

CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC SPEAKING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Once students have read this chapter, they will be able to:

- 1.1 Identify four benefits of studying public speaking.
- 1.2 Define communication, including its five basic levels.
- 1.3 Explain the model of communication in terms of the seven elements.
- 1.4 Use eight critical thinking skills in developing and evaluating speeches.

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. Why Study Public Speaking?

- A. To gain academic benefits
 1. Classroom communication skills
 2. Critical thinking skills
 3. Group work skills
 4. Organizational skills
 5. Research skills
 6. Writing skills
- B. To gain personal/social benefits
 1. Awareness and appreciation of other cultures
 2. Relationships with friends, family members, and romantic partners
 3. Self-awareness
 4. Self-esteem
 5. Understanding of social and environmental responsibilities
- C. To gain professional benefits
 1. Ability to obtain employment
 2. Career advancement
 3. Collaboration skills with coworkers
 4. Salary negotiation skills
- D. To gain public benefits
 1. Become an active member of society

2. Creating and sustaining a society of informed, active citizens

II. Definitions of Communication

- A. When you communicate, you share, or make common, your knowledge and ideas with someone else.
- B. Defined as both a process and a product.
- C. Communication is the sharing of meaning by sending and receiving symbolic cues.
- D. Ogden and Richards' "Triangle of Meaning"
 - 1. *Interpreter*—the person who is communicating.
 - 2. *Symbol*—anything to which people assign meaning.
 - 3. *Referent*—the object or idea for which the symbol stands.

III. Levels of Communication

- A. *Intrapersonal communication*—communication with yourself.
- B. *Interpersonal (dyadic) communication*—communication that involves ourselves and one other person.
- C. *Group communication*—communication that occurs with three or more people interacting and influencing one another to pursue a common goal and includes a sense of a group identity.
- D. *Public communication*—communication that involves one person speaking face-to-face with an audience and is a more one-directional flow of information.
- E. *Mass communication*—communication that involves one person or group communicating with many people through some print or electronic medium.
 - 1. Feedback is always delayed.
 - 2. The way the message is sent can become very important.

IV. Elements of Communication

- A. *Speaker* - begins the process of human communication.
 - 1. Could also be called sender, source, or encoder.
 - 2. Encodes message.
 - 3. *Encoding*—the process the speaker uses when putting ideas into symbols.
- B. *Message*—the ideas actually communicated verbally and nonverbally.
- C. *Listener*—the person to whom the message is sent.
 - 1. Could also be called receiver or decoder.
 - 2. Decodes message.

3. *Decoding*—attaching meaning to the symbols (words, gestures, and voice inflections) received.
- D. *Feedback*—the interactions between listeners and senders.
 1. Can be verbal or nonverbal.
 2. Can be conscious or unconscious.
- E. *Channel* (medium)—the way the message is sent.
- F. *Environment*—the occasion, social context, and physical setting for communication.
- G. *Noise*—anything that distracts from effective communication; always present.
 1. *Physical noise*—originates in the physical environment.
 2. *Physiological noise*—originates in the bodies of communicators.
 3. *Psychological noise*—originates in the minds of communicators.

V. The Public Speaker as Critical Thinker

- A. *Critical thinking*—the logical, reflective examination of information, and ideas to determine what to believe or do.
- B. Helps you make effective choices as a public speaker.
- C. Eight categories of critical thinking skills.
 1. *Focusing*—used to define problems, to set goals, and to select pieces of information.
 2. *Information gathering*—used to formulate questions and to collect data.
 3. *Remembering*—used to store information in long-term memory and to retrieve it.
 4. *Organizing*—used to arrange information so that it can be understood and presented more effectively.
 5. *Analyzing*—used to clarify existing information by examining parts and relationships.
 6. *Generating*—used to infer and to elaborate new information and ideas, based on prior knowledge.
 7. *Integrating*—used to combine, to summarize, and to restructure information.
 8. *Evaluating*—used to establish criteria and to assess the quality of ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have students reflect on their own training in communication, from kindergarten to now. In which of the following have they received the least formal training: reading, writing, or speaking? If they are typical, they will have had the least instruction in learning how to speak.
- Have students list or discuss careers that they are considering. How could studying public speaking benefit them in their chosen career fields?
- Have students provide examples of words that trigger referents because of differences in the users' ages, genders, religious experiences, educational backgrounds, political affiliations, economic status, and so forth. Discuss how a speaker could enhance shared meaning in each of these examples.
- The technology we use affects how we use intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small group communication, public communication, and mass communication. How might each of these levels of communication be affected by the use of technology?
- We encode many messages so effortlessly that we rarely stop to think about the process. What situations make us aware of the process of encoding a message? (Answers may include times when the speaker is learning a new language, is trying to put his or her best foot forward in a job interview, or is providing comfort to a friend who's had a death in the family.)
- We also decode many messages so effortlessly that we rarely stop to think about the process. What situations make us aware of the process of decoding a message? (Answers may include times when the speaker is learning a new language, is trying to figure out a cryptic or unclear message, or is analyzing the behavior of a new person he or she is dating.)
- How can the channel of communication affect the message being sent? Are there times when some channels of communication are inappropriate? For example, how should you deliver the message that you want to end a romantic relationship? Via text? E-mail? Over the phone? In person? What factors affect your choice of a channel in this case?
- Give an example of: 1) a time when someone failed to act on the feedback you supplied; 2) a time when you misinterpreted another's feedback; and 3) a time when you changed your behavior as a result of feedback from another person. What were some of the consequences of these actions?
- How might you use each of the eight categories of critical thinking skills to prepare and deliver your speeches in this class? Would these categories of critical thinking skills be used in a different way for speeches that you deliver in other settings?

CONTENT PRESENTATION/LECTURE LAUNCHERS

A public speech should echo the tone of good interpersonal communication. Hallmarks of conversations include eye contact, variety in vocal tones, and natural use of gestures. A speech should appear to be more a conversation with audience members than a performance in front of them. Listeners should feel that the speaker is talking with them, not talking at them.

During the public speaking process, you will be using intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small group communication, and public communication. As a public speaker, you'll use intrapersonal communication to generate ideas and research a topic, and to develop, deliver, and evaluate a speech. You will also communicate interpersonally in the public speaking process when you interview classmates about topics or interview sources as part of your research. As a public speaker you will work in groups to develop speech ideas, conduct audience analysis, or to discuss and evaluate speeches they have heard. Most obviously, you'll use public communication on speaking days, where you present your ideas in speech form.

Using models to represent the communication process has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that a model can aid understanding and retention by translating a theoretical concept into visual form. Their chief disadvantage is that models always oversimplify what they represent.

As a public speaker, you will use all eight categories of critical thinking skills:

1. You use *focusing skills* as you select your speech topic, narrow it to key points, and set goals for your speech.
2. You use *information gathering skills* as you develop your speech content through research, identify your key ideas, and decide how you will support them.
3. You use *remembering skills* as you tap personal knowledge and experience relevant to your topic and as you practice speaking only from key words and phrases.
4. You use *organizing skills* as you outline your key ideas and develop the introduction, body, and conclusion of your speech in a logical way.
5. You use *analyzing skills* throughout the speech making process as you study your audience, your research, your main points, your supporting materials, and the ideas or arguments you develop.
6. You use *generating skills* as you brainstorm for topic ideas, draw conclusions from your evidence, and predict the effects of what you propose.
7. You use *integrating skills* as you synthesize your supporting material to reinforce your specific purpose and as you summarize your main points for your listeners.

8. You use *evaluating skills* as you assess the validity of what you say and your effectiveness in saying it.

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment: Career Assessment

Using the website <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/interestAssessment.cfm> students should assess their interests. Based on the results of the MN careers inventory, students should prepare a one-minute oral summary of what occupations or careers are best suited to their interests.

Activity: Creating Stories

(An exercise developed by Russ Wittrup, Austin Community College)

Prepare envelopes or folders with at least 5 symbols in them. Use a variety of pictures, words, and colors. Be sure to include at least one picture of a person or group of people. Divide students into groups and give each group an envelope or file. Have students create a story about the symbols they received.

After students present their stories, discuss how the group went about creating a referent for each symbol. How different were their initial interpretations of the symbols they were given? Which symbols were particularly difficult to assign meaning to?

Assignment: The Many Levels of Me

(An exercise developed by Kelly A. Stockstad, Austin Community College)

Students will be present a short self-introduction speech, using the levels of their personal communication. Ask students to observe their communication over an average day. Students should use the following structure to discuss the levels of their communication:

- Me as an Intrapersonal Communicator: How did I communicate with myself (e.g., to-do lists, journals) that day?
- Me as an Interpersonal Communicator: How many one-on-one conversations did I have that day, whether in person, over the phone, or online? Name three to five people who are your most significant interpersonal relationships (the people who are most important to you and to whom you communicate the most frequently).
- Me as a Group Communicator: How many conversations did I have with three or more people that day, either in person or online? To what groups do I currently belong or have belonged to in the past?

- Me as a Public Communicator: How many presentations did I give that day, whether they were informal or formal? How many presentations did I attend that day?
- Me as a Mass Communicator: How did I function as a mass communicator that day (e.g., sending Tweets, appearing on a TV or radio program)? List three to five specific mass communication acts that I witnessed that day (e.g., TV shows, advertisements, newspapers).
- Me as a Confident Communicator: At which level(s) of communication do I feel most confident? Which level(s) is most challenging for me?

Activity: Creating a Communication Model

Using the elements of communication discussed in this chapter (and any others the students wish to add), have students meet in groups to design their own models of communication. Have each group draw its model on the chalkboard and discuss it or provide each group with poster-sized paper and markers to draw their model.

Activity: The Communication Elements Model in Action

(An exercise developed by Kelly A. Stockstad, Austin Community College)

NOTE: This class activity will involve every member of the class by the end.

Start by asking for two volunteers to stand on opposite sides of the classroom: One person represents the speaker and one person represents the listener. Ask the speaker to encode a message to the listener. As the speaker is thinking of a message, ask for two more volunteers. One of these volunteers will represent the message, and the other will represent the channel. The speaker will give the message to the person who represents the message, then the channel will escort the message to the listener. Ask for another volunteer, who will represent feedback. The listener will give a response (verbal or nonverbal) to the person representing feedback. The person representing the channel will then escort the person representing feedback to the speaker.

At this point, ask the class, "Is communication this easy?" Point out that there can be problems with only these elements of the model. The channel can have issues (e.g., dropped calls on a cell phone) encoding or decoding can result in a different message than the one intended. You may have the volunteers illustrate these types of problems, if there is time.

Next, ask the person representing the message and the person representing the channel to return to the speaker. Now, the speaker will create a new message to send to the listener. Ask for five to seven additional volunteers to represent noise. Once these volunteers are in place, have the speaker send the message and channel back to the listener. The volunteers representing noise should interfere with the message by being loud, distracting the listener or speaker, or repeating a phrase to represent the type of noise (e.g., "headache", "tired," "had a fight with your spouse"). The volunteers

representing noise should not physically restrain or harm the message or channel. The listener should send feedback with the channel back through the interference of noise.

Finally, have all members of the class stand and form a circle around the elements of the model. Discuss that the circle represents the environment and ask how the environment might affect communication.

Activity: Memory Exercise—How Good Are You?

(Published in *Newsweek*, Feb. 14, 2000, p. 8.)

Below are three different tests. One is a poem, one is a list of random numbers, and one is a list of random words. Provide copies to the students of the three tests. Give them one minute to study the information. Then ask them, without referring to the prompt sheet, to write down as much as they can remember. Following the exercise, indicate to the students that when *Newsweek* conducted a comparison between its staff and a high school scholarship finalist, and a contestant from *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, the highest scores were made by the high school student.

Poem:

Immaculate time-sense

Brought man out of the hole-in-the-
ground Out of the Nick in the Nick-of-
Time

Black-striped dress shirt disheveled,
Its suddenly-too-long-arm

Soiled with the grime from Nowhere.

Random Numbers:

7 6 3 4 1 2 2 3 8 9

7 4 3 1 5 6 5 6 8 2

1 2 0 4 5 1 0 3 4 5

6 8 0 3 4 2 1 4 2 6

Random Words:

claim	prism	antic	selvage
impetigo	calf	omega	consent
look	ocean	ulcer	navel
conflict	road	chalk	grit
hare	berry	eye	fly

function	video	freak	claret
expert	chant	atom	present
folk	drink	illness	cheek

STUDENT EXERCISES

1. If your class includes international students, ask them to describe the roles speaking plays in their native cultures. Are students encouraged to speak in class? Or are such behaviors discouraged? Are speaking skills considered more important for one gender than for the other? What general differences do international students notice in the speaking skills of U.S. students compared with those of their own cultures?
2. Using the communication elements model (Figure 1.2) as a guide, analyze a lecture given by an instructor in one of your classes. Focus specifically on the listeners and feedback. Was the instructor attentive to the students' verbal and nonverbal behaviors? If not, what could the instructor have done to make the communication event more of a two-way experience? If yes, give examples to illustrate the instructor's attentiveness to student feedback.
3. Find a magazine or journal article, in print or online, that discusses speech communication in business and professional environments. Write a one-page summary and attach it to a copy of the article.
4. Analyze the physical noise in your classroom. As a listener, how does this affect your reception of your instructor's message? As a speaker, how might you minimize the effect of this noise? If you were redesigning the classroom, what changes would you make to minimize this type of noise?

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Carnegie, Dale. *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Public Speaking*. New York: Pocket Books, 1990. Also available on audio CD.

Elder, Linda, and Richard Paul. "Critical Thinking in Everyday Life: 9 Strategies." The Foundation for Critical Thinking. 2001. Available: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/critical-thinking-in-everyday-life-9-strategies/512>

Jeary, Tony. *Inspire Any Audience: Proven Secrets of the Pros*. (Audio edition). Auburn, CA: Audio Partners, 1999.

Princeton Language Institute. *10 Days to More Confident Public Speaking*. New York: Warner Books, 2001.

"10 Tips for Public Speaking." Tips and Techniques. Toastmasters International. 2011. Available: <http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.asp>