

**Contemporary Human Communication**  
**Exam 4 Study Guide**

- **The basics: Review information from exam one**
- **Definition(s) of Communication—**
  - **E. Griffin:** The relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response.
  - **West and Turner:** A social process in which individuals employ symbols to establish and interpret meaning in their environment
- **Models of Communication-**
  - Linear:**
    - Shannon and Weaver “telephone”
    - Source---Message---Channel—Receiver
    - Assumes only one message in the communication process
    - Overly simple (feedback is missing)
  - Interactional**
    - Schramm model
    - Two way communication process
    - Communication is ongoing (process) but no simultaneous roles (source/receiver): one can be a sender OR receiver, not both
    - Feedback is a key element
    - Field of Experience: there is an overlap of the sender’s and receiver’s culture, experience, and heredity in communication
  - Transactional**
    - Barnlund
    - Simultaneous sender and receiver roles due to feedback
    - Mutual responsibility to meaning (S and R)
    - Communication influenced by past experiences
    - Interdependency of messages- each builds on and effects the next message
    - Dance (Helix) model
    - Most accepted contemporary model
- **Components of communication**
  - **Source:** transmits/encodes the message
  - **Encoding:** the process of taking an already conceived idea and getting it ready for transmission
  - **Message:** the stimulus that the source transmits to the receiver
  - **Channel:** means by which the message is conveyed
  - **Receiver:** decodes the message
  - **Decoding:** the process of taking the stimuli that have been received and giving them meaning through individual interpretation and perception
  - **Noise:** anything not intended by the information source. It inhibits the receiver’s accurate reception of the message
    - Types of Noise: semantic, physical/external, psychological, physiological
- **Definition of theory- theories describe, predict, and explain human thought and behavior**
  - E. Griffin- A set of systematic informed hunches about the way things operate
  - West and Turner- abstract system of concepts and their relationships that help us to understand a phenomenon

## Evaluating theory

- **Scope:**
  - breadth of communication behaviors covered by the theory
  - Theories can be broad or narrow- some have expanded over time
- **Heurism:**
  - Amount of research and new thinking that the theory generates
  - Launches new and interesting ways of viewing the world
- **Test of time:**
  - still relevant over time/ still applied in research
- **Utility:**
  - Offer practical advice
  - Useful/able to be applied to some context
- **Testability:**
  - Test why it is or is not valid
  - Investigate theory's accuracy and ability to prove false
- **Parsimony:**
  - Relative simplicity
  - Should not be overly cumbersome to understand or to use
  - Use fewest number of terms necessary to explain the communication phenomenon

## Objective Approach

- "Social scientists"
- The assumption that truth is singular and is accessible through unbiased sensory observation
- Committed to uncovering cause-and-effect relationships

## Interpretive Approach

- "Interpretive scholars"- concerned with meaning and reflect a range of ideological and methodological positions.
- The linguistic work of assigning meaning or value to communicative texts
- Assumes that multiple meanings or truths are possible.

### Distinguishing between the two

- **Epistemology:** study of origin, nature, method and limits of knowledge (aka how we know what we know)

Objective	Interpretive
Truth= singular- not dependent on local conditions	Truth is socially constructed through communication
Good theories are reflective of nature	Social reality is always in flux
Good theories represent reality	Knowledge is viewed through a particular standpoint
Truth is objective	Truth is subjective

- **Determinism-** assumption that behavior is caused by hereditary and environment

Objective	Interpretive
Determinism	Human choice

Human behavior in casual terms and in terms of prior stimulus	Human behavior in terms of conscious intent
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- **Emancipation-** liberation from any form of political, economic, racial, religious, or sexual oppression; empowerment

Objective (effectiveness)	Interpretive (participation)
Use of objective tests in order to find the "truth"- personal values set aside in finding the truth	Brings own values into interpretation of text
Seeks empirical evidence for claims	Seek to liberate people from oppression
Suggest ways to validate ideas and claims	Oppose detached stance of social scientists
Believe the evidence should speak for itself	Insist that knowledge is never neutral

### Seven Traditions

#### 1. Socio-Psychological: (interpersonal interaction and influence)

Most objective- scientific perspective

- Main focus: relationships and persuasion
- Absolute truths
- Truth can be discovered by systematic observation
- Look for cause/ effect relationships
- Effects founding father: Carl Hovland

Yale Studies: studied communication stimuli, audience predisposition, and opinion change

- 3 causes of persuasive variation:
  - o Who—the source of the message.
  - o What—the content of the message.
  - o Whom—the audience characteristics.
- source credibility is vital to opinion shift. Two Types: expertness and character.
  - o Expertness was more important for boosting opinion change, but its effect didn't last.

#### 2. Cybernetic tradition: (info processing)

- Cybernetics: field of artificial intelligence
- Way feedback makes info processing possible in our heads and on our computers
- Communication is the link separating the separate parts of any system
- Shannon: established the idea of communication as information processing
- Goal: establish maximal line capacity with minimum distortion
- Defined information as the reduction of uncertainty
- The less predictable a message, the more information it carries
- Noise reduces the information-carrying capacity of the channel
- Regarded communication as the science of balancing predictability and uncertainty