interpersonal communication

THIRD EDITION

Kory Floyd

interpersonal communication

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KORY FLOYD

University of Arizona
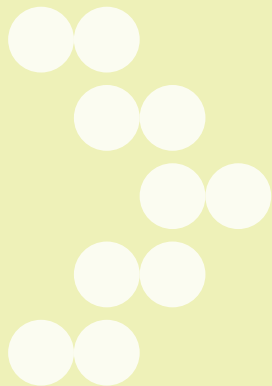
To those who communicate
for the betterment of us all.

Name: Kory Floyd

Education: I got my undergraduate degree from Western Washington University, my master's degree from the University of Washington, and my PhD from the University of Arizona.

Current jobs: Professor at the University of Arizona, researcher, writer

Favorite job growing up: Singing busboy

Worst childhood memory: Getting sent to the principal's office in third grade. (It's possible I haven't told my parents about that.)

Best childhood memory: The birth of my sister and brother

Hobbies: Playing piano, singing, reading, traveling, playing Wii tennis

Pets: I have a dog named Cruise and a puppy named Buster.

Favorite recent book: The Language of Life by James Lull and Eduardo Neiva

Favorite TV show: The Big Bang Theory

Places I love: New Zealand, Starbucks, my brother's house

Dear Readers,

I can still recall how my family reacted when I said I wanted to study communication. *You already know how to communicate,* I remember one relative saying. Communication seemed like common sense to my family members, so they weren't entirely sure why I needed a PhD just to understand it.

As it turns out, a lot of other people feel the way my relatives do. Because each of us communicates in some form nearly every day of our lives, it's hard not to think of communication as completely intuitive.

That is especially true for interpersonal communication, since forming and maintaining relationships with others is such a pervasive human activity. What can we learn from research and formal study that we don't already know from our lived experience? Aren't we all experts in interpersonal communication? Just for the sake of argument, let's say we were. Why, then, do we so often misunderstand each other? Why is our divorce rate as high as it is? How come it seems like conflict and deception are all around us? How do we explain the popularity of online support groups? If we're all experts at communicating interpersonally, why is it so challenging so often? Maybe communication isn't as intuitive as one might think.

My goal with *Interpersonal Communication* is to help students see how communication not only affects their relationships but also influences their health, happiness, and quality of life. I want to encourage students to go beyond commonsense notions about communication and help them see the value of investigating interpersonal processes—both face-to-face and online—in a systematic way. Importantly, I strive to meet those priorities while speaking to students in a way that interests them and helps them to use both the content and the cognitive tools to relate theories and concepts to their own experiences.

And those experiences—along with the ways we communicate—are changing quickly these days. With electronically mediated communication, what used to be unprecedented is now commonplace. Deployed servicemen watch the birth of their children live via Skype. College students organize rallies with less than a day's notice on Twitter. Adults given up for adoption as infants use Facebook to find their biological parents. Each new technology expands our world just a little more, making interpersonal communication skills increasingly valuable. With a focus on well-being, everyday applications, and adaptability to situations and channels, *Interpersonal Communication* helps students build the interpersonal skills they'll need to communicate effectively in today's quickly changing environments.

Just as our communication adapts to new communication channels, so do the ways we study and teach. *Interpersonal Communication* now provides students and teachers with a holistic course solution through Connect. An all-inclusive learning tool, Connect offers students a personalized reading experience with SmartBook, an adaptive ebook that targets areas for improvement and serves up interactive learning resources as needed. Connect also helps instructors gauge students' skills and comprehension through online quizzes and homework assignments. Meanwhile, the Instructor's Manual, Test Bank, and PowerPoint slides provide additional tips and activities—adding to the robust support found in the Annotated Instructor's Edition. By seamlessly integrating all the resources for *Interpersonal Communication* in one place, Connect helps teachers get the most out of their class time and helps students study smarter.

I hope you will find the result of these efforts to be a well-integrated package of engaging and contemporary materials for the study of interpersonal communication.

brief contents

contents

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

4 Interpersonal Perception   106

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

PART 2 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ACTION

5 Language   140

6 Nonverbal Communication 176

7 Listening 214

8 Emotion 244

"SmartBook lets me know I am retaining the information."

> "SmartBook helps me identify what we are going to be covering in class."

PART 3 DYNAMICS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

9 Forming and Maintaining Personal Relationships 274

10 Interpersonal Communication in Close Relationships 308

11   Interpersonal Conflict   342

"SmartBook helps me feel more prepared for class."

12   Deceptive Communication   372

boxes

McGraw-Hill Connect: An Overview

McGraw-Hill Connect offers full-semester access to comprehensive, reliable content and learning resources for the Interpersonal Communication course. Connect's deep integration with most Learning Management Systems (LMS), including Blackboard and Desire2Learn (D2L), offers single sign-on and deep gradebook synchronization. Data from Assignment Results reports synchronize directly with many LMS, 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 Interpersonal Communication course:

Tool	Instructional Context	Description
SmartBook	• SmartBook is an engaging and interactive reading experience for mastering fundamental Interpersonal 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.	• 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 a learner is 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, and 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.

(*Continued*)

Connect Insight for *Instructors*	• Connect Insight for *Instructors* is an analytics resource that produces quick feedback related to learner performance and learner engagement.
	• Designed as a dashboard for both quick check-ins and detailed performance and engagement views.
		• Connect Insight for *Instructors* offers a series of visual data displays that provide analysis on five key insights:
		  • 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*	• Connect Insight for *Students* is a powerful data analytics tool that provides at-a-glance visualizations to help a learner understand his or her performance on Connect assignments.	• Connect Insight for *Students* offers the learner details on each Connect assignment. When possible, it offers suggestions for the learner on how he or she can improve scores. These data can help guide the learner to behaviors that will lead to better scores in the future.
Instructor Reports	• Instructor Reports provide data that may be useful for assessing programs or courses as part of the accreditation process.	• 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	• Student Reports allow learners to review their performance for specific assignments or for the course.	• Learners can keep track of their performance and identify areas they are struggling with.
Simple LMS Integration	• Seamlessly integrates with every learning management system.	• Learners have automatic single sign-on. • Connect assignment results sync to the LMS's gradebook.
Pre- and Post-Tests	• Instructors can generate their own pre- and post-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.	• 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	• 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.	• 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.
Speech Capture	• 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.	• 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	• Speech Preparation Tools provide learners with additional support, such as Topic Helper, Outline Tool, and access to third-party Internet sites like EasyBib (for formatting citations) and SurveyMonkey (to create audience-analysis questionnaires and surveys).	• 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's Guide to Connect for
Interpersonal Communication

When you assign Connect, you can be confident—and have data to demonstrate—that the learners in your courses, 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 SmartBook, 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 needed and when needed.

Interpersonal Communication SmartBook

A personalized and adaptive learning experience with SmartBook.

Boost learner success with McGraw-Hill's adaptive reading and study experience. The *Interpersonal Communication* SmartBook highlights the most impactful interpersonal communication concepts the learner needs to study at that moment in time. The learning path continuously adapts based on what the individual learner knows and does not know and 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.

SmartBook highlights the key concepts of every chapter, offering learners a high-impact learning experience. Here, highlighted text and an illustration together explain a communication model. Highlights change color (right) when a learner has demonstrated his or her understanding of the concept.

Over 100 interactive Learning Resources.

Presented in a range of interactive styles, the Learning Resources in *Interpersonal Communication* support learners who may be struggling to master, or simply wish to review, the most important communication concepts. Designed to reinforce essential theories and skills—from competent online self-disclosure and nonverbal communication channels to detecting deceptive communication and managing relationships—every Learning Resource is presented at the precise moment of need. Whether a video, audio clip, or interactive mini-lesson, each Learning Resource is new and is designed to give learners a lifelong foundation in strong interpersonal communication skills.

More than 1,000 targeted question probes.

Class-tested at colleges and universities nationwide, a treasury of engaging question probes— new and revised—assess learners at every stage of the learning process, helping them to thrive in the course. Designed to gauge learners' comprehension of the most important concepts in *Interpersonal Communication,* and presented in a variety of interactive styles to facilitate learner engagement, targeted question probes give learners immediate feedback on their understanding of the content, identifying a learner's familiarity with the instruction and pointing him or her to areas where additional review is needed.

You are at lunch with some colleagues and share your feelings about the upcoming election, assuming incorrectly that they share the same feelings. What are you guilty of?

Click the answer you think is right.

- multicultural error
- shared knowledge error
- shared opinion error
- monopolization error

Do you know the answer?   📄 Read about this

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

Interpersonal Communication bridges theory and practice

New! Over 70 percent new scholarly references.

A thorough update of the entire text, including new theories and research on electronically mediated communication, immerses learners and instructors alike in the latest and best knowledge about interpersonal communication available today.

Seamless integration of scholarship, theory, and skills.

By combining the latest research with the everyday scenarios learners face, author Kory Floyd presents a systematic and modern approach to the study of interpersonal communication that helps learners build vital interpersonal skills and make sound choices—academically, personally, and professionally.

Emphasis on critical thinking and self-reflection.

Learners have numerous opportunities to make connections between the text and their own lives as well as consider how their communication choices influence the outcomes they experience.

- *Learn It/Apply It/Reflect on It.* This section-ending feature encourages learners to assess their comprehension, practice theory in their own lives, and reflect on their experiences to improve self-awareness.
- *Fact or Fiction?* This feature allows learners to challenge their assumptions about interpersonal communication.

Examples with real-world relevance relate content to real life.

New chapter-opening vignettes, refreshed examples in every chapter, and a current photo program enliven the content and allow learners to study interpersonal communication in an engaging way that directly relates to them.

Interpersonal Communication emphasizes critical contexts: technology, gender, culture, and relationships

New! Online and electronically mediated communication integrated in every chapter.

Every chapter includes comprehensive coverage of technology and digital devices' influence on interpersonal communication. Covering everything from online deception and relational maintenance via texts to improving listening and emotional expression when online, these sections provide learners with the latest research on electronically mediated communication, including practical skills they can immediately use in their own lives.

Competent Online Communication

These days, much of our interpersonal communication takes place in electronically mediated contexts. These include e-mail, instant messaging, and text messaging; social networking (such as on Facebook and LinkedIn); tweeting; image sharing (such as on YouTube and Flickr); and videoconferencing (such as on Skype and Facetime), among others. As you'll see in this section, communicating competently in these venues requires paying attention to their unique capabilities and pitfalls.

BEWARE OF THE POTENTIAL FOR MISUNDERSTANDING. Face-to-face conversations allow you to pay attention to behaviors that help to clarify the meaning of a speaker's words. People's facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, for example, generally provide clues about what they are trying to say. Are they speaking seriously or sarcastically? Are they upset or calm, tentative or self-assured? We can usually tell a lot about people's meaning by considering not only *what they say* but *how they say it.*

We saw earlier that some channel-lean forms of communication—such as tweeting and instant messaging—rely heavily on text, restricting our access to facial expressions and other clues. As a result, these forms of communication increase the potential for misunderstanding. Many of us have had the experience of teasing or joking with someone in a text message, for instance, only to discover that the person took our words seriously and felt offended or hurt.

To communicate competently when using channel-lean media, follow these guidelines:

Culture, gender, and diversity are integrated throughout the text.

In addition to a full chapter on culture and gender, every chapter includes essential information about how culture, gender, and sexual identity affect communication. Discussions include the priorities and challenges of socially marginalized groups such as the elderly, immigrants, sexual minorities, people with physical disabilities, people with psychological disorders, and economically disadvantaged individuals.

New organization for relationship chapters.

For many learners, coverage of close relationships is the heart of the interpersonal communication course. To promote a more straightforward approach to teaching and learning this material, these chapters have a new structure:

- Chapter 9 focuses on the theories and processes of relationship attraction, formation, maintenance, and dissolution.
- Chapter 10 focuses on communication in friendships, romantic relationships, families, and workplace relationships.

Interpersonal Communication **promotes competence**

Whether online or face-to-face, learners will understand how to be an effective communicator and learn the skills needed to make competent choices in their own lives.

Skills self-assessment.

The Assess Your Skills feature in the text and the Skills Assessment feature in Connect ask learners to evaluate their tendencies and competence in specific interpersonal skills.

Communication dark side/light side.

These boxes examine the common positive and negative communication issues that people face. In this practical feature, learners gain insight into how to best navigate these challenges and choices.

Got Skills? activities.

These innovative boxes tell learners why a specific interpersonal skill matters, while instructing them on how to practice the skill and reflect on the practice for a holistic understanding of the skill.

Data Analytics

Connect Insight provides at-a-glance analysis on five key insights, available at a moment's notice from your tablet device. You can see, in real time, how individual learners or sections are doing (or how well your assignments have been received) so you can take action early and keep struggling learners from falling behind.
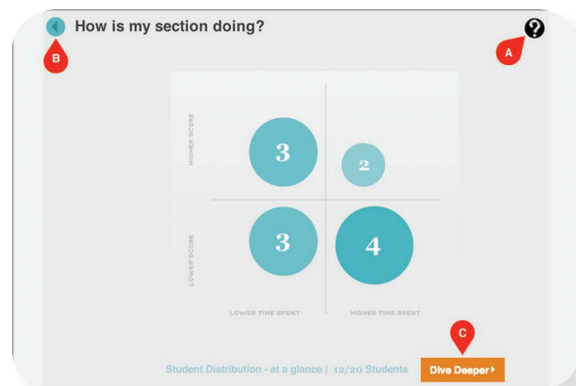
Instructors can see, at a glance, individual learner performance: analytics showing learner investment in assignments, and success at completing them, help instructors identify, and aid, those who are at risk.

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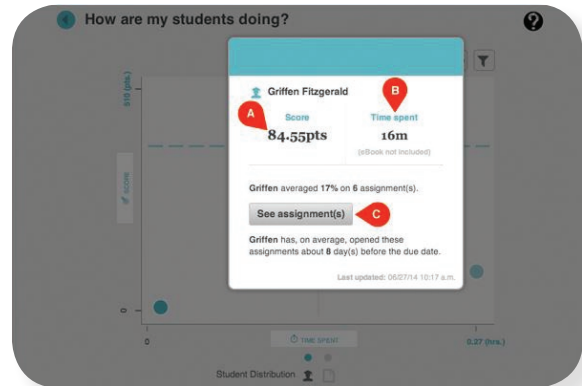
Connect Reports

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 of 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.

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.

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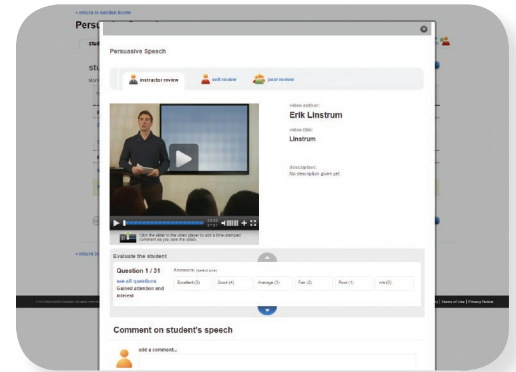
PEER REVIEW
Peer review assignments are easier than ever. Create and manage peer review assignments and customize privacy settings.

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.

Classroom Preparation Tools

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

ANNOTATED INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION
The Annotated Instructor's Edition features a plethora of marginal notes to help instructors make use of the full range of the coverage, activities, and resources in the text and online.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL
The IM provides outlines, discussion questions, key terms and their definitions, a research library, and examples of in-class and out-of-class assignments for every chapter.

TEST BANK

Test Bank offers multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, short-answer questions, and essay questions for each chapter.

POWERPOINT SLIDES

The PowerPoint presentations provide chapter highlights that help instructors create focused yet individualized lesson plans.

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/
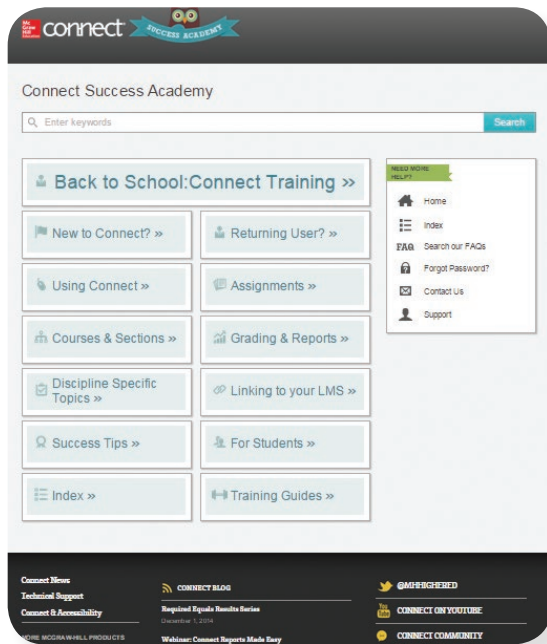
- **Digital Success Team**—The Digital Success Team is a group of specialists dedicated to working online with instructors—one-on-one—to demonstrate how the Connect platform works and to help incorporate Connect into a customer's specific course design and syllabus. Contact your digital learning consultant 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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McGraw-Hill is dedicated to supporting instructors and learners. To contact our customer support team, please call us at 800-331-5094 or visit us online at http://mpss.mhhe.com/contact.php

Changes for the Third Edition
Chapter-by-Chapter Changes

CHAPTER 1: ABOUT COMMUNICATION

- New opening vignette on *Portlandia*'s Carrie Brownstein and Fred Armisen.
- New "Communication: Dark Side" feature discusses the challenges of managing face-to-face communication when distracted by smartphones.
- New "Got Skills?" box on empathic communication.
- New "Assess Your Skills" box: "Are You a High Self-Monitor?"
- New section "Competent Online Communication" explores electronically mediated communication (EMC).
- Updated "Fact or Fiction?" box on same-sex relationships with new research.
- New "Got Skills?" box on using powerful language, specifically for EMC.

CHAPTER 2: CULTURE AND GENDER

- New opening vignette about cross-cultural friendships in diverse neighborhoods.
- New "Communication: Dark Side" box discusses cultural stereotyping during times of stress.
- New section "Social Media as a Co-Culture" explores the emerging culture of online communities across different social media platforms.
- Expanded discussion of similarity assumption and the role it plays in EMC.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNICATION AND THE SELF

- New opening vignette on managing multiple identities on the TV show *Black-ish*.
- New discussions on expressions of self-esteem and identity in social media.
- New section "Challenges and Risks of Disclosing Online" provides advice on managing self needs when using social media.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION

- Updated discussion of challenges facing female professionals, including Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In*.
- New section "Forming Perceptions Online" explores the way avatars and photos influence perception in EMC.
- Revised discussion of recency effect including comparisons between face-to-face and online impressions.
- New discussion of egocentrism and online communication.
- Revised "Fact or Fiction?" box on making accurate perceptions.

CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE

- New "Fact or Fiction?" box explores the impact of texting on our ability to use language.
- Updated discussion of loaded language examines language choices by proponents and critics of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- New section on criticism of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

- New "Got Skills?" box on using ethical appeals to persuade others.
- New "Communication: Light Side" box on Facebook tribute pages.
- Revised coverage of communication climates (previously in Chapter 10) moved to a new section on the influence of language in relationships.
- New section "Create Positive Climates in Electronically Mediated Communication."
- New "Got Skills?" box on how to spot confirming messages.

CHAPTER 6: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- New opening vignette discusses John Travolta's embrace of Scarlett Johansson at 2015 Oscars.
- New "Got Skills?" box on communicating emotion nonverbally.
- New "Communication: Light Side" box on affection at cuddling parties.
- New figure of Hall's Four Spatial Zones.
- New section "Managing Nonverbal Behavior in Electronically Mediated Communication" includes tips for videoconferencing and texting.

CHAPTER 7: LISTENING

- New opening vignette about veterans with PTSD.
- New "Assess Your Skills" box on identifying listening styles.
- Revised section on the effect of culture and sex on listening.
- New section "Effective Listening Online."
- New "Communication: Light Side" box on online listening groups.
- New "Fact or Fiction?" box on whether technology impairs listening abilities.
- New section on managing information overload during EMC.

CHAPTER 8: EMOTION

- New opening vignette examines emotions and communication on TV's *The Walking Dead.*
- New "Got Skills?" box on expressing anger constructively.
- New "Communication: Light Side" box about the life benefits of experiencing joy.
- New section explores relationship between emotion and EMC.
- Revised discussion of emotional contagion now covers online communication.

CHAPTER 9: FORMING AND MAINTAINING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- New opening vignette discusses the relationship types in the film *This is Where I Leave You.*
- New chapter structure focuses on relational theory—how personal relationships form and develop.
- New section "Relationship Development and Maintenance via Online Social Networking" examines the ways in which EMC affects and is affected by relationships.
- New "Fact or Fiction?" box on how opposites attract.
- New "Assess Your Skills" box about how to communicate positivity.
- New "Got Skills?" box on expressing affection online.

CHAPTER 10: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

- New opening vignette details relationship of two real-life friends and co-workers.
- New chapter structure examines different types of relationships in detail—romantic, friendships, family, and workplace.
- New section "Online Communication in Workplace Relationships" examines the challenges of EMC in the workplace.
- New "Fact or Fiction?" box about the percent of marriages that end in divorce.
- New "Got Skills?" box on using upward, downward, and lateral communication.

CHAPTER 11: INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

- New opening vignette highlights restorative justice programs used to manage conflict.
- New sections on cultural dimensions and conflict and cross-cultural conflict.
- New section "Managing Computer-Mediated Conflict".
- Revised section on how power influences communication.
- New "Communication: Dark Side" box on alcohol and conflict.

CHAPTER 12: DECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION

- New opening vignette explores the deception between a married couple in the film *Gone Girl.*
- Revised section "Defining Deception" including high-stakes, low-stakes, and middle-stakes lies.
- New section on how deception is common when communicating online.
- New Communication: Dark Side" box on lying to loved ones.

Contributors

I am most grateful to have had exceptional, astute groups of instructors across the country who served as reviewers and offered insights and suggestions that improved *Interpersonal Communication,* Third Edition, immeasurably:

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About Communication

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FROM FANS TO FRIENDS TO COLLABORATORS

Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein have been friends for more than a decade. The pair met at a *Saturday Night Live* after-party in 2003, and quickly bonded over their shared love of comedy (Armisen was a cast member) and indie rock (Brownstein was touring with her band, Sleater-Kinney). Despite living on opposite coasts, the two became fast friends, and eventually decided that they needed to work on something together, because as Brownstein explains, when two people are not romantically involved, "it begins to seem kind of weird if you're flying around the country" to spend time together.

This friendship yielded hilarious results: Their sketch comedy show, *Portlandia,* became a hit, first on the Internet and eventually as a regular series on IFC. Playing a rotating series of characters, the two get to explore different sorts of relationships and communication styles: "I get to play at connecting with people," Brownstein says, "because in every scene we're in a different relationship."[1] Their real relationship is more consistent: They text each other each night before bed, and look forward to working together each day.

chapter preview

1 Why We Communicate

2 The Nature of Communication

3 How We Communicate Interpersonally

4 Building Your Communication Competence

t is nearly impossible to overestimate the importance of close relationships. Our families can make us laugh, keep us sane, and pick us up when we're feeling down. Our romantic partners can make us feel as though we're the only person in the world who matters. And, on occasion, we meet people who become close working partners as well as valuable friends.

At the same time, relationships can be profoundly challenging. Even our closest friends can get under our skin. Sometimes our romantic partners aren't completely honest with us. And from time to time, we don't quite know how to support those who need our help. It's pretty remarkable that human relationships can be the source of such joy *and* such heartache. What makes the difference between a relationship that's going well and one that's going poorly? One of the biggest factors is how we communicate. To understand why that's true, let's look first at the critical role of communication in our lives.

1 Why We Communicate

Asking why we communicate may seem about as useful as asking why we breathe. After all, could you imagine your life without communication? We all have times, of course, when we prefer to be alone. Nevertheless, most of us would find it nearly impossible—and very unsatisfying—to go through life without the chance to interact with others. Perhaps that's why we spend so much of our time communicating, whether face-to-face or electronically (see Table 1).

You might think that communicating as much as we do would make us all communication experts. In truth, however, we often don't recognize how many communication challenges we face. Learning to overcome those challenges starts with appreciating why we communicate in the first place. As we'll discover in this section, communication touches many aspects of our lives, from our physical and other everyday needs to our experiences with relationships, spirituality, and identity.

TABLE 1

Life Online: Communicating in Cyberspace

23	Number of hours per week the average American spends on the Internet
81	Percentage of American teenagers who sleep with, or next to, their cell phone
678	Number of text messages the average American sends per month
143,199	Number of messages received daily on Snapchat
400,000,000	Number of active blogs online
196,400,000,000	Average number of e-mail messages sent per day

Sources: The Mobile Youth Report; Business News Daily; Computerworld; Business Insider; Nielsen; Radicati Group. Statistics are from 2011–2015.

The need for social contact has fueled debates in cities such as New York over the use of solitary confinement for juvenile offenders. © *Tinnapong/Getty Images, RF*

Communication Meets Physical Needs

Communication keeps us healthy. Human beings are such inherently social beings that when we are denied the opportunity for interaction, our mental and physical health can suffer. That is a major reason why solitary confinement is such a harsh punishment. Several studies have shown that when people are cut off from others for an extended period, their health can quickly deteriorate.[2] A recent study even showed that feeling rejected reduces the rate at which a person's heart beats.[3] Similarly, individuals who feel socially isolated because of poverty, homelessness, mental illness, or obesity can also suffer from a lack of quality interaction with others.[4]

It may sound like an exaggeration to say that we can't survive without human contact, but that statement isn't far from the truth, as a bizarre experiment in the thirteenth century helps to show. German emperor Frederick II wanted to know what language humans would speak naturally if they weren't taught any particular language. To find out, he placed 50 newborns in the care of nurses who were instructed only to feed and bathe them but not to speak to or hold them. The emperor never discovered the answer to his question because all the infants died.[5] That experiment was clearly unethical, meaning that it did not follow established principles that guide people in judging whether something is morally right or wrong. Such an experiment fortunately wouldn't be repeated today. But as touch expert Tiffany Field reports, more recent studies conducted in orphanages and adoption centers have convincingly shown that human interaction, especially touch, is critical for infants' survival and healthy development.[6]

Social interaction keeps adults healthy too. Research shows that people without strong social ties, such as close friendships and family relationships, are more likely to suffer from major ailments, including heart disease and high blood pressure, and to die prematurely than people who have close, satisfying relationships.[7] They are also more likely to suffer from lesser ailments, such as colds, and they often take longer to recover from illnesses or injuries.[8] Communication researchers Chris Segrin and Stacey Passalacqua have even found that loneliness is related to sleep disturbances and stress.[9]

stigma A characteristic that discredits a person, making him or her be seen as abnormal or undesirable.

The importance of social interaction is often particularly evident to people who are stigmatized. A **stigma** is a characteristic that discredits a person, causing him or her to be seen as abnormal or undesirable.[10] It isn't the attribute itself that stigmatizes a person, however, but the way that attribute is viewed by others in that person's society. In the United States, for instance, being HIV-positive has been widely stigmatized because of its association with two marginalized populations—gay men and intravenous drug users—even though many individuals with HIV do not belong to either group.[11] U.S. Americans don't tend to stigmatize people with asthma or diabetes or even cancer to the same extent as they do people with HIV, even though those other illnesses can also be serious and even life-threatening.

Stigmatized people might frequently feel like outsiders who "don't fit in" with others. As a result, they may be more likely to suffer the negative physical effects of limited social interaction. Going further, the less social interaction they have, the more

they are likely to continue feeling stigmatized. Although not everyone needs the same degree of interaction to stay healthy, communication plays an important role in maintaining human health and well-being.

Communication Meets Relational Needs

Besides our physical needs, we have several relational needs, such as needs for companionship and affection, relaxation and escape.[12] We don't necessarily have the same needs in all our relationships—you probably value your friends for somewhat different reasons than you value your co-workers, for instance. The bottom line, though, is that we need relationships, and communication is a large part of how we build and keep those relationships.[13]

Imagine how challenging it would be to communicate if you couldn't speak the language everyone else was using. That is a common experience for many immigrants. © Erik Freeland/Corbis saba/Corbis News/Corbis

Think about how many structures in our lives are designed to promote social interaction. Neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, malls, theaters, and restaurants are all social settings in which we interact with people. In addition, the Internet offers innumerable ways of connecting with others, and many people have made new friends—or even met romantic partners—online.[14] Imagine how challenging it would be to form and maintain strong social relationships if you lacked the ability to communicate with people. This is a common experience for many immigrants, who often struggle to learn the cultural values, as well as the language, of their new environments and may feel lonely or ignored by others in the process.[15]

Some scholars believe our need for relationships is so fundamental that we can hardly get by without them.[16] For example, research has shown that having a rich social life is one of the most powerful predictors of a person's overall happiness.[17] Mere interaction isn't enough, though: Studies show that having *meaningful* conversations leads to happiness, whereas "small talk" can be associated with reduced well-being.[18] Casual conversation online *can* spark a new relationship, but deeper, more meaningful conversation helps it grow.

Studies have shown that the most important predictor of happiness in life—by far—is marital happiness.[19] Being happily married is more important than income, job status, education, leisure time, or anything else in accounting for how content people are. On the negative side, people in distressed marriages are much more likely to suffer from major depression, and they report being in worse physical health than their happily married counterparts.[20]

The cause-and-effect relationship between marriage and happiness isn't a simple one. It may be that strong marriages promote happiness and well-being, or it may be that happy, healthy people are more likely than others to be married. Whatever the association, personal relationships clearly play an important role in our lives, and communication helps us form and maintain them.

Communication Fills Identity Needs

Are you energetic? Trustworthy? Intelligent? Withdrawn? Each of us can probably come up with a long list of adjectives to describe ourselves, but here's the critical question: How do you *know* you are these things? In other words, how do you form an identity?

How we communicate with others, and how others communicate with us, play a big role in shaping how we see ourselves—whether it's as intelligent, as popular, or as altruistic. © Digital Vision/Getty Images, RF, © McGraw-Hill Education, Lars A. Niki photographer, © McGraw-Hill Education, Christopher Kerrigan photographer

The ways we communicate with others—and the ways others communicate with us—play a major role in shaping how we see ourselves.[21] As you'll learn in the Communication and the Self chapter, people form their identities partly by comparing themselves with others. If you consider yourself intelligent, for instance, what that really means is that you see yourself as more intelligent than most other people. If you think you're shy, you see most other people as more outgoing than you are. If you think of yourself as attractive, that translates into viewing yourself as better looking than most others.

One way we learn how we compare with others is through our communication with those around us. If people treat you as intelligent, shy, or attractive, you may begin to believe you have those characteristics. In other words, those qualities will become part of how you view yourself. Communication plays a critical role in driving that process, and good communicators have the ability to emphasize different aspects of their identities in different situations. During a job interview it might be most important for you to portray your organized, efficient side; when you're hanging out with friends, you might emphasize your fun-loving nature and sense of humor.

Besides expressing personal identity, communication also helps us express our cultural identity. As you'll discover in the Culture and Gender chapter, culture includes the symbols, beliefs, practices, and languages that distinguish groups of people. The ways you speak, dress, gesture, and entertain yourself all reflect the cultural values you hold dear.

Communication Meets Spiritual Needs

An important aspect of identity for many people in many cultures is their spirituality. Spirituality includes the principles valued in life ("I value loyalty" or "I value equal treatment for all people"). It also encompasses people's morals, or their notions about right and wrong ("It's never okay to steal, regardless of the circumstances" or "I would lie to save a life, because life is more important than honesty"). Finally, spirituality involves people's beliefs about the meaning of life, which often include personal philosophies, an awe of nature, a belief in a higher purpose, and religious faith and practices ("I believe in God" or "I believe I will reap what I sow in life").

A 2010 survey of more than 112,000 U.S. college students found that many students consider some form of spirituality to be an important part of their identity.[22] Almost half of those surveyed said they consider integrating spirituality into their lives to be very important or essential. For those in the study, spirituality didn't necessarily include

Communication lets people express their faith and spirituality. © *Don Hammond/ Design Pics, RF*

formal religion; over 68 percent believed that people can grow spiritually without being religious. For people who include spirituality as a part of their identity, communication provides a means of expressing and sharing spiritual ideas and practices with one another.

Communication Serves Instrumental Needs

Finally, people communicate to meet their practical, everyday needs. Researchers refer to those needs as **instrumental needs.** Instrumental needs include short-term tasks such as ordering a drink in a restaurant, scheduling a haircut on the telephone, filling out a rebate card, and raising one's hand to speak in class. They also include longer-term career goals such as getting a new job, earning a promotion, and getting one's work noticed and appreciated by supervisors and customers. Those communicative behaviors may not always contribute much to our health, our relationships, our identity, or our spirituality. Each behavior is valuable, however, because it serves a need that helps us get through our personal and professional lives.

instrumental needs
Practical, everyday needs.

AT A GLANCE

Five Needs Served by Communication

Physical Needs	Communication helps us maintain physical and mental well-being.
Relational Needs	Communication helps us form social and personal relationships.
Identity Needs	Communication helps us decide who we are and who we want to be.
Spiritual Needs	Communication lets us share our beliefs and values with others.
Instrumental Needs	Communication helps us accomplish personal and professional tasks.

Meeting instrumental needs is important for two reasons. The first reason is simply that we have many instrumental needs. In fact, most of the communication you engage in on a day-to-day basis is probably mundane and routine—not heavy, emotionally charged conversation but instrumental interaction such as talking to professors about assignments or taking orders from customers at work. The second reason satisfying instrumental needs is so important is that many of them—such as buying groceries at the store and ordering clothes online—have to be met before other needs—such as maintaining quality relationships and finding career fulfillment—become relevant.[23]

LEARN IT How is communication related to our physical well-being? What relational needs does communication help us fill? In what ways do communication behaviors meet our identity needs? How does communication help us express spirituality? What are some of the instrumental needs served by communication?

APPLY IT Describe in a short paragraph how, in a recent conversation or online interaction, your communication behavior contributed to your physical, relational, identity, spiritual, and instrumental needs. Which need or needs took precedence? Why?

REFLECT ON IT Can you identify ways in which your own communication meets your relational or spiritual needs? Do you communicate for any reasons that are not discussed in this section?

2 The Nature of Communication

In the television comedy *The Big Bang Theory,* Sheldon Cooper is a theoretical physicist at Caltech. With two doctoral degrees and an IQ of 187, Cooper qualifies as a genius. Yet despite his intellect and professional accomplishments, Cooper is socially inept. He is childish and self-centered, and he rarely realizes how his lack of communication skills affects other people. How could someone so smart—and someone who has communicated practically every day he has been alive—be such a poor communicator?

In one way or another, you, too, have communicated daily since birth, so you may be wondering what you could possibly have left to learn about communication. In fact, researchers still have many questions about how we communicate, how we make sense of one another's behaviors, and what effects communication has on our lives and our relationships.

We begin this section by looking at different ways to understand the communication process. Next, we'll examine some important characteristics of communication, and we'll consider various ways to think about communication in social interaction. Finally, we'll tackle some common communication myths.

Three Models of Human Communication

How would you describe the process of communicating? It's not as easy as it might seem, and even researchers have answered that question in different ways. A formal description of a process such as communication is called a **model.** In this section, we'll look at three models developed by communication scholars: the action, interaction, and transaction models. These models represent the evolution of how communication researchers have defined and described communication over the years.

model A formal description of a process.

COMMUNICATION AS ACTION.   In the action model, we think of communication as a one-way process. Let's say you want to leave work early one day to attend a parent–teacher conference at your daughter's school, and you're getting ready to ask your supervisor for permission. As illustrated in Figure 1, the action model starts with a **source**—you—who comes up with a thought or an idea you wish to communicate.

To convey the idea that you'd like to leave early, you must **encode** it; that is, you must put your idea into the form of language or a gesture that your supervisor can understand. Through that process, you create a **message,** which consists of the verbal and/or nonverbal elements of communication to which people give meaning. In this example, your message might be the question "Would it be all right if I leave work a little early today?"

According to the action model, you then send your message through a communication **channel,** a type of pathway. You might pose your question to your supervisor face-to-face. Alternatively, you might send your question by e-mail, through a text message, or by leaving a voice mail message for your supervisor. Those are all channels of communication. Your supervisor acts as the **receiver** of the message—the person who will **decode** or interpret it.

During the communication process, there is also likely to be some **noise,** which is anything that interferes with a receiver's ability to attend to your message. The major types of noise are physical noise (such as background conversation in the room or static on the telephone line), psychological noise (such as other concerns your supervisor is dealing with that day), and physiological noise (such as fatigue or hunger). Experiencing any of those forms of noise could prevent your supervisor from paying full attention to your question.

Noise also interferes with the ability to interpret a message accurately. Decoding a message doesn't necessarily mean we have understood what the speaker is trying to say. Physical, psychological, and physiological noise can all cause us to misunderstand someone's words, which may prompt the person to say "That's not what I meant."

You can see that the action model is very linear: A source sends a message through some channel to a receiver, and noise interferes with the message somehow. Many people talk and think about the communication process in this linear manner. For example, when you ask someone "Did you get my message?" you are implying that communication is a one-way process. The problem is that human communication is rarely that simple. It is usually more of a back-and-forth exchange than a one-way process—more similar to tennis than to bowling. Over time, this criticism of the action model of communication gave rise to an updated model known as the interaction model.

source The originator of a thought or an idea.
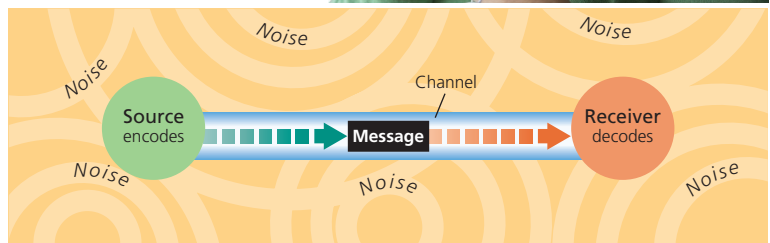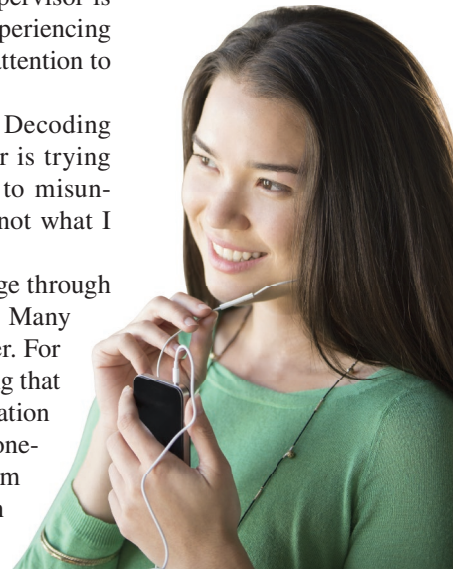
encode To put an idea into language or gesture.

message Verbal and nonverbal elements of communication to which people give meaning.

channel A pathway through which messages are conveyed.

receiver The party who interprets a message.

decode To interpret or give meaning to a message.

noise Anything that interferes with the encoding or decoding of a message.

COMMUNICATION AS INTERACTION. The interaction model, depicted in Figure 2, takes up where the action model leaves off. It includes all the same elements: source, message, channel, receiver, noise, encoding, and decoding. However, it differs from the action model in two basic ways. First, it recognizes that communication is a two-way process. Second, it adds two elements to the mix: feedback and context.

If you've studied physics, you know that every action has a reaction. That rule also

FIGURE 1 The Action Model In the action model of communication, a sender encodes a message and conveys it through a communication channel for a receiver to decode. Leaving someone a voice mail message illustrates the one-way process of the action model. *© Caiaimage/ Sam Edwards/Getty Images, RF*