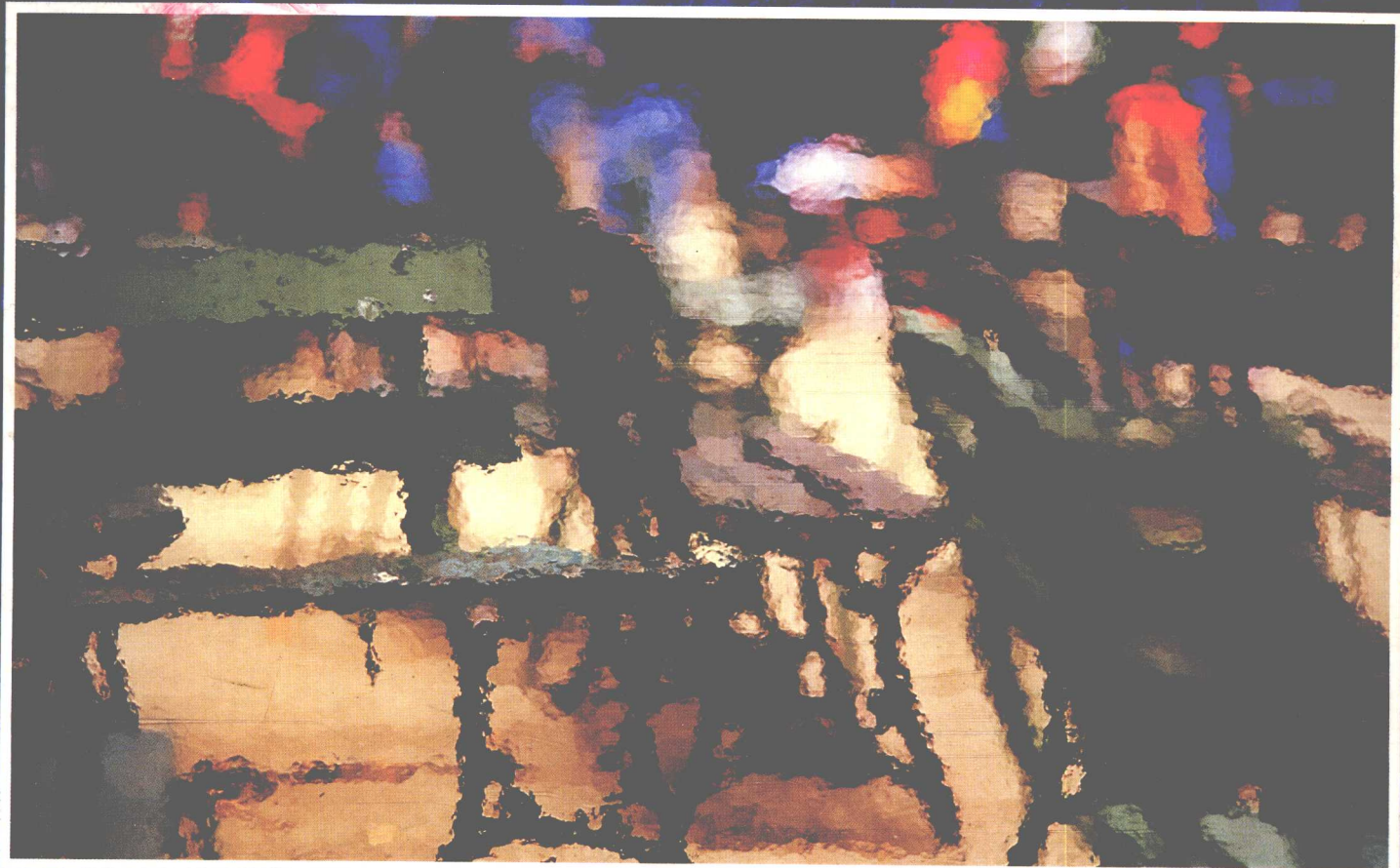


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# INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION



## COMPETENCY THROUGH CRITICAL THINKING

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JOHN S. CAPUTO

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HARRY C. HAZEL

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COLLEEN McMAHON

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# *Interpersonal Communication*

**COMPETENCY THROUGH  
CRITICAL THINKING**

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## **DEDICATION**

To our parents and teachers who planted the ideas, wet-nursed our hunger, nurtured our exploration, encouraged our thinking, and gave freedom to “our” ideas. We also dedicate this effort to Joann Caputo and Michael McMahon, whose patience, love, and support helped to make it possible. Thank you.

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## PREFACE

**T**his book is about the process of building and maintaining relationships through communication. Although it is primarily designed for students enrolled in college classes, it should prove useful for anyone interested in the connection between communication and relational development. This book is both historical and contemporary. That is, it presents current, cutting edge scholarship from both the semiotic and process schools of communication theory, yet asks you to look at these ideas critically and with a broad view of their usefulness. Our perspective is that of the liberal arts, which means the ideas should help you to think critically about what constitutes sound, ethical interpersonal communication and what skills and strategies are important for us to be interpersonally competent communicators. As we examine relational development, we present practical concepts and skills that will guide you in making good choices for communicating more effectively with intimates, close friends, family members, and professional colleagues. Additionally, we will explore implications of cultural differences and mass media for their impact on relationships in modern society.

### Themes of the Book

This book is built upon several premises:

- Communication is a learned process. We learn to communicate through observation and experience. Most of this learning is done informally. Through this book, we present a systematic examination of communication that will guide you through the following steps: gaining self-knowledge; discovering commonality with others; identifying the processes of communication; applying communication principles; recognizing the basic elements of communication common to many different settings; developing ethical guidelines in your interpersonal relationships; and striving for quality in communication.
- Critical thinking can help us make intelligent choices and thereby improve the quality of our relationships.
- Interpersonal relationships develop over time and are less dependent upon the setting or context than on the qualitative differences that occur as people get to know one another, negotiate their realities, and become more accurately able to predict each other's behaviors.
- The quality of communication is a critical ingredient in satisfactory interpersonal relationships. Communication is worth working on because it can be improved. Recognition of the process and experience

are the foundation of improvement. Quality can be achieved through conscious and consistent effort at improvement.

- Cultural knowledge plays a significant role in both our knowledge and our interpersonal style. Communication is both generated by, and a reflection of, culture.
- A liberal arts perspective helps us 1) to see that we are each responsible for our own learning; and 2) to seek truth in the theory and practice of communication. Quick fixes and cookbooks are not going to help us make informed choices in our relational communication.
- Because interpersonal communication is about relationships and we are in a position to positively and negatively influence others, we must be ethically responsible in our communication.

### Plan of the Book

*Interpersonal Communication: Competency Through Critical Thinking* is divided into four main parts. Part I, **Foundations**, chapters 1 and 2, focuses on the foundations of interpersonal communication. The chapters comprising this part address the developmental nature of interpersonal communication, set forth various definitions and perspectives, present the value of examining interpersonal communication from a liberal arts perspective, and explore the role of critical thinking in communication skill and strategy development.

In Part II, **The Intrapersonal Monologue**, chapters 3 and 4, you will explore the impact of perception on the development of our self and our understanding of others.

Part III, **The Interpersonal Dialogue**, chapters 5 through 8, looks at the use of symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, as tools of communication that make up our semiotic potential for communication with others. Additionally, you will examine the roles of disclosure and rhetorical sensitivity for their usefulness in developing quality communication. The last chapter in this part, chapter 8, examines the importance of listening.

Chapters 9 through 13 constitute Part IV: **Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Relationships**. We look at our interpersonal communication in specific relational contexts such as families, work, etc., and discuss the impact of gender and culture on interpersonal relationships. The last chapter, chapter 13 *Interpersonally Communicating in a Mediated World*, is new to a college text on interpersonal communication. The chapter focuses on two dimensions of media and interpersonal relationships. The first part of the chapter looks at how media can enhance interpersonal communication by connecting us with others over great distances of time and space. The second part examines media portrayals of relationships as models, both positive and negative, of actual relationships we form. The concept of media literacy is presented as an approach

to help us more carefully and critically examine media reality and interpersonal communication.

### **Features and Pedagogy**

Included in this book are several helpful features and pedagogical tools to enhance understanding and allow you opportunities to directly apply concepts that will further develop your interpersonal skills.

At the beginning of each chapter the **Cognitive Map** provides a synthesis of the outline of the chapter. This graphic maps out the relationships that exist among the major ideas you will study in the chapter.

### **CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

At the chapter beginning, there are a series of objectives for each chapter. We have identified specific goals which should be mastered upon completion of the readings, discussions, and activities.

### **CONSIDERING CRITICAL THINKING**

Throughout the chapters you will find numerous critical thinking exercises designed to help you focus on the importance of critical thinking in relationships. You will gain experience in distinguishing between logical thinking and subjective thinking. For example, the critical thinking exercise in Chapter 11 asks for your suggestion in working out a problem which involves a professional relationship.

### **CONSIDERING CULTURE**

Many communication guidelines change when we engage with culturally different people. These boxes provide you with opportunities to directly apply concepts from the specific chapters to an intercultural or culturally diverse situation. For example, in Chapter 7 you are asked to come up with examples of ethnic, national, or cultural group differences in nonverbal behavior.

### **CONSIDERING ETHICS**

To reinforce the importance of ethics in interpersonal communication, we provide exercises and discussion boxes in which we ask you to explore the ethical ramifications and your own behaviors in particular communication situations. Chapter 8, Listening, provides an opportunity for you to look at the ethics of your own interpersonal behavior when you are asked to listen to "confidential" information.

### **COMMUNICATING SKILLFULLY**

In addition to the boxes which focus on culture, ethics, and critical thinking, we include activities and exercises designed to focus on key aspects of interpersonal communication presented in the particular chapter.



### **PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE**

To provide further discussion questions and skill building exercises, we include a final section of practical applications, which directly reflects key concepts from each chapter. These are designed for group or individual use as students continue to develop and enhance their interpersonal skills.

### **REVIEW OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

This section comes at the end of each chapter as reminders of the concepts and their connections that were first introduced in the cognitive map at the beginning of each chapter.

### **FOR EXTENDED STUDY**

This list of related readings allows you to explore a particular topic in greater depth. In addition to the list, we provide a brief description of the contents.

A culmination of all the key terms is found in the **Glossary**, at the end of the text. The terms, found in alphabetical order, provide definitions and a resource guide for study.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous people have contributed to the completion of *Interpersonal Communication: Competency Through Critical Thinking*. In particular, we are especially grateful to Stephen Hull; his assistant, Brenda Conaway; Editorial-Production Supervisor, Elaine Ober; Production Coordinator, Leslie Olney; and Thomas Dorsaneo and his staff. All of these people provided invaluable assistance and suggestions through all important phases of this effort. We also give special thanks to several individuals at Gonzaga University, including our colleague Patrick J. Ford, S.J. for his support, Marti Abrahamson, Julia Bjordahl, Sandra Hank, Jennifer Griffith, Virginia DeLeon, Kathleen Morig, and Laura Reinhardt for their typing, proof reading, and graphic assistance, and Deanna Dannels for her invaluable research, input, and organizational help. Finally, we extend our gratitude to our colleagues across the country whose reviews and feedback were most instrumental in completing this book: Judith Bowker, Oregon State University; Dawn Braithwaite, Arizona State University; Dennis Brown, El Paso Community College; Stephanie Coffman, Eastern Montana College; Katherine Dindia, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Claudia Hale, Ohio University; Jennifer Hanlon, Brazosport College; Colan Hanson, Morehead State University; Patrick Hebert, Northeast Louisiana University; Sherry Holman, Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute; Kipp Preble, Chaffey College; Melinda Womack, Rancho Santiago Community College; John Stewart, University of Washington; Dick Stine, Johnson County Community College; Art VanLear, University of Connecticut; Shirley Whitfield, Northeast Louisiana University.

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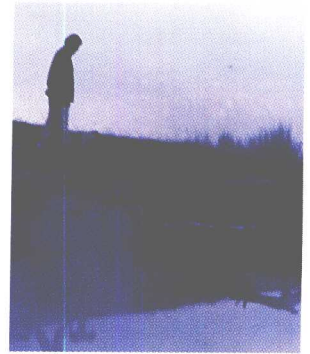
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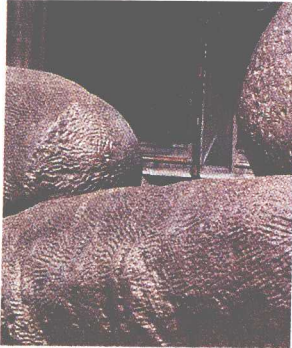
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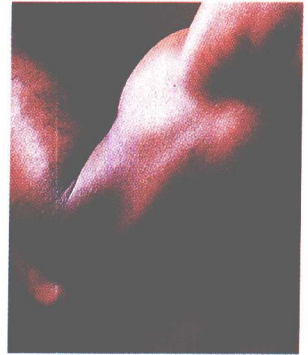
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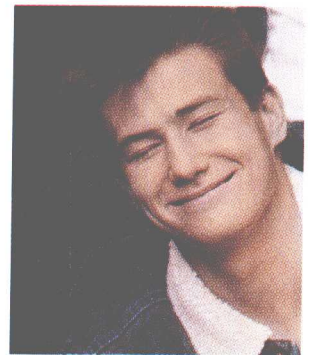


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