuckman's group development), [185](#) (table), [391](#)

Norms, group, [182](#)

Norwood, Kristen, [34](#)

Note-taking, [146](#), [147](#) (box), [298](#) (table)

Obliging (style of conflict management), [127](#)

O'Connell, Robert, [173](#) (box)

Off record (politeness strategy), [85](#) (table), [391](#)

Oh, Sohyun, [117](#)

O'Keefe, Daniel, [341](#)
 Onion Model, [47–48](#), [50](#), [50](#) (figure)
 Open brainstorming, [285](#), [391](#)
 Open questions, [256–257](#), [391](#)
 Openness–closedness dialectic, [60](#), [169](#) (table), [391](#)
 Operational definitions, [289](#), [391](#)
 Opinions, [289–290](#), [391](#)
 Oral citations, [296](#), [391](#)
 Organization principles for presentations, [305–309](#), [307](#) (figure)
 Organizational communication, study of, [39–40](#). *See also* Workplace
 Organizational culture, [200](#), [203–205](#)
 Organizational patterns, [309–313](#), [310](#) (table), [391](#)
 Orientation (Fisher's group progression), [186](#) (table), [391](#)
 Orientation phase, [318](#), [391](#)
 Origin stories, [62](#)
 Out-groups, [181–182](#), [391](#)
 Overintensification, [107](#), [391](#)

Padilla-Walker, Laura, [220](#) (table)
 Paralanguage (vocalics), [109–110](#), [356–357](#)
 Paraphrasing (reflecting), [139](#)
 Parasocial relationships, [222–223](#), [223](#) (table), [391](#)
 Parole, [80](#) (box), [391](#)
 Participant observation, [33](#)
 Past experience with the source, [149](#), [391](#)
 Pathos, [337–338](#), [391](#)
 Pauses, [357](#), [391](#)
 Paxman, Jeremy, [123](#) (box)
 Pelazzolo, Kellie, [36](#)
 Pentad, [81–82](#), [82](#) (table), [83](#) (table), [391](#)
 Perception

- defined, [49](#), [391](#)
- of environment, [101–103](#)
- identity and, [49](#), [52–55](#)
- language and, [71](#) (box)
- selection, [52–53](#)
- selective, [53](#)
- of technology and media, [216–219](#)

Performance interviews, [246–247](#), [391](#)
 Performative self, [64](#), [391](#)
 Performing (Tuckman's group development), [185](#) (table), [391](#)
 Personal constructs, [55](#), [391](#)
 Personal relationships. *See* Relationships, personal
 Personal space, [105–106](#), [105](#) (figure), [128](#) (box), [391](#)
 Personal testimony, [291](#), [391](#)
 Personality, [163](#), [222](#) (table)
 Persuasion

- cultural persuadables, [130](#)
- culture and, [127](#) (box)
- defined, [287](#), [391](#)
- emotions as tools of, [337](#) (box)
- fallacious arguments and, [334](#) (box)
- general purpose and, [287](#)

- specific purpose and, [288](#)
- study of, [40](#)
- truth vs. techniques and, [351](#) (box)
- Persuasive interviews, [247–248](#), [391](#)
- Persuasive presentations
 - to actuate, [336–337](#), [336](#) (table)
 - artistic proofs (ethos, pathos, logos) and, [337–339](#)
 - to convince, [334–335](#), [336](#) (table)
 - defined, [304](#)
 - samples, [372–377](#)
 - social judgment theory and, [339–341](#), [340](#) (figure)
 - types of claims, [334–335](#)
- Petronio, Sandra, [60](#), [61](#)
- Philipsen, Gerry, [131](#) (box)
- Photographs on social networking sites, [232–233](#)
- Physical appearance. *See* Appearance and attractiveness, physical
- Physical context, [9–10](#)
- Pitch, [109](#), [356](#), [391](#)
- Plausibility, [142](#), [391](#)
- Points principle, [306](#), [391](#)
- Policy, claims of, [334](#)
- Politeness, in media equation, [222](#) (table)
- Politeness theory, [85–86](#), [85](#) (table)
- Political communication, study of, [40–41](#)
- Polychronic cultures, [124](#), [392](#)
- Polysemy, [71](#), [392](#)
- Pond, Kris, [86](#)
- Population, statistical, [293–294](#), [392](#)
- Positive face wants, [84](#), [392](#)
- Positive politeness (politeness strategy), [85](#) (table), [392](#)
- Post hoc ergo propter hoc* (fallacious argument), [143](#) (box), [392](#)
- Power
 - critical approach and, [35–36](#), [36](#) (box)
 - leadership and, [189–190](#), [190](#) (table)
 - of media, [10](#) (box)
- Practicing presentations, [349–350](#), [365–366](#)
- Praxis (relational dialectics), [167–168](#), [392](#)
- Presentation aids, [359](#), [360](#) (table), [362–363](#) (table), [392](#)
- Presentation delivery
 - conversational, [350](#)
 - credibility, secondary dimensions of, [359](#) (box)
 - effective, [354–358](#)
 - extemporaneous style, [354](#)
 - eye contact, [357–358](#)
 - facial expression and body position, [358](#)
 - gestures and mannerisms, [358](#)
 - manuscript style, [351–352](#)
 - memorized style, [353–354](#)
 - mistakes and errors during, [348–349](#), [350–351](#)
 - natural, [349–350](#)
 - nerves, anxiety, and managing emotions, [345–347](#), [360–367](#)
 - not reading, [347–348](#)

- personal appearance and, [355–356](#)
- practicing and recording, [349–350](#), [365–366](#)
- presentation aids, [359](#), [360](#) (table), [362–363](#) (table)
- visualizing, [361](#) (box)
- vocalics, [356–357](#)
- Presentation preparation, [276–300](#)
 - audience analysis, [279–283](#)
 - evidence and materials, selection of, [294–296](#)
 - evidence and materials, types of, [289–294](#)
 - nerves and, [279](#) (box)
 - purpose, general and specific, [286–288](#)
 - relationships and, [277–278](#)
 - sources, selecting and searching (*inventio*), [297–298](#), [297](#) (table), [298](#) (table)
 - thesis statement, [288](#)
 - topic selection, [283–286](#), [284](#) (table), [286](#) (table)
- Presentations, [302–325](#)
 - classroom relationships and, [330](#) (box)
 - communication as presentational, [14–15](#)
 - conclusions, [313–314](#), [319–323](#), [320](#) (table)
 - confidence and, [303](#)
 - defined, [14](#), [392](#)
 - developing an argument, [305](#)
 - informative, [304](#), [328–333](#)
 - informative, samples of, [378–384](#)
 - introductions, [313–319](#), [315](#) (table)
 - Iowa House Judiciary Speech (Zach Wahls), [385](#)
 - organization and development principles, [305–309](#), [307](#) (figure)
 - organizational patterns, [309–313](#), [310](#) (table)
 - pace, [330](#)
 - persuasive, [304](#), [334–341](#)
 - persuasive, samples of, [372–377](#)
 - verbal communication as, [80–82](#)
- Presentations to actuate, [336–337](#), [336](#) (table), [392](#)
- Presentations to convince, [334–335](#), [336](#) (table), [392](#)
- Previews, enumerated, [319](#)
- Previous experience, [5](#)
- Primary questions, [256](#), [392](#)
- Primary territory, [103–104](#)
- Privacy dimension of environment, [102](#)
- Probing questions (secondary questions), [256](#), [392](#)
- Problem–solution pattern, [312–313](#), [392](#)
- Problem-solving interviews, [248](#), [392](#)
- Process demonstrations, [329–330](#), [392](#)
- Professional face, [202](#), [392](#)
- Pronouns, gender, [77](#) (figure), [78](#) (box)
- Pronuntiatio*, [345](#)
- Prospective units, [165–166](#), [392](#)
- Prototypes, [54–55](#), [392](#)
- Provisions of relationships, [158–159](#), [158](#) (box), [392](#)
- Proxemics, [103–105](#), [252–253](#), [392](#)
- Public relations, study of, [41](#)
- Public speaking, in communication studies, [24–25](#), [26](#) (box), [27](#). *See also* Presentations; Verbal

- communication
- Public territory, [104](#)
- Purpose
 - in Burke's pentad, [82](#) (table)
 - defined, [392](#)
 - general, [287](#)
 - groups and, [178](#) (box)
 - interviews and, [255](#)
 - of presentation, [286–288](#)
 - in presentations, [316–317](#)
 - specific, [287–288](#)
- Question–answer pattern, [311](#), [392](#)
- Questionnaires, [30–31](#)
- Questions, in interviews
 - asking for, [266](#)
 - common questions, [262–265](#)
 - directive, [258](#)
 - framing and, [259–262](#)
 - illegal, [259](#), [260](#) (table), [265](#), [265](#) (table)
 - leading, [258](#)
 - mirror, [256](#)
 - neutral, [257–258](#)
 - nondirective, [258–259](#)
 - open and closed, [256–257](#)
 - preparing, [249](#), [251](#), [267](#)
 - primary and secondary, [256](#)
 - probing, [256](#)
- Questions, in statistics, [294](#) (box)
- Radio, [218](#)
- Rainie, Lee, [235](#)
- Rate (of speech), [109](#), [148](#), [356–357](#), [392](#)
- Raven, Bertram, [190](#), [190](#) (table), [192](#)
- Reading and listening, [309](#) (box)
- Reagan, Ronald, [350](#) (box)
- Reality, [30](#), [32](#)
- Reasoning, appeals to (logos), [338–339](#)
- Receiving, [138](#), [392](#)
- Red herring (fallacious argument), [144](#) (box), [392](#)
- Reeves, Byron, [222](#)
- Referent power, [190](#) (table), [392](#)
- Reflecting (paraphrasing), [139](#), [392](#)
- Reflection on relationships, [171](#)
- Regulators, [106–107](#), [392](#)
- Reinforcement (Fisher's group progression), [392](#)
- Relational context, [10](#)
- Relational continuity constructional units (RCCUs), [165–166](#), [392](#)
- Relational dialectics, [166–168](#), [169](#) (table), [392](#)
- Relational goals, [201](#), [392](#)
- Relational listening, [141](#), [141](#) (table), [392](#)
- Relational perspective
 - audience and, [280](#), [317–318](#), [322–323](#), [330](#), [332–333](#)

- communication studies and, [28](#)
- constitutive approach to communication and, [17](#)
- emotions as relational activity, [337](#)
- everyday communication and, [3–5](#)
- group discussion, relational politics of, [187](#) (box)
- improving communication studies through, [37–41](#)
- interviews and, [254–255](#)
- nonverbal communication and, [91](#)
- presentations and classroom relationships, [330](#) (box)
- technology and media and, [216–217](#)
- verbal communication and, [73–75](#)
- on workplace, [197](#)
- Relational technologies, [227–229](#), [392](#)
- Relationship Filtering Model, [160–163](#), [161](#) (figure), [392](#)
- Relationships, personal, [156–175](#)
 - behavior, influencing, [337](#) (box)
 - benefits and provisions of, [156–159](#)
 - Breakdown Process Model, [171–174](#), [172](#) (figure)
 - communication intertwined with, [11–12](#)
 - composing, through communication, [164](#)
 - conversational hypertext in, [75](#)
 - culture and, [116](#), [164](#) (box)
 - decline, symptoms and sources of, [168–171](#)
 - defined, [156](#), [391](#)
 - determining status of, [165](#) (box)
 - dialectics, [166–168](#), [169](#) (table)
 - direct and indirect relationship talk, [164–165](#)
 - everyday communication and, [3–4](#)
 - friends, talking with, [74](#) (box)
 - God and Devil terms in, [73](#)
 - identity and, [48](#), [51](#), [56](#) (box), [64](#)
 - information in, [332](#) (box)
 - listening and, [137](#)
 - lying in, [167](#) (box)
 - meaning and, [74–75](#)
 - media and, [39](#) (box)
 - nonverbal communication as regulator in, [101](#)
 - obligations, relational, [13](#) (box)
 - parasocial relationships, [222–223](#), [223](#) (table)
 - presentations and, [277–278](#)
 - RCCUs and maintenance of, [165–166](#)
 - Relationship Filtering Model and initiation of, [160–163](#), [161](#) (figure)
 - self-disclosure and, [59–61](#)
 - social relationships vs., [156](#)
 - space, distance, and, [105–106](#)
 - talk about technology and media, [225](#)
 - talk functions and, [86–87](#)
 - technology and media and, [39](#) (box), [219–226](#), [220](#) (table), [223](#) (table), [234–237](#)
 - territoriality and, [104](#)
 - transforming, through communication, [164](#)
 - vocalics and, [109–110](#)
- Religion and spirituality, [104](#) (box), [137](#)

Representation, [14–15](#), [80](#), [392](#)
 Representational (content) listening, [147](#)
 Responding, [139](#), [392](#)
 Restricted code, [75](#) (box), [392](#)
 Résumés, [243–245](#), [392](#)
 Resurrection process, [172](#) (figure), [173–174](#), [392](#)
 Retention, selective, [53–54](#)
 Retrospective units, [166](#), [392](#)
 Revelation–concealment dialectic, [169](#) (table), [392–393](#)
 Reward power, [190](#) (table), [393](#)
 Rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, [25](#), [27](#), [41](#)
 Richmond, Virginia, [37](#)
 Ringtones, [228–229](#)
 Robert, Henry Martyn, [180](#) (box)
Robert's Rules of Order, [180](#) (box)
 Robots, [223](#) (box)
 Roles, [162–163](#), [182–183](#)
 Rommel, Erwin, [192](#)

Samples, convenient, [32](#)
 Sandemose, Aksel, [122](#), [122](#) (table)
 Sapir, Edward, [71](#) (box)
 Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, [71](#) (box), [393](#)
 Saussure, Ferdinand de, [80](#) (box)
 Savage, Matthew, [36](#)
 Scenes, [82](#) (table), [393](#)
 Scents, [100](#)
 Schemata, [54](#), [393](#)
 Scipio Africanus, [192](#)
 Secondary questions, [256](#), [393](#)
 Secondary territory, [104](#)
 Sedimentation, [204](#), [393](#)
 Seiter, John, [359](#) (box)
 Selective exposure, [53](#), [393](#)
 Selective listening, [147](#), [393](#)
 Selective perception, [53](#), [393](#)
 Selective retention, [53–54](#), [393](#)
 Self-description, [55](#) (box), [58](#), [393](#)
 Self-disclosure, [57–61](#), [233–234](#), [393](#)
 Self-fulfilling prophecies, [260–261](#), [393](#)
 Semantic diversion, [147](#), [393](#)
 Sexual and gender identities, [57](#) (box)
 Sexual harassment, [209](#), [393](#)
 Sigman, Stuart, [165](#), [166](#), [236](#)
 Significant ties, [235](#), [393](#)
 Signs, [7](#), [393](#)
 Silence, [109](#), [393](#)
 Simmel, Georg, [219](#)
 Sinatra, Frank, [348](#) (box)
 Situational context, [10](#)
 Smartphones
 cultural perceptions of time and, [125](#) (box)
 identity construction using, [227–230](#)

- recording practice presentations on, [349–350](#), [366](#)
- ringtones, [228–229](#)
- social shaping of technology (SST) and, [218](#)
- text messages, number of, [215](#)
- Sociability, [358](#), [359](#) (box), [393](#)
- Social class, [75](#) (box)
- Social construction, [9](#), [393](#)
- Social construction of technology (SCOT), [218](#), [393](#)
- Social judgment theory, [339–341](#), [340](#) (figure), [393](#)
- Social networking sites
 - characteristics of, [236–237](#)
 - early and developing, [234](#) (box)
 - future of, [232](#) (box)
 - identity construction and, [231–234](#)
 - nonverbal cues, lack of, [108](#) (box)
 - photographs on, [232–233](#)
 - provisions of relationships and, [158](#) (box)
 - relational technology and, [227–228](#)
 - relationship maintenance and, [235](#)
 - transacting identities online, [62](#) (box)
- Social process, [172](#) (figure), [173](#), [393](#)
- Social relationships, [156](#), [156](#) (box), [393](#)
- Social roles, [183](#), [393](#)
- Social scientific approach, [30–32](#), [393](#)
- Social scientific revolution, [26](#)
- Social shaping of technology (SST), [218–219](#), [393](#)
- Socialization, cultural, [120](#)
- Socialization impact of media, [221](#), [393](#)
- Socioemotional leaders, [188–189](#), [393](#)
- Socrates, [25](#)
- Source distractions, [146](#), [393](#)
- Sources
 - citation of, [4](#) (box)
 - dated, [261](#) (box)
 - evaluation of, [143](#)
 - inventio* (selecting and searching), [297–298](#), [297](#) (table), [298](#) (table)
 - oral citations, [296](#)
 - past experience with the source, [149](#)
 - types of, [297](#) (box)
- Spatial pattern, [310](#), [393](#)
- Specific purpose, [287–288](#), [393](#)
- Speech codes (communication codes), [130](#), [202](#), [393](#)
- Speech communities, [130](#), [393](#)
- Spillover effects, [207](#)
- Sprague, Jo, [287](#)
- Standpoint theory, [54](#) (box)
- Static nonverbal communication, [95–96](#), [393](#)
- Statistics, [292–294](#), [292](#) (table), [295](#) (table), [393](#)
- Stewart, Charles, [265](#)
- Storming (Tuckman's group development), [185](#) (table), [393](#)
- Storytelling
 - breakup stories, [173](#)

- children's stories and cultural norms, [118](#) (box)
- identity and, [61–62](#)
- verbal communication and, [80](#)
- Strangers, talking to, [160](#)
- Structural perspective, [117–118](#)
- Structuration theory, [204](#), [393](#)
- Stuart, Douglas, [287](#)
- Students, traditional and nontraditional, [52](#) (box)
- Studying methods, improvement of, [353](#) (box). *See also* Note-taking
- Subpoints, [306](#), [307](#) (figure), [393](#)
- Support groups, [179](#) (table), [393](#)
- Support material. *See* Evidence and support material
- Surveillance in an organization, [209–210](#)
- Surveys, [30–31](#), [294](#) (box)
- Syllogisms, [338–339](#), [393](#)
- Symbolic interactionism, [57](#), [394](#)
- Symbolic self, [57](#), [394](#)
- Symbols and symbolic communication
 - Burke's pentad, [81–82](#), [82](#) (table), [83](#) (table)
 - communication as symbolic, [7–8](#)
 - culture and, [116](#)
 - decoding and encoding, [94–95](#), [95](#) (table)
 - defined, [7](#), [394](#)
 - emotions as symbolic activity, [337](#)
 - language and, [69](#)
 - meaning conveyed by, [8](#)
 - nonverbal communication and, [94–95](#)
 - verbal and nonverbal, [10](#)
 - verbal communication and, [70](#)
- Synchronous communication, [236](#), [394](#)
- Syntax, [69](#)
- Taa language (Botswana), [70](#) (box)
- Talk
 - about oneself, [159](#)
 - cultural styles of, [76](#), [78](#) (table)
 - direct and indirect relationship talk, [164–165](#)
 - essential function of, [86–87](#), [164](#)
 - with friends, [74](#) (box)
 - indexical function of, [86](#), [164](#)
 - instrumental, indexical, and essential functions of, [86–87](#)
 - to strangers, [160](#)
 - technology and media used in everyday talk, [223–226](#)
 - See also* Verbal communication
- Task leaders, [188–189](#), [394](#)
- Task roles, [183](#), [394](#)
- Teams, [192](#)
- Teamsterville, [131](#) (box)
- Technological determinism, [217–218](#), [394](#)
- Technology and media, [214–239](#)
 - concurrent media use, [215](#)
 - connotative meanings in media references, [72](#) (box)
 - early cinema depictions of workplace, [200](#) (box)

- e-mail, company surveillance of, [210](#) (box)
- in everyday talk, [223–226](#)
- identity construction and, [225–226](#), [231–234](#)
- impact, views on, [217–219](#)
- interviews and, [251](#) (box), [254](#) (box)
- laptops, note-taking on, [146](#), [147](#) (box)
- media equation, [222](#), [222](#) (table)
- media literacy, [224–225](#)
- medium distractions, [146](#)
- new technology and fear, [216](#), [216](#) (box)
- nonverbal cues, lack of, [108](#) (box)
- power of, [10](#) (box)
- radio, [218](#)
- as relational, [216–217](#)
- relationships and, [39](#) (box), [219–226](#), [220](#) (table), [223](#) (table), [234–237](#)
- socialization impact of media, [221](#)
- study of, [38–39](#)
- telecommuting and virtual workplaces, [205](#) (box)
- See also* Smartphones
- Technology and media generations, [227](#), [394](#)
- Technology and media profile, [226](#), [226](#) (table), [394](#)
- Telecommuting, [205](#) (box)
- Teleprompters, [352](#) (box)
- Territoriality, [103–105](#), [394](#)
- Tesla, Nikola, [218](#)
- Testimony, [290–291](#), [394](#)
- Text messages, number of, [215](#)
- Texts, analysis of, [36](#)
- Thesis restatement, [321–322](#)
- Thesis statements, [288](#), [316–317](#), [394](#)
- Time
 - chronemics, [110](#)
 - culture and, [110](#), [123–124](#), [125](#) (box)
 - industrial, [205](#)
 - statistics and, [293](#)
- Tong, Stephanie Tom, [236–237](#)
- Topical pattern, [311–312](#), [394](#)
- Topics of presentations, [283–286](#), [284](#) (table), [286](#) (table), [318–319](#)
- Topic-specific brainstorming, [285](#), [394](#)
- Totality (relational dialectics), [168](#), [394](#)
- Touch (haptics), [110–111](#), [110](#) (box), [111](#) (box), [111](#) (table). *See also* Handshakes
- Traditional and nontraditional students, [52](#) (box)
- Transaction, communication as
 - action, interaction, and, [16](#) (figure)
 - culture and, [118–119](#), [127–131](#)
 - defined, [17](#), [387](#)
 - engaged listening and, [140–141](#)
 - leadership and, [192](#)
 - relationships and, [163–168](#)
 - study of communication and, [17](#)
 - workplace and, [204](#), [206–207](#)
- Transgressions, major, [170](#)

Transitions, [308–309](#), [394](#)
 Trent, Judith, [40](#)
 Truth, [30](#), [32](#)
 Tuckman, Bruce, [185](#), [185](#) (table)
 Unity principle, [306–307](#), [394](#)
 Values
 of audience, [281–283](#)
 claims of value, [334–335](#)
 defined, [282](#), [394](#)
 encoded in words, [72–73](#), [73](#) (table)
 Verbal communication, [68–89](#)
 Burke's pentad, [81–82](#), [82](#) (table), [83](#) (table)
 conversational hypertext, [75](#)
 as cultural, [76](#), [78](#) (table)
 defined, [69](#), [394](#)
 facework and facewants, [84](#)
 frames and, [77–80](#)
 instrumental, indexical, and essential functions of talk, [86–87](#)
 language, use of, [69](#)
 meaning and, [10](#), [71–72](#), [74–75](#)
 nonverbal communication and, [98–99](#)
 politeness theory and, [85–86](#), [85](#) (table)
 as presentational, [80–82](#)
 as relational, [73–75](#)
 as representational, [80](#)
 restricted code and elaborated code, [75](#) (box)
 social class and, [75](#) (box)
 as symbolic, [70](#)
 values encoded through words, [72–73](#), [73](#) (table)
 See also Talk
 Verifiability, [145](#), [394](#)
 Virtual workplaces, [205](#) (box)
 Vision, leadership, [190–191](#)
 Vocal characteristics as distractions, [146](#)
 Vocalics (paralanguage), [109–110](#), [356–357](#), [394](#)
 Vocational anticipatory socialization, [198–199](#), [394](#)
 Volume, [109](#), [357](#), [394](#)
 Voluntary audience, [281](#), [394](#)
 Wahls, Zach, [370](#)
 Walther, Joseph, [236–237](#)
 Wandering thoughts, [148](#), [394](#)
 Warmth dimension of environment, [102](#)
 Watzlawick, Paul, [12](#)
 Weiss, Robert, [158](#)
 Wellman, Barry, [235](#)
 Whorf, Benjamin, [71](#) (box)
 Williams, Kevin, [30](#)
 Wood, Julia, [54](#) (box), [168](#), [170](#)
 Work spouses, [208](#) (box)
 Workplace, [196–212](#)

as culture, [200](#), [203–205](#)
in early cinema, [200](#) (box)
as frame, [200–202](#)
high-context and low-context cultures in, [122](#) (box)
identity and, [202](#)
listening, [137](#)
metaphors of organizations, [199–200](#)
as relationships, [197](#), [205–211](#), [206](#) (table)
as site of meaning making, [198](#)
structure vs. experience of relationships in, [197](#)
study of, [39–40](#)
surveillance in, [209–210](#)
teams and, [192](#)
as transacted, [204](#), [206–207](#)
vocational anticipatory socialization, [198–199](#)
Wrap-up signals, [266](#), [320–321](#), [394](#)
Wright, Courtney, [31](#)

Yarbrough, Elaine, [111](#), [111](#) (table)

Zero-history groups, [185](#) (box)
Zorn, Theodore, [198](#)
Zweig, David, [209–210](#)