

Map of the book

Unit	Discussion skills	Critical thinking skills
Unit 1 Understanding interpersonal communication P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the basics of group discussions • Expressing personal viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing major communication models and understanding their features • Analyzing a communication phenomenon via observation and participation
Unit 2 Knowing yourself P15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voicing an opinion • Displaying proper manners in a talk show discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating yourself from multiple perspectives • Supporting your claim with sound reasons regarding the issue of living/not living with parents
Unit 3 Comprehending identities P29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguing a point • Making constructive comments to help solve practical problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing communication problems deriving from different social identities • Applying the social identity approach to managing identity-related problems
Unit 4 Controlling anger P43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the logic of other people's arguments • Developing lateral thinking ability through intentional questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing thoughts and reasons underlying feelings of anger and rage • Evaluating ways of anger management from multiple perspectives
Unit 5 Handling peer pressure P57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening critically in discussions • Talking about different types of peer pressure and feelings generated by them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating certain behavior and practices of peers • Generating effective solutions to peer pressure problems
Unit 6 Understanding intercultural communication competence P73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing agreement appropriately • Arguing a point with supporting evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication • Transforming concepts and communication processes from verbal to graphic form
Unit 7 Listening in communication P89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing disagreement rationally and politely • Applying critical listening skills to decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying barriers leading to poor listening • Using theories in clarifying or critiquing an argument
Unit 8 Communicating nonverbally P103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking good questions in a discussion • Responding properly based on observation of people's nonverbal behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing nonverbal codes and evaluating their functions in communication • Evaluating nonverbal behavior in various contexts



Intercultural competence

- Enhancing awareness of intercultural differences in communication
- Developing cooperative attitudes to overcome barriers in intercultural communication

- Understanding cultural influence on self-perception
- Explaining a Chinese cultural phenomenon—Chinese square dancing to foreigners

- Being sensitive to stereotypes about a social/cultural group
- Building a superordinate identity to overcome cultural differences

- Maintaining tolerant attitudes to different cultural norms
- Developing sensitivity to various cultural taboos

- Enhancing understanding of and empathy with peers from different cultural/social groups
- Handling peer pressure effectively in intercultural contexts

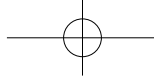
- Identifying cultural influence on expressions of affection
- Developing sensitivity to cultural differences in intercultural communication

- Acquiring adequate information in intercultural contexts
- Identifying cultural influence on speaking and listening customs

- Identifying the influence that culture, technology, and situations have on nonverbal behavior
- Comparing nonverbal communication practices across cultures

Map of the book

Unit	Discussion skills	Critical thinking skills
Unit 9 Communicating with your teacher P117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading a discussion • Comparing views in a discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying problems in teacher-student communication • Developing criteria for evaluating teacher-student interactions
Unit 10 Developing a friendship P131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing a discussion • Taking notes to map the link between a claim and supporting evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying strategies for developing cross-gender friendship • Understanding and using theoretical tools to evaluate friendship
Unit 11 Enhancing family relationships P145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entering a discussion at the proper time • Displaying proper discussion etiquette 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing family communication patterns • Analyzing and solving problems in family communication
Unit 12 Maintaining a romantic relationship P159	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding inappropriate behavior in discussions • Applying the comparative approach to the discussion of an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying different stages of a romantic relationship • Analyzing patterns of romantic love reflected in the popular media
Unit 13 Managing conflicts P173	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding effective problem-solving discussions by following a five-step model • Summarizing solutions from a problem-solving discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating major conflict types • Applying conflict management styles to solving disputes on campus
Unit 14 Cultivating leadership P191	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing a group discussion • Being an active discussant and working with other group members to reach your group goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishing and evaluating different leadership styles in group discussions • Identifying the problems in group work and applying necessary strategies to improve its efficiency
Unit 15 Using social media for interpersonal communication P205	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating a discussion and a discussant, and giving feedback • Expressing agreement and disagreement on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the pros and cons of using social media • Generating effective solutions to problems with social media
Appendix P219		



Intercultural competence

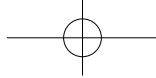
- Recognizing different learning behaviors among Chinese and Western students
 - Identifying cultural differences in different learning environments
- Investigating perceptual differences in friendship across cultures
 - Identifying communicative problems in the development of intercultural friendship
- Recognizing intergenerational differences in value endorsement in family communication
 - Analyzing cultural influence on family communication patterns
- Acquiring knowledge of romantic love in different cultures
 - Understanding perceptual differences in romantic love between Western and Chinese cultures
- Understanding different conflict management styles across cultures
 - Developing empathetic perspectives in intercultural conflict management
- Understanding the mandate of World Environment Day and contributing to the cross-cultural campaign in addressing environmental issues on a global scale
 - Exploring the experience of other cultures concerning environmental protection
- Understanding the different attitudes and ways of using social media between generations
 - Reflecting on your behavior in the cyber world and developing qualities of good cyber citizenship

1

Unit

Understanding interpersonal communication

We communicate every day with someone, a friend, a professor, a family member, or perhaps a delivery boy. We communicate either face to face or through emails, phone calls, text messages or WeChat. Have you ever thought about how competent you are as a communicator? Can you find some people around you who get on well with others because they know how to talk appropriately and effectively in different contexts? How do they do it? In this unit, we'll discuss the key elements involved in a typical communication process and start our exploration into the field of interpersonal communication.



Objectives

Discussion skills

- Understanding the basics of group discussions
- Expressing personal viewpoints

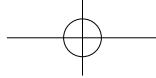
Critical thinking skills

- Comparing major communication models and understanding their features
- Analyzing a communication phenomenon via observation and participation

Intercultural competence

- Enhancing awareness of intercultural differences in communication
- Developing cooperative attitudes to overcome barriers in intercultural communication

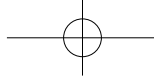




Pre-class work

1. Read the article “Understanding the communication process” on Pages 10–13. Familiarize yourself with the key components of a typical communication process and major communication models. Find out how the linear, interaction, and transaction models differ from one another. Identify the weaknesses and strengths of each model.
2. Cultural differences may exist between people differing in generation, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity or nationality, etc. They can cause communication obstacles if not handled properly. Read the story below. Draw a model of this communication process, by using components introduced in the article, to explain how messages flow in this communicative process.

Lily: It was my 12th birthday. My mom said she had a surprise gift for me, which turned out to be a pink dress. I didn't like it. Being at the turning point from childhood to adolescence, I was extremely sensitive about everything. When I heard my mom saying “My baby is beautiful in pink,” I became so annoyed—Mom still treated me as her personal possession! She would buy me anything without asking first, and I had to accept her gift. No, I wanted to be independent. So I shouted: “I don't want to be your pink baby. If you don't know what I want, then don't buy me anything!” My mom was shocked, because in the past 12 years, she had always been the one who knew me well. She later left me a note: “Dear, I really care about you and love you. But as you are growing up, it's just increasingly difficult for us to know your taste. If you don't like my gift, you can give it to your younger sister. It's very important to me to make my baby happy.” At the sight of the note, I felt quite ashamed as my mom was so considerate of me.



I. Starting point

1 In groups of five (A, B, C, D, and E), play the messenger games below, following the rule for each game strictly.

- 1) Your teacher will show Student A a message in a complex sentence with about 12 words. When the game starts, Student A whispers the message to Student B, who then passes it on to Student C, and so on. The last student, Student E, announces the message to the entire group.

Rule 1

The message receiver is not allowed to ask any questions or check in any way; the message sender is not allowed to explain or repeat any part of the message.

- 2) Play the same game again with a new message from the teacher. This time start with Student E.

Rule 2

The message receiver is allowed to ask one question to check the message; the message sender is allowed to explain once. No further interaction is allowed between the message sender and receiver.

- 3) Play the same game for the third time with another new message from the teacher. Start with Student A again.

Rule 3

The message sender and receiver are allowed to communicate freely until they think they've got the correct message and then pass it on.

2 Based on your experience in the games, discuss the questions below. In your discussion, practice ways of expressing personal views.

- 1) Which game ends up with the most accurate message? Which game has the least accurate message at the end? Why do the messages get distorted?
- 2) What factors affect the message transmission outcome? The message sender, the receiver, the environment, the way senders and receivers communicate with each other or any other factors? What are some sources of "noise" in the games?
- 3) Which communication model can be used to explain the message transmission process of each game? Draw models of your own on a piece of paper with labels of key components and concise explanatory words to describe the processes.



II. Understanding problems in communication

Activity 1 It happened to me: Thanks!



- 1 Communication across cultures is fun, but it sometimes can be difficult. Problems in intercultural communication may arise due to lack of cultural knowledge. We need to develop an awareness of cultural differences and an open attitude to reach out to other cultures. Listen to Grace's story.

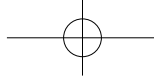
Grace: Last summer, I went to the UK and visited my friend Jane. After a brief and warm greeting, she asked, "Would you like some tea?" I nodded and said, "Thanks." Immediately, a puzzled look crossed on Jane's face. "Is that a yes?" Later I got to know that in accepting or declining an offer, "yes" usually goes with "please" while "no" often matches with "thanks" in the UK. Obviously, my Chinese way of accepting an offer of tea does not work in such a situation.



- 2 In groups of three, discuss the communication problem reflected in this story. What has caused the problem, according to the interaction model or the transaction model?
- 3 Work in the same group. Two students start a conversation, telling each other one embarrassing or frustrating communication experience in an intercultural context (e.g. marked by different nationalities or age, ethnic, gender or occupation groups). The third student acts as an observer, listening to the conversation and taking notes. After the conversation, the third student comments on the effectiveness of the communication by referring to the six basic components of communication and the communication models introduced in this unit.

Activity 2 How is meaning created?

"Message" and "meaning" are different concepts in communication. A message is a verbal or nonverbal sign. A meaning can be encoded in both verbal and nonverbal forms. Due to cognitive and cultural differences, people convey the same meaning in various messages while the same message can be interpreted differently by its encoder (sender) and decoder (receiver).



- 1** Read the following excerpt from *My Secret Unicorn* by Linda Chapman. Create a short play based on the excerpt. There are four roles in your performance: Mrs. Foster, Lauren Foster, Max, and Buddy.

“Where do you want this box, Mom?” Lauren Foster asked, staggering into the kitchen.

Her mom was kneeling on the floor, surrounded by packing cases. “Just put it anywhere you can find a space, honey,” she said.

Lauren went over to the kitchen table and put the box on it. Just then, Max, her young brother, came running in. Hot on his heels was Buddy, their three-month-old Bernese mountain dog.

The puppy came bounding across the floor to say hello—and crashed straight into a stack of dishes that Mrs. Foster had just unpacked. A couple of plates fell off the pile with a horrible clatter.

“Oh, Buddy...” Mrs. Foster sighed.

“It’s not his fault,” Max said. He rushed over to scoop the fluffy black-and-tan puppy into his arms. “He just hasn’t gotten the hang of stopping yet.”

Mrs. Foster laughed. “Why don’t you take Buddy out into the yard?” she suggested. “You can teach him how to use his brakes.”

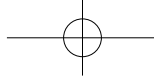
Max and Buddy rushed out again into the April afternoon sunshine.

“Watch out, Max!” Mrs. Foster called from the hallway.

- 2** Perform your play to the class. While you are watching other groups’ performances, pay attention to the diverse ways that the same role is played by different classmates.

- 3** After all plays are done, students who play the same role form a group. Use terms or concepts you have read in “Understanding the communication process” to discuss the following questions.

- 1) What verbal and nonverbal differences did you notice in the performance?
- 2) Whose performance did you like most? Why?
- 3) Choose one performer in your group and explain the primary cognitive or cultural “noise” preventing you from acting in the same way as that performer did.



Discussion skills: understanding the basics of group discussions

Group discussion involves an exchange of thoughts. Discussants usually sit in a circular, a semi-circular (U shaped) fashion or along a rectangular table, depending upon the venue, so that they can see each other and discuss easily. A typical group discussion includes three phases: initiation, body, and summarization.

Group discussions are either case-based or topic-based. A case study tries to simulate a real-life situation. With given information, group members resolve the situation. There is usually no standard answer or perfect solution, and participants tend to analyze the situation from various angles.

Topic-based discussions are divided into three types: factual topics, controversial topics, and abstract topics. Factual topics give discussants a chance to show their knowledge about something, for example, the events leading to World War II. Controversial topics are argumentative in nature. For example, should euthanasia be legalized? In group discussions where these topics are given, the noise level is usually high and there may be tempers flying. A good discussant should argue a point rationally without getting personal and emotional. Abstract topics are about intangible things for which discussants demonstrate lateral thinking and creativity. They need to interpret and connect the abstract topic to a real-life situation. Take “need for love” for an instance. You may start the discussion with the two aspects involved—loving someone and being loved. Then you mention how a reciprocal loving relationship transcends challenges and makes both parties satisfied. Following suit, other participants may want to discuss aspects that connect with real life.

No matter what type of topic you have, as a participant, you should focus on your strengths and contribute to the discussion. Do not spend too much time thinking about how others are superior or inferior to you. Confidence, excellent analytical and communication skills, and good manners are necessary to ensure a successful discussion.

III. Solving problems in communication

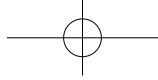
Activity 1 Developing positive relationships via communication

Communication is a negotiated process. The meaning of a message is not determined unilaterally, i.e. only by the speaker or the receiver, but by both parties jointly. Communicators with varying social or cultural backgrounds may often interpret each other's remarks wrongly.

- 1 Below is a table of four types of interpersonal relationships a college student may have. Choose one relationship and recall an unpleasant experience of your own in which you have encountered communication obstacles. Write down key words connected with your interactions in the right column, e.g. what was said or done.

Relationship	Interaction
Dormitory staff vs. students	
Teachers vs. students	
Friends from different geographical regions	
Parents vs. children	

- 2 Pair up with a classmate and tell each other about your experiences in turn. Identify communication problems in your experiences and explain how your interactions affected this relationship.
- 3 Propose suggestions to yourself and your partner to help improve this type of relationship in general via better communication.
- 4 Reflect on the discussion. Summarize what kind of discussion this is and what skills are required to make discussions like this fruitful.



Activity 2 How to become a cooperative communicator

- 1 Using the concepts and examples you have discussed in Activity 1, prepare a 2-minute speech on the topic “How to become a cooperative communicator.” Remember to describe features of a cooperative communicator at the beginning of the speech.
- 2 In pairs, take turns to make the speech. Give your partner feedback on the content, organization, and language of his/her speech.



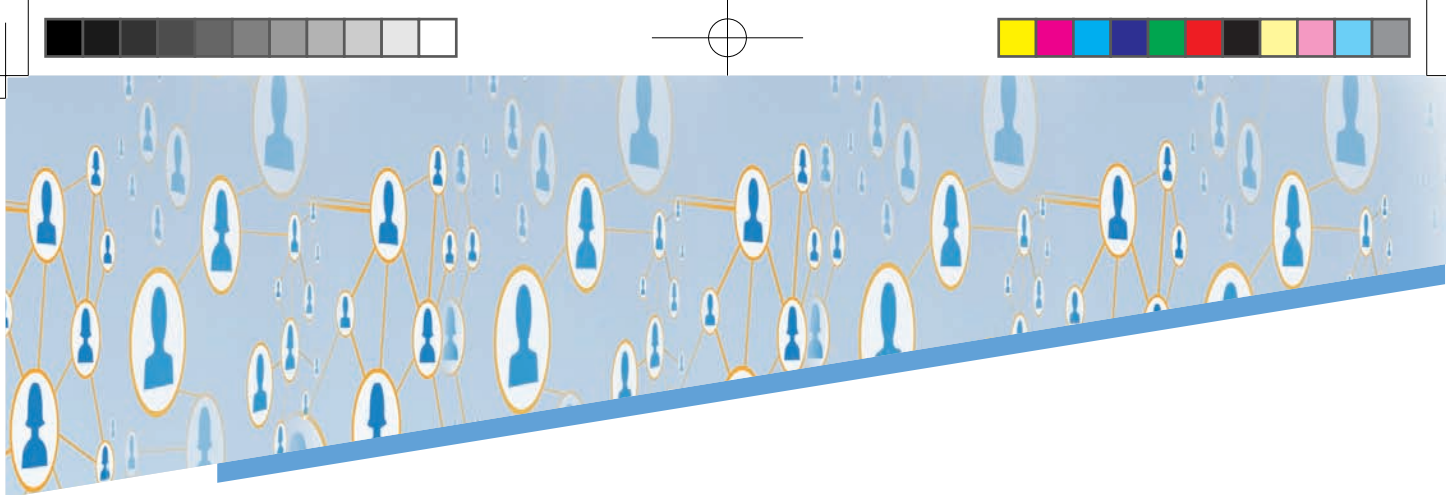


We are in relationships with other people, whether casual or close, simple or complicated, to meet our physical needs and needs for companionship and intellectual stimulation. College students develop diverse types of interpersonal relationships with friends, romantic partners, family members, professors, classmates, online pals, and other people in their lives. To understand these relationships, we need to know the role communication plays in them. Interpersonal communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between two people who have a relationship and are influenced by their communicator's messages. A close look at what happens once we are engaged in a communication process will help us understand interpersonal communication outcomes better.

There are different models describing the communication process. The three most popular ones are the linear model, the interaction model and the transaction model. Let's start with the components of communication to understand these models.

Components of human communication. There are six basic components in a typical communication process: setting, participants, message creation, channels, noise, and feedback. Features of each element influence how a communication interaction develops.

Setting is the physical surroundings of a communication activity. It includes the location where the communication occurs (e.g. in a classroom or a library), environmental conditions (e.g. temperature and lighting), time of day or day of the week (e.g. exam time or Friday evening), and proximity of the communicators (e.g. face-to-face or on WeChat). Suppose you want to break up with someone. What physical setting would you choose for that conversation?

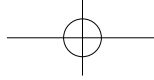


Participants are people who interact. The number of participants and their characteristics influence how the interaction develops. Typically, the smaller a group is, the easier it may be for participants to communicate. Also, the more characteristics participants share (e.g. educational, cultural, and familial backgrounds), the easier they will find it to communicate. A communicator's mood influences his/her communication. For instance, if you are in a good mood because you received an A in a quiz, you may be more polite and cheerful when talking with others. Also, the type of relationship the communicators have affects their communication. That is, whether the communicators are family members, romantic partners, friends, acquaintances or strangers shapes how they frame, deliver, and interpret a message. For instance, how would you borrow ¥100 from a close friend? Would you ask in the same way as you might do with an acquaintance?

Message creation occurs when we use symbols and signs to transmit ideas and emotions. Putting ideas into messages is described as encoding, while receiving and interpreting a message is referred to as decoding. If you want to let someone know you are happy to see them, you might encode this idea into a message by saying "I am so glad you could come" with a smiling face or delighted tone.

Channels are the means through which a message is transmitted. Face-to-face communication involves two channels—the verbal (e.g. what you say) and the nonverbal (e.g. clothing, facial expressions, gestures, and other bodily movements). Messages transmitted through technology usually have one or more channels, such as radio, TV, newspaper or the Internet. Technologies such as instant messenger, email, and WeChat are all distinct channels through which messages can be transmitted.

Noise refers to any stimulus that interferes with the quality of a message. It includes external signals such as loud music or voices, a humming refrigerator, or strange hairstyles. Noise can come from internal stimuli as well, such as cultural/educational backgrounds, hunger, sleepiness or medication, and semantic interference, such as when speakers use words you do not know or a familiar word in an unfamiliar way. Imagine delivering a lecture in a huge lecture hall with four hundred freshmen. What are some possible types of noise you may experience?



Feedback is the response to a message. Feedback lets a sender know if the message was received and how the message was interpreted. For example, if a friend tells you a joke and you laugh heartily, your laughter serves as a positive signal that you have heard the joke and found it amusing. If you keep silent in class after questions from your teacher, this feedback may be understood as you being very tired, disliking the lecture, or finding the questions too hard to answer.

Using the six concepts introduced above, communication scholars have developed some models to show how people interact in the process of communication. Let's begin with the linear model.

Linear model. The components of this model include the sender, message, channel, and receiver (see Figure 1). According to this model, the sender encodes a message and determines the channel for transmitting the message to the receiver who decodes it. This is a one-way communicative process.



Figure 1 Linear model

Interaction model. The components of the interaction model include the sender, message, channel, noise, feedback and receiver (see Figure 2). This model focuses on creating shared meaning between the speaker (sender) and the listener (receiver). In the interaction, the receiver encodes a feedback message through a verbal or nonverbal channel. Feedback is the receiver's response to the original message, such as a stunned or a puzzled look. The speaker decodes the receiver's feedback and responds with more messages. Noise can be internal or external. Do you remember any trigger words that once caused an emotional stir in you during your talk with a professor or a friend? They are the noise in that interaction.

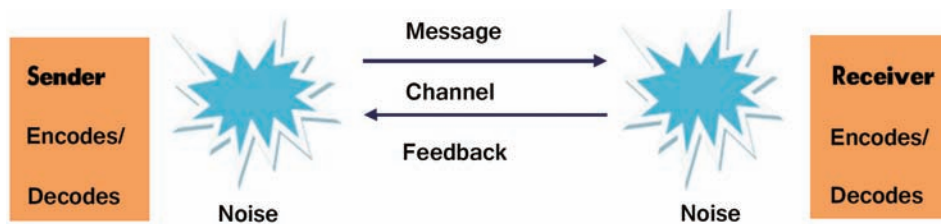
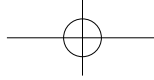


Figure 2 Interaction model

Transaction model. New concepts are added to this model. The transactional model (see Figure 3) assumes that in communication, people have equal roles, i.e. they are called “communicators,” not “senders” or “receivers.” They use messages to share meanings in particular contexts. The two



communicators are constantly critiquing their own message and providing feedback in the process. Each communicator is responsible for encoding and decoding messages and sending feedback.

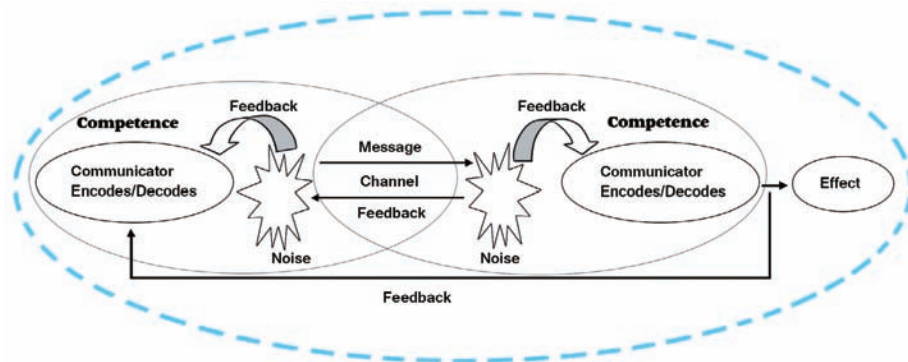
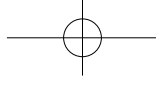


Figure 3 Transaction model

Competent communicators will exhibit four communication skills. They will 1) reflect on their own and the others' communication behaviors; 2) understand accurately their own and the others' feelings and meanings, as well as the specific circumstances of the communication; 3) recognize and strategically use components of communication to reach their objectives; 4) express concerns for the others' well-being and be willing to share responsibility for the communication outcome. These skills work together to determine the communicator's competence.

The context of the communication involves the entire environment of the transaction, such as time and place, previous communication encounters, communicators' identities, life experiences, and other uncontrollable factors that affect the communicators. These contextual factors determine how we communicate. Communicators have their views of the world shaped by their life experiences. These life experiences determine, in part, who you are and how you communicate. The area where these two fields overlap is the part of the communication transaction where two communicators have a common/similar experience and thus create shared meaning. If you talk with a friend about how you have celebrated your birthdays over the years, what common experiences can the two of you find? What do you both agree on?

In a typical interpersonal communication, both communicators are active participants in the transaction. Their communication competence and fields of experience affect the construction of shared meaning. This in turn affects the communication outcome. Therefore it is necessary for us to use various communicative techniques and skills flexibly in specific contexts for an optimum outcome. Equipped with the theories, and through practice and careful analysis of the communication context, you can become a competent communicator.



Assignment

1. Explain the following concepts in your own words.

channel

communication competence

context

noise

decoding

encoding

feedback

meaning

interpersonal communication

message

receiver/sender

2. Use the terms above to analyze and evaluate the communicative behaviors of the Chinese and foreign diners described in the following incident. How do cultural differences influence their communication? What suggestions would you make to both parties?

Several Chinese diners at a late-night restaurant in Xi'an say they were beaten up by a group of foreigners after proposing a toast to them and asking to take a photo with the group.

A man from Lanzhou was with two local friends at a restaurant in the Changyanbao night market on April 23 when they noticed a group of foreigners seated next to them, including five men and a woman.

One of the Chinese diners toasted the foreigners with a drink. His friend did the same about a half hour later. But things quickly went downhill when the man from Lanzhou attempted to get a photo with the group of foreigners, saying he wanted to show it to people back home in Lanzhou where "laowai" are "rare."

The foreigners, obviously annoyed, objected and began beating the group of Chinese people, even using bottles as weapons. Some people shouted "Foreigners are beating up Chinese!"

For their part, restaurant staff say the three Chinese diners should not have disturbed the party of foreigners, and blame them for causing the altercation. But some Chinese media reports highlighted the toasting before the fight, saying the foreigners didn't understand China and ignored its cultural traditions.