

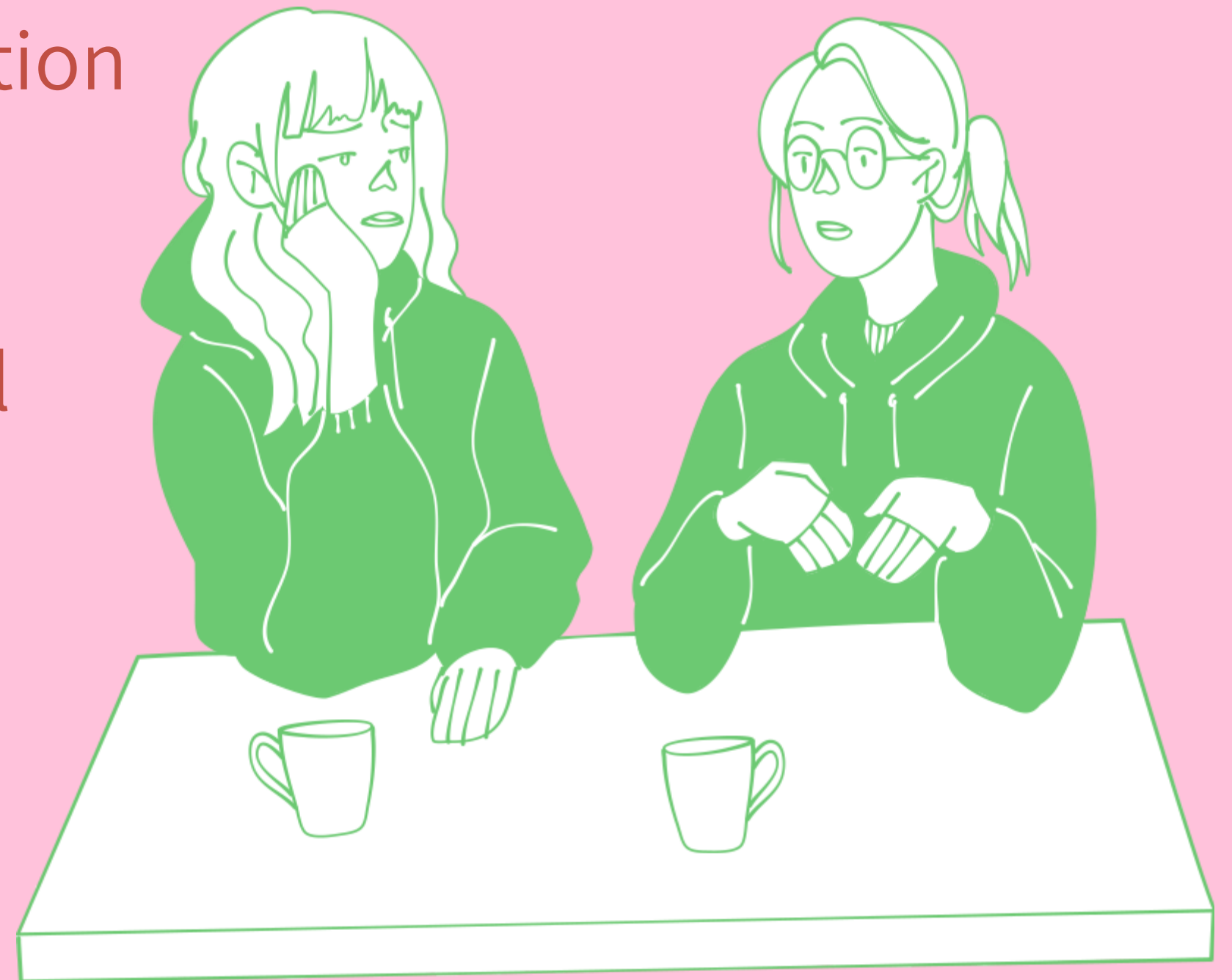


S8: COMMUNICATION MODELS Helical models, Westley and Macleans

ruchika.gurung@whistlingwoods.net

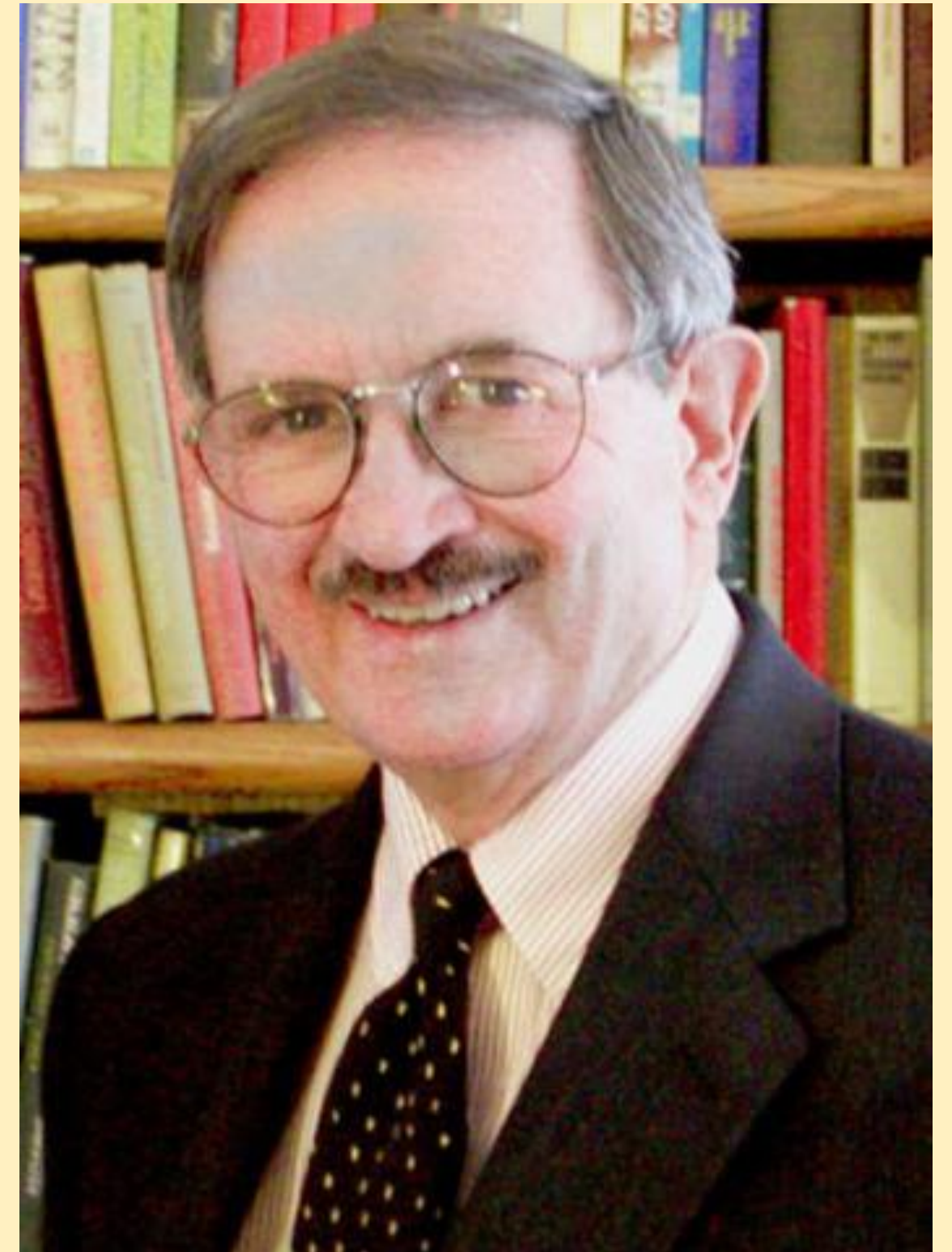
Session outline

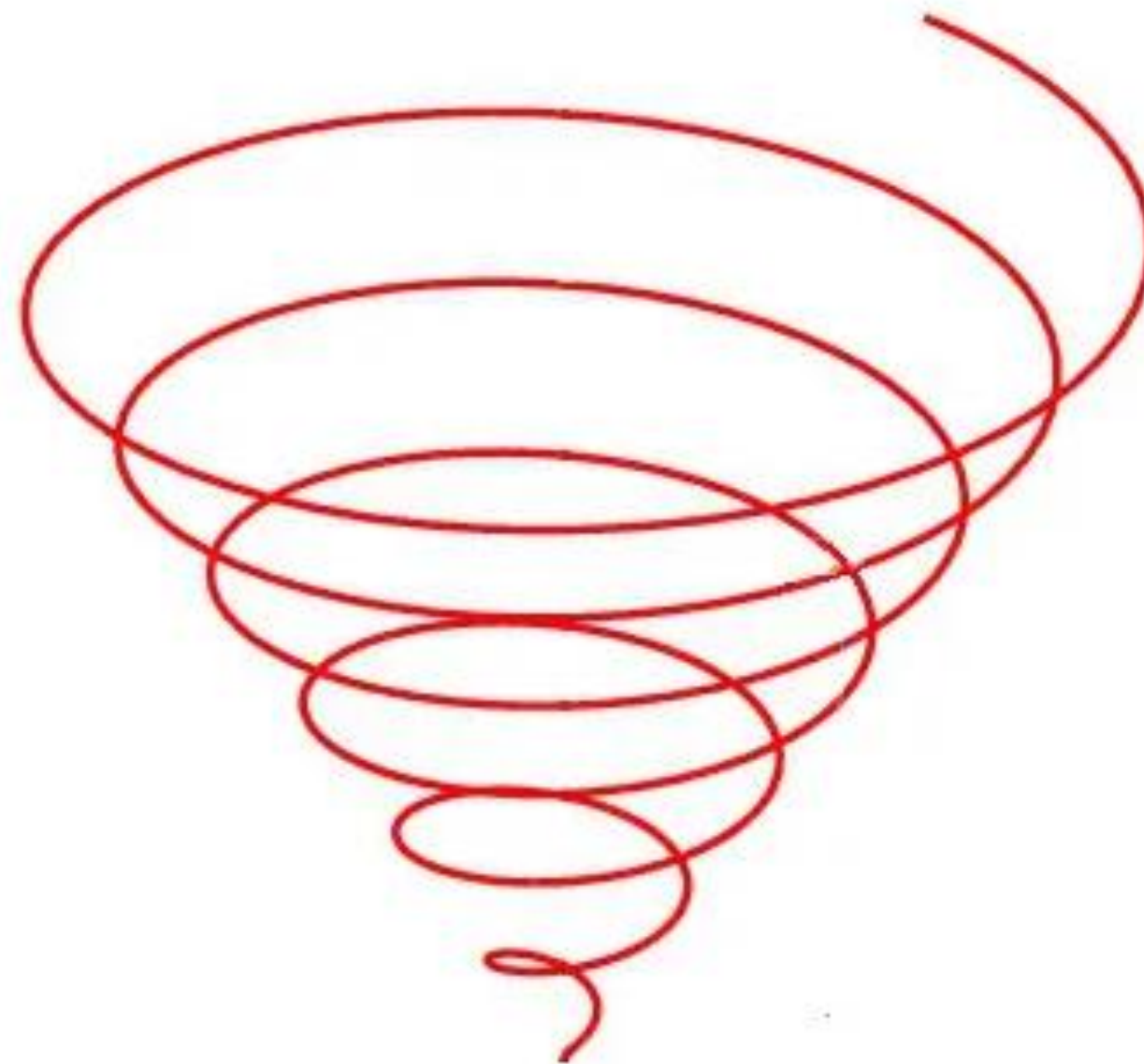
- 1 Helical model of communication
- 2 Westley and Maclean's model



Helical model of communication

- Frank Dance (1929-)
- Developed in 1967 and originally named Dance's Helix Model of Communication
- In this model, communication is proposed to be cyclical, influenced by time and experience, continuous, non-repetitive, and accumulative (complex and knowledge based)
- Dance proposes that communication never perfectly repeats itself.
- On receiving information from someone, we use that new information to say something smarter, in a more informed way manner in the next time.





DANCE'S HELICAL MODEL depicts communication as an endless spiral of increasing complexity.

- The spiral, conical shape showcases the complexity and accumulative nature of communication
- While our original communication may be simple, as we gain knowledge and our vocabulary expands, our communication skill develops as well
- This is the spiral starts from a small point, small circles, and expands outward, with larger circles.
- Smaller circles represent a simpler communication cycle
- Dance states that, the model highlights how communication while moving forward is at the same time coming back upon itself and being affected by its past behaviour.

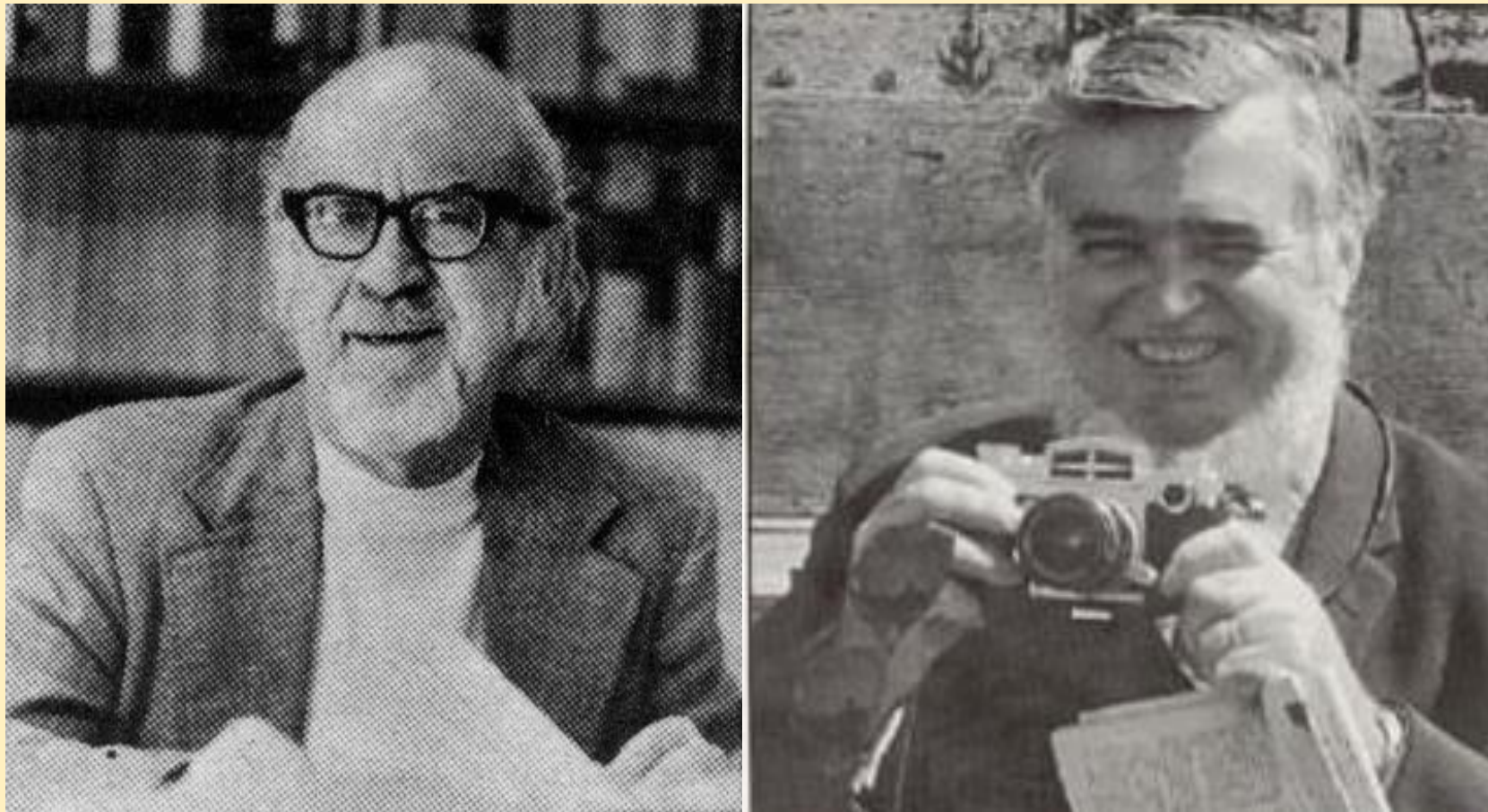
Advantages

- Representative of growth over a period of time
- Acknowledgment of time
- Complexity.
- Acknowledgement of experience and impact

Disadvantages

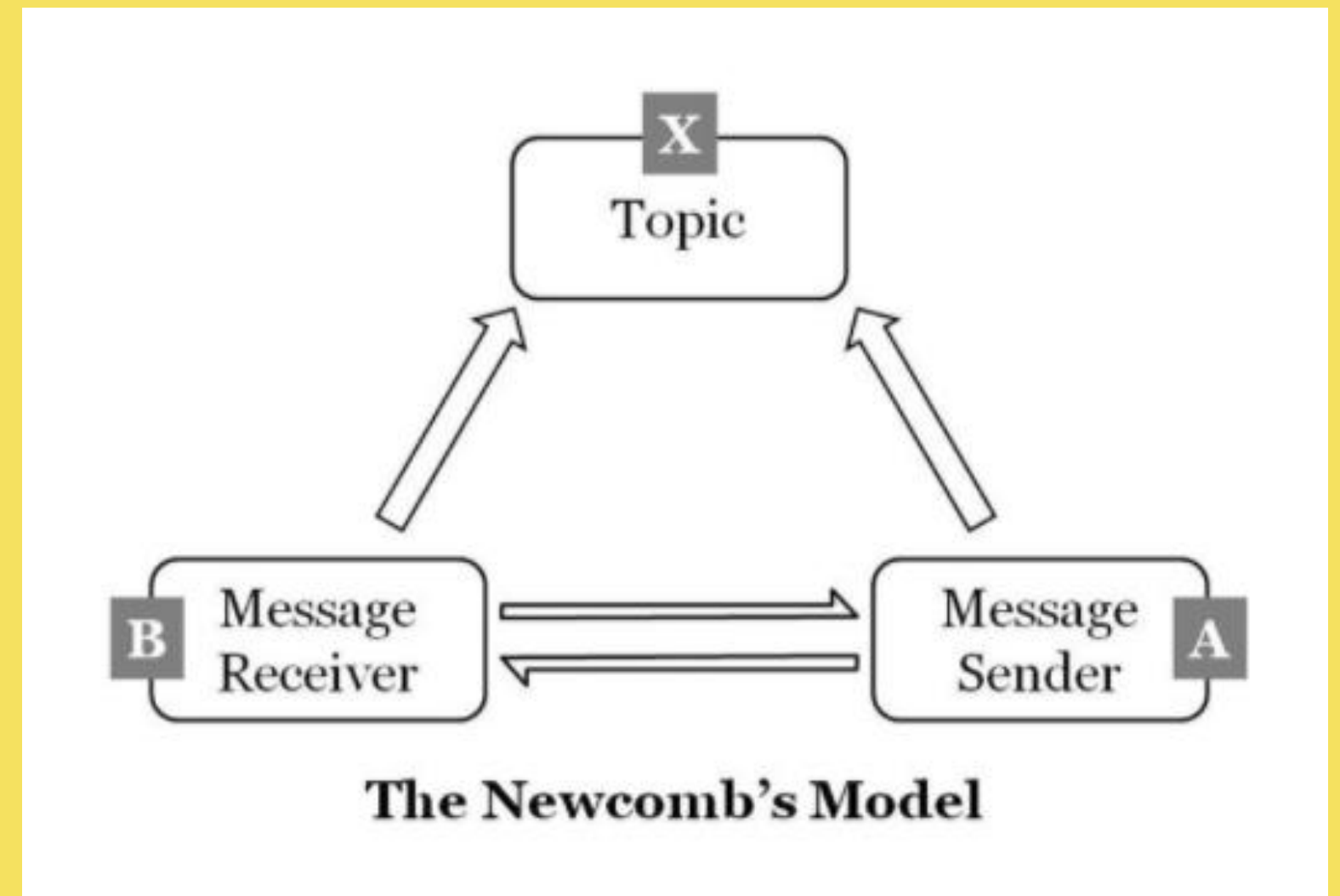
- Little insight on old ways of communicating
- Implies communication development is linear.
- Assumes continuity
- Lack of clarity
- Ambiguous in terms of the communication process
- Redundant

Westley and MacLean's model of communication (1957)



- Springs from a development of Newcomb's Co-orientation theory
- His model stated that, 'Communication, in its essence, serves two ends, to establish a common orientation of two (or more) individuals with respect to each other and, simultaneously, to link them to a shared object of concern.'
- This perspective recognised an interpersonal adaptation mediated by an interest in the state of an objective world, one that communicators are mutually connected to and by.

- Newcomb's model was a simple model that he called an A-B-X system
- Two individuals, A and B, and one object, X. A is the sender, B the receiver and X is the object.
- The resulting triad, can be understood from two different perspectives: 1. That of the participants themselves, as seen from within their respective life spaces, or 2. That of an external observer for whom the whole A-B-X system is in view.
- The key factor, for him, is attitude.
- It is one of his students, Bruce Westley, who, collaborating with Malcolm MacLean, publishes an article in 1957 which explored the topic of gatekeeping.
- Westley and MacLean made two fundamental changes: Introduced a new element, C, which is the editorial communicating function (process of deciding what and how to communicate). They also start to stretch the model so that it is beginning to return to the familiar linear shape



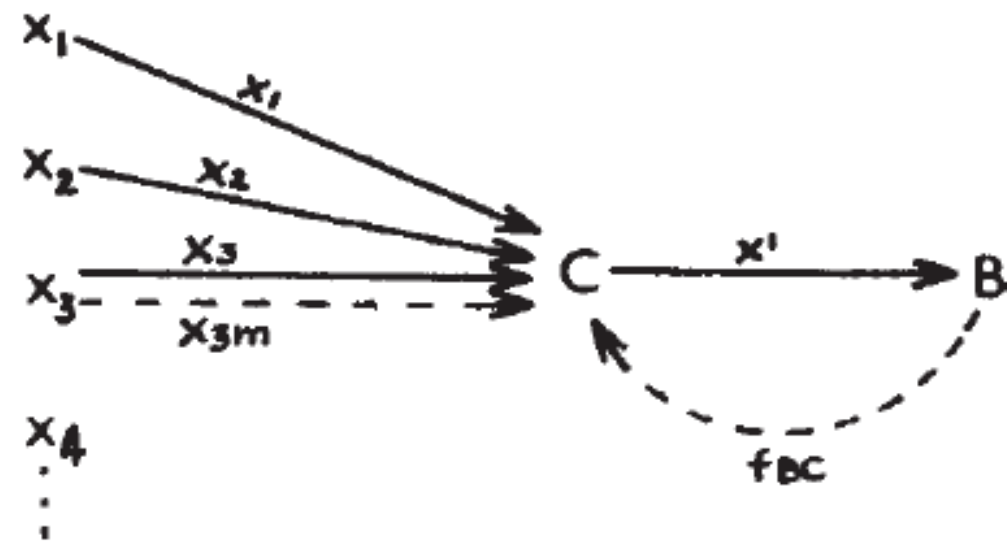


Figure 8 *The addition of an editorial function*

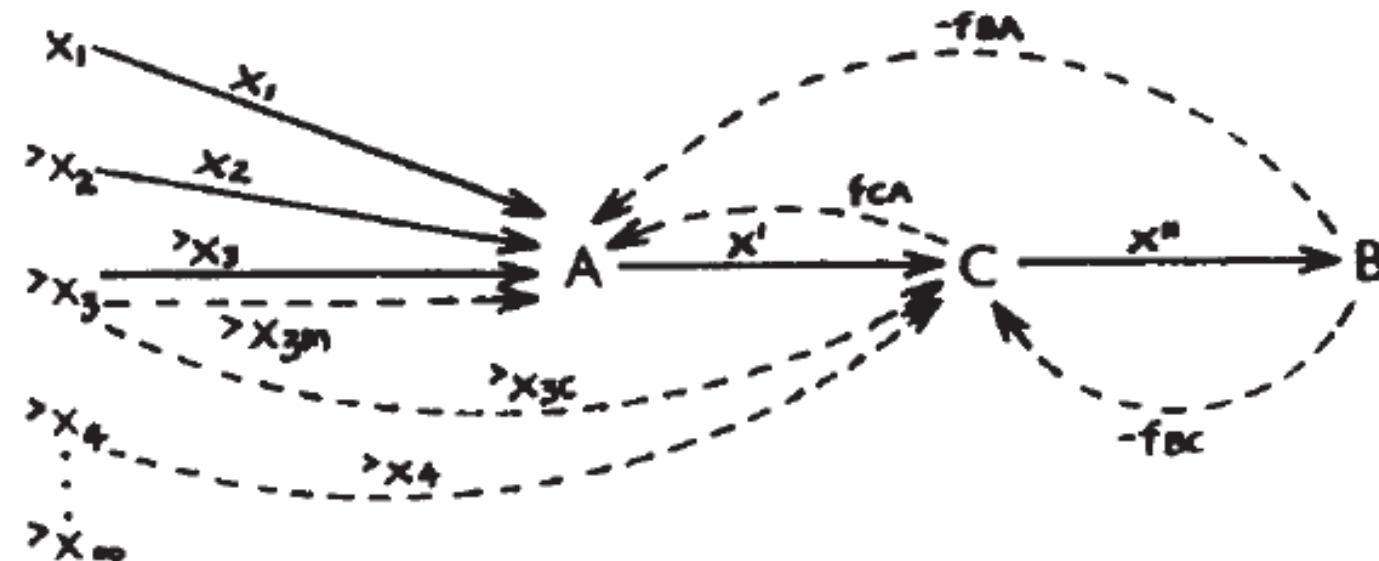
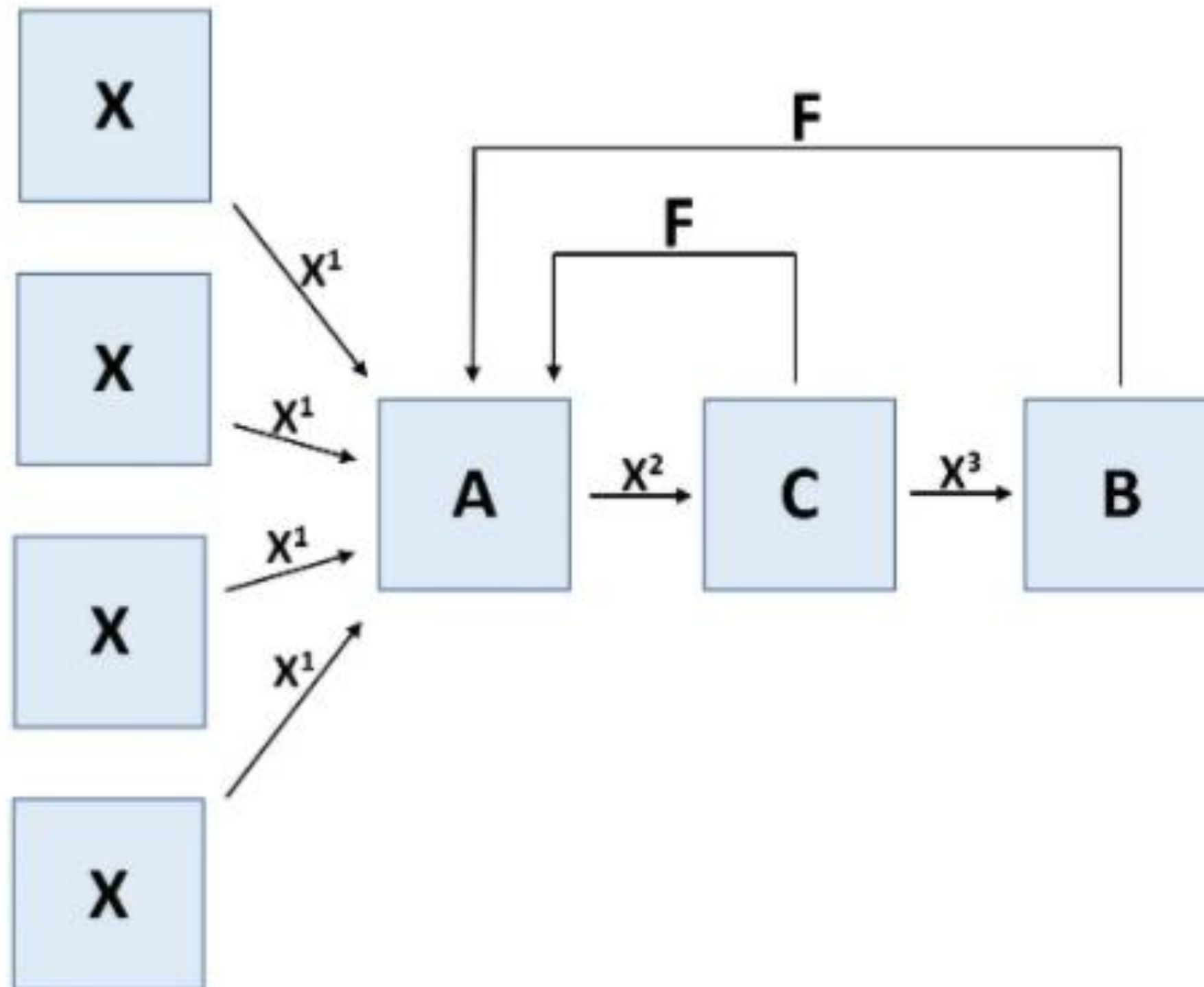


Figure 9 *The mass-communication model*

- Talks about the influence of environmental factors and subjectivity in communication.
- Communication is believed to start with environmental factors which influence an individual to speak.
- 9 key elements:
 1. Environment X
 2. Sensory experience X1
 3. Source A
 4. Object of Orientation of the Source XR
 5. Receiver
 6. Object of Orientation of the Receiver X3
 7. Feedback
 8. Gatekeepers
 9. Opinion Leaders

The 9 Key Elements of the Model

The Westley and Maclean Model of Communication



X = Environmental Factors

The factors that influence why the message is created in the first place.

A = Sender

The person who sends the message.

B = Receiver

The person who receives the message.

C = Gatekeeper

The editor of the message, such as a newspaper editor. Common in mass communication.

F = Feedback

The return messages sent back to the sender. These can help shape future messages.

X¹ = Sensory Experience

The ways we receive messages, which also shape the content of our future messages.

X² = Object of Orientation (Sender)

The beliefs, culture and background of the sender which influence the sender's message.

X³ = Object of Orientation (Receiver)

The beliefs, culture and background of the receiver which influence the receiver's interpretation.

Advantages

- Communication process starts with environmental factors that influence the sender.
- Acknowledges the role of personal bias
- Acknowledges the role of social and cultural factors in influencing messages.
- Accounts for both interpersonal and mass communication.
- Acknowledges the role of feedback

Disadvantages

- More emphasis on the message sender than message feedback
- Outdated concept of the gatekeeper
- Does not account for noise
- Does not say much about the channel

Bibliography

Drew, C. (2020) '5 Features of Dance's Helical Model of Communication', *The Helpful Professor*. Available at <https://helpfulprofessor.com/helical-model-of-communication/>

Drew, C. (n.d.) 'Westley and Maclean Model of Communication (9 Key Elements)', *The Helpful Professor*. Available at <https://helpfulprofessor.com/westley-maclean-model/>

Fiske, J. (1990) *Introduction to Communication Studies*. 2nd edn. New York: Routledge

Westley, B. H., and MacLean, M. S. (1957) 'A Conceptual Model for Communications Research' *Journalism Quarterly*, 34(1), pp. 31–38.