

Human Communication 6e

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**Mc
Graw
Hill**
Education



SIXTH EDITION

Human Communication

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From the Authors



Your life is punctuated with critical moments in which communication plays an important role. Whether you are talking to a potential employer during a job interview, a loved one about an important issue facing your family, or an instructor about an assignment, what you say and how you say it can dramatically shape the outcome of an interaction. Our goal in writing *Human Communication* is to help you feel confident in any situation. We want you to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be a successful communicator.

We want you to be ready to

- **Communicate** effectively in novel and uncertain situations
- **Assess** who you are talking to and establish common ground
- **Listen** effectively and respond appropriately
- **Practice** the skills appropriate to a variety of relationships and cultures
- **Adapt** your communication using technologies that enhance, express, and transmit your messages
- **Speak** with confidence and clarity on important topics



Human Communication draws on the best available research to help you develop the knowledge you need to communicate effectively in a variety of situations. The research-based theories we present in this text, coupled with the street savvy you have developed over the course of your life, will equip you with a strong foundation for reading situations, acting appropriately, and adapting your communication behaviors.



As instructors in the field of communication, we believe that personal improvement in communication begins with a clear understanding of your own attitudes and of the relationships you build with others. *Human Communication* will help you develop the skills you need to tell the story of your life and serve as a foundation for lifelong success.

— Judy C. Pearson

— Paul E. Nelson

— Scott Titsworth

— Angela M. Hosek

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*“With SmartBook,
I remember more of
what I read.”*

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"I like applying what I've read by answering the questions in SmartBook."

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“SmartBook helps me identify what we are going to be covering in class.”

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“SmartBook lets me know I am retaining the information.”

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**“SmartBook helps me
feel more prepared for
class.”**

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"I am a big fan of how SmartBook emphasizes the topics I struggle with."

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“Reviewing with SmartBook about once a week is a good way to refresh my memory.”

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"I feel the homework activities in SmartBook are most helpful because I need that extra push when learning."

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"I like the SmartBook assignments because they keep me on track."

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preface

McGraw-Hill Connect: An Overview

McGraw-Hill Connect offers full-semester access to comprehensive, reliable content and learning resources for the communication course. Connect's deep integration with most learning management systems (LMSs), including Blackboard and Desire2Learn (D2L), offers single sign-on and deep gradebook synchronization. Data from Assignment Results reports synchronize directly with many LMSs, allowing scores to flow automatically from Connect into school-specific grade books, if required.

The following tools and services are available as part of Connect for the communication course.

Tool	Instructional Context	Description
SmartBook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SmartBook is an engaging and interactive reading experience for mastering fundamental communication content.• The metacognitive component confirms learners' understanding of the material.• Instructors can actively connect SmartBook assignments and results to higher-order classroom work and one-on-one student conferences.• Learners can track their own understanding and mastery of course concepts and identify gaps in their knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SmartBook is an adaptive reading experience designed to change the way learners read and learn. It creates a personalized reading experience by highlighting the most impactful concepts a student needs to learn at that moment in time.• SmartBook creates personalized learning plans based on student responses to content question probes and confidence scales, identifying the topics learners are struggling with and providing learning resources to create personalized learning moments.• SmartBook includes a variety of learning resources tied directly to key content areas to provide students with additional instruction and context. This includes video and media clips, interactive slide content, mini-lectures, and image analyses.• SmartBook Reports provide instructors with data to quantify success and identify problem areas that require addressing in and out of the classroom.• Learners can access their own progress and concept mastery reports.
Connect Insight for Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect Insight for <i>Instructors</i> is an analytics resource that produces quick feedback related to learner performance and learner engagement.• It is designed as a dashboard for both quick check-ins and detailed performance and engagement views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect Insight for <i>Instructors</i> offers a series of visual data displays that provide analysis on five key insights:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are my students doing?• How is this one student doing?• How is my section doing?• How is this assignment doing?• How are my assignments doing?
Connect Insight for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect Insight for <i>Students</i> is a powerful data analytics tool that provides at-a-glance visualizations to help learners understand their performance on Connect assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect Insight for <i>Students</i> offers details on each Connect assignment to learners. When possible, it offers suggestions for the learners on how they can improve scores. These data can help guide learners to behaviors that will lead to better scores in the future.

Tool	Instructional Context	Description
Speech Capture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Capture provides instructors with a comprehensive and efficient way of managing in-class and online speech assignments, including student self-reviews, peer reviews, and instructor grading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Speech Capture tool allows instructors to easily and efficiently set up speech assignments for their course that can easily be shared and repurposed, as needed, throughout their use of Connect. • Customizable rubrics and settings can be saved and shared, saving time and streamlining the speech assignment process from creation to assessment. • Speech Capture allows users, both students and instructors, to view videos during the assessment process. Feedback can be left within a customized rubric or as time-stamped comments within the video-playback itself.
Speech Preparation Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Preparation Tools provide learners with additional support and include Topic Helper, Outline Tool, and access to third-party Internet sites like EasyBib (for formatting citations) and Survey Monkey (to create audience-analysis questionnaires and surveys). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Preparation Tools provide learners with additional resources to help with the preparation and outlining of speeches, as well as with audience-analysis surveys. • Instructors have the ability to make tools either available or unavailable to learners.
Instructor Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor Reports provide data that may be useful for assessing programs or courses as part of the accreditation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect generates a number of powerful reports and charts that allow instructors to quickly review the performance of a given learner or an entire section. • Instructors can run reports that span multiple sections and instructors, making it an ideal solution for individual professors, course coordinators, and department chairs.
Student Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Reports allow learners to review their performance for specific assignments or for the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners can keep track of their performance and identify areas with which they struggle.
Pre- and Post-Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors can generate their own pre- and posts-tests from the Test Bank. • Pre- and post-tests demonstrate what learners already know before class begins and what they have learned by the end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors have access to two sets of pre- and post-tests (at two levels). Instructors can use these tests to create a diagnostic and post-diagnostic exam via Connect.
Tegrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tegrity allows instructors to capture course material or lectures on video. • Students can watch videos recorded by their instructor and learn course material at their own pace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors can keep track of which learners have watched the videos they post. • Learners can watch and review lectures by their instructor. • Learners can search each lecture for specific bites of information.
Simple LMS Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect seamlessly integrates with every learning management system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners have automatic single sign-on. • Connect assignment results sync to the LMS's gradebook.

Instructor's Guide to Connect for Human Communication

When you assign **Connect** you can be confident—and have data to demonstrate—that the learners in your course, however diverse, are acquiring the skills, principles, and critical processes that constitute effective communication. This leaves you to focus on your highest course expectations.



TAILORED TO YOU. **Connect** offers on-demand, single sign-on access to learners—wherever they are and whenever they have time. With a single, one-time registration, learners receive access to McGraw-Hill's trusted content. **Learners also have a courtesy trial period during registration.**

EASY TO USE. **Connect** seamlessly supports all major learning management systems with content, assignments, performance data, and LearnSmart, the leading adaptive learning system. With these tools you can quickly make assignments, produce reports, focus discussions, intervene on problem topics, and help at-risk learners—as you need to and when you need to.

Human Communication SmartBook


A Personalized and Adaptive Learning Experience with Smartbook. Boost learner success with McGraw-Hill's adaptive reading and study experience. The *Human Communication SmartBook* highlights the most impactful communication concepts the student needs to learn at that moment in time. The learning path continuously adapts and, based on what the individual learner knows and does not know, provides focused help through targeted question probes and learning resources.

Enhanced for the New Edition! With a suite of new learning resources and question probes, as well as highlights of key chapter concepts, SmartBook's intuitive technology optimizes learner study time by creating a personalized learning path for improved course performance and overall learner success.

<p>Pearson Human Comm 5e</p> <p>Elizabeth Murphy</p> <p>Leave Assignment</p> <p>Assignments</p> <p>Preview</p> <p>Read</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Recharge</p> <p>My Reports</p> <p>How to use SmartBook</p> <p>connect[®]</p> <p>Copyright 2015 McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Comm - Human Communication - Pearson, 5e, Listening and Critical</p> <p>Chapter 9 Listening and Critical Thinking 88</p>  <p>Figure 9.2 The listening process.</p> <p>recognize the flow from hearing to understanding the nature of a message prior to the need of a solution. The hearing stage results in sound waves that enter the ear.</p> <p>ATTENTION</p> <p>Attention must be given to make the content of the message "fit" the needs of the listener. This is done by focusing on the speaker's message and ignoring other distractions. Active listening is the focused focus on what the speaker is saying. Active listening involves listening with your full attention, not just your ears. Active listening involves listening with your full attention, not just your ears. Active listening involves listening with your full attention, not just your ears.</p>	<p>Pearson Intro Comm</p> <p>Victoria DeRosa</p> <p>Leave Assignment</p> <p>Assignments</p> <p>Preview</p> <p>Read</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Recharge</p> <p>My Reports</p> <p>How to use SmartBook</p> <p>connect[®]</p> <p>Copyright 2015 McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Comm - Human Communication - Pearson, 5e, Listening and Critical</p> <p>Chapter 9 Listening and Critical Thinking 88</p>  <p>Figure 9.2 The listening process.</p> <p>recognize the flow from hearing to understanding the nature of a message prior to the need of a solution. The hearing stage results in sound waves that enter the ear.</p> <p>ATTENTION</p> <p>Attention must be given to make the content of the message "fit" the needs of the listener. This is done by focusing on the speaker's message and ignoring other distractions. Active listening is the focused focus on what the speaker is saying. Active listening involves listening with your full attention, not just your ears. Active listening involves listening with your full attention, not just your ears.</p>
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SmartBook highlights the key concepts of every chapter, offering the learner a high-impact learning experience (left). Here, highlighted text and an illustration together explain the listening process. Highlights change color (right) when a student has demonstrated his or her understanding of the concept.

Hundreds of Interactive Learning Resources. Presented in a range of interactive styles, *Human Communication Learning Resources* support learners who may be struggling to master, or simply wish to review, the most important communication concepts. Designed to reinforce the most important chapter concepts—from nonverbal communication cues and critical thinking skills to workplace interviewing techniques and organizing presentations—every Learning Resource is presented at the precise moment of need. Whether video, audio clip, or interactive mini-lesson, each of the 200-plus Learning Resources is new to the new edition and was designed to give learners a lifelong foundation in strong communication skills.




A speech to gain passive agreement is a persuasive speech in which the speaker tries to convince the audience that a given policy is desirable—without expecting them to take any specific action in support of the policy.

Watch the video clip on this slide to see an example of a speaker with this goal. Notice that he does not ask his audience to do anything specific, like sign a petition.

Speech Video: Defining Speech to Gain Passive Agreement

Video: What Is a Speech to Gain Passive Agreement?



00:00 00:29

More than 1,000 Targeted Question Probes. Class-tested at colleges and universities nationwide, a treasury of engaging question probes—new and revised, more than 1,000 in all—gives learners the information on communication they need to know, at every stage of the learning process, in order to thrive in the course. Designed to gauge learners’ comprehension of the most important *Human Communication* chapter concepts, and presented in a variety of interactive styles to facilitate student engagement, targeted question probes give learners immediate feedback on their understanding of the material. Each question probe identifies a learner’s familiarity with the instruction and points to areas where additional remediation is needed.

The process of using messages to generate meaning _____ in a situation that allows mutual opportunities for both speaking and listening is defined as _____ communication.

Click the answer you think is right.

between at least two people; intrapersonal

within the self; interpersonal

within the self; mass

between at least two people; interpersonal

Do you know the answer? [Read about this](#)

I know it **Think so** **Unsure** **No idea**

Informed by the Latest Research. The best insights from today’s leading communications scholars infuse every lesson and are integrated throughout *Human Communication*.

Fresh Examples Anchored in the Real World. Every chapter of *Human Communication* opens with a vignette exploring communication challenges in our everyday lives. Dozens of additional examples appear throughout the new edition, each demonstrating an essential element of the communication process. Whether learners are reading a chapter, responding to a question probe, or reviewing key concepts in a learning resource, their every instructional moment is rooted in the real world. McGraw-Hill research shows that high-quality examples reinforce academic theory throughout the course. Relevant examples and practical scenarios—reflecting interactions in school, the workplace, and beyond—demonstrate how effective communication informs and enhances students’ lives and careers.

A Greater Emphasis on Creativity. A new feature, *Communicating Creatively*, illustrates ways in which originality—from effective collaboration strategies, to emphasizing one’s personality, to using music to boost a message—can be used to augment the communication skills addressed in the chapters.

communicating creatively

Memorable Message About College

As a way to celebrate International Women's Day, YouTube encouraged people to empower young women with the #DearMe campaign. The #DearMe campaign asks digital creators around the world to upload "video letters" to their younger selves that provide the advice and encouragement that they wish they had heard when they were younger. The campaign encouraged people to use the hashtag #DearMe on social media to share their messages. Although the initial focus was on young girls, these video letters apply to anyone wishing to tell their younger selves or others a supportive, clarifying, and/or realistic message. A quick search of the videos yields an array of messages, perspectives, and identities. In this section, you have been learning about how your self-perceptions and others' perceptions of you have, in part, formed who you are. Perhaps you can take the time to create a video or write a handwritten letter to your younger self. What would your letter say? What part does perception play in your message to your younger self?

Source: Brouwer, B. (2015, March). YouTube launches #DearMe campaign for International Women's Day. *TubeFilter* (www.tubefilter.com/2015/03/03/youtube-dear-me-campaign-international-womens-day/).

New Annotated Student Speech. The Informative Presentations chapter includes three compelling student speeches on contemporary topics, including an informative presentation new to the new edition. Each speech models how a speaker can increase audience members' awareness of an issue, integrate sources and other supporting material, and organize the message to help listeners better understand a topic.

Tips for Embracing Diverse Cultures. To help students navigate the communication challenges of a multicultural society, *Engaging Diversity* boxes offer guidance on topics such as nonverbal cues, disabilities, bilingualism, new technologies, and provocative speech.

Guidance for a Lifetime. The end-of-chapter feature, *Be Ready . . . for What's Next*, stresses the lifelong application of communication skills and how mastery of these skills can help learners in other classes, the workplace, and life.

Speech Capture

Designed for use in face-to-face, real-time classrooms, as well as online courses, Speech Capture allows you to evaluate your learners' speeches using fully customizable rubrics. You can also create and manage peer review assignments and upload videos on behalf of learners for optimal flexibility.

Persuasive Speech

The screenshot displays the Speech Capture interface. At the top, there are three tabs: "instructor review", "self-review", and "peer review". Below the tabs is a video player showing a man (Erik Linstrum) standing in front of a screen. To the right of the video player, the video author is listed as "Erik Linstrum" and the video title is "Linstrum". Below the video player, there is a section for "Evaluate the student" with a question "Question 1 / 31" and a prompt "ANSWERS: (select one)". The question is "see all questions" and "Gained attention and interest". The answer options are: "Excellent (5)", "Good (4)", "Average (3)", "Fair (2)", "Poor (1)", and "na (0)".

Learners can access rubrics and leave comments when preparing self-reviews and peer reviews. They can easily upload a video of their speech from their hard drive or use Connect's built-in video recorder. Learners can even attach and upload additional files or documents, such as a works cited page or a PowerPoint presentation.

Peer Review. Peer review assignments are easier than ever. Create and manage peer review assignments and customize privacy settings.

Speech Assessment. Connect Speech Capture lets you customize the assignments, including self-reviews and peer reviews. It also saves your frequently used comments, simplifying your efforts to provide feedback.

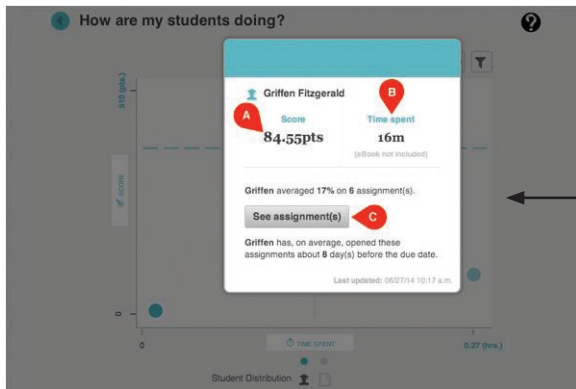
Self-Reflection. The self-review feature allows learners to revisit their own presentations and compare their progress over time.

Data Analytics

Connect Insight provides at-a-glance analysis on five key insights, available at a moment's notice from your tablet device. The first and only analytics tool of its kind, Insight will tell you, in real time, how individual students or sections are doing (or how well your assignments have been received) so you can take action early and keep struggling students from falling behind.



Instructors can see how many learners have completed an assignment, how long they spent on the task, and how they scored.



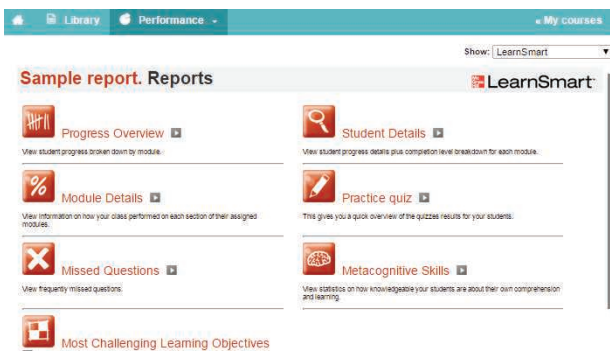
Instructors can see, at a glance, individual learner performance: analytics showing learner investment in assignments, and success at completing them, help instructors identify, and aid, those who are at risk.

Connect Reports

Instructor Reports allow instructors to quickly monitor learner activity, making it easy to identify which learners are struggling and to provide immediate help to ensure those learners stay enrolled in the course and improve their performance. The Instructor Reports also highlight the concepts and learning objectives that the class as a whole is having difficulty grasping. This essential information lets you know exactly which areas to target for review during your limited class time.

Some key reports include:

Progress Overview report—View learner progress for all modules, including how long learners have spent working in the module, which modules they have used outside any that were assigned, and individual learner progress.



Missed Questions report—Identify specific probes, organized by chapter, that are problematic for learners.

Most Challenging Learning Objectives report—Identify the specific topic areas that are challenging for your learners; these reports are organized by chapter and include specific page references. Use this information to tailor your lecture time and assignments to cover areas that require additional remediation and practice.

Metacognitive Skills report—View statistics showing how knowledgeable your learners are about their own comprehension and learning.

Classroom Preparation Tools

Whether before, during, or after class, there is a suite of Pearson products designed to help instructors plan their lessons and to keep learners building upon the foundations of the course.

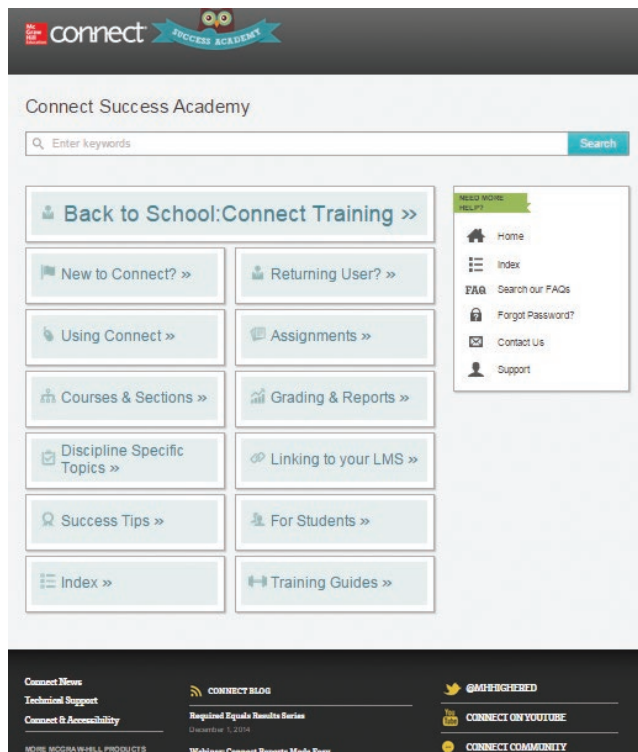
Annotated Instructor's Edition. The Annotated Instructor's Edition provides a wealth of teaching aids for each chapter in *Human Communication*. It is also cross-referenced with SmartBook, Connect, and other supplements that accompany *Human Communication*.

Powerpoint Slides. The PowerPoint presentations for *Human Communication* provide chapter highlights that help instructors create focused yet individualized lesson plans.

Test Bank. The Test Bank is a treasury of more than 1,000 examination questions based on the most important communication concepts explored in *Human Communication*; more than 100 of the questions are new or revised for this edition.

Support to Ensure Success

- **Digital Success Academy**—The Digital Success Academy on Connect offers a wealth of training and course creation guidance for instructors and learners alike. Instructor support is presented in easy-to-navigate, easy-to-complete sections. It includes the popular **Connect** how-to videos, step-by-step **Click through Guides**, and **First Day of Class** materials that explain how to use both the Connect platform and its course-specific tools and features. <http://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy/>
- **Digital Success Team**—The Digital Success Team is a group of specialists dedicated to working online with instructors—one-on-one—to demonstrate how the Connect platform works and to help incorporate Connect into a customer's specific course design and syllabus. Contact your digital learning consultant to learn more.
- **Digital Learning Consultants**—Digital Learning Consultants are local resources who work closely with your McGraw-Hill learning technology consultants. They can provide face-to-face faculty support and training. <http://shop.mheducation.com/store/paris/user/findltr.html>
- **Digital Faculty Consultants**—Digital Faculty Consultants are experienced instructors who use Connect in their classroom. These instructors are available to offer suggestions, advice, and training about how best to use Connect in your class. To request a Digital Faculty Consultant to speak with, please e-mail your McGraw-Hill learning technology consultant. <http://connect.customer.mheducation.com/dfc/>
- **National Training Webinars**—McGraw-Hill offers an ongoing series of webinars for instructors to learn and master the Connect platform as well as its course-specific tools and features. We hope you will refer to our online schedule of national training webinars and sign up to learn more about Connect! <http://webinars.mhhe.com/>



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Chapter-by-Chapter Changes to the New Edition: Highlights

New and updated material in this edition of *Human Communication* reflects the latest research in the field, as well as McGraw-Hill Education's research identifying the skills and topics students find most challenging.

Chapter 1: New discussion of communication as a process in which meaning is negotiated; new examples of how diversity and new technologies impact communication; “setting” added to the components of communication to better emphasize the importance of context

Chapter 2: New opening vignette on how language shapes perceptions and expectations; reframed focus on identity as a factor influencing perception; intergroup perspective added to theoretical framing of chapter; updated research on stereotyping; new coverage of technology's impact on perception, first impressions, online identity, and personal branding

Chapter 3: New opening vignette on how words become “real”; new examples of slang and clichéd language; reframed focus on gender-biased language and new discussion of trans* language; new coverage of vanishing languages, communicating personality, and using we-and-I statements during job interviews

Chapter 4: New coverage of communicating emotions, using adaptors, adapting nonverbal behaviors to digitally mediated communication, diversity, and nonverbal cues; updated research on the dangers of overemphasizing physical attractiveness

Chapter 5: Updated research on listening habits; new discussion of the changing work environment, social media listening, multitasking with new communication technology, and listening effectively in the workplace

Chapter 6: New discussion of self-disclosure, communication privacy management, social media, and visible and nonvisible disabilities; updated research on grieving and social media

Chapter 7: New opening vignette on culture-based group conflict; updated statistics on diversity in the United

States; new research on the importance of exposing college students to diversity; new coverage of the role of music in building cultural awareness

Chapter 8: New opening vignette on group work during community crises; updated research on group work, group think, and related tech apps; new *Emerging Technology and Group Roles* section; new coverage of collaborative co-working, the impact of physical structures on human interaction, managing privacy, and conflict in work groups; new *Adapted Competent Group Communication Evaluation Form*

Chapter 9: Updated statistics on U.S. workforce trends; new coverage of organizational communication, personal branding, and bilingual communication in the workplace; new table outlining workplace communication competence skills

Chapter 10: New coverage of “dangerous speech,” strategies for preventing violence-inciting speech, and strategies for creating provocative speech

Chapter 11: Chapter reorganized to emphasize strategies for locating information for presentations; new coverage of common ground, expertise, and credibility

Chapter 12: Enhanced coverage of audience feedback when creating the body of a speech

Chapter 13: New opening vignette on nonverbal behaviors during delivery; new coverage of infographics and credibility building with diverse audiences

Chapter 14: New sample speech; new coverage of learning preferences among diverse cultures and learning-style differences

Chapter 15: New opening vignette on public protest and advocacy; new coverage of the speaker-audience dialogue and silence as a presentational speaking tool

acknowledgments

The authors wish to extend a very sincere thank you to the many colleagues who assisted in the revision of this edition of *Human Communication*. Many of our communication faculty colleagues and students have provided feedback, both formal and informal, about how to improve both the substance and feel of this book. Such insight is critical, and we are very appreciative of your time and expertise. We are forever grateful to Judy Pearson, Paul Nelson, and Lynn Harter, who were co-authors on previous editions of this book. Your voices, spirit, and commitment to students are, and will forever be, integral parts of this project.

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We are also indebted to the outstanding team of McGraw-Hill Education colleagues who contributed their time and talent to this edition. Nancy Huebner and Lisa Pinto provided critical guidance as we developed a vision for this edition. Your wisdom and pragmatic approach provided us with confidence, while your enthusiasm and vision instilled excitement! There are many other individuals who worked on several essential aspects of this project, including Sally Constable, Samantha Donisi-Hamm, Sheila Frank, Laura Kennedy, Michael O’Loughlin, Jennifer Shekleton, Janet Smith, Linda Su, and Kim Taylo. Thank you for being part of the *Human Communication* team!

We were particularly blessed to work with a delightful editor, Victoria DeRosa. Victoria was a true collaborator on this project. Her eye for detail, insightful suggestions, understanding of our vision, and commitment to be inclusive to students was evident in the work she did with us. We are so thankful to have had you with us on this journey!

Finally, we are reminded that book projects are family endeavors. Scott would like to thank Lynn Harter for providing a creative sounding board and unending support for this project. Thanks also to Emma, Ned, and Cleo for their love and fun diversions from the computer! Angela would like to thank Scott for the opportunity to collaborate on this project and for his constant interest in new and bold ideas. She is also grateful for the endless support and patience of her partner, Timothy, and for the little hands and laughter of her children, Lillie and Ayden, that remind her to be still in the moment.

A purple rounded rectangle with a drop shadow, containing the text 'Human Communication'. Two semi-transparent purple circles are positioned behind the text: one behind 'Human' and one behind 'Communication'.

Human Communication



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introduction to human communication

When you have read and thought about this chapter, you will be able to

1. State reasons why the study of communication is essential.
2. Define communication.
3. Name the components of communication.
4. Explain some principles of communication.
5. Explain how the contexts of communication differ from each other.
6. Set goals for improving yourself as a communicator.

In this chapter you will learn about the importance of communication in your everyday life. You will find that communication is the foundation on which you build your personal, social, and professional life. You will also learn about communication on a deeper level, including the terms, processes, and contexts of communication.

Do you remember the process you went through when making decisions about college? You likely met with many people, all of whom were trying to arm you with information about topics ranging from scholarships to campus architecture. The job of a college recruiter is a great example to illustrate why communication is so important to our lives and careers.

Sarah Logue has been an undergraduate admissions recruiter for approximately three years. During a recent discussion, Sarah noted that for her job she regularly communicates with parents, students, and even high school staff in presentations that range from one on one to groups to audiences of over a hundred. Many of her interactions are face-to-face, but e-mail and other electronic communication tools are also common for her job.



© B.O'Kane/Alamy

Sarah is a very effective recruiter because she recognizes the importance of communication for helping applicants feel comfortable with their choice. As she explained in an interview, “Naturally, it’s important to calibrate your message and tone based on your audience—high school students don’t have the same concerns about college as their parents do. Though the information we share is crucial to helping students and their families compare us to other institutions, it can be pretty dry, too. We have to bring it to life or risk losing our audience. So I use humor, I tell stories about my own experiences and those of students I’ve known, and I ask questions to draw reluctant students and parents out of their shells.”

Sarah’s job is not unlike many jobs and activities in our culture. More and more of what we do revolves around effective communication. In this chapter, you will begin learning about the process of communication and how it functions across various contexts. We hope that you will follow Sarah’s lead and recognize that much of your future success will stem from understanding how to communicate effectively with others.

The Study of Communication Is Essential

Communication is central to your life. Effective communication can help you solve problems in your professional life and improve relationships in your personal life.¹ In fact, the field of communication studies is on the rise in terms of popularity, degrees earned, and undergraduate majors, so your involvement with this content is timely and useful.²

According to *The Huffington Post*, studying communication is timely because, as a discipline, communication studies is well suited for trends in digital and social media interactions. Knowledge about ideas such as relationship networks on social media, small-group and team communication, and media theory is becoming vitally relevant for you to be ready to succeed now and in your future.³

Understanding the theory, research, and application of communication will make a significant difference in your life and in the lives of people around the world.⁴ A quick daily review of social media highlights the importance of communication principles. Communication principles and practices can resolve disputes among nations, as well as



- Effective communication can strengthen interpersonal relationships.

© Jordan Siemens/Stone/Getty Images

among friends and family. Effective communication may not solve all the world’s problems, but better communication practices can help us solve or avoid many problems.

Communication is everywhere. You cannot avoid communication, and you will engage in communication nearly every minute of every day of your life. Communication plays a major role in nearly every aspect of your life.

Regardless of your interests and goals, the ability to communicate effectively will enhance and enrich your life. Learning about communication matters and will help you know how to be ready to communicate. Studying communication comprehensively offers the following seven advantages:

1. *Studying communication can improve the way you see yourself.* Communication is “vital to the development of the whole person.”⁵ Most of our self-knowledge comes from the communicative experience. As we engage in thought (*intrapersonal* communication) and in interactions with significant other people (*interpersonal* communication), we learn about ourselves. People who do not understand the communication process and the development of self-awareness, self-concept, and self-efficacy may not see themselves accurately or may be unaware of their own self-development. Knowing how communication affects self-perception can lead to greater awareness and appreciation of the self.

Learning communication skills can improve the way you see yourself in a second way. As you learn how to communicate effectively in a variety of situations—from interpersonal relationships to public speeches—your self-confidence will increase. In a study based on the responses from 344 students at a large public university, students who completed a communication course perceived their communication competence to be greater in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. Most dramatic were their perceived improvements in feeling confident about themselves, feeling comfortable with others’ perceptions of them, reasoning with people, and using language appropriately.⁶

In short, your success in interacting with other people in social situations and your achievements in professional settings will lead to more positive feelings about yourself.

2. *Studying communication can improve the way others see you.* You can control your own behavior to a considerable extent, which will lead to positive outcomes with others. Your interactions can be smoother and you can achieve your goals more easily as you manage the impression you make on others. See the chapter on perception, self, and communication for more on self-presentation and identity management.

You can improve the way others see you a second way. Generally, people like communicating with others who can communicate well. Compare your interactions with someone who stumbles over words, falls silent, interrupts, and uses inappropriate language to express thoughts to your interactions with someone who has a good vocabulary, listens when you speak, reveals appropriate personal information, and smoothly exchanges talk turns with you. Which person do you prefer? Most of us prefer competent communicators. As you become increasingly competent, you will find that others seek you out for conversations, assistance, and advice.

3. *Studying communication and engaging in effective communication behaviors can improve your relationships with others.* The field of communication includes learning about how people relate to each other and about what type of communication is appropriate for a given situation. Most people value human relationships and find great comfort in friendships, family relationships, and community relationships. Within these relationships we learn about trust, intimacy, and reciprocity.

Human relationships are vital to each of us. Human babies thrive when they are touched and when they hear sounds; similarly, adults who engage in human relationships appear to be more successful and satisfied than do those who are isolated. Human relationships serve a variety of functions. They provide us with affection (receiving and providing warmth and friendliness), inclusion (experiencing feelings that we belong and providing others with messages that they belong), pleasure (sharing happiness and fun), escape (providing diversion), and control (managing our lives and influencing others).⁷

We learn about the complexity of human relationships as we study communication. We learn, first, that other people in relationships are vastly different from each other. We learn that they may be receptive or dismissive toward us. We learn that they may behave as if they were superior or inferior to us. We learn that they might be approachable or highly formal.

We also learn that our interactions with others may be helpful or harmful. Communicators can share personal information that builds trust and rapport. The same personal information can be used outside the relationship to humiliate or shame the other person. Whereas some relationships enhance social support, others are riddled with deception and conflict. Interactions are not neutral.

We learn that people coconstruct the reality of the relationship. Families, for example, love to tell stories of experiences they have had when on vacation, when moving across the country, or when some particularly positive or negative event occurred. Indeed, they often take turns “telling the story.” Couples, too, create and tell stories of their lives. Couples’ stories may be positive as the couple emphasizes their feelings of belongingness and their identity as a couple. On the other end of the spectrum, stories may be highly negative as people deceive others with information that allows them to cover up criminal acts, such as drug use, child abuse, or murder.

Human relationships are complex. As you study communication, you will clarify the variables involved in relationships—the people, the verbal and nonverbal cues provided, the effect of time, the nature of the relationship, and the goals of the participants. You will be ready to engage in relationships with an understanding of the communication process.



- Studying communication improves critical thinking skills and can help people achieve success in college and on the job.
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People who receive communication-skills training experience greater relational satisfaction than those who don't.^{8,9} The link between communication skills and life satisfaction is strong. The connection holds true in health contexts,¹⁰ including situations in which family members are experiencing life-threatening illnesses.¹¹ For example, couples' communication during early stages of cancer diagnoses impacts their levels of intimacy and adjustment.

4. *Studying communication can teach you important life skills.* Studying communication involves learning important skills that everyone will use at some point in his or her life, such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, team building, media literacy, and public speaking.¹² Our visual literacy is improved as we understand the technical and artistic aspects of the visual communication medium.¹³ The increasing focus on visual and social media requires us to attend to how communication skills are at work in these contexts.

Studying communication early in your college career can enhance your success throughout college. Consider the centrality of oral communication to all of your college classes. You regularly are called on to answer questions in class, to provide reports, to offer explanations, and to make presentations. In addition, both your oral and written work depend on your ability to think critically and creatively, to solve problems, and to make decisions. Most likely, you will be engaged in group projects in which skills such as team building and conflict resolution will be central. The same skills will be essential throughout your life.

5. *Studying communication can help you feel confident in voicing and advocating your opinions and create space to give voice to others.* Few nations have a bill of rights that invites people to convey their opinions and ideas, yet freedom of speech is essential to a democratic form of government. Being a practicing citizen in a democratic society means knowing about current issues and being able to speak about them in conversations, in speeches, and through the media; it also involves being able to critically examine messages from others.

Our understanding of communication shapes our political lives. Mass communication and communication technology have sharply altered the way we consume and use information as part of the political process. Today many more people have the opportunity to receive information than ever before and through more channels than ever before. Think about how you get information about local, national, and global issues. Do you get alerts from a CNN app pinged to your phone? Do you have an app like Zite or Feedly.com that pulls together information from newspapers and magazines, based on your specified interests, at one location? Perhaps you have specific news programs you watch or newspapers to which you subscribe. In many ways, the methods through which you consume media determine the amount and frequency of the information to which you have access. Through the mass media, and specifically social media, people in remote locations are as well informed as those in large urban centers. The public agenda is largely set through the media. Pressing problems are given immediate attention. McCombs notes, "The agenda-setting role of the mass media links journalism and its tradition of storytelling to the arena of public opinion, a relationship with considerable consequences for society."¹⁴

Whereas some people may feel more enfranchised by digitally mediated communication, particularly social media, to advocate their positions, others feel more alienated as they become increasingly passive in the process. Face-to-face town meetings were the focus of democratic decision making in times past, but today people receive answers to questions, solutions to problems, and decisions about important matters from the media.

Social media has become a strong tool in protest movements. In particular, researchers point to the vital role social media played during the Arab Spring in 2010. During this contemporary social protest movement, sites such as Twitter were used to organize successful antigovernment protests that led to the resignation of Egypt's dictatorial leader.¹⁵ Social media sites also played a large role in organizing protests and spreading messages for the Occupy movement in the United States. Gerbaudo (2012), in his book *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*, suggests that new media creates opportunities and risks as people express dissent through social media as part of contemporary protest movements. Have you expressed dissent or agreement about political issues using social media? How did the people in your life react to your posts or involvement? Have your friends or family members been involved in movements that were organized through social media?¹⁶

The study and understanding of communication processes is profoundly political. Hart suggests that “those who teach public address and media studies teach that social power can be shifted and public visions exalted if people learn to think well and speak well.”¹⁷ Paraphrasing the ancient Greek rhetorician Isocrates, Hart notes, “To become eloquent is to activate one's humanity, to apply the imagination, and to solve the practical problems of human living.”¹⁸ Freedom goes to the articulate.

You have the opportunity to be a fully functioning member of a democratic society. You also have the challenge of understanding the media and other information technologies. Studying communication will help you learn how to speak effectively, analyze arguments, synthesize large quantities of information, and critically consume information from a variety of sources. The future of our society depends on such mastery.

6. *Studying communication can help you succeed professionally.* A look at the job postings in any newspaper will give you an immediate understanding of the importance of improving your knowledge and practice of communication. The employment section of a newspaper or Internet posting has entries like these:

- “We need a results-oriented, seasoned professional who is a good communicator and innovator,” reads one posting for a marketing manager.
- Another posting, this one for a marketing analyst, reads, “You should be creative, inquisitive, and a good communicator both in writing and orally.”
- A posting for a training specialist calls for “excellent presentation, verbal, and written communication skills, with ability to interact with all levels within organization.”

Employers want to hire people who are competent communicators. In fact, they often say they want effective public communicators and people who can work in teams.¹⁹ You may believe that some professions are enhanced by communication skills but that many are not. However, professionals in fields such as accounting, auditing, banking, counseling, engineering, industrial hygiene, information science, public relations, and sales have all written about the importance of oral communication skills.²⁰ More recently, professionals in the computer industry,²¹ genetics and science,²² farming and ranching,²³ education,²⁴ and the health field²⁵ have stressed the importance of communication skills to potential employees. The variety of these careers suggests that communication skills are important across the board.

Communication skills are crucial in your first contact with a prospective employer. By studying communication, you can enhance your interviewing skills. Further, human resource interviewers note that oral communication skills, in general, significantly affect hiring decisions.²⁶ One survey in 2013 of over 700 employers indicated that effective communication is vital to career success and that they are finding many college graduates lacking such skills.²⁷ Taking this course and being able to persuasively explain how this course has prepared you to be an effective communicator will set you apart from other job applicants.

Employers view your written and oral communication competencies and your ability to listen and analyze messages as essential job skills.²⁸ Similarly, college graduates perceive communication coursework as essential.²⁹ In short, communication competence is important.

Communication skills are important not only to equip you for beginning your career but also to help you navigate changes throughout the work life span. Dauphinais observes that communication skills can increase upward mobility in one's career.³⁰ Business executives note the importance of communication competence.³¹ Finally, communication skills are among the top priorities for entrepreneurs.

What communication skills are employers seeking? Clearly, listening skills are among the most important components of communication³² (see the chapter on listening and critical thinking). Speaking clearly, succinctly, and persuasively is crucial to many jobs, including those in sales,³³ which you can read more about in the chapters on language and meaning, delivery and visual resources, and persuasive presentations. An ability to work in teams or groups is vital,³⁴ and you can read about this in the chapter on workplace communication. Employers are also seeking interpersonal skills,³⁵ which you can learn about in the chapter on interpersonal communication. Public speaking skills are important in most professions because employees are often required to give talks and presentations.³⁶ Finally, employers seek employees with strong written communication skills.³⁷ You will have an opportunity to improve your writing skills as you prepare outlines and manuscripts for public speeches, which you can learn more about in the chapters on public speaking. Ultimately, the content and skills in this course will prepare you to be ready to communicate in ways that matter for your professional career.

7. *Studying communication can help you navigate an increasingly diverse world.* As you stroll through a mall, deposit money in a bank, go to a movie, or work at your job, odds are that about one in every five people you come into contact with will speak English as a second language. According to the 2007 American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 20% of respondents speak a language other than English in their home. The increasingly diverse population of the United States means that multilingual communication encounters are, for most of us, the norm rather than the exception. Learning how to communicate in today's world, whether English is your first language or not, requires an understanding of communication and culture and how those two concepts are related.

As you develop an understanding of basic communication concepts and learn how to apply those concepts in everyday interactions, you will be better equipped to bridge language and cultural barriers and promote effective interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and digitally mediated communication.

Defining Communication

Now that you have considered why learning about communication is important, you need to know exactly what the term means. Over the years, scholars have created hundreds of definitions of communication. How they define the term can limit or expand the study of the subject. In this edition of *Human Communication*, we will adopt a broad definition of communication that is applicable to many different situations and contexts in which people interact.

Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, which means “to make common” or “to share.” The root definition is consistent with our definition of communication. We define **communication** as the process of using messages to generate meaning. Communication is considered a **process** because it is an activity, an exchange, or a set of behaviors—not an unchanging product. Communication is not an object you can hold in your hand; it is an activity in which you participate. David Berlo, a pioneer in

communication

The process of using messages to generate meaning.

process

An activity, an exchange, or a set of behaviors that occurs over time.

the field of communication, probably provided the clearest statement about communication as a process:

If we accept the concept of process, we view events and relationships as dynamic, ongoing, ever changing, continuous. When we label something as a process, we also mean that it does not have a beginning, an end, a fixed sequence of events. It is not static, at rest. It is moving. The ingredients within a process interact; each affects all the others³⁸

In stating that communication is a process, we mean that you cannot look at any particular communication behavior as a snapshot and fully understand what is happening. Suppose that you were in a coffee shop and observed an interaction between a customer and a server. The customer asks for a double-shot espresso, and the barista responds by asking, “Sure you don’t want a latte?” The customer responds by saying, “Definitely no,” to which the barista says, “Wow, must be a bad day.” On its face, this interaction could seem somewhat abrupt—maybe even inappropriate. But, if the customer is a regular, the barista might know that this is an unusual order, inferring that the need for an extra jolt of caffeine is indicative of a hectic day for the patron. In this example, the communication interaction started well before the actual behaviors you observed. Those behaviors were part of an ongoing process of communication between the customer and the barista. How the customer responds to the “bad day” comment, perhaps with annoyance or with a story about what is going on, will further influence that unfolding communication process.

Messages include verbal and nonverbal symbols, signs, and behaviors. When you smile at another person, you are sending a message. When a radio announcer chooses language to emphasize the seriousness of a recent event, she is creating a message. The public speaker might spend days choosing just the right words and considering his bodily movements, gestures, and facial expression.

People hope to generate common meanings through the messages they provide. **Meaning** is the understanding of the message. You know that all of the messages you generate are not shared by others with whom you try to communicate. You try to flirt with someone you meet in class, but the other person seems oblivious to your subtle nonverbal signals. College professors are generally very knowledgeable about a subject matter, but they vary greatly in their ability to convey shared meanings.

Understanding the meaning of another person’s message does not occur unless the two communicators can elicit common meanings for words, phrases, and nonverbal codes. During the process of communication, we naturally attempt to negotiate meaning with others. For instance, during class, you might raise a hand to have a professor clarify the meaning of a term. During a conversation with a friend, you might use a shake of the head to indicate that you are not following her point. In both examples, you used verbal or nonverbal symbols or codes to provide feedback and negotiate meaning with another person. This negotiation is constant, and it means that the process of communication is continually unfolding as we attempt to share common meaning with others.

Components of Communication

In this section you will learn how communication in action really works. The components of communication are people, messages, channels, feedback, codes, encoding and decoding, noise, and situation.



- Understanding emerges from shared experience.

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meaning

The understanding of the message.