

Richard L. Weaver II

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UNDERSTANDING



INTERPERSONAL



COMMUNICATION

S e v e n t h E d i t i o n

Understanding Interpersonal Communication

S E V E N T H E D I T I O N

Richard L. Weaver II

Bowling Green State University



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***To Robert G. Gunderson and Edgar E. Willis—teachers who
have contributed to my growth and development***

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PREFACE

▼ The seventh edition of *Understanding Interpersonal Communication*, like the previous editions, is intended to help students understand interpersonal communication and improve their skills in this area. The concepts, principles, and theories of human interaction not only must be learned but also must be made relevant to one's life. Thus, this book, even more than previous editions, emphasizes the practical skills needed to improve communication with others—indeed, the practical skills that evolve naturally from the concepts, principles, and theories discussed.

▲▲▲ Approach and Focus

The dual emphasis on concepts and skills underlies both the overall approach of the book and the organization within chapters. Chapters begin with an explanation of concepts and conclude with a discussion of skills. As I was preparing this edition, it became clear that the book was expanding rapidly and some material needed substantial trimming. Cutting material is always difficult, since certain information becomes a favorite for instructors and eliminating it is like losing a prized possession. But decisions had to be made: more on that in "Changes in the Seventh Edition."

I have tried to write a teachable book that covers essential content and a readable book that interests students. To these ends, the chapters are organized in a consistent manner that follows the way the course is often taught. There have been no changes in the overall order in this new edition.

In addition, each chapter is self-contained to permit maximum flexibility. Instructors can use the chapters in any order. I have tried for prose that is jargon-free and have buttressed the text with numerous pertinent examples to hold attention, spur interest, and maintain relevancy.

▲▲▲ Pedagogical Features

In addition to the dual emphasis on concepts and skills, this text has numerous pedagogical features—more in this edition than in the last:

- *Chapter objectives* are listed at the beginning of each chapter. Clear and specific, they represent the most significant concepts in the chapter.
- *Key terms* are printed in boldface in the text, and the definition follows immediately after the term is mentioned.
- *Key terms* also are listed at the end of each chapter in the order they occur in the chapter.
- “*Consider This*” readings are all new to this edition. They focus specifically on one of four aspects of interpersonal communication: multicultural issues, gender concerns, workplace examples, or ethical questions. An icon indicates the specific emphasis of each “*Consider This*” reading.
- *Critical thinking* skills are emphasized. Each “*Consider This*” box contains provocative questions to stimulate reader involvement in the reading.
- “*Try This*” features, which appear throughout the text, encourage students to try new behaviors and practice new skills. Many of the most popular “*Try This*” features have been retained from earlier editions.
- *Skill Building* sections conclude every chapter. The sections provide students with specific methods for changing their behavior with respect to the content of each chapter.
- *Chapter Summaries* allow students to recap briefly the chief points from each chapter.
- *Further Reading* suggestions at the end of each chapter are annotated and include both popular and scholarly sources. Substantially updated, these suggestions represent reader-oriented sources for extending the material of each chapter.
- *Diagrams and models* illustrate the textual material to make the concepts, principles, and theories easier to grasp.
- *Photographs with captions* add interest and visual reinforcement to the text and provide a source for additional discussion questions.
- *Relevant examples* begin each chapter. The examples provide a fresh way to introduce the ideas and immediately engage the interest and attention of readers.

▲▲▲ *Changes in the Seventh Edition*

Substantial changes mark this edition. Two additions are of special interest. The first is a new chapter, “Gender Communication: Understanding the Other Sex.” This chapter underscores the importance of studying gender differences, recognizes some of the major gender differences, alerts readers to likely reactions to gender talk, explains why caution in apply-

ing generalizations about gender differences is necessary, and offers skills important in improving gender sensitivity.

The second substantial change is the new section on verbal aggression in the chapter, "Creating Messages: Verbal Communication." This section discusses why verbal aggression is destructive, what verbally aggressive messages are, why verbal aggression occurs, why it continues, why some people think there are good reasons for it, and how it can be prevented or kept from escalating.

Now, let's look at the new material chapter by chapter:

- The *Prologue* focuses on "Communication Competency: What It Is and How to Achieve It." The elements of communication competence are explained in detail, and a "Communication Competence Evaluation Form" is provided to make the concepts clear and specific.
- *Chapter 1*, "Speaking Interpersonally: Elements and Characteristics" combines Chapters 1 and 2 from the sixth edition. The goal was to bring similar information together in one place and reduce the amount of introductory information to heighten interest and increase attention.
- *Chapter 2*, "Creating Meaning: Perception," begins with three dramatic new examples and includes all new "Consider This" sections. In addition, the chapter provides a closer relationship between perception and effective interpersonal communication.
- *Chapter 3*, "Getting in Touch: The Self and Self-Disclosure," draws together in one place information from two chapters in the sixth edition. The new, more tightly organized chapter begins with three new examples and draws a closer relationship between self-concept and effective communication.
- *Chapter 4*, "Responding to Others: Listening and Feedback," also draws together in one place information from separate chapters on listening and feedback in the sixth edition. In addition to the new examples that introduce both sections, and the new "Consider This" readings, there are separate skills sections for improving both listening and feedback.
- *Chapter 5*, "Creating Messages: Verbal Communication," includes new opening examples, new "Consider This" boxes, and a new section, "Verbal Aggression."
- *Chapter 6*, "Communicating Without Words: Nonverbal Characteristics, Functions, Forms, and Types," combines two chapters on nonverbal communication from the sixth edition. There are new opening examples, a new "Try This" box containing 14 specific skills that can be applied when the student faces an intercultural communication situation, and all new "Consider This" information.
- *Chapter 7*, "Gender Communication: Understanding the Other Sex," is entirely new. The chapter attempts to make this study of gender interesting and provocative.

- Chapters 8 to 14 include all new opening examples—three per chapter—all new “Consider This” material designed to focus reader attention on important related information, new skill-building sections in each chapter, new summaries at the end of each chapter, and new “Further Reading” selections. The former Chapter 18, “Communicating on the Job: Promoting Success in the Workplace,” has been eliminated from the seventh edition.

▲▲▲ Supplements

Available with the seventh edition of *Understanding Interpersonal Communication* are the following materials:

- An expanded *Instructor's Manual* written by the author;
- A test bank, available in both the *Instructor's Manual* and in TestMaster-IBM, the HarperCollins computer software program;
- Grades-IBM, the HarperCollins grade-keeping computer program;
- HarperCollins Interpersonal Communication Video Library (available to qualified adopters).

▲▲▲ Acknowledgments

This edition, like those before it, reflects the contributions of many people. I am especially grateful for the suggestions provided by the manuscript reviewers for each edition.

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years, he has generously contributed of his ideas, research, interests, and polishing to what is written here and elsewhere. I thank him for a warm, rich, challenging, and rewarding association.

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Dick Weaver

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