Understanding Human Communication

Chapter 1
What and Why

2008

How Do You Define Communication?

• What examples come to mind when you think of the term “communication”?

• Official definition: The process of creating meaning through symbolic interaction.”

Considering Attributes of Communication

• Why is communication considered a process, not a discrete occurrence?

• What do the authors mean when they say “communication is symbolic?”

• Research: Should all communication behaviors “count” as being intentional?
Types of Communication

- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal/Dyadic
- Small Group
- Public Communication
- Mass Communication

Functions of Communication

- Physical needs
- Identity needs
- Practical needs
- Social Needs

Social Needs
Transactional Definition of Communication

- Communication refers to the act of one or more persons…
- sending and receiving msgs simultaneously…..
- through a variety of channels…..
- that occur within an environment…..
- are distorted by noise…..
- and lead to some effect.

Transactional MODEL of Communication

Communication Environment/Context

- Physical
- Cultural
Encoders (Responders)/Decoders

- We receive and send messages at the same time.
- Encoders can consciously send a new message or simply “respond” unconsciously.

Messages

- Verbal & Nonverbal
  - Feedback

Channels of Communication

- Vocal/Verbal
  - Face to Face
  - Mediated (telephone, e-mail, faxes, videoconference)
  - Writing
- Not in the book:
  - Visual
  - Olfactory
  - Tactile

- Note: More nonverbal than verbal channels
Noise

- Defined:
  - Forces that interfere with effective communication. Distorts the message so that the original message is distorted.
- External/physical (outside the speaker)
- Physiological
- Psychological

Effects – Not in the book

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Psychomotor

Communication involves Ethics

- Because communications have consequences and effects they involve decisions of right and wrong
- Consider:
  - What’s your purpose?
  - What’s your motive?
  - Is it harmful or hurtful?
  - Would you want everyone to do it?
  - Etc....
Competent Communicator

- Defined:
  - “Achieves one’s goals in a manner that ideally maintains or enhances the relationship in which communication occurs.”

8 Characteristics of Competent Communicator

1. Wide range of behaviors
2. Choose appropriate behavior
3. Skill @ performing behaviors
4. Empathy & Perspective taking
5. Cognitive complexity
6. Self-monitoring
7. Commitment to relationship
8. Communication is Inevitable, Irreversible & Unrepeatable.

Competence in Mediated Communication

- What does it mean to communicate in a mediated environment?
- Challenges:
  - Leaner messages
  - How does the absence of “richness” affect a mediated communication exchange?
  - Disinhibition
  - How does increased expressiveness impact non-face-to-face exchanges?
  - Permanence
Expanding Communication Competence Interculturally

- How do competent communicators function co-culturally?
- Characteristics of competent intercultural communicators
  - Motivation
  - Tolerance for ambiguity
  - Open-mindedness
  - Knowledge and skill

Competence in Mediated Communication

- What does it mean to communicate in a mediated environment?
- Challenges:
  - Disinhibition – transmit uncensored msgs
    - Volunteer personal information
    - Increased expressiveness
  - Permanence

Misconceptions about Communication

~ NOT ~