

# introduction to public speaking

## chapter 1

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### introduction

Humans' ability to communicate using formalized systems of language sets us apart from other living creatures on the Earth. Whether these language conventions make us superior to other creatures is debatable, but there is no question that overall, the most successful and most powerful people over the centuries have mastered the ability to communicate effectively. In fact, the skill of speaking is so important that it has been formally taught for thousands of years (see Chapter 2 "The Origins of Public Speaking" by DeCaro).

The ironic feature of public speaking is that while we recognize that it is an important skill to have, many of us do not like or want to give speeches. You may be reading this book because it was assigned to you in a class, or you may be reading it because you have to give a speech in your personal or professional life. If you are reading this book because you like public speaking or you have a burning desire to learn more about it, you're in the minority.

The good news about public speaking is that although it may not be on the top of the list of our favorite activities, *anyone* can learn to give effective presentations. You don't have to look like a Hollywood star and you don't have to use fancy words to be a successful speaker. What is important is that the audience understands you and remembers what you have to say. By learning and using the techniques provided in this book, you will discover how to create engaging speeches and present them using your own delivery style.

### chapter objectives

*After reading this chapter, you should be able to:*

1. Articulate at least three reasons why public speaking skills are important.
2. Describe the difference between the linear and the transactional model of communication.
3. List, define, and give an example of each of the components of communication.
4. Differentiate between the major types of speeches
5. Identify the eleven core public speaking competencies.
6. Apply chapter concepts in final questions and activities.

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize readers with the basic concepts of communication and public speaking. The chapter begins with a description of the personal, professional, and public benefits of learning more about public speaking. Then the transactional model of communication is introduced along with the fundamental components of the communication process. Next, readers will learn about different types of speeches and the occasions for which they would be presented. The chapter ends with an overview of eleven primary public speaking competencies.

### chapter outline

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- **Elements of the Communication Process**
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- **Types of Speeches**
- **Speaking Competencies**
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  - Suitable Vocal Expression
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  - Adapted to the Audience
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  - Convincing Persuasion
- **Conclusion**
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- **Glossary**
- **References**

*Wherever I go meeting the public... spreading a message of human values, spreading a message of harmony, is the most important thing.*

*~Dalai Lama*



### benefits of public speaking

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, there are a core set of skills that are necessary “both for a globally engaged democracy and for a dynamic-innovation fueled economy” (Rhodes, 2010, p. 10). In the category of “Intellectual and practical skills” **public speaking** is listed as one of these core skills. This is not particularly surprising given that communication skills are critical for intellectual development, career trajectory, and civic engagement. Public speaking is universally applicable to all types of majors and occupations and is seen by U.S. employers as a critical employability skill for job seekers (Rockler-Gladen, 2009; U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). No matter what your ambitions and interests are, developing speaking skills will benefit your personal, professional, and public life.

### personal

People don’t just give presentations on the job and in classes. At times we are called upon to give speeches in our personal lives. It may be for a special event, such as a toast at a wedding. We may be asked to give a eulogy at a funeral for a friend or loved one. As a part of volunteer work, one may have to introduce a guest speaker at an event or present or accept an award for service. Chapter 17, “Special Occasion Speaking” by Scholl will help you to prepare for these brief but important speeches. Developing the skill to give these types of speeches can help us to

fulfill essential roles in our family and community.

Another great personal benefit of public speaking is that it builds self-confidence. It’s no surprise that speaking in public is scary, but by engaging in the activity you will build self-confidence through the experience. Chapter 11, “Speaking with Confidence” by Grapsy ( in this book) will give you advice on how to minimize speech apprehension, and the advice can be used in many other social situations as well.

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*Action is a great restorer and builder of confidence.*

*Inaction is not only the result, but the cause, of fear.*

*Perhaps the action you take will be successful; perhaps different action or adjustments will have to follow. But any action is better than no action at all.*

*~ Norman Vincent Peale*

### professional

TV announcers, teachers, lawyers, and entertainers must be able to speak well, but most other professions require or at the very least can benefit from the skills found in public speaking.

It is believed 70% of jobs today involve some form of public speaking (Aras, 2012). With the recent economic shift from manufacturing to service careers, the ability to communicate with others has become crucial. Top CEOs advise that great leaders must be able to communicate ideas effectively, they must be able to persuade, build support, negotiate and speak effectively in public (Farrell, 2011). The chapters on “Informative Speaking” and “Persuasive Speaking” can help readers understand how to write presentations that enhance their leadership skills.

But before you even start a career, you have to get a job. Effective speaking skills make you more attractive to employers, enhancing your chances of securing employment and later advancing within your career. Employers, career counselors, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) all list good communication skills at the top of the list of qualities sought in potential employees. According to NACE’s executive director, Marilyn Mackes, the Job Outlook 2013 Report found that employers are looking for people who can communicate effectively (Koncz & Allen, 2012). Monster.com advises, “articulating thoughts clearly and concisely will make a difference in both a job interview and subsequent job performance” (McKay, 2005).

### public

Learning about public speaking will allow you to participate in democracy at its most basic level. Public speaking is important in creating and sustaining a society, which includes informed, active participants. Even if you do not plan to run for office, learning about public speaking helps you to listen more carefully to and critically evaluate other’s speeches. In fact the “Listening Effectively” and “Critical Thinking and Reasoning” chapters in this book by Goddu and Russ will help you to develop those skills. Listening and critical thinking allow you to understand public dilemmas, form an opinion about them, and participate in resolving them. The progress of the past century involving segregation,



women's rights and environmental protection are the result of people advancing new ideas and speaking out to others to persuade them to adopt changes.

### models of communication

It should be clear by now that public speaking happens all around us in many segments of our lives. However, to truly understand what is happening within these presentations, we need to take a step back and look at some of the key components of the communication process.

#### linear model of communication

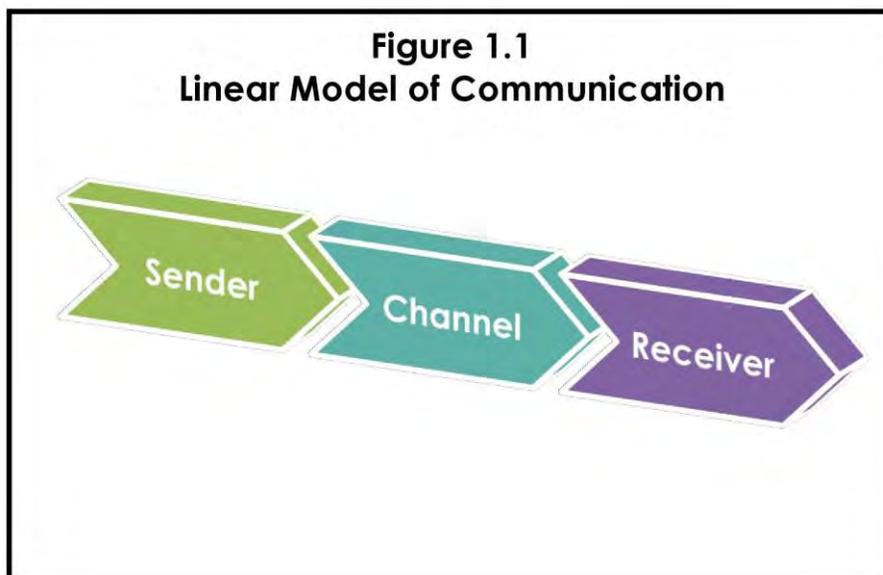
The first theoretical model of communication was proposed in 1949 by Shannon and Weaver for Bell Laboratories (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). This three-part model was intended to capture the radio and television transmission process. However it was later adapted to human communication and is now known as the linear model of communication. The first part of the model is the sender, and this is the person who is speaking. The second part of the model is the channel, which is the apparatus for carrying the message (i.e., the phone or T.V.). The third part of the model is the receiver, and this is the person who picks up the message. In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.1.

If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate – communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.

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*He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying.*

~ Friedrich Nietzsche



#### transactional model of communication

Models of communication have evolved significantly since Shannon and Weaver first proposed their well-known conceptual model over sixty years ago. One of the most useful models for understanding public speaking is Barnlund's (2008) transactional model of communication. In the transactional model, communication is seen as an ongoing, circular process. We are constantly affecting and are affected by those we communicate with. The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model, participants' worldviews and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.2 on the next page for an illustration.

#### elements of the communication process

##### encoding and decoding

**Encoding** refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message. So, if you wanted to explain to your aunt the directions to

your new apartment, you would picture in your mind the landscape, streets and buildings, and then you would select the best words that describe the route so your aunt could find you.

**Decoding** is the reverse process of **listening** to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images. If your aunt were trying to find her way to your apartment, she would listen to your words, associate these words with streets and landmarks that she knows, and then she would form a mental map of the way to get to you. Ramsey's "Using Language Well" (Chapter 10) provides additional insight into the encoding and decoding process.

#### communicator

The term **communicator** refers to all of the people in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people we are not only sending a message, we are receiving messages from others simultaneously. When we speak, we observe others' **nonverbal behavior** to see if they understand us and we gauge their emotional state. The information we gain from these observations is known as feedback. Over the telephone, we listen to paralinguistic cues, such as pitch, tone, volume and fillers (i.e., "um," "uh," "er," "like," and so on). This means that

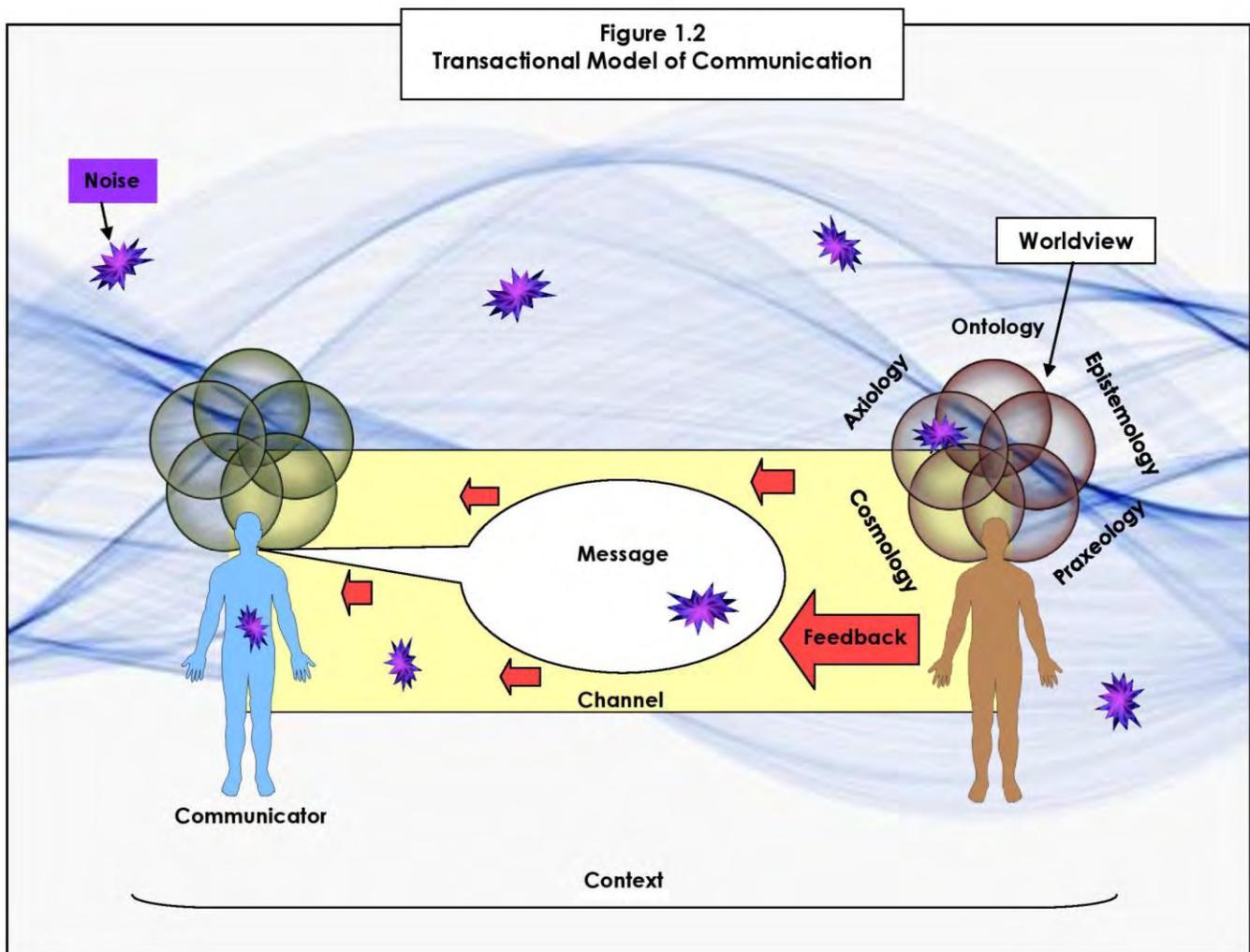
communication is not a one-way process. Even in a public speaking situation, we watch and listen to audience members' responses. If audience members are interested, agree, and understand us, they may lean forward in their seats, nod their heads, have positive or neutral facial expressions, and provide favorable vocal cues (such as laughter, "That's right," "Uh huh," or "Amen!"). If audience members are bored, disagree, or are confused by our message, they may be texting or looking away from us, shake their heads, have unhappy or confused expressions on their faces, or present oppositional vocal cues (like groans, "I don't think so," "That doesn't make sense," or "You're crazy!"). Thus, communication is always a transactional process – a give and take of messages.

**message**

The **message** involves those verbal and nonverbal behaviors, enacted by communicators, that are interpreted with meaning by others. The verbal portion of the message refers to the words that we speak, while the nonverbal portion includes our tone of voice and other non-vocal components such as personal appearance, posture, gestures and body movements, eye behavior, the way we use space, and even the way that we smell. For instance, the person who gets up to speak wearing a nice suit will be interpreted more positively than a person giving the exact same speech wearing sweats and a graphic t-shirt. Or if a speaker tries to convince others to donate to a charity that builds wells in poor African villages using a monotone voice, she will not be as effective as the speaker who gives the

same speech but speaks with a solemn tone of voice. If there is ever a conflict between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of a message, people will generally believe the nonverbal portion of the message. To test this, tighten your muscles, clench your fists at your sides, pull your eye brows together, purse your lips, and tell someone in a harsh voice, "NO, I'm NOT angry!" See if they believe your words or your nonverbal behavior.

The message can also be intentional or unintentional. When the message is intentional, this means that we have an image in our mind that we wish to communicate to an audience or a person in a conversation, and we can successfully convey the image from our mind to others' minds with relative accuracy. An unintentional message is sent when the message that we wish to convey is not the same as the message





the other person receives. Let's say you are returning from an outing with your significant other and she or he asks, "Did you have a good time?" You *did* have a good time but are distracted by a T.V. commercial when asked, so you reply in a neutral tone, "Sure, I had fun." Your significant other may interpret your apathetic tone of voice and lack of eye contact to mean that you did not enjoy the evening, when in fact you actually did. Thus as communicators, we cannot always be sure that the message we wish to communicate is interpreted as we intended.

### channel

The **channel** is very simply the means through which the message travels. In face-to-face communication the channel involves all of our senses, so the channel is what we see, hear, touch, smell and perhaps what we taste. When we're communicating with someone online, the channel is the computer; when texting the channel is the cell phone; and when watching a movie on cable, the channel is the TV. The channel can have a profound impact on the way a message is interpreted. Listening to a recording of a speaker does not have the same psychological impact as listening to the same speech in person or watching that

person on television. One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2012), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. "Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], 'My God, they've embalmed him before he even died'" (History.com, 2012). Kennedy, on the other hand, looked into the camera, was tanned, wore a dark suit that made him stand out from the background, and appeared to be calm after spending the entire weekend with aides practicing in a hotel room. Most of those who listened to the radio broadcast of the debate felt that it was a tie or that Nixon had won, while 70% of those watching the televised debate felt that Kennedy was the winner.

### noise

The next aspect of the model of communication is noise. **Noise** refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception (i.e., getting the image from your head into others' heads). There are several different types of noise. The

first type of noise is **physiological noise**, and this refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message. For instance, if a speaker has a headache or the flu, or if audience members are hot or they're hungry, these conditions may interfere with message accuracy. The second type of noise is psychological noise.

**Psychological noise** refers to mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception. For example, if someone has just broken up with a significant other, or if they're worried about their grandmother who is in the hospital, or if they are thinking about their shopping list, this may interfere with communication processes as well. The third type of noise is actual **physical noise**, and this would be simply the actual sound level in a room. Loud music playing at a party, a number of voices of people talking excitedly, a lawnmower right outside the window, or anything that is overly loud will interfere with communication. The last type of noise is cultural noise.

**Cultural noise** refers to message interference that results from differences in peoples' worldviews. Worldview is discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

### worldview

Most people don't give a lot of thought to the communication process. In the majority of our interactions with others, we are operating on automatic pilot. Although the encoding and decoding process may appear to be



fairly straightforward, it is actually much more complicated than it seems. The reason for this is because we all have different worldviews. **Worldview** is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it. There are five core components to our worldview.

1. **Epistemology** is the way that we acquire knowledge and/or what counts as knowledge. Think about the process of conducting research. Thirty years ago, to find a series of facts one had to use a card catalogue and scour the library stacks for books. Now researchers can access thousands of pages of information via their computer from the comfort of their own home. Epistemology is linked to public speaking because it governs audience members' preferred learning styles and who or what they consider to be credible sources.

2. **Ontology** refers to our belief system, how we see the nature of reality or what we see as true or false. We may (or may not) believe in aliens from outer space, that butter is bad for you, that the Steelers will win the Superbowl, or that humans will be extinct in 200 years. Speech writers should be careful not to presume that audience members share the same beliefs. If a speaker claims that illness can be aided with prayer, but several people in the audience are atheists, at best the speaker has lost credibility and at worst these audience members could be offended.

3. **Axiology** represents our value system, or what we see as right or wrong, good or bad, and fair or unfair.



One of the ways that you can tell what people value is to ask them what their goals are, or to ask them what qualities they look for in a life partner. Our values represent the things that we hope for --they do not represent reality. Values can have an impact on multiple levels of the public speaking process, but in particular values impact speaker credibility and effectiveness in persuasion. For instance, some cultures value modest dress in women, so a female speaker wearing a sleeveless blouse while speaking could cause her to lose credibility with some audience members. Or if audience members value the freedom to bear arms over the benefits of government regulation, a speaker will have a difficult time convincing these audience members to vote for stricter gun control legislation.

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*It is always good to explore the stuff you don't agree with, to try and understand a different lifestyle or foreign worldview. I like to be challenged in that way, and always end up learning something I didn't know.*

~ Laura Linney

4. **Cosmology** signifies the way that we see our relationship to the universe and to other people. Cosmology dictates our view of power relationships and may involve our religious or spiritual beliefs. Controversial speech topics (like universal health care and the death penalty) are often related to this aspect of worldview as we must consider our responsibilities to other human beings and our power to influence them. Interestingly, cosmology would also play a role in such logistical points as who is allowed to speak, the order of speakers on a schedule (e.g., from most to least important), the amount of time a speaker has to speak, the seating arrangement on the dais, and who gets the front seats in the audience.



5. **Praxeology** denotes our preferred method of completing everyday tasks or our approach to solving problems. Some speech writers may begin working on their outlines as soon as they know they will need to give a speech, while others may wait until a few days before their speech to begin preparing (we do not recommend this approach). Praxeology may also have an impact on a speaker's preference of delivery style, methods of arranging main points, and choice of slideware (i.e., Power Point versus Prezi).

It is important to understand worldview because it has a profound impact on the encoding and decoding process, and consequently on our ability to be understood by others. Try this simple experiment. Ask two or three people to silently imagine a dog while you imagine a dog at the same time. "Dog" is a very **concrete word** (a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses), and it is one of the first words children in the United States learn in school. Wait a few seconds and then ask each person what type of dog they were thinking of. Was it a Chihuahua? A greyhound? Golden retriever? Rottweiler? Or some other dog? Most likely each person you asked had a different image in his or her mind than you had in yours. This is our worldview at work.

To further illustrate, you may tell a co-worker, "I can't wait to go home this weekend – we are having lasagna!" Seems like a fairly clear-cut statement,



doesn't it? Unfortunately, it is not. While "lasagna" is also a concrete word, our worldviews cause us to interpret each word in the statement differently. Where is "home?" Who is making the meal? What ingredients will be used in the lasagna? Is this dish eaten as a regular meal or for a special occasion? Will there be leftovers? Are friends invited? Since everyone who has eaten lasagna has had a different experience of the cuisine, we all acquire a different image in our mind when we hear the statement "...we are having lasagna!"

Complicating matters is the fact that the more abstract the word becomes, the more room there is for interpretation. **Abstract words** (words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview. Communicators have their own unique worldviews that shape both the encoding and decoding processes, which means that we can never be completely understood by another person. People from the Midwest may call carbonated beverages "pop," while those from the east coast may say "soda," and those from Georgia may say "coke." Even when simple terms are used like "oak tree" or "fire hydrant," each listener will form a different mental image when decoding the message. Never take communication for granted, and never

assume your listener will understand you. It takes hard work to make yourself understood by an audience.

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*Context is worth 80 IQ points.*

*~ Alan Kay*

### context

The last element of the communication process is the **context** in which the speech or interaction takes place. In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store. People communicate differently in each one of these places as there are unwritten rules of communication (called **norms**) that govern these settings. More recently the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships. So you do not speak the same way to your best friend as you do to a small child, your parent, your boss, your doctor or a police officer. And you may speak to your best friend differently in your apartment than you do in your parents' home, and your communication may also change when you are both out with friends on the weekend. In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.



### types of speeches and speaking occasions

There are three general purposes for speaking in public. The general purpose of a speech is usually determined by the occasion in which the speech will be presented. The first general purpose is to inform your audience. In an informative speech, the presenter will share information about a particular person, place, object, process, concept, or issue by defining, describing, or explaining. Occasions for which an informative speech would be presented include a report presented to coworkers, a teacher presenting information to his or her class, and a training session for a job. The second purpose for public speaking is to persuade. In a persuasive speech, the presenter will attempt to reinforce or change their audiences' beliefs, attitudes, feelings, or values. Several occasions where persuasion is used include a sales pitch to potential customers, a politician's campaign speech, or a debate during a public forum. The last general purpose is to commemorate or entertain. These types of speeches often strengthen the bonds between audience members from recalling a shared experience or intend to amuse audiences through humor, stories, or illustrations. Examples of this purpose include a toast, such as a best man's speech at a wedding reception; a eulogy to praise the dead; a commencement speech at graduation; or presenting an award. It is important

to note that these general purposes may overlap one another. One might wish to use some forms of entertainment while informing or persuading his or her audience.

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*A desire presupposes the possibility of action to achieve it; action presupposes a goal which is worth achieving.*

~ Ayn Rand

### speaking competencies

We assume you are reading this book or chapter because you wish to improve your speaking skills – a worthy goal. As Ayn Rand alludes to in her quote, a desire to succeed is the first step in achieving this objective. Nevertheless, you cannot hit a target unless you know what it is. Thus, the final portion of this chapter is devoted to an overview of eleven speaking competencies which we consider to be the standards for evaluating a variety of presentations at every level of mastery. These are based on the *Public Speaking Competence Rubric* [PSCR] (Schreiber, Paul & Shibley, 2012). A complete copy of the rubric can be found at <http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/activities.html>.

#### 1. useful topic

The first speaking competency is to *select a topic that is appropriate to the audience and the occasion*. An advanced speaker selects a worthwhile topic that engages the audience. His topic also presents the audience with new information that they did not know before the speech. A beginning speaker selects a topic that lacks originality or is out of date. His topic provides no new information to the audience. An ineffective speaker may give a speech in which a single topic cannot be deduced by the audience.

#### 2. engaging introduction

To *formulate an introduction that orients the audience to the topic and the speaker* is the second speaking competency. An advanced speaker writes an introduction that contains an excellent attention-getter. She firmly establishes her credibility. She provides a sound orientation to the topic, states her thesis clearly, and previews her points in a cogent and memorable way. For the beginning speaker, her attention-getter is mundane and she somewhat develops her credibility. Her thesis is awkwardly composed and she provides little direction for the audience. The ineffective speaker has no opening technique, no credibility statement and provides no background on the topic. In addition she has no thesis statement and no preview of her points.



#### 3. clear organization

Competency three is to *use an effective organizational pattern*. An advanced speaker is very well organized and delivers a speech with clear main points. His points are mutually exclusive and directly related to the thesis. Further, he employs effective transitions and signposts to help the speech flow well. The beginning speaker has main points that

are somewhat organized, but the content of these points may overlap. Transitions may also be present in his speech, but they are not particularly effective. In the ineffective speaker's speech, there is no clear organizational pattern, there are no transitions, and it sounds as if the information is randomly presented.

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*Don't leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented.*

~ Richard Wright

#### 4. well-supported ideas

Fourth on the list of speaking competencies is to *locate, synthesize, and employ compelling supporting materials*. In the advanced speaker's speech, her key points are well supported with a variety of credible materials, and her sources provide excellent support for her thesis. In addition, all of her sources are clearly cited. A beginning speaker has points that are generally supported with a fair mix of materials. Only some of her evidence supports her thesis, and her source citations need to be clarified. An ineffective speaker gives a speech with no supporting materials or no source citations.

#### 5. closure in conclusion

The fifth speaking competency is to *develop a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure*. The advanced speaker provides a clear and memorable summary of his points, and he refers back to the thesis or big picture. His speech also ends with a strong clincher or call to action. A beginning speaker provides some summary of his points, but there is no clear reference back to his thesis. The closing technique of his speech can also be strengthened. In an ineffective speaker's speech, there is no conclusion. His speech ends abruptly and without closure.



### 6. clear and vivid language

To demonstrate a careful choice of words is the sixth speaking competency. An advanced speaker's language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid. Her language is also completely free from bias, grammatical errors and inappropriate usage. The beginning speaker selects language that is adequate to make her point. She has some errors in grammar and occasionally uses slang, jargon or awkward sentence structure. The ineffective speaker has many errors in her grammar and syntax. She also mispronounces words and extensively uses slang, jargon, and/or sexist or racist terms.

### 7. suitable vocal expression

Competency number seven is to effectively use vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience. Excellent use of vocal variation, intensity and pacing are characteristics of the advanced speaker. His vocal expression is also natural and enthusiastic, and he avoids fillers. Some vocal variation is evident in the beginning speaker's speech. He also enunciates clearly, speaks audibly, and generally avoids fillers (e.g., "um," "uh," "like," etc.). An ineffective speaker is inaudible, enunciates poorly, and speaks in a monotone voice. His speech also has poor pacing, and he distracts listeners with fillers.

### 8. corresponding nonverbals

Eighth on the list of competencies is to demonstrate nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message. An advanced speaker has posture, gestures, facial expression and eye contact that are natural, well developed, and display high levels of poise and confidence. Some reliance on notes is seen with the beginning speaker, but she has adequate eye contact. She also generally avoids distracting mannerisms. The ineffective speaker usually looks down and avoids eye contact. She has nervous gestures and other nonverbal behaviors that distract from or contradict the message.

*Body language is a very powerful tool. We had body language before we had speech, and apparently, 80% of what you understand in a conversation is read through the body, not the words.*

~ Deborah Bull

### 9. adapted to the audience

The ninth speaking competency is to successfully adapt the presentation to the audience. The advanced speaker

shows how information is important to audience members, and his speech is tailored to their beliefs, values and attitudes. He may also make allusions to culturally shared experiences. A beginning speaker assumes but does not articulate the importance of the topic. His presentation is minimally adapted to the audience, and some of the ideas presented in the speech are removed from the audience's frame of reference or experiences. An ineffective speaker's speech is contrary to the audience's beliefs, values and attitudes. His message may be generic or canned and no attempt is made to establish common ground.

### 10. adept use of visual aids

To skillfully make use of visual aids is the tenth competency. Exceptional explanation and presentation of visual aids is characteristic of the advanced speaker. Her speech has visuals that provide powerful insight into the speech topic, and her visuals are of high professional quality. The beginning speaker's visual aids are generally well developed and explained, although there may be minor errors present in the visuals. An ineffective speaker uses visual aids that distract from her speech. Her visuals may not be relevant, or her visuals may be of poor professional quality.



## 11. convincing persuasion

The eleventh and final speaking competency is to *construct an effectual persuasive message with credible evidence and sound reasoning*. An advanced speaker articulates the problem and solution in a clear, compelling manner. He supports his claims with powerful and credible evidence while completely avoiding reasoning fallacies. His speech also contains a memorable call to action. In the beginning speaker's speech, the problem and solution are evident, and most claims are supported with evidence. He also has generally sound reasoning and a recognizable call to action. For the ineffective speaker, the problem and/or solution are not defined. His claims are not supported with evidence, his speech contains poor reasoning, and there is no call to action.

Readers should note that the competencies listed above are not all inclusive. Ultimately one must adjust, expand, and apply these competencies as best fits the requirements of the speaking situation. But they do provide a starting point for new or less experienced speakers to begin to understand all of the interrelated components of a speech.

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*Being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn.*

~ Benjamin Franklin

### conclusion

Our capacity to communicate through systems of language differentiates us from other species, but the use of that language to communicate effectively is actually harder than anticipated, particularly in front of an audience. Fortunately, by reading this book, you can learn the skills required to communicate more effectively one-on-one and in a speaking situation.



The speeches you present will be given in a particular context. In your role as communicator, you will encode and deliver a message which will then be decoded by audience members (also communicators). At the same time you are speaking, you will be receiving verbal and nonverbal feedback from the audience. The way that the message is decoded will depend entirely on the amount of noise interfering with the message as well as the worldviews of audience members.

Every new speaker should work to become skilled at the eleven core public speaking competencies. These competencies include: selecting a useful topic, writing an engaging introduction, organizing the points of the speech, finding effective supporting materials for the points, adding a conclusion that provides closure, using clear and vivid language, making sure that one's vocal expression corresponds to the goals of the speech, using nonverbals that complement the message, adapting the message to one's audience, using visual aids effectively, and using credible evidence and sound reasoning in persuasive messages.

Each one of the competencies just listed is covered in depth in one or more chapters in this book.

The authors of this textbook hope that readers will find the chapters useful in developing their own communication competence. Whether you are new to giving presentations, or a more experienced speaker, it is important to remember that the best way to improve your public speaking skills is through preparation and practice. Although it may take time to learn effective speaking skills, the effort is well worth the benefits you will reap in your personal, professional, and public life.

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*An effective speaker knows that the success or failure of his talk is not for him to decide -- it will be decided in the minds and hearts of his hearers.*

~Dale Carnegie

## review questions and activities

### review questions

1. What are the personal, professional and public benefits of enhancing your public speaking skills?
2. What is the difference between the linear and transactional model of communication?
3. Define and give an original example of each of the elements of the communication process.
4. Which of the elements of the communication process do you think has the greatest impact on the way a message is interpreted. Explain.
5. What are the three types of speeches? For each of the three types of speeches, give two examples of an occasion or situation in which that type of speech might be given.
6. List the eleven speaking competencies. For each competency listed, describe the differences between the advanced speaker and the inexperienced speaker.

### activities

1. Working in groups of 3 – 5, generate a list of the characteristics of ineffective speakers you have seen. Next, generate a list of the characteristics of the effective speakers you have seen. What three qualities do you believe are most important to be a successful speaker? Explain.
2. Locate a speech on YouTube. While watching the speech, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker's content and delivery? What three things could the speaker improve on? What three things did you like about the speaker? If you were to deliver the speech, how would you do things differently?
3. Locate a copy of the *Public Speaking Competence Rubric* at <http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/activities.html>. Read through each of the levels of each of the competencies, and try to determine what your level of skill is for each of the speaking competencies. If you are able, have a friend or colleague watch one of your speeches and ask him or her to evaluate your level of skill for each of the competencies. Compare your responses to see how much correspondence there is between your responses and the evaluator's responses. In what areas are you strongest? What do you need to improve upon?

## glossary

### Abstract Word

Words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality.

### Axiology

A part of worldview; refers to an individual or group's value system.

### Channel

The means through which the message travels.

### Communicator

The people in the interaction or speech setting who encode and decode messages simultaneously.

### Concrete Word

A word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses.

### Context

The communication rules that govern different physical settings and/or different types of relationships.

### Cosmology

A part of worldview; refers to the way individuals and groups see themselves in relation to other people and their view of their place in the universe.

### Cultural Noise

Differences in worldview that cause message interference.

### Decoding

The process of listening to words and interpreting the words so they are associated with a mental image.

### Encoding

The process of taking a mental image, associating the image with words, and then speaking those words.

### Epistemology

A part of worldview; refers to the way an individual or group acquires knowledge or what counts as knowledge.

### Listening

The psychological process of interpreting and making sense of the messages we receive.

### Message

The words, nonverbal behavior, or other signals transmitted from one person to another.

**Noise**

Any thing that interferes with the message transmission or the encoding and decoding process.

**Nonverbal Behavior**

All of the messages we send --- except for the words we say. Can include appearance, eye behavior, kinesics (body movement), proxemics (use of space), touch, time, and smell.

**Norms**

The verbal and nonverbal rules (usually unspoken) that govern communicative behavior.

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**Ontology**

A part of worldview; refers to an individual's or group's belief system.

**Praxeology**

A part of worldview; refers to the way an individual or group goes about tasks or solving problems.

**Psychological Noise**

Message interference that results from disturbed or excited mental states.

**Physiological Noise**

Message interference that results from bodily discomfort.

**Physical Noise**

Message interference that results when the noise level (as measured in decibels) makes it difficult to hear a message.

**Public Speaking**

The act of delivering a speech in front of a live audience.

**Worldview**

The overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it.

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