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# Communication Perspectives

Questions you'll be able to answer after reading this chapter:

- How does the communication process work?
- What characterizes each of the communication settings you will study in this course?
- What are the basic principles of communication?
- What major ethical issues face communicators?
- What is *communication competence* and what can you do to achieve it?
- What is *communication apprehension* and how does it relate to communication competence?

Mimi and Marcus finished talking with the fifth car salesperson.

"From what I could understand, most of the basic features we need are about the same," said Mimi. "So, for me, it comes down to who we feel most comfortable with."

"Yeah, that's pretty much the way I see it. And from that standpoint, I'd pick Carrie," Marcus responded.

"She really seemed nice, didn't she?" asked Mimi. "She seemed friendly and—unlike Paul—she talked to both of us, not just you."

Marcus replied, "She talked about features, price, and financing options that were tailored to our specific needs—unlike Dempsey, who spent most of his time talking about luxury features that cost more than we can afford."

Mimi added, "Yeah, and Gloria was so disorganized . . . "

"And she was so focused on getting through her presentation that she didn't even notice when you tried to ask a question!" Marcus interjected.

"I sort of liked Steve," Mimi continued, "but when we suggested that the price range he was quoting was out of our budget, he wasn't much help. Once he got off his 'script,' he seemed lost."

"Well," Marcus replied, "not only did Carrie offer a car with features we can use and a financing plan we can afford, she also led me to believe that we could call her with questions later about when and where to service our vehicle."

"OK," Mimi said as she nodded. "So we agree; we're buying our car from Carrie!"

Why was Carrie successful? Was it the car she was promoting or her specialized expertise in the automobile business? Not necessarily. From this conversation, it appears that Carrie's success was due to her ability to communicate with Mimi and Marcus. Carrie's success is not unusual. Time and time again, studies have concluded that, for almost any job, employers seek oral communication skills, teamwork skills, and interpersonal abilities (College learning for the new global century, 2008; Hansen & Hansen, 2007; Young, 2003). For example, an article on the role of communication in the workplace reported that in engineering, a highly technical field, speaking skills were very important for 72 percent of the employers surveyed (Darling & Dannels, 2003, p. 12). A survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (Koncz, 2008) reported the top 10 personal qualities and skills that employers seek from college graduates. The number one skill was communication, including face-to-face speaking, presentational speaking, and writing. Other skills ranked in the top 10 that you will learn about and practice in this course include teamwork skills (number three), analytical skills (number five), interpersonal skills (number eight), and problem-solving skills (number nine). The employers also said these very skills are, unfortunately, the ones many new graduates lack. So this course can significantly increase your ability to get a job and be successful in your chosen career.

How effectively you communicate with others is important not only to your career, but also to your personal relationships. Your ability to make and keep friends, to be a good family member, to have satisfying intimate relationships, to participate in or lead groups, and to prepare and present speeches depends on your communication skills. During this course, you will learn about the communication process and have an opportunity to practice basic communication skills that will help you improve your relationships.

In this chapter, we begin by explaining the process of communication. Next, we describe several communication settings and how we'll address improving communication skills for them in this book. From there, we describe several fundamental principles of communication. Finally, we discuss communication competence, the role managing communication apprehension plays in achieving it, and a strategy for improving your communication skills.

# The Communication Process

**Communication** is the process of creating or sharing meaning in informal conversation, group interaction, or public speaking. To understand how this process works, we begin by describing its essential elements: participants (who), messages (what), context (where), channels (how), interference (distractions), and feedback (reaction).

How does the communication process work?

## Participants

The **participants** are the individuals who assume the roles of senders and receivers during an interaction. As senders, participants form and transmit messages using verbal symbols, visual images, and nonverbal behavior. As receivers, they interpret the messages that have been transmitted to them.

## Messages

**Messages** are the verbal utterances, visual images, and nonverbal behaviors to which meaning is attributed during communication. To understand how messages are created and received, we need to understand meanings, symbols, encoding and decoding, and form (organization).

### Meanings

**Meanings** include the thoughts in your mind as well as the interpretations you make of another's message. Meanings are the ways participants make sense of messages. It is important to realize that meanings are not transferred from one person to another, but are created together in an exchange. Some communication settings enable participants to verify that they have shared meanings; in other settings this is more difficult. For instance, if Sarah says to Tiffany that many female celebrities are unhealthily underweight, through the exchange of verbal messages, they can together come to some degree of understanding of what that means. But if Sarah is giving a speech on the subject to an audience of 200 people, Tiffany's ability to question Sarah and negotiate a mutual meaning is limited. If Sarah shows a slideshow of before-and-after photographs of some of the celebrities she is referring to, she can make the meaning clear even for a large audience.

### Symbols

To express yourself, you form messages made of verbal symbols (words), nonverbal cues (behaviors), and visual images. **Symbols** are words, sounds, and actions that represent specific ideas and feelings. As you speak, you choose word symbols to express your meaning. At the same time, you also use facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice—all symbolic, nonverbal cues—in an attempt to express your meaning. Your listeners make interpretations or attribute meaning to the messages they receive. When you offer your messages through a variety of symbols, the meaning you are trying to convey becomes clearer.

### Encoding and decoding

**Encoding** is the process of putting your thoughts and feelings into words, nonverbal cues, and images. **Decoding** is the process of interpreting another's message. Ordinarily you do not consciously think about either the encoding or the decoding process. Only when there is a difficulty, such as speaking in a second language or having to use an easier vocabulary with children, do you become aware of encoding. You may not think about decoding until someone seems to speak in circles or uses unfamiliar technical words and you have difficulty interpreting or understanding what is being said. Have you ever taken a course where the instructor used lots of unfamiliar technical words? If so, how did that affect the decoding process for you?

**communication**
*the process of creating or sharing meaning in informal conversation, group interaction, or public speaking.*

**participants**
*individuals who assume the roles of senders and receivers during an interaction.*

**messages**
*verbal utterances, visual images, and nonverbal behaviors to which meaning is attributed during communication.*

**meanings**
*thoughts in our minds and interpretations of others' messages.*

**symbols**
*words, sounds, and actions that are generally understood to represent ideas and feelings.*

**encoding**
*the process of putting our thoughts and feelings into words and nonverbal cues.*

**decoding**
*the process of interpreting another's message.*

### Form (Organization)

When the meaning we wish to share is complex, we may need to organize it in sections or in a certain order. Message form is especially important when one person talks without interruption for a relatively long time, such as in a public speech or when reporting an event to a colleague at work. Visual images also need to be organized and in good form if they are to aid understanding.

## Context

The **context** is composed of the (1) physical, (2) social, (3) historical, (4) psychological, and (5) cultural situations in which a communication encounter occurs, including what precedes and follows what is said. According to noted German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the ideal speech situation is impossible to achieve, but considering its contexts as we communicate with others can move us closer to that goal (Littlejohn & Foss, 2007 p. 335). The context affects the expectations of the participants, the meaning these participants derive, and their subsequent behavior.

### Physical context

The **physical context** includes the location, the environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, and noise level), the distance between communicators, and the time of day. Each of these factors can affect the communication. For instance, the meaning shared in a conversation may be affected by whether it is held in a crowded company cafeteria, an elegant candlelit restaurant, over the telephone, or on the Internet.

Today, more and more of our communication exchanges occur in technologically mediated spaces. When you call someone on your cell phone, for instance, you are in different physical places and your conversation will be influenced by the physical contexts each of you occupy as well as by the quality of your phone connection. Moreover, the messages and meaning are affected by whether the technology used is synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous technologies allow us to exchange messages in real time, while asynchronous technologies allow delays between sending, receiving, and responding to messages. Telephone calls are synchronous, and voice mail messages and e-mail are typically asynchronous. Instant messages (IMs) and text messages may be either synchronous or asynchronous.

**context**
*the setting in which communication occurs, including what precedes and follows what is said.*

**physical context**
*a communication encounter's location, environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, noise level), distance between communicators, seating arrangements, and time of day.*

**social context**
*the nature of the relationship that exists between the participants.*

**historical context**
*the background provided by previous communication episodes between the participants that influence understandings in the current encounter.*

### Social context

The **social context** is the nature of the relationship between the participants. Whether communication takes place among family members, friends, acquaintances, work associates, or strangers influences what and how messages are formed, shared, and interpreted. For instance, most people change how they interact when talking with their parents or siblings as compared to how they interact when talking with their friends.

### Historical context

The **historical context** is the background provided by previous communication episodes between the participants. It influences understandings in the current encounter. For instance, suppose one morning Chad tells Shelby that he will pick up the rough draft of a paper they had given to their professor for feedback to help prepare the final manuscript. When Shelby joins Chad for lunch in the cafeteria, she says, "Did you get it?" Another person listening to the conversation would have no idea what the *it* is. Yet Chad quickly replies, "It's on my desk." Shelby and Chad would understand each other because the content of their previous conversation provides the context for understanding what "it" is in this exchange.

### Psychological context

The **psychological context** includes the moods and feelings each person brings to the interpersonal encounter. For instance, suppose Corinne is under a lot of stress. While she is studying for an exam, a friend stops by and pleads with her to take a break and go to the gym with her. Corinne, who is normally good-natured, may explode with an angry tirade. Why? Because her stress level provides the psychological context within which she hears this message and it affects how she responds.

### Cultural context

The **cultural context** includes the values, beliefs, orientations, underlying assumptions, and rituals prevalent among people in a society (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2007). Culture penetrates into every aspect of our lives, affecting how we think, talk, and behave. Each of us belongs to many cultural groups, though we may differ in how much we identify with each group. Mina, for example, was born in Taiwan but was raised in Boston, where she attended Chinese elementary school. She is also a college student and a Democrat. Each of these groups helps characterize her cultural setting. When two people from different cultures interact, misunderstandings may occur because of the cultural variations between them. For example, the role of a "good student" in many Asian cultures typically means being quiet, respectful, and never challenging others' views, but the good-student role in U.S. classrooms often includes being talkative, assertive, and debating the views expressed by others. The Pop Comm article in this chapter describes how the cultural ritual of mourning is changing in the U.S.A.

**psychological context**
*the mood and feelings each person brings to a conversation.*

**cultural context**
*the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society.*

**channel**
*both the route traveled by the message and the means of transportation.*

**interference (noise)**
*any stimulus that interferes with the process of sharing meaning.*

**physical interference**
*sights, sounds, and other stimuli in the environment that draw people's attention away from intended meaning.*

## Channels

**Channels** are both the route traveled by the message and the means of transportation. Messages are transmitted through sensory channels. Face-to-face communication has three basic channels: verbal symbols, nonverbal cues, and visual images. Technologically mediated communication uses these same channels, though nonverbal cues such as movements, touch, and gestures are represented by visual symbols like **emoticons** (textual images that symbolize the sender's mood, emotion, or facial expressions) and **acronyms** (abbreviations that stand in for common phrases). For example, in a face-to-face interaction, Barry might express his frustration about a poor grade on an assignment by verbally noting why he thought the grade was unfair, by visually showing the assignment along with the grading criteria for it, and by nonverbally raising his voice and shaking his fist. In an online interaction, he might insert a frowning-face emoticon (☹) or the acronym "POed" to represent those nonverbal behaviors.

Did you know that 2.5 billion text messages are sent each day in the United States?

Leland Bobbe/Photonica/Getty images

## Interference (Noise)

**Interference (noise)** is any stimulus that hinders the process of sharing meaning. Interference can be physical or psychological.

**Physical interference** includes the sights, sounds, and other stimuli in the environment that draw people's attention away from intended meaning. For instance, while a

## Mourning in the United States, 21st-Century Style

Pop Comm!

CHIP EAST/Reuters/Landov

Mourning is a universal human communication activity. It is the process of celebrating the life of someone while grieving his or her death. Mourning rituals and traditions vary by culture and religion and change over time. So it is not surprising that mourning in the United States in the 21st century is adapting past practices to modern life.

Mourning rituals include norms for how the body of the deceased is dealt with, burial and commemorative rituals, symbols of mourning, and comforting practices. In the past, personally washing, dressing, and preparing the body for burial enabled mourners to present the deceased as they would like the person to be remembered. Burial and commemorative rituals gave family, friends, and the larger community an opportunity to gather, exchange memories of the deceased, comfort those closest to the deceased, and receive comfort in return. Graves were places where those close to the deceased could go to "talk" to the departed and recall memories. Family members would often withdraw into their homes for a period of time to grieve. Friends and community members would visit with the family in their home during this intense period of mourning. Those closest to the person who had died chose or were expected to wear symbols of their status as mourners. Mourning clothes and tokens served as signals to others in the community that the person so dressed was in mourning and should be accorded extra gentleness.

Today, in the U.S.A. most families do not personally prepare the body of their loved one for burial

friend is giving you instructions on how to work the new MP3 player, your attention may be drawn away by the external noise of your favorite TV show, which is on in the next room. External noise does not have to be a sound, however. Perhaps, while your friend is giving instructions, your attention is drawn momentarily to an attractive man or woman. Such visual distractions are also physical interference.

**psychological interference**
*internal distractions based on thoughts, feelings, or emotional reactions to symbols.*

**internal noise**
*thoughts and feelings that compete for attention and interfere with the communication process.*

**Psychological interference** includes internal distractions based on thoughts or feelings and can fall into two categories: internal noise and semantic noise. **Internal noise** refers to the thoughts and feelings that compete for attention and interfere with the communication process. If you have ever tuned out the lecture your professor is giving and tuned into a daydream or a past conversation, then you have experienced internal noise. **Semantic noise** refers to the distractions aroused by certain symbols that take our attention away from the main message. If a friend describes a 40-year-old secretary as "the girl in the office," and you think *girl* is an odd and condescending term for a 40-year-old

or wear special mourning clothes. Increasingly, one or more members of the family may honor their loved one by preparing a commemorative Web page that memorializes the life of the departed. Web sites such as Legacy.com, MyDeathSpace.com, and Memory-Of.com have been around for over a decade to facilitate the creation of interactive online memorials. An article in *The Boston Globe* recounted the story of Shawn Kelley who created a "moving tribute" to his brother Michael, a National Guardsman killed in Afghanistan. The 60-second video features a slide show of Michael growing up, from a toddler to a clean-cut teen, while quiet classical music plays softly and a voice-over recounts Michael's attributes and interests. Shawn reported that it made him feel good to be able to "talk" about his brother, and over a year later he was still visiting the site to watch the video and to view the messages left by family members and friends (Plumb, 2006). Today the rituals traditionally associated with funerals and memorial services such as eulogies, visitations, and expressions of condolence now often take place online.

Interactive memorial Web sites also have become a "place" where mourners can "visit" with their departed loved one and connect with other mourners, activities that traditionally occurred at a funeral or memorial service. Most Web sites that host memorial Web pages allow visitors to leave messages of condolence, share stories about the deceased, and leave messages directed to the deceased. Denise McGrath, a mother who created "R.I.P. Tony," a memorial Web page for her teenage son on MySpace explained that it was "just a place for his friends to go" (Plumb, 2006). Today Legacy.com hosts over 50,000 permanent memorials and reports being visited by over 10 million users each month (Plumb, 2009).

The somber mourning clothes of past generations have given way to newer ways of marking oneself as in mourning. Today family members and friends may wear T-shirts imprinted with pictures of the deceased. This practice is most common when the departed is young and died a violent death. According to Montana Miller, professor of popular culture at Bowling Green State University, the tradition of wearing commemorative t-shirts originated with West Coast gangs in the early 1990s (Moser, 2005).

Not only are people using T-shirts to signal mourning, but they are also designing decals to place on cars and bikes to memorialize those who have died. In a highly mobile society, decals are visual markers that can not only memorialize a loved one who has died but can also connect mourners to others who have suffered a similar loss. When one 17-year-old was shot and killed, hundreds of people in his town put memorial decals in their car windows. Four years later the young man's mother reported that seeing those decals continued to help her with her grieving process (Moser, 2005).

Although we may no longer personally prepare the dead for burial or wear somber formal mourning clothes, we still need to connect and communicate with others as we grieve, and we continue to evolve new methods for doing so.

woman, you might not even hear the rest of what your friend has to say. Whenever we react emotionally to a word or a behavior, we are experiencing semantic noise.

## Feedback

**Feedback** is the reactions and responses to a message that indicate to the sender whether and how that message was heard, seen, and interpreted. In face-to-face communication, we can express feedback verbally through words or nonverbally through body language. In online interactions, we can express feedback verbally through words or nonverbally through emoticons and acronyms. We continuously give feedback when we are listening to another, if only by paying attention, giving a confused look, or showing signs of boredom. Or we may give direct verbal feedback by saying, "I don't understand the point you are making" or "That's a great comment you just made." In online interactions, we might use an acronym like CC (I understand) or WDYM (What do you mean?).

**semantic noise**
*distractions aroused by certain symbols that take our attention away from the main message.*

**feedback**
*reactions and responses to messages.*

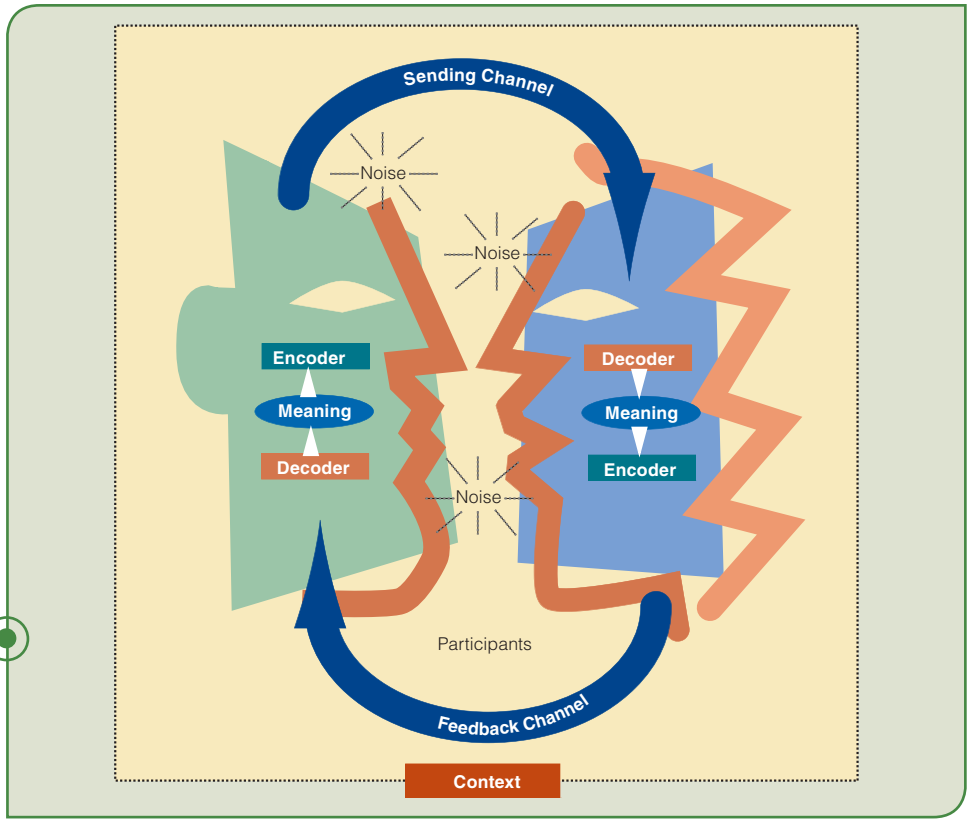


**Figure 1.1**
A model of communication between two individuals

Skill Learning Activity 1.1

What characterizes each of the communication settings discussed in this book?

## A Model of the Basic Communication Process

Figure 1.1 illustrates the communication process between two people. In the minds of these people are meanings, thoughts, and feelings that they intend to share. These thoughts and feelings are created and shaped by the people's values, culture, environment, experiences, occupation, sex, interests, knowledge, and attitudes. To communicate a message, the sender encodes thoughts and feelings into messages that are sent using one or more channels.

The receiver decodes or interprets the symbols in an attempt to understand the speaker's meaning. This decoding process is affected by the receiver's total field of experience—that is, by all the same factors that shape the encoding process. Feedback completes the process so that the sender and receiver can arrive at a similar understanding of the message.

The model depicts the context as the area around the participants. This may include the physical, social, historical, psychological, and cultural contexts that permeate all parts of the process. Similarly, the model shows that during conversation physical and psychological interference (noise), including internal and semantic distractions, may interfere at various points and therefore affect the people's ability to arrive at similar meanings. As you might imagine, the process becomes more complex when more than two people are conversing or when someone is speaking to a large and diverse audience.

**communication setting**
*the different communication environments within which people interact, characterized by the number of participants and the extent to which the interaction is formal or informal; also called communication contexts.*

**intrapersonal communication**
*the interactions that occur in a person's mind when he or she is talking with himself or herself.*

## Communication Settings

The basic communication process describes how meanings are shared and in this course you will learn skills that will help you communicate effectively regardless

of the type of interaction you are experiencing. But there are also important skills to learn that are specific to a particular communication setting. **Communication settings** differentiate interactions based on the number of participants and the extent to which the interaction is characterized by formal or informal exchanges. Also called *communication contexts* by some scholars these classifications describe the different communication environments within which we interact. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, pp. 52–53). In this book, you will learn skills that will help you in intrapersonal settings, interpersonal settings, small group settings, and public communication settings.

**Intrapersonal communication** refers to the interactions that occur in your mind when you are talking with yourself. While we may occasionally think out loud, we usually don't verbalize our internal dialog. When you sit in class and think about what you'll do later that day, you are communicating intrapersonally. Similarly, when you send yourself a reminder note as an e-mail or text message, you are communicating intrapersonally. A lot of our intrapersonal communication occurs subconsciously (Kellerman, 1992). When we drive into the driveway "without thinking," we are communicating intrapersonally on a subconscious level. The study of intrapersonal communication often focuses on its role in shaping self-perceptions and in managing communication apprehension, that is, the fear associated with communicating with others (McCroskey, 1977). Our study of intrapersonal communication will focus on self-talk as a means to improve your self-concept and self-esteem and, ultimately, your communication competence in a variety of situations.

**Interpersonal communication** is characterized by informal interaction between two people who have an identifiable relationship with each other (Knapp & Daly, 2002). Talking to a friend between classes, visiting on the phone with your mother, texting or chatting online with your brother, and comforting someone who has suffered a loss are all examples of interpersonal communication. In Part II, our study of interpersonal communication includes the exploration of how we develop, maintain, improve, or end our relationships with others. We will also focus on listening and responding to others with empathy and on sharing personal information.

**Small group communication** typically involves three to 20 people who come together to communicate with one another (Beebe & Masterson, 2006; Hirokawa, Cathcart, Samovar, & Henman, 2003). There are many kinds of small groups; examples include a family, a group of friends, a group of classmates working on a project, and a management team in the workplace. Small group communication can occur in face-to-face settings, as well as online through electronic mailing lists, discussion boards, and blogs. In Part III, our study of small groups focuses on the characteristics of effective groups, ethical and effective communication in groups, leadership, problem-solving, conflict, and group presentations.

**Public communication** is communication delivered to audiences of more than 20 people. Public communication includes public speeches and other types of mass communication that you may experience live, in person, or on a delayed or mediated basis. For example, when President Barack Obama delivered his inaugural address some people were there, others watched on TV or the

**interpersonal communication**
*informal interaction between two people who have an identifiable relationship with each other.*

**small group communication**
*two to 20 people who participants come together for the specific purpose of solving a problem or arriving at a decision.*

**public communication**
*one participant, the speaker, delivers a prepared message to a group or audience who has assembled to hear the speaker.*

Karen Kapoor/Getty Images

How might the conversation of these people differ if they were in the library working on a class project?

Internet at the time he spoke, and still others have experienced his speech after Inaugural Day by viewing it in the form of televised snippets or via a Web site such as YouTube. The Internet is also becoming the medium of choice for posting job ads and résumés, for advertising and buying products, and for political activism. In Part IV, our study of public communication will focus on preparing, practicing, and delivering effective oral presentations in both face-to-face and virtual environments.

Skill Learning Activity 1.2

## Communication Principles

Principles are general truths. Understanding the principles of communication is important as you begin your study because they will provide a foundation for practicing and improving your communication skills. In this section, we discuss seven generally agreed-upon principles: communication has purpose, communication is continuous, communication messages vary in conscious thought, communication is relational, communication is guided by culture, communication has ethical implications, and communication is learned.

### Communication Has Purpose

What are the fundamental principles of communication?

When people communicate with each other, they have a purpose for doing so. The purpose may be serious or trivial, and they may or may not be aware of it at the time. Here we list five basic purposes for communicating that we'll be addressing throughout the book.

1. **We communicate to develop and maintain our sense of self.** Through our interactions, we learn who we are, what we are good at, and how people react to how we behave.
2. **We communicate to meet our social needs.** Just as we need food, water, and shelter, so too do we, as social animals, need contact with other people. Two people may converse happily for hours, chatting about inconsequential matters that neither remembers afterward. Still, their communication has functioned to meet the important need simply to talk with another human being.
3. **We communicate to develop and maintain relationships.** Not only do we get to know others through our communication with them but, more importantly, we develop relationships with them—relationships that grow and deepen or stagnate and wither away. For example, when Beth calls Leah to ask whether she'd like to join her for lunch to discuss a project they are working on, her purpose actually may be to resolve a misunderstanding they've had because she wants to maintain a positive relationship with Leah.
4. **We communicate to exchange information.** Some information we get through observation, some through reading, some through media, and a great deal through direct communication with others, whether face-to-face, via text messaging, or online through e-mail and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Whether we are trying to decide how warmly to dress or whom to vote for in the next election, all of us have countless exchanges that involve sending and receiving information.
5. **We communicate to influence others.** It is doubtful that a day goes by in which you don't engage in behavior such as trying to convince your friends to go to a particular restaurant or to see a certain movie, to persuade your supervisor to alter your schedule, or to convince an instructor to change a grade.

Skill Learning Activity 1.3

## Communication Is Continuous

Because communication is nonverbal and visual as well as verbal, we are always sending behavioral messages from which others draw inferences or meaning. Even silence communicates if another person infers meaning from it. Why? Because your nonverbal behavior represents reactions to your environment and to the people around you. If you are cold, you shiver; if you are hot or nervous, you perspire; if you are bored, happy, or confused, your face or body language probably will show it. Not only that, we are continuously sending and receiving multiple messages when we communicate with others. For example, as you talk with your friend about where to go on spring break, both of you are simultaneously sending and receiving multiple verbal and nonverbal messages to each other. As skilled communicators, we need to be aware of the explicit and implicit messages we are constantly sending to others.

## Communication Messages Vary in Conscious Thought

Recall that sharing meaning with another person involves encoding and decoding verbal messages, nonverbal cues, and even visual images. Our messages may (1) occur spontaneously, (2) be based on a "script" we have learned or rehearsed, or (3) be carefully constructed based on our understanding of the unique situation in which we find ourselves.

Many of our messages are **spontaneous expressions,** spoken without much conscious thought. For example, when you burn your finger, you may blurt out, "Ouch!" When something goes right, you may break into a broad smile.

At other times, our messages are **scripted,** phrasings that we have learned from our past encounters and judge to be appropriate to the present situation. Many of these scripts are learned in childhood. For example, when you want the sugar bowl but cannot reach it, you may say, "Please pass the sugar," followed by "Thank you" when someone complies. This conversational sequence comes from your "table manners script," which may have been drilled into you at home. Scripts enable us to use messages that are appropriate to the situation and are likely to increase the effectiveness of our communication. One goal of this text is to acquaint you with general scripts (or skills) that can be adapted for use in your communication encounters across a variety of relationships, situations, and cultures.

Finally, our messages may be carefully constructed to meet the unique requirements of a particular situation. **Constructed messages** are those that we put together with careful thought when we recognize that our known scripts are inadequate for the situation.

**spontaneous expressions**
*messages spoken without much conscious thought.*

**scripted messages**
*phrasings learned from past encounters that we judge to be appropriate to the present situation.*

**constructed messages**
*messages put together with careful thought when we recognize that our known scripts are inadequate for the situation.*

## Communication Is Relational

In any communication setting, in addition to sharing content meaning, our messages also reflect two important aspects of our relationships: immediacy and control.

**Immediacy** is the degree of liking or attractiveness in a relationship. For instance, when José passes Josh on campus he may say, "Josh, good to see you" (a verbal expression of friendliness); the nonverbal behavior that accompanies the words may show Josh whether José is genuinely happy to see him or is only expressing recognition. For instance, if José smiles, has a sincere sound to his voice, looks Josh in the eye, and perhaps pats him on the back or shakes hands firmly, then Josh will recognize these signs of friendliness. If, however, José speaks quickly with no vocal inflection and with a deadpan facial expression, Josh will probably perceive the comment as impersonal communication offered merely to meet some social expectation.

**Control** is the degree to which one participant is perceived to be more dominant or powerful. Thus, when Tom says to Sue, "I know you're concerned about

**immediacy**
*the degree of liking or attractiveness in a relationship.*

**control**
*the degree to which one participant is perceived to be more dominant or powerful.*



What message about immediacy and control do wedding couples send as they feed each other cake? Power in relationships is influenced by both verbal and nonverbal messages.

the budget, but I'll see to it that we have money to cover everything," his words and the sound of his voice may be saying that he is "in charge" of finances—that he is in control. How Sue responds to Tom determines whether, on this issue, she submits to his perception of control. If Sue says, "Thanks, I know you have a better handle on finances than I do," then she accepts that on this issue, she is willing to submit to Tom at this time. A few days later, if Tom says to Sue, "I think we need to cut back on credit card expenses for a couple of months," and Sue responds, "No way! I need a new suit for work, the car needs new tires, and you promised we could replace the couch," then the nature of the relationship will require further discussion.

## Communication Is Guided by Culture

**Culture** may be defined as systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. It includes a system of shared beliefs, values, symbols, and behaviors. How messages are formed and interpreted depends on the cultural background of the participants. We need to look carefully at ourselves and our communication behavior; as we interact with others whose cultural backgrounds differ from our own, so we don't unintentionally communicate in ways that are culturally inappropriate or insensitive and thereby undermine our relationships. In addition to national and ethnic culture we also need to be sensitive to the sex, age, class, and sexual orientation of our listeners. Failure to take those differences into account when we interact can also lead us to behave insensitively.

Throughout the history of the United States, we've experienced huge migrations of people from different parts of the world. According to the *New York Times Almanac* (Wright, 2002), at the turn of the 21st century, people of Latin and Asian descent constituted 12.5 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively, of the total U.S. population. About 2.4 percent of the population regards itself as multiracial. Combined with the approximately 13 percent of our population that is of African descent, these four groups account for nearly 32 percent of the total population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, this figure is predicted to rise to nearly 50 percent by 2050.

Web Resource 1.1

According to Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2007) "a number of cultural components are particularly relevant to the student of intercultural communication. These include (1) perception, (2) patterns of cognition, (3) verbal behaviors, (4) nonverbal behaviors, and the influence of context" (p. 13). Because cultural concerns permeate all of communication, in each chapter of this book we will point out when the concepts and skills you are learning are viewed differently by cultural groups other than the dominant American one. In the Diverse Voices feature found in many chapters, authors explain how they or their culture views a concept presented in the text. In this chapter, Harlan Cleveland describes how the diverse peoples in the United States have learned to live together.

**culture**
*systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.*

Diverse Voices

## Lessons from American Experience

by Harland Cleveland

*The late Harland Cleveland was president of the University of Hawaii and the World Academy of Art and Science. In this selection, Cleveland explains how Hawaii, the most diverse of our 50 states, achieves ethnic and racial peace. He argues that the Hawaiian experience is no different from the experience of immigrants to the mainland; the ability to tolerate diversity is not unique in the world.*

We Americans have learned, in our short but intensive 200-plus years of history as a nation, a first lesson about diversity: that it cannot be governed by drowning it in "integration."

I came face-to-face with this truth when, just a quarter of a century ago, I became president of the University of Hawaii. Everyone who lives in Hawaii, or even visits there, is impressed by its residents' comparative tolerance toward each other. On closer inspection, paradise seems based on paradox: Everybody's a minority. The tolerance is not despite the diversity but because of it.

It is not through the disappearance of ethnic distinctions that the people of Hawaii achieved a level of racial peace that has few parallels around our discriminatory globe. Quite the contrary. The glory is that Hawaii's main ethnic groups managed to establish the right to be separate. The group separateness, in turn, helped establish the rights of individuals in each group to equality with individuals of different racial aspect, ethnic origin, and cultural heritage.

Hawaii's experience is not so foreign to the transatlantic migrations of the various more-or-less white Caucasians. On arrival in New York (passing that inscription on the Statue of Liberty, "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me"), the European immigrants did not melt into the open arms of the white Anglo Saxon Protestants who preceded them. The reverse was true. The new arrivals stayed close to their own kind; shared religion, language, humor, and discriminatory treatment with their soul brothers and sisters; and gravitated at first into occupations that did not too seriously threaten the earlier arrivals.

The waves of new Americans learned to tolerate each other—first as groups, only thereafter as individuals. Rubbing up against each other in an urbanizing America, they discovered not just the old Christian lesson that all men are brothers, but the hard, new, multicultural lesson that all brothers are different. Equality is not the product of similarity; it is the cheerful acknowledgement of difference.

What's so special about our experience is the assumption that people of many kinds and colors can together govern themselves without deciding in advance which kinds of people (male or female, black, brown, yellow, red, white, or any mix of these) may hold any particular public office in the pantheon of political power.

For the twenty-first century, this "cheerful acknowledgement of differences is the alternative to a global spread of ethnic cleansing and religious rivalry. The challenge is great, for ethnic cleansing and religious rivalry are traditions as contemporary as Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s and as ancient as the Assyrians.

In too many countries, there is still a basic (if often unspoken) assumption that one kind of people is anointed to be in general charge. Try to imagine a Turkish chancellor of Germany, an Algerian president of France, a Pakistani prime minister of Britain, a Christian president of Egypt, an Arab prime minister of Israel, a Jewish president of Syria, a Tibetan ruler of Beijing, anyone but a Japanese in power in Tokyo. Yet in the United States during the twentieth century, we have already elected an Irish Catholic as president, chosen several Jewish Supreme Court justices, and racially integrated the armed forces right up to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff . . . .

I wouldn't dream of arguing that we Americans have found the Holy Grail of cultural diversity when, in fact, we're still searching for it. We have to think hard about our growing pluralism. It's useful, I believe, to dissect in the open our thinking about it, to see whether the lessons we are trying to learn might stimulate some useful thinking elsewhere. We still do not quite know how to create "wholeness incorporating diversity," but we owe it to the world, as well as to ourselves, to keep trying.

### Reflective Questions

1. To what degree to you think America has moved forward since Harland Cleveland offered these statements?
2. Name some specific examples to support your opinion.

*Excerpted from Harland Cleveland, "The Limits to Cultural Diversity," in* Intercultural Communication: A Reader *(12th ed.), eds. Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, and Erwin R. McDaniel (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2009), pp. 431–434. Reprinted by permission of the World Future Society.*

## Communication Has Ethical Implications

What ethical issues face communicators?

In any encounter, we choose whether or not to communicate ethically. **Ethics** is a set of moral principles that may be held by a society, a group, or an individual. Although what is considered ethical is a matter of personal judgment, various groups still expect members to uphold certain standards. These standards influence the personal decisions we make. When we choose to violate the standards that are expected, we are viewed to be unethical. Here are five ethical standards that influence our communication and guide our behavior.

1. **Truthfulness and honesty mean refraining from lying, cheating, stealing, or deception.** "An honest person is widely regarded as a moral person, and honesty is a central concept to ethics as the foundation for a moral life" (Terkel & Duval, 1999, p. 122). Although most people accept truthfulness and honesty as a standard, they still confess to lying on occasion. We are most likely to lie when we are caught in an **ethical dilemma,** a choice involving an unsatisfactory alternative. An example of an ethical dilemma would be a boss asking us if our coworker arrived to work late today and knowing that telling the truth would get the coworker fired.
2. **Integrity means maintaining a consistency of belief and action (keeping promises).** Terkel and Duval (1999) say, "A person who has integrity is someone who has strong moral principles and will successfully resist the temptation to compromise those principles" (p. 135). Integrity, then, is the opposite of hypocrisy. A person who had promised to help a friend study for the upcoming exam would live up to this promise even when another friend offered a free ticket to a sold-out concert for the same night.
3. **Fairness means achieving the right balance of interests without regard to one's own feelings and without showing favor to any side in a conflict.** Fairness implies impartiality or lack of bias. To be fair to someone is to listen with an open mind, to gather all the relevant facts, consider only circumstances relevant to the decision at hand, and not let prejudice or irrelevancies affect how you treat others. For example, if two of her children are fighting, a mom is exercising fairness if she listens openly as the children explain "their side" before she decides what to do.
4. **Respect means showing regard or consideration for others and their ideas, even if we don't agree with them.** Respect is not based on someone's affluence, job status, or ethnic background. In a classroom, students show respect for others by attentively listening to another student's speech even when the main point violates their political or religious position.

**ethics**
*a set of moral principles that may be held by a society, a group, or an individual.*

**ethical dilemma**
*a choice involving two unsatisfactory alternatives.*

5. **Responsibility means being accountable for one's actions and what one says.** Responsible communicators recognize the power of words. Messages can hurt and messages can soothe. Information is accurate or it may be faulty. A responsible communicator would not spread a false rumor about another friend.

Web Resource 1.2

In our daily lives, we often face ethical dilemmas and must sort out what is more or less right or wrong. In making these decisions, we usually reveal our ethical standards. At the end of each chapter of this book, the feature What Would You Do? A Question of Ethics will ask you to think about and resolve an ethical dilemma that relates to that chapter's content. Your instructor may use these as a vehicle for class discussions, or you may be asked to prepare a written report.



Just as children learn how to behave from their parents, so too do they learn to communicate. What specific communication behaviors can you identify that you learned at home?

## Communication Is Learned

Just as you learned to walk, so too you learned to communicate. But talking is a complex undertaking. You may not yet have learned all of the skills you will need to develop healthy relationships. Because communication is learned, you can improve your ability. Throughout this text, we identify communication skills that can help you become a more competent communicator.

# Increasing Our Communication Competence

What is communication competence, and what can you do to achieve it?

**Communication competence** is the impression that communicative behavior is both appropriate and effective in a given situation (Spitzberg, 2000, p. 375). Communication is *effective* when it achieves its goals; it is *appropriate* when it conforms to what is expected in a situation. We create the perception that we are competent communicators through the verbal messages we send, and the nonverbal behaviors and visual images that accompany them. Competence is an impression or judgment that people make about others. Because communication is at the heart of how we relate to each other, one of your goals in this course will be to learn strategies to increase the likelihood that others will view you as competent.

**communication competence**
*the impression that communicative behavior is both appropriate and effective in a given situation.*

Perceptions of competence depend, in part, on personal motivation, knowledge, and skills (Spitzberg, 2000, p. 377). Motivation is important because we will only be able to improve our communication if we are *motivated*—that is, if we want to. People are likely to be more motivated if they are confident and if they see potential

rewards. Knowledge is important because we must know what is involved in increasing competence. The more knowledge people have about how to behave in a given situation, the more likely they are to be able to develop competence. Skill is important because we must know how to act in ways that are consistent with our communication knowledge. *Skills* are goal-oriented actions or action sequences that we can master and repeat in appropriate situations. The more skills you have, the more likely you are to be able to structure your messages effectively and appropriately.

In addition to motivation, knowledge, and skills, credibility and social ease are important components of communication competence. **Credibility** is a perception of a speaker's knowledge, trustworthiness, and warmth. Listeners are more likely to be attentive to and influenced by speakers they see as credible. **Social ease** means managing communication apprehension so you do not appear nervous or anxious. To be seen as a competent communicator, it is important that you can speak in a style that conveys confidence and poise. Communicators that appear apprehensive are not likely to be regarded as competent, despite their motivation or knowledge.

What is communication apprehension and what can you do to manage it effectively?

Although most people think of public speaking anxiety when they hear the term *communication apprehension* (CA), there are actually four different forms of CA. Generally speaking, **communication apprehension** is "the fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with others" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). The four specific types are traitlike CA, audience-based CA, situational CA, and context-based CA. If you experience *traitlike communication apprehension*, you feel anxious in most speaking situations. About 20 percent of all people experience traitlike CA (Richmond and McCroskey, 2000). If you experience *audience-based communication apprehension*, you feel anxious about speaking only with a certain person or group of people. *Situational communication apprehension* is a short-lived feeling of anxiety that occurs during a specific encounter, for example, during a job interview. Finally, *context-based communication apprehension* is anxiety only in a particular situation, for example, when speaking to a large group of people. All these forms of communication anxiety can be managed effectively in ways that help you convey social ease when communicating with others. Throughout this book, we will offer strategies for managing communication apprehension in various settings.

The combination of our motivation, knowledge, skills, credibility, and social ease leads us to perform effectively in our encounters with others. The rest of this book is aimed at helping you increase the likelihood that you will be perceived as competent. In the pages that follow, you will learn about theories of interpersonal, group, and public speaking that can increase your knowledge and your motivation. You will also learn how to perform specific skills, and you will be provided with opportunities to practice them. Through this practice, you can increase the likelihood that you will be able to perform these skills when needed.

**credibility**
*a perception of a speaker's knowledge, trustworthiness, and warmth.*

**social ease**
*communicating without appearing to be anxious or nervous.*

**communication apprehension**
*fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with others.*

## Speech Assignment: Communicate on Your Feet

### Introduce a Classmate

### The Assignment

Following your instructor's directions, partner with someone in the class. Spend some time talking with this person, getting to know him or her, so that next class period you can give a short 2-minute speech introducing your partner to the rest of the class.

### Questions to Ask

1. What is your background? (Where were you born and raised? What is the makeup of your family? What else do you want to share about your personal background?)
2. What are you majoring in and why?
3. What are some of your personal and professional goals after college?
4. What are two personal goals you have for this class and why?
5. What is something unique about you that most people probably don't know?

### Speeches of Introduction

A speech of introduction is given to acquaint a group with someone they have not met. We make short "speeches" of introduction all the time. When a friend from high school comes to visit for a weekend, you introduce her to your friends. Not only will you tell them her name, but you will probably mention other things about her that will make it easy for your friends to talk with her. Likewise, a store manager may call the sales associates together in order to introduce a new hire. The manager might mention the new team member's previous experience, interests, and other items of information that will make it easy for the team to respect, help, and become acquainted with the new employee.

Speeches of introduction also often precede formal addresses. The goal of the introducer is to establish the credibility of the main speaker by letting the audience know the education, background, and expertise of the speaker related to the topic of the speech and to build audience interest. The introducer usually concludes by identifying the topic or title of the address.

### Speech to Introduce a Classmate

Because your classmate will not be giving a formal address after you introduce him or her, we suggest you organize your speech as follows:

1. **The introduction:** Start with an attention catcher—a statement, story, or question tied to something about the speaker that will pique audience curiosity. Then offer a thesis and a preview of main points, which can be as simple as "I'm here today to introduce [name of person] to you by sharing something about his personal background, personal and professional goals, and something unique about him."

2. **The body:** Group the information you plan to share under two to four main points. For example, your first main point might be "personal background," your second main point "personal and professional goals," and your third main point "something unique." Then offer two or three examples or stories to illustrate what you learned regarding each main point. Create a transition statement to lead from the first main point to the second main point, as well as from the second main point to the third main point. These statements should remind listeners of the main point you are concluding and introduce the upcoming main point. For example, "Now that you know a little bit about [name of person]'s personal background, let's talk about his personal and professional goals."
3. **The conclusion:** Ideally, in your conclusion, you'll remind listeners of the name of the classmate you introduced and the two to four main points you discussed about him or her. Then, end with a clincher—a short sentence that wraps the speech up by referring to something you said in the speech (usually in the introduction) that will encourage listeners to want to know him or her better.

## Develop Communication Skills Improvement Goals

To get the most from this course, we suggest that you write personal goals to improve specific skills in your own interpersonal, group, and public communication repertoire.

Before you can write a goal statement, you must first analyze your current communication skills repertoire. After you read each chapter and practice the skills described, select one or two skills to work on. Then write down your goal statement in four parts.

1. **State the problem.** Start by stating a communication problem that you have. For example: "*Problem*: Even though some of my group members in a team-based class project have not produced the work they promised, I haven't spoken up because I'm not very good at describing my feelings."
2. **State the specific goal.** A goal is specific if it is measurable and you know when you have achieved it. For example, to deal with the problem stated above, you might write: "*Goal*: To describe my disappointment to other group members about their failure to meet deadlines."
3. **Outline a specific procedure for reaching the goal.** To develop a plan for reaching your goal, first consult the chapter that covers the skill you wish to hone. Then translate the general steps recommended in the chapter to your specific situation. For example: "*Procedure*: I will practice the steps of describing feelings. (1) I will identify the specific feeling I am experiencing. (2) I will encode the emotion I am feeling accurately. (3) I will include what has triggered the feeling. (4) I will own the feeling as mine. (5) I will then put that procedure into operation when I am talking with my group members."
4. **Devise a method of determining when the goal has been reached.** A good goal is measurable, and the fourth part of your goal-setting effort is to determine your minimum requirements for knowing when you have achieved a given goal. For example: "*Test for Achieving Goal*: I will have achieved this goal when I have described my disappointment to my group members about missed deadlines."

At the end of each section, you will be challenged to develop a goal statement related to the material presented. Figure 1.2 provides another example of a communication improvement plan, this one relating to a public speaking problem.

**Problem:** When I speak in class or in the student senate, I often find myself burying my head in my notes or looking at the ceiling or walls.
**Goal:** To look at people more directly when I'm giving a speech.
**Procedure:** I will take the time to practice oral presentations aloud in my room. (1) I will stand up just as I do in class. (2) I will pretend various objects in the room are people, and I will consciously attempt to look at those objects as I am talking. (3) When giving a speech, I will try to be aware of when I am looking at my audience and when I am not.
**Test for Achieving Goal:** I will have achieved this goal when I am maintaining eye contact with my audience most of the time.

**Figure 1.2**
Communication improvement plan

## A Question of Ethics

Molly has just been accepted at Stanford University and calls her friend Terri to tell her the good news.

MOLLY: Hi Terri! Guess what? I just got accepted to Stanford Law School!
TERRI [*Surprised and disappointed*]: Oh, cool.
MOLLY: Thanks—you sound so enthusiastic!
TERRI: Oh, I am. Listen, I have to go—I'm late for class.
MOLLY: Oh, OK. See you.

The women hang up, and Terri immediately calls her friend Monica.

TERRI: Monica, it's Terri.
MONICA: Hey, Terri. What's up?
TERRI: I just got some terrible news—Molly got into Stanford!
MONICA: So, what's wrong with that? I think it's great. Aren't you happy for her?
TERRI: No, not at all. I didn't get in, and I have better grades and a higher LSAT score.
MONICA: Maybe Molly had a better application.
TERRI: Or maybe it was what was on her application.
MONICA: What do you mean?
TERRI: You know what I mean. Molly's black.
MONICA: Yes, and . . . ?

## What Would You Do?

TERRI: Don't you see? It's called affirmative action.
MONICA: Terri, give it a rest!
TERRI: Oh, please. You know it, and I know it. She only got in because of her race and because she's poor. Her GPA is really low and so is her LSAT.
MONICA: Did you ever stop to think that maybe she wrote an outstanding essay? Or that they thought the time she spent volunteering in that free legal clinic in her neighborhood was good background?
TERRI: Yes, but we've both read some of her papers, and we know she can't write. Listen, Monica, if you're black, Asian, American Indian, Latino, or any other minority and poor, you've got it made. You can be as stupid as Forrest Gump and get into any law school you want. It's just not fair at all.
MONICA [*Angrily*]: No, you know what isn't fair? I'm sitting here listening to my so-called friend insult my intelligence and my ethnic background. How dare you tell me that the only reason I'll ever get into a good medical school is because I'm Latino. Listen, honey, I'll get into medical school just the same way

that Molly got into law school—because of my brains, my accomplishments, and my ethical standards. And based on this conversation, it's clear that Molly and I are way ahead of you.

Describe how well each of these women followed the ethical standards for communication discussed in this chapter.

*Adapted from "Racism," a case study posted on the Web site of the Ethics Connection, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University. Retrieved from http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/education/racism.html. Used with permission.*

## Summary

We have defined communication as the process of creating or sharing meaning, whether the setting is informal conversation, group interaction, or public speaking. The elements of the communication process are participants, messages, context, channels, interference (noise), and feedback.

Our communication is guided by at least seven principles. First, communication is purposeful. Second, communication is continuous. Third, communication messages vary in degree of conscious encoding. Messages may be spontaneous, scripted, or constructed. Fourth, communication is relational, defining the power and affection between people. Fifth, communication is guided by culture. Sixth, communication has ethical implications. Ethical standards that influence our communication include truthfulness, integrity, fairness, respect, and responsibility. And seventh, interpersonal communication is learned.

A primary issue in this course is competence—we all strive to become better communicators. Competence is the perception by others that our communication behavior is appropriate and effective. It involves a desire to improve our communication, increasing our knowledge of communication, identifying and attaining goals, being able to use various skills, and presenting ourselves as credible and confident communicators. Skills can be learned, developed, and improved, and you can enhance your learning this term by writing goal statements to systematically improve your own skill repertoire.

## Communicate! Active Online Learning

Now that you have read Chapter 1, use your Premium Web site for *Communicate!* for quick access to the electronic resources that accompany this text. These resources include

- **Study tools** that will help you assess your learning and prepare for exams (*digital glossary, key term flash cards, review quizzes*).
- **Activities and assignments** that will help you hone your knowledge, analyze communication situations (*Skill Learning Activities*), and build your public speaking skills throughout the course (*Communication on Your Feet speech assignments, Action Step activities*). Many of these activities allow you to compare your answers to those provided by the authors, and, if requested, submit your answers to your instructor.
- **Media resources** that will help you explore communication concepts online (*Web Resources*),

develop your speech outlines (*Speech Builder Express 3.0*), watch and critique videos of communication situations and sample speeches (*Interactive Video Activities*), upload your speech videos for peer reviewing and critique other students' speeches (*Speech Studio online speech review tool*), and download chapter review so you can study when and where you'd like (*Audio Study Tools*).

This chapter's Key Terms, Skill Learning Activities, and Web Resources are also featured on the following pages, and you can find this chapter's *Communicate on Your Feet* assignment in the body of the chapter.

## Key Terms

channel (5)
communication (3)
communication apprehension (16)
communication competence (15)
communication setting (8)
constructed messages (11)
context (4)
control (11)
credibility (16)
cultural context (5)
culture (12)
decoding (3)
encoding (3)
ethical dilemma (14)
ethics (14)
feedback (7)
historical context (4)
immediacy (11)
interference (noise) (5)
internal noise (6)
interpersonal communication (9)
intrapersonal communication (8)
meanings (3)
messages (3)
participants (3)
physical context (4)
physical interference (5)
psychological context (5)
psychological interference (6)
public communication (9)
scripted messages (11)
semantic noise (7)
social context (4)
social ease (16)
small group communication (9)
spontaneous expressions (11)
symbols (3)

## Skill Learning Activities

### 1.1: Identifying Elements of the Communication Process (8)

For the following interaction, identify the contexts, participants, channels, message, interference (noise), and feedback:

Maria and Damien are meandering through the park, talking and drinking bottled water. Damien finishes his bottle, replaces the lid, and tosses the bottle into the bushes at the side of the path. Maria, who has been listening to Damien talk, comes to a stop, puts her hands on her hips, stares at Damien, and says angrily, "I can't believe what you just did!" Damien blushes, averts his gaze, and mumbles, "Sorry, I'll get it—I just wasn't thinking." As the tension drains from Maria's face, she gives her head a playful toss, smiles, and says, "Well, just see that it doesn't happen again."

1. Contexts
   a. Physical_____
   b. Social_____
   c. Historical_____
   d. Psychological_____
2. Participants_____
3. Channels_____
4. Message_____
5. Interference (Noise)_____
6. Feedback_____

When you're done with this activity, compare your answers to the authors' at the Premium Web site for *Communicate!* Look for them in the Skill Learning activities for Chapter 1.

### 1.2: Communication over the Internet (10)

The Internet has thoroughly revolutionized communication over the last 20 years. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of communicating via the following Internet-based mediums: e-mail, newsgroups, Internet chat, social networking sites, social messaging services (e.g., Twitter), and blogs. Spend some time evaluating these mediums if you are not already familiar with them. Enter your thoughts into a two-column table, with advantages in the first column and disadvantages in the second. Did your analysis produce any discoveries that surprised you?