What Is Mass Communication?

- **Communication**: the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver.
  - Must be sharing (or correspondence) of meaning
  - Feedback
  - Interpersonal communication
Communication Occurs When?

A source sends a message through a medium to a receiver producing some effect.
What Is Mass Communication?

- **Media** plural of *medium*
- Messages are **encoded**
- Once received, messages are **decoded**
  - Noise
  - Medium
What Is Mass Communication?

Osgood and Schramm’s Model of Communication


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What Is Mass Communication?

- **Mass communication**: the process of creating shared meaning between the mass media and their audience.

- Schramm’s mass communication model represents feedback by *inferential feedback*—indirect rather than direct.
What Is Mass Communication?

Schramm’s Model of Mass Communication


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### What Is Mass Communication?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Communication</strong>&lt;br&gt;You invite a friend to lunch.</td>
<td><strong>Mass Communication</strong>&lt;br&gt;Levitan-Lloyd produces Modern Family</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Message</strong>&lt;br&gt;Highly flexible and influential</td>
<td><strong>Nature</strong>&lt;br&gt;Electrically, mechanically produced, simultaneously sent</td>
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<td><strong>Interpreter A</strong>&lt;br&gt;One person—in this case, you</td>
<td><strong>Interpretation A</strong>&lt;br&gt;Infatable, unchangeable&lt;br&gt;The completed Modern Family episode that is aired</td>
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<tr>
<td>You know your mind. You can reconcile your own message to suit yourself, your values, your likes and dislikes.</td>
<td>Once production is completed, Modern Family cannot be changed.&lt;br&gt;Is a platitude or other communicative device that’s working with the audience, nothing can be done.</td>
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<td><strong>Interpreter B</strong>&lt;br&gt;One or a few persons, usually in direct contact with you, in a greater or lesser degree, known to you—in this case, your friend</td>
<td>A large, heterogeneous audience known to Interpret B only in the most rudimentary way. little more than basic demographics—in this case, several million viewers of Modern Family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You can tailor your message specifically to Interpret B. You can make relatively accurate judgments about B because of information present in the writing. Your friend is a vegetarian; you don’t suggest a steak house.</td>
<td>Communication cannot be tailored to the wants, needs, and tastes of all audiences members or even those of all members of some subgroups. Some are or less generally acceptable standard is set.</td>
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<td><strong>Feedback</strong>&lt;br&gt;Immediate and direct yes or no response</td>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong>&lt;br&gt;Delayed and inferential&lt;br&gt;Even overnight ratings too late for this episode of Modern Family&lt;br&gt;Moreover, ratings limited to rating the number of sets tuned in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You know how successful your message is immediately. You can adjust your communication on the spot to maximize its effectiveness.</td>
<td>Even if the feedback is useless, it is too late to be of value for this episode. In addition, it doesn’t suggest how to improve the communication effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong>&lt;br&gt;Flexible, personally relevant, possibly adventurous, challenging, or experimental</td>
<td>Constrained by virtually every aspect of the communication situation&lt;br&gt;A level of communication most likely to meet the greatest number of viewers’ needs&lt;br&gt;A belief that experimentation is dangerous&lt;br&gt;A belief that to challenge the audience is to risk failure</td>
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What Is Mass Communication?

**Cultural definition of communication (1975)**

- James W. Carey: “Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed.”

- Carey’s updated definition (1989) asserts that communication and reality are linked. It’s truest purpose is to maintain ever-evolving, “fragile” cultures; communication is that “sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality.”
What Is Culture?

- **Culture**: the learned behavior of members of a given social group.

- Culture as Socially Constructed Shared Meaning

- Functions and Effects of Culture:
  - Limits our options and provides guidelines
  - Culture’s limiting effects can be negative
  - Dominant culture
What Is Culture?

- Cultural values can be *contested*
  - Bounded cultures
  - Divide and/or unite
  - Culture/communication
  - Differentiation can divide
Mass Communication and Culture

• Our stories help define our culture

• The aim is to shape in a professional and ethical way
Scope and Nature of Mass Media

- The role of technology
  - Technological determinism
- The role of money
Scope and Nature of Mass Media

Minutes per day

- Television: 4 hrs. 34 min.
- Internet: 2 hrs. 47 min.
- Mobile phone: 65 min.
- Radio: 64 min.
- Magazines & Newspapers: 44 min.
Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy

- Media literacy
- Literate culture
- Oral or preliterate cultures
The Gutenberg Revolution

• Printing Press
• The Impact of Print
• The Industrial Revolution
Media Literacy

- Critical thinking that leads to independent judgments
- Understanding the process of mass communication
- Awareness of impact of media on the individual and society
- Strategies for analyzing and discussing media messages
Media Literacy

- Understanding of media content as insight into our cultures/lives
- Ability to enjoy, understand, and appreciate media content
- Development of effective and responsible production skills
- Understanding of the ethical and moral obligations of media practitioners
Media Literacy Skills

- Understand content
- Pay attention
- Filter out noise
Media Literacy Skills

- Respect for power of messages
  - Third-person effect

- Emotion vs. reason

- Heightened expectations of content
Media Literacy Skills

• Genre conventions
  - Genre
  - Conventions

• Ability to think critically

• Knowledge of internal language
  - Production values