

# 1.7 Simplified Models of Communication

## Aim

- To enable the students decide upon a common description of communication
- To enable the students visualise the communication process
- To examine appropriate communication models for community and be able to conceptualise one's own communication model.

## Procedure

- Two of the students will play the part of a father and son in a three minute dialogue. The father will be asking the son about his school activities.
- Three students will engage in a conversation about an accident they have witnessed.
- Six students will engage in a conversation about a football match they watched over the weekend.

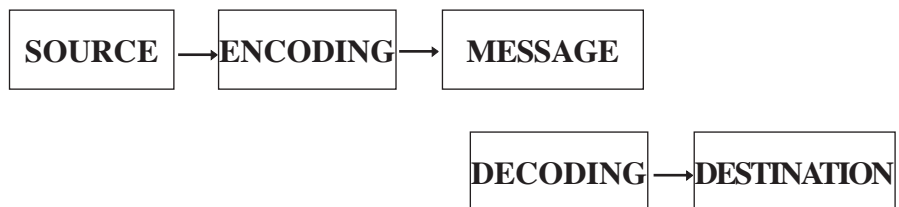
While these discussions are going on, the students listen carefully to the whole process and later try to capture the conversations in graphic form (models) on separate sheets of paper. The students then share the results of their work. They address the questions: 'Were there any differences in the processes?' If so, what were the differences and what are the reasons for them? Secondly, did trying to capture the processes in graphic and diagram form help in understanding the process better?

## Input

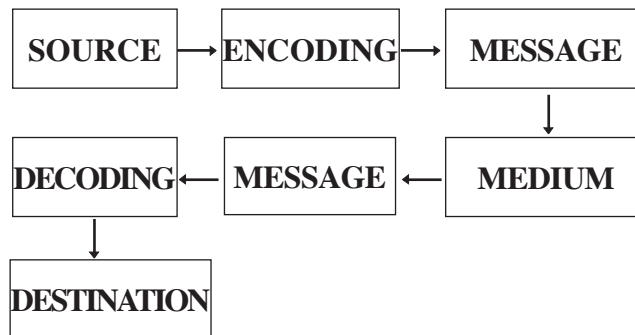
Communication takes place around three elements. The source, the message and the destination



Another element also has to be recognised - the element of encoding and decoding. Encoding is putting the message into a manner that can be understood by the other, and decoding is the act of taking that manner and making meaning of it for yourself. The model then looks like the one below.



Next we have to add the process that is used to send the message e.g. face to face speech, radio, television, acting, music etc.

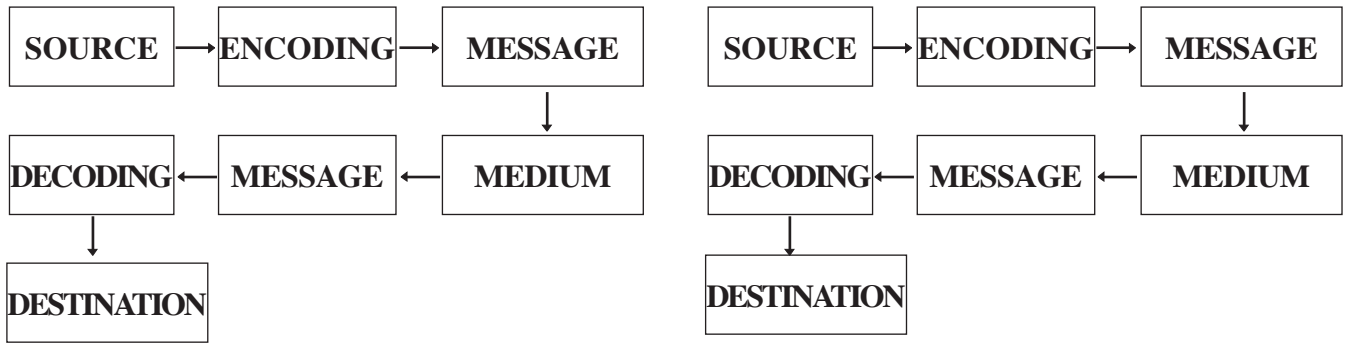


Finally, another element - the Feedback is added and now we have:

## Materials Required

- Request the students for 11 volunteers.





Another example model is that of the three T's

T1 - Stands for Transmit. This is done by the communicator and once the message is sent out, the responsibility ends there. It is an act requiring only the sender and the necessary equipment to send the message out

T2 - Stands for Transfer. This occurs once the receiver receives the message, but does it ensure that communication has taken place?

T3 - Stands for Transact. It implies doing something together. The receiver is not merely echoing the message, but adding to it, responding, sending feedback, receiving new or revised messages and responding again and again and again. Both parties now become sender and receiver.

### Community Communication Model

The relevant and more appropriate forms of communication in community are interpersonal communication and group communication. The essence of the African way of life is relating, interacting and sharing of information and messages. A person's attitude towards his neighbour is very important and the process of communication is one of 'contacting'. This is a two-way process of dialogue (verbal and/or non-verbal) whose purpose is to achieve mutual understanding. Thus, the convergence model of communication is the more appropriate one that describes in simplified graphic form the reality of the process of interaction between two or more people within the African context. This model conceptualises human communication as a two-way process of dialogue whose purpose is to reach mutual understanding and agreement between two or more individuals or groups. Mutual understanding becomes the primary function of the process. In contrast to the linear models of communication, the convergence model presents the process of communication as a cyclical process of convergence or divergence. A process in which there is negotiation, of convergence and divergence, through which competing needs are shared, perceived and mutually understood.

### Review

1. Communication takes place around three elements. The source, the message and the destination
2. Other elements such as encoding, decoding, medium and feedback are also added to make the communication process more complete.
3. Another example model is that of the three T's i.e. Transmit, Transfer and Transact.
4. The relevant and more appropriate forms of communication in community are interpersonal communication and group communication.
5. The convergence model conceptualises human communication as a two-way process of dialogue whose purpose is to reach mutual understanding and agreement between two or more individuals or groups.

### Reflection

Reflect on the way communication takes place in your respective cultural/ethnic group and describe this in a convergence model. Accompany this with a two page essay/paper explaining the model (from every cultural community).

### Relevant Skills

Observe a group of people communicating either on TV, radio or even your institution's way of communicating to students or staff. Using your own ingenuity draw a model to represent the communication that takes place, putting factors such as noise and feedback into play.

### Resources

AMECEA and IMBISA. Basic Human Communication. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

### References

AMECEA and IMBISA. Communication Culture and Community. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.