

third edition

SARAH TRENHOLM

ARTHUR JENSEN

# Interpersonal Communication





THIRD EDITION

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Ithaca College

**ARTHUR JENSEN**

Syracuse University



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# Preface

## TO THE INSTRUCTOR

Writing the third edition of *Interpersonal Communication* has been an extremely satisfying experience for us. We thank all who have used and responded favorably to the previous editions, particularly those who have served as reviewers for this edition. Such a stamp of approval has not only been gratifying, but has been accompanied by enthusiastic suggestions on how to make this edition even better.

Reviewer responses prompted several changes in the structure and content of the text, and other changes grew out of the spirit of their concerns as well. We have attempted to make the central and most enduring themes of the text even more explicit, while introducing and expanding other themes in new directions. At the heart of this edition remains the primary goal of *helping students achieve interpersonal competence in a social world that is at once deeply cultured and yet openly challenged by new modes of thought and action*. Understanding and managing interpersonal interaction and relationships in such a world is seldom easy, but new research and theory points out further complications. We now understand that contemporary American patterns of interpersonal communication are not only culturally, but historically situated. In previous editions of *Interpersonal Communication* we were content to allude to historical contexts with boxed material tangential to the primary text. In this edition, the importance of the cultural and historical

backdrops is woven into our model of communication competence, drawn out in several new boxes and in various discussions throughout the text, and summarized in the final chapter.

Among other changes in this edition, you will find a revised model of communication competence; a more pronounced emphasis on competence in each chapter, with summary sections on improving competence in each of the four relational context chapters (family, intimate, and professional relationships, and a new final chapter on cultural/historical perspectives). In addition, fifteen new boxes ranging from a history of dating to the politics of multicultural talk have replaced outdated or less intriguing material. We have also updated the research base in each chapter, trying to reflect the state of the art in as many areas as possible, given the limitations of space and the reader's attention span. Finally, for those who do want to read more, we have updated the Suggested Readings section at the end of each chapter.

In keeping with the emphasis on communicative competence, the structure of the text has been modified to emphasize that theme throughout the text. Part 1 introduces the reader to basic perspectives on interpersonal communication. A newly revised model of competence is introduced in Chapter 1. The model shows how five key elements (perceptual, role, self, goal, and message competence) are interrelated and shaped by cultural and historical influences. One of these elements, message competence, is further delineated in terms

of verbal, nonverbal, and relational codes. In Chapter 2, we focus more specifically on interpersonal communication, explaining what it means to form interpersonal bonds.

Each element of the competence model becomes the focus of separate chapters in Part 2 and Part 3. Part 2 examines the ways in which we send and receive messages, beginning with nonverbal competence in Chapter 3 and addressing verbal competence in Chapter 4. New material on the role of language in promoting the interests of some groups in society and silencing the voices of others has been added to this chapter. The section concludes with a discussion of relational competence in Chapter 5. The rationale for dealing with message making prior to other elements of the model is twofold. First, it makes interaction the prominent site from which the other elements (perceptions, roles, relationships, and self-concepts) are derived or in which they are displayed. And second, it offers the instructor an opportunity to prompt discussion on such issues as the relationship between cognition and behavior. Under what conditions do we behave first and then reflect on what our behavior means? When is our communication behavior an intentional reflection of previously held attitudes?

Part 3 looks more closely at the other basic processes linked to message construction and interpretation. Chapter 6 examines the relationship between perception and successful communication. The discussion of cognitive schemata has been clarified to improve student understanding as to how cognition and communication are related. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on how social and personal identities are formed and how they affect interactions. A new emphasis on how gender and other cultural/historical narratives influence role behavior informs Chapter 7, while an historical perspective on how each historical era calls for decidedly different self-concepts is introduced in Chapter 8. Finally, Chapter 9 shows how we use the interpersonal influence process to achieve goals in a competent fashion.

In Part 4, we investigate how communication principles are applied in the context of different kinds of relationships. Chapter 10 discusses interpersonal communication in the family. As in many other chapters, we introduce an historical perspective to help us better understand current communication patterns. We have also provided a more thorough discussion of parent-child communication in this edition. Chapter 11, on how intimate relationships work, is once again the chapter with the most new research to report. This reflects researchers' interests as well as the importance our culture attaches to close relationships. In Chapter 12 we examine professional, role-oriented relations. Some reviewers have suggested that we cut this chapter, as it seemed to them out of place in a text primarily focused on the close, personal relationships of family and friends. We resist doing that, on the basis that our culture already trivializes role relations and other forms of public, impersonal interaction. We believe that democracy rests very heavily on the civil interaction of people who do not know one another personally and feel no compulsion to make every relationship a personal one (or to attach value only to the most personal of relationships). Finally, Chapter 13 draws together the thematic influences that culture and history exercise on interpersonal communication. This chapter is, for all practical purposes, a new one. It incorporates some material on cross-cultural communication from the previous edition, but the historical overview of interpersonal communication patterns is all new. Each of the chapters in Part 4 concludes with a new section examining how the material in that chapter relates to the recurring theme of developing and enhancing our communication competence.

Throughout the text you will find boxed materials. These contain interesting and unusual applications of communication principles. Fifteen of these boxes are completely new or have been substantially rewritten. Drawn from anthropology, ethnology, history, psychology, philosophy, education, linguistics, popular cul-



ture, and the like, they demonstrate that communication occurs in many different contexts. We've included them not only because we think they are interesting, but also because they provide sources for additional reading and study.

At the end of each chapter, you will still find a section devoted to enhancing a particular communication skill relevant to the thrust of the chapter. This section describes the principles, steps, or subskills necessary for improving the skill. In effect, it offers practical ways to put the content of the chapter to work. The other end-of-the chapter materials in the section entitled "Process to Performance" are designed to move students toward application as well. This section includes discussion questions, observational assignments, and classroom exercises that further aid in skill development.

We have also updated the *Instructor's Manual*, which now includes a student handout of review questions for each chapter, many more test items, additional classroom activities, and other handout material. We hope you will find this material helpful in your teaching efforts.

## TO THE STUDENT

We hope that reading this book will open your eyes to a new world of interaction. While you've communicated all your life, you've probably never really *seen* communication. Most people don't take time to observe and analyze familiar everyday activities. When they do, often they are amazed at the richness and complexity they find. We believe that after reading this book, you will never again dismiss communication as uninteresting or commonplace. You'll have the tools to observe the context in which communication takes place and to increase your own communication competence.

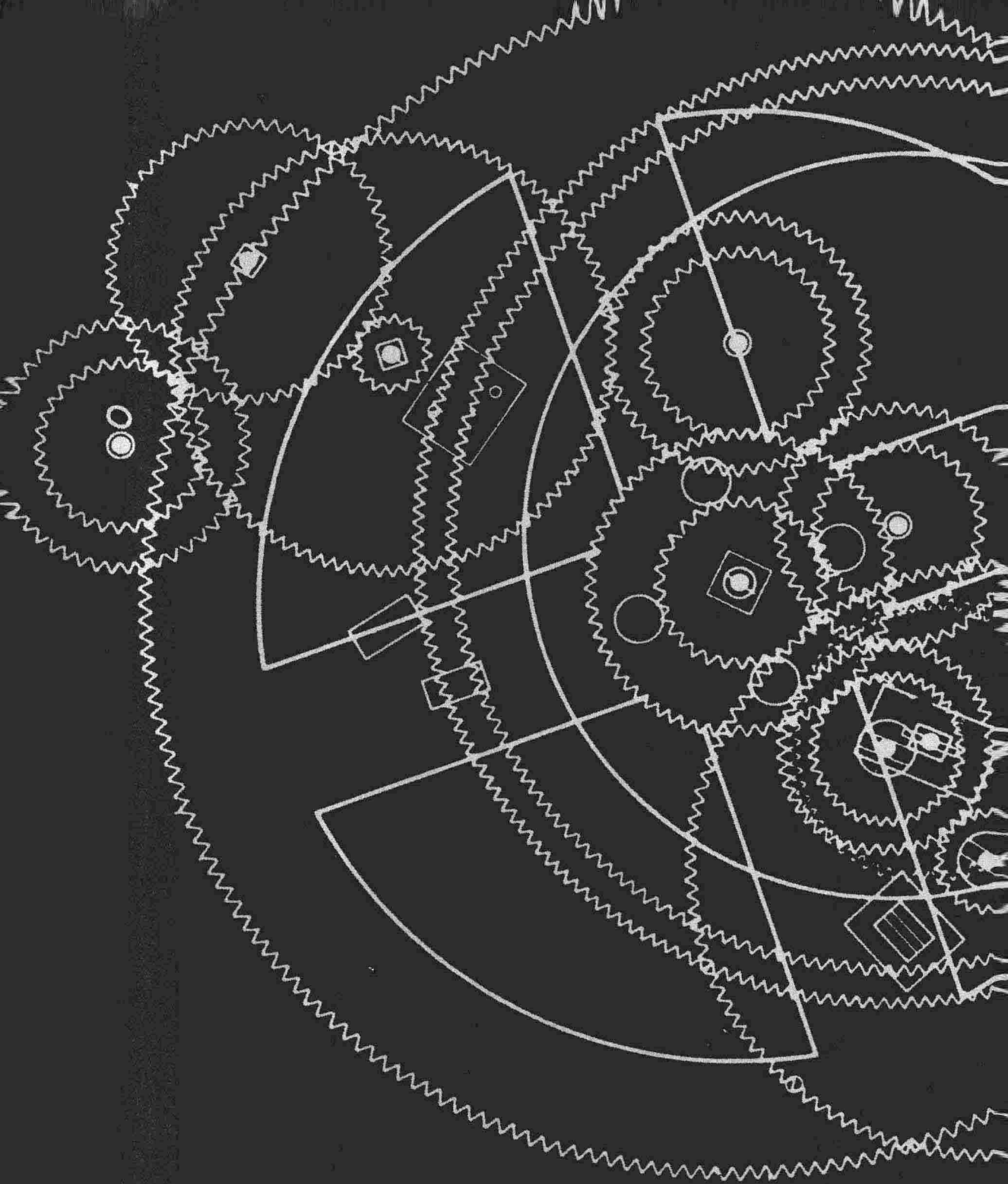
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are indebted to those who have reviewed this and previous editions of *Interpersonal*

*Communication*. We believe (and readily admit our bias) that each edition has been improved in terms of both the comprehensive nature of its content, and in the arrangement of ideas and materials. Our reviewers are largely responsible for those improvements. We would like to thank Brant R. Burleson, Purdue University; Mindy Chang, University of Richmond; Kenneth Cissna, University of South Florida; Richard K. Curtis, Indiana University; Lawrence W. Hugenberg, Youngstown State University; Randall J. Koper, University of the Pacific; Sandra Metts, Illinois State University; Martha W. Moore, Murray State University; Sally K. Murphy, California State University at Hayward; Charles Petrie, SUNY-Buffalo; Sally Planalp, University of Colorado at Boulder; Marilyn Root, Boston University; Karyn Rybacki, Northern Michigan University; Gregory J. Shepherd, University of Kansas; Ralph Smith, Southwest Missouri State; Robbyn J. Turner-Matthews, Miami University (Ohio); Michael Waltman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Lynne Webb, University of Florida; Jerry L. Winsor, Central Missouri State University. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the following folks at Wadsworth: Todd Armstrong, our editor, for his persistence and ability to keep us on track, and his flair for arranging conference calls; Laura Murray, editorial assistant, for her gracious and timely assistance on matters too numerous to mention; and Tina Samaha, our production editor, for seeing to all the details. Finally, we are grateful to our colleagues and students at Ithaca College and Syracuse University for their encouragement and support.

Sarah Trenholm

Arthur Jensen



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