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Chapter 1: Why Study Persuasion?

Key Terms and Concepts

persuasion as an art and science
pervasiveness of persuasion
word of mouth (WOM)
buzz marketing
tipping points
“the law of the few”
mavens
connectors
salespeople
context
stickiness
scalability
effortless transfer
gamification

instrumental function
communication competence
knowledge function
habitual persuasion
defensive function
third person effect
debunking function
counter-intuitive finding
manipulation
“tool” analogy of persuasion
meta-analysis
propaganda
indoctrination

Chapter Summary

- I. Persuasion is everywhere; it is ubiquitous.
- II. Persuasion can be thought of as both an art and a science.
 - A. While much is known about processes of social influence, the scientific study of persuasion is still in its infancy.
 - B. Persuasion isn't evil or manipulative. It is an essential, indispensable feature of human interaction.
- III. Persuasion is worth studying because it is pervasive; it is inevitable and unavoidable.
 - A. It is part and parcel of the “people professions.”
 - B. The average person is exposed to hundreds, if not thousands, of ads per day.
 - C. Buzz marketing, also known as word of mouth (WOM) has gained favor because it is cheap, self-perpetuating, and effective.
 - 1) Social media are increasingly important channels for persuasion.
 - 2) Sentiment tracking relies on social media to identify topics, brands, and threads that are trending.
 - D. Support for an idea, a brand, or a phenomenon by the influential “law of the few” creates momentum that ultimately becomes the tipping point, or a self-perpetuating persuasive message.
 - 1) Malcolm Gladwell (2000) suggests that certain people act as mavens, connectors, and salespeople.
 - 2) Context, stickiness, scalability, and effortless transfer are essential for reaching a tipping point
 - 3) There are no guarantees that viral marketing will succeed, just as there are no guarantees that any persuasive campaign will succeed.
 - E. Gamification is designed to increase consumer engagement via active participation.
 - F. Persuasion is found in not-so-obvious places like the natural sciences, the arts, and a variety of other communication contexts.
 - G. Weird persuasion is often aimed at generating controversy or buzz and, hence, free publicity.
 - H. The interpersonal arena is where influence attempts are most prevalent and have their greatest impact.
- IV. Learning about persuasion serves four basic functions:
 - A. Learning about persuasion performs an instrumental function by enhancing the student's ability to use persuasion effectively and appropriately.
 - B. Learning about persuasion fulfills a knowledge function by increasing the student's understanding of how persuasion works.
 - 1) People are often unaware of their own habitual patterns of persuasion.
 - C. Learning about persuasion serves a defensive function by making the student a more discriminating consumer of persuasive messages.
 - 1) People tend to underestimate the influence of advertising on themselves and overestimate its effects on others, a phenomenon known as the third-person effect.
 - D. Learning about persuasion performs a debunking function by alerting the student to false or outdated notions of how persuasion works.
 - 1) Many common sense notions about persuasion are mistaken.

- 2) Persuasion research has yielded insightful, counter-intuitive findings.
- V. Two common criticisms regarding the study of persuasion merit consideration:
- A. Some claim that studying persuasion is tantamount to teaching manipulation.
- 1) Persuasion research focuses on the means of influence, which tend to be amoral, rather than moral or immoral.
 - 2) Persuasion can be likened to a tool, such as a hammer. The tool itself isn't good or bad. The end or purpose for which the tool is used may be good or bad.
 - 3) A persuader's motives, more than the persuasive means, determine how ethical or unethical a given influence attempt is.
 - 4) The study of persuasion performs a defensive function, arming people against unscrupulous influence attempts.
 - 5) People who denounce the study of persuasion are themselves advocating a persuasive position.
- B. Some claim that persuasion findings are overly qualified or contradictory.
- 1) Human behavior is complex, so one should expect a certain amount of complexity in how persuasion operates.
 - 2) A number of meaningful, yet qualified, generalizations have been established through meta-analyses.
- VI. An important part of the process of learning how to persuade involves learning how to persuade ethically.
- VII. (Box 1.1) Persuasion, propaganda, and indoctrination are related terms.
- A. Propaganda and indoctrination have a pejorative meaning and are usually used to refer to persuasion used by the opposition.
- B. Four basic characteristics of propaganda are identified, along with some common propaganda techniques.
- VIII. (Box 1.2) The advice on what to watch out for when buying a car illustrates the defensive function of persuasion.

Exercises and Learning Activities

Exercise 1-A, Pervasiveness of Persuasion Exercise

Principle Illustrated: The ubiquity of persuasion

Purpose: To demonstrate the pervasive, ubiquitous nature of persuasion to students.

Time Required: approximately 10 minutes

Directions: Ask students to look around the classroom and identify as many persuasive stimuli as they can. The instructor might want to divide students up into teams and have the teams compete to see which team can spot the most persuasive stimuli.

Examples of stimuli to look for include:

- official signs (e.g., no smoking, maximum occupancy, please turn lights off when leaving room, etc.)
- posters, flyers, or other announcements on bulletin boards
- slogans, insignia, or logos on students' clothing, backpacks, or notebooks
- graffiti on desks, chairs, or walls
- the physical layout and arrangement of the room; furniture, equipment, space (the layout may signify power or status differences, or encourage or discourage one form of communication over another)
- students' nonverbal cues (seating proximity, body position, eye contact, etc.)
- distractions, such as outside noise, fans, poor acoustics, smells, etc.

In the process of identifying persuasive stimuli, students will gain an appreciation of how many messages are competing for their attention at a given time, even in the rather limited environs of a college classroom. Students will note that some persuasive stimuli are more subtle than others. Students may also disagree about what constitutes a persuasive stimulus, which will get them thinking about some of the definitional issues discussed in Chapter 2.

Exercise 1-B, Ethical or Unethical Persuasion?

Principle Illustrated: Ethical issues surrounding persuasion

Purpose: To get students to reflect on the ethical issues surrounding any choice to persuade. This exercise sets the stage for getting students to appreciate the fact that every persuasive effort is fraught with ethical implications. The

instructor may want to reinforce the authors' perspective, which is amplified in Chapter 16, that it is a persuader's motives that determine primarily how ethical or unethical a given influence attempt is, and only secondarily the means of persuasion which are used.

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Directions: Box 1.3 in the text (see p. 19) identifies 14 hypothetical scenarios, each of which contains ethical implications for persuasion. Simply ask students to rate how ethical or unethical the strategy used in each scenario is, based on a 5-point scale (1= highly ethical, 5= highly unethical). Call on students and ask them why they evaluated a given strategy as they did. The instructor may also want to ask students which of the 14 strategies they perceive to be the most ethical, and which they perceive as the least ethical.

Scenario 1: This situation entails deception designed to benefit the deceiver, and an appeal to pity. Ask students if it matters whether the student is genuinely crying or not.

Scenario 2: This situation involves deception intended to benefit the receiver. There is also an "ends vs. means" controversy: Ask students if the outcome—giving the patient hope—justifies the use of deception.

Scenario 3: This situation involves adapting a message to the receivers' frame of reference, rather than the persuader's personal convictions.

Scenario 4: The central issue here is the use of *ad hominem* appeals (character attacks, mudslinging). Ask students if it matters whether the scandal is true or not.

Scenario 5: This situation involves deception in the form of withholding or suppressing information rather than an outright falsehood.

Scenario 6: The central issue here is the conflict between a legal duty vs. a moral duty. Ask students if, in the context of a criminal trial, achieving an acquittal is more important than disclosing the truth. From a prosecutor's standpoint, is obtaining a conviction ever more important than the truth?

Scenario 7: This situation involves a potential misuse or abuse of credibility on the part of the minister, as well as the use of *ad hominem* appeals.

Scenario 8: This scenario raises the issue of whether being sincere or genuine is enough, or whether ethical persuasion also entails a responsibility to have one's facts straight and be accurate when attempting to persuade.

Scenario 9: This situation involves the use of nonverbal persuasion and an emotional appeal (*pathos*). Ask students if it makes any difference whether the defendant had seen his wife or children in many years.

Scenario 10: This situation entails the use of deception and ulterior motives in persuasion. Ask students if their answers would be any different if the scenario involved a heterosexual male student asking a heterosexual female student to get together. If so, why?

Scenario 11: This scenario involves the use of fear appeals. Ask students if it matters whether the fear appeal is true, e.g., scaring a child about the potential dangers of talking to strangers.

Scenario 12: This situation entails deception in the form of withholding or suppressing information, as did Scenario 5, but in this case with a more vulnerable target audience.

Scenario 13: This scenario involves the use of threats as a means of gaining compliance. Ask students if it would matter if the wife went to a coffee house instead, or if the husband threatened to go to a bar and play pool.

Scenario 14: This situation involves adapting a message to the receivers' frame of reference, as did Scenario 3. Scenario 3 is more generic, whereas Scenario 14 involves the political arena, a context in which some students may believe "anything goes."

Exercise 1-C, Ice Breaker and Reflection Activity

Principle Illustrated: Functions of studying persuasion

Purpose: To get to know students and reinforce the practical value of the course.

Time Required: 20- 45 minutes, depending on the number of students in the course

Directions: First, ask each student to write down (a) one communicative skill he/she would like to develop or improve on to increase his/her persuasiveness (*instrumentality*), (b) one persuasive context he/she would like to learn more about (*knowledge and awareness*), (c) one scenario or context where he/she tends to be an easy mark (*defense*), and (d) one common sense or “homespun” assumption held by the average person about how persuasion works (*debunking*).

Next, have each student identify him/herself, state his/her major (or probable major), and list his/her answers to prompts ‘a’ – ‘d’. When each student has finished speaking, break down the prompts in terms of the four benefits of studying persuasion. Be sure to use the students’ examples during the debriefing. Emphasize that through the text, lectures, assignments, and activities, students will become more skilled and knowledgeable in all four functions.

Exercise 1-D, Are You a Connector?

Principle Illustrated: Malcolm Gladwell’s Tipping Points

Purpose: To illustrate the “law of the few” from Gladwell’s Tipping Points.

Time Required: 20-30 minutes, depending on discussion after activity

After completing the activity, the instructor may want to reinforce the role played by connectors. According to Gladwell, the positions of influence (e.g. maven, connector, salesperson) fall to a selected few, so they should not be disappointed if they find that they are not connectors.

This activity has been adapted from Malcolm Gladwell’s website.

http://www.gladwell.com/tippingpoint/tp_excerpt2.html

First, create a bank of 250 random last names. You can use a random surname generator such as those below, or simply look up names in a phone directory (say, every 100th name on every 12th page, for example).

<http://www.namegenerator.biz/last-name-generator.php>

<http://www.atlantagamer.org/iGM/RandomNames/index.php> (choose by gender or culture)

<http://random-name-generator.info/random/?n=100&g=1&st=2>

<http://www.xtra-rant.com/gennames/>

Next, hand out the list of names to students. Give them approximately 5 minutes to scan the list to see how many individuals they know whose surnames are included in the bank. “Know” means that if the student saw the person at a coffee shop, the mall, or other place, she/he would stop and say “Hi.”

According to Gladwell, the average person in the classroom will likely not know more than 50 people. This activity illustrates that few of us are true “connectors,” thus highlighting the “law of the few.” Keep in mind, students may exaggerate about how many people they know.

Lead a discussion on “the law of the few.” Ask students about their reactions to the phenomenon of viral marketing. Do they agree that social influencers are key to influencing consumers? Who are the connectors in their circle of contacts, e.g., the people who seem to know everybody. Finally, ask students if they want to get to know more people and attempt to achieve the role of a connector.

Web Links

1. Principles Illustrated: The ubiquitous nature of persuasion; practicality of the study of persuasion.

Dr. Kelton Rhoads (a) provides an overview of several disciplines that study persuasive communication (<http://www.workingpsychology.com/persdisc.html>), (b) provides an interesting essay documenting the prevalence of persuasion in our lives (<http://www.workingpsychology.com/evryinfl.html>), and (c) cites examples showing the value of learning about persuasion (<http://www.workingpsychology.com/whatcan.html>).

2.Principle Illustrated: The power of propaganda.

This U.S. National Archives & Records Administration exhibit shows some interesting propaganda posters used during World War II. Good Power Point visuals.

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_home.html).

3. Principle Illustrated: Positive aspects of persuasion.

This link from the Department of Health and Human Services provides an overview of health communication and outlines some characteristics of effective health communication messages.

(<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/HTML/Volume1/11HealthCom.htm>).

Test Questions

Multiple Choice Questions

1. According to Gass & Seiter, persuasion is best thought of as

- a. a science
- b. an art
- c. a science and an art
- d. a social science

Answer: C

Page 3

2. Which of the following statements best reflects the view of persuasion offered by Gass & Seiter?

- a. On balance, persuasion probably does more harm than good
- b. Persuasion is an essential, desirable feature of human interaction
- c. Persuasion emphasizes manipulation, communication emphasizes cooperation
- d. Persuasion is a necessary, but unfortunate, fact of life

Answer: B

Page 4

3. To say that persuasion is “pervasive” means

- a. influence attempts are found everywhere you find people communicating
- b. it is difficult to define what is and isn't persuasion
- c. persuasion plays a major role in the “people” professions, but a minor or negligible role in the natural sciences
- d. influence attempts are usually explicit or overt, rather than subtle or implicit

Answer: A

Pages 4-10

4. The arena in which persuasive attempts enjoy the greatest likelihood of success is

- a. print media
- b. television
- c. cinema
- d. interpersonal
- e. online

Answer: D

Page 11

5. One reason for studying persuasion is to learn more about how and why people respond to persuasive messages. This is called the

- a. attentiveness function
- b. knowledge function
- c. defensive function
- d. debunking function

Answer: B

Page 12

6. An example of habitual persuasion is

- a. arguing with a friend about an editorial in the newspaper
- b. negotiating with your parents over how much of your tuition they should pay
- c. claiming "the dog ate it" whenever you turn in a late assignment
- d. asking a professor to explain why you got the grade you did on an essay

Answer: C

Page 12

7. The debunking function

- a. helps us defend ourselves against unscrupulous influence attempts.
- b. serves to correct erroneous perceptions about how persuasion works.
- c. assists in making us more discriminating consumers of persuasive messages.
- d. helps us avoid habitual or mindless persuasion.

Answer: B

Page 15

8. When politicians are shown drinking a beer, shopping at Wal-Mart, eating at McDonald's, or going bowling, they are employing which propaganda technique?

- a. testimonials
- b. bandwagon effect
- c. transfer
- d. card-stacking
- e. plain folks appeal

Answer: E

Page 14

9. The debunking function of persuasion helps one to

- a. arm him/herself against influence attempts by unethical persuaders
- b. gain greater awareness about false stereotypes and myths regarding persuasion
- c. identify different elements and features of a persuasive message
- d. design and present a persuasive message on his/her own

Answer: B

Page 15

10. Which of the following best reflects the view of persuasion offered in the text?

- a. People actually aren't all that gullible or easy to persuade
- b. There is a sucker born every minute
- c. Anyone can be persuaded if you know the right button to push
- d. Persuaders know far more about persuading than researchers do about how persuasion works

Answer: A

Page 18

11. Which of the following statements about the relationship of persuasion to the arts is most accurate?

- a. Artists are the most temperamental of all persuaders.
- b. Artists are usually too wrapped up in their work to care about persuading others.
- c. Art is as much about persuasion as it is about creating aesthetic works.
- d. Art is usually created for "art's sake" and not as a means of influencing others.

Answer: C

Page 9

12. Persuasion research often produces “counter-intuitive” findings, e.g., results that are contrary to what common sense would dictate. Such findings highlight the _____ function performed by the study of persuasion.

- a. pragmatic
- b. empirical
- c. defensive
- d. debunking

Answer: D

Page 15

13. In using a tool analogy to describe persuasion, Gass & Seiter wish to show that

- a. a persuader, like a carpenter, is only as good as her/his tools
- b. it is the poor persuader (or carpenter) who blames his tools
- c. whether persuasion is good or bad depends on the purpose for which it is used
- d. specific persuasive situations call for specific persuasive tools

Answer: C

Page 15

14. Which persuasive strategy below is designed to increase consumer engagement through active participation?

- a. online advertising
- b. sentiment tracking
- c. product placement
- d. gamification

Answer D

Page 7

15. A meta-analysis helps persuasion researchers to

- a. determine if a persuasive strategy is ethical or unethical.
- b. formulate universal generalizations regarding persuasion.
- c. identify what their persuasive goal or objective should be.
- d. reconcile previous inconsistencies in the literature.

Answer: D

Page 18

16. Which of the following generalizations drawn from persuasion research is most accurate?

- a. Current studies, from the 1970s through the 1990s, tend to contradict past studies, those from the 1940s through the 60s
- b. The results of persuasion studies have been remarkably consistent, dating back to the time of Aristotle
- c. Newly developed statistical techniques have made it possible to resolve a number of previous inconsistencies in the literature
- d. Research findings are largely consistent, but there are dramatic differences in theories of persuasion

Answer: C

Page 18

17. A reporter asks a politician, “Do you favor or oppose gay adoptions?” The politician responds, “I’m for families. The family unit is the backbone of our society. Family bonds are vital.” The politician’s response best reflects which propaganda technique?

- a. smoke and mirrors
- b. pomp and circumstance
- c. card-stacking
- d. glittering generalities

Answer: D

Page 14

18. Which of the following statements best characterizes persuasion, as opposed to propaganda?

- a. It operates most effectively in the interpersonal arena
- b. It is practiced by organized groups and institutions
- c. It has a strong ideological bent
- d. It tends to rely on ethically suspect methods of influence

Answer: A

Pages 11, 14

19. Which of the following statements about propaganda is most accurate?

- a. Propaganda is a feature of totalitarian regimes, rather than democratic societies
- b. The government uses propaganda frequently, but the private sector rarely does so
- c. The term “propaganda” has a negative connotation, and is usually used in a pejorative sense
- d. Propaganda tends to be political in nature, rather than religious or commercial

Answer: C

Page 14

20. According to Gass & Seiter, persuasion

- a. occurs primarily in the mass media
- b. is rare in the natural or "hard" sciences
- c. is more common in mediated than non-mediated settings
- d. occurs in a variety of non-obvious or even weird contexts

Answer: D

Page 10

21. Which of the following justifications for the study of persuasion do Gass & Seiter identify as most compelling?

- a. Social influence is an interdisciplinary area of scholarly inquiry
- b. Influence is generally manipulative
- c. Persuasion is the cornerstone of many positive, pro-social activities
- d. To be well paid in the “people professions,” one must be able to influence others

Answer: C

Page 4

22. Word-of-mouth marketing (WOM) based on social networks is also known as

- a. viral marketing
- b. multi-modal marketing
- c. branding
- d. consumer-centric marketing
- e. decentralized persuasion

Answer: A

Pages 4-5

23. All of the following are reasons why buzzmarketing has become popular **except**

- a. it is more expensive than traditional media advertising
- b. it is becoming harder to reach large audiences via traditional media
- c. TiVO and digital video recorders allow viewers to ignore commercials entirely
- d. it generates its own free publicity

Answer: A

Page 5

24. Which of the following statements about buzz marketing is most accurate?

- a. Buzz marketing relies heavily on TV and print media
- b. Buzz marketing depends upon the selling power of celebrity endorsers
- c. Buzz marketing relies on word-of-mouth recommendations
- d. Buzz marketing is aimed at young, urban consumers

Answer: C

Pages 4-5

25. Buzz marketing has become a pervasive persuasion strategy because

- a. consumers prefer traditional advertisements.
- b. consumers rely on word of mouth in their social circles
- c. consumers enjoy clever advertisements and commercials
- d. consumers are comfortable with corporate-sponsored marketing

Answer: B

Pages 4-5

26. According to the "Tipping Point" theory, people who have lots of expertise and know-how are known as:

- a. connectors
- b. salespeople
- c. mavens
- d. geeks
- e. nerds

Answer: C

Page 6

27. According to Gladwell's concept of Tipping Points, a product or idea can't take off unless it has inherent appeal. This is known as

- a. gravitational pull
- b. scalability
- c. momentum magic
- d. stickiness
- e. gravitas

Answer: D

Page 6

28. Kiyoko is known by her friends as the fashion expert. She is always ahead of the curve on fashion trends. According to Malcolm Gladwell, Kiyoko would be termed a

- a. connector
- b. maven
- c. hawker
- d. salesperson
- e. trendspotter

Answer: B

Page 6

29. In regards to ethical communication, it isn't so much what strategies and tactics a persuader uses as

- a. the amount of skill she/he has
- b. the events that take place
- c. whom she/he can influence
- d. why she/he uses them

Answer: D

Page 15

30. Which of the following statements best describes the third person effect? People tend to

- a. overestimate the influence of persuasion on themselves and underestimate its effects on others
- b. underestimate the influence of a group on an individual member
- c. underestimate the influence of persuasion on themselves and overestimate its effects on others
- d. underestimate the influence of the individual member on the group

Answer: C

Page 13

31. People who often provide suggestions to their circle of friends such as, "You should try it," "You have to see this movie," and "You need to buy it, it is the best thing yet!" are termed

- a. connectors
- b. prompters
- c. mavens
- d. salespersons

Answer: D

Page 6

32. Sentiment tracking is most closely associated with

- a. social media
- b. print advertising
- c. television advertisements
- d. word of mouth

Answer: A

Page 5

Essay Questions

1. In what setting or context do influence attempts tend to be most effective? Why?
2. Provide an example of “habitual” persuasion, and explain how such habitual patterns of persuasion can be overcome.
3. What do the authors mean when they say that learning about persuasion performs a “defensive” function?
4. What is the third-person effect? Provide a specific example of how it applies to persuasion.
5. Explain what the “debunking” function is as it applies to persuasion research, and provide an example of an empirical finding that illustrates this function.
6. Identify one of the chief criticisms leveled against the study of persuasion, and explain one of Gass & Seiter’s replies to the criticism.
7. Identify what you believe to be a modern-day example of propaganda, and explain how it satisfies the characteristics associated with propaganda.
8. Use personal examples and anecdotes to defend the statement “Very little of the good that we see in the world could be accomplished without persuasion.”
9. Identify the conditions by which viral marketing is successful. Include how and why viral marketing becomes “hit or miss” in persuading others.

Chapter 2: What Constitutes Persuasion?

Key Terms and Concepts

terms closely related to persuasion

pure persuasion

borderline persuasion

source-centered views

intent criterion (intentionality)

intent litmus test for persuasion vs. social influence

socialization processes

unintended receiver effect

difficulty of determining intent

effects criterion

receiver-oriented definitions

persuasion as a process vs. a product

linear view of persuasion

boomerang effect

free will and conscious awareness criterion

persuasion and coercion as closely related

unconscious criteria in decision-making

freedom/coercion is often a matter of degree

product planting and WOM operate at a low level of awareness

symbolic action criterion

advertising relies on images more than words

looking at text alone is fragmented

interpersonal versus intrapersonal persuasion

self-persuasion (denial, rationalizing) is possible

Gass and Seiter model of persuasion

contextual features of persuasion

number of communicators

synchronous vs. asynchronous communication

ratio of verbal to nonverbal cues

nature and type of media

goals of the participants

socio-cultural factors

Gass and Seiter definition of persuasion

Not everything is persuasion

sneezing, tripping, torture, psychic phenomena

Dual Process models of persuasion

the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion (ELM)

central route, or central processing

peripheral route, or peripheral processing

motivation to process a message

level of involvement

need for cognition

ability to process a message

central processing and persistence of persuasion

Heuristic-Systematic Model of persuasion (HSM)

systematic processing

heuristic processing

decision rules

heuristic cues

simultaneous processing

sufficiency principle

Unimodel of persuasion

Chapter Summary

I. There is no clear consensus on what the term “persuasion” means.

A. Different definitions emphasize different aspects of persuasion.

B. Some definitions emphasize “pure” cases of persuasion, while others include “borderline” cases of persuasion as well. Consider the hypothetical situations in Box 2.1.

II. Various definitions of persuasion may be categorized according to five limiting criteria.

A. Source-oriented definitions emphasize intentionality as a defining characteristic of persuasion.

B. Some authors distinguish between persuasion and social influence, based on an intent criterion; e.g., persuasion is intentional, social influence is not.

C. Problems with relying on an intent criterion include:

1) Influence may be accidental or unconscious, or may operate at a very low level of awareness.

2) Persuaders aren't always aware of their intentions.

3) Unintended receivers may be influenced by persuasive messages.

4) There are difficulties involved in determining a persuader's intent.

5) There may be intra-audience effects, e.g., receivers persuade one another.

6) An intent requirement emphasizes a linear view of persuasion.

D. Receiver-oriented definitions emphasize effects as the defining characteristic of persuasion.

E. Problems with relying on an effects criterion include:

1) An effects criterion emphasizes persuasion as a product, or outcome, rather than a process.

2) An effects criterion entails a linear view of the persuasion process, from the source to the receiver. In reality, influence attempts are often mutual or reciprocal.

3) There are inherent difficulties in measuring or assessing persuasive effects.

- 4) The success of an influence attempt depends on the point of view of the perceiver.
- F. Definitions of persuasion can be based on the amount of free choice or free will granted to receivers.
- G. Problems with relying on free choice or free will as a limiting criterion include:
 - 1) It is difficult to clearly differentiate persuasion from coercion.
 - 2) Coercion can involve positive inducements and incentives, not just negative sanctions.
 - 3) Most influence attempts contain both persuasive and coercive features.
 - 4) The degree of coerciveness is largely in the eye of the beholder.
- H. Some definitions use symbolic action as a limiting criterion for defining persuasion.
- I. Problems with limiting persuasion to symbolic action include:
 - 1) Nonverbal cues contain persuasive potential.
 - 2) Behaviors and physiological processes may hold persuasive implications.
 - 3) Limiting persuasion to symbolic action excludes a host of non-symbolic features that affect persuasive outcomes.
- J. Some definitions restrict persuasion to interpersonal (two or more) encounters, as opposed to intrapersonal processes.
 - 1) Numerous examples of self-persuasion can be found.
- III. The role of context must be considered in any definition or model of persuasion.
 - A. The context determines the nature of the persuasion process that is operating (linear, two-way, delayed, etc.).
 - B. Context-based factors that affect the nature of the persuasion process include:
 - 1) the number of communicators.
 - 2) whether communication is synchronous or asynchronous.
 - 3) the ratio of verbal to nonverbal cues that are present.
 - 4) the nature and type of media.
 - 5) the goals of the participants.
 - 6) socio-cultural factors that shape participants' message construction and perceptions.
- IV. The authors define persuasion as "one or more persons who are engaged in the activity of creating, reinforcing, modifying, or extinguishing beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations, and/or behaviors, within the constraints of a given communication context."
- V. A completed model illustrating the authors' definition of persuasion is found in Figure 2.3
- VI. Not all human behavior is persuasive, although nearly all human behavior carries persuasive potential.
 - A. It is possible to examine communication without probing into the persuasive element.
 - B. Although the authors' consideration for persuasive forms of communication is wide-ranging, it is also limited for purely practical reasons.
- VII. Petty and Cacioppo's Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides a useful explanation of how persuasion operates.
 - A. Central processing involves active mental effort or "issue-relevant thinking," while peripheral processing involves focusing on non-message related cues or heuristic cues.
 - B. Whether central or peripheral processing is used depends on receivers' motivation and ability to engage in central processing.
 - C. High involvement increases receivers' motivation to engage in central processing.
 - D. High need for cognition increases receivers' likelihood of engaging in central processing.
 - E. Persuasion via the central route is more persistent, or long-lasting than persuasion via the peripheral route, and more resistant to counter-persuasion.
- VIII. Chaiken & Eagly's Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of persuasion provides another useful model of how persuasion occurs.
 - A. Systematic processing is thoughtful and deliberate (analogous to central processing).
 - B. Heuristic processing relies on the application of mental shortcuts (analogous to peripheral processing).
 - 1) heuristic cues, or simply "heuristics," such as the quantity of proof or credibility, simplify the thought process
 - 2) decision rules, such as brand loyalty, simplify decision making
 - C. Both motivation and ability are determinants of the extent to which heuristic or systematic processing will be used.
 - D. The HSM posits that simultaneous processing is possible, e.g., both systematic and heuristic processing take place.
 - E. The sufficiency principle posits that individuals balance their need for systematic and heuristic processing based on the importance of the issue.

IX. Kruglanski & Thompson's Unimodel of persuasion provides an alternative perspective to the previous dual process models on how persuasion occurs.

- A. It rejects the notion of two distinct types of processing.
- B. There is simply more or less processing; if one thinks more, cognitive elaboration will be higher. If one thinks less, cognitive elaboration will be lower.
- D. The Unimodel has generated attention to whether and how dual processing occurs.

Exercises and Learning Activities

Exercise 2-A, What Constitutes Persuasion?

Principle Illustrated: The scope of persuasion

Purpose: To cause students to reflect on their own intuitive, "armchair" definitions of persuasion. Students should begin to think not only about how broadly or narrowly they define persuasion, but also which limiting criteria are implicit in their definitions.

Time Required: 15-45 minutes (depending on which variation of the exercise is used)

Note: This exercise works best if it is done before students have read Chapter 2. Once they have read the chapter, they are more likely to recite textbook doctrine rather than venture their own ideas and opinions.

Directions: Box 2.1 in the text (see p. 24) offers seven hypothetical situations and asks about each: Is this persuasion? Listed below is a summary of the central definitional issue embodied in each situation. Break the class into groups of 4-5 students each. Require each group to reach consensus on whether persuasion has or hasn't occurred. Then bring the class back together and have the groups share their rationales for categorizing each scenario as they did. The discussion will reveal students' implicit criteria for defining persuasion.

Scenario 1: What degree of awareness or intentionality is required of senders and receivers in order to conclude that persuasion has occurred?

Scenario 2: Should the term "persuasion" be used to differentiate those influence attempts that are successful or effective from those which are unsuccessful or even counterproductive?

Scenario 3: Is persuasion limited only to "symbolic" communication or can it include "signs" and "symptoms" as well?

Scenario 4: Is all communication inherently persuasive? Is it possible not to persuade?

Scenario 5: Does persuasion require two or more persons? Does persuasion include intra-personal thought processes?

Scenario 6: Should the term "persuasion" be used if third parties, unintended parties, or anyone other than the target audience is influenced?

Scenario 7: What is the difference, if any, between persuasion, coercion, propaganda, manipulation, indoctrination, etc.?

Exercise 2-B, Definition/Conceptualization Exercise

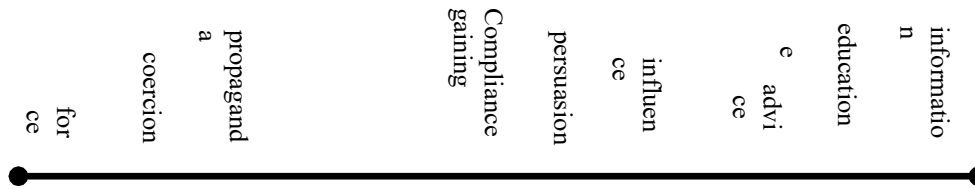
Principle Illustrated: Conceptualizations of persuasion

Purpose: To get students thinking about terms that are closely related to persuasion and the relationship of those terms to one another.

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Instructions: Provide students with an alphabetical list of terms (we print them on 8 ½" X 11" cardstock) related to persuasion and ask them to place each along a continuum. In addition, ask students to place what they perceive to be closely related terms closer together on the continuum, and what they perceive to be less closely related terms farther apart.

Possible terms include: advice, coaxing, coercion, compliance gaining, force, guidance, hinting, inducement, influence, information, manipulation, persuasion, propaganda, teaching. An illustration of one possible arrangement using some of these terms is provided below:



Compare students' continuums with one another. Ask them *why* they placed the terms where they did. In providing their answers, students will discover their implicit, "armchair" definitions of these terms. Their answers will provide insights into how they conceptualize persuasion and persuasion-related terms.

Exercise 2-C, Class Discussion/Lecture Supplement

Principles Illustrated: The Elaboration Likelihood and Heuristic Systematic models of persuasion

Purpose: To gain a better understanding of how and why people process and respond to persuasive stimuli.

Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Directions: After defining and explaining the principles of the ELM and HSM, test the class's understanding of the two models by asking them to identify the processing route (or routes) traveled by the receivers in the following scenarios (make sure that the class also understands *why* each person chose the route she/he did).

Situation 1: Drs. Smith and Jones are primary care physicians attending a medical supply convention to review the latest technologies and products. The first seminar they attend is geared toward infant and toddler care. The seminar's first speaker is an expert in "cradle cap" care (a condition where infants develop yellow, scaly, and oily patches of skin on their skulls), and discusses in detail the effectiveness of the latest creams, ointments, and shampoos developed to treat this condition.

Dr. Smith, who sees babies daily, listens carefully to the description of each product and ultimately decides to order several packages of Canus Lil Goats Milk Shampoo, the product proved most effective in clinical trials. Dr. Jones, on the other hand, very rarely sees babies at his practice, doesn't pay much attention to the speaker, and goes with Johnson's Baby Shampoo, telling himself that Johnson's is a "proven name."

Key: Dr. Smith followed the central route because he was able and motivated to elaborate on the information presented; Dr. Jones traveled the peripheral route because he was able but unmotivated to spend time thinking about the quality of a product he would almost never use.

Situation 2: Bianca and Brittany, two out-of-state freshmen attending Keg State University, were famished after spending the moving into their new dorm room. The young women were in the mood for quality cuisine, but had no way of knowing for sure which restaurants near the campus served good food. After surveying several eateries, Bianca suggested they eat at Gustavo's Gourmet Buffet, because the food was "very expensive." Brittany, though, said she thought the food would be best at Duke's Diner, because it was the most crowded of the restaurants they'd seen.

Key: Bianca and Brittany are forced to travel the peripheral route because they lack the information needed to make an informed decision (friends, local newspaper reviews, etc.). Bianca uses the decision rule "expensive = good" to make her decision, while Brittany uses social evidence as a peripheral cue to defend her recommendation. Central processing would be involved in they looked up and read restaurant reviews online, although simply going with a five-star rating on Yelp.com or Urbanspoon.com could still rely on peripheral processing if they didn't read the reviews carefully.

Situation 3: Tran is a well-read, analytical fellow who likes to solve problems. Tran's best friend, DeShawn, is also extremely intelligent but doesn't like to "waste time" thinking about issues that don't directly affect him. Last Friday, the pair watched a debate on CNN between a domestic drug company representative and free market activist

over how to regulate prescription drug imports for senior citizens. After carefully weighing the arguments made by both speakers, Tran decided that he agreed with the drug company representative's position that foreign drugs must be regulated for safety reasons. DeShawn, however, disagreed, saying, "The big drug companies just want profits. That's all they care about."

Key: Tran travels the central route because he has the ability to do so but also because he has a high need for cognition. DeShawn also has the ability to travel the central route, but is unmotivated to do so because he does not have a high need for cognition. DeShawn therefore, relies on a decision rule (i.e., "all drug companies care about is money") to decide where he stands on the issue.

Test Questions

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Pure persuasion means

- a. all the ingredients for what most people would consider to be persuasion are present.
- b. the source succeeded in persuading the receiver completely.
- c. there are underlying motives behind the message.
- d. the sender is well-intentioned, or has the receiver's best interests at heart.

Answer: A

Page 25

2. Borderline persuasion refers to

- a. influence attempts that are ethically suspect.
- b. influence attempts that are only partially successful.
- c. less traditional or obvious forms of influence.
- d. attempts to influence border patrol agents and immigration officers.

Answer: C

Page 25

3. A litmus test for distinguishing persuasion from social influence is

- a. social influence is coercive, persuasion is not
- b. social influence requires conscious awareness, persuasion does not
- c. persuasion is intentional, social influence is not
- d. persuasive is effective, social influence is not

Answer: C

Page 26

4. You see two unsavory-looking characters standing near an ATM machine and decide to go elsewhere to make a cash withdrawal. Their threatening appearance best represents

- a. pure persuasion
- b. borderline persuasion
- c. coercion
- d. third person effect

Answer: B

Page 25

5. You advise a friend to enroll in Professor Windplenty's class because "he's an easy 'A.'" A stranger in the registration line overhears you and decides to sign up for the same professor. This is an example of

- a. peripheral persuasion
- b. the "grapevine" effect
- c. the bystander phenomenon
- d. the unintended receiver effect

Answer: D

Page 27

6. A problem with a linear view of persuasion is

- a. the role of the source is ignored
- b. the effect of the message is ignored
- c. the possibility for mutual influence is ignored
- d. persuasion as a product or outcome is ignored

Answer: C

Page 27

7. An effects orientation to defining persuasion emphasizes

- a. the receiver
- b. the source
- c. the message
- d. the outcome

Answer: D

Pages 27-28

8. Which two limiting criteria for defining persuasion are primarily receiver-based?

- a. intent, effects
- b. effects, free choice
- c. free choice, symbolic action
- d. intent, free choice

Answer: B

Page 27, 28, 31

9. "Persuasive communication represents any message that is intended to shape, reinforce, or change the responses of another, or others" (James Stiff, 2003). The above definition relies on which two limiting criteria?

- a. intentionality, interpersonal
- b. intrapersonal, symbolic action
- c. intentionality, free will
- d. effects, conscious awareness

Answer: A

Pages 26, 31

10. Daniel O'Keefe (2002) defines persuasion as "a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom." His definition presumes that:

- a. persuasion may be accidental
- b. persuasion must be effective
- c. persuasion must be ethical
- d. self-persuasion is common

Answer: B

Page 27

11. The idea that persuasion requires free choice or free will focuses on

- a. the receiver
- b. the source
- c. the message
- d. the outcome

Answer: A

Page 28

12. The unintended receiver effect illustrates one problem with relying on _____ to define persuasion

- a. intentionality
- b. effects
- c. free will

d. symbolic action

Answer: A

Page 27

13. What is the relationship of persuasion and coercion, according to Gass & Seiter?

- a. Persuasion is the antithesis of coercion
- b. Coercion is a subset of persuasion
- c. Persuasion is a subset of coercion
- d. Persuasion and coercion are close relatives

Answer: D

Page 29

14. A definition which limits persuasion to symbolic action

- a. would say all persuasion exists in the world of words
- b. would say most behavior is persuasive in nature
- c. would say protests, marches, demonstrations, and sit-ins were part of persuasion
- d. would say physical characteristics such as height or attractiveness are part of persuasion

Answer: C

Page 30

15. Which of the following influence scenarios represents persuasion through symbolic action?

- a. Art sees a picture of a malnourished African child in his local newspaper and decides to donate \$100 to an international charity organization.
- b. A human resource executive decides not to hire a particular job candidate after learning of her criminal history.
- c. Participants in a social scientific study rate a taller speaker as more credible than a shorter speaker even though the two speakers delivered speeches of the same quality.
- d. A passer-by observes a protest march by members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and afterwards decides to volunteer to help at the local animal shelter.

Answer: D

Page 30

16. In the Gass & Seiter model, the outer circle represents _____ persuasion, while the inner circle represents _____ persuasion.

- a. pure, borderline
- b. borderline, pure
- c. symbolic, nonsymbolic
- d. free choice, free will

Answer: B

Pages 25, 32

17. The Gass & Seiter model maintains that _____ determines the nature of the persuasion process.

- a. ethnicity
- b. the message
- c. the context
- d. the source

Answer: C

Pages 32-33

18. Which of the following is the best example of synchronous persuasion?

- a. A door-to-door solicitor tries to sell a vacuum cleaner to a resident
- b. An email message encourages you to upgrade your software
- c. The envelope for a mail-in promotion proclaims, "You may already be a winner"
- d. A television commercial says a pick-up truck has the most horsepower in its class

Answer: A

Page 32

19. A preacher reminds his congregation that even though forgiving a sinner may not be easy, it is the Christian thing to do. This is an example of

- a. changing existing attitudes and beliefs
- b. creating new attitudes and beliefs
- c. reinforcing existing attitudes and beliefs
- d. extinguishing existing attitudes and beliefs

Answer: C

Page 34

20. Petty and Cacioppo's ELM postulates that there are two routes to persuasion:

- a. a pure route, and a borderline route
- b. an ethical route, and an unethical route
- c. self-persuasion and other persuasion
- d. a central route, and a peripheral route

Answer: D

Page 36

21. Which of the following groups of receivers would tend to rely less on credibility as a peripheral cue and more on the content or substance of a message?

- a. alumni of a college where a tuition hike was being considered
- b. students at a college where a tuition hike was being considered
- c. faculty at a college where a tuition hike was being considered
- d. students at a different college than the one considering a tuition hike

Answer: B

Page 36

22. Which group of receivers would be most likely to engage in peripheral processing?

- a. receivers with high involvement and a high need for cognition
- b. receivers with high involvement and a low need for cognition
- c. receivers with low involvement and a high need for cognition
- d. receivers with low involvement and a low need for cognition

Answer: D

Pages 36-37

23. In the terms used in the Elaboration Likelihood Model, a person low in the need for cognition is more likely to be persuaded via the _____ route to persuasion.

- a. serial
- b. parallel
- c. central
- d. peripheral

Answer: D

Page 37

24. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, a person with high involvement in an issue would tend to be persuaded by

- a. credibility
- b. the central route
- c. peripheral route
- d. heuristics cues

Answer: B

Page 36

25. Buying a television based on its brand name, or purchasing a product based on a celebrity endorsement are examples of

- a. systematic processing
- b. parallel processing

- c. heuristic processing
- d. central processing

Answer: C

Page 38

26. One way to help ensure a persuasive message will have a lasting effect on receivers is to:

- a. increase their intelligence
- b. increase their peripheral processing
- c. decrease their self-monitoring
- d. increase their involvement in the issue

Answer: D

Page 37

27. _____ is to Chaiken & Eagly's HSM model what _____ is to Petty & Cacioppo's ELM model.

- a. heuristic processing, systematic processing
- b. systematic processing, central processing
- c. central processing, systematic processing
- d. heuristic processing, central processing

Answer: B

Page 38

28. Which of the following is the best example of asynchronous persuasion?

- a. A teenager asks her parents to purchase concert tickets for her sixteenth birthday
- b. A television commercial claims that a juicer is three times more durable than its competitors
- c. A salesperson in the fragrance department encourages you to try a new perfume
- d. The cashier at a department store asks if you would like to donate to a charity

Answer: B

Page 32

29. Central processing involves all of the following except

- a. heuristic cues
- b. cognitive elaboration
- c. greater motivation
- d. ability to process information

Answer: A

Page 36, 38

30. Beverly needs a new surround sound system. She has researched the type of system she wants and is motivated to find the best system to fit her budget. The _____ suggests that she will strive to find out as much as she can about surround sound systems, but only as much as she needs to make a decision, no more, no less.

- a. processing potential
- b. efficiency maxim
- c. information effect
- d. sufficiency principle

Answer: D

Page 38

31. The Unimodel postulates that there is one route to persuasion whereby

- a. systematic processing overrides heuristic processing
- b. there is less cognitive elaboration
- c. decision rules are the main components
- d. there is simply more or less processing

Answer: D

Page 39

32. Parents commonly instill beliefs, impart values, and model behavior for their children, without knowing they are doing so. This is an example of

- a. ulterior motives
- b. social modeling
- c. relational goals
- d. symbolic effects

Answer: B

Page 26

33. Quincy wants to speak to his professor about his last paper. He intends to challenge the professor about his grade. Shortly into the conversation, Quincy realizes he misunderstood the assignment. Rather than challenge the grade, he decides to ask for a chance to rewrite the paper. This best reflects the notion that

- a. people's goals may change during a persuasive encounter
- b. a reliance on peripheral processing rarely produces compliance
- c. a reliance on central processing rarely produces compliance
- d. people's need for identity management far outweighs other persuasive tactics

Answer: A

Page 26

34. Which of the following is not a contextual factor of persuasion?

- a. number of communicators
- b. synchronous vs. asynchronous communication
- c. degree of success
- d. ratio of verbal to nonverbal cues

Answer: C

Pages 27, 32-33

Essay Questions

1. What is one of the primary weaknesses of relying on intentionality as a defining characteristic of persuasion?
2. What are the limitations of using an "effects" standard as the basis for a definition of persuasion?
3. Do Gass & Seiter believe there is such a thing as self-persuasion? Why or why not?
4. Provide a hypothetical or real-life example of central or systematic processing, and a hypothetical example or real-life example of peripheral or heuristic processing.
5. Is there such a thing as "accidental" persuasion? Why or why not?
6. Which limiting criterion identified by Gass & Seiter do you think is most important for defining persuasion, and why?
7. What differences are apparent among the dual-process models and the Unimodel of persuasion?
8. Based on Gass and Seiter's conceptualization of persuasion, what isn't persuasion?