Communication Theories and Intercultural communications

Thanks in part to to K. Ellis, A. Nicholson

Ref:
Eunson, B., C21(2010) – Communicating in the 21st Century (2nd Edition), Wiley: Chapters 9, 10
Zelley, E.D.. and Daintn,M. (2014), Applying Communication Theory for Professional Life: A practical Introduction, 3rd Ed.

Topic Objectives

For you to
• Understand that there are different theories behind how we (an organisations) communicate • Understand that these theories apply to face to face communications as well as computer mediated communications
• Understand that intercultural awareness will assist in creating and managing effective communication

View this for a quick understanding
Shannon Weaver Model as it applies to twitter

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDWprG0CvBU

"Good" communication means different things to different people in different situations. To communicate well you need to understand that there are underlying principles and depending on various aspects including the situation, how you communicate might need to change.
You cannot assume that communicating the same way for everyone, for every message and in every situation will be the same.
For effective communication you will need to understand and consider these principles.

In organisations, one can think that communication is just information passing from one area to another. It is something that happens along with project management, planning and so on.

However, you should consider that communication is about how people manage meaning. This is not the same. We have to consider whether what is perceived to have been heard is what was intended. It is not just an extra thing to do but is necessary for every interaction.

Basic Communications Concepts

Communications may be considered in terms of:

1. **Who?** – transmitter

2. **Says what?** – content

3. **How?** – structure/format

4. **To Whom?** – audience

Often, we tend to focus on the second aspect – the content of the communication. By expanding our focus to consider the other aspects more actively, we can become more effective communicators.

There are many formal communication models (See Eunson Chapter 1)
• Lasswell's Model (Eunson Table 1.1)
• The Shannon-Weaver Model (Eunson Fig 1.5)
• Berlo's SMCR model
• Lievrouw and Finn's communication systems model
• Foulger's ecological model of communications
• Eunson's expanded model of communication

Simplest Model often termed Shannon- Weaver model.

By examining communications models, we hope to gain a better understanding of how to be effective communicators. We now examine two particular models with this in mind.

Formal Communications Models

Numerous commentators have devised different communications models, including:

Lasswell's model of communication

The Shannon-Weaver communication model

Lasswell's Model

Harold Lasswell developed an influential communications model, suggesting that to understand or craft a communication, we should answer the following questions:

Who	What	Channel	Whom	Effect
Who?	Says what?	In what channel?	To whom?	With what effect?

Each of these relates to a different aspect of the communication, allowing distinct focus on the transmitter; content; medium; audience and outcome of a communication, respectively.

The Shannon-Weaver Model

Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1963) published a mathematical communications model, which introduces the concept of 'noise' in communications.
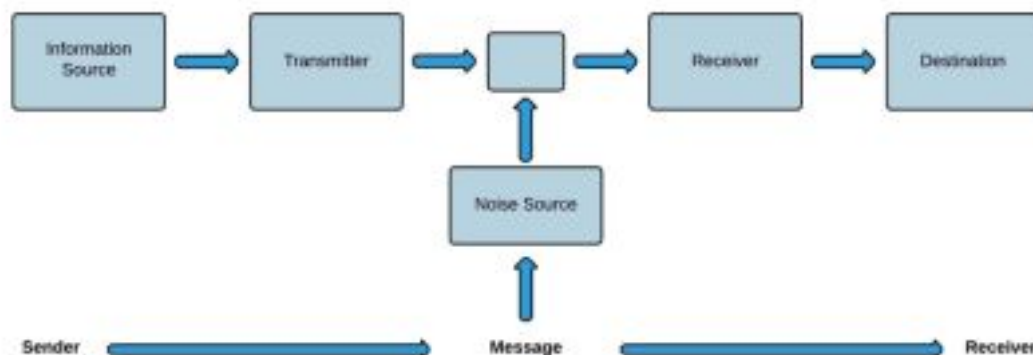
In this model, the 'noise' which may disrupt the communication occurs in the channel – so it may be viewed as technical. But we can also consider 'noise' as growing out of semantic issues or other communications issues.

So generally, the model consists of a sender, a message, a channel where the message travels, noise or interference and a receiver.

Shannon Weaver Model as it applies to twitterhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDWprG0CvBU

Priestly's Paradox

Author John Boyton Priestly suggested that the more we elaborate our method of communication, the less we actually communicate. In an era where the vast majority of our communications are 'elaborated' by technological layers, are we communicating less effectively? Alternatively, is the trend toward short communications, such as SMS and instant messaging a reduction in the 'elaboration' of our communications, meaning we communicate more effectively?

Importance of understanding both organisational culture and cross cultural awareness

Understanding these various communications models and concepts can assist us as we attempt to become more effective communicators.

If the message is received not as it was sent, then there is a tendency to blame the receiver, the audience. However, this is often due to all the other players described in the model – perhaps choosing the wrong channel, too much noise and so on.

Wilbur Schramm added another dimension to the model, that of relationship, in that how will the relationship between the sender and the receiver affect the message, so the social environment. This leads to taking into account the situation and the organizational culture – all concepts that affect how passing information is managed and understood. Job titles affect affect the message sending and receiving. Organisations have official rues and procedures so this environment will affect communication model. So communication is not just about sending a message but bout the response. Messages are sent to get a response. The response too, can be affected by noise.

As mentioned the organizational culture will affect all the players in the model, as will cross cultural (international)issues. These you also need to be aware of.
So a recognition of the fact that culture as in organisation culture and cross cultural (as in individual people/countries/ will have an effect on communication bath face to face and vi a technology . Businesses need to recognize cultural variables that affect attitudes, values and behaviours in sending or receiving the message (and responding) and will need to adapt business strategy for communications accordingly and probably for each type of situation.