**Chapter 1: An Overview of Communication**

[Sweet pea' and 'pussy cat': An examination of idiom use and marital satisfaction over the life cycle](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch01_Article.pdf)
Bruess, C. J. S., & Pearson, J. C. (1993).  *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10*, 609-615.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. This article discusses the relationship between 154 couples’ use of idiosyncratic communication and marital satisfaction over the life cycle and found that happier couples tended to use more idiosyncratic communication. Would you expect the same sorts of results to be found in friendship?
2. The researchers found that in general there was a decline in the use of personal idioms over the course of the length of the marriage, but that couples early in the stages of their marriage tended to use more personal idioms and nicknames for one another. Why do you suppose this might be true? What hypotheses can you come up with to suggest that the use of personal nicknames is not indicative of romantic feelings as a relationship lengthens?
3. Couples with no children reported using the most idioms. Why would you expect there to be a decline in personal idioms as couples have children and the children grow older?
4. Would you expect that in general couples would become less demonstrative about their own relationship in front of children? If so why, and if not why not? Or do you suppose that there would be no change at all?
5. What do you think is the connection between the use of personal nicknames and the intimacy of a relationship?

**Chapter 2: Verbal Communication**

[The Dynamic Nature of Deceptive Verbal Communication](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch02_Article.pdf)
Burgoon, J. K. & Qin, T. (2006).  *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 76-96.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. The authors suggest that the verbal deception occurs in the context of ongoing relationships and that one of the reasons why past research on deception has been inconsistent may be due to the fact that it overlooks the dynamic nature of such deception. In long-term relationships people obviously carry out deception over a longer period of time than if they are just speaking for a moment to a customs official. In what ways might relational partners be harder to deceive than other people?
2. …and now the other side… in what ways might relational partners be easier to deceive than other people and why?
3. Do you think there is a difference between telling something that is false and withholding something that is true? Is it easier or harder in a long-term relationship to do one thing than the other?
4. Not all deception is evil or bad for a relationship: consider birthday surprises, unexpected gifts, or other forms of relationship celebration which are kept quiet. How do you think the communication scholar would explain the difference between the "white lie" and other kinds of deception using the terms in this chapter?
5. What would you expect to be the relationship between verbal behavior that is intended to deceive and nonverbal behaviors that may be involved in deception? Would you expect that people find it easier or harder to control their verbal behavior or their nonverbal behavior?

**Chapter 3: Nonverbal Communication**

[Characteristics of vocal communication between young adults and their parents and grandparents](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch03_Article.pdf)

Montepare, J. S., & Rosenberg, B. (1992).

*Communication Research*, 19, 479-492.

Discussion Questions:

1. This article discusses vocalic aspects of speech accommodations. Are there other kinds of people to whom you accommodate your nonverbal communication? Who and in what ways do you accommodate?
2. The researchers found that speaker’s voices became higher, more feminine, and more babyish when talking to grandparents compared to when talking to parents. One explanation they offer for this finding is that participants reported that exchanges with grandparents are sometimes not sincere or are affected. If this explanation holds, why do you think more feminine speech is used to indicate insincerity? Does this finding potentially hold implications for the gendering of voices? How would you manipulate your voice to indicate dominance? Confidence? Submissiveness? Empathy?
3. The findings that showed different vocal styles used with mothers and fathers were explained by differences in power and relationship. Do you think the fact that all of the participants who were recorded talking to their parents were females had any effect on this finding? Do you think the results would have been different if there were both male and female speakers?
4. Do you think that the findings would differ if the older adults the speakers conversed with were NOT their grandparents? In other words, is it the person’s age that is causing the vocal changes in the speaker or is it their familial role and the way the two have been socialized to interact due to the grandparent/grandchild relationship?
5. Results of this study are consistent with past research that shows that people accommodate their speech to older adults much like they do to children. Do you think there are other elements or subcodes of nonverbal communication for which we treat children and the elderly differently than young or middle aged adults? For example, do we give children and older adults more leniencies when they commit violations of personal space norms?

 **Chapter 4: Listening**

[Using journals to improve listening behavior: An exploratory study](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch04_Article.pdf)
Johnson, I. W., Barker, R. T., & Pearce, C. G. (1995).  *Journal of Business and Technical Communication 9*; 475.

In this study, students made daily written observations of one of their listening behaviors for one week at a time. The authors were trying to discover ways of more effectively teaching listening skills.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What was the most predominant theme that emerged from the student’s journals? What were some of the main reasons students gave for poor listening?
2. Consider that some of the listening problems students reported were attributed to the speaker, some to the message, some to the situation, and some to the student herself or himself. In addition to training in listening skills, what else could be done in a classroom environment to improve student listening? Consider changes that could be made by the speaker, changes that could be made to the message, and changes that could be made in the classroom setting.
3. This study was completed in 1995, and reported many of the same findings as research published in 1957. Do you think there would be different findings if the study were repeated today? Do you think students are generally better listeners today, poorer listeners, or about the same? What evidence can you offer for your judgment?
4. The authors conclude that using journals is an effective way to help students reflect on their own listening behaviors and to ultimately improve their listening skills. Do you agree with the authors?

**Chapter 5: Identities and Perceptions**

[The Role of Identity in the Link between Relationship Thinking and Relationship Satisfaction](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch05_Article.pdf)
Acitelli, L. K., Rogers, S., & Knee, C. R. (1999). *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 591-618.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. The authors introduce the idea of relational self, that is to say the tendency to see oneself in relation to others in general, and indicated that the strength of one’s relational self is more important than biological sex differences in determining satisfaction with relationships. How likely do you think it is that men on the one hand and women on the other hand see themselves in terms of relational self instead of a gendered identity?
2. The authors discovered that in the long term, the outcomes of positive thinking about relationships lead to greater satisfaction for women than for men. Do you think that this may be because women associate themselves with their relationships more closely than men do and give the relationships more thought?
3. Do you think that it helps a couple to develop a close relationship, if they see themselves not just as individuals but as partners, and so adjust their thinking about the relationship so that their satisfaction is interdependent? Would this mean that the partners would suffer from the dialectical tension of autonomy and connectedness?
4. In what ways do the findings of this study contradict or support the arguments in this chapter about the complex levels of self in performance during communication?

**Chapter 6: Talk and Interpersonal Relationships**

[Relational Framing Theory: Drawing inferences about relationships from interpersonal interactions](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch06_Article.pdf)
Solomon, D. H., & McLaren, R. M. (2008).
In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.),  *Engaging Theories in Communication* (pp. 103-115). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, Inc.

Note that this piece actually comes from one of SAGE’s edited books on communication, and has been included here to offer a unique perspective about interpersonal relationships. In this book chapter, the authors describe the basic assumptions of relational framing theory and discuss empirical findings that support the theory. Relational framing theory posits that two substantive dimensions of relational communication, dominance-submissiveness and affiliation-disaffiliation, function as cognitive frames to help people interpret each other’s messages. The theory also states that there is a third dimension of relational judgments, involvement, which is an intensity judgment about the two substantive dimensions.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Relational framing theory draws on a large body of research on relational communication to argue that all communication is about either dominance-submissiveness or affiliation-disaffiliation. Think back on some of your recent interactions. Can you identify which dimension was most relevant for understanding that interaction? Do you agree with this general claim?
2. In the beginning of this reading, the authors describe a number of situations that might seem ambiguous and therefore require a person’s relational frame to fill in the details. What characteristics of interactions might make them or more or less difficult to decipher?
3. The authors provide the picture of the old woman and the young girl as an illustration of how relational frames displace each other. By looking at the picture, you can focus on details that allow you to see the old woman or the young girl, but you cannot see both at the same time. Do you think that people can focus on details of an interaction to purposefully perceive them as relevant to the dominance-submissiveness frame or the affiliation-disaffiliation frame? Do you think people can consciously choose how to frame an interaction or is it always an unconscious process?
4. After someone’s initial framing of an interaction, do you think people can re-frame an interaction? If so, what things might change someone’s initial reaction to an interaction?
5. The authors discuss different cues that might activate relational frames, such as the content of an utterance, the function of a social episode, or people’s dispositional tendencies. Do you think that those cues all carry equal strength in activating relational frames? For example, when might the function of a social episode (e.g., a job interview) influence frame activation more than the exact words they are using in that interaction? Can you think of an example where you had to rely on one cue more than another to understand what the interaction was about?

**Chapter 7: Groups and Leaders**

[Wise Ways: Leadership as Relationship](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch07_Article.pdf)

Chatterjee, D. (2006).

*Journal of Human Values*, 12(2), 153-160.

Discussion Questions:

1. This article describes leadership as a process of evolving adaptive cultures by relating to reality in new ways and encouraging other people to relate to each other in novel ways as well. Although the article supports the position that we have taken in this book, it would be useful to give specific examples of the way in which such changes could take place. What examples can you think of that would bring about such relational change?
2. What do you make of the author’s proposal that a transformational system works best when monolog is changed into multilogue, that is to say when all voices are given an opportunity to be heard and leadership is not simply a top-down process.
3. The author argues that there are fundamental traditions of wisdom in the world that have shed light on fundamental values for personal and organizational excellence. This suggests that there is a transcultural way to run groups. Do you agree that such a possibility is realistic, or are groups in some countries necessarily going to be run differently from those in others?
4. Take the example of two different organizations which have their own culture, which would be a much lower level of analysis than that which is offered by the author of the present article, and see if you can suggest ways in which two different organizations could involve themselves in a dialogue about how they could transform the two systems into one.
5. Is the nature of organizations necessarily tied in with the nature of culture or not?

**Chapter 8: Culture, and Communication:**

[Mate selection in Jordan: Effects of sex, socio-economic status, and culture](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch08_Article.pdf)
Khallad, Y. (2005)  *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, Vol. 22, No. 2, 155-168.*

***Discussion Questions:***

1. The author finds a considerable amount of similarity between the way in which Americans and Jordanians share the same kind of sex differences in preference for potential mates, with males preferring good looks and females preferring economic resources and commitment. Does this show that there is a universal quality to the preferences of males and females in mates?
2. The findings also observed that the Jordanians have disinclination to consider marrying people who have previously been married and are now divorced. The author attributes this to a male preference for certainty about faithfulness in females who may bear their children, so that the male can be certain that any children are his own. What alternative explanation could you offer in terms of culture or religion?
3. What role do you believe culture plays in the choices that people make in expressing their preferences for attractiveness in partners? Note that those people who are considered beautiful in one culture may not be considered beautiful in another. How can you account for this in terms of culture?
4. Do you think that the findings would be likely to be different if the study had been done in a comparison between America and France? How would you test your hypothesis and connect it to the concepts of culture discussed in this chapter?
5. How much importance to you place on the fact that the subjects in this particular study were relatively young and intelligent (college students)? Do you think it is more likely that older people would be more traditional in their cultural beliefs or does the study show that this is not really a relevant issue?

**Chapter 9: Technology in Everyday Life**

[Social interactions across media: Interpersonal communication on the Internet, telephone, and face-to-face](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch09_Article.pdf)
Baym, N. K., Zhang, Y. B., & Lin, M-C. (2004).  *New Media & Society*, 6, 299–318.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Before reading this article what were your assumptions about the way people communicate via the Internet, telephones, and in face-to-face communication and why did you make these assumptions?
2. How were early studies about the Internet possibly skewing their data through the construction of their studies?
3. Why did the authors use multiple methods to conduct their studies? Did this help or hurt the studies?

**Chapter 10: Relational Uses and Understanding of Media:**

[Attachment styles and intimate television viewing: Insecurely forming relationships in a parasocial way](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch10_Article.pdf)

Cole, T., & Leets, L. (1999).

*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 16, 495–511.

Discussion Questions

1. This study states that "Avoidant" individuals who tend to avoid relational intimacy will also avoid imagined intimacy in a parasocial relationship. Using information from the article and your chapter, what are some other reasons a person might avoid parasocial relationships?
2. How did the understanding of parasocial relationships evolve over time?
3. Compare and contrast the relational development framework with an attachment theory approach to understanding parasocial relationships. Which approach provides a fuller understanding of the concept and why?

**Chapter 11: Preparing for a Public Presentation**

[The Affordances of Blogging: A Case Study in Culture and Technological Effects.](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch11_Article.pdf)
Graves, L. (2007).  *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 31, 331.

**Discussion Questions**

This chapter explores the ways people use evidence to support their claims in public arguments. One of the richest sources of public arguments in contemporary society is blogs – websites where entries are "made in journal style and displayed in reverse chronological order" (Wikipedia). Graves offers an historical context for the cultural practice of blogging and argues that news-related blogs offer not only a forum for opinion but also a forum for open, collaborative analysis. In other words, bloggers use their sites to argue what is and is not real, true and known. This makes them a rich site for analyzing how evidence is used to support public arguments.

1. Compare and contrast: How are bloggers the same as public speakers? How are bloggers and public speakers different?
2. What are the affordances of blogging? How do they differ from the affordances of public speaking? Consider the differences between audience members’ ability to respond to a speaker and blog readers’ ability to post a response to a blogger.
3. The author quotes an analogy – a comparison that connects an unfamiliar idea with a familiar idea: "Asking if blogs will replace news outlets is like asking if farmer’s markets will replace restaurants." How does this quotation reflect the author’s argument? Does he agree or disagree?
4. Find one of the blogs described in the article (e.g., Daily Kos, Next Hurrah, Talking Points Memo). Read one of the postings and determine the general and specific purposes and the thesis statements. What does the blogger assume about his or her audience’s attitudes, beliefs and values?
5. As described in the literature review, some communication scholars maintain that new communication technologies have always been suspect and that contemporary society’s fascination with news-related blogging is just another way that people communicate – printed books, telephones, Internet. Are these just different ways of doing the same thing we always have done? Graves argues that blogs exist as the "intersection of technology and sociocultural practice." How is this characterization similar to or different from other communication technologies?
6. Consider the ethics of blogging to an anonymous "audience." Should there be limits on what bloggers can say or write? Should there be limits on what governmental sources can "mine" in Internet postings? Consider this author’s findings in terms of free speech protections.

**Chapter 12: Developing a Public Presentation**

[Testing Public (Un)Certainty of Science: Media Representations of Global Warming.](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch12_Article.pdf)

Corbett, J. B. & Durfee, J. L. (2004).

*Science Communication*, 26, 129.

Discussion Questions

1. Chapter Twelve explains how the sequence and structure of evidence offered in a public speech affects how an audience understands the speaker’s argument. Although dealing with written communication, this study tests how slight changes in the order and content of a message can change the readers’ perceptions of the truth of a report. Briefly describe how the four messages used in this experiment differ from one another. What do the terms "context" and "controversy" mean in this study?
2. This article shows how media messages frame scientific issues for an audience. A public speaker, through the selection and organization of evidence, performs the same function. The authors find a significant difference in how people who were already convinced about global warming perceived the messages, as compared to those individuals who were uncertain about global warming. Given the nature of uncertainty as described in this article, what guidelines should an ethical public speaker follow in presenting information? How does this relate to the speaker’s purpose? To audience analysis and adaptation?
3. What two strategies are used by journalists when sources offer conflicting claims about the topic? What do the authors of this article argue are the problems with these strategies? If you are giving a speech about a controversial topic, and you perceive the audience has a great deal of uncertainty surrounding this topic, what would the authors of this study likely advise about the presentation of evidence? Why?
4. One question this research explores is the nature of media reporting. As Duck and McMahan have made clear, speakers and their audiences dwell in a vast landscape of information. Considering the findings in this study, compare messages received from journalistic reports in the media to messages received from a public speaker/fellow classmate in the classroom to messages received from a scientific source. Which is more credible? Which is more comprehensible? Which is more powerful? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

**Chapter 13: Relating Through Informative and Persuasive Speeches**

[President Bush’s Enthymeme of Evil: The Amalgamation of 9/11, Iraq, and Moral Values.](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch13_Article.pdf)
Smith, C. A. (2005). *American Behavioral Scientist; 49, 32.*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. The author of this article uses polling reports of public perceptions to distinguish what came to be understood as facts from what the public generally understood to be true.
2. Ted Windt’s model of presidential speeches of international crisis suggests that there is a conventional way of declaring war, and an expected way that a U. S. President should behave in a time of crisis. How does Smith argue that President Bush re-aligned those conventions?
3. In order to declare war, we must have enemies. How are enemies created and maintained?
4. Using this article as a guide, search for copies of the speeches and interviews the author cites and draw some of your own conclusions. Can you see dynamics he missed? Can you draw different interpretations of public perceptions or of the President’s behavior?
(see: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/rhetoricofterrorism.htm>9/11/01-10/07/02)

**Chapter 14: Delivering a Public Presentation**

[Nonverbal Communication and Image Building: Their Importance to the Business Professor.](http://www.sagepub.com/bocstudy/articles/Ch14_Article.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)
Scott, J. L., O’Neal, J. W., & Cheatham, C. (1994).  *Journal of Management Education; 18*; 105

**Discussion Questions**

1. The authors describe the ways in which a professor’s credibility and effectiveness rest on her or his nonverbal behaviors. What are the nonverbal behaviors and characteristics of an effective professor?
2. What is the "Dr. Fox effect?"
3. There is certainly a difference in contemporary standards of dress for men and women. How does this research reported in this study reinforce those standards?
4. The authors describe a set of non-verbal behaviors as "high expressive." What does this mean? What is included in a "high expressive" mode of delivery?
5. How does this research inform your work as a public speaker? Does dress affect your perception of a speaker? If a classmate dressed up for a classroom speech, would you view them as more credible or informed?