

Preface

Effective communication enriches life. *The Communication Playbook*, third edition, with its emphasis on skill development and real-life application is *the* text for the hybrid communication course. The playbook fulfills three key communication objectives: (1) It equips you with the skills and knowledge you need to communicate across the communication spectrum—face-to-face and virtually, on your own and assisted by AI, in your personal life, in workspaces and workplaces, and in public; (2) It offers best practices for communicating your humanness as you work with others to resolve personal, professional, and societal issues; and (3) It guides you in traversing communication contexts and entering into personal, professional, and civic relationships that depend on effective communication for their success.

The Communication Playbook, third edition, provides you a wide selection of communication tools and understandings to put to work in your personal life, career, and community. The Playbook's primary focus is on how to connect with others and present yourself as competently and confidently as possible no matter the communication arena. To that end, *The Communication Playbook* demonstrates how to make communication work across and with an ever-changing array of communication options such as AI.

Ultimately, the impact of our communication presence in social, civic, and professional arenas and personal, group, and public settings determines the health of our relationships, our life satisfaction, and success. This is why we can never be too effective at communicating.

The Strategy of The Communication Playbook

The Communication Playbook coaches you to personal and career success, guiding you in learning to use and manage an authentic and effective communication tool set that will serve you today and in the future. How skillful we are at communicating as we navigate different life arenas influences how others in our social, professional, and civic spheres perceive and respond to us.

While the questions we ask about communication may remain the same, the answers we come up with continue to evolve. What are the competencies we need to master for others to perceive us as having value? What are the skills we need to exhibit to be judged an effective communicator? What are the understandings we need to display as we navigate from one life arena to another? This third edition of *The Communication Playbook* offers fresh and insightful answers to these questions.

While exploring communication basics and key life arenas, the third edition of *The Communication Playbook* shares an array of useful ideas and information about the essentials of communication; interpersonal communication and interviewing; group communication, leadership/teambuilding, and problem solving; and the preparation, practice, and delivery of public presentations. As we enrich our understanding of each type of communication, we realize the potential to build meaningful personal, work, and community relationships.

To the Instructor: What Differentiates The Communication Playbook From Other Hybrid Texts on the Market?

A prime differentiator of *The Communication Playbook* remains our highlighting the importance of both the physical and the digital domains in students' lives. We coach students in conceptualizing, creating, cultivating, and communicating an authentic communication presence to foster success not only in their personal relationships online and offline but in their careers and civic lives as well. Although other texts may cover similar topics, none place students in personal control of how others value and perceive them—even though that is what happens as they engage others in both the physical and digital worlds. We wrote this text so individuals with whom students interact in any life arena will have good things to say about them. We wrote this text so that those with whom our students interact are able to perceive their value and open doors and opportunities for them. We want our students to learn more about themselves as communicators—to develop empathy and perspective-taking so that they may envision how they affect others, to tap into existing talents and build communication skills that facilitate goal achievement, and to chart a course that nurtures the continual improvement of their authentic and unique communication presence.

In addition, woven through *The Communication Playbook* are the following proven pedagogical techniques:

- A series of objectives and desired outcomes designed to facilitate personal development in communication
- A selection of individual and group activities and self-assessments built to foster engagement
- A series of personal goals for students to realize as they build their communication presence and develop communication skills and competence
- End-of-chapter checklists and word-mastery lists that guide students in reviewing and demonstrating learning.

Four thematic threads are woven through *The Communication Playbook*:

1. A concern for communicating ethically
2. A focus on self-awareness, particularly what it takes to be comfortable engaging with people who are culturally and ideologically diverse
3. A consideration of how technology and social networks impact every communication arena
4. An exploration of how to build bridges of understanding among those with whom we engage socially, professionally, and civically

To this end, *The Communication Playbook* also contains a series of highlighted boxes within its chapters.

Self-Assessments: In every chapter of the Vantage course, students evaluate a communication skill to determine their level of proficiency and identify areas for growth.

Skill Builders: Learning activities for use inside or outside of class. Skill Builders encourage students to observe and consider their own and others' face-to-face and digital communication practices, to assess their effects, and to experience the insights and practice they need to become more skillful communicators in their personal, professional, and civic lives.

Bridging Differences: Activities designed to help students explore their differences and similarities, including developing an appreciation for gender and cultural influences.

Ethics and Communication: Experiential vehicles designed to help students work their way through ethical quandaries and define for themselves the meaning of "ethical communication."

Be the Communication Coach: a new box designed to foster the student's self-development by enabling them to coach one another.

Each boxed series is designed to promote critical inquiry and reflection as it challenges students to complete and analyze self-inventories, identify how advances in technology are reshaping communication, and become actively involved in meeting future 21st-century communication challenges—envisioning and demonstrating how improving communication skills paves a path to personal and professional success.

New to the Third Edition

The third edition of *The Communication Playbook* incorporates changes informed by feedback from instructors and students.

- We have freshened chapter openings to ensure they are relevant, capture the reader's attention, and immediately engage them in the chapter's content.
- We have integrated new material on artificial intelligence, social media, and other technological communication advances through the text.
- We have increased coverage of contemporary communication challenges such as misinformation and disinformation, and wokeness and incivility.
- We have incorporated post-COVID realities and experiences.
- We have broadened coverage of present day ethical and cultural influences on each type of communication.
- We have added new material and research to the Playbook's boxed features.
- We have continued our coverage of communication and health.
- We have added fresh examples throughout the text.
- We have updated speech examples and outlines.

- We have updated research and visuals.
- Mindful of length, we have made each chapter more succinct and understandable, eliminating redundant and dated content.

All the changes made in this third edition of *The Communication Playbook* reflect the evolving field of communication. We hope students and instructors enjoy using this third edition as much as we have enjoyed working on it!

We wish you a bright communication future,
Teri and Michael Gamble

Sage Vantage

This text is available in Sage Vantage—an intuitive learning platform you and your students will actually love.

9 out of 10 of your colleagues using Sage Vantage would recommend it!

Sage Vantage for *The Communication Playbook*, Third Edition integrates all the textbook content with assignable multimedia activities and auto-graded assessments to drive student engagement and ensure accountability. Unparalleled in its ease of use and built for dynamic teaching and learning, Vantage offers customizable LMS integration and best-in-class support.

Vantage Learning Platform ISBN: **9798348808778**

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—Aubrey Akins, Student, St. Bonaventure University

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—Echo Leaver, Instructor, Salisbury University

Analytic Skill-Building

Assignable video activities and reading activities in Vantage align with learning objectives, reinforcing fundamental concepts in every chapter. With automatic assessment integration into your gradebook, these resources provide an ideal platform for students to hone their critical thinking and application skills by applying chapter concepts to real-world scenarios.

Video Activities for The Communication Playbook

Chapter 1

Video Activity 1.1: The Transactional Model of Communication

Chapter 2

Video Activity 2.1: Speech Styles of Different Co-Cultures

Video Activity 2.2: High-Context Versus Low-Context Cultures

Chapter 3

Video Activity 3.1: Perception

Video Activity 3.2: Self and Identity

Chapter 4

Video Activity 4.1: The Triangle of Meaning

Video Activity 4.2: Sexist Language

Chapter 5

Video Activity 5.1: Nonverbal Communication

Video Activity 5.2: Proxemics

Chapter 6

Video Activity 6.1: The HURIER Model

Video Activity 6.2: Gender and Listening

Chapter 7

Video Activity 7.1: A Model of Interaction Stages

Video Activity 7.2: LGBTQIA Relational Maintenance

Chapter 8

Video Activity 8.1: Uncertainty Reduction

Video Activity 8.2: Emotional Intelligence

Chapter 9

Video Activity 9.1: Small Group Development

Video Activity 9.2: Small Group Speech: Group Community Service

Chapter 10

Video Activity 10.1: Conflict Styles

Video Activity 10.2: Leadership Communication

Chapter 11

Video Activity 11.1: Types of Presentations

Video Activity 11.2: Informative Speech: What to Consider When Purchasing Tea

Chapter 12

Video Activity 12.1: How to Cite Sources and Avoid Plagiarism

Video Activity 12.2: How to Structure Your Introduction and Conclusion

Chapter 13

Video Activity 13.1: Be Prepared: Learn How to Use Presentation Software

Video Activity 13.2: Needs Improvement: Body Awareness

Chapter 14

Video Activity 14.1: Informative Speech: Choosing a Bicycle

Video Activity 14.2: Informative Speech: The School-to-Prison Pipeline in America

Chapter 15

Video Activity 15.1: Persuasive Speech: Domestic Violence

Video Activity 15.2: How to Craft a Persuasive Argument

Chapter 16

Video Activity 16.1: What Do I Include in My Resume and Cover Letter?

Video Activity 16.2: Elements of an Interview

Self Assessments for The Communication Playbook

Chapter 1 Self-Assessment 1.1. How's My Communication?

Chapter 2 Self-Assessment 2.1. Cultural Attitudes

Chapter 3 Self-Assessment 3.1. My Online Posts and Presence

Chapter 4 Self-Assessment 4.1. Images, Words, and Actions

Chapter 5 Self-Assessment 5.1. Nonverbal Intelligence

Chapter 6 Self-Assessment 6.1. How's My Listening?

Chapter 7 Self-Assessment 7.1. Relationship Attractors

Chapter 8 Self-Assessment 8.1. How Do I Cope With and Handle My Feelings?

- Chapter 9 Self-Assessment 9.1. Decisions, Decisions
- Chapter 10 Self-Assessment 10.1. How Do You Approach Power?
- Chapter 11 Self-Assessment 11.1. Score Your Subject
- Chapter 12 Self-Assessment 12.1. Research Sources
- Chapter 13 Self-Assessment 13.1. How Ready Are You to Use Presentation Aids?
- Chapter 14 Self-Assessment 14.1. Information Management
- Chapter 15 Self-Assessment 15.1. How Credible Are You?
- Chapter 16 Self-Assessment 16.1. Thoughts About the Job Interview

Additional Teaching Resources

Visit collegepublishing.sagepub.com to find the teaching materials designed to accompany this textbook. On this site you will find an array of materials that will save you time and help you keep students engaged, including:

Learning management system cartridges that easily integrate with your course management system so student test results and graded assignments seamlessly flow into your gradebook;

Test banks, aligned to Bloom's Taxonomy, provide a diverse range of test items, including multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions;

Lecture notes that provide an outline and the key concepts in each chapter to aid in lecture preparation;

PowerPoint® slides that offer a flexible, accessible, and customizable solution for creating multimedia lectures;

Tables and Figures from the book are available to support lecture preparation and class discussions.

Chapter 1

Communication in Your Life



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Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Explain the importance of cultivating communication presence.
- 1.2 Define communication, identifying its essential elements and visualizing them in action.
- 1.3 Describe the core principles of communication.
- 1.4 Evaluate the benefits of and skills necessary for communicating effectively.

Welcome to *The Communication Playbook*. A playbook is a game plan—a plan of action for continuous improvement. What results will you achieve by employing a playbook approach to the study of communication? *The Communication Playbook* coaches and guides you in the skills and understandings necessary to achieve success in your personal and professional life. It will guide you in deciding which play to use when facing different communication situations and contexts, from face-to-face to digital, from engaging with a friend to interacting in groups and teams, or from speaking interpersonally to speaking publicly.

Communication touches every aspect of life. Improving your ability to communicate skillfully will enhance yours. This playbook's goal is to help you make communication work as effectively as possible in all the social, civic, and professional settings you frequent. We want you to think of *The Communication Playbook* as your resource for developing communication skills for life and career success. We hope you're ready to put the plays in this resource into action.

In particular, we will prepare you to find success with these 10 common communication challenges:

1. Communicating in an interconnected, multicultural world
2. Listening attentively and avoiding distractions
3. Reconciling verbal and nonverbal messages
4. Displaying emotional intelligence
5. Having a willingness to experience issues from another's perspective
6. Demonstrating effective leadership, problem solving, and decision making
7. Disagreeing without damaging a relationship
8. Assessing and evaluating informative and persuasive presentations to make sense of the world around us
9. Responding thoughtfully to technological innovations
10. Asking questions about communication and applying what you learn

What kind of communicator are you? What kind of communicator would you like to be? Answer the following questions to gain some insight into how you believe others evaluate your communication:

Recall a recent interpersonal interaction. Would your communication partners (a close friend, family member, romantic partner, co-worker, roommate, etc) say that you were present or distracted, credible or untrustworthy, authentic or fake, empathetic or distant?

How would your peers describe you as a coworker or team member? Might they find you to be cooperative and collaborative, or might they instead judge you to be self-concerned and a blocker?

When delivering a speech, how might your audience assess your speech-making abilities? Would they say you were prepared and persuasive or ill-prepared and uninspiring? And

when roles are switched, how might they describe you as a member of their audience? Might they report that you were attentive and encouraging, or would they believe you to be bored or uninterested?

The adjectives others ascribe to our communicative behavior tell us what they think of our communication presence, specifically whether they think we are an effective communicator or not.

Are you ready to focus on your communication? We hope so. This chapter starts with a definition of communication presence. We follow this with an overview of the essential elements of communication and a look at a transactional communication model. We then explore key communication principles. Finally, we discuss the benefits we gain when we communicate skillfully.

Build Communication Presence

1.1 Explain the importance of cultivating communication presence.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our physical, emotional, and mental health. It also drastically altered the communication landscape. In times when gathering with loved ones or having in-person classes was prohibited or discouraged, we found many virtual alternatives, with varying degrees of success and satisfaction. Many people were eager to return to pre-pandemic life and activities; others were more hesitant and found better life balance in things like virtual work. Regardless of the communication situation and circumstance, we each bear personal and social responsibility for developing an effective **communication presence**—the composite of communication characteristics that others use to describe us as communicators in both the physical world and the online world.

How we perceive one another in both the physical and the digital world affects our relationships and well-being, including our mental and physical health.¹ We are wired for connection, so we may experience feelings of loneliness or *fomo* (fear of missing out) when we feel disconnected. When others are not physically present, we can use social networking to fill some communication voids but not others. The objective, of course, is for our communication presence to be perceived as positive and authentic, whether we are communicating online or face-to-face, and for it to serve as a catalyst for success in relationships and life.

Becoming adept at connecting with others, whether they are physically present or digitally dispersed, is a skill we all work to master. When it comes to having a successful social and professional life, enhancing communication effectiveness is the differentiator.² As you begin your study of communication, consider what you seek to express about yourself and how you would like others to view you, much like you did when presenting yourself in your college application.³

Skill Builder

Imagining You Experiencing Me

How do others respond to your communication presence? Come up with three impressions you would like others to call to mind when they think about you. What do you hope each of these impressions conveys about you to them? How do you think they could benefit the relationship you share? Are there any unintended consequences they might have on how others think about and interact with you?

To validate your conceptions, ask three people in your life to come up with three descriptive statements that they believe represent you. To what extent, if any, did your chosen impressions and theirs statements overlap? What can you do bridge any gaps that exist?

Balance Your Communication Mix

How do you decide whether to communicate face-to-face or via mediated means? Do you make sound decisions about how to engage most effectively and appropriately with others? We have numerous communication options available, and some means may be more appealing to us than others. For example, for many college students, texting remains the most prevalent form of interaction.⁴ But is it their best choice? What is your preferred “go-to” means of communicating? The communication presence we present and share in social, civic, and professional arenas affects our relationships, ability to partner with others, and life satisfaction, so we can never be too careful about making the right communication choices.

Many of us rely on social media platforms to build and maintain relationships. If you’re like many 21st-century students, your smartphone serves as your prime personal connector. You likely use it to text or post to X, Instagram, and TikTok—but less frequently to make a phone call. For some, talking to another person causes discomfort. For these individuals, digital technology is freeing, because they don’t have to be in the physical presence of others. It lets them say what they want without fear of being interrupted or even having to listen to another’s response. How can we assess if this is good, bad, or neutral? To what extent is communicating via social media easier or more challenging for you than communicating face-to-face?

The Benefits and Drawbacks of Social Media

Social media present users with both benefits and drawbacks. Based on your experiences, do their benefits outweigh their costs or vice versa?

When it comes to benefits, social media foster friendship as well as professional and romantic connections. They help us keep in touch with one another and provide a low-anxiety communication option for those who are particularly shy. They also help alleviate feelings of loneliness for those who are hesitant or unable to leave their homes. Additionally, they serve as alternative support networks for individuals with relational, substance abuse, or mental health issues, and they also provide the means for advocating for social movements or for fundraising via sites such as GoFundMe.

Yet, social media have drawbacks. Many of the relationships social media foster can be superficial and/or deceptive (as we can easily lie about who we are online). Though we may count the number of online “friends” or connections we have in the hundreds or thousands, a much smaller number (approximately 15) are “real” friendships.⁵ In fact, having too many online friendships may limit our time spent communicating face-to-face, resulting in off-line relational problems. For example, according to a Pew Research Center study, 89% of smartphone owners said they used their phones during the last social gathering they attended. They also reported that they were not happy about it because it impeded conversation.⁶

Addiction Concerns

Several years ago, a YouTube video titled “I Forgot My Phone” went viral. By now, the video has been viewed well over 50 million times. At the video’s start, we see a couple in bed. The woman stares into space while her boyfriend focuses on his smartphone. The scenes that follow show the woman amid a series of dystopian situations. Her friends ignore her and stare at their phones during lunch. Concertgoers are too busy recording the performance to enjoy it. The guest of honor at a birthday party takes selfies while his friends sing. The last scene finds the couple back in bed. Her boyfriend is still phone obsessed. Have you experienced any of the scenarios just described?



The majority of smartphone users report using their device when with each other.

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We well might be captives of our devices. In fact, surveys show that U.S. Americans check their smartphones 144 times a day, with 89 percent checking them within 10 minutes of waking up to start the day. Some 69 percent also report having texted someone who was in a room with them.⁷ *Have you done this?*

Smartphones and social media apps are hypnotically compelling. In part, this is because they deliver unscheduled “variable rewards”—much like slot machines do. We receive messages, alerts, notifications, photos, and “likes” randomly, making it virtually impossible for us not to react to them. They induce large numbers of us to become compulsive site checkers looking for a dopamine boost—almost as if seeking a fix.

Significantly, heavy use of social media is linked with health consequences including social anxiety, deficient self-esteem, inferior social skills, and feelings of loneliness.⁸ Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist and the author of *The Anxious Generation*, believes that we can implicate social media for a decline in the mental health of young people and a decrease in their social skills.⁹

The Upshot

Just because these apps and our devices can be addictive does not mean they have to be. It’s up to us to not let them run our lives. We must be able to connect both remotely and in

person, in a social or professional network, or in a social or professional circle. Whenever and wherever we connect, the goal is to make communication work—and that is this playbook’s primary goal.

Pay Attention to Social Capital

Neither job-specific talent, nor technical expertise, nor graduating from college alone will guarantee you upward mobility or the attainment of goals. In fact, many of us get our jobs because of our **social capital**, the people we know, rather than our **human capital**, our skills, knowledge, and experience, or what we know.¹⁰ The Internet makes it relatively easy today for us to find out anything we don’t know, but being able to effectively communicate and develop positive relationships with others facilitates our success.¹¹ Our communities and workplaces are prime environments for developing these connections.

Foster Communication Skills

Communication is at the heart of all our effective personal and professional relationships. Understanding how to communicate enables us to develop healthier relationships with family members, friends, romantic partners, and work associates. It shapes our relationship future.

Communication also makes a difference in our physical and emotional health. Having others to whom we can turn to for support in times of stress improves our mental well-being and enhances our physical well-being too. In contrast, suffering the loss of close relationships can compromise general health and even precipitate death.

Communication also impacts employability. Among the top 10 skills employers seek when hiring college graduates is the ability to communicate with others both inside and outside of the organization. Employers especially seek job candidates with problem-solving and teamwork abilities.¹² Although not guaranteed, people with good communication skills are more likely to be promoted rapidly, be happy in relationships, and believe their lives are rich and fulfilling. Whatever your age, sex, marital status, or employment history, it is never too late to learn skills that will enrich and improve your career and life.

We are not born knowing how to make communication work. We learn and develop communication skills. If you want to improve your ability to relate to people in your social life, job, or academic life, now is the time to start making communication work better for you!

The Nature and Essentials of Communication

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| <p>1.2 Define communication, identifying its essential elements and visualizing them in action.</p> |
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We are all communicators. Communication is our link to the rest of humanity. In this section we define communication, explore different types of communication, identify the elements at work during communication, and study a transactional communication model.

Defining Communication

Every time we knowingly or unknowingly send a verbal or nonverbal message to anyone, communication takes place. We define **communication** as the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning. It is the process that occurs whenever someone observes or experiences behavior and attributes meaning to that behavior. If what someone does or says is interpreted as a message—if the behavior of one person affects or influences that behavior of another—communication is occurring.

Which of the following quotations, if any, do you find most applicable to your own experiences?

- Instead of calling someone out, call them in. (Rita Maniscalco)
- Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill. (Buddha)
- We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve. (Bill Gates)
- The best way to solve problems and fight against war is through dialogue. (Malala Yousafzai)
- People need social skills. (David Brooks)
- Two monologues do not make a dialogue. (Jeff Daly)

It's your turn! Add a quotation to the list that expresses your personal thoughts about an aspect of communication important to you.

Types of Communication

To better understand communication, we need to distinguish among the types of communication we use.

- During **intrapersonal communication**, we think about, talk with, learn about, reason with, and evaluate ourselves. We listen and interact with the voice in our head.
- When we engage in **interpersonal (or dyadic) communication**, we interact with another, learn about them, and act in ways that help sustain or terminate our relationship.
- When we participate in **group communication**, we interact with a limited number of others, work to share information, develop ideas, make decisions, solve problems,



Communication is the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning, whether by words, looks, or behavior.

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offer support, or have fun. Every person in a group can actively participate with others in the group.

- **Organizational communication** is conducted with larger, more stable collections of people who work together to achieve the organization's goals. Organizations include corporations, nonprofits, entertainment, sports, health operations, and political, religious, and charitable groups. Health communication practitioners, for example, advocate for communications that have a positive influence on health.
- Through **public communication**, we inform others. We also persuade the members of various audiences to hold certain attitudes, values, or beliefs so that they will think, believe, or act in a particular way. We also function as members of different audiences, in which case another person will do the same for us.
- Through **mass communication**, the media entertain, inform, and persuade us. Messages are sent to large, dispersed audiences using electronic and print media. We, in turn, can use our viewing and buying habits to influence the media.
- **Masspersonal communication** is a newer label describing the mixing of personal and public communication. Video-sharing services such as YouTube, X, and TikTok let users upload their own content. Some of the videos originally intended for limited numbers of viewers end up going viral.¹³

Assessing our communication experiences within these contexts and thinking about how we can improve are essential for developing more effective relationships. For example, as we increase awareness and understanding of different communication practices across and within cultures, we enhance the likelihood for positive relational outcomes.

Skill Builder

How Well is Communication Working?

Consider your feelings about communicating with others in person-to-person, group, public, and mass-personal settings. Indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements by selecting a number from 1 to 5, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree, 2 represents Disagree, 3 represents Not sure, 4 represents Agree, and 5 represents Strongly Agree.

I am comfortable “breaking the ice” with a person I do not know. ____

I don't let first impressions deter me. ____

I give others my full attention when we interact. ____

I refrain from judging what someone is telling me until I understand it. ____

I am relaxed conversing with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. ____

I am good at understanding how others feel about me. ____

I am capable of interpreting others' nonverbal cues. ____

- I'm comfortable asking questions. ____
- I rarely feel anxious when asked to answer another's question. ____
- I patiently wait until others finish speaking before I interject. ____
- I have no fear about presenting my ideas when meeting with others. ____
- I am eager to meet new people. ____
- I am confident when delivering presentations in public settings. ____
- I express my thoughts clearly and confidently no matter the setting. ____
- I am comfortable disagreeing with others. ____
- I am comfortable receiving feedback from others. ____
- I am equally adept at communicating face-to-face or online. ____
- I am honest when assessing my communication performance. ____
- I can express why I think and feel as I do. ____
- I make good communication choices. ____

Scoring Analysis: Total your scores. Your score will range from a low of 20 to a high of 100. The higher your score, the more favorably you assess your ability to make communication work.

Interestingly, we sometimes believe we are better at communicating than others do. With that in mind, you might ask another person to fill out this skill builder with you in mind. Then, you can compare answers and create an action plan for improvement. For example, based on others' feedback, you might opt not to text while walking down a street with a friend. Or you might decide not to answer your phone when dining with a coworker. If it were up to you, would you opt to increase or decrease the number of online versus face-to-face interactions that you share with others? Why?

The Elements of Communication

Whatever the nature or type of communication in which we are involved, the communication act itself is characterized by the interplay of seven elements. All communication interactions have these common elements that together help define the communication process. The better you understand these components, the easier it becomes for you to develop your own communicative abilities. Let's begin by examining the **essentials of communication**, those elements present during every communication event.

People

Obviously, human communication involves people. Interpersonal, small-group, and public communication encounters take place between and among all types of **senders** (people who encode and send out messages) and **receivers** (people who take in messages and decode). Although it is easy to picture a communication experience beginning with a sender and ending with a receiver, during communication the role of sender does not belong exclusively to one person and role of receiver to another. Instead, the processes of sending and receiving occur simultaneously. Even if only one person is speaking, others can communicate through facial expression, attentiveness, or raising a hand to ask a question.

Messages

A **message** is the content of a communicative act. During every communication act, we all send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages. What you talk about, the words you use to express your thoughts and feelings, the sounds you make, the way you sit and gesture, your facial expressions, and even your touch or smell communicate information.



Gestures convey messages.

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Some messages we send are private (a kiss accompanied by “I love you”); others are public and may be directed at hundreds or thousands of people. We send some messages purposefully (“I want you to know . . .”) and others accidentally (“I had no clue you were watching or ‘lurking’”).

Everything a sender or receiver does or says is a potential message if someone is there to interpret it.

Channels

Channels are the media we use to carry messages. We classify channels according to which of our senses carries or receives the message; whether the message is being delivered verbally, non-verbally, or both; and the primary means of communication we use to deliver the message, that is, whether we use face-to-face interaction, text messaging, or a mass medium such as television or a podcast.

We use multiple channels. We receive sound messages (we hear noises from the street), sight messages (we size up how someone looks), taste messages (we enjoy the flavor of a particular food), smell messages (we like the scent of a friend’s perfume), and touch messages (we feel the roughness of a fabric).

Which channel are you most attuned to? To what extent do you rely on one or more channels while excluding or ignoring others? Effective communicators are adept channel switchers. They recognize that communication is a multichannel experience. The following dialogue between a couple illustrates the multichannel nature of communication:

Laura: *Mateo, you’re late again. You smell like smoke – did you stop at your dad’s? I thought he was trying to quit smoking. Now we’ll never make it to the party on time.*

Mateo: *No, I didn’t stop at my dad’s. This is the coat I wore camping last weekend and it smells from the campfire. I tried my best to be on time (places a consoling hand on her shoulder) but we were really short staffed at work and I couldn’t just leave.*

Laura: *(Sarcastically) Sure, you tried your best. (Drawing away) I’m not going to put up with this much longer. My job is important too and I manage to be on time.*

Mateo: *(Lowering his voice) Ok. Ok. I know your job is important, and I have been trying to be on time. I really did get stuck at work (Smiles at her) Let’s not blow this up. I’ll tell you about it on the way to the party.*

What message is Laura (the initial source-encoder) sending to Mateo (the receiver-decoder)? She is letting him know with her words, her voice, and her physical actions that she is upset and angry. Mateo responds using words, vocal cues, and gestures to explain his behavior. Both are affected by the nature of the situation (they are late for a party), by their attitudes (how they feel about what's happened), and by their past experiences.



We receive messages via multiple channels simultaneously. For instance, we see, taste, and smell an ice-cream cone as we hold it and our tongue touches it.

Yuliya Taba/istock

Noise

In the context of communication, **noise** is anything that interferes with or distorts our ability to send or receive messages. Although we are accustomed to thinking of noise as a particular sound or group of sounds, noise can have both internal and external causes. Internal noise is attributed to a communicator's psychological makeup, intellectual ability, or physical condition. External noise is attributed to the environment. Thus, noise includes distractions such as a loud siren, a disturbing odor, and a hot room; personal factors such as prejudices, daydreaming, and feelings of inadequacy; and semantic factors such as uncertainty about what another person's words are supposed to mean.

Context

Communication always takes place in a **context**, or setting. Sometimes a context is so natural that we barely notice it. At other times, however, the context exerts considerable control over our behavior. Would your behavior be the same at a friend's 21st birthday party and at a child's first communion? Both are celebrations, but the context is different. Consider how your present environment affects the way you act toward others. Also, consider the extent to which certain environments might cause you to alter your posture, manner of speaking, attire, or means of interacting.

Feedback

Whenever we communicate, we receive feedback in return. The verbal and nonverbal cues that we perceive in reaction to our communication function as **feedback**. Feedback tells us how we are coming across. A smile, a frown, a chuckle, a sarcastic remark, a muttered thought, or simply silence in response to something we do or say can cause us to change, continue, or end a communication exchange.

Feedback that encourages us to continue our present behavior is **positive feedback**. In contrast, **negative feedback** extinguishes a behavior; it serves a corrective rather than a reinforcing function. Note that the terms *positive* and *negative* should not be interpreted as "good" and "bad"; these labels simply reflect the way the responses affect behavior.

Both positive and negative feedback can emanate from internal or external sources. **Internal feedback** is feedback you give yourself as you monitor your own communicative behavior. **External feedback** is feedback from others who are involved in the communication event. To be an effective communicator, you must be sensitive to both types of feedback.

Effect

As we communicate, we are changed in some way by the interaction. Communication has an effect and can be viewed as an exchange of influences. An **effect** can be emotional, physical, cognitive, or any combination of the three. Communication can elicit feelings of joy, anger, or sadness (emotional); it can cause you to fight, argue, become apathetic, or evade an issue (physical); or it can lead to new insights, increased knowledge, the formulation or reconsideration of opinions, silence, or confusion (cognitive). Some effects are not always visible or immediately observable. Effects can be delayed.

Be the Communication Coach

Ideas Into Action

Recall a specific communication situation in which you were a key player, perhaps a family disagreement, consoling a friend who received bad news, or meeting with a professor to request they reconsider a grade. Consider how each of the essential elements discussed in this section worked during that situation.

Identify at least five ideas you can put into action to improve the functioning of the communication essentials.

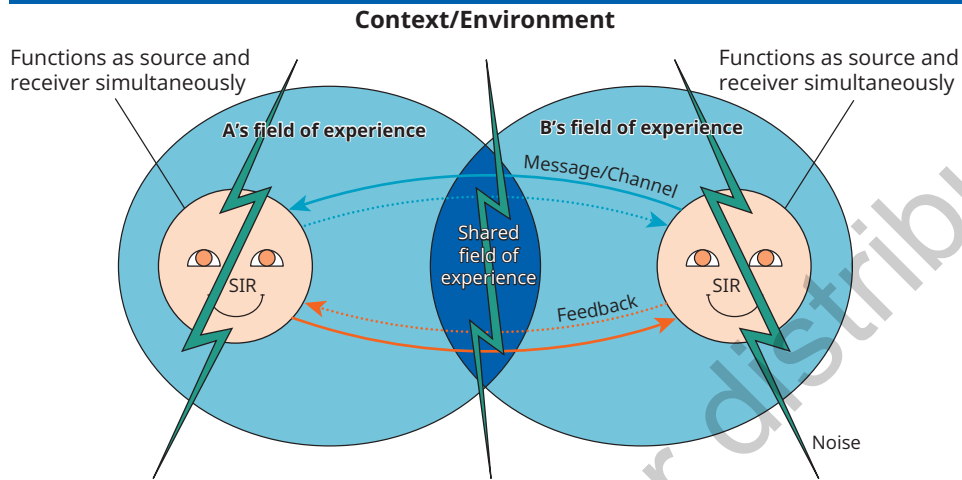
A Transactional Model of Communication

Now that we have examined the basic elements of communication, we are ready to see how we can use a picture, or model, that is descriptive of the communication process to reflect our understanding of communication in action. Modeling is a useful tool in discovering how communication operates and in examining your own communication encounters.

The model of communication in Figure 1.1 is a transactional one. A **transactional communication model** depicts communication as a continuous circle with sending and receiving as simultaneous rather than separate acts. Such a model enables us to visualize the vital complexity and dynamic nature of communication. Each person in the model is pictured sending and receiving messages (including feedback) through one or more channels at the same time as the other, because both persons have sending and receiving responsibilities and their messages will build upon and affect one another.

Each person's field of experience—their culture, past experiences, education, biases, and heredity—influences the interaction. Of consequence is the extent to which their fields of experience overlap. In theory, the more individuals communicate with each other, the more overlap they create.

Figure 1.1 • Gamble and Gamble's Model of Communication



In addition, we see that noise can enter the interaction at any point—it can pop up in the message, be present in the channel, come from one's field of experience, or derive from the context. Such noise can affect the sending and/or the receiving abilities and effectiveness of the communicators.

Every interaction we have with another has an impact on our future interactions with that person and potentially with others.

Key Communication Principles

1.3 Describe the core principles of communication.

Simply communicating frequently does not mean that you are as effective a communicator as you could be. Too often, we neglect problems with our communicative relationships. When we either lack empathy or fail to consider the feelings of others, our relationships suffer. There is no such thing as being too effective at establishing, maintaining, and controlling personal and public contacts with others. Being mindful of the principles discussed in this section can help you to improve your communication skills.

Communication Is Dynamic

When we call communication a dynamic process, we mean that all its elements constantly interact with and affect each other. Because we are interconnected, whatever happens to one person determines in part what happens to others.

Relationships evolve. Nothing about communication is static. Everything is accumulative. Thus, every interaction we engage in is part of a series of connected happenings. Present communication experiences can be thought of as points of arrival from past encounters and as points of departure for future ones. In what ways do your experiences support this?

Communication Is Unrepeatable and Irreversible

Every human contact we experience is unique. It has never happened before and will never again happen in just the same way. Our interpretation of the adage “You can never step into the same river twice” is that the experience changes both you and the river forever. A communication encounter similarly affects and changes people so that one encounter can never occur exactly in the same way a second time.

In addition to being unrepeatable, communication is also irreversible. We cannot take back something we have said or posted any more than we can erase the effects of something we have done. Just as toothpaste cannot be squeezed back into a tube, the e-mails, texts, and posts we send have permanent consequences.

When has the unrepeatable and irreversible nature of communication caused you a problem?

Communication Has No Opposite

We often assume that communication is purposeful and that we communicate only because we want to. This is true, but we sometimes communicate without any awareness of doing so—and just as often, even without wanting to.

Whenever we are involved in an interaction, we respond in some way. Even if we choose not to respond verbally, even if we maintain absolute silence and attempt not to move a muscle, our lack of response is itself a response; it constitutes a message, influences others, and communicates. We can never stop behavior because behavior has no opposite. No matter how hard we try, we cannot *not* communicate.

Culture Influences Communication

As you will learn in Chapter 2, how we formulate and interpret messages depends on our culture—the shared beliefs, values, and practices of a group of people. Of what cultures are you a member? Aspects of culture, including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and age, influence the meanings we



Cultural differences influence the encoding and decoding of messages.

Image Source/istock

attribute to communication. We may feel empowered in some cultural settings and disempowered in others. Cultural differences exist not only between people who speak different languages but also between people who speak the same language. Every cultural group has its own rules or preferences for interaction. When these are unknown or ignored, we are apt to misinterpret the meaning of messages received and miscalculate the impact of messages sent.

Bridging Differences

A Need for Understanding

Years ago, researcher Gordon Allport wrote the following two-person dialogue in his now classic book *The Nature of Prejudice*:

See that man over there?

Yes.

Well, I hate him.

But you don't know him.

That's why I hate him.

Allport's observations remain true today and are being magnified by social media. To what extent do you believe that enhanced understanding can help resolve this? Why does a lack of knowledge or familiarity help breed hate? Why might some people experience "hate" when encountering individuals from a new or unfamiliar culture or group?

Gender Influences Communication

Our culture shapes our conceptions of gender, and conceptions of gender shape our communication.¹⁴ We learn socially accepted variations in the definitions of gender differences as we grow up. For example, when they are young, girls are encouraged to "play nice," while boys are encouraged to "act tough." Gender is a relational construct with individuals promoting the gender ideologies they accept. What happens, for example, when sex and gender do not align? How do you respond to women who display a more masculine style or men who display a more feminine style?

To what extent do you believe that your communication has been influenced by gender constructions or restrictions and what society considers "normal"?



Some gender differences are taught to us by the society in which we live. Much of the U.S. associates girls with pink and boys with blue, but this is not true elsewhere in the world.

Antonio_Diaz/istock

Digital and Social Media Influence Communication

Decades ago, media critic Marshall McLuhan cautioned, “The medium is the message.”¹⁵ In McLuhan’s view, different channels of communication affected both how a sender encoded a message and how a receiver responded to it. This means that the same words delivered face-to-face, on paper, via text, with a post on X, or with the aid of ChatGPT do not constitute the same message. The channel of communication changes things. What channel would you use to say good-bye to someone who was moving away? Which channel would you use to tell someone “I’m sorry?” What about “I love you?”

New communication forms—new channels—alter our communication experiences. AI and social media are game changers, and we must reflect on how we use them. As our real and virtual communication repertoire expands, we exist simultaneously both in the physical world and online. We also may find ourselves immersed in the world of **influencer marketing**—working with people who have a considerable online following -- and having to come to grips with several social media paradoxes.



A message received via X will not have the same meaning as the same message received in person or via a handwritten note.

Hakase/istock

Influencer Culture

There are approximately 50 million global content creators who promote products or ideas to followers in exchange for money or goods.¹⁶ Do you follow any of the social media stars who have turned their lives into virtual brands or who earn a living as brand boosters? Do you ever imagine reinventing yourself by transforming from a follower into an influencer? If so, what is it that you envy?

Social media influencers lead very public lives. Many, to garner followers, can go too far with their “insta-worthy” efforts. Emphasizing the importance of physical appearance and

consumerism, influencer culture feeds on our insecurities. However, image and reality are not the same thing.

Has another's filtered living brand ever made you green with envy? Keep in mind that acquiring followers and reposts are not requirements for happiness. Social media pressures exact a toll.

Social Media Paradoxes

Can we depend on social media? On one hand, they influence our cultural sensibilities, making it easier for many among us to identify like-minded people who share our interests. However, they make it less likely that we will expose ourselves to different points of view. They make it possible for us to remain anonymous or to disguise ourselves; but, this anonymity allows our communication to be evaluated more for what we write than for how we look. Then again, social media allow us to present our lives through filters—delivering a carefully curated image of ourselves to the world—but those filters also can be problematic.¹⁷

Social media reshape human consciousness and relationships. There are only so many hours in a day, so the time we spend using social media takes time away from other activities. Social media impede our ability to live “in the moment.” Rather than enjoying the company of others or an event or celebration, we post to X, use Snapchat, or check Instagram. They also sometimes foster an unhealthy dependency on others—we wait anxiously to see if our post will receive approval and affirmation.¹⁸ On the other hand, they make it easier for marginalized groups to find support. They have upsides and downsides.

Our relationship with social media influences our mental health. Sometimes it can bring you joy – such as seeing a video your brother posted of your niece taking her first steps. But sometimes they distract us, addict us, or cause us to obsess or become angry over what we see on our screens.¹⁹ They also provide opportunities for self-expression, but can also lead to forming views of others' lives and bodies that are unrealistic.²⁰ What happens online influences off-line realities.

Personal Ethics Influence Communication

Every time we communicate, we decide implicitly or explicitly if we will do so ethically. **Ethics** are the moral principles, values, and beliefs that members of society use to guide behavior. Since communication has consequences, it involves judgments of right and wrong. When the agreed-upon standards of behavior are violated, (for example, when words and deeds don't match, when people act uncivilly or without compassion, or when they are unfair to or dishonest with one another) the behavior is judged to be unethical. Most of us expect those with whom we interact to be honest, play fair, respect our rights, and accept responsibility for their actions. Failing to be perceived as an ethical communicator can have a negative impact on the outcome of your relationships, both personal and professional.²¹

Communication Is Rule Guided

Rules reveal the behaviors that are appropriate, whether preferred or prohibited, in specific communication contexts. Some rules are explicit; these are clearly expressed and understood, such as

not yelling “fire” at a crowded concert when nothing is burning. Others are implicit; although not formally articulated, these rules are followed by most of us, such as “Don’t bully someone to get your way.” What are the implicit rules you follow when it comes to communicating with social media and when face-to-face?

Communication Is Competence Based

A communication scholar once said that if communication can fail, it will.²² Our challenge is determining how we can prevent communication from failing. One solution is to make wise choices. In certain situations, some messages are appropriate to share with particular receivers, whereas others are not. Making wise choices means recognizing that behavior doesn’t always mean what you first assume it means. In other words, consider an array of interpretations. This requires you to be mindful, develop awareness of what you’re thinking and feeling in the moment, and consider your available options for responding. When we are mindful, we think before we act rather than relying too heavily on our first impression, which might well be wrong.

Even though we all have different communication strengths and weaknesses, we can all benefit from getting better at communicating. When we add to our knowledge and make a commitment to develop the skills to apply that knowledge across an array of communication situations or contexts, we gain communication competence.

Competent communicators consider how their communication affects others, and they monitor their communication behavior accordingly. **High self-monitors** observe their own behavior, keeping track of what works and doesn’t with different people in different contexts. **Low self-monitors** go about their communication business with few concerns, unaware of how their behavior impacts others and how others react to them. While developing self-awareness is typically a plus, being too much of a self-monitor may cause you to be perceived as too focused on acting or dissembling and may contribute to others concluding they will never come to know the real you.

Why Work to Improve Communication Skills?

1.4 Evaluate the benefits of and skills necessary for communicating effectively.

Communication serves several purposes. For example, it can help us discover who we are, help us establish more meaningful personal and professional relationships, or prompt us to examine and change our own attitudes and behaviors or to influence the attitudes and behaviors of others. We study communication for many reasons, including to develop skills we can use to enhance the effectiveness of our person-to-person connections and improve our communication outcomes. Having a **growth mindset**, the belief that continual improvement is possible, provides an advantage.²³ By enriching our communication repertoires, we acquire a range of communication options that we can apply to make our lives better. In our increasingly digital world, effective communication and forming positive connections remain the cornerstones of a successful future.²⁴

To Gain Self-Understanding and Insight Into Others

One key function of communication is self–other understanding: insight into ourselves and others from diverse backgrounds. When we get to know another person, we also get to know ourselves and when we get to know ourselves, we learn how others affect us. We depend on communication to develop self-awareness.

We always need feedback from others, and others constantly need of feedback from us. Interpersonal, small-group, public, and mediated and digital forms of communication offer us numerous opportunities for self–other discovery. Through communication encounters we can learn why we are trusting or untrusting, whether we can make our thoughts and feelings clear, how we can influence others, and whether we can effectively make decisions and resolve conflicts and problems.

Modern communicators need to be able to interact with people culturally different from themselves. Although it might be feasible in the virtual world to seek comfort in similarity, insulating ourselves from intercultural contact in our social networks, communities, and workplaces is neither possible nor desirable. It is through communication that we reveal to others what is important to us and what we stand for.

To Form Healthy Relationships

In building relationships, we cannot be solely concerned with ourselves but must consider the needs and wants of others. It is through effective communication that our basic physical and social needs are met.

Communication offers each of us the chance to satisfy what psychologist William Schutz calls our “needs for inclusion, control, and affection.”²⁵ The **need for inclusion** is our need to be with others, our need for social contact. We like to feel that others accept and value us, and we want to feel like a full partner in a relationship. The **need for control** is our need to feel that we are capable and responsible, that we can deal with and manage our environment. We also like to feel that we can influence others. The **need for affection** is our need to express and receive love. Because communication allows each of these needs to be met, we are less likely to feel unwanted, unloved, or incapable if we can communicate meaningfully with others.



A lack of satisfying social relationships is associated with loneliness and poorer health.

fstop123/istock

Communication also gives us the chance to share our personal reality with people from our own and different cultures. Whether we live in an East Coast city, a southern suburb, a desert community, a home in sunny California, a village in Asia, a plain in Africa, or a town in the Middle East, we all engage in similar activities when we communicate. We may use different symbols, rely on different strategies, and desire different outcomes, but the processes we use and the motivations we have are strikingly alike. Equally significant is the fact that insensitivity to another's needs and preferred ways of interacting can hamper our ability to relate effectively.

To Influence Others

Communication touches all our lives. During all kinds of communication, we have ample opportunities to influence each other subtly or overtly. We spend a great deal of time trying to persuade others to think as we think, do what we do, like what we like. Sometimes our efforts are successful; sometimes we may be persuaded by the preferences of others. In any case, our experiences with persuasion afford each of us the chance to influence others so that we may try to realize our personal and professional goals and advocate for what we believe is important.

To Develop a Successful Career

Most of us will end up spending as much time communicating professionally as we do personally, making communication central to our professional lives. Like personal fulfillment, career success turns on our ability to communicate with others. Employers are concerned about the lack of communication skills in new hires. In fact, most are less concerned about technical skills and more concerned with the abilities of potential employees to relate to and engage with others in the workplace.²⁶ Among the perennial complaints of employers are the poor written communication and presentation abilities of applicants, along with their lack of interpersonal skills. Employers report that recent college graduates tend to ramble when asked to explain something, have difficulty making a point, and are prone to sending e-mails and texts that are far too casual for the professional world.²⁷ In other words, employers fear that new hires will have no clue regarding how to behave at work.²⁸

Remember, a positive relationship exists between the ability to communicate and career success. Employers seek to hire those who know how to make communication work. If you develop the ability to speak so that others listen, listen when others speak, critically evaluate what you read and hear, adapt to differences in cultural perspectives, handle conflicts and solve problems, and make sound decisions, then you will exhibit skills valued by employers.²⁹

Ethics and Communication

Communication at Work

Communication can have both positive and negative results. In every relationship and context, it can be used in ways ranging from ethical to unethical. For example, communicators who are friends, co-workers, or relative strangers can inform and deceive, support and intimidate, or help and harm one another. Since ideas regarding what is and is

not ethical vary from person to person, and situation to situation, this activity prompts you to consider the principles *you* use to decide if communication behavior is effective and ethical in a specific relationship and context of your choice.

1. Using what you have learned to this point, list the behaviors that you think mark a communicator as effective and ethical. Then give yourself a grade (A, B, C, D, or Fail) for each behavior listed.
2. Elaborate on how improving specific communication skills will enable you to demonstrate specific ethical behaviors which could benefit you professionally and personally.
3. Identify the pros and cons of communicating virtually versus face-to-face in workplace and social interactions.
4. Explain how developing a specific digital communication skill such as the ability to use AI ethically could enable you to make a difference at work and in your social life.
5. View an episode of a reality show such as *Survivor*, *Love is Blind*, *Hell's Kitchen*, or *90 Day Fiancé*. Based on what you've learned about communication in this chapter, rate each participant in the episode on their communication skills and ethical behavior by awarding each an A, B, C, D, or F grade. Identify the attributes that contributed to some participants coming across as more effective and ethical communicators than others. What steps do you recommend the weaker participants take to improve their professional communication competence and standing?

To Improve the Quality of Our Lives

Good relationships, whether at home or in social or professional settings, positively affect our health, both psychologically and physically. Psychologists tell us that we need other people just as we need water, food, and shelter. When we are cut off from human contact, we become disoriented and maladjusted, and our lives may be placed in jeopardy. People who lack satisfying social relationships are more likely to experience health problems and to die earlier than those who have an abundance of satisfying relationships.³⁰ Thus, as we experienced during the isolation of the pandemic, effective and quality communication, even via social networks, can improve our health. In fact, having meaningful professional relationships and effective social ties contributes to feelings of overall well-being, enabling us to better control stressors that otherwise might make us ill. Communication helps make our lives happier, healthier, and more fulfilling.³¹

Communication Skills: Practice Effective Communication

The primary purpose of this playbook is to help you gain an understanding of communication and to assist you in developing your interpersonal, small-group, public, and digital and social media skills. Engaging with the following tasks will give you a great start.

Commit to Enhancing Communication Competence

Once you commit to putting the principles we discuss into practice, you are on your way to becoming a better communicator. Use the learning objectives in this text to clarify your personal communication objectives. Use the boxed features to further explore what you must know and do to become a more effective communicator.

Make the Effort to Increase Both Self-Awareness and Awareness of Others

You will improve your personal and professional life by developing the following skills:

- Appreciate the extent to which gender, culture, and digital and social media affect communication
- Listen to and process information
- Be sensitive to the nonverbal messages that you and others send
- Know how words affect us
- Understand how relationships develop
- Realize how feelings and emotions affect relationships
- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Understand how beliefs, values, and attitudes affect the formulation and reception of messages and the development of speaker–audience relationships

Demonstrate Belief in Yourself

Above all else, you need to believe that you are worth the time and effort required to develop your communication skills. You also need to believe that developing these skills will improve the quality of your life immeasurably. As motivational speaker and self-development author Brian Tracy has affirmed that communication is a skill that you can learn. It's like riding a bicycle or typing. If you're willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.

Complete This Chapter 1 Checklist

1.1. I understand the importance of cultivating communication presence.

Communication presence is the composite of characteristics that others perceive us to present in the physical and online world. We each need to be able to present an effective real-world or face-to-face identity and an effective digital-world or virtual identity to which others respond favorably. Being able to navigate between and balance our communication options affects judgements of our communication presence and the communication outcomes we achieve.

1.2. I can define communication, identifying its essential elements and visualizing them in action.

Communication is the deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning. Human communication takes place interpersonally (one-to-one), in small groups (one to a few), in public forums (one to many), and via digital and social media.

The essential elements of communication are people, messages, channels, noise, context, feedback, and effects. Each element influences and is influenced by the other elements. Though the elements are constantly in flux, they are interdependent.

A transactional communication model illustrates the communication process in action. It depicts communication as a continuous circle with sending and receiving as simultaneous rather than separate acts, helping us to visualize the vital complexity and dynamic nature of communication.

1.3. I can describe the core principles of communication.

Communication reflects a few general principles. First, because communication is a dynamic process, each interaction is part of a series of interconnected communication events. Second, every communication experience is unique, unrepeatable, and irreversible. Third, behavior has no opposite. Fourth, culture influences communication. Fifth, gender influences communication. Sixth, digital and social media influence and continue to transform communication. Seventh, ethics influence communication. Eighth, communication is competence based.

1.4. I can evaluate the benefits of and skills necessary for communicating effectively.

Effective communication promotes self–other understanding, helps us establish meaningful relationships, enables us to examine and attempt to change the attitudes and behaviors of others, enhances career development, and affects our state of well-being. Developing communication skills is a lifelong process. This book explains the strategies you can use to assess your communication abilities, improve the effectiveness of your communication relationships, and enhance the quality of your life. Once you become involved in the study of communication, commit to setting and tracking personal goals, and demonstrate belief in yourself, you are on the road to mastering communication skills to last a lifetime.

Key Terms

channels
communication
communication presence
context
effect
essentials of communication
ethics
external feedback
feedback
group communication
growth mindset
high self-monitor
human capital
influencer marketing
internal feedback
interpersonal communication
intrapersonal communication

low self-monitor
mass communication
masspersonal communication
message
need for affection
need for control
need for inclusion
negative feedback
noise
organizational communication
positive feedback
public communication
receivers
senders
social capital
transactional communication model

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Chapter 2

Culture and Communication



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Learning Objectives

- 2.1 Explain the significance of intercultural communication.
- 2.2 Analyze how attitudes toward cultural differences affect communication.
- 2.3 Demonstrate influences on cultural identity, distinguishing between cultures and co-cultures.
- 2.4 Illustrate six dimensions of cultural variability and their role in reducing the strangeness of strangers.
- 2.5 Understand how digital technology influences communication with people from different cultures.

How's your CQ (cultural intelligence)? Are you as at ease when communicating with people from different cultures as you are when interacting with those who share your cultural background? How do you anticipate things will go when interacting with people from different cultures? Are you prepared to adapt as needed to cultural differences? Cross-cultural researcher Edward T. Hall has observed that “Culture is communication and communication is culture.”¹ What does this statement mean to you? To us, it suggests that an understanding of how culture influences communication is essential to engage meaningfully in a multicultural society and world. The study of culture is after all the study of ourselves and others. Even without our realizing it, our culture passes on to us a system of thinking and behaving. As we internalize the messages, we develop a shared group identity, common beliefs and values, and rules for living and communicating within our culture—in other words, a **world-view**—a framework we use to interpret the world and its people, and which we express through our communication.²

As you prepare to explore the relationship between culture and communication, ask yourself these questions: Have you ever formed a positive or negative opinion of someone, judged them, or decided you liked or disliked them without really knowing them? Has anyone ever done the same to you? If your answer to either of these questions is yes, it is likely that *stereotypes*, the mental images that guide reactions to others, played a role. A stereotype expresses the knowledge, beliefs, and expectations we have of the members of a particular group.³ Whereas some of the stereotypes we hold of members belonging to a particular cultural group may be positive, others may be astoundingly negative. Some contain kernels of truth, whereas others prevent us from recognizing our misconceptions.

What groups of people do you stereotype positively and/or negatively? What stereotypes might others hold of you? And how do our evaluations of one another affect our communication? In this chapter, we explore a host of factors that influence our willingness and readiness to connect and communicate in a multicultural world.

The Link Between Communication and Culture

2.1 Explain the significance of intercultural communication.

“It’s a Small World After All” is a song that echoes through Disney theme parks. Its words highlight human interconnectedness, promoting themes of inclusion and diversity. Yet, according to *On Diversity* author Russell Jacoby, many people spend an abundance of their time engaging with others who mirror their thinking and confirm their beliefs, rather than communicating with those from different backgrounds.⁴ Surrounding ourselves with people who look like and think like we do will not benefit us in today’s multicultural world. Rather, we should be seeking to open ourselves to the different viewpoints and attitudes that can enrich our communication and relationships.⁵ To do this, we must consider multiculturalism and how to approach cultural differences.

The Global Village

Globalization is the increasing economic, political, and cultural integration and interdependence of diverse cultures—the worldwide integration of humanity. **Diversity**, a related concept, is the recognition and valuing of difference, encompassing such factors as age, gender and sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, education, physical ability, and income. An early observer of how technology affects behavior and thinking, the Canadian media researcher Marshall McLuhan predicted many years ago that our world would become a global village.⁶ He was right. We are linked physically and electronically to people around the globe.

Multiculturalism—engagement with and respect toward people from distinctly different cultures—is increasingly important in this global village. People living hundreds or thousands of miles apart can now become our friends and coworkers thanks to social media and the internet. Many of us move a number of times during our lives for personal or professional reasons.⁷ Others travel abroad regularly, some to visit relatives (one in five Americans was born abroad or has at least one parent who was), others to represent an employer, and still others to vacation.⁸ Each of these moves, whether in or beyond the borders of the United States, provides us with opportunities to improve cultural understanding.

Skill Builder

Handling Communication Differences

Name the specific communication differences you faced during your last interaction with a person whose cultural background differed from yours. For example, perhaps you faced language differences (verbal and nonverbal); different ways of thinking, including contrasting attitudes, beliefs, and values; differing cultural perspectives, or unfamiliar communication practices.

How well you were able to handle each identified difference affected the outcome of your interaction. Rate yourself from 1 to 10 on each of the differences faced, where 1 represents handling the difference extremely ineffectively and 10 represents handling it extremely effectively.

Identify the specific behaviors you used to meet each difference as well as what you might have done to handle it better.

The specific behaviors that identify us as effective and competent communicators in our own culture may not be the behaviors valued or appreciated by people in other cultures. For example, in the United States, people tend to be very direct in their communication. In Japan, people spend time socializing before saying what's on their mind. By developing a cultural perspective—an appreciation for cultural differences—we acknowledge that what works in one culture will not necessarily work in another. Instead, we need to be sensitive to cultural differences and demonstrate our ability to adapt to the explicit and implicit rules at work in other cultures.

Demographics and the Future

Demographers inform us that diversity is reshaping the United States and transforming our person-to-person ties even more quickly than was originally predicted. According to the 2020 U.S. census, 57.8 percent of the population identified as non-Hispanic white or white alone; 12.1 percent as Black or African American alone; 6.1 percent as Asian alone; and 1.1 percent as Native American and Alaska Native alone. 2.8 percent identified as two or more races. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders comprise .2 percent of the population. At 18.7 percent, Hispanics and Latin Americans are the largest minority group. The under-18 population is now majority people of color at 52.7 percent. Within one generation, under-represented groups are forecast to become the majority.⁹ (Refer to Table 2.1 for population projections.) More than half the children in the United States currently are of a minority race or ethnic group.¹⁰

Table 2.1 ■ Projected Population by Race and Ethnicity: 2030 to 2060
(in millions)

Characteristics	2016	2030	2060	Change from 2016 to 2060
Total population	323,128	355,101	404,483	81,355
White	248,503	263,453	275,014	26,511
Non-Hispanic White	197,970	197,992	179,162	-18,808
Hispanic	57,470	74,807	111,216	53,746
Black or African American	43,001	49,009	60,690	17,689
Native American and Alaska Native	4,055	4,663	5,583	1,528
Asian	18,319	24,394	36,815	18,496
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	771	913	1,125	354
Two or More Races	8,480	12,669	25,255	16,775

Based on information in Jonathan Vespa, Lauren Medina, and David M. Armstrong, "Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections 2020 to 2060," Current Population Reports, Issued March 2018 and Revised February 2020 <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.pdf>; <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/popproj/2023-alternative-summary-tables.html>

The United States is one of the most demographically diverse countries in the world, making it very probable that the number of contacts U.S. Americans have with people of other cultures will continue to increase. This alone makes it important for us to be able to understand and communicate with those whose backgrounds, nationalities, and lifestyles differ from our own.

Diversity in Communities

Some people are not eager to embrace diversity. In *Bowling Alone*, written at the turn of this millennium, author Robert Putnam reported that trust in others was on the decline. After studying 30,000 people across the United States, Putnam found a relationship between ethnically mixed environments and withdrawal from public life. In other words, people living in diverse communities tended to “hunker down.” They were more likely to distrust their neighbors—whether they were of the same or a different race, a similar or different background.¹¹ The reissued 20th anniversary edition of *Bowling Alone* noted that not much has changed over the intervening two decades. If anything, some in the United States are not only more alienated and isolated, but also more polarized, fragmented, and individualistic. They prefer familiarity and similarity when confronted with differences and uncertainty. In a subsequent book, *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*, Putnam explores the benefits we can gain from discovering our sense of solidarity, believing that changing from a culture of “I” to a culture of “we” can facilitate our accomplishing this.¹²

Diversity at Work

Happily, the working world reveals a promising story. In organizations, people with *identity diversity* (people who come from different races and religions) and *cognitive diversity* (people who come from different outlooks and training) come together to do the organization’s work. Research reveals that organizational teams that are gender and geographically diverse, and have people of different ages working together, outperform non-diverse groups 87 percent of the time.¹³ Organizations show that it is possible to create a broader sense of “us” and harness community out of diversity.¹⁴



Are you up to meeting the challenges of increased diversity in the workplace?

Jacob Wackerhausen/istock

Intercultural Communication and Its Many Facets

Intercultural communication is the process of interpreting and sharing meanings with people from different cultures to help people better understand the richness in cultural variability.¹⁵ In reality, we practice intercultural communication in our own backyards as well as with people around the world.

Among intercultural communication’s many aspects are **interracial communication** (which occurs between people of different races), **interethnic communication** (which occurs when the communicating parties have different ethnic origins), **international communication** (which occurs

between people representing different political structures), and **intracultural communication** (which includes all forms of communication among members of the same racial, ethnic, or other co-culture groups). Familiarizing ourselves with the many faces of culture prepares us to respond appropriately to varied communication styles, expands our choices as communicators, and increases our effectiveness in interacting with people from diverse cultural groups.

Culture, Communication, and Difference

2.2 Analyze how attitudes toward cultural differences affect communication.

Culture is the lens through which we view the world. It is the mirror we use to reflect and interpret reality.¹⁶ It teaches us how to think and what to think about. It reveals to us what is beautiful or ugly, helpful or harmful, appropriate or out of place. It fosters expectations for behavior and beliefs, including attitudes towards controversial issues of importance.

Culture Is Influenced by Philosophies

Has the amount of contact you have with people of diverse cultural backgrounds changed since you were a child? As we observed, changes in demography and technology are giving you more opportunities to interact with others unlike yourself. For many of us, intercultural communication is now the norm. In fact, living in the United States gives us an incredible opportunity to engage in intercultural communication without having to pay for international travel. But it hasn't always been that way.

The Melting Pot Philosophy

Years ago, the United States embraced a **melting pot philosophy**. According to this theory, when individuals immigrated to the United States, they embraced assimilation, giving up their original heritage, and becoming U.S. Americans. The national motto, *E pluribus unum* (a Latin phrase meaning “out of many, one”), reflects this way of thinking. The practice was for diverse cultural groups to be assimilated into the parent or dominant culture.

The Salad Bowl Philosophy

Over time, the philosophy of **cultural pluralism**, also known as “the **salad bowl philosophy**,” emerged. Replacing the melting pot philosophy, this allowed for cultures to maintain differences while coexisting in broader society. Cultural pluralists believe in respect for uniqueness and tolerance for difference. In a multicultural society, every group will do things differently, and that's OK.



Cultural pluralism values difference and coexistence of multiple groups within society.

ULU_BIRD/istock

Culture Is a Teacher

In effect, every culture provides its members with a series of lessons such as how to say “hello” and “good-bye,” when to speak or remain silent, how to act when angry or upset, where to focus one’s eyes when functioning as a source and receiver, how much to gesture, how close to stand to others, and how to display emotions such as happiness or anger. By instructing its members, culture guides behavior and communication, revealing to members how to act, think, talk, and listen.¹⁷ The term **enculturation** refers to the process of acquiring a culture. We learn some of culture’s lessons directly as when a caregiver reminds us to say “thank you” after helping us. Other lessons we learn indirectly by watching and observing others.

Cultural Ignorance Is Costly

If we fail to realize that people from different cultures may not look, think, or act as we do, we risk appearing insensitive, ignorant, or **culturally confused** (lacking knowledge of cultural difference). The culturally confused pay a high price. The following examples demonstrate the cost of cultural ignorance and its effect on communication.

- McDonald’s fast-food chain unintentionally offended thousands of Muslims when it printed an excerpt from the Koran on its throwaway hamburger bags.¹⁸ Muslims saw this as sacrilegious.
- The Japanese view business cards as an extension of a person, handling them with great care, whereas North Americans view them as a business formality and a convenience. Consequently, North Americans often end up insulting Japanese people by treating a business card too casually.¹⁹
- Arab people typically adopt a direct body orientation when communicating, which can seem aggressive and unnerving to North American people, who employ a stance that is somewhat less direct.
- Arab and Latin American people as well as Mediterranean Europeans tend to gesture vigorously when speaking to others, which less physical North Americans construe as inappropriate and unmannerly.
- Middle Eastern men and women tend to openly display strong emotions, whereas U.S. Americans tend to be less public. Japanese individuals may try to hide or mask certain emotions as many Asian cultures tend to exhibit reserve and emotional restraint.
- U.S. Americans and Arab people place a high value on looking someone in the eye and tend to distrust those who fail to do so. The Japanese, in contrast, believe sustained eye contact shows disrespect. Among Asian cultures, too much eye contact is deemed intrusive.



Many Americans were confused when an Iraqi journalist threw a shoe at President George W. Bush during this 2008 press conference, but in many Arab cultures shoe throwing is a form of protest.

APTN/Associated Press

Stereotypes and Prejudice Are Harmful

Stereotypes and prejudice influence our reactions to people whose cultures differ from our own.

Stereotypes, again, are mental images we carry around in our heads. They are shortcuts, both positive and negative, that we use to guide our reactions to others.²⁰ Stereotypes can generate unrealistic pictures of others and prevent us from distinguishing an individual from a group.

Prejudice describes how we feel about a group of people whom, more likely than not, we don't know personally. A negative or positive prejudgment, prejudice arises either because we want to feel more positively about our own group (the in-group) or because we feel others present a threat, real or not (the out-group).²¹ In-groups are groups we identify with, and out-groups are groups we see as different from us, with out-group members becoming easy targets for discrimination.²²

Because of the negative expectations that stereotypes and prejudice produce, we may try to avoid interacting with people who are the objects of our prejudice (perhaps those of another race or religion) or attack them when we do. (We discuss stereotypes and prejudice in more depth in Chapter 3.) For example, *profiling* is the act of discriminating against a person based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin, is indicative of prejudice, and is one example of how stereotyping affects us. Profiling can be deciding which drivers to stop for speeding solely based on their race, for example.

The Impact of Cultural Imperialism and Hegemony

Cultural imperialism is the dominance of one culture over another culture, such as what ensued during colonization. **Cultural hegemony** is the dominance of one country or social group over

others in a culturally diverse society with the effect of achieving imperial control. Both may cause communication between members of different cultures to suffer. Not taking cultural practices into account impedes relationship building, whereas recognizing, respecting, and responding to differences among cultures allows more meaningful relationships to develop.

Again, we need to be mindful not to rely on stereotypes. Everyone from a particular culture does not necessarily exhibit the same characteristics and communication traits. Failing to develop insights into cultural nuances can lead to lost opportunities and increased tensions between people. Being unaware of how others outside a culture view that culture's members can be equally costly.



American cultural influence is visible around the world from small villages to major cities like Tokyo.

tanukiphoto/istock

Cultural Flexibility Is Key

When we interact with people whose values or behavioral norms are different from ours, we need to be able to accept that diversity. Being culturally flexible enables us to communicate more effectively.

Ethnocentrism Has Perils

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to see our own culture as superior to others. People who are ethnocentric experience great anxiety when engaging with people outside their culture. They may say things like, “They take our jobs,” “They’re everywhere,” or “They’re just not like us.” The more ethnocentric individuals are, the greater their tendency is to view groups other than their own as inferior. As a result, they blame others for problems they face and often turn the facts inside out, making unsupported accusations.²³ When we develop sets of “alternative facts,” we close ourselves to learning the truth.

To combat revisionist histories, some decide to act. Theo Wilson was one such person. Wilson was a Black man who posted YouTube videos about culture and race. Wilson soon found himself being trolled by people who attacked him with racial slurs and cited twisted facts. Wilson decided to go undercover online by presenting himself as a white supremacist to figure out the reasons for their hatred of him. He created a ghost profile and named his avatar John Carter. Through the 8 months he communicated with other white supremacists, he came to understand how their interaction in isolated forums contributed to their ability to blame non-white and non-Christian groups for their problems as they struggled to maintain their cultural traditions; yet they were unable to offer any viable solutions.²⁴

Keep in mind that ethnocentrism is measured on a continuum; it is not an all or nothing thing. We can be ethnocentric to varying degrees when it comes to different cultural groups.

We may have a low degree of ethnocentrism when it comes to individuals from Thailand, but a higher degree of ethnocentrism about individuals from Iran or Russia due to the current political climate. What we need to be mindful of is how much our ethnocentrism influences our interaction with members of these groups and what we can do to reduce it.

Cultural Relativism Has Promise

The opposite of ethnocentrism is **cultural relativism**. When you practice cultural relativism, you recognize that all cultures are different and work to understand the behavior of other cultural groups based on the context in which the behavior occurs, not just from your own frame of reference.

Whether you display more of the characteristics of one who is ethnocentric or one who is a cultural relativist, your behavior will influence both the nature and outcomes of your communication.

Skill Builder

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

These six behaviors are likely to be exhibited by persons with ethnocentric tendencies. For each of the six behaviors, please provide a concrete example of how you either exhibited or did not exhibit the behavior when communicating with at least three different persons from three different cultures.

1. I go out of my way to be with people who are like me.
2. I can cooperate with people like me, but I find it difficult to cooperate with people unlike me.
3. I trust those who are like me more freely than I trust those who are different from me.
4. I am less fearful when I am around people like me than when I am around people unlike me.
5. I am much more apt to blame people unlike me for causing trouble than I am to blame people like me.
6. I believe that people unlike me should try to become more like me.

What do each of your specific examples reveal? Are there some people who belong to cultures different from your own that you are more comfortable with than others? What steps are you willing to take, if any, to minimize the potentially negative effects of ethnocentrism?

Cultural Identity: Cultures Within Cultures

- 2.3 Demonstrate influences on cultural identity, distinguishing between cultures and co-cultures.

Cultural Identity and Communication

We all belong to many groups, including those defined by our gender, age, racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and physical abilities. Our cultural identity, based on these group memberships, influences our behavior, including our personal, community, and professional relationships. Let's consider how.

Gender Roles and Sexual Orientation

Gender is a culturally constructed concept revealing how each of us has been socialized in relation to our sex. The definition of gender roles affects the ways individuals present themselves, socialize, work, perceive their futures, and communicate. We may perceive ourselves to be feminine, masculine, or androgynous (possessing an amalgam of masculine and feminine qualities). For example, the term *cisgender* refers to people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. In the U.S., cisgender men who identify with masculine traits tend to adopt a task-based and problem-solving orientation in their communication, while cisgender women who adopt feminine traits tend to be relationship oriented.²⁵ Transgender people, in comparison, identify with gender behavior that does not conform to that typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Individuals who identify as non-binary, tend to have a more expansive concept of gender, choosing to distance themselves from a specific gender identity.²⁶

When it comes to their sexual orientation, people might identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual, among others. Despite growing public acceptance, members of the LGBTQIA+ community continue to be more negatively judged when compared with heterosexual individuals based on their sexual orientation. As a result they have faced discrimination in housing, employment, and healthcare.²⁷

Age and Generational Membership

We also have ideas regarding the meaning and significance of age, including how people our age should look and behave. In the United States, many people place great value on appearing youthful and younger than their actual ages. In contrast, in Muslim, Asian, and Latin American cultures, people respect rather than deny aging.

In addition to age, we also need to acknowledge the role generational differences play in our communication with one another. Demographers usually classify people into the following generations: matures, boomers, Gen X, Millennials (Gen Y), Gen Z (iGen), and generations Alpha and Beta.

The Greatest Generation. Called “the greatest generation,” matures were born between 1900 and 1945. World War II and the Cold War were two of their defining experiences. Matures are known for respecting authority, following the rules, being loyal to their employing organizations, and respecting timeliness.

The Baby Boomers. Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, came of age during the space race, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and Watergate. They are famous for

questioning authority, displaying a “can do” attitude, and focusing on how to get their way. The first TV generation, boomers had to get off the couch to change channels.

Generation X. Gen X-ers, who were born between 1965 and 1982, saw traditional gender roles bend and flex. Growing up during the Vietnam War, they were also affected by the emergence of the Internet, HIV, and the popularity of MTV. They are known for seeking a work–life balance and being loyal to people, not organizations, meaning that they are unlikely to spend their entire careers with a single organization.

The Millennials. Gen Y members, born between 1983 and 1995, are referred to as the millennial generation or as digital natives. They are known for being technologically savvy. They also have exceedingly high expectations and think they are proficient multitaskers. They are apt to spend more time with the Internet and media than they do face-to-face with others. One out of three Gen Y members is a member of a minority group.

Gen Z. The postmillennial or i-generation (born between 1995 and 2009) is the most digitally savvy among us and the first generation to grow up with smartphones. Also called Generation Z or the App Generation, the iGeneration has no memory of a time without social media. Although still forming their identities, they nonetheless are expected to present a crystallized and idealized online selves.²⁸ Described as conscientious, somewhat anxious, and predisposed to “play it safe,” they are looked to as prime influencers of tomorrow and mindful of the future. Sometimes referred to as “millennials on steroids,” they are concerned with their personal brands but believe that the generation before them posted too openly.²⁹

Generations Alpha and Beta. “Alpha” is a moniker that signals a transition to the Greek alphabet and the start of something new. This generation’s members were born between 2010 and 2024. Forecast to be the most technologically immersed generation ever, they also are the most likely to spend most of their childhood in living arrangements that don’t involve both of their biological parents. This cohort’s members also are said to care more about issues and display impatience to get things done.³⁰

Generation Beta arrived on January 1, 2025 and will include all individuals born through the year 2039. We expect their world to be driven by AI.



Generational differences may pose communication challenges.

Jacob Wackerhausen/istock

Racial and Ethnic Identities

Our racial and ethnic identities are similarly socially constructed. Some racial and ethnic groups, for example, share experiences of oppression. Their attitudes and behaviors may reflect their struggles, influencing their attitudes toward contemporary issues such as affirmative

action. Thus, our racial and ethnic identities affect how we navigate the world including self and other perceptions and how we think and experience life. Having a strong racial and ethnic identity can mitigate the effects of discrimination.³¹

Religious Identity

Religious identity is at the root of countless contemporary conflicts occurring around the world, including the Middle East, India, Pakistan, and the United States, with Islamophobia and antisemitism becoming factors in the war between Hamas and Israel and the 2024 presidential election.³² Religion influences cultural norms, beliefs, and values, so it may create communication challenges when people from different religious backgrounds interact, unless communication is navigated with respect and sensitivity.³³



Religious identity is a source of conflict around the world. In Bangladesh a crowd protests the persecution of Rohingya Muslims.

Farid_Ahmed/istock

Socioeconomic Identity

Similarly, socioeconomic identity frames how we respond to issues of our day. The significant gap between the ultra-wealthy and the middle and working classes in the United States contributes to different attitudes between socioeconomic groups on a wide array of issues. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, those who were economically secure (and could work from home thanks to personal devices and reliable wifi as well as have their groceries delivered) had very different responses to stay-at-home orders than did those who were economically challenged and unable to readily communicate online with others.

National Identity

National identity refers to our legal status or citizenship. People whose ancestors were from other countries may have been U.S. citizens for generations, yet even though they persist in the struggle to be accepted as American, some still perceive them as foreigners.

(Dis)Ability and Identity

In 2019, Ali Stroker made history when she became the first actress who uses a wheelchair to win a Tony award for her performance as Ado Annie in *Oklahoma*.³⁴ In her acceptance speech, Stroker dedicated her award to every child “. . . who has a disability, a limitation, a challenge, who has been waiting to see themselves represented in this arena.”³⁵ Interacting with people with disabilities may require adaptations for all parties. For example, using sign language to communicate with members of the Deaf community, identifying oneself first when speaking with someone with low vision, placing oneself at eye level when communicating with a person who uses a wheelchair. Members of the disabled community also make adaptations, such as

using visual assistive technology, sign language, captioned media, or the services of an interpreter to ensure understanding. Remember that disability is but one feature of any person, not the only identifying characteristic.

Bridging Differences

Culture and Workplace Communication

Culture influences many aspects of our professional lives, including how we define work, our comfort working in a team, conceptions of leadership, expectations of rewards, attitudes about gender, ideas about power, and willingness to discuss particular topics with coworkers. Consider a work environment (paid or volunteer) you have experienced and reflect on these questions:

Choose any three of the cultural identification influences discussed in this section. (For example, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity.) How did these influences affect your experience on the job?

Now think specifically about age and generation. Was this experience multigenerational? Did the variety of ages impact communication on the job? If so, how? How might you encourage members of your generation to work effectively with members of other generations?

How did you or could you determine if an organization's culture reflects your own values and is a good fit for you?

Intersectionality

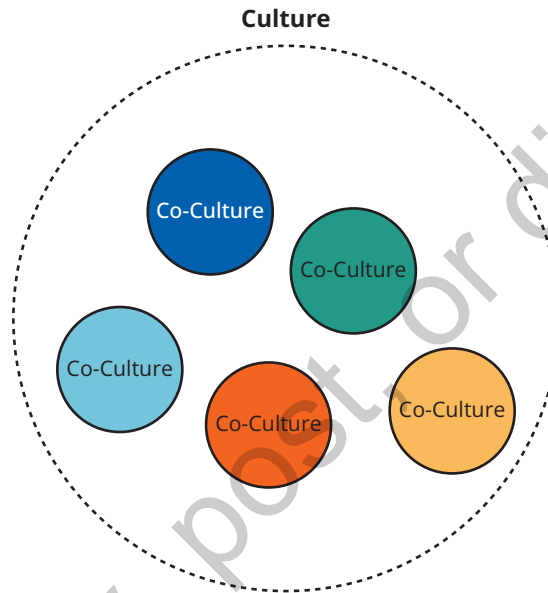
According to the **theory of intersectionality**, we live our lives at the intersection of multiple identities that can both advantage and disadvantage us, leading us to develop unique perspectives and ways of communicating. For example, a heterosexual, Black man who was born and raised in the United States will have different intersecting identities than an Asian lesbian woman who immigrated to the U.S. in high school. However, they may also have similar communication experiences having a similar socioeconomic background, being the same age and of the same generation, and participating in religious services regularly. Categories like “woman” or “man” or “Black” or “lesbian” don't exist independently of each other but inform each other. Similarly, the experience of a white Catholic woman who is a member of the Blind community cannot be fully understood by labeling the person as “white,” “Catholic” or “Blind.” It's the combination that matters.³⁶

Cultures and Co-Cultures

A **culture** is the system of knowledge, beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that are acquired, shared, and used by its members during daily living.³⁷ Within a culture are co-cultures. **Co-cultures** are composed of members of the same general culture who differ in some ethnic or sociological way from the parent culture. As we see, in U.S. society, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Japanese Americans, people with disabilities, members of

the LGBTQIA community, and older adults are just some of the co-cultures belonging to the same general culture³⁸ (Figure 2.1). Thus, co-culture is not based on the country in which you were born or raised but rather on the smaller groups of people with whom you identify. Your co-culture identity may be stronger or weaker than your broader culture identity. Additionally, you may identify with more than one co-culture.

Figure 2.1 ■ A Culture and Its Co-Cultures



Ethics and Communication

Through Others' Eyes

Every communication implicitly or explicitly involves communication ethics. Based on what we observe, we draw conclusions about the rightness or wrongness of others' behavior, determining whether they have behaved fairly and honestly.

1. Imagine you arrive in the United States, and are totally unfamiliar with what life in the U.S. is like. In fact, until now you have never viewed U.S. American media. You do, however, read and understand English. You find an entertainment programming guide online. Based on the titles and descriptions of prime-time network, cable, and streaming entertainment programming, do the following:
 - a. List the behavioral characteristics and values you attribute to U.S. Americans. How many of your listed characteristics and values do you consider positive and ethical? Negative and unethical?
 - b. What subjects appear to be of great interest to U.S. Americans?

2. Next, focus specifically on the members of a featured co-culture.
 - a. Based on what you find, what conclusions can you draw about the selected co-culture's members and their ethical concerns and behavior?
 - b. Compare and contrast these conclusions with the conclusions drawn about U.S. Americans in general.

Variations Among Co-Cultures

Co-cultures have varying norms and different ideas about what ought to be. They may share values such as veganism, adopt a particular symbol such as the rainbow flag used by members of the LGBTQIA community, wear specific clothing articles as done by the Amish and Hasidic communities, and/or use jargon or a specialized vocabulary understood by other members of the co-culture. Remember that there's not just one way to be a member of a culture or co-culture.³⁹

Co-Cultures and Communication Strategies

Have you ever identified as an outsider? People who believe they belong to a marginalized group—that is, a group whose members feel like outsiders—have several options regarding how they want to interact with members of the dominant culture or even if they want to interact with them at all. Have you, or has anyone you know, used any of these strategies?

Assimilation. Co-culture members who use the strategy of **assimilation** attempt to fit in or join with members of the dominant culture. They converse about subjects that members of the dominant talk about, such as cars or sports, or they dress as members of the dominant culture dress. They give up their own ways to assume the modes of behavior of the dominant culture, placing more value on fostering relationships with members of the host culture.

Accommodation. In comparison, co-culture members who use the strategy of **accommodation** attempt to maintain their cultural identity even while they strive to establish relationships with members of the dominant culture, placing value on both their culture and the host culture. A gay man or lesbian who takes their partner to an occasion at which members of the dominant culture will be present, such as a company or family celebration, is using the strategy of accommodation.

Separation. On the other hand, when members of a co-culture resist interacting with members of the dominant culture, they employ the strategy of resistance, or **separation**. Because these people, such as the Amish or Hasidic Jews, prefer to interact with each other rather than have contact with people they perceive to be outsiders, they tend to keep to themselves, placing more value on maintaining their cultural heritage.



Amish communities in Lancaster, PA and other areas of the United States and Canada, are reflective of separation.

Bastiaan Slabbers istock

Co-Cultures and Communication Approaches

Members of co-cultures can use passive, assertive, or more aggressive/confrontational communication approaches in their efforts to accomplish their objectives relative to the dominant culture.

Passive Communication. Co-culture members who use a passive communication approach seek to avoid the limelight. They accept their position in the cultural hierarchy. Rather than defend their ways and oppose others, they embrace the cultural beliefs and practices of the dominant culture. Recent immigrants to the United States who desire to attain citizenship may choose this path, hoping to blend in so that they do not disturb the status quo.

Assertive Communication. Co-culture members who use an assertive communication approach may seek to communicate a shared cultural identity with members of the dominant group. They want others to accommodate their diversity. They are receptive to rethinking several of their ideas and may give up or modify some while holding on to others. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, for example, many Arab Americans spoke openly of their patriotism, their support for the war against terror, and their desire for others to allow them to live according to their values and beliefs.

Confrontational Communication. Co-culture members who use a more aggressive communication approach defend their own beliefs and traditions with intensity and may be perceived by members of the dominant culture as “hurtfully expressive” or “self-promoting.” They make it difficult for members of the dominant culture to ignore their presence or pretend they do not exist.⁴⁰ They adopt this strategy to demarginalize themselves and actively participate in

the world known to members of the dominant culture. In the early years of Act Up, a gay rights organization, members employed this approach.

Table 2.2 offers additional examples of preferred strategies and approaches explained in this section.

Strategy	Communication Approach	Example
Separation	Passive	Lunching alone
	Assertive	Opting to live with like people
	Confrontational	Criticizing discriminatory practices of the dominant culture
Accommodation	Passive	Wearing a yarmulke to work; wearing a sari to a party
	Assertive	Sharing information; engaging in education of others
	Confrontational	Critiquing others to promote change
Assimilation	Passive	Emphasize commonalities to fit in
	Assertive	Downplay differences but reveal feelings
	Confrontational	Staging a protest to negotiate position

Understanding both the general culture and its co-cultures is essential for effective communication. Merely knowing another's language is not enough. It also is necessary to become aware of the norms and rules of the culture or co-cultures that might influence the nature of interactions you have with its members. It is important to understand the ways culture shapes interaction.

Dimensions of Culture in Action

2.4 Illustrate six dimensions of cultural variability and their role in reducing the strangeness of strangers.

By exploring six dimensions used to distinguish one culture from another, we can increase our ability to understand our own and other cultures. These six dimensions are (1) individualistic and collectivistic cultures, (2) high-context and low context communication cultures, (3) high-power-distance and low-power-distance cultures, (4) monochronic and polychronic cultures, (5) masculine and feminine cultures, and (6) uncertainty avoidance, which reflects a culture's tolerance for ambiguity and acceptance of risk. As we discuss each of these cultural variations, keep in mind that no culture is purely one or the other; rather, cultures vary in the degree to which they possess each of the characteristics. Also think about the ways in which cultures can influence one another.

Although members of a culture may have emphasized one variable over the other at different points in the culture's history, that does not mean that the culture can't change once strongly impacted by the behaviors displayed by members of another culture. For example, both the United States (an individualistic culture) and Japan (a collectivistic culture) have influenced one another with the U.S. becoming more collectivistic in its use of group work in educational and business settings and Japan becoming more individualistic. Also, remember that not every member of a culture will embody the primary cultural value to the same extent or express themselves similarly in all contexts.

Individualism and Collectivism

The cultural dimension of individualism versus collectivism reveals how people define themselves in their relationships with others. **Individualistic cultures**, such as those of Great Britain, the United States, Canada, France, and Germany, stress individual goals and cultivate individual initiative, achievement, and power. **Collectivistic cultures**, represented by Japan, China, South Korea, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Nigeria, give precedence to group goals and nurture group influences, tradition, and conformity. This means that, whereas the “I” may be most important in individualistic cultures with persons being primarily self-oriented and valuing their privacy, the “we” (concern for the larger group) is the dominant force in collectivistic ones. In collectivistic cultures, the individual is expected to fit into and be loyal to the group. In individualistic cultures, emphasis is placed on developing the sense of self.

High Context and Low Context

A second way that cultures vary in communication style is in their preference for directness in communication, ranging from low-context to high-context communication.

Cultures with **high-context communication** systems are tradition bound and gather information from the context of a situation, rather than through explicit verbal messages. Members of high-context cultures place a significant value on “face-saving,” desiring to avoid embarrassing themselves or others. They generally prefer not to disagree, criticize publicly, or say no for fear of causing their communication partners to lose face. In contrast, cultures with **low-context communication** systems generally encourage members to share openly and to exhibit a more direct communication style. They focus on verbal messages more than context and are willing to disagree openly and argue a point.

Members of low-context cultures tend to gather background information when meeting someone for the first time. They might ask people they have just met where they went to college, where they live, and who they work for. People from high-context cultures are much less likely to ask such questions up front.⁴¹ In addition, people from low-context cultures generally feel that they must explain everything rather than rely on nonverbal, contextual information. In contrast, people from high-context cultures believe that most messages can be understood without direct verbal messages, often through nonverbal means such as nods, eye contact (or lack thereof), and even silence.

Asian cultures typically emphasize high-context communication, whereas Western cultures typically represent low-context systems. For example, Japanese people traditionally value silence, believing that a person of few words is thoughtful, trustworthy, and respectable. For members of high-context cultures, silence communicates mutual understanding, whereas it makes

members of low-context cultures feel uncomfortable. Thus, Japanese people spend considerably less time talking than do people in the United States. This orientation also helps explain why the Japanese often perceive self-disclosures during interaction as socially inappropriate.⁴²

High Power Distance and Low Power Distance

Power distance measures the extent to which individuals are willing to accept power differences and inequalities among people. Individuals from **high-power-distance cultures** such as Saudi Arabia, India, Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia, view power as a fact of life and tend to defer to people with higher power (e.g. a supervisor or other leader). In such cultures, power rests in the hands of a few rather than being distributed throughout the population. The hierarchy of relationships, rather than relationship interdependence, maximizes perceptions of power differences.

In contrast, individuals from **low-power-distance cultures**, such as Israel, Sweden, and the United States, tend to favor the equality and interdependence of all people. Superiors and subordinates from low-power-distance countries emphasize their interdependence by displaying a preference for consultation; subordinates will even contradict their bosses when necessary.⁴³ In such cultures, you may also find people with less power addressing people with more power by their first names (such a subordinate calling their supervisor “Michah” or “Janelle” or even using a nickname).

Monochronic and Polychronic

Chronemics refers to time use. How we perceive time also influences our communication. For example, in most of Europe and North America, “time flies” and life can be very fast paced. In Kenya, Argentina, and southern U.S. states, activities are often conducted at a slower rhythm and without the same sense of urgency. When not understood, such differences in conceptual orientation can become frustrating. According to Hall, cultures approach time in one of two ways: as monochronic or polychronic.⁴⁴

People attuned to **monochronic** time schedule time carefully, one event at a time, preferring to complete an activity before beginning another. This orientation, common in Western cultures, perceives time to be linear—having a beginning and an end. In contrast, people brought up using **polychronic** time perceive time to be cyclical. Rather than rigidly scheduling or segmenting their time, they readily give in to distractions and interruptions, even choosing to tackle several different problems or hold several different conversations at the same time. Additionally, rather than trying to be on time, like monochronic people, polychronic people may be late for an appointment, change an appointment right up to the last minute, or opt not to arrive for their appointment at all.⁴⁵



People accustomed to polychronic time tend to take on multiple tasks at once.

Paul Bradbury/istock

Masculine and Feminine

Cultures differ in their attitudes toward gender roles.⁴⁶ In highly **masculine cultures**, members value aggressiveness, strength, and material symbols of success. In highly **feminine cultures**, members value relationships, tenderness in members of both sexes, and a high quality of life. Among highly masculine cultures are Japan, Italy, Germany, Mexico, and Great Britain. Among highly feminine cultures are Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Thailand, and Chile.

Masculine cultures socialize members to be dominant and competitive. They tend to confront conflicts head-on and are likely to use a win–lose conflict resolution strategy. In contrast, the members of feminine cultures are more apt to compromise and negotiate to resolve conflicts, seeking win–win solutions. Thus, whereas masculine cultures emphasize maximal distinctions in the behavior of men and women and stress assertiveness, feminine cultures are characterized by more overlap in the social roles performed by men and women, and underscore the importance of nurturing. Gender norms, however, continue to evolve, with a competing version of masculinity—one stressing a duty to protect the weak—emerging to challenge the more traditional version stressing toughness.⁴⁷

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is a measure of tolerance for ambiguity and acceptance of risk. Many of us go out of our way to avoid the uncertainty we experience when we find ourselves in uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations. Not all cultures, however, are equally bothered or stressed by uncertainty. Rather, cultures vary in their tolerance for uncertainty, also known as their tolerance for ambiguity.

In cultures with a low tolerance for uncertainty, such as in Japan, Greece, Argentina, and Chile, people generally avoid interacting in situations and with people who are unfamiliar. They may avoid taking risks and find differences in opinion and a lack of specificity challenging. In contrast, members of a culture with a high tolerance for uncertainty, such as in Denmark, Great Britain, and Ireland, people tend to enjoy new situations and people, have a “live and let live” attitude toward differences in opinion; can cope with vagueness; have nonspecific timetables; and feel comfortable handling risk, stress, and anxiety. The U.S. falls a bit past the mid-point toward the high tolerance end of the scale.

Interpretations of Cultural Differences

Where a culture falls on the individualistic–collectivistic, low-context versus high-context communication, masculine-feminine, power distance, time, and uncertainty tolerance scales affects the interactional preferences of its members. Developing a fuller comprehension of these dimensions can improve communication between the members of diverse cultures. For example, knowing whether individuals tend to understate their accomplishments or take credit for personal achievements can keep you from passing judgments that may be ill-founded.

Understanding where individuals fall on the remaining cultural continua, whether they prefer individual or group goals, how they view power differentials, how they conceive of

silence, the degree to which they value assertiveness and confrontation compared with relational harmony and the expression of feelings can guide us in responding more mindfully. When people from diverse cultures interact, unless their differences in orientation are acknowledged, interactions may well result in misunderstandings that could have been avoided had we only been mindful.

Digital Technology, Community, and Connectivity

2.5 Understand how digital technology influences communication with people from different cultures.

Digital communication is redefining the meaning of “community,” including the nature of neighborhoods and neighbors, the dangers of polarization and division, and options for extending our communication reach and settings.

Expand Your Borders

When we acknowledge the primary value of the communities in which we reside (including their schools, places of worship, cultural and sports facilities), we position ourselves to foster stronger real-world connections with others. Many of us supplement these real-world connections by also seeking out communities online. The Internet helps us find groups of people in the virtual world who think the same way we do and who resemble us in every conceivable way, along with groups of people who differ from us.

Many virtual communities also are social networks in which users create profiles or avatars—alternate selves or images of characters—they use when interacting virtually with others. Especially in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), millions of people go online in search of surrogate neighborhoods and relationships. This has led some critics to assert that rather than bringing people together, online networks are isolating us. They contend that these communities are missing the essence of real neighborhoods, including a sense of location and a feeling of permanence and belonging. Despite this, because the Internet can permeate national boundaries, it has the potential to widen our concept of community by enabling us to interact more easily with people who have diverse lived experiences and worldviews, expanding our reach and helping us encounter new people and ideas that enrich our lives.⁴⁸

Be Wary of Those Who Seek to Divide and Polarize

Despite the incredible power of the internet to expand our borders, we should proceed cautiously. For example, while we may meet people who share and encourage our beliefs, communicating solely with like-minded people may lead to polarization. Contrastingly, communicating with mixed-minded people tends to bring about a moderation of viewpoints.⁴⁹ A preference for

likeness and an intolerance for difference often leads to the development of online in-groups (composed of people whom we perceive to be like us) and out-groups (composed of those we view as different from us) whom we may block or “unfriend.”

Similarly, social media influencers can impact our perceptions of others and opposing viewpoints, allowing the opinions posted to polarize us, divide us, and drive us further apart. The gulf in how we see things reflects both affective polarization (contributing to our disliking others more) and ideological polarization (a measure of how far apart we are on issues of concern, such as immigration, gun control, the legitimacy of elections, and abortion).

Unfortunately, if we fail to keep an open mind when we find ourselves exposed to opinions countering our own, we may become more entrenched, which only serves to strengthen our original position. Since social media tend to feature and lead with extreme positions, we end up pushed away from, even repulsed by, others’ stances, while our own positions are reinforced. Social media plays to the extremes rather than leading with moderate views; instead of reinforcing our own viewpoints and deeming the viewpoints of those opposed to ours as “crazy,” it is more effective to seek out people and positions that are more to the center.⁵⁰

Engage in Digital Dialogue

On the bright side, social media platforms allow us to stay in touch with friends and offer opportunities to reacquaint us with those with whom we have lost touch. They also allow us to make new friends, via special interest groups, for example. Wherever we live, we can use the Internet to help bring diversity and new cultures into our lives, changing our social, political, and business lives. Advocates for such communication believe it facilitates international dialogue.⁵¹

So, how can we ensure we are using the internet for productive intercultural communication? Ask yourself these questions: Are all voices really included and being heard? Are we becoming more or less tolerant of each other? Are we aware that words posted to global online groups have consequences, just as they do when delivered in person? If we use the Internet wisely, we will find ways to increase the scope and diversity of our knowledge and develop our abilities to work together in diverse teams to solve personal, professional, and societal problems.⁵²

Recognize Power Dynamics

The Internet facilitates communication during crises such as natural disasters and wars. Those in control of governments during periods of unrest may choose to censor the Web, even suspending access to sites such as YouTube and X in the effort to preserve their power by controlling what the people in their countries can say and access online. However, tech-savvy activists usually find ways to circumvent such controls.

On a more positive note, the **digital divide**, which refers to inequality in access to technology and the Internet, is shrinking. Members of minority groups, older adults, and people with lower incomes are going online in greater numbers, democratizing access. Still, gaining access to technology remains a problem in many places around the world because of high poverty levels and the absence or unreliability of electricity and broadband connections.



Instruction in new technology has helped to bridge the digital divide between young people and older adults.

Morsa Images/istock

Be the Communication Coach

Looking Forward

Generation Beta is the name given to the cohort that will be born between 2025 and 2039. Growing up with artificial intelligence, they are expected to live in a world in which the lines between the physical and virtual world are blurred, experience ubiquitous connectivity, and possess unprecedented technological fluency. Based on what you've learned, identify five lessons about culture and communication that you would like to pass on to them as they make their way towards 2039.

Communication Skills: Practice Communicating Interculturally

Despite technology's ability to expand borders, there are too many of "us" who do not work as hard as we should at communicating with people from different cultures, simply because we do not wish to live or interact with "them."⁵³ To counter this, we need to prioritize reducing the strangeness of strangers. How can we do this?

Focus on mastering and maintaining these skills as you work to eliminate ineffective behaviors.

Refrain From Formulating Expectations Based Solely on Your Culture

Be open-minded. When those you interact with have diverse communication styles, it is critical that you acknowledge the differences and accept their validity. By not isolating yourself

within your own group or culture, you allow yourself to be more fully a part of a multicultural society and thus a better communicator.

Recognize Faulty Education Can Impede Understanding

Identify and work to eliminate any personal biases and prejudices you have developed over the years. Determine, for example, the extent to which your family and friends have influenced your feelings about people from other cultural groups. Do those you have grown up with appear comfortable or uncomfortable relating to people of different cultural origins? To what extent have their attitudes affected your intercultural communication competence?

Be Mindful of Your and Others' Behavior

Instead of relying on how you once felt, make the effort to be “fully present” when interacting with those whose cultures differ from yours. Consider how your thoughts and communication preferences may be both like and different from the thoughts and communication preferences of people with different cultural roots. By practicing the intercultural sensitivity resulting from mindfulness, your communication can help bridge cultural differences and discover common ground.

Commit to Developing Intercultural Communication Skills

In 2024, a live-stream, sidewalk video portal linked people in Dublin with people in Manhattan, enabling them to peer into one another's lives. Its creators touted it as a symbol of global interconnectedness. While many behaved appropriately when using the portal, others exhibited inappropriate behavior, such as holding up swastikas, causing the portal to be shut down for a briefly.⁵⁴

The creation of a global village makes it essential that you leave the comfort of your cultural niche, become more knowledgeable of other cultures, and strive to be culturally aware.

Familiarize yourself with the communication rules and preferences of members of different cultures so that you can increase the effectiveness of your interactions.

Complete This Chapter 2 Checklist

2.1. I can explain the significance of intercultural communication.

Culture is communication and communication is culture. Globalization is the increasing economic, political, and cultural integration and interdependence of diverse cultures. Diversity is the recognition and valuing of difference. Multiculturalism is the practice of respecting and engaging with people from different cultures. Through intercultural communication, we interpret and share meanings with individuals from different cultures.

2.2. I can analyze how attitudes toward cultural differences affect communication.

Cultural pluralism, acknowledging that other cultural groups are equal in value to one's own, gained acceptance, replacing the melting pot philosophy. Cultural relativism is the opposite of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to see one's own culture

as superior to all others. Stereotypes are mental images or pictures we carry around in our heads; they are shortcuts we use to guide our reactions to others. A prejudice is a negative or positive prejudgment that leads to the creation of in and out-groups.

2.3. I can demonstrate influences on cultural identity, distinguishing the difference between cultures and co-cultures.

Among the groups that influence cultural identity, and on which cultural identity is based, are those defined by gender, age, racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, national, and generational identities. A culture is a system of knowledge; beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that are acquired, shared, and used by members. A co-culture is a group of people who differ in some ethnic or sociological way from the parent culture.

2.4. I can illustrate six dimensions of cultural variability and their role in reducing the strangeness of strangers.

Cultures vary in six general ways: (1) individualism versus collectivism, (2) high versus low context, (3) high versus low power distance, (4) monochronic versus polychronic, (5) masculine versus feminine, and (6) uncertainty avoidance. Individualistic cultures stress individual goals. Collectivistic cultures stress group goals. High-context communication cultures are bound to tradition and value indirectness. Low-context communication cultures encourage directness in communication. High-power-distance cultures view power as a fact of life with subordinates deferring to superiors. Low-power-distance cultures believe in equality of all people. Monochronic cultures schedule time carefully. Polychronic cultures refuse to be restricted by time. Masculine cultures value aggressiveness, strength, and material success. Feminine cultures value relationships, tenderness, and high quality of life. Uncertainty avoidance is a measure of tolerance for ambiguity and acceptance of risk. Understanding these six dimensions adds to our storehouse of knowledge, enhancing our communication competence and our ability to adapt to cultural differences.

2.5. I can understand how digital technology influences communication with people from different cultures.

For many of us, the Internet and social media facilitate this by enabling us to join a wide range of online communities and interact with people who hold different worldviews. They also inform us of the dangers of polarization and division, demonstrating the risk we face of becoming more isolated or insulated from diverse viewpoints. On the other hand, they facilitate the augmenting of real-life experiences with digital ones. Technology enhances our opportunities to communicate within and across cultural boundaries in both real and virtual communities.

Key Terms

accommodation

assimilation

co-cultures

collectivistic cultures

cultural hegemony

cultural imperialism

cultural pluralism

cultural relativism

culturally confused
culture
digital divide
diversity
enculturation
ethnocentrism
feminine cultures
globalization
high-context communication
high-power-distance cultures
individualistic cultures
intercultural communication
interethnic communication
international communication

interracial communication
intracultural communication
low-context communication
low-power-distance cultures
masculine cultures
melting pot philosophy
monochronic
multiculturalism
polychronic
salad bowl philosophy
separation
theory of intersectionality
uncertainty avoidance
world-view

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