Gender and Communication Video Resource List


Gender: The Enduring Paradox. (c. 1990). Smithsonian World / PBS

Inequity in the Classroom. (1991). Concordia, Canada: Concordia University


Tootsie. How does playing Dorothy affect Michael’s perceptions of male and female roles? Discuss how Michael enhances his empathy as a result of playing Dorothy. How did playing the role of Dorothy change Michael’s way of managing conflict?

Steel Magnolias. How do the women show support and empathy for M’Lynn? What differences in male and female intimacy styles can be seen in the movie? How do M’Lynn and Shelby struggle with the dialectical tension of autonomy vs. connection? How does M’Lynn use defensive climate behaviors when attempting to maintain connection?

When Harry Met Sally. What gender differences are evident in Harry and Sally’s communications? How does or does not Harry and Sally’s relationship match Knapp’s model of relational stages?

You’ve got Mail. Describe the communication climate between Kelly and Joe in their online, computer-mediated communication (CMC). What factors are involved in creating this climate? How do Kelly and Joe transform their face-to-face relationship from negative to positive? What theories used in this movie? Describe CMC theory in the movie.


A videotape of a presentation to a university audience in which Deborah Tannen lays out and illustrates her linguistic approach to understanding conversations between women and men. Including video clips of children at play and talking to their best friends, Tannen illustrates her claim that ways of speaking that tend to characterize and sometimes distinguish men and women can be traced to conversational styles learned as children growing up. Topics include: Why many men don’t like to stop and ask for directions, When do women tend to be more indirect than men—and when do men tend to
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be more indirect than women? Who talks more, women or men? Why are women so often told, “Don’t apologize; it’s not your fault”? Why do so many women complain, “He doesn’t talk to me and he doesn’t listen,” whereas many men complain “She nags”? What conversational rituals common among women are taken too literally by men, and what conversational rituals common among men are taken too literally by women?

Includes an Instructor’s Package outlining the lecture, suggesting exercises and discussion points, and reproducing two essays in which Tannen goes deeply into the topic.

“Deborah Tannen: In Depth.” (25 minutes) is a companion video in which Tannen addresses key issues, including: the nature/nurture questions: are conversational styles born or made? Is gender the most important factor affecting conversational interaction? Are these patterns cross-cultural? What about power and dominance? How are Linguistic and psychological approaches different?


A videotape of a presentation to a university audience in which Deborah Tannen lays out and illustrates her linguistic approach to understanding how we use language to create meaning--and why communication so often goes awry. On a canvas of disciplines, from linguistics and psychology to anthropology and communication, Tannen paints a fascinating picture of how our everyday interactions are structured, how our conversational signals may be misunderstood, and how the various aspects of conversational style must be understood relatively, not in isolation. Moving beyond analysis, she proposes how understanding conversational styles can lift the burden of pathology and personality judgments from communication gone awry.

Deborah Tannen: 1 on 1. (25 minutes) is a companion video in which Tannen addresses key issues, including: Why is this Linguistics? Psychology & Linguistics Presentation Rituals & Avoidance Rituals Contextualization Cues Conversational Rules Methodology Metamessage & Framing Why Focus on Misunderstanding?

Couples Arguing (1987)
Examines the dynamics of the husband/wife argument, where important issues and views are brought to the surface, and resolutions and compromises reached.

Talking 9 to 5: Women and Men in the Workplace (Tannen, Deborah)
The video is designed to be used in a workshop setting. A facilitator's handbook organized by topic and containing discussion questions and suggested activities
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accompanies the video.

**Talk 19** - Janis Lundman and Adrienne Mitchell, Directors/Producers
For one whole year, five very different sixteen year-old girls were interviewed and filmed at home, in school, at work and with their friends. The girls openly shared their secrets, frustrations and dreams, and their innermost thoughts about boys, drugs, peer pressure and self-esteem. Three years later the filmmakers went back and filmed a follow up, intercutting between the old and new footage. The result is a sometimes funny, sometimes sad portrait of growing up female in our society. Rhonda, who at sixteen had dreams of stardom, realizes that it's difficult to be an actress if you're black and not beautiful. Spunky, hardworking Lina is now in college and convinced that only plastic surgery will bring her a husband and happiness. Erin, still as pretty as she was at sixteen, has become a "wild girl" on her college campus. Helen, the daughter of ambitious Korean immigrants, is studying pre-med and finally getting out from under her parents' yoke. Astra, the streetwise school drop out in Talk 16 has a good job and a boyfriend, but there are still hints in her life of the "bad girl" she used to be. This candid, refreshing look at girls on the verge of adulthood will be food for discussion for years to come.

Video or DVD. 48 min. Sale $195. Video rental $75.
Also available: Talk 16. Video or DVD. 116 min (6-segments to facilitate classroom use). Sale $195. Video rental $75. Purchased together $495.

"These films will generate discussion about being female and are excellent resources for large school libraries."
School Library Journal Festivals
National Women's Studies Assoc., 1997
American Psychological Assoc., 1997

**Gender and Communication: Male-Female Differences in Language & Nonverbal Behavior** (2001)
The 42-minute videotape explores "how gender affects us every time we communicate," said Archer, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Five years in the making, the video artfully tackles the pervasive--and sometimes entertaining--differences in verbal and nonverbal communication between men and women.

"We wanted to produce a work that looks at the topic broadly and that captures, in an imaginative way, how gender scripts our interactions," said Archer. The result is a resource that taps the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and women's studies.

The video blends commentary by communications experts with examples of gender-based differences in communication, movement, space, and touch. Little things, such as
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differences in the amount of space men and women take up on a couch, illustrate the
pervasiveness of gender in our lives.

Intended for college audiences, much of the video focuses on differences between men
and women in conversational styles and the amount of "interaction work" that takes
place, including things such as interruptions and "tag questions," which women
frequently add to the end of sentences to engage their listeners.

But nonverbal examples capitalize on the video format and have great impact, too. One
segment showcases the role experience and practice play in the building of basic skills
such as throwing a softball: A woman with little experience is shown throwing a ball,
followed by a man whose form is much better. When asked to throw with his other arm,
the man "throws like a girl." To drive the point home, the segment ends with footage of a
veteran woman ballplayer demonstrating excellent form and a powerful pitch.

A section on advertising illuminates the desensitizing effects of mass media. In the
segment, men mimic the poses routinely struck by female fashion models in magazine
layouts, draped awkwardly on furniture and perched in precarious positions. For viewers,
seeing men in such awkward poses highlights the absurdity of the layouts. "It really
points out the diminishing impact advertising has on women by turning them into
decorative objects," noted Archer.

In a lighthearted segment, the video illustrates the different vocabularies men and women
have for describing colors: Asked to identify different shades between blue and purple,
the women authoritatively identify periwinkle, plum, lavender, and sky blue. By
contrast, the men run out of descriptors beyond blue and purple.

"We wanted to produce a videotape that would promote discussion of how gender
inequality is reproduced in daily life," said Archer. "Gender differences in
communication are everywhere. Once you start looking for them, you see them
everywhere. That awareness is the first step toward change."

Dane Archer can be reached via e-mail at archer@cats.ucsc.edu or at (831) 459-2137. To
receive a review copy of Gender and Communication: Male-Female Differences in
Language & Nonverbal Behavior, contact Jennifer McNulty in the UCSC Public
Information Office at (831) 459-4399 or via e-mail at jmcnulty@cats.ucsc.edu. This
videotape is designed to be used in high school and college classrooms; interested faculty
and teachers can obtain a copy from the University of California Extension Center for
Media and Independent Learning at (510) 642-0460.