

# Lesson 1: Communication Processes

## OVERVIEW

Communication is an integral aspect of living-of being human. It occupies a large chunk of your dy. Intrinsically, you feel the need to express yourself-your thoughts, ideas, perspectives, emotions, etc.-and to interact with others with a purpose (i.e. to seek or share information, to persuade, to request). Your ability to communicate effectively enables you to establish connections and rapport with other people. Mastering the skill of getting your ideas across will allow you to share them clearly to your interlocutor (audience).

Etymologically, communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, which was first used in 1529 and archaically means “share” (Merriam Webster, Incorporated, 2017). The specific sense of the word is “to make common to many” or “to impart” (Chamber Dictionary of Etymology as cited by WordPress.com, 2011). From these simple definitions of communication, we move on to more elaborate definitions and descriptions as formulated and noted by different authors:

- a. “Communication is [sometimes] defined as the process of sending and receiving messages” (Satterwhite & Olson-Sutton, 2007).
- b. “Communication” is the process of using verbal and nonverbal messages to generate meaning within and across various contexts, cultures, and channels” (Engelberg & Wynn, 2008).
- c. “Communication is the transactional process by which people, interacting in a particular context, negotiate the meanings of verbal and nonverbal symbols in order to achieve shared understanding” (Hamilton & Creel, 2011)
- d. ‘Communication is the process of transferring information and meaing between senders and receivers, using one or more written, oral, visual, or electronic media” (Bovee & Thill, 2014).

## ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

### 1. *Sender/Receiver*

The sender is the participant who initiates the communication process and establishes the purpose of the message. On the other hand, the receiver is the one for whom the message is intended and sent. In simultaneous communication, these two components consecutively interact with each other, making a participant a “transceiver”, sending and receiving messages at the same time (Chesebro, O’Connor, & Rios, 2007).

### 2. *Message*

The message contains the information, thought, and feelings that a communicator expresses to the other participant in the communication process. As previously mentioned, the sender determines the purpose of the message, and this can be one of these forms; to inform, to persuade, or to take action.

### 3. *Channel/Medium*

The channel or medium identifies how the message is delivered. N a verbal and face-to-face communication, air serves as the medium, and messages are transmitted through sound and light waves. A channel can also be sensory such as how somebody

holds or shakes hands with you. It can also be any other means like use of technology or any other medium (i.e. telephone, e-mail, voicemail, video recording, written memo).

#### 4. Feedback

The feedback is the receiver's response to the sent message. This makes communication a two-way process. It indicates how the message is interpreted- how it is seen, heard, understood; it conveys the receiver's emotion or feelings about the message and toward its sender.

#### 5. Context

Context affects the way communicators send and receive messages. It refers to the circumstances-situation, condition, environment-where communication occurs. According to Roebuck (2006), environment can include room temperature, lighting, furniture, timing, as well as the climate and relationships that exist between the communicators.

#### 6. Noise

Noise is defined as an impediment to successful communication. It is anything that hinders shared understanding. Generally, noise is classified as external, internal, and semantic.

#### 7. Frame of reference

Communicators bring into their interactions their own value system or culture, preferences, world views, self-concept, expectations and experiences.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION**

1. **Communication is a process.** It is a process because there is a transmission of thoughts, ideas, and emotions that happens. Since it is a process, communication is then considered as a nonstatic or unfixed phenomenon.

*There are three models of communication that are often cited for how they present and break down the communication process. These are the linear model, the interactive model, and the transactional model.*

- a. *Linear Model-* it is considered as the earliest and most influential model of communication. This model views communication as one-way or a linear transmission of messages (see Figure 1).

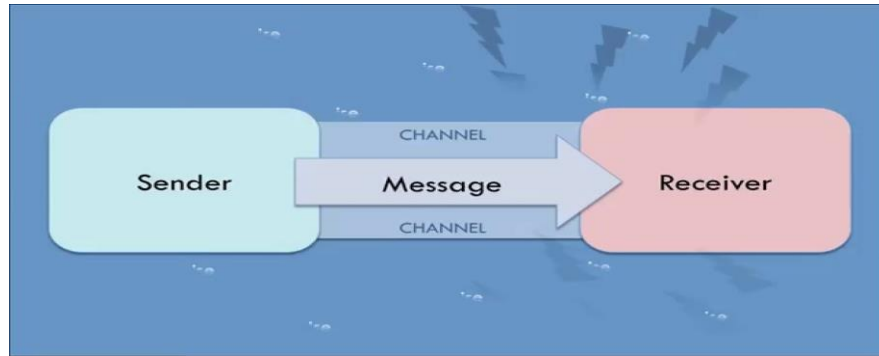


Figure 1. Linear Model

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSq5lw1qDUk>

- b. *Interactive Model*- it shows that communication is a two-way process, for it recognizes the presence of feedback. This means that there is message going both ways (see Figure 2). The sender gives off a message to the receiver, who then responds and becomes the sender, and so on.

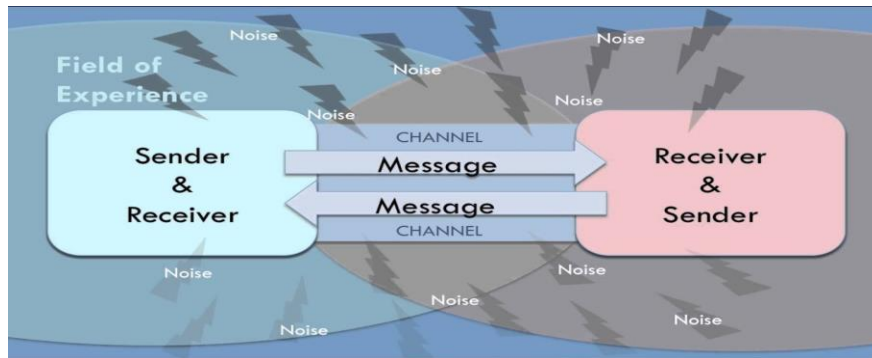


Figure 2. Interactive Model

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ml5tieIioLc>

- c. *Transactional Model*- this suggests that communication is essentially not a solo endeavor. Rather, the people involved engage in a transaction, making communication simultaneous (see Figure 3). This model emphasizes that there is conscious interaction between sender and receiver to generate or create meaning and to arrive at common understanding of the information.

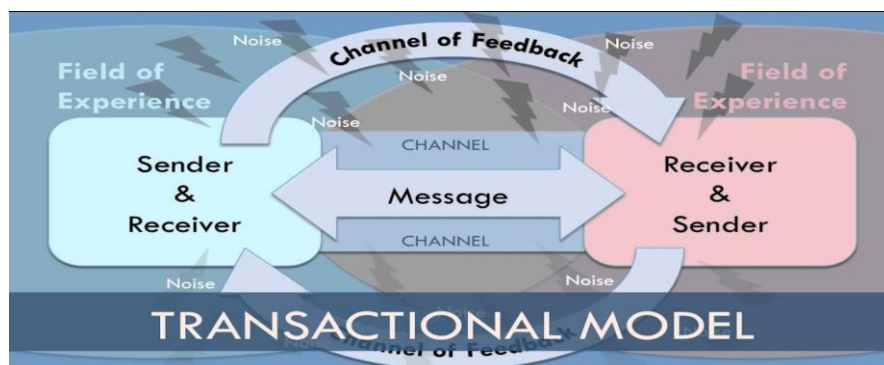


Figure 3. Transactional Model

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxyuP0451ZU>

2. **Communication necessitates negotiation of meanings of symbols.** Two of the foregoing definitions specify that communicators “use” and/or “negotiate the meanings of verbal and nonverbal symbols.” The information that is exchanged can be comprised

of a range of feelings, thoughts, wants, needs, and intentions. These may or may not explicitly expressed or articulated in words. Their representations are called symbols. Spoken and written words refer to verbal symbols, while vocal tones, facial expressions, gestures, body movements, physical appearance, and manners are all examples of nonverbal symbols.

3. **Communication is Contextual.** Another characteristic of communication reflected in the definition and stressed in the transactional model is that communication occurs in a context. The principle behind this is that communication adapts to and is shaped by these circumstances. There are three general types of contexts:
  - a. *Psychosocial Context*- refers to the interaction among the emotional history, social relationships and cultural capital of the participants. Variables, such as age, sex, gender preference, religion and socioeconomic status are all considered in his category.
  - b. *Logistical Context*- this is also termed as the physical context and is concerned with the setting (time and place) and occasion.
  - c. *Interactional Context*- the various compositions or classifications of interaction dictate the style of communication that is employed by the communication participants. This is what is regarded as interactional context. There are six major categories of interactional context:
    - Intrapersonal context
    - Interpersonal context
    - Group context
    - Organizational context
    - Public or presentational context
    - Mass communication context

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Spoken and written words refer to verbal symbols. The use of spoken or written symbols in making and interpreting meanings is called verbal communication.

- a. *Written Communication.* If you need a permanent record or proof of the interaction, if the content of your message is complex and confidential, and if you want a formal response, you should opt for written communication (Satterwhite & Olsom-Sutton, 2007), which frequently comes in the form of memoranda, letters, and reports, and is transmitted through any conventional or online means and services, such as through the post office or e-mail, respectively.
- b. *Spoken or Oral Communication.* The spoken form is characterized as more fluid and simultaneous compared with the written form. Spoken messages may be sent through telephone, face-to-face, broadcasts, or presentations.

## **NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Nonverbal messages are comprised of signals, characterized as visual, audible and movement clues. Vocal tones, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body movements, physical appearance, and manners are all examples of nonverbal representations. The use of these symbolic physical behaviors, other than written or spoken language, is called nonverbal communication.

## **FORMAL COMMUNICATION**

Formal communication is based on specified and standardized guidelines, channels, and systems. It is practiced in an organizational, business, and formal environment and includes the sending and receiving of official, sometimes confidential and sensitive information. Hence, there is usually the need for a written document as proof of the interaction.

## **INFORMAL COMMUNICATION**

Informal communication is the typical, personal face-to-face communication that happens between friends and family members. Unlike formal communication, it is free from any guidelines or organizational rules. Most spoken interactions are informal, in which no proof is needed for the communication that has occurred.

## **INTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION**

The words and signals used in communication have their intended meanings. People communicate out of purpose and motive. Intentional communication happens when the communicators are aware of their own purposes and how their words and actions might impact others.

## **UNINTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION**

When communication is not purposeful, it is unintentional. This happens in cases where messages are not intended to be sent or have reached the wrong receiver. Although, this may be possible for both verbal and nonverbal forms, unintentional communication is common and considered an issue in the use of nonverbal behaviors.