NINTH EDITION

Interpersonal
Communication

RELATING TO OTHERS

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Interpersonal Communication

Relating to Others

NINTH EDITION

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Pearson

Dedicated to Our Families

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Special Features

Preface

The world does not revolve around you. This unprofound observation has profound implications for the study of interpersonal communication: At the heart of quality interpersonal relationships is an emphasis on others. A focus on others rather than on oneself has been the hallmark of most volunteer, community, and faith movements in the world for millennia. Yet this text is not about religion or philosophy. It's about how to enhance the quality of your interpersonal communication with others. The importance of being other-oriented was the foundation of the first eight well-received editions of *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, and it continues to be the central theme of the ninth edition.

Revel™

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors' narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Learn more about Revel

www.pearson.com/revel

Special Features in Revel for Communication Students

Revel is a dynamic learning experience that offers students a way to study the content and topics relevant to communication in a whole new way. Rather than simply offering opportunities to read about and study interpersonal communication, Revel facilitates deep, engaging interactions with the concepts that matter most. For example, in Chapter 5, students are presented with a self-assessment that scores their skill in empathizing with others, allowing them to examine their level of empathy and consider how they could improve on it. Interactive text and figures on topics like "What You Do with Your Communication Time" are designed to capture student's attention and engage them in the text. In addition, students are presented with video examples throughout the book on topics like gender-inclusive language, personal growth and assertiveness, how to give feedback, and what attracts people to one another. A wealth of student and instructor resources and interactive materials can be found within Revel. Some of our favorites include the following:

- **Module Audio and Audio Excerpts**
  With an Internet connection, students can listen to audio of the entire book while on the go. In addition, audio excerpts bring examples to life in a way that a printed text cannot. Throughout the book, dialogue excerpts highlight effective as well as ineffective ways to communicate. These audio examples reinforce learning by increasing student comprehension and engagement.

- **Self-Assessments**
  Self-assessment instruments allow students to analyze their own communication styles, enabling them to learn and grow over the duration of the course. Self-assessments are offered on a variety of topics, such as testing your empathy and strategies for improving intercultural competence.

- **Videos and Video Self-Checks**
  Videos on topics such as listening, electronically mediated communication, perception barriers, understanding diversity, nonverbal messages, and conflict appear throughout the product to boost mastery of these essential concepts. These engaging videos enhance existing content and most are bundled with correlating self-checks (in the form of multiple-choice questions), enabling students to test their knowledge. For example, the following video self-check, "Listening," which appears in Chapter 5, provides an overview of listening styles, the stages of listening, and listening barriers.

Video Self-Check: Listening

- **Interactive Figures**
  These interactive figures are designed to engage and help students understand hard-to-grasp concepts, such as the model of communication as transaction, through

interactive visualizations. For example, students can interact with Figure 1.3 (A Model of Communication as Transaction) by clicking the "next" and "previous" buttons to reveal each element of the model one step at a time.

Figure 1.3 A Model of Communication as Transaction
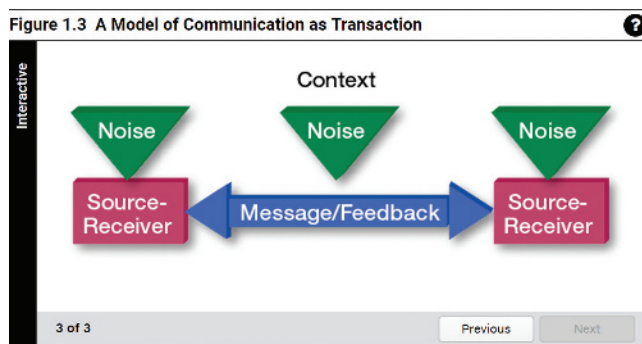
The source and receiver of a message experience communication simultaneously.

- **Integrated Writing Opportunities**

  To help students connect chapter content with personal meaning, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts: (1) the Journal prompt, which elicits free-form, topic-specific responses addressing content at the module level, and (2) the Shared Writing prompt, which encourages students to share and respond to one another's brief responses to high-interest topics in the chapter. Most of the journal prompts, which appear in every module, help students make connections between interpersonal communication topics and their own experiences. At the end of each chapter, a Shared Writing prompt allows students to see and respond to their classmates' comments, thereby facilitating discussion online as well as in the classroom. Instructors have access to students' responses to these writing activities and can also assign them as homework.

  For more information about the tools and resources in Revel and access to your own Revel account for *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, Ninth Edition, go to www.pearson.com/revel.

What's New in the Ninth Edition

With this revision, we have worked to retain the strengths that readers value most—an easily accessible style, our other-oriented approach, and a balance of theory and skills. We have also enhanced the strengths of the interactive elements in Revel that resonate so much with students and instructors. This new edition adds fresh examples and new research throughout. A new feature box, **#communicationandsocialmedia,** appears in each chapter that focuses on how social media is changing how we relate to and interact with others. For example, in Chapter 1 the feature highlights how being constantly connected to others via some electronic means can impact our lives and in Chapter 2, students are encouraged to consider and

compare their "cyber" and "realspace" selves. Throughout Revel you will find new videos with video self-checks, new Journal prompts, and new activities on contemporary topics. These new interactive elements in Revel provide a robust and fully immersive experience for students as they study interpersonal communication in a multimedia environment.

Chapter Updates: New Content and Research

Here are some more reasons to give this new edition a close look.

- Chapter 1, "Introduction to Interpersonal Communication," presents new research on how texting and social media can influence relationships and how the visible presence of a smartphone can diminish the quality of conversation. New material has been added on the effect of social media on our relationships. In Revel, a new animated video provides an overview of the three interpersonal communication models discussed in the text and also presents the five principles of interpersonal communication. An accompanying video self-check reinforces these hard-to-grasp concepts by testing students on their knowledge of the models and principles covered in the chapter.

- Chapter 2, "Interpersonal Communication and Self," features a new discussion about how we judge the credibility of social media self-disclosures. The chapter also includes new research on attachment styles, compulsive Internet use, and self-disclosure among couples. A new animated video in Revel helps students understand the components of the self-concept and intrapersonal communication. Another video from *Sky News* explores how and why some schools in the United Kingdom are offering confidence classes. After watching these videos, students can test their knowledge of these topics by answering self-check questions. Almost all of the Recap boxes, which periodically summarize key concepts and terms, are interactive in Revel so students can review the material they just read and then check their knowledge so they can confidently move on to the next topic.

- Chapter 3, "Interpersonal Communication and Perception," contains a new **#communicationandsocialmedia** box that discusses how to use social media to promote a positive perception of yourself. New content on the ways we seek information to reduce uncertainty has been added to the chapter. We have also included new material on the social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE). A new Journal prompt in Revel on the fundamental attribution error asks students to consider and write about a situation where they blamed someone for something they later found out was out of

his or her control. In Revel, Figure 3.1 is an interactive multimedia gallery that highlights how we organize our world by creating categories, linking together the categories we have created, and then seeking closure by filling in any missing gaps in what we perceive.

- Chapter 4, "Interpersonal Communication and Diversity: Adapting to Others," includes an expanded and updated discussion of sex and gender. As the updated data highlighted in the **Relating to Diverse Others** feature box in this chapter indicates, the United States continues to become increasingly diverse. With these new statistics in mind, we've added material on race and ethnicity, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity. Revel also features a new video with an accompanying self-check that discusses diversity of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and age. The authors have also included more research on post millennials (sometimes called Generation Z or the iGeneration), and another new video in Revel provides an overview of common barriers to effective intercultural communication.

- Chapter 5, "Listening and Responding Skills," includes a new discussion of adaptive listening and new research on meta-cognitions. The chapter also features a new **Improving Your Communication Skills** box on how our increasing reliance on text messages and social media can result in more misunderstandings. There is also a new **Relating to Diverse Others** box that discusses how the amount of social support we offer and receive appears to be influenced by both our sex and sexual orientation. The chapter ends with a new **Applying an Other-Orientation** box with a passage adapted from *Confessions of a Guilty Bystander* by Trappist Monk Thomas Merton. A new activity in Revel is designed to help students test their listening skills. After listening to an audio clip, students can assess their recall ability by answering a series of multiple-choice questions. The chapter also features a number of new excerpt audio clips, which bring dialogue and examples to life. In addition, a new social explorer survey in Revel invites students to assess their skill in empathizing with others.

- Chapter 6, "Verbal Communication Skills," includes a new discussion of gender-neutral singular pronouns and a revised section on how words become words. New research on the persuasiveness of arguments on and offline has also been added as well as a new video in Revel with an accompanying video self-check on how to avoid using sexist language. Like other chapters, most of the Recap boxes are interactive so students can review and then immediately test their knowledge on the material they just read.

- Chapter 7, "Nonverbal Communication Skills," opens in Revel with a new introductory video on nonverbal communication that gives students a broad overview of the topics they'll be studying in this chapter. In Section 7.2 there is also a new video on nonverbal messages. Both have accompanying video self-checks. Figure 7.1, which highlights Edward T. Hall's four zones of space, is now interactive in Revel. After reviewing the figure, students can then test their knowledge of the four spatial zones that speakers in Western cultures sometimes define for themselves unconsciously. The chapter also includes new material on inappropriate and unwanted touching. The **#communicationandsocialmedia** box has been revised to include research on screen size and how it affects how we process messages.

- Chapter 8, "Conflict Management Skills," has a revised section on destructive conflict. The **Relating to Diverse Others** feature box on the effects of sex and gender on conflict and power has been revised and updated with new research. There is also new research on how avoiding confrontations can decrease relational satisfaction and increase overall stress. Revel includes a new video and accompanying self-check on how to give feedback during a difficult conversation, an important real-world skill for students to learn before entering the workforce. There are also new Journal prompts that ask students to share their opinions or personal experiences as they relate to the following topics: conflict misconceptions, ego conflict, temper strategies, and conflict management skills.

- Chapter 9, "Understanding Interpersonal Relationships," contains new material on the use of affectionate communication, including a discussion of affection exchange theory. The chapter also includes new content on self-disclosure and electronically mediated communication, as well as new research on dialectic tensions related to texting and cell phone use. The discussion of relationship de-escalation has been expanded and new material on relational dialectics theory has been added to the chapter. Revel also includes a new interactive figure on the social penetration model, as well as a new activity on self-disclosure and relational development. These interactive figures and activities are designed to actively engage students as they learn new and challenging topics. A new video and accompanying self-check discusses why sharing similarities with a romantic partner is important in long-term relationships.

- Chapter 10, "Managing Relationship Challenges and the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication and Relationships," now includes six shorter sections that cover the following topics: when relationship expectations are violated, maintaining long-distance relationships (LDRs) and relationships that challenge social norms, addressing grief and delivering bad news, the dark side of interpersonal communication, the dark side of interpersonal relationships, and interpersonal relationship de-escalation and termination. Addition-

al content on grief and delivering bad news, serial arguments, verbal aggression, and relational turbulence has been added to the chapter. New research on deception and methods for dealing with cyberstalking has also been included, as well as a new video in Revel about the reasons why people tend to breakup. In addition, new Journal prompts encourage students to consider and write about topics such as implicit and explicit understandings, long-distance relationships, delivering bad news, deception, and unwanted attention.

- Chapter 11, "Interpersonal Relationships: Friendship and Romance," includes a new discussion of relationship maintenance strategies. Updated data on Facebook friendships has been included in the section on young adult friendships. Research on online dating, hookup expectations, and unsolicited advice has also been added to the chapter. A new video in Revel discusses the reasons why people date. A self-check quiz accompanies the video.

- Chapter 12, "Interpersonal Relationships: Family and Workplace," had previously consisted of two very long sections that are now divided into five, shorter sections for this edition. We've added new material on topics such as relationships between parents and adult children, workplace bullying, and hostile work environments. In addition, there is also new content on adoptive and foster families, as well as on intermarriage between people from different cultures, races, religions, and ethnicities. Revel includes a new video with an accompanying self-check activity on dealing with bullies in positions of power, an important and timely topic. In addition, Revel features new Journal prompts on parent and adult children relationships, dating at work, workplace communication, and hostile work environments. Figure 12.1, which is interactive in Revel, highlights the most common sources of family difficulties.

Unique Features

An Other-Oriented Approach

Becoming other-oriented is a collection of skills and principles that are designed to increase your sensitivity to and understanding of others. Being other-oriented doesn't mean you abandon your own thoughts, ignore your feelings, and change your behavior only to please others; that would not only be unethical, it would also be an ineffective approach to developing genuine, honest relationships with others. An other-oriented person is self-aware in addition to being aware of others. True empathy, emotional

Being OTHER-Oriented

When someone "pushes your hot buttons" and you find yourself becoming emotionally upset, what can you do to calm yourself and remain centered? First, simply be aware that you are becoming emotionally upset. Then take action (such as focusing on your breathing) to lower the tension you are feeling. What other strategies can help you remain calm when someone "pushes your buttons"?

Journal: Being OTHER-Oriented—Your Hot Buttons

When someone "pushes your hot buttons" and you find yourself becoming emotionally upset, what can you do to calm yourself and remain centered? First, simply be aware that you are becoming emotionally upset. Then take action (such as focusing on your breathing) to lower the tension you are feeling. What other strategies can help you remain calm when someone "pushes your buttons"?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

intelligence, and sensitivity are possible only when we feel secure about our own identities.

Becoming other-oriented is a mindful process of considering the thoughts, needs, feelings, and values of others, rather than focusing exclusively on oneself. This process involves all the classic principles and skills typically taught in interpersonal communication courses—listening, feedback, conflict management skills, and verbal and nonverbal skills—and places additional emphasis on the importance of the perceptions, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, values, and emotions of others.

BEING OTHER-ORIENTED Being OTHER-Oriented boxes appear throughout the product and connect the other-orientation theme to specific discussions. Every box presents a thought-provoking question to get students thinking about how other-oriented their own communication is. In Revel, these **Being OTHER-Oriented** questions are presented as Journal prompts, which allow students to electronically submit a free-form response. Instructors have access to students' responses to these writing activities and can also assign them as homework.

APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION   At the end of each chapter, the summary section **Applying an Other-Orientation** discusses essential applications and specifically applies the other-orientation to the chapter content.

A Balance of Principles and Skills

This product provides a clear overview of interpersonal communication theory and principles to help students understand how they communicate, balanced with strategies to help students improve their interpersonal communication skill. Every chapter includes both classic and contemporary research conclusions that document essential interpersonal communication principles. Theory that helps explain the interpersonal communication behavior of others also helps students predict how best to enhance their own interpersonal communication. The research-based skills and practical suggestions throughout show students how to apply the principles and improve such skills as listening, conflict management, and verbal and nonverbal communication.

we encounter in people of the other gender or of other cultures, ethnicities, or ideologies.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND DIVERSITY: ADAPTING TO OTHERS   This in-depth chapter (Chapter 4) not only identifies barriers to competent intercultural communication, but also presents strategies to bridge the chasm of differences that still too often divide rather than unite people.

RELATING TO DIVERSE OTHERS   This feature, which is included in every chapter, presents research findings as well as communication strategies for understanding differences.

RELATING TO DIVERSE OTHERS

Social Support Preferences Based on Sex Differences and Sexual Orientation

The amount of social support that we offer and receive appears to be influenced by both our sex and sexual orientation.

Sex Differences in Social Support. Research has found that women, regardless of sexual orientation, are more likely to offer more social support to others compared to men.[111] In addition, women tend...

Sexual Orien... searchers Lillian Ell... sex intimate relatio... more social suppo... relationships with... reciprocal social su...

In general, reg... als with greater lev...

lower likelihood of separating than those in heterosexual relationships. Researchers speculate that same-sex partners may be more likely to provide the kind of social support that their partners need, resulting in what they called an "optimal matching of support."[114]

An Emphasis on Diversity

Inherent in our other-oriented approach is the understanding that people differ in significant ways, such as culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political perspectives, and other points of view. It is because of these differences that we need skills and principles that allow us to develop links to other people and encourage us to establish meaningful interpersonal relationships with them. Respect for and understanding of diversity is a message we share in every chapter. In Revel, these viewpoints are also represented in videos and excerpt audio clips, as well as interactive figures and activities.

Communication occurs when people find commonalities in meaning that transcend their differences. Using a competency-based approach, this book presents practical, research-based strategies for increasing understanding when interacting with those who are different from us. Using examples, photos, illustrations, interactive figures, activities, videos, audio, and research conclusions woven throughout each chapter, we identify ways to become other-oriented despite differences

An Emphasis on Technology and Social Media

The line between face-to-face and electronically mediated communication has become increasingly blurred as we text, e-mail, and Skype with our friends and share the latest news and views via social media. This text explores the ever-increasing role of technology in interpersonal communication and the implications of technology for our daily communication and our relationships with others. Our narrative includes the latest research findings about how our electronic connections affect our face-to-face interactions.

#communicationandsocialmedia The new **#communicationandsocialmedia** feature box focuses on research conclusions about the ways in which social media is changing how we relate to and interact with others. It also offers practical applications relating to the impact of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

#communicationandsocialmedia

Being "Listened to" by Our Facebook Friends

Listening to others is a way to show our support and express our affection toward them, especially if the other person is having a difficult time. When we have a difficult day or experience a disappointment, research suggests that we expect our friends to be there for us and support us.

provides us with a broader audience of acquaintances as well as good, close friends who can listen to our concerns and life challenges. Research suggests that if we are fearful of being judged by close friends or we feel at risk disclosing something personal that would invite a detailed response, we may turn to seek support in the form of a quick "like"—enough that someone "hears" us and that we do not de a lengthy explanation. [75]

#communicationandsocialmedia

Being "Listened to" by Our Facebook Friends

Listening to others is a way to show our support and express our affection toward them, especially if the other person is having a difficult time. When we have a difficult day or experience a disappointment, research suggests that we expect our friends to be there for us and support us.

An Emphasis on Relationships

As the book's subtitle Relating to Others suggests, we highlight the importance of enhancing interpersonal relationships by developing an increased awareness of and sensitivity to how we relate to others. Relationship chapters focus first on fundamental interpersonal theory and skills directly related to relationships and on theories of the stages of relationship development. While we emphasize the positive nature of relationships, we also provide a glimpse into the challenging "dark side" of relating to others, including such issues as deception, jealousy, and the influence of technology on our interactions and communication. A wide range of relationship types is then explored in detail, including relationships with friends, romantic partners, family members, and coworkers, as well as strategies for managing these relationships. Videos in Revel also explore relationship topics such as attraction, love, breakups, dating, and family. These engaging and insightful videos enhance existing content and most have accompanying self-checks (in the form of multiple-choice questions), enabling students to test their knowledge.

COMMUNICATION AND EMOTION **Communication and Emotion** boxes throughout help students see how emotions affect their relationships with others.

A Partnership with Students and Instructors

To use a music metaphor, we have provided the "notes," but the instructor is

the one who makes the music, in concert with the student reader. We provide the melody line, but the instructor adds harmony, texture, and color to make the instructional message sing. Built into the book is a vast array of pedagogical features:

- **Learning Objectives** appear at the beginning of each chapter and are additionally highlighted in their related sections. Then, using the learning objectives as an organizing framework, our Study Guide feature at the end of each chapter gives students the opportunity to review, apply, and assess key chapter concepts through questions, and classroom and group activities. Learning objectives in Revel appear at the beginning of each chapter and link to their respective modules. Each assessment question in Revel is also associated with a specific learning objective.

- **Chapter-opening sections** highlight the one-to-one correspondence of the learning objectives and chapter outlines.

COMMUNICATION AND EMOTION

What's Your Emotional Intelligence Level and Why Does It Matter?

Researchers have found **emotional intelligence (EI)** to be an important factor in how you relate to others.

What Is Emotional Intelligence?
Emotional intelligence is the ability to be empathic and aware of your own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Emotionally intelligent people are also able to manage their own emotions. It has be
iel Goleman's book
More than IQ was
magazine cover sto
referred to as EQ,
the concept.[84] But
us? Researchers h
of positive outcome
[85]

EI Helps You Express Emotions
An emotionally intelligent person is able to express his or her own emotions—to use words accurately to describe feelings, moods, and emotions.

EI Helps You Manage Your Emotions
If you understand your own emotions, you have the ability to

Communication and Emotion

What's Your Emotional Intelligence Level and Why Does It Matter?

Researchers have found **emotional intelligence (EI)** to be an important factor in how you relate to others.

- Student-friendly **Recap** feature boxes periodically summarize key concepts and terms. Almost all of the **Recap** boxes are interactive in Revel so students can review and then immediately test their knowledge on the material they just read.

- **Improving Your Communication Skills** boxes throughout offer practical strategies for applying chapter content. Many of these feature boxes are interactive in Revel, allowing students to type their responses directly into the multimedia environment.

- **Key terms** are defined in a full end-of-text glossary. In print, the Key term definitions appear in the margins while in Revel, students can click on any bold-faced key term and the definition will automatically pop up.

  In addition to the learning resources built into the product, we provide a wide array of instructor resources and student supplements.

Revel Combo Card

The Revel Combo Card provides an all-in-one access code and loose-leaf print reference (delivered by mail).

Resources in Print and Online

Key instructor resources include an Instructor's Manual (ISBN 978-0-13-487579-8), Test Bank (ISBN 978-0-13-487583-5), and PowerPoint Presentation Package (ISBN 978-0-13-487580-4). These supplements are available at www.pearson.com/us (access code required). MyTest online test generating software (ISBN 978-0-13-487584-2) is available at www.pearsonmytest.com (access code required). For a complete listing of the instructor and student resources available with this text, please visit the Interpersonal Communication e-Catalog page at www.pearson.com/us.

Recap

Listening Styles

Relational-oriented listening style	Listeners prefer to attend to feelings and emotions and to search for common areas of interest when listening to others.
Analytical-oriented listening style	Listeners prefer to withhold judgment, listen to all sides of an issue, and wait until they hear the facts before reaching a conclusion.
Critical listeni	
Task-oriented	

Recap: Listening Styles

Click on each box to see the definition of each listening style. Then check your understanding by matching the listening style to its correct definition.

- Relational-oriented listening style
- Analytical-oriented listening style
- Critical listening style
- Task-oriented listening style

IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Who Are You?

Consider this question: Who are you? More specifically, ask yourself this question ten times. Write your responses in the spaces provided here or on a separate piece of paper. It may be challenging to identify ten aspects of yourself. The Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes said, "To know thyself ... is the most difficult lesson in the world." Y... explore your self-concept and...

I am _____

I am _____

I am _____

I am _____

I am _____

Improving Your Communication Skills: Who Are You?

Consider this question:

Who are you? More specifically, ask yourself this question ten times. Write your responses in the boxes provided. It may be challenging to identify ten aspects of yourself. The Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes said, "To know thyself ... is the most difficult lesson in the world." Your answers will help you begin to explore your self-concept and self-esteem in this chapter.

I am

Pearson MediaShare

Share, assign, and assess a variety of media easily and meaningfully in Revel using Shared Media and VideoQuiz assignments.
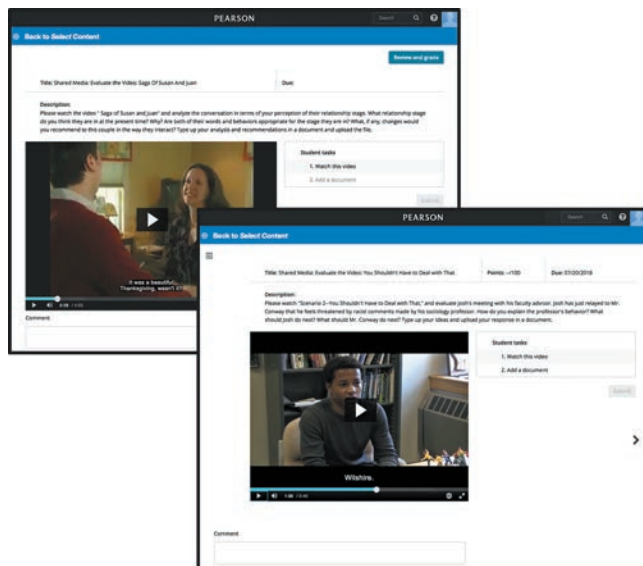
Using the best of MediaShare functionality and designed with learners and learning in mind, Shared Media assignments allow instructors and students to share and engage with videos and other media, including recorded performances in Public Speaking. And VideoQuiz assignments transform a typically passive activity into an active learning experience. Rather than watching a video and then answering questions, students engage with instructional content while it's being delivered.
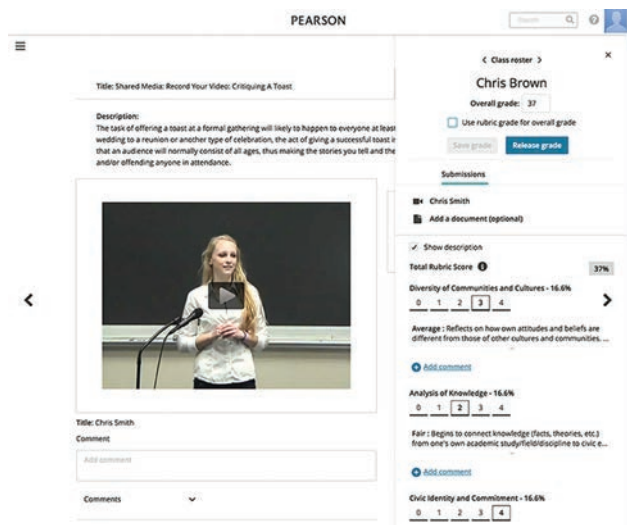
- Use Shared Media to assign or view speeches, video-based assignments, role plays, and more in a variety of formats including video, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

- Assess students using customizable, Pearson-provided rubrics, or create your own around classroom goals, learning outcomes, or department initiatives.
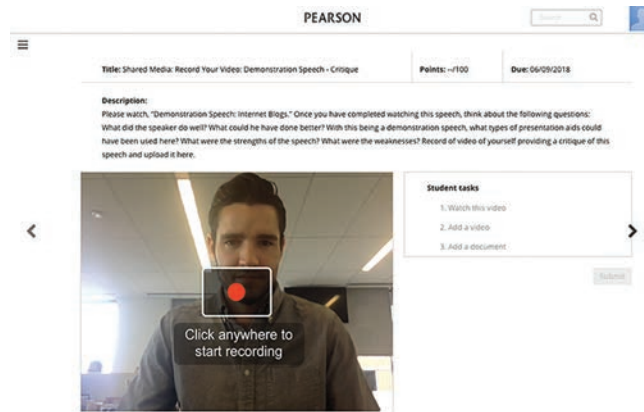
- Create assignments for students with options for full-class viewing and commenting or private comments between you and the student.
- Record video directly from a tablet, phone, or other webcam.
- Embed video from YouTube or Pearson Clips via assignments to incorporate current events into the classroom experience.
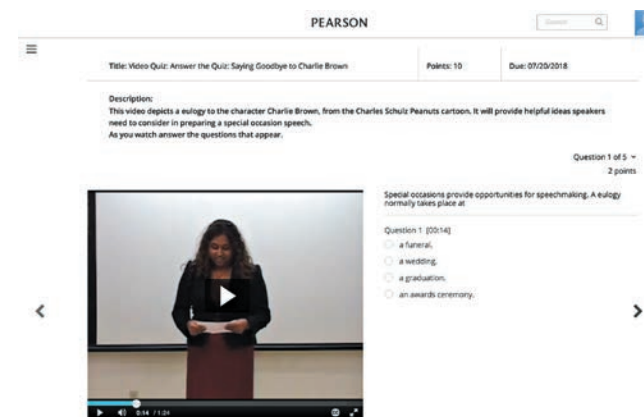
- Set up time-stamped quiz questions on video assignments to ensure students master concepts and interact and engage with the media.
- Import grades into most learning management systems.
- Ensure a secure learning environment for instructors and students through robust privacy settings.

Acknowledgments

This text is not only a collaboration among the three of us, but also a collaboration with a host of others. Without the research conclusions of the talented, creative scholars who have studied interpersonal communication and published their results, a text of this scope would not be possible. We also thank our students, who are a constant source of questions, ideas, inspiration, and challenges that enrich our teaching and writing.

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Ninth Edition Reviewers

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Steven A. Beebe
Susan J. Beebe
Mark V. Redmond

Steven A. Beebe is Regents' and University Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Texas State University. He served as Chair of the Department of Communication Studies at Texas State for twenty-eight years and concurrently as Associate Dean for twenty-five years. Steve is the author or co-author of twelve widely used communication books, most of which have been through multiple editions (including Russian and Chinese editions), as well as numerous articles, book chapters, and conference presentations. He has been a Visiting Scholar at both Oxford University and Cambridge University in England. He made international headlines when conducting research at Oxford; he discovered a manuscript that was the partial opening chapter of a book that was to be co-authored with J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis called *Language and Human Nature*. Steve has traveled widely in Europe and Asia, and has played a leadership role in establishing new communication curricula in Russian universities. He has received his university's highest awards for research and twice for service, has been recognized as Honors Professor of the year, received the Texas State Evertte Swinney Excellence in Teaching Award twice, was designated a Piper Professor by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation, and was named Outstanding Communication Professor by the National Speaker's Association. In 2013 he served as President of the National Communication Association, the largest professional communication association in the world. His passions include his family and a lifelong love of music; he is a pianist and organist and a struggling cellist.

Susan J. Beebe's professional interests and expertise encompass both oral and written communication. Sue has co-authored three books and has published a number of articles and teaching materials in both English and communication studies. She has received the Texas State University Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching and in Service and the College of Liberal Arts Awards for Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activities, in Teaching, and in Service. After serving as Director of Lower-Division Studies in English for eleven years, Sue retired in 2014 from the Department of English at Texas State. An active volunteer in the community of San Marcos, Texas, Sue was the founding coordinator of the San Marcos Volunteers in Public Schools Program and has served on the San Marcos School Board and the Education Foundation Board. In 1993, she was named the statewide Friend of Education by the Texas Classroom Teachers' Association; in 2000 the San Marcos school district presented her with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Sue enjoys reading, traveling, and caring for the Beebe family pets. Sue and Steve have two adult sons: Mark, who works in marketing in the Dallas area; and Matt, who teaches middle school in Austin.

Mark V. Redmond is an Associate Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies at Iowa State University. In 2012 he received the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences award for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching. Besides this text, Mark has authored an introductory text on communication theory and research, edited an upper-level text in interpersonal communication, and co-authored a public speaking text. His research focuses on social decentering (taking into account another person's thoughts, feelings, perspectives, etc.), one of the themes incorporated in this text. His research studies include expectations associated with male–female relationships, social decentering's impact in marriage, initial interactions between strangers, adaptation in interpersonal interactions, and intercultural communication competence. This theory and research are presented in his 2018 book, *Social Decentering: A Theory of Other-Orientation Encompassing Empathy and Perspective-Taking* published by De Gruyter Oldenbourg. He is a Cyclone sports fan with an avocation for playing basketball at least three times a week (despite an aging hook shot). An unaccomplished piano and guitar player, he loves composing and writing songs and vows to someday complete the musical he's been working on for thirty years. Mark and his wife Peggy have three children: Beth, a graduate of the University of Iowa and Mount Mercy University; Nicholas, a graduate of Iowa State University and McCormick Theological Seminary; and Eric, a graduate of Iowa State University and Northwest Missouri State University.

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"Communication is to a relationship what breathing is to maintaining life." *Virginia Satir*

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 Compare and contrast definitions of communication, human communication, and interpersonal communication.

1.2 Explain why it is useful to study interpersonal communication.

1.3 Describe the communication process, including key components and models of communication as action, interaction, and transaction.

1.4 Discuss five principles of interpersonal communication.

1.5 Discuss the role of electronically mediated communication in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

1.6 Identify strategies that can improve your communication competence.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Interpersonal Communication Defined

Interpersonal Communication's Importance to Your Life

Interpersonal Communication and the Communication Process

Interpersonal Communication Principles

Interpersonal Communication and Social Media

Interpersonal Communication Competence

nterpersonal communication is like breathing; it is a requirement for life. And, like breathing, interpersonal communication is inescapable. Unless you live in isolation, you communicate interpersonally every day. Listening to your roommate, talking to a teacher, texting a friend, and talking to your parents or your spouse in person or via Skype are all examples of interpersonal communication.

Like many people, you probably use a wide range of social media applications to develop, maintain, and redefine *social* relationships with others.[1] You may well be one of a growing number of people who turn to online dating sites to seek and develop relationships. More than 40 million Americans look for love online, which is rapidly becoming a primary means of establishing relationships with others.[2] Journalist Thomas Friedman has reminded us, "Cyberspace is now where we do more of our shopping, more of our dating, more of our friendship-making and sustaining, more of our learning" than any other context.

Research suggests that online conversations mirror the same kinds of topics and issues that occur during face-to-face (FtF) interactions.[3] You may find yourself seamlessly toggling between e-conversations and "realspace" interactions.[4] Texting our friends and lovers has been found to significantly enhance the quality of our relationships.[5] Social media is especially important in maintaining existing relationships.[6] Yet additional research suggests that our social media interactions can sometimes result in less-satisfying relationships, loneliness, and unhappiness, which is why we will explore the role of social media in initiating and sustaining our relationships throughout this book.[7]

Whether on- or offline, it is impossible *not* to communicate with others.[8] Even before we are born, we respond to movement and sound, and we continue to communicate until we draw our last breath. Without interpersonal communication, a special form of human communication that occurs as we manage our relationships, people suffer and even die. Recluses, hermits, and people isolated in solitary confinement dream and hallucinate about talking with others face to face.

Human communication is at the core of our existence. Most people spend between 80 and 90 percent of their waking hours communicating with others.[9] Think of the number of times you communicated with someone today, as you worked, ate, studied, shopped, or experienced your other daily activities. The younger you are, the more likely you communicated via text message today. Young adults ages 18 to 24 send an average of 110 text messages a day—20 times more than someone 65 years old, although the use of texting and social media is growing among older Americans.[10] It is through these interactions with others, both on- and offline, that we develop interpersonal relationships.[11]

Because relationships are so important to our lives, later chapters will focus on the communication skills and principles that explain and predict how we develop, sustain, and sometimes end, relationships. We will explore such questions as the following:

- Why do we like some people and not others?
- How can we interpret other people's unspoken messages with greater accuracy?
- Why do some relationships blossom and others deteriorate?
- How can we better manage disagreements with others?
- How does social media influence making, maintaining, and ending relationships?

As we address essential questions about how you relate to others, we will emphasize the importance of being **other-oriented**. Being other-oriented requires empathic awareness of the thoughts, needs, experiences, personality, emotions, motives, desires, culture, and goals of your communication partners while still maintaining your own integrity. Becoming other-oriented is not a single skill, but a collection of skills and principles that are designed to increase your sensitivity to

other-oriented

To be aware of the thoughts, needs, experiences, personality, emotions, motives, desires, culture, and goals of your communication partners while still maintaining your own integrity.

and understanding of others. Unfortunately, in general, research has found that we are becoming less empathic and other-oriented.[12]

This chapter charts the course ahead, addressing key questions about what interpersonal communication is and why it is important. We will begin by seeing how our understanding of the interpersonal communication process has evolved. And we will conclude by examining how we initiate and sustain relationships through interpersonal communication.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEFINED

1.1   Compare and contrast definitions of communication, human communication, and interpersonal communication.

To understand interpersonal communication, we must begin by understanding how it relates to two broader categories: communication in general and human communication. Scholars have attempted to arrive at a general definition of communication for decades, yet experts cannot agree on a single one. One research team counted more than 126 published definitions.[13] In the broadest sense, **communication** is the process of acting on information.[14] Someone does or says something, and others think or do something in response to the action or the words as they understand them.

To refine our broad definition, we can say that **human communication** is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.[15] We learn about the world by listening, observing, tasting, touching, and smelling; then we share our conclusions with others. Human communication encompasses many media: speeches, e-mail, songs, radio and television broadcasts, podcasts, social networks, online discussion groups, letters, books, articles, poems, and advertisements.

Interpersonal communication is *a distinctive, transactional form of human communication involving mutual influence, usually for the purpose of managing relationships*. In this section, we discuss the essential elements that differentiate the unique nature of interpersonal communication from other forms of human communication.[16]

communication
Process of acting on information.

human communication
Process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.

interpersonal communication
A distinctive, transactional form of human communication involving mutual influence, usually for the purpose of managing relationships.

Interpersonal Communication Is a Distinctive Form of Communication

For years, many scholars defined interpersonal communication simply as communication that occurs when two people interact face to face. This limited definition suggests that if two people are interacting, they are engaging in interpersonal communication. Today, interpersonal communication is defined not only by the number of people who communicate, but also by the quality of the communication. Interpersonal communication occurs when you treat the other person as a unique human being.[17]

Increasingly, people are relating via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Google+, and Skype. Research confirms that many of us think of the various electronic means we use to connect to others as natural ways to establish and maintain relationships.[18] With a smartphone in our pocket, we are within easy reach of our friends, family, and colleagues. Although sometimes our tweets and Facebook posts more closely resemble mass communication (broadcasting a message to a large group of people at the same time), we nonetheless also use social media to enrich personal relationships with individuals.[19]

Interpersonal versus Impersonal Communication   **Impersonal communication** occurs when you treat others as objects or respond to their roles rather than to who they are as unique persons. Think of all human communication, whether

impersonal communication
Process that occurs when we treat others as objects or respond to their roles rather than to who they are as unique persons.

mediated or face-to-face, as ranging on a continuum from impersonal to interpersonal communication. When you ask a server in a restaurant for a glass of water, you are interacting with the role, not necessarily with the individual. You're having an impersonal conversation rather than an interpersonal one.

I–It and I–Thou Relationships Philosopher Martin Buber influenced our thinking about the distinctiveness of interpersonal communication when he described communication as consisting of two different qualities of relationships: an "I–It" relationship or an "I–Thou" relationship.[20] He described an "I–It" relationship as an impersonal one, in which the other person is viewed as an "It" rather than as an authentic, genuine person. To expect every communication transaction to be a personal, intimate dialogue would be unrealistic and inappropriate. It's possible to go through an entire day communicating with others but not be involved in interpersonal communication.

An "I–Thou" relationship, on the other hand, occurs when you interact with another person as a unique, authentic individual rather than as an object or an "It." In this kind of relationship, true, honest dialogue results in authentic communication. The communicators are patient, kind, and forgiving. They have developed an attitude toward each other that is honest, open, spontaneous, nonjudgmental, and based on equality rather than superiority.[21] However, although interpersonal communication is more intimate, not all interpersonal communication involves sharing closely guarded personal information.

Interpersonal versus Other Forms of Human Communication In this book, we define interpersonal communication as a unique form of human communication. There are other forms of human communication, as well.

mass communication
Process that occurs when one person issues the same message to many people at once; the creator of the message is usually not physically present, and listeners have virtually no opportunity to respond immediately to the speaker.

- **Mass communication** occurs when one person communicates the same message to many people at once, but the creator of the message is usually not physically present, and listeners have virtually no opportunity to respond immediately to the speaker. Messages communicated via radio and TV are examples of mass communication. Tweets and Facebook posts can resemble mass communication messages since a large number of people usually view those messages.

public communication
Process that occurs when a speaker addresses an audience.

- **Public communication** occurs when a speaker addresses an audience.

small-group communication
Process that occurs when a group of three to fifteen people meet to interact with a common purpose and mutually influence one another.

- **Small-group communication** occurs when a group of three to fifteen people meet to interact with a common purpose and mutually influence one another. The purpose of the gathering can be to solve a problem, make a decision, learn, or just have fun. While communicating with others in a small group, it is also possible to communicate interpersonally with one or more individuals in the group.

intrapersonal communication
Communication with yourself; thinking.

- **Intrapersonal communication** is communication with yourself. Thinking is perhaps the best example of intrapersonal communication. In our discussion of self and communication in Chapter 2, we discuss the relationships between your thoughts and your interpersonal communication with others.

Interpersonal Communication Involves Mutual Influence Between Individuals

Every interpersonal communication transaction influences us. Mutual influence means that *all* communication partners are affected by a transaction that may or may not involve words. The degree of mutual influence varies a great deal from transaction to transaction. You probably would not be affected a great deal by a brief smile that you received from a traveling companion on a bus, but you would be greatly affected by your lover telling you he or she was leaving you. Sometimes interpersonal

The Continuum Between Interpersonal Communication and Impersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication	Impersonal Communication
• People are treated as unique individuals.	• People are treated as objects.
• People communicate in an "I–Thou" relationship. Each person is treated as special, and there is true dialogue and honest sharing of self with others.	• People communicate in an "I–It" relationship. Each person has a role to perform.
• Interpersonal communication often involves communicating with someone you care about, such as a good friend or cherished family member.	• The interaction is mechanical and stilted. There is no honest sharing of feelings.
	• Impersonal communication involves communicating with people such as sales clerks and servers—you have no history with them, and you expect no future with them.

communication changes our lives dramatically, at other times, it only impacts us in small ways. Long-lasting interpersonal relationships are sustained by a spirit of mutual equality. Both you and your partner listen and respond with respect for each other. There is no attempt to manipulate others.

Buber's concept of an "I–Thou" relationship includes the quality of being fully "present" when communicating with another person.[22] To be present is to give your full attention to the other person. The quality of interpersonal communication is enhanced when both you and your partner are simultaneously present and focused on each other.

Interpersonal Communication Helps Individuals Manage Their Relationships

Question: What is neither you nor I, but always you and I? Answer: A relationship.[23] A **relationship** is a connection established when you communicate with another person. When two individuals are in a relationship, what one person says or does influences the other person.

You initiate and form relationships by communicating with others whom you find attractive in some way. You seek to increase your interactions with people with whom you wish to develop relationships, and you continually communicate interpersonally to maintain the relationship. You also use interpersonal communication to end or redefine relationships that you have decided are no longer viable or need to be changed. In essence, to relate to someone is to "dance" with them. You dance with them in a specific time and place, with certain perceptions and expectations. Over time, this dance becomes an ongoing interpersonal relationship.

You are increasingly likely to use social media to connect with friends and manage your relationships.[24] Research has found that instant messages (including text messages) can have an overall positive effect on your relationships, although not always.[25] E-mail, texts, and other forms of instant messages appear to be used primarily to maintain *existing* relationships, although they may also establish initial contact with others. Additional research has found that people first perceive online and instant

relationship
Connection established when one person communicates with another.

In face-to-face encounters, we simultaneously exchange both verbal and nonverbal messages that result in shared meanings. Through this kind of interrelation, we build relationships with others.

Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock

messages as lower quality than face-to-face interactions, but over time rate them just as positively.[26] Even after someone dies, friends or family members may maintain his or her Facebook account so they can post messages in memory of that person; around 40 million deceased "users" have Facebook accounts.[27] So whether it occurs on- or offline, interpersonal communication helps you manage your relationships.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION'S IMPORTANCE TO YOUR LIFE

1.2   Explain why it is useful to study interpersonal communication.

Why learn about interpersonal communication? Because it touches every aspect of our lives. It is not only pleasant or desirable to develop quality interpersonal relationships with others, it is also vital for our well-being. We have a strong need to communicate interpersonally with others, whether face to face or through social media. Research suggests that our relationships with others enhance our overall well-being and happiness, nurture us, and provide a consistent source of positive support.[28] Understanding and improving interpersonal communication can enhance our relationships with family, loved ones, friends, and colleagues, and can enrich the quality of our physical and emotional health.[29]

Improved Relationships with Family

Relating to family members can be a challenge. Although around 90 percent of people marry by age 50, the divorce statistics in the United States reflect the difficulties that can occur when people in relationships live with each other: About half of all marriages end in divorce within twenty years of the wedding.[30] We don't claim that you will avoid all family conflicts or that your family relationships will always be harmonious if you learn the principles and skills of interpersonal communication. You can, however, develop more options for responding when family communication challenges come your way. You will also be more likely to develop creative, constructive solutions to family conflict if you understand what's happening and can promote true dialogue with your spouse, partner, child, parent, brother, or sister. Furthermore, author Virginia Satir calls family communication, "the largest single factor determining the kinds of relationships [people make] with others."[31] Dialogue with family members and loved ones is the fundamental way of establishing close, personal relationships with them and with others.

Improved Relationships with Friends and Romantic Partners

For unmarried people, developing friendships and falling in love are the top-rated sources of satisfaction and happiness in life.[32] Conversely, losing a relationship is among life's most stressful events. Most people between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four report that they have had five to six romantic relationships and have been "in love" once or twice.[33] Studying interpersonal communication may not unravel all the mysteries of romantic love and friendship, but it can offer insight into our partners' and friends' behaviors.[34] Increasingly, people use Facebook and other social media to develop their relationships with friends and loved ones.[35]

Improved Relationships with Colleagues

Several surveys document the importance of quality interpersonal relationships in contributing to success at work.[36] The abilities to listen to others, manage conflict, and develop quality interpersonal relationships with others are usually at the top of the

skills list employers seek in today's job applicants.[37] In addition, your success or failure in a job often hinges on how well you get along with your supervisors and peers.

Improved Physical and Emotional Health

Positive interpersonal relationships with others have direct benefits for your overall health and happiness. Research has shown that the lack or loss of a close relationship can lead to ill health and even death. Physicians have long observed that patients who are widowed or divorced experience more medical problems, such as heart disease, cancer, pneumonia, and diabetes, than married people.[38] Grief-stricken spouses are more likely than others to die prematurely, especially around the time of the departed spouse's birthday or near their wedding anniversary.[39] Being childless can also shorten one's life. One study found that middle-aged, childless wives were almost two-and-one-half times more likely to die in a given year than those who had at least one child.[40] Terminally ill patients with a limited number of friends or no social support die sooner than those with stronger ties.[41] Without companions and close friends, opportunities for intimacy and stress-minimizing interpersonal communication are diminished. Although being involved in intimate interpersonal relationships can lead to conflict and feelings of anger and frustration, researchers suggest that when all is said and done, having close relationships with others is a major source of personal happiness.[42] Studying how to enhance the quality of your communication with others can make life more enjoyable and enhance your overall well-being.[43]

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

1.3 Describe the communication process, including key components and models of communication as action, interaction, and transaction.

Interpersonal communication is a complex process of creating meaning in the context of an interpersonal relationship. To better understand interpersonal communication as a distinct form of communication, it is useful to examine the communication process.[44]

Components of the Communication Process

The most basic components of communication include these elements: source, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, and context. Understanding each of these elements can help you analyze your own communication with others as you relate to them in interpersonal situations as well as other communication contexts. Let's explore these elements in greater detail.

- *Source.* The **source** of a message is the originator of the ideas and feelings expressed. The source puts a message into a code, a process called **encoding**. The opposite of encoding is the process of **decoding**, which occurs when the receiver interprets the source's words or nonverbal cues.

- *Message.* **Messages** are the written, spoken, and unspoken elements of communication to which people assign meaning. You can send a message intentionally (talking to a professor before class) or unintentionally (falling asleep during class); verbally ("Hi. How are you?"), nonverbally (a smile and a handshake), or in written form (this book).

- *Channel.* The **channel** is the means by which the message is expressed to the receiver. You probably receive messages through a variety of channels, including mediated channels, such as text messaging, e-mail, phone, video conference, Facebook, or Twitter.

source
Originator of a thought or emotion, who puts it into a code that can be understood by a receiver.

encode
To translate ideas, feelings, and thoughts into code.

decode
To interpret ideas, feelings, and thoughts that have been translated into a code.

message
Written, spoken, and unspoken elements of communication to which people assign meaning.

channel
Pathway through which messages are sent.

receiver

Person who decodes a message and attempts to make sense of what the source has encoded.

noise

Anything external (physiological) or internal (psychological) that interferes with accurate reception of a message.

feedback

Response to a message.

context

Physical and psychological environment for communication.

- *Receiver.* The **receiver** of the message is the person (or persons) who interprets the message and ultimately determines whether it was understood and appropriate. As we emphasize in this book, effective communicators are other-oriented; they understand that the receiver ultimately makes sense of the message they express.

- **Noise** is anything that interferes with the message being interpreted as it was intended. Noise is always present. It can be external (e.g., beeps coming from a smartphone that signal incoming e-mail or text messages) or physiological (e.g., hunger pains). It can also be internal or psychological (e.g., thoughts, worries, and feelings that compete for our attention).

- *Feedback.* **Feedback** is the response to the message. Like a Ping-Pong ball, messages bounce back and forth. We talk; someone listens and responds; we listen and respond to this response. This perspective can be summarized using the following physical principle: For every action, there is a reaction.

  Without feedback, communication is rarely effective. When your roommate says, "Would you please pick up some milk at the store?" you may say, "What kind—1 percent, 2 percent, organic, chocolate, soy, or almond?" Your quest for clarification is feedback. Further feedback may seek additional information, or simply confirm that the message has been interpreted: "Oh, some 1 percent organic milk would be good." Like other messages, feedback can be intentional (your mother gives you a hug when you announce your engagement) or unintentional (you yawn as you listen to your uncle tell his story about bears again); verbal ("That's a pepperoni pizza, right?") or nonverbal (blushing after being asked to dance). Feedback happens not only face to face, but also online. Your responses (feedback) to what you have purchased on Amazon.com and other shopping sites often result in directed, customized advertisements crafted just for you.[45]

- *Context.* **Context** is the physical and psychological environment for communication. All communication takes place in some context. As the cliché goes, "Everyone has to be somewhere." A conversation on the beach with your good friend would likely differ from a conversation the two of you might have in a funeral home. Context encompasses not only the physical environment, but also the people present and their relationships with the communicators, the communication goal, and the culture of which the communicators are a part.[46]

Models of the Communication Process

The components of the communication process are typically arranged in one of three communication models, showing communication as action, as interaction, or as transaction. Let's review each model in more detail to see how expert thinking about human communication has evolved.

Communication as Action: Message Transfer   The oldest and simplest model, shown in Figure 1.1, is *communication as action*—a transferring of meaning.

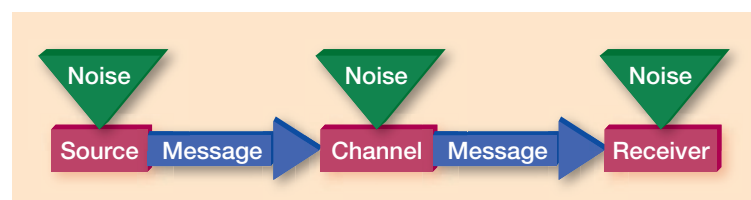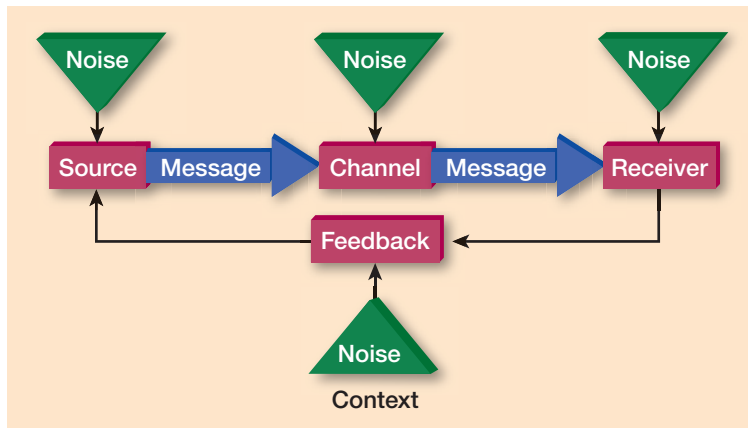**Figure 1.1   A Simple Model of Human Communication as Action**

Figure 1.2   A Model of Communication as Interaction

Interaction models of communication include feedback as a response to a message sent by the source and context as the environment for communication.

"Did you get my message?" This sentence reflects the communication-as-action approach to human communication. Communication takes place when a message is sent and received. Period.

Communication as Interaction: Message Exchange   As shown in Figure 1.2, the perspective of communication as interaction adds the elements of feedback and context to the action model, but it still views communication as a linear, step-by-step process. While the interaction model is more realistic than the action perspective, it does not quite capture the complexity of simultaneous human communication. For example, in interpersonal situations, both the source and the receiver send and receive messages at the same time, which is not reflected in this model.

Communication as Transaction: Message Creation   Today, the most sophisticated and realistic model views communication as transaction, in which each element influences all of the other elements in the process at the same time. This perspective acknowledges that when you talk to another person face to face, you are constantly reacting to your partner's responses. In this model, all the components of the communication process are simultaneous. As Figure 1.3 indicates, even as you talk, you are also interpreting your partner's nonverbal and verbal responses.

The transactional approach to communication is based on **systems theory**. A system is a set of interconnected elements in which a change in one element affects all of the other elements. Key elements of any system include *inputs* (all of the variables that go into the system), *throughputs* (all of the things that make

systems theory
Theory that describes the interconnected elements of a system in which a change in one element affects all of the other elements.

Figure 1.3   A Model of Communication as Transaction

The source and receiver of a message experience communication simultaneously.