Chapter 1

Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy
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

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Highly flexible and adaptable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can change it in midstream. If feedback is negative, you can offer an alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In feedback still negative? Take a whole new approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreter A</td>
<td>One person—in this case, you</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You know your mind. You can encode your own message to suit yourself, your values, your likes and dislikes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreter B</td>
<td>One or a few people, usually in direct contact with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and, to a greater or lesser degree, known to you—in this case, you friend</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You can tailor your message specifically to Interpreter B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can make relatively accurate judgments about it because of information present in the setting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Your friend as a vegetarian; you don't suggest a steak house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Immediate and direct yes or no response</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You know how responsive your message is immediately.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You can adjust your communications on the spot to maintain its effectiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>Flexible, personally relevant, possibly adventurous, challenging, or experimental</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contrasted by virtually every aspect of the communication situation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A level of communication most likely to meet the greatest number of receiver’s needs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A belief that experimentation is dangerous.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A belief that to challenge the audience is to risk failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Identical, mechanically produced, simultaneously seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infleksible, unalterable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The completed Modern Family episode that is aired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Once production is completed, Modern Family cannot be changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a plotline or other communicative device isn’t working with the audience, nothing can be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who really is Interpreter A?</td>
<td>Levita Lloyd Productions' executive? The writer? The director? The actors? The network and its standards and practices people? The sponsors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All must agree, leaving little room for individual vision or experimentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication cannot be tailored to the wants, needs, and tastes of all audience members or even those of all members of some subgroup.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some more or less generally acceptable standard is set.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

- 4 hrs. 34 min. for Television
- 2 hrs. 47 min. for Internet
- 65 min. for Mobile phone
- 64 min. for Radio
- 44 min. for Magazines & Newspapers

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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