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CERTIFICATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE
EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION
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COMMUNICATION

Much has been said about the word “communication” over the centuries. In order to explore the effect that communication has on our daily lives, whether it be communication on a personal basis, or how communication is related to business relationships and those of a group, working effectively as a team; it is appropriate to start by simply defining the word “communication”.

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines communication in this manner as “The process of sharing information, especially when this increases understanding between people or groups...”, and gives as further examples:

We have been in communication with various agencies in regard to this matter.

a form/means/method of communication Email is an excellent means of communication because of the flexibility it allows.

The training department uses a special board game to improve communication between managers and their employees.

enhance/improve/foster communication He said communication with neighbourhoods and community groups must be improved.

The project failed because of a lack of communication between the two departments.

There was a breakdown in communication.

channels/lines of communication It is important to keep the channels of communication open at all times.

Effective communication is a two-way process.

Good communication skills are essential in this job.

In the study, the effectiveness of online communication was contrasted with person-to-person interaction

The reference source goes on to further illustrate that communication is accomplished through numerous means:

“...the various methods of sending information between people and places, especially phones, computers, radio, etc.”

The Early History of Communication

The Kish tablet, discovered in the ancient Sumerian city of Kish, has inscriptions considered by some experts to be the oldest form of known writing. Dated to 3500 BC, the stone features proto-cuneiform signs, basically rudimentary symbols that convey meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object. Similar to this early form of writing are the ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs, which date back to around 3200 BC.

Elsewhere, written language appears to have come about around 1200 BC in China and around 600 BC in the Americas. Some similarities between the early Mesopotamian language and the one that developed in ancient Egypt suggests that some concept of a writing system originated in the middle east. However, any kind of connection between Chinese characters and these early language systems are less likely since the cultures don't seem to have had any contact.

Among the first non-glyph writing systems not to use pictorial signs is the phonetic system. With phonetic systems, symbols refer to spoken sounds. If this sounds familiar, it's because the modern alphabets that many people in the world use today is a phonetic form of communication. Remnants of such systems first appeared either around 19th century B.C thanks to an early Canaanite population or 15th century B.C. in connection with a Semitic community that lived in central Egypt.

Over time, various forms of the Phoenician system of written communication began to spread and were picked up along the Mediterranean city-states. By the 8th century B.C., the Phoenician symbols reached Greece, where it was altered and adapted to the Greek oral language. The biggest alterations were the addition of vowel sounds and having the letters read from left to right.

Around that time, long-distance communication had its humble beginnings as the Greeks, for the first time in recorded history, had a messenger pigeon deliver results of the first Olympiad in the year 776 BC. Another important communication milestone to come from the Greeks was the establishment of the first library in 530 BC.

And as humans neared the end of the B.C. period, systems of long-distance communication started to become more commonplace. A historical entry in the book “Globalization and Everyday Life” noted that around 200 to 100 BC: “Human messengers on foot or horseback common in Egypt and China with messenger relay stations built. Sometimes fire messages used from relay station to station instead of humans.”

Effective Team Working and Communication **Contemporary Relevance**

All of the information researched here, is targeted toward exploring how communication is relevant to “effective team work”, as this is the primary crux of this course. So, one must recognize firstly, that beyond the imaginings of one’s mind which is entirely a cerebral matter, anyone who cares to accomplish anything, while taking into account the basic definition of the word “communication” as it relates to effective team working; anytime anyone speaks or acts in an effort to share any form of information, they are in fact engaged in the act of “communication” with one or more persons. This is especially so, as is seen by our examination of the definition of communication itself as “The process of sharing information, especially when these increases understanding between people or groups...”, as was extracted from The Cambridge English Dictionary, whose source appears in “References” and a footnote to this paper.

Within the context of most academic studies today, communication and teamwork, are usually approached from the standpoint of how the two concepts apply to the world of business and commerce; however, it is readily obvious that even the most casual of an observer, readily understands the intertwined connection between communication and team work between as few individuals of two people. The importance of communication through the expression of ideas and opinions, values, personal morals, ethics, and personal, as well as business practices is a foremost requirement throughout our daily lives, if we are to enjoy any measure of success, regardless of the goal or goals we are attempting to achieve. This is so, regardless of one’s vocation, field of study or profession practiced, failure to focus on meaningful communication toward achieving effective teamwork could and does if ignored result in a possible tragic result as it emphasized in the journal article detailed immediately below.

This is an example of how communication in areas of “patient safety” is directly dependent on the presence of effective teamwork, found only through meaningful, relevant communication in the field of medicine and patient safety and healthcare. This, expressed very well, stating possible harmful effects of poor teamwork and communication in the field of medicine in the PubMed Abstract by Sandhya Mujumdar, Diana Santos; PMID No: 24948029. See the endnote reference.

An Example of Communication Failure
Teamwork and Communication: An Effective Approach to Patient Safety

“Teamwork and communication failures are leading causes of patient safety incidents in health care. Though health care providers must work in teams, they are not well-trained in teamwork and communication skills. Health care faces the problems of differences in communication styles, communication failures and poor teamwork. There is enough evidence in the literature to show that communication failure is detrimental to patient safety. It is estimated that 80% of serious medical errors worldwide take place because of miscommunication between medical providers. NUH recognizes that effective communication and teamwork are essential in the delivery of high-quality safe patient care, especially in a complex organization. NUH is a good example, where there is a rich mix of nationalities and races, in staff and in patients, and there is a rapidly expanding care environment. NUH had to overcome these challenges by adopting a multi-pronged approach. The trials and tribulations of NUH in this journey were worthwhile as the patient safety climate survey scores improved over the years.”

It is readily seen that in this one example, of which there are many, many more in numerous vocations, professions, and personal endeavours; unmentioned here for the sake of brevity, that if effective teamwork is not realized through the determined practice of meaningful communication, that things so severe as the loss of human life can and do actually occur. This is also an extreme example of why the detailed study of teamwork realized through effective teamwork and communication is a justifiable exercise.

The Eight Models of Communication

When “communication” is studied from the perspective of a discipline, there are eight accepted academic models and in the following categories; namely:

The Linear Models

1. Aristotle’s Model
2. Lasswell’s Model
3. Shannon-Weaver Model
4. Berlo’s S-M-C-R Model

The Interactive Models

5. Osgood-Schramm Model
6. The Westley and Maclean Model

The Transactional Models

7. Barnlund’s Transactional Model
8. Dance’s Helical Model

THE LINEAR MODELS

The Aristotle Model

_____ Aristotle's model of communication is the oldest communication model, dating back to 300BC. The model was designed to examine how to become a better and more convincing communicator. Aristotle argues we should look at five elements of a communication event to analyse how best to communicate: speaker, speech, occasion, target audience and effect. He also identified three elements that will improve communication: ethos (credibility), pathos (ability to connect) and logos (logical argument). Aristotle's model does not pay attention to the role of feedback in communication.

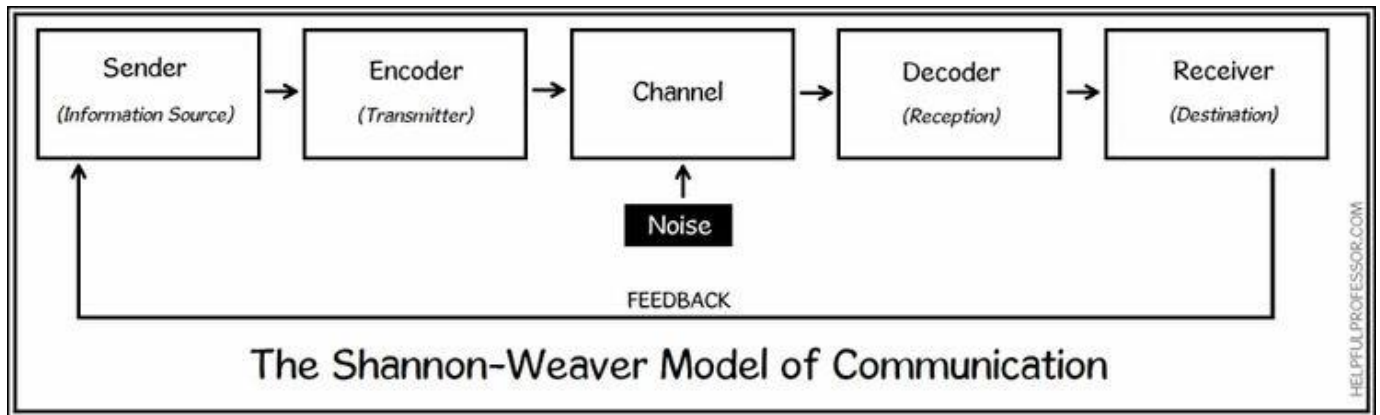
Lasswell's Model

Lasswell's model of communication tries to understand a communication event by asking five important questions. It looks at who created the message (and what their bias may be), what they said, the channel they said it through (e.g. TV, radio, blog), who they said it to, and what effect it had on the receiver. This model is effective as it provides a very simple and practical way of critiquing a message and exploring five important elements that can help explain the event under analysis in more detail.

Question	Component	How to Analyze	Example of Component
Who?	Communicator	Control analysis	Vacuum cleaner salesman
Says What?	Message	Content analysis	Promotes his brand of vacuum as the best
In which Channel?	Medium	Media analysis	Television
To Whom?	Audience	Audience analysis	Evening TV viewers in United States
With what Effect?	Effect	Effects analysis	Brand awareness, belief that this vacuum is best, increased sales revenue

The Shannon Weaver Model

The Shannon-Weaver model sees communication occurring in five key parts: sender, encoder, channel, decoder, receiver. It emphasizes the importance of encoding and decoding messages for them to be sent (e.g. turning them into written words, morse code, etc.). During the process of encoding, sending and decoding, 'noise' occurs that can disrupt or cloud a message. In the most traditional sense, this may be static on a radio broadcast, or even extend to mishearing a conversation or misspelling an email. This model was the first to introduce the role of noise in the communication process. The idea of feedback was retroactively introduced to this model.



_____The foregoing comprises the most widely accepted models for the study of communication as an academic discipline.

Berlo's S-M-C-R Model

Berlo's model of communication explains it in four steps: Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver. The unique aspect of Berlo's model is that it gives a detailed account of the key elements in each step that will affect how well the message is communicated:

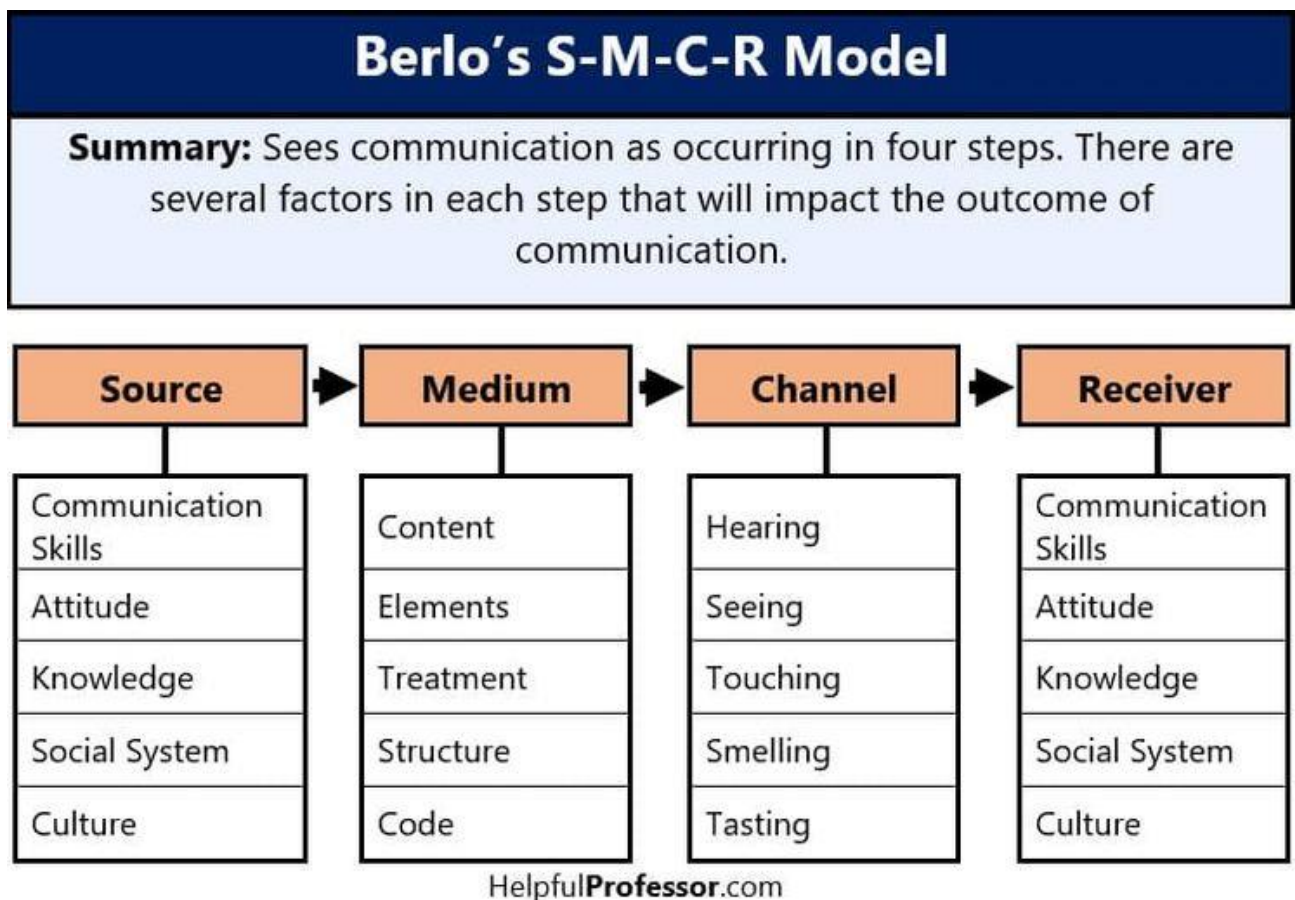
Source: Elements of the source include communication skills of the sender, their attitude and their culture.

Message: Elements of the message include its content, structure and code.

Channel: Elements of the channel include the senses of hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, etc.

Receiver: Elements of the receiver include their attitude, knowledge and culture.

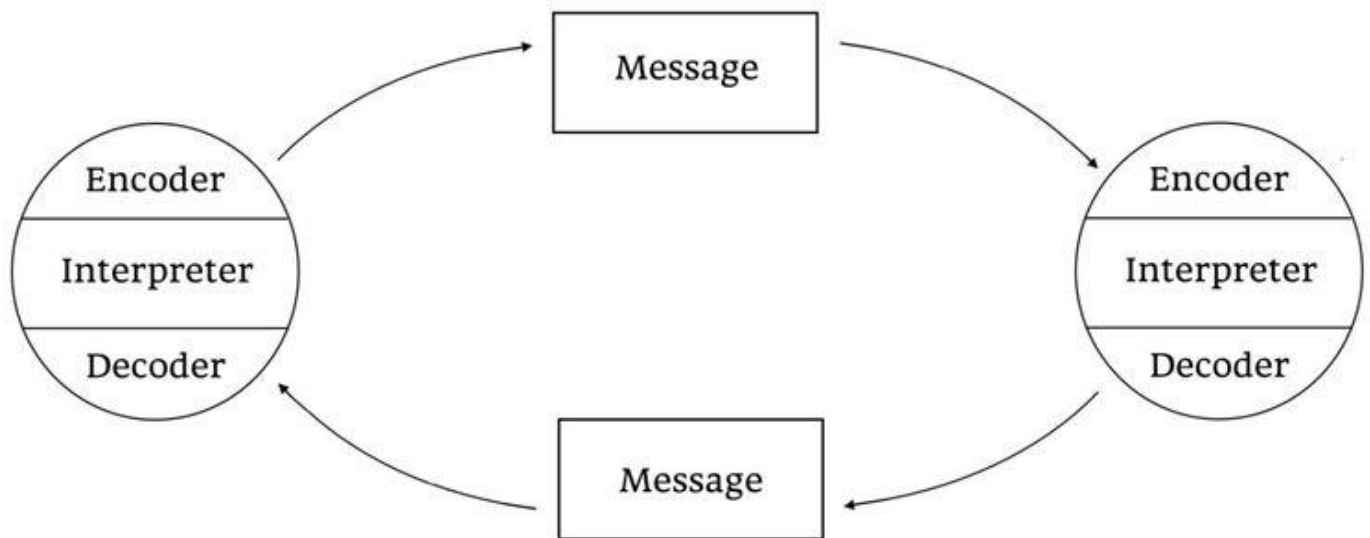
See a summary of all elements in the image below:



THE INTERACTIVE MODELS

Osgood-Schramm Model

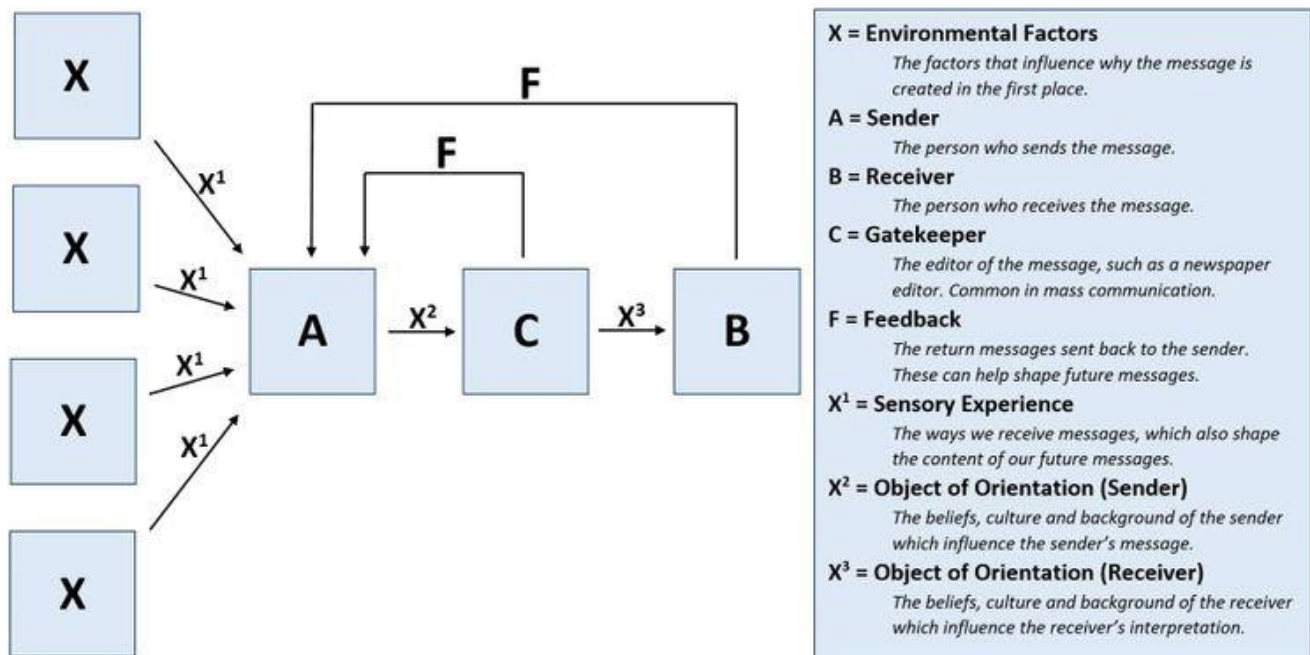
_____The Osgood-Schramm model explores communication that is equal and reciprocal. It does not differentiate between the sender and receiver, but sees each as being in an equal position as message encoders and decoders. This model is best for explaining and examining personal synchronous communication where feedback is immediate (such as face-to-face discussions). As feedback is immediate, noise can be reduced through ongoing clarification of messages during the conversation.



The Westley and Maclean Model

The Westley and Maclean model embraces the importance of feedback in communication. However, it also emphasizes the important role of environmental and cultural factors in influencing communication. It shows that the things we say and communicate are influenced by who we are, what our background is, and what perspective we are approaching issues from. The model takes into account the object of orientation (background, culture and beliefs) of the sender and receiver of messages. It also considers the message to have been received and sent within a broader social context that needs to be considered to know and understand the message.

The Westley and Maclean Model of Communication



THE TRANSACTIONAL MODELS

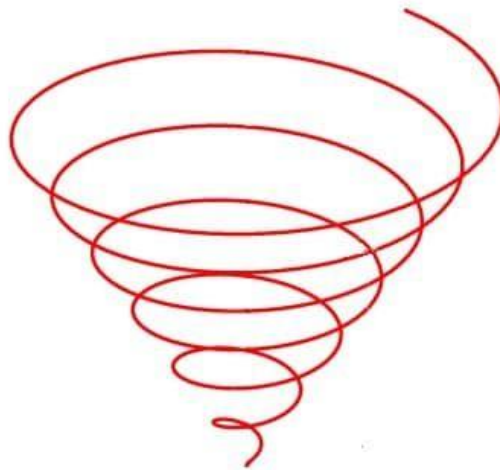
Barnlund's Transactional Model

Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication is a model that explores interpersonal, immediate-feedback communication. Central to this approach is the idea that feedback for the sender is the reply for the receiver.

This model also highlights the role of 'cues' in impacting our messages. Barnlund highlights the role of public cues which are environmental cues, and private cues which are a person's personal thoughts and background. With this emphasis on cues, Barnlund's model highlights the factors that influence what we think and say.

Dance's Helical Model

Dance's Helical Model builds on circular models by explaining how we improve our messages over time by using feedback. When we communicate with others, their feedback will influence our next statement. We become more knowledgeable with each cycle of communication, enabling us to 'expand our circle', as represented by the increasingly wider and wider circles. The movement up the spiral indicates that each communication practice is new and different from the previous, as communication does not ever perfectly repeat itself.



DANCE'S HELICAL MODEL depicts communication as an endless spiral of increasing complexity.

Summary

The purpose of this assignment in itself has been to summarize the study of communication and to link its relevance to the effectiveness of interpersonal communication within the context of two or more people which is defined as group. It is clear from the earliest days of communication, whether from the most basic utterances of series of clicks to the development of spoken language and writing, onward to the present day usage of media of all form, that without meaningful, understood communication between two or more people, that it would be and is quite impossible to have effective group progress on any one given subject or area. This is why the example of patient safety was chosen to illustrate the critical importance of effective communication and teamwork within the context of working with a group.

Only through the process of work, learning, listening intently, and dedication to the practice of meaningful communication, can any team work to accomplish the goals to be achieved be realized.

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