

Communication Models

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about two different models for understanding the communication process. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Transactional Model of Communication

Researchers have observed that when communication takes place, the source and the receiver may send messages at the same time, often overlapping.

➞ **EXAMPLE** If you are giving a speech, you are playing both the roles of source and receiver. You'll focus on the communication and the reception of your messages to the audience. The audience will respond in the form of feedback that will give you important clues. This is where your **self and social awareness skill** comes into play as you adjust based on this feedback.

Rather than looking at the source sending a message and someone receiving it as two distinct acts, the **transactional model of communication** views communication as an exchange, with actions often happening at the same time.

The distinction between source and receiver is blurred in conversational turn-taking, where the participants play both roles simultaneously.



TERM TO KNOW

Transactional Model of Communication

A communication model that focuses on communication as an exchange in which certain events (e.g., sending and receiving a message) can occur simultaneously.

2. Constructivist Model of Communication

Researchers have also examined the idea that we all construct our own interpretations of the message. In the **constructivist model of communication**, the focus is on the negotiated meaning, or common ground, when trying to describe communication.

IN CONTEXT

Imagine that you are visiting Atlanta, Georgia, and go to a restaurant for dinner. When asked if you want a "Coke," you may reply, "Sure." The waiter may reply, "Which kind?" and you may say, "Coke is fine." The waiter then may ask again, "Which kind of soft drink would you like?"

The misunderstanding in this example is that in Atlanta, the home of the Coca-Cola Company, most soft drinks are generically referred to as "Coke." When you order a soft drink, you need to specify which type, even if you wish to order a beverage that is not a cola or not even made by the Coca-Cola Company. To someone from other regions of the United States, the words "pop," "soda pop," or "soda" may be the familiar way to refer to a soft drink— not necessarily the brand "Coke."

Both you and the waiter understand the word "Coke," but you each understand it to mean something different. In order to communicate, you must each use your **self and social awareness skill** to realize what the term means to the other person, and establish common ground so that you can fully understand the request and provide an answer.

Because we carry multiple meanings of words, gestures, and ideas within us, we need to use communication as an opportunity to negotiate meaning.



TERM TO KNOW

Constructivist Model of Communication

A communication model that focuses on finding a negotiated meaning, or common ground, in order to reach understanding.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about two models that analyze the communication process. The **transactional model of communication** explains communication as an exchange of messages between sources and receivers that can occur at the same time, muddling the distinction between the roles. The **constructivist model of communication** is more interested in how meaning is constructed and negotiated between parties.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: This tutorial has been adapted from "Business Communication for Success" Version 1.0 by Scott McLean. Copyright 2010. ISBN 978-1-4533-2742-5 (Licensee Product: Workplace Communication), reprinted with permission from FlatWorld.



TERMS TO KNOW

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