

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Communication

I. Basic Components of Communication

- a. **SOURCE**: transmits/encodes the message (the deliverer)
- b. **ENCODING**: the process of taking an already conceived idea and getting it ready for transmission (making the ad/commercial/etc.)
- c. **MESSAGE**: the stimulus that the **source** transmits to the receiver
- d. **DECODING**: taking the stimuli that has been received and interpreting its meaning
- e. **NOISE**: anything not intended by the information **source**
 - i. *Inhibits* the receiver's accurate reception of the *message*
 1. Different types of *noise*: semantic, physical/external, psychological, physiological
- f. **FEEDBACK**: Messages the receiver sends back to the *source*
 - i. This is the component that makes communication a process
 1. Some feedback is better than no *feedback*
 2. *Feedback* can be positive or negative
 3. Negative *feedback* can sometimes be more helpful than positive *feedback*
 - ii. Components of *feedback*
 1. Verbal/nonverbal
 2. Immediate/delayed
 3. Critical/supportive
 4. Low-monitoring/-high-monitoring
 - a. (totally honest/highly guarded)
 5. Accurate *feedback* is important to communication improvement

II. Defining Communication

- a. **COMMUNICATION** is difficult to define which leads to multiple definitions and interpretations of its meaning
 - i. "The relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response"
 1. **MESSAGES**: the core of communication study
 - a. **TEXT**: a message that can be studied, regardless of the medium
 - i. Ex. A book, film, photograph, broadcast
 2. **Creation of Messages**: indicates that content and form of a text are constructed/invented/planned/crafted

- a. The communicator is making a conscious choice of the *message's* form and substance
- 3. **Interpretation of Messages:** *Messages* don't interpret themselves
 - a. "words don't mean things, people mean things"
 - b. **Polysomic:** Words are always open to multiple interpretations
- 4. **Relational Process**
 - a. *Communication* is always in flux
 - i. alters and influences relationships between people
- 5. **Messages that Elicit a Response**
 - a. If a message doesn't stimulate any cognitive, emotional, or behavioral reaction...it isn't *communication*
 - ii. A social process in which individuals employ *symbols* to establish and interpret meaning in their environment
 - iii. The transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills, etc. by the use of symbols. (words, pictures, figures graphs, etc.)
 - iv. Human *communication* has occurred when a human being responds to a symbol
- b. **Controversy Defining Communication**
 - i. There are disagreements on the **nature** of *communication*
 - ii. *Communication* is less precise than other sciences
 - 1. Thus, the study of *communication* can be more complex
 - iii. Premise: there is a difference between behavior and communication
 - 1. Is there really a difference?
 - a. Argument 1: "only intentional behaviors are communicative"
 - b. Argument 2 (Palo Alto Group): "You cannot **not** communicate"
 - i. All behavior is communication
 - 1. Intentional or not
 - ii. Nonverbal communication is what makes communication continuous
 - iii. Effects of communication last forever

III. Characteristics of Communication

- a. **Social:** interactive between 2 people
- b. **Process:** on-going and unending
 - i. Past interactions affect present interpretations
 - ii. Dynamic
 - iii. Continuously changing
 - iv. Helix dance

- c. **Symbolic**: concrete and abstract symbols
 - i. Interpretations may differ based on experiences
- d. **Miscommunication/misinterpretation**: occurs due to the dynamic nature of communication
 - i. If everybody can have their own interpretation than it is only natural that the intended meanings get lost in translation
- e. **Environment**: the situation or context in which communication takes place

IV. Models of Communication

- a. **LINEAR MODEL**
 - i. Shannon and Weaver "**telephone**"
 - ii. Basic model
 1. Too much *noise*
 2. Assumes that there is only one message in the communication process (only one *source*)
 3. *Feedback* is missing component
 - b. **INTERACTIONAL MODEL** (Schramm 1954)
 - i. Two-way communication *process*
 - ii. On going *process* but no simultaneous roles (*source/receiver*)
 1. One can be sender OR receiver, but not both
 - iii. Feedback is a key element
 - iv. **FIELD OF EXPERIENCE**: there is an overlap of the sender's and receiver's culture, experience, and heredity of communication
 1. Shapes how a *message* is sent and received
 - c. **TRANSACTIONAL MODEL** (Barnlund, 1970)
 - i. Simultaneous sender and receiver roles due to *feedback*
 - ii. Mutual responsibility to meaning (*sender/receiver*)
 - iii. *Communication* is influenced by past experiences
 - iv. Interdependency of Messages: each message builds on the effects of the last
 - v. The most accepted contemporary model
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