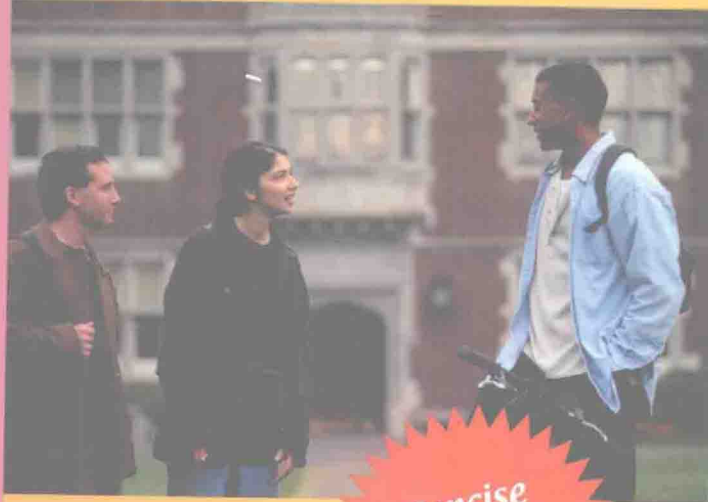


Communication

with Credibility and Confidence

Diverse People, Diverse Settings



**Second
Edition**

*Concise
and
value-priced*

**Gay Lumsden
Donald Lumsden**



C

ommunicating with Credibility and Confidence

Diverse People, Diverse Settings
Second Edition

Gay Lumsden
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Preface

We believe that communicating should be challenging, effective, and fun. Yes, fun. Of course, communication can be deadly serious. Words can start or end wars; they can manipulate and abuse humanity—or raise human relationships to great heights of understanding and compassion. Communication also is simply making a friend, or selling an idea, or playing, or sharing emotional highs and lows, or exchanging tender words of romance. Your everyday communication—conversing, working with a team, even giving a speech—should be stimulating and interesting and gratifying. In fact, the people who communicate in the rarified atmosphere of international negotiation would tell you that they even—no, especially—love the challenge of working out critical communication exchanges. Communication *can* be fun, even when it's serious.

The good news is, you have a start. You already communicate constantly with yourself and with others. Sometimes you feel comfortable and successful in your communication; sometimes you may feel awkward or ill at ease. That's natural, because effective communication is so important to you. Communication is the vehicle for making your life what you want it to be, both in your personal relationships and in your career goals.

We've written this book to help you make that vehicle work for you. Everything we hope you will learn—theories, facts, feelings, approaches, and abilities—all add up to two critical attributes that we want you to *own* by the end of this course:

- *Credibility.* Other people will want to listen to you because they trust you and believe in you. Your credibility is critical in all forms of communication, whether you're talking to one person or a thousand. This book develops credibility as an overriding theme so you can, first, recognize the credibility you now have and, then, start working to develop your credibility further.
- *Confidence.* You will learn how to manage nervousness, turn it to your advantage, and be able to speak confidently to others—one on one, in groups, or to large audiences. Confidence is based on knowing you've been successful in the past and anticipating success in new experiences. Whatever your confidence level is now, you can build it by practicing the strategies presented in this book, including relaxation and visualization techniques, to reduce your stress and improve your performance.

Fortunately, confidence and credibility are attributes that you can develop right along with increasing your competence in a range of communication situations. This book is designed to help you do that. It is based on several assumptions—first, about students and patterns of learning and, second, about the common threads that weave through all types of communication.

About the Second Edition

The philosophy and the substance of the first edition remain, but we have made the following changes:

Tightening and shortening. We have abbreviated the text somewhat, on the advice of our reviewers, in part by eliminating the original Chapter 4, “Creative and Critical Thinking: Processing Ideas.” We have incorporated much of the substance of that chapter into the rest of the book as well as into Chapter 3, now titled, “Perception and Thought: Making Sense.”

Clarifying language. For the many English-as-a-second-language students who use the book, we have simplified some of the language, again on the advice of reviewers. That change includes eliminating most colloquialisms and slang, although we have left in common language devices that clearly have roots in identifiable metaphors. Our own experience has been that students can track metaphors and find this useful in developing their English usage.

Updating. In addition to updating resources and research, we have provided more information on using technology effectively for both research and presentation. Some of this content is included in the text, and some appears in new boxes, instructions, and exercises.

About Students and Learning

Our experience has shown us that many students share certain characteristics in learning to communicate more effectively. Even those who are best-prepared have to cope with:

- *Overcoming nervousness.* Students often are nervous about speech communication classes. Almost everyone gets anxious about communicating at one time or another, and almost everyone believes she or he is the only one who feels this way. So this book starts with where you may be right now—shaking in your boots. We have found that students frequently have a low opinion of their own competence and credibility. They often say they know nothing worth listening to (that is, they are not credible) and think they can't make people want to listen to them (that is, they are not confident). These are lonely feelings, and we want you to change those perceptions.

- *Acquiring knowledge and skills.* Students become good communicators when they acquire knowledge, develop positive feelings, and practice specific skills. Having knowledge helps you explain, with theory and facts, how people communicate. Positive feelings about yourself and communication situations enable you to approach communication confidently and wisely. Finally, both your knowledge and your feelings provide the foundation for practicing and implementing specific communication skills. To help you develop all three strands of learning, each chapter begins with a list of objectives categorized according to “knowledge,” “feelings and approaches,” and “abilities.”

About Common Threads Throughout Communication Experiences

If you can talk to a friend, you can talk to an audience. That statement may seem extreme, but we believe it's true. Certain basic skills are common to every type of oral communication: with yourself, with another person, with a group, with an audience. In fact, all types of communication are more alike than they are different. This is true across cultures and across experiences. Often students believe their foreign accent, their American dialect, or their particular voice or physical characteristics will block their communication. Students even worry about their gestures because they reflect a particular culture. Not one of these individual characteristics means the student has a communication problem. It's only a matter of developing the skill to turn what seems to be a disadvantage into an advantage, and you already have the foundation for doing that.

This book develops common skills first, step by step, so you can adapt them later to each type of interaction. Presentational speaking is discussed at the very end of the book, but when you get there you will have already developed communication strength in other contexts—and that strength will provide the foundation for speaking to an audience. As your confidence grows in using these approaches with one person or a few, you will find it easier to communicate with more people. Some important common threads among all communication situations include ethics, adaptation, and creative and critical thinking.

Ethics. Any time you communicate, you make ethical choices about what to say, how to say it, and how to act. Those choices reflect how you regard yourself, your listeners, and your subject; they have consequences that affect you and the people with whom you communicate. In this book, we explain why we believe that dialogical ethics provides the best approach to communication by helping you to build relationships, to work cooperatively in groups and teams, to involve audiences deeply in your public presentations, and to establish a sound base for your credibility and confidence.

Adaptation. Communication in today's world requires understanding and adapting to diverse individuals. Both personally and professionally, you will

communicate with people who vary widely in background, ethnicity, culture, abilities, gender, and sexual orientation. Diversity can enrich communication with the multiple perspectives it makes available; when you understand how to communicate with people different from yourself, you can transcend potential barriers to communication. That's why the book integrates issues and information about diversity—especially in culture and gender.

Creative and critical thinking. Communicating effectively, both as a giver and receiver of ideas, integrates both artistic and analytical approaches. Creative and critical thinking are essential to all communication because they involve analyzing, understanding, creating, organizing, phrasing, and supporting ideas. Whether you are talking to yourself about a problem you must solve, working out an idea with a friend, brainstorming an idea with a team, presenting a persuasive speech, or simply listening intently, you're using both creative and critical thinking. This book will help you develop these skills in every context of communication.

Features

We've tried to make this book user-friendly for you. *Communicating with Credibility and Confidence* has some special features to help integrate and apply the concepts. These include:

- *Terms* boldfaced and defined in the text and included in a glossary at the end of the book.
- *Competencies* listed at the beginning of each chapter so you can see what you're trying to accomplish.
- *Boxes* to stimulate discussion by presenting brief excerpts from contemporary publications on technology, culture, communication in business, interpersonal relationships, and so on.
- *Short quotations* as marginal inserts to stimulate thought and discussion.
- *Exercises and activities* that systematically develop competency through individual, dyadic, and group work and presentations. The exercises are designed to achieve two goals: to introduce a wider range of communication genre and to build skills incrementally.
- Integrated technology activities, called *Cyberpoints*, that direct you to interesting and relevant World Wide Web sites relating to concepts discussed in the text, to the student resources at the *Communicating with Credibility and Confidence* Web site, and to InfoTrac College Edition to research communication issues and find speeches to read and critique.
- *Web site* that provides self-assessment and observation forms, resources, and examples for students to use as supplementary information.
- *Workbook* containing self-paced exercises and experiences for students.

- *Instructor's manual* that develops the course so your instructor can choose a traditional approach to the class or a collaborative learning approach, together with syllabi, schedules, assignments, new activities and experiential exercises, examinations, and resources.
- *Art* that includes photo case studies, cartoons, models, diagrams, tables, and illustrations of concepts.

Overview of the Book

The book will lead you to achieve three major goals: develop your credibility to yourself and to others; develop your confidence in your own communication; and develop skills that enable you to achieve your goals through communication. That starts with the experience and abilities you already have, so Part I focuses on what communication is, how it functions, and how it influences your present and future life. We use this foundation for examining the nature of credibility and confidence. From there, we explore the essential roles of perception, critical thinking, and creative thinking in your communication.

Part II discusses creating dialogue with others. Here you will strengthen your listening and questioning abilities as well as your nonverbal and verbal communication skills—a background that applies to all communication situations.

Part III examines your communication in interpersonal relationships, including situations that help communication with another individual grow and develop, personal relationships with friends and family, and relationships in college and in your professional life.

Part IV develops your abilities to work in groups and teams. Group communication involves all the knowledge and skills covered in the previous chapters and applies them to achieving common goals through teamwork. Your communication helps you build effective teams, provide leadership, analyze problems, and develop solutions in group settings.

Part V prepares you to make speeches. Public presentations involve speaking to inform an audience about a topic and persuading an audience to change its attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. Everything you have learned to this point serves as the foundation for the extensive preparation and effective practice that develop your skills as a credible, confident public speaker.

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Many kind, patient, and insightful people have helped us develop this book. Our students—past and present—have provided the “proving ground” for much of the material, and they have contributed excellent ideas and enormous inspiration and encouragement. We especially thank the students who gave their time and thoughtfulness to reading and evaluating early drafts. The text reflects their suggestions for material and revisions to make it better and more student-friendly.

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Finally, we want to thank our family and close friends for their love, support, and tolerance. Although we are always with them in spirit, we’d rather be together in person—and we hope we can compensate for some of the time we have sacrificed in the process of developing this text. It’s to our kids and grandkids (who have both grown and multiplied during this second edition)—Ed, Tom, Diana, Carolyn, Bill, Maria, Zoe, Savannah, Rita, Rita D., and Anna Maria—that we dedicate this work.

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