PROCEEDINGS

1977 *SOUTHWEST ABCA*
SPRING CONFERENCE

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
AT CLEAR LAKE CITY
2700 Bay Area Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77058

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON at Clear Lake City

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SAM J. BRUNO, EDITOR

PREFACE

For those persons unable to attend the Southwest American Business Communication Spring Conference, held at the Hyatt Regency, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 23-26, 1977, a few hours with this collection of papers can provide a very meaningful updating of their information and knowledge. For those in attendance, this publication can serve as a valuable review or information for sessions not attended.

Like the three previous volumes of the SW-ABCA Proceedings, papers are presented in their entirety as they were originally discussed at the conference. Some papers, however, were rewritten by the authors to change the style from that of a speech to that of an article. This style still allows the reader to capture or recapture the flavor of the original source and provides real advantages for meaningful communication. To further capture the spirit of this highly successful New Orlean conference, the order of presentations in these Proceedings corresponds to the conference program. The complete program was retyped and accompanies this collection of conference papers.

Phil Lewis's concern for an outstanding program is reflected in the variety and depth of papers presented at the meeting. The topics of these papers ranged from the business communication curriculum to psychology, semantics and communication, to research activities in business communication, to techniques for teaching business communication, to how and what to write. For this stimulating program, Phil Lewis deserves our special thanks and hearty congratulations.

Another person that deserves special thanks is Dr. Rosemary Pledger, Dean of the School of Professional Studies. The editor and members of the SW-ABCA are especially indebted to Dr. Pledger for her generous monetary gift that paid for the publishing and mailing of this volume and for providing the academic environment for publishing this collection of papers.

Conference papers presented in this collection have a uniform format. This uniformity in format was achieved through the cooperation of program participants. These contributors provided the editor with camera ready manuscripts. For this I wish to thank those authors who so carefully followed a detailed set of instructions for preparing camera ready manuscripts. Several of the papers presented at the Spring meeting, however, were not submitted for publication.

I am also indebted to my most capable work-study student, Cathy Penn, for her tireless dedication and support in proofreading this entire manuscript, correcting typographical errors, preparing the prefatory pages and who in various other ways assisted in the completion of these Proceedings.

On the behalf of Phil Lewis, President and Program Chairman, and the SW-ABCA, let me extend the wish that readers of these Proceedings find it professionally rewarding and academically worthwhile.

Sam J. Bruno
Editor
ABCA -- Southwest Region

University of Houston at Clear Lake City
January, 1978

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Chairperson: Herb Price, Arkansas State University

"Student and Faculty Perceptions for a Better Business Communication Curriculum"
Myron Glassman and Robert H. Luke, Jr., Old Dominion University

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Joseph H. Clements, University of Southern Mississippi

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"Communicating a Felling of Trust"
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J. Lynn Johnson, Southwest Texas State University

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Phil Lewis, Oklahoma State University
Jack Lord, University of Texas, Austin

PART I
THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM

STUDENT AND FACULTY PERCEPTIONS FOR A BETTER BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS CURRICULUM

Myron Glassman, Old Dominion University
Robert H. Luke, Jr., College of the Virgin Islands

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the study of responses from Faculty and Students of Business Communications curricula in regard to: 1) Importance of the course, 2) Value to education, 3) Needs of older vs. younger students. Factor Analysis establishes perception of the 10 most desired topics in a communication course, and 10 least desired topics.

Correlation was found to exist between faculty and student. The most important topics to be covered included 1) learning how to listen, 2) report writing, 3) business letter writing, 4) learning how to be interviewed, 5) avoiding communication breakdowns. Age and business experience had a minimal effect on student responses.

INTRODUCTION

Most professionals regard communications as an important aspect of the business world. As a consequence, almost all schools and colleges of business generally suggest (or require) their graduates to have a course in "business communications." Despite the apparent agreement as to the importance of the course, there seems to be little agreement as to the course's content matter. Specifically, judging from the variety of topics and approaches covered in business communication texts, a course may legitimately include such diverse topics as "final notice" collection letters and improving employee relations through communication. To add to the variety, most business communication topics can be viewed from any one of a number of points on an applied-theoretical continuum. For example, the role of communication in employee relations can be taught by stressing such concepts as commonness and needs or by presenting the student with "ten easy steps."

This variety of topics and approaches has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include flexibility, the opportunity to be creative, and the ability to tailor the course to meet student's needs. The disadvantages include the task of selecting from the list of possible topics those which can best benefit the student. This task is made even more difficult by the fact that the material selected must be covered in one term.

A second concern is the fact that the faculty who determine course content may not have a good grasp of the student's strengths and weaknesses, and therefore, may include topics in the course that may be of little value to the student. This misperception on the part of the faculty may also lead to the exclusion of a number of topics which would satisfy student needs.

A third concern, likely to be prevalent on urban campuses, is a heterogenous student body. Specifically, do older students or students with business experience have the same needs and expect to get the same thing out of class as younger students or students without any business experience?

These questions, coupled with 1) a paucity of pertinent findings/answers in the literature and 2) the feeling that students should have a meaningful and relevant course, formed the basis for this study. Specifically, the purpose of this research effort was to gather information regarding: (1) the relative importance of various topics to a business communications course as viewed by students and by faculty, (2) differences in student and faculty perceptions of course content, and (3) the effects of age and business experience on student perceptions of course content.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The basic design of the survey called for the distribution of questionnaires to the faculty (full and part-time) of the School of Business and to students currently enrolled in business communications at Old Dominion University.

Each faculty member received the survey in his or her mailbox with a cover letter stating that the survey's purpose was course development and that it should be returned within one week. Of the 110 distributed, 41 were returned in a usable form. Student surveys were distributed and completed in class. Of the 168 distributed, 164 were returned in a usable form.

The first two survey questions dealt with respondent's general feelings about the role of the course in the curriculum, i.e.,

All business students should be <u>required</u> to take a course in business communications

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

If the respondent disagreed (1 or 2) or was uncertain (3) about the above statement, he was instructed to answer the following question.

Business communications should be available as an <u>elective</u> course

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

If response 3, 4, or 5 for either of the above questions was circled, the respondent was instructed to complete the remainder of the survey. If, for both questions, responses 1 or 2 was circled, the respondent was instructed to fill out the demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire and leave the middle section of the survey blank. This procedure was followed because it was felt that: (1) the primary focus of the survey should be on the responses of those individuals who supported the course and (2) respondents who did not, in any way, support the course were likely to give biased or careless answers. Respondents who supported the course were then asked to indicate the year (freshman, sophomore, etc.) in which the course should be taken and whether the course should be a one or two semester course.

To determine the theoretical/applied orientation of the students and faculty with respect to the course, the following two questions were asked:

A course in business communications should emphasize the theoretical side 1:2:3:4:5:6:7: the applied side of the topic.

If you were to divide the course into a theory section and an applied section, how many weeks of a 15 week semester would you spend on each?

theory__________ applied__________

After reading a paragraph of instructions, respondents were asked to respond to 54 questions designed to ascertain the relative importance of the topics to a business communications course. For example, making public presentations:

Unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Important

After completing these questions, students were asked their age, year in school, years of full time business experience, major and sex. Faculty were asked their department, years of teaching experience, and years of business experience.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Of primary concern to all who teach the course and to those who have to make decisions about the role of the course in the curriculum is the extent to which the course finds support by both students and faculty. As seen in Table 1, the overwhelming majority of students and faculty felt that the course should be required. Approximately 78% of the faculty and 77% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the course should be required. Of those who did not agree or strongly agree with the statement, 71% of the faculty and 92% of the students felt that the course should be an elective. To summarize, of 205 students and faculty, only 5 noted that the course should be abolished.

TABLE 1

The Role Of Business Communications In The Curriculum

	Disagree 1	2	3	4	Agree 5	No Answer	N
Students							
Required	4.3	9.8	8.5	51.8	25.0	.6	164
*Elective	2.6	2.6	2.6	60.5	31.6	0.0	38
Faculty							
Required	12.2	4.9	2.4	26.8	51.2	2.4	41
*Elective	0.0	28.6	0.0	57.1	14.3	0.0	7

*Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who circled responses 1, 2, or 3 to the question, "All business students should be required to take a course in business communications."

Although both students (79.4%) and faculty (80.5%) felt that the course should be taken during either the sophomore or junior year, a further analysis indicated that while faculty were about equally divided as to whether the course should be taken in the sophomore (41.4%) or junior (39.0%) year, the majority of students (52.5%) favored the junior year over the sophomore year (26.9%). With respect to whether the course should be a one or two semester course, both students (81.6%) and faculty (81.6%) agreed that it should be a one semester course.

An interesting finding occurred with respect to the questions dealing with the theoretical/applied orientation of the course. In general, the orientation of both students and faculty was toward the applied side of the continuum, i.e., the average faculty response was 4.65 (s.d. = 1.4.) and the average student response was 5.00 (s.d. = 1.34). That the difference between the means was not significant (t = 1.24, d.f. = 186), was surprising. Specifically, it was expected that the student would prefer the course to be oriented toward the applied end of the continuum, i.e., somewhere between 5 and 7, while the preferred orientation of the faculty would be toward the theoretical end, i.e., somewhere below 3.

The second question dealing with the theoretical/applied orientation of the course had students and faculty dividing a fifteen week semester into a theory section and an applied section. Both students and faculty felt that the applied section of the course should be longer (8.97 weeks and 9.80 weeks respectfully) than the theoretical section (6.00 weeks and 5.08 weeks respectfully). Most interesting was the finding that the faculty would like the applied section to be one week longer ($t = 1.98$, d.f. = 198) than the students. Specifically, one would expect to find the stereotyped student-faculty distinction, namely, students would rather spend more time on applied topics while faculty members would place a greater emphasis on theory. However, if the findings are viewed in terms of the responsiveness of the faculty to current educational trends and student needs, the results are encouraging. Specifically, Old Dominion University, being an urban university, has a large percentage of older students and working students whose primary concern is how their education can assist them on the job. To most students, relevance to the outside world and application are synonymous. The faculty seem to recognize this and feel that a course should reflect the students apparent needs.

To summarize, a business communications course was viewed as being a required part of the curriculum by an overwhelming majority of students and faculty. Both groups thought the course should be a one semester course taken during the sophomore or junior year and have an applied orientation.

Given the strong support of the course by both students and faculty, it would be of value to examine how students and faculty view the relative importance of various topics that could be included in the course. Specifically, what do students and faculty view as the ten most important and ten least important topics; what topics do they view as belonging together; and do they differ significantly in their perceptions of the relative importance of the various topics?

Table 2, shows a number of similarities between student and faculty rankings. Specifically, four topics (avoiding communication breakdowns, how to listen, leadership through communications, and using communications to solve problems) appeared on both top-ten lists. Six topics (giving dictation, acknowledging the receipt of a letter or order, writing collection letters, writing brochures, writing forms, how space communicates, and informing a client that an order is incomplete or back ordered) appeared on both bottom-ten lists. Based on these responses it seems that students wanted the course to deal with basics of English, i.e., grammar and sentence construction and <u>general</u> principles of report and letter writing without dealing with each <u>specific</u> type of letter or report. The student also wanted to know how to listen, persuade, lead, and present his ideas to others.

TABLE 2

Student and Faculty Perceptions of the Ten Most Important and Unimportant Business Communications Topics

Ten Most Important Topics

	Student's Topic	Mean	Faculty Topic	Mean
1	How To Listen	6.08	Being Interviewed	6.00
2	Report Writing	5.97	Avoiding Communication Breakdowns	6.00
3	Business Letter Writing	5.90	Self Confidence Through Communication	5.98
4	Avoiding Communication Breakdowns	5.87	Leadership Through Communication	5.96
5	Grammar	5.80	Selling Yourself To Others Through Communication	5.87
6	Communicating To Persuade	5.80	Using Communication To Understand Others	5.83
7	Leadership Through Communications	5.73	How To Listen	5.83
8	Sentence Construction	5.68	Using Communications To Resolve Conflict	5.82
9	Making Public Presentations	5.68	Interviewing	5.79
10	Using Communication to Solve Problems	5.65	Using Communication To Solve Problems	5.74

Ten Least Important Topics

	Student's Topic	Mean	Faculty Topic	Mean
45	Writing Brochures	3.69	Informal Faculty Conversation	4.18
46	Writing Manuals	3.82	Using Body Language To Communicate	4.18
47	Giving Dictation	3.84	Giving Dictation	4.18
48	Writing Collection Letters	3.89	Acknowledging The Receipt Of A Letter Or Order	4.18
49	Creative Writing	3.96	Writing Collection Letters	4.18
50	Diction	4.01	Writing Brochures	4.32
51	How Space Communicates	4.16	Writing Forms	4.34
52	Acknowledging The Receipt Of A Letter Or Order	4.18	How Space Communicates	4.34
53	Writing Goodwill Letters	4.26	Informing A Client That An Order Is Incomplete Or Back Ordered	4.40
54	Writing Forms	4.28	Communicating Through Eye Contact	4.45
55	Informing A Client That An Order Is Incomplete Or Back Ordered	4.28		

The faculty also viewed the course as dealing with learning how to listen, persuade and lead. But, rather than dealing with basics, faculty would have the course involve self development topics including self confidence through communication and selling oneself to others through communications. Like students, faculty felt the course should not dwell on writing various types of business letters and memos.

The factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) performed on student's responses and faculty responses lent additional support to the notion that student and faculty perceptions share some similarity. As seen in Table 3, the first factor for faculty members can best be called the "executive factor." It includes those communications skills that an executive would need to succeed in business. The factor includes such topics as persuasion, group and conference behavior, problem solving, and human relations. The second faculty factor and the first student factor are virtually identical. Both deal with various types of written communication. The second student factor is similar to the first faculty factor except that the student factor seems to be oriented toward conference related communication. The third faculty factor and the third student factor are also nearly identical. These two factors deal with the basics, i.e., grammar, spelling, sentence construction.

The final student-faculty comparison deals with perceptions of the relative importance of the 54 topics included in the survey. As seen in Table 4, students and faculty differed significantly in their perceptions of 16 of the 54 topics. Of the 16 on which they differ, 6 are in the top ten. These topics are: report writing, sentence construction, making public presentations, being interviewed, self confidence through communication, and interviewing others.

As previously mentioned, one of the reasons for conducting the survey was to ascertain the effect of age and practical business experience on the responses. After dividing respondents into three groups (under 21, 21-29, and 30+), a one way ANOVA performed on each of the 54 items showed significant differences for only three topics: writing complaint letters, acknowledging the receipt of a letter or order, and writing resumes. As might be expected as the age of the respondent increased, the importance of each of the three topics decreased.

With respect to business experience a slightly different pattern emerged. Respondents were again divided into three groups. The first group consisted of respondents with no business experience, the second group consisted of respondents with one to four years of experience, and the third group consisted of respondents with five or more years of experience. Of the fifty-four one-way ANOVA's performed, only four yielded significant F-ratios: using communications to solve problems, writing complaint letters, writing

TABLE 3

Factor Analysis Of Students And Faculty Responses

Faculty

Factor I

Decision Making In Small Groups	.68
Sizing Up Others Through Their Communications	.51
Avoiding Communication Breakdowns	.69
Communicating To Persuade	.53
How To Listen	.70
Communicating Through Eye Contact	.56
Communicating In A Conference	.58
Using Communication To Understand Others	.72
Informal Conversation	.69
Using Communication To Solve Problems	.72
Using Communications To Resolve A Conflict	.83
Giving Dictation	.64
Understanding Communication Technology	.58
Selling Yourself To Others Through Communication	.66
Human Relationships Through Communications	.85
% Variance Accounted For	39.7

Factor II

Writing Manuals	.58
Writing Goodwill Letters	.67
Writing Resumes	.54
Writing Or Handling Credit Inquiries	.86
Replying To Claim Or Adjustment Letters	.82
Writing Forms	.67
Being Interviewed	.55
Informing A Client That An Order Is Incomplete Or Back Ordered	.76
Sales Letters	.74
Writing Brochures	.84
Writing Complaint Adjustment Letters	.85
Acknowledging The Receipt Of A Letter Or Order	.91
Writing Letters Of Inquiry	.75
Persuasive Writing	.57
Writing Collection Letters	.83
% Variance Accounted For	16.9

Factor III

Grammar	.79
Business Letter Writing	.57
Spelling	.85
Punctuation	.89
Sentence Construction	.83
% Variance Accounted For	11.1

Factor IV

Self Confidence Through Communication	.57
Using Body Language To Communicate	.53
How To Listen	.52
Understanding The Effects Of Mass Communications	.68
Communication In Organizations	.74
% Variance Accounted For	6.7

TABLE 3 (Cont'd)

Factor Analysis Of Students And Faculty Responses

Students

Factor I

Writing Or Handling Credit Inquiries	.68
Replying To Claim Or Adjustment Letters	.75
Writing Forms	.51
Informing A Client That An Order Is Incomplete Or Back Ordered	.75
Sales Letters	.73
Writing Brochures	.69
Giving Dictation	.59
Writing Complaint/Adjustment Letters	.75
Acknowledging The Receipt Of A Letter Or Order	.76
Writing Letters Of Inquiry	.75
Writing Collection Letters	.80
% Variance Accounted For	43.8

Factor II

Avoiding Communication Breakdowns	.67
Communicating In A Conference	.58
Using Communication To Understand Others	.70
Using Communication To Solve Problems	.82
Leadership Through Communications	.75
Using Communications To Resolve A Conflict	.78
Communication In Organizations	.65
Human Relationships Through Communications	.67
% Variance Accounted For	15.2

Factor III

Grammar	.75
Spelling	.81
Punctuation	.70
Sentence Construction	.76
% Variance Accounted For	7.8

Factor IV

Making Public Presentations	.67
Stage Presence	.56
Delivering Speeches	.87
% Variance Accounted For	6.4

TABLE 4

Means, Standard Deviations and T-Values of Students and Faculty for 54 Business Communications Topics

	Faculty		Students		T-Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Making Public Presentations	5.68	1.07	4.73	1.51	3.68**
Decision Making In Small Groups	5.08	1.79	5.62	1.12	1.77
Being Interviewed	5.26	1.54	6.00	1.02	2.81**
Communication Without Words	4.55	1.43	4.91	1.38	1.44
Grammar	5.80	1.60	5.23	1.38	1.35
Business Letter Writing	5.90	1.39	5.50	1.20	1.76
Writing Memos	5.32	1.63	4.92	1.24	1.38
Sizing Up Others Through Their Communications	4.95	1.14	5.31	1.25	1.68
Communicating To Persuade	5.80	1.21	5.67	.95	.63
Writing Goodwill Letters	4.82	1.29	4.26	1.41	2.22*
Writing Manuals	4.81	1.29	3.82	1.48	3.76**
Self Confidence Through Communication	5.45	1.55	5.98	1.00	2.02
Avoiding Communication Breakdowns	5.87	1.23	6.00	1.00	.73
Using Body Language To Communicate	4.18	1.78	4.77	1.29	1.91
Diction	5.16	1.33	4.01	1.33	1.13
Preventing Conflict	5.01	1.62	5.46	1.12	1.36
Spelling	5.61	1.62	4.69	1.64	3.11**
How To Listen	6.08	1.30	5.83	.99	1.13
Writing Resumes	5.21	1.38	5.50	1.34	1.21
Report Writing	5.97	1.22	4.89	1.41	4.34**
Writing Or Handling Credit Inquiries	4.63	1.46	4.58	1.42	.20
Replying To Claim Or Adjustment Letters	4.71	1.62	4.66	1.32	.22
Writing Forms	4.34	1.53	4.28	1.49	.21
Communicating Through Eye Contact	4.45	1.55	4.86	1.34	1.66
Interviewing	5.29	1.37	5.79	1.01	2.11*
Communicating With Charts & Graphs	5.45	1.27	4.55	1.38	3.64**
Communicating In A Conference	5.47	1.16	5.60	1.05	.64
Punctuation	5.13	1.53	4.36	1.64	2.62**
Using Communication To Understand Others	5.50	1.32	5.83	.96	1.44

TABLE 4 (Cont'd)

Means, Standard Deviations and T-Values of Students and Faculty for 54 Business Communications Topics

	Faculty		Students		T-Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Informing A Client That An Order Is Incomplete Or Back Ordered	4.40	1.80	4.28	1.55	.44
Sales Letters	4.71	1.80	4.50	1.40	.66
Informal Conversation	4.18	1.78	4.44	1.36	.83
Writing Brochures	4.32	1.69	3.69	1.40	2.37*
Using Audio Visual Aids To Communicate	5.34	1.21	4.60	1.35	3.08**
Using Communication To Solve Problems	5.65	1.36	5.74	1.16	.42
Leadership Through Communications	5.73	1.66	5.96	.96	.81
Using Communications To Resolve A Conflict	5.47	1.39	5.82	1.04	1.46
Stage Presence	5.10	1.41	4.34	1.42	2.96**
Giving Dictation	4.18	1.80	3.84	1.44	1.24
Understanding Communication Technology	4.57	1.46	4.51	1.49	.21
Understanding The Effects Of Mass Communications	5.03	1.37	5.09	1.22	.30
Writing Complaint/Adjustment Letters	4.47	1.52	4.30	1.49	.64
Acknowledging The Receipt Of A Letter Or Order	4.18	1.54	4.17	1.47	.03
Writing Letters Of Inquiry	4.50	1.55	4.67	1.27	.72
Sentence Construction	5.68	1.36	4.38	1.59	4.69**
Delivering Speeches	5.60	1.06	4.73	1.50	3.29**
Creative Writing	4.89	1.39	3.96	1.62	3.26**
Communication In Organizations	5.38	1.44	5.72	1.02	1.36
Eliminating Jargon From Communications	5.13	1.51	4.76	1.52	1.35
How Space Communicates	4.34	1.39	4.16	1.38	.71
Selling Yourself To Others Through Communication	5.53	1.20	5.87	1.03	1.81
Human Relationships Through Communications	5.32	1.54	5.73	1.08	1.57
Persuasive Writing	5.45	1.45	5.12	1.29	1.38
Writing Collection Letters	4.18	1.66	3.89	1.46	1.05

* Significant at .05
** Significant at .01

resumes, and interviewing others. With respect to all four topics, the groups with one to 4 years of business experience gave the highest importance ratings. In all but one case (using communications to solve problems) the group with no business experience gave the second highest importance ratings followed by the group with five or more years of experience.

To summarize, a relatively high degree of similarity was found between student and faculty perceptions. Both groups viewed the same four topics as belonging in their respective top ten and six topics were viewed by both as belonging in the bottom ten. Overall, in comparing students and faculty on 54 topics, significant differences were found for only 16. Age and work experience (two variables which might be expected to have on impact in importance ratings) had only minimal effect.

DISCUSSION

Three findings are of considerable importance to anyone concerned with the field of business communications. First, there seems to be a great deal of support for the course among students and faculty. This is important, since no matter how useful a course may be, a general negative feeling about a course or any uncertainties about its place in the curriculum can only have detrimental effects on students taking a course and on the faculty teaching it. Second, there seems to be considerable agreement between students and faculty about the course content. Although differences were found, by and large, it would appear that a great deal of similarity between a student and faculty prepared syllabus would exist. Third, it would appear that age and business experience had no impact on topic preference. This is welcome news to faculty who teach business communications during the day to the traditional college student and at night to the older, more mature student.

CONCLUSION

Although the above findings provide answers to the initial research questions, some additional problem areas remain. First, there is the textbook question. As was mentioned, current business communications texts were used to generate topics.

Although some excellent books on written communication and communication theory were discovered, none of these texts achieved the balance that the students felt they needed in order to learn to communicate effectively in the business world.

A second problem is turning the statement, "students think persuasive communication is very important," into a part of a syllabus. Although the survey suggests that the topic is important, it sheds little insight on how the topic should be approached. For such important topics, there are almost as many sub-topics and approaches as there are main topics.

Finally, even though there is considerable student and faculty agreement about course content, will this content really give the student the tools that he needs to successfully communicate in the business world?

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE CORE CURRICULUM--A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF GRADUATES, 1965-1970

Joseph H. Clements, University of Southern Mississippi

ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this study was to determine the extent that each of the five institutional objectives of the College of Business Administration were achieved. One of the five specific objectives was: To enable the students to communicate clearly and effectively with others. The findings yielded a positive indication to support the achievement of this objective. Respondents evaluated the core requirements to be the most important strength of the various curricula, and ranked the core subjects in the following order: (1) Accounting, (2) Business Communication (Letters and Reports), (3) Business Law, (4) Corporation Finance, (5) Principles of Management, (6) Principles of Marketing, and (7) Money and Banking.

Business Communication (Letters and Reports) was ranked second. Slightly more than two-thirds of all respondents indicated that business communication was either the most or an important subject in preparing them for their careers.

INTRODUCTION

What degree of importance is the subject area, business communication, as a core requirement for the student in a collegiate school of business? This was a major question in the minds of members of the Follow-up Study Committee at the University of Southern Mississippi in 1975. The most valuable contribution the recent graduate can make to his undergraduate school is information. The recent graduate has knowledge reinforced by experience. He has experienced the relevance of his education by utilizing acquired knowledge in his career. In addition, the recent graduate's evaluation of his undergraduate program, predicated upon experience (at least five years of experience), will be different than that of a student who has just begun his career.

Here follows a portion of the research study as it relates to business communication. This report will present: (1) the research objectives, (2) a description of the research methodology used to accomplish the research objectives, (3) a report of the overall findings that were obtained, and (4) a conclusion for the study of business communication.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall research objective of this study was to obtain evaluative and descriptive data from recent graduates of the College of Business Administration, University of Southern Mississippi.

More specifically, information of two types was sought from the graduates:

1. Evaluative data on the curriculum graduates were exposed to in the College of Business Administration in terms of the importance of subject areas in their careers.

2. Descriptive data on education and employment experiences. This included data on additional degrees earned, geographic location, job titles, earnings, size of company, etc.

This information could also be used as a guide in structuring the academic program of future students in the College of Business Administration.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedure

The population of interest for the study was defined as all students granted a degree from the College of Business Administration from May 1965 through August 1970.

From the 2,530 names, a sample size of 250 was selected using a stratified, proportionate, probability sampling design. Graduates were stratified on the basis of academic major to insure adequate representation of all academic areas within the College of Business Administration. Furthermore, the number of graduates in each major was proportionate to their number in the population. For example, if economic majors represented 10 percent of the graduates in the population, the number included in the sample would be 10 percent of the total number sampled. This also helped ensure a representative sample. Once the proportionate number by stratum was determined, the names of graduates were selected by systematic sampling procedures. The strata characteristics of the population and the actual sample characteristics are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

STRATA CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION AND SAMPLE

	Population		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Accounting	476	.188	40	.213
Economics	101	.040	8	.042
Finance	304	.120	18	.096
General Business	334	.132	31	.165
General Management	223	.088	9	.048
Industrial Management	223	.088	16	.085
Marketing	536	.212	33	.176
Personnel Management	282	.111	25	.133
Real Estate and Insurance	51	.020	7	.037
Totals	2,530	.999	187	.995

An additional 250 names were drawn using the same procedures to form a replacement pool for those who would not respond or for which current addresses were not correct. After the 250 names of graduates to be included in the sample were selected, the address shown on the printout was verified through records kept by the Alumni Association.

Questionnaire Design and Administration

A questionnaire, along with a cover letter and a prepaid envelope, was mailed to each of the graduates. Five weeks after the initial mailing, another copy of the questionnaire was mailed to each graduate who had not responded. Prior to this mailing, graduates that lived in Mississippi were contacted by telephone to alert them to the arrival of another questionnaire.

The survey instrument utilized in the study to gather information concerning the two areas--education and employment--essentially consisted of four basic elements: (1) soliciting the respondent's cooperation and stressing the importance of the research project to create rapport, (2) the questionnaire itself, (3) the classification data by undergraduate major, gradepoint average, additional degree or license, etc., and (4) provisions for the coding operation to facilitate tabulation and analysis.

Tabulation and Analysis

The tabulations and statistical manipulations of the data were accomplished by computer. The basic method of analysis was classification and comparison. The data were analyzed for all graduates combined and then by academic major.

Based on analysis of responses in the 187 questionnaires returned by graduates, a description of the education preparation and employment experience of the College of Business Administration graduates for the years 1965-1970 was developed. In addition, their evaluation of the College's program was revealed.

SUMMARY

The findings which are believed to be the most important concerning all majors combined, having graduated from the College of Business Administration, are listed below.

1. Nearly all of the 26.2 percent of the College of Business Administration graduates who pursued work beyond the bachelor's degree earned a degree or special certification, and 60 percent of those were granted the degree at the University of Southern Mississippi.

2. The specific industry areas in which graduates were initially employed, ranked in declining order and excluding military service, were educational services, insurance, accounting and auditing, general merchandise stores, banking, and construction; the general industry areas ranking in declining order were finance, insurance, and real estate; professional and related services; manufacturing; government; and wholesale and retail trade.

3. The average starting monthly salary for all majors was $583 during the years 1965-1970.

4. The majority of graduates remained in Mississippi. Other states of greatest concentration in addition to Mississippi were Florida, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

5. Most graduates were employed by corporations; however, slightly over 10 percent reported self-employment.

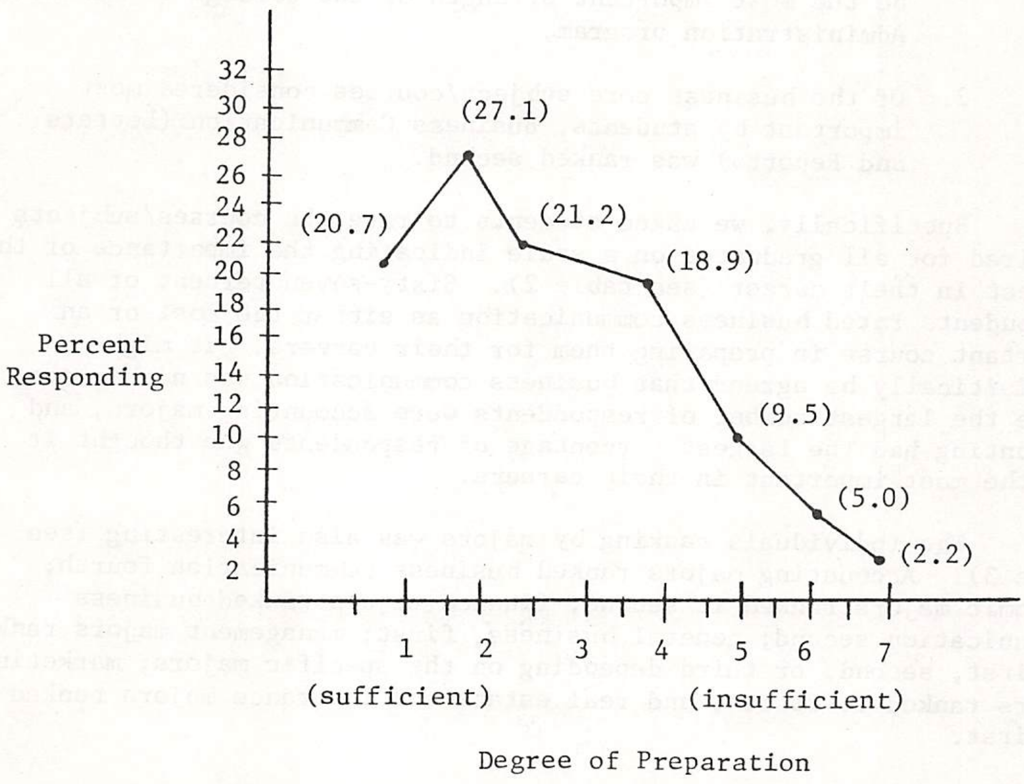
6. The functional area in which the greatest number of graduates were then currently employed was selling.

7. The job classification reported by the largest percentage of graduates was that of manager.

8. Forty percent of total respondents reported supervisory authority and responsibility for one to ten people. Slightly over 8 percent reported direct responsibility for more than 100 people.

9. Over two-thirds of the respondents believed their undergraduate programs at the University of Southern Mississippi had prepared them for their careers; and they indicated that given their present information about job opportunities and preparation, they would choose the same major at the University of Southern Mississippi. The distribution of the responses to the question concerning the extent to which the undergraduate program prepared respondents for their careers is sketched against a seven-interval scale in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1.--Extent to Which Undergraduate Program Prepared Respondents for Careers (Based on number responding to the question, hence percentages total to more than 100 percent).



10. The core subject/courses considered most important were Accounting, Business Communication (Letters and Reports), Business Law, Corporation Finance, Principles of Management, Principles of Marketing, and Money and Banking. Percentage responses to the question concerning the significance of the core requirements are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

11. Respondents indicated the core requirements to be the most important strength of the College of Business Administration program.

12. The most frequently made recommendation for improvement was a change in course requirements, particularly in certain majors.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

There were many findings in the study which were of interest to the faculty in the College of Business Administration. Of special interest to you, however, are the findings on the students' evaluation of the role of business communication. To summarize, two of these overall findings were:

1. Respondents indicated the business core requirements to be the most important strength of the College of Business Administration program.

2. Of the business core subject/courses considered most important by students, Business Communication (Letters and Reports) was ranked second.

Specifically, we asked students to rate the courses/subjects required for all graduates on a scale indicating the importance of the subject in their career (see table 2). Sixty-seven percent of all respondents rated business communication as either the most or an important course in preparing them for their careers. It might realisitically be agreed that business communication was number one since the largest number of respondents were accounting majors, and accounting had the largest percentage of respondents who thought it was the most important in their careers.

The individuals ranking by majors was also interesting (see table 3). Accounting majors ranked business communication fourth; economic majors ranked it second; finance majors ranked business communication second; general business, first; management majors ranked it first, second, or third depending on the specific majors; marketing majors ranked it fourth; and real estate and insurance majors ranked it first.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY MAJORS INDICATING DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF BUSINESS CORE REQUIREMENTS AS RELATED TO THEIR BUSINESS CAREER

Core Subjects*	Majors Most Important or Important									
	Accounting	Economics	Finance	General Business	General Management	Industrial Management	Marketing	Personnel Management	Real Estate and Insurance	All Majors
Accounting (Principles)	95.0	37.5	88.9	58.0	33.3	62.5	44.5	68.0	57.2	67.9
Business Communication (Letters)	57.5	62.4	83.3	77.4	66.6	81.2	50.6	60.0	71.3	67.3
Business Communication (Reports)	42.5	62.4	72.2	64.4	55.5	62.4	51.5	40.0	14.3	52.4
Business Law (Fundamentals)	62.5	25.0	72.2	41.9	33.3	49.9	51.5	52.0	71.3	52.9
Business Law (Advanced)	55.0	12.5	50.0	22.6	33.3	49.9	33.2	52.0	71.3	42.1
Corporation Finance (Business Finance)	57.5	25.0	66.7	61.2	33.3	74.9	51.5	56.0	42.8	56.1
Data Processing (Concepts)	65.0	37.5	33.3	32.2	22.2	43.6	27.3	32.0	14.3	38.5
Economics (Intro. to Price Theory)	32.5	62.5	61.2	51.6	22.2	62.4	45.4	40.0	57.0	46.0
Economics (Intro. to Income Theory)	30.0	62.5	44.5	25.8	22.2	49.9	36.4	40.0	57.0	36.9
Investment Finance	42.5	25.0	55.5	35.5	22.2	37.4	45.4	28.0	42.9	39.1
Management Principles	47.5	25.0	66.6	74.1	77.7	81.2	75.8	76.0	57.1	66.3
Marketing Principles	17.5	12.5	55.5	67.7	44.4	56.2	78.7	56.0	57.1	51.4
Money and Banking	55.0	37.5	72.3	51.6	33.3	56.2	60.6	48.0	57.0	54.5
Statistics (Elementary)	50.0	37.5	50.0	51.5	44.4	56.2	39.4	32.0	14.3	44.4
Statistics (Advanced)	30.0	25.0	44.5	45.1	44.4	43.7	21.2	24.0	..	29.4

*Subjects required by the College of Business Administration, University of Southern Mississippi.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONDENTS, GRADUATED IN ALL MAJORS, INDICATING DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF BUSINESS CORE SUBJECTS AS RELATED TO THEIR BUSINESS CORE

Core Subjects*	Most Important or Important	Undecided	Little or Least Important
Accounting (Principles)	67.9	14.4	17.7
Business Communications (Letters)	67.3	12.8	19.8
Management Principles	66.3	15.5	18.2
Corporation Finance (Business Finance)	56.1	18.2	25.8
Money and Banking	54.5	19.2	26.2
Business Law (Fundamentals)	52.9	21.9	25.1
Business Communications (Reports)	52.4	13.9	33.7
Marketing (Principles)	51.4	14.5	34.2
Economics (Introduction to Price Theory)	46.0	17.1	36.9
Statistics (Elementary)	44.4	16.5	39.0
Business Law (Advanced)	42.1	23.5	34.2
Investment Finance	39.1	29.4	41.6
Data Processing (Concepts)	38.5	18.2	43.3
Economics (Introduction to Income Theory)	36.9	26.8	36.4
Statistics (Advanced)	29.4	25.1	45.5

*Subjects required by the College of Business Administration, University of Southern Mississippi.

These findings clearly point out that our former business students realize that "everything a businessman does ends up communicating something to somebody" and that the study of business communication is vital in their business careers. This is a serious indictment emerging from graduates who are now utilizing their academic business preparation in the market place.

ESTABLISHING AND VALIDATING WRITING AND COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES FOR STUDENTS IN GRADUATE BUSINESS PROGRAMS--A MODEL

Larry D. Hartman, Northern Illinois University

ABSTRACT

Communication instructors are responsible to three major publics as they identify instructional content, as they select teaching strategies, methods and techniques, and as they evaluate the adeptness of their student's on-the-job performance.

Accountability

Position accountability, competency assessment, personnel fitness reports, and achievement of managerial objectives are terms known in participative communication climates. Regardless of the particular managerial approach or philosophy about motivating and managing people and resources in firms, writing and communication needs unique to each firm exist.

Communication instructors, particularly at the community college and university level, lack teacher credibility because they are not aware of these business differences or of these needs. Why? Either because it has been too long since they worked closely with various companies, or because they are essentially textbook bound, or because they are insecure about venturing into real life settings. But institutions, and particularly their curriculum approving and program assessing committees, must evaluate their offerings and determine the effectiveness of student's communication experiences. Unless institutions consistently assess the needs of their students, change their offerings and instruction processes, and follow-up the on-the-job application, business world relevancy fades.

Keeping Up-To-Date

In order to account to your publics, your students and their parents, your content and instruction, and your funding base, you should study the needs of the specific firms that employ your students. You should equate the in-class experiences to the new employee's business experiences and you should change and adapt as the results of your investigation indicate.

A Model for Investigation

Though national surveys and follow-up studies provide valuable samples of format and research design, specific reviews of the businesses hiring an institution's graduates are the prime source for relevancy. Time, interest, funds, and a willingness to face the results are features of genuine inquiry. Prepare surveys, complete personal interviews, and control variables in your studies so you can speak authoritatively about the competencies your students possess.

Figure 1 describes the process by which you can attain information essential to the assessment of your content and instruction.

FIGURE 1

A Model of Communication Competencies

- Feasibility Preview -- Pilot
- Inquiry Interviews -- Person-to-person
Telephone
- Guide Sheets Draft Instruments
- Jury Assessment Pilot Testing
- Population and Sample
- Data Collection -- Interviews, questionnaires,
video taped discussions, etc.
- Statistical Analysis
- Curriculum Appraisal -- Compentency Change
Competency Confirmation, etc.
- Repeated Study

Your graduates, preferably those who have been on the job for sometime so that they have completed the usual in-house training and orientation programs, are prime candidates. They understand what communication competencies are required by the company and they are acutely aware of the skills they did not possess at this stage. Recently employed graduates are not aware of their job responsibilities let alone their company's expectations. Select those with three or four or more years of experience.

Company supervisors and their personnel assistants are your next most important resources. In the preview and piloting process, make eight to ten visits to companies to assess the quality, acceptance and successes of your graduates. Interview your graduates, and their supervisors, in person. If it is not feasible, telephone interviews are also realistic.

Do not go unprepared. Should you ask a general question like, "How is John Benson working out in his position in your accounting department?", you better be prepared for a non-meaning reply. Even using an inquiry such as "John Benson completed two of our business communication courses, how does he write?", is dangerous. Business supervisors are hesitant to be too critical when an individual is involved, but they are more specific and responsive when a question is asked in the collective sense. Useful data result when you use guide questions during the survey. Putting business supervisors or graduates on the spot is threatening. Permit them the chance to preview or think about the situation. You will receive a more coherent response.

Guide questions should relate closely to the survey instrument you plan to use to reach the sample you select from your population of graduates and employers. Use some of the following questions in your preview, during the pilot, and for the study.

a. How frequently do you dictate business letters? Where did you learn to dictate?

b. How frequently do you dictate or write short reports?

c. Did you learn to write short reports on the job or before?

d. How frequently do you dictate or write long, formal reports? Does this involve primary or secondary research? Where did you learn to write formal reports?

e. How frequently do you use the telephone or an inter-office sound system? Rate yourself on your ability and effectiveness.

f. Do you explain results of studies to large audiences, small audiences, or to individuals? How frequently? Rate your effectiveness.

g. Are you able to design studies and gather data that you use in solving problems related to your assignment? Are these problems related to technical matters, organizational matters, etc.?

h. Do you know the different styles and approaches you can use to organize simple versus longer or technical reports? Do you change report format or a report style frequently?

i. Can you design graphic or audio aids to enhance or complete your writing or presentations?

j. How confident are you when you present information from your studies to peers, supervisors, or customers? Rate the quality of your nonwriting communication experiences at your institution.

Semantic differential and bi-polar selectors work on an instrument. Multiple choice and forced choice responses using graded numbers or short explanations are useful as well. Figure 2 illustrates an optical response design.

FIGURE 2 -- Sample Instrument Format

<u>Directions</u>: Below are listed a number of items which are typically emphasized in business communication courses. First, place a check mark in the appropriate column (1 to 5) to indicate the degree of emphasis accorded each item through the combined efforts of all instructors in business courses you took at . Second, place a check mark in the appropriate column (6 to 10) to indicate the degree of emphasis <u>you feel</u> should be accorded each item as a result of experiences since graduating from .

		Check One Here to indicate emphasis given at .					Check One Here to indicate your recommendation				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Comprehensive	Some details	Limited details	Incidental	No Treatment	Comprehensive	Some details	Limited details	Incidental	No Treatment
7. Importance of reports in business and industry											
a. Definition of a report	a.										
b. Role of reports in business	b.										
c. Qualifications of report writers	c.										
d. General information designed to stimulate student interest	d.										

Your pilot and testing processes will also identify other areas you need to assess. Jury assessment, consisting of students, business representatives and writing instructors, will also help you identify the independent and selected dependent variables you wish to study. Though statistical comparisons of survey data are limited, your population and sample should be of sufficient size to permit you to assess correlations and review simple significance levels. A simple counting and percentages application is informational, but will not carry the strength or meaning that statistical inferences permit.

Data collection requires mailing lists, follow-up interviews, follow-up mailings, and funds. Business grants may supplement other research funds from your college sources. Frequently, business supervisors want to cooperate if you permit them to assess their in-house orientation and training programs along with your own programs. Comparing your facts through the use of a computer is helpful, although a hand tally and desk calculator also work. Use whatever you have.

Objectively assess the results of the data your graduates and their employers return. The results will be most helpful in your departmental and college curriculum committee meetings and classrooms. The results are important to the participants of the study and to their employers as well. Returning a short abstract or summary of the results is a common courtesy. Supervisors will need a more detailed assessment of the conclusions and recommendations. An executive summary is also appropriate.

As a result of your findings, you are able to design laboratory experiences, select teaching machines, provide reinforcing experiences, and actuate simulations and video taped examples of graduates on-the-job. Most importantly, the communication concepts needed in your series of courses become more meaningful to your students, more defensible to your curriculum committees and more satisfying to your teachers.

RELEVANCY

Identifying writing and communication competencies being used in industry now, permitting your students to simulate or experience as many of these activities before they are employed, and helping your instructors use appropriate strategies, methods and techniques in the classroom, not only improves your relationship to your business marketplace, but to your funding sources and to your student sources as well. Communication and writing instructors can be accountable.

PLANNING A PROGRAM FOR A MAJOR IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Barron Wells, University of Southwestern Louisiana

ABSTRACT

The University of Southwestern Louisiana offers a B.S. Degree with a major in Business Communication. Its primary purpose is to prepare students to implement decisions, plans, and policies through people by communicating with them. The curriculum for this major includes courses from four areas: business communication, other communication areas, business administration, and general education. Courses in business communication and other communication areas (English composition, speech, and journalism) comprise 36 semester hours of communication courses. The major distinguishing characteristic of the program is that it is more behavioral and less quantitative than the other programs in the College of Business.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Southwestern Louisiana is one of the few schools in the nation to offer a Bachelor's Degree with a major in Business Communication.

The program for a major in Business Communication has been in existence for several years (15). However, it has recently been reorganized to give it more of a business administration orientation rather than its former secretarial orientation.

Why a Major in Business Communication

Why a major in Business Communication? Why Not? If you approach the matter from this open minded point of view, you surely will agree that such a program is needed, feasible, and defensible.

Too many programs in Business Administration today deal with decision making, planning, policy making, etc., and do not prepare people to implement those decisions, plans, and policies. Decisions, plans, policies, etc., must be implemented through other people by communicating with them. A business person's success or failure may depend as much or more on implementation as on sound decision making.

Today's society also demands persons skilled in the art of communicating effectively with people. Today's manager cannot coerce;

he must gain the cooperation and support of the people he works with; subordinates as well as superiors and colleagues. Also, today's emphasis on consumer rights, consumer protection, company image, etc., stresses the need for effective public relations.

Hopefully, as other areas are covered, more and more answers to the question, Why a major in Business Communication?, will emerge.

Objectives of the Major in Business Communication

Some of the objectives of the major in Business Communication at the University of Southwestern Louisiana are as follows:

A. To develop the ability to communicate effectively, especially in a business situation.

1. Appreciate the need for good communication
2. Understand the principles of human communication
3. Apply the principles of human communication
    a. accurately and without misunderstanding
    b. accomplishing the purpose
    c. maintaining goodwill
4. Utilize human psychology
5. Conduct and report the results of business research
6. Master all kinds of communication activities ordinarily engaged in by the business organization
7. Utilize all media ordinarily used for communication by business
8. Use effective communication as a tool of Business Administration
9. Promote effective human relations

B. To develop a broad and sound foundation in Business Administration, especially in Management (Communication is a tool of business, especially Management).

1. Management
2. Marketing
3. Finance
4. Economics
5. Accounting
6. Other General Business Administration Areas (Bus. Law, Statistics, etc.)

C. To obtain a broad liberal education that provides a "well-rounded" personality and is supporting to the business foundation.

CURRICULUM FOR A MAJOR IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Take a good look at the traditional Business Communication Course or courses and compare them to the communication that takes place in the business world. Communication in the business world includes at least the following:

A. Communication within the business organization

1. Downward
2. Upward
3. Lateral (sideways)
4. Informal (grapevine)

B. Communication between business organizations

1. Sales
2. Purchases
3. Exchange of information (credit, employee references, etc.)
4. Claims and adjustments
5. Cooperative advertising
6. etc.

C. Communication with customers

1. Credit
2. Sales
3. Claims
4. Service
5. etc.

D. Communication with labor and labor organizations

E. Communication with the community (company image)

F. Communication with government

1. Taxes
2. Conformity to regulations

Also, this communication in the business world takes place through various media such as informal face-to-face conversations, formal meetings, telephone conversations, memos, letters, reports, pay envelope inserts, suggestion boxes, sales pitches, personnel policies, across a negotiation table, etc.

From this frame of reference, it becomes apparent that a "letter writing" course will not fulfill the communication needs of business.

In the curriculum for a major in Business Communication at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, an attempt is made to meet the "communication in business" needs of the students through the following courses. (3 semester hours each)

A. Business Communication Courses

1. BCOM 203 -- Business Letter Writing. Study of effective business correspondence techniques with practical applications in the preparation of business letters and other written communication. Emphasis on business English and business vocabulary.

2. BCOM 303 -- Communication in Business. Theory and Psychology of communication in business, communication networks within the business organization, and communication between the business organization and its customers, other businesses, labor, and the community. Includes both oral and written communication, and utilizes all media ordinarily used in business communication. Case problems provide specific application to business type situations.

3. BCOM 304 -- Business Research and Reporting. Research designs for gathering information for the solution of business problems, techniques for gathering and interpreting data, and methods of reporting the results of business research.

4. BCOM 415 -- Independent Study. Approved business research in areas of the student's need. Preq: BCOM 304 or approval of instructor.

5. MGMT 420 -- Organizational Theory and Dynamics. Analysis of communicative and organizational dynamics of the administrative process and interpersonal behavior.

Specialization becomes possible in the Business Communication courses because there are five of them. The teachers do not have to attempt to cover all facets of communication in business in just one or two courses. The Business Letter Writing course can concentrate on all kinds of business letters, business vocabulary, and business English, since it does not include report writing, managerial communication, or advanced communication theory. The Communication in Business course can concentrate on communication theory and the many aspects of communication in the business world because it does not emphasize letter writing, report writing, or business English. The Business Research and Reporting course can concentrate on the research aspect as much as on the report writing aspect because it does not include letter writing and other areas of business communication. The Independent Study course allows additional latitude in specialization to meet the needs of individual students, and the Organizational Theory and Dynamics course is free to concentrate on advanced communication theory and communication within the business enterprise.

B. Other Communication Courses

1. English Composition and Literature -- 2 courses
2. English Electives -- 2 courses
3. Speech -- 2 courses
   a. Fundamentals of Speaking
   b. Discussion and Conference
4. Journalism -- 1 course

These seven courses, plus the five business communication courses, make a total of 36 semester hours of communication courses. The question is often asked: Where do you get enough subject matter to constitute a major in Business Communication? The University of Southwestern Louisiana believes that these 36 semester hours are sufficient to constitute a respectable major in Business Communication, and most other fields too, for that matter.

C. Supporting Business Courses

1. General Business Administration -- 4 courses

   a. Introduction to Business
   b. Business Statistics
   c. Business Law I and II

2. Office Administration -- 1 course

   a. Beginning Typewriting

3. Accounting -- 2 courses

   a. Principles I and II

4. Economics -- 2 courses

   a. Macro
   b. Micro

5. Management -- 4 courses

   a. Fundamentals
   b. Organizational Behavior
   c. Organizational Theory and Dynamics
   d. Management Elective

6. Marketing -- 2 courses

   a. Principles
   b. Marketing Elective

7. Finance -- 1 course

   a. Corporation Finance

D. General Education Courses

1. Science -- 2 courses
2. Math -- 2 courses
3. Physical Education -- 2 courses
4. Psychology -- 3 courses

   a. General
   b. Business
   c. Social

5. Political Science -- 1 course
6. Sociology -- 1 course
7. Computer Science -- 1 course (Computers in Modern Society)
8. Philosophy Elective -- 1 course
9. History Elective -- 1 course
10. Free Electives -- 9 semester hours (3 courses)

From this description, one of the more distinguishing characteristics of the program for a major in Business Communication at the University of Southwestern Louisiana can probably be noticed. It is more behavioral and less quantitative than most of the other programs in the College of Business. For example, it requires only two math courses, only two accounting courses, and only one finance course. The math courses required are the lowest level general math courses offered at the University.

On the other hand, it requires four behavioral management courses and three psychology courses in addition to the business communication courses which are also behaviorally oriented.

The following is a copy of the entire curriculum for a major in Business Communication at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. It is not considered to be perfect; indeed it is not yet exactly as its faculty wants it, given present offerings at the university. But then, like any program that is to be viable in today's world, it will never be completed.

First Semester		Second Semester	
Course	Hrs.	Course	Hrs.
BIOL 105 (Man and Environment)	3	ACCT 101 (Prin of Acct 1)	3
ENGL 101 (Comp & Lit 1)	3	BIOL 106 (Man and Environment)	3
GBUS 101 (Intro to Business)	3	ENGL 102 (Comp & Lit II)	3
MATH 101 (Basic Concepts I)	3	MATH 102 (Basic Concepts II)	3
OFAD 100 (Elementary Typing)	3	SPCH 100 (Fund of Speaking)	3
PED or AERO	1-2	PED or AERO	1-2
	16-17		16-17

Third Semester

Course		Hrs.
ACCT 102	(Prin of Acct II)	3
ECON 201	(Prin of Econ I)	3
JOUR 101	(Introduction)	2
PSYC 110	(General Psyc I)	3
	(Elective English)	3
PED or AERO		1-2
		15-16

Fourth Semester

Course		Hrs.
POLS 200	(Intro to Pol)	3
SOCI 100	(General Sociology)	3
	(Elective English)	3
ECON 202	(Prin of Econ II)	3
BCOM 203	(Bus Let Writ)	3
PED or AERO		1-2
		16-17

Fifth Semester

BCOM 303	(Com in Bus)	3
GBUS 307	(Bus Stat)	3
MGMT 330	(Fundamentals)	3
MKTG 345	(Prin of Mktg)	3
PSYC 310	(Business Psyc)	3
CMPS 300	(Comp & Mod Society)	3
		18

Sixth Semester

BCOM 304	(Bus Research & Report)	3
FNAN 300	(Corp Fnan)	3
MGMT 360	(Organizational Behav)	3
SPCH 334	(Discussion & Conf)	3
	(Elective History)	3
		15

Seventh Semester

BCOM 415	(Independent Study)	3
GBUS 407	(Bus Law I)	3
PSYC 401	(Social Psyc)	3
	(Elective Management)	3
	(Free Elective)	3
		15

Eight Semester

GBUS 408	(Bus Law II)	3
MGMT 420	(Org Thy & Dynamics)	3
	(Elective Marketing)	3
	(Free Electives)	6
		15

PART II
PSYCHOLOGY, SEMANTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS

PSYCHOLOGICAL SEMANTIC PROBLEMS OF INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORANDA AND THE SATELLITE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses semantic problems of intra-organizational memoranda in terms of psychological and informational content, offers the "satellite theory" of communication as a basis for understanding the semantic problems associated with intra-organizational memoranda, and suggests methods to resolve the weaknesses of memorandum usage.

INTRODUCTION

The "satellite theory" of communication holds that it is better to communicate something indirectly than to do so directly. Fritz Steele draws the image of "sending a message out into space, where it is received by a satellite, reflected back to earth, and picked up by the person who is standing next to you."[1]

The use of intra-organizational memoranda serves to prevent the application of the human ability to communicate information and emotions directly. Written memoranda are transmitted to express indirectly the thoughts of one organization member to another whose physical location may be in close proximity to the sender. The "satellite theory" reinforces the sender's belief that it is to his advantage to communicate indirectly - that he can send and receive subtle cues without experiencing an open transmission of reality.

Herein lies the basis for understanding and analysis of semantic problems associated with intra-organizational memoranda. In many specific business situations, the semantics of intra-organizational memoranda have psychological as well as informational content.

SEMANTICS AND INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORANDA

The intra-organizational memorandum has gained widespread use as an informal business communication form. Impersonal in content,

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[1]Fritz Steele, The Open Organization: The Impact of Secrecy and Disclosure on People and Organizations, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., Reading, Massachusetts, 1975, p. 20.

highly conventional in format, concise in information, the intra-organizational memo is a communicator designed to provide a "link" between verbal communication and the formal business letter. Long used strictly within an organization, the memorandum is increasing in use outside the originating organization.

Primary applications for the business memorandum include:

1. to circulate information;
2. to make a record of policies, decisions and agreements;
3. to transmit information of record;
4. to provide a summary of a meeting;
5. to keep members of an organization or group posted on new policies; and
6. to report on an activity or situation.[2]

In each situation, the semantic content of "information" or "record" included in the memorandum has potential for psychological communication problems within the organization.

The ideal intra-office memorandum should present facts as a matter of record, stated by the writer to any reader in a format free from implied information. However, semantic problems are likely to arise in the following cases where additional non-information content is included.

First, emotive content of words must be considered. As each word in the memorandum has emotive meaning in addition to the standard definitional meaning, words may be used to deliberately convey emotional impact.[3] For example, stating "for what it is worth, I feel" instead of "in my opinion" may tell the reader you consider your opinion worthless and "why did you bother to ask me anyway?"

"Shades" of meaning are a second consideration. The emotive content of a memorandum may be altered entirely by a subtle change of meaning conveyed by a word which arouses emotional feeling in the reader.[4] For example, writing "I honestly feel" instead of just "I feel" may cue the reader that you are giving him a more considered opinion than is normally requested.

Within the range of potential semantic problems lies the issue of expressions considered taboo, i.e., not acceptable in a social sense. The verbal expression that an employee did "one hell of a good job" requires written modification to "an excellent job" or "a very good

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[2]Herman M. Weisman, Technical Correspondence: A Handbook and Reference Source for the Technical Professional, John Wiley and Sons, New York, New York, 1968, p. 50.

[3]Louis B. Salomon, Semantics and Common Sense, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, New York, 1966, p. 27.

[4]Ibid., p. 30.

job", which lessens the emotional impact conveyed in the enthusiastic verbal communication.[5]

Ambiguity, a semantic hazard in any business communication, is an inherent problem in the use of the inter-office memorandum. The problem, aside from that resulting from multiple meanings of words, arises when memoranda are styled to be deliberately ambiguous in order to free the writer from presenting a risky or questionable decision. The executive who has been requested to recommend action on entry of his firm into diversified product lines may be reluctant to commit himself to a decision - hence, the use of the ambiguous memorandum allows him to evade the question which, in a face-to-face confrontation, would require an answer.[6]

Failure to define terms, a situation easily remedied in verbal communication, compounds semantic problems in the written memorandum. The executive who informs foremen, via memo, that production efficiency must be increased 10%, may believe that he has conveyed a requirement of 10% greater output with current operating resources. The foreman may interpret as his criterion for improvement, a 10% reduction in rejects by Quality Control. Neither definition is in error - the error lies in the failure by the writer to define his terms.[7]

The very format of a memorandum conveys emotional meaning. With its structure, specified style and concise businesslike presentation, the bounds are strictly set for expression of the message. The traditional "To... From..." format, requiring only filling in the names of the receiver and sender, eliminates the courteous "Dear..." salutation, and "Sincerely," closing, or the "Good to see you" warmness of a personal meeting.

There is no place in a memorandum for personal remarks or pleasantries. Because of the style, and possible wide distribution of a memorandum, all communication must be kept to the facts related to the subject, as specified at the outset of the communication.

The distribution and style limits of format extend to the statement format itself. Questions which are raised cannot objectively be directed toward one person, due to the emotive content.

A sudden decrease in one territory's sales revenue may necessitate a report to the sales manager on probable causes. The manager is reluctant to ask directly "What went wrong, Bill?" He is likely to modify the request to indicate his desire that he receive a written analysis of the last year's sales by representative and territory from each territorial manager. Perhaps the end result of such a structured analysis will present the same conclusions as a verbal response; however, the impact of direct communication is lessened and the speed of

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[5] _Ibid._, p. 31.

[6] _Ibid._, p. 37.

[7] _Ibid._, p. 47.

of the response slowed.

Beyond the general semantic problems arising from content, the inter-organizational memorandum lends itself to further communication hazards in its distribution requirements.

Consider the case of a manager who, by memo, asks for a production report from his supervisor, then routes copies of this request to upper management "for their information." Bypassing the opportunity to verbally request the needed information, he has implied that the distribution to higher authorities adds credence to his request and puts additional pressure on the recipient to respond since it is no longer a matter between just manager and production supervisor.

Again the indirect communication is seen when memoranda are distributed widely to "record" the controversial discussions of a meeting which was attended by all memo recipients. The direct message may be: "Here is what happened, and I want to make sure my version is the permanent record."

A third indirect message is conveyed by the aspiring manager who produces report after report for his department's use, then routes these to managers in upper levels of the organizational structure "for their information." The direct message of the memorandum is the informational content; the indirect message is: "Note how much work I produce."

The recipient of a memorandum presents a significant danger for development of semantic problems in organizational communication. Any reader possesses a set of built-in opinions and ideas through which all incoming messages are filtered.[8] The burden of circumventing these attitudes and opinions rests with the memorandum writer. His best approach is that of sticking to the subject as objectively as possible without introducing potentially ambiguous, controversial, or strongly opinionated messages. It is the writer's responsibility neither to dissuade the reader in his own opinion nor to sway him to adopt the writer's, but rather to present factual information which will convey the same meaning from writer to reader.

Any memorandum reader must be considered by the writer to be busy, and to be interrupting his own schedule to receive the memo's message.[9] A certain impatience may be assumed in the reader, which will lead the astute writer to get quickly to the point, to avoid vague or opinionated references, and to answer concisely any questions which might arise in the reader's mind.

A well-planned concise memorandum will prevent the occurrence of further reader problems of tangential rambling on the part of the reader,

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[8]Norman G. Shindle, The Art of Successfull Communication, McGraw-Hill, New York, New York, 1965, pp. 46-47.

[9]Ibid.

and the diversion of the reader's attention by introduction of non-related concepts or information.

The memorandum writer anticipating wide circulation of his message faces reader problems compounded by the number of recipients. Unable to know or respond to varying built-in opinions and individual situations, his communication must be one which even more carefully considers these reader aspects than those of a direct letter writer or a verbal communicator.

CONCLUSIONS

Some feel the most desirable solution to problems inherent in intra-organizational memoranda is the discontinuation of memorandum use altogether. Of course, the set of problems resolved by this step is then replaced by those associated with total dependence upon verbal communication, given the large and complex structure of most organizations.

How then can the business communicator resolve, or at least deal with, the weaknesses of memorandum usage? First, wherever possible, he may replace written memoranda with direct verbal communication, where its message can be more effective. In any situation where communication is one-to-one, verbal communication is preferable because it presents the immediate opportunity to clarify potential areas of misunderstanding.

Secondly, education of management in the basics of semantics will alert these key people to the potential dangers of their communications. Information on the potential for semantic problems in content and awareness of the readers' situations will be effective in steering management toward better written intra-organizational communication.

Thirdly, the indirect messages implied in memo distribution should be kept to a minimum. Only those to whom information content is relevant need be included as recipients.

Most importantly perhaps, we should stop using the "satellite theory" of communication when composing intra-organizational memoranda and remember that such memoranda are intended as only minor missives rather than tactical missiles.

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ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES TO SEXIST COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Sexist communication precasts people on the basis of sex and is particularly debilitating for females. Eradication of sexist communication requires understanding of its insidious erosion of self-concept for females and its limitation on full human development for both females and males. Some general guidelines for nonsexist communication involve commitment, familiar idiom, consistency, message checking, and name reporting. Some specific guidelines deal with names, courtesy titles, the "Mr. and Mrs. John Jones" concept, the "man" words, the "he" pronouns, sex-object descriptions for women, "girls" for women, sex markers, nonhuman sexist forms, and stereotyping.

INTRODUCTION

Miller and Swift summarize well the problems for women arising from their treatment in the language:

> Those who have grown up with a language that tells them they are at the same time men and not men are faced with ambivalence--not about their sex, but about their status as human beings. For the question "Who is man?" it seems, is a political one, and the very ambiguity of the word is what makes it a useful tool for those who have a stake in maintaining the status quo."[1]

These words are used to introduce a few of the many principles for nonsexism in communication. However, before covering the principles, some definitions are presented. In addition, an attempt is made to engage or increase commitment to acceptable nonsexist communication, and to state some general guidelines for it.

Sexist Communication Defined

Sexist communication is communication--written, oral, or nonverbal--that precasts people on the basis of sex. Thus, nonsexist

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[1]Casey Miller and Kate Swift, Words and Women, Anchor Press/ Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1976, p. 38.

communication is communication--written, oral, or nonverbal--that does not precast people on the basis of sex. Though sexist communication affects both females and males, it is more debilitating for females. Therefore, nonsexist guidelines necessarily emphasize the removal of communication modes negative to females.

Commitment

To initiate or increase dedication to the process of cleansing communication of prejudicial stereotyping on the basis of sex, a few points are reviewed:

(1) The ability for sophisticated communication sets humans above animals; therefore, communication patterns that classify males as the superior and the norm, and females as the inferior and the aberration, sets males above females.

(2) Communication reflects the male-supremacy myth that grew out of a patriarchal culture. Thus, to cling to communication patterns that betray the female's fullest development simply because those patterns exist is to sacrifice women at the altar of tradition.

(3) In spite of all the claims to the contrary, research shows that the so-called generic nouns and pronouns (the "man" and "he" words) do create images of maleness within the receivers.

(4) Sexist communication perpetuates sex-stereotyped roles. When males grow up "seeing" themselves a strong, unemotional, head-of-household superiors, they are prevented from becoming sensitive, giving, sharing human beings. When females grow up "seeing" themselves as emotional, economically dependent, toilet-cleaning subordinates, they are prevented from becoming fully educated, courageous, independent equals. The prophecy of self-fulfillment implicit in sex-stereotyped roles is insidiously successful in keeping all people "in their places." Those in academia contribute no small part to the perpetuation of such sex-role stereotyping.

(5) Studies show that the Freudian type of claim of biologically based inferiority of females is without foundation. Females and males are more alike than they are different. Where differences do exist, the range is so wide that the overlap between the sexes is large enough to make the qualities virtually nonsex-related. The few differences that do seem to exist are split about fifty/fifty between favoring females and males. And, most importantly, the differences that have been found are as easily explained by socialization as they are by biological differences in the sexes.

(6) If nouns and pronouns are truly generic, why are such phrases as these regularly encountered: "the taxpayer . . . his wife and children" and "the manager . . . he . . . and the secretary . . . she"? If the words are generic, references to "wife" and "secretary . . . she" would not occur.

(7) The ultimate sexism--for both sexes--is the falsity of the male-superiority, female-inferiority myth. The myth does disservice to

both females and males, because it creates men whose psyches are distorted by a sense of superiority to women, and women whose psyches are shriveled by a sense of inferiority to men. The humanity of both suffers in the process.

(8) Whether educators can personally accept the importance of nonsexist communication--or even accept that the sexes are equal--they must practice nonsexist communication. The weight of humanism/feminism for communication equality can no longer be ignored, for equal treatment in communication is both a reflector and creator of human equality.[2]

The resistance to communication changes epitomizes in the opposition to conversion to nonsexist communication modes. People understand why Kunta Kinte in Roots endured beatings and lashings before accepting the name of Toby--and then only on the surface. But people cannot seem to understand why a woman wants to retain her birth name when she marries, or at least her first name, instead of being absorbed into a "Mrs. John Jones" style. But then Kunta Kinte was a man, and a woman is just a woman.

An acquaintance once came away from a class and described a horrible moment for him. It seems that he had become flustered because his work at the chalk board was not yielding the correct answer. So, in his embarrassment he had uttered "There's a nigger in the woodpile somewhere." He "caught" his error immediately and made some sort of apology to the class. The faux pas weighed so heavily on his mind that he told others about it. The same man regularly calls a woman "chairman" when she has called herself "chairperson" and "chairwoman," and he calls grown women "girls" and "gals" in the same breath with referring to the "men" in the group. He understands the importance of semantics in the case of racism, but obviously not in the case of sexism.

People can understand a black man's not wanting to be called a "boy." Yet they just cannot understand a woman's not wanting to be called a "girl."

These, unfortunately, are accurate pictures of the attitudes of all too many people--both men and women. As semanticists and word merchants, business educators must practice what they preach--the consideration of the receivers. And a sufficiently large number of receivers are "out there" who demand equality of treatment in communication that the demand must be honored.

Oh, yes, many women themselves are so thoroughly socialized that they will fight for the "right" to be subsumed in the language. But, remember, many blacks are so thoroughly socialized that they too accept subordination and answer to words like "colored" and "nigra"

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[2]The definition of "feminism" is simply the movement to bring females into social, economic, and political equality.

as right and proper. Those who are brainwashed into acceptance, and even defense of subordination--whether on the basis of race or sex or whatever--are the victims and thus those most in need of leadership in overcoming that subordination.

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES

Before dealing with the specific problems introduced in some sentences, a few general guidelines for nonsexist communication are presented:

(1) Establish and practice a commitment to the cause of nonsexist communication. Use positions as educators and communicators to direct and persuade others to do the same. Once the commitment is there, the correction is not that difficult.

(2) Use inoffensive patterns, familiar idiom, and consistency in phraseology, but maintain nonsexism. If some unfamiliar expressions must be used, use them until they become the familiar. Do not "kid" or use counterproductive words and phrases that subvert the process of exorcising the language of sexism. The only acceptable alternative to sexist communication is nonsexist communication--but nonsexist communication as nonglaring as possible.

(3) "Check" every message before it is transmitted; remove the sexism from it.

(4) Exercise control over names. Women must be tenacious in the determination that they will be addressed in a nonsexist fashion. Sometimes it takes several calls or letters, but ultimately most businesses and people will come around. For example, the author travels several times a year and always makes arrangements with a travel agency on campus. She and her husband were planning a trip to Hawaii. The author made all of the arrangements for the trip by phone and in person. This was the first time her husband's name had appeared on the travel agency's records. A letter about the Hawaii trip was addressed to "R. L. Persing." (At least it was not addressed to "Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Persing.") Rather than just "let it go," the author called the manager and told him that she is not an extension of her husband, that she is not absorbed in a unit defined by him, and that she expects all future mail to be addressed to "R. L. and Bobbye Persing" or "Bobbye and R. L. Persing." And she told him that if he uses courtesy titles, the pairing is to be "Ms. (or "Dr.") Bobbye and Mr. R. L. Persing."

Observe the sex-fairness found in varying the order of names. Where is it written (except in a male-dominated culture) that the man's name always comes first? The alphabetical arrangement is quite fair; thus, the "Bobbye and R. L." Why should that be shocking to anyone? But, indeed, it is. The sexist name-calling comes into play with words like "hen-pecked" and "I'd hate to be married to her." Thankfully, the author and her husband have grown together in acceptance of equality between the sexes. And also thankfully, he is secure enough in himself not to feel threatened by an equal.

The instance with the travel agency is one example of how exercising name control will light a few candles that can leap into a fire that will consume the monument to sexism found in communication modes. Every woman can do the same.

SOME SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Attention is now turned from general nonsexist guidelines to some types of sexism and some specific rules for supplying acceptable alternatives to them. The vehicle for the discussion will be five brief passages. The coverage is obviously not exhaustive, and the illustrations are just as obviously contrived, compressed, and out-of-context examples of sexism. The sexist words and phrases are underlined in the passages as each is introduced.

1. <u>Jones</u> asked <u>Miss Constance</u>, <u>Mrs. Friar, and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wallace</u> whether they had enjoyed the series of lectures entitled "<u>Mankind's</u> Finest Hour."

   a. Maintain consistency in reporting names. Make it "Jones asked Talbert, Friar, Wallace, and Wallace . . . ." or Bruce Jones asked Constance Talbert, Sherrill Friar, Andrea Wallace, and Bill Wallace . . . ." or "Bruce asked Constance, Sherrill, Andrea, and Bill . . . ." or "Mr. Jones asked Ms. Talbert, Ms. Friar, Ms. Wallace, and Mr. Wallace . . . ."

   b. Maintain consistency in courtesy titles; either introduce marital-status courtesy titles for men or eliminate them for women. "Ms." is used in the preceding suggestion, because marital-status titles for men are not likely to be added to the language.

   c. Eliminate the total subordination of a married woman found in the "Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wallace" concept. At least retain her given name. Examples are found in the suggested solution.

   d. Eliminate the use of supposed generic nouns. Instead of "mankind" in the example, use "humanity," "humankind," "people," etc. An additional problem arises when existing sexist passages are being reported. The key is to avoid reporting them verbatim. In this example, one could simply write ". . . they had enjoyed the most recent series of lectures at the university."

2. A good doctor will instruct <u>his</u> nurse about how <u>she</u> should <u>master</u> <u>her</u> work.

   a. Use neither the "generic" male pronoun nor the sex-stereotyped pronoun. Use substitute words; use her/his format sparingly; use plurals: "A good doctor will instruct the nurse about how the work . . . ." or "A good doctor will instruct her or his nurse about how he or she . . . ." or "Good doctors will instruct their nurses about how they . . . ."

3. Gerald Davidson, Jr., is Chairman of the Board. Sherry, an attractive brunette girl and former Miss Logan County, is a lady attorney and executrix for the Holmes estate.

   a. Even the naming system is sexist. While names such as Davidson, Thompson, Blackman, and Alderman cannot be changed, awareness that they reflect a patriarchal culture increases understanding of the depth of sexism in society.

   b. Eliminate "Jr." Use "II." The maleness of "Jr." is well established.

   c. Eliminate "man" words. Use "chairperson," "chairone," "chair-one," "chair," or "head" for this particular illustration. If "-man" is retained for a man who holds the position, use "-woman" (not "-person") for a woman and "-woman and -man" for a generic reference. The communicator cannot have it both ways; the word either becomes sex-neutral or the generic reference includes both "-man" and "-woman" words.

   d. Maintain consistency in reporting names: "Gerald Davidson, II . . . Sherry Ellis . . ." or "Gerald . . . Sherry . . . . " or "Davidson . . . Ellis . . . ."

   e. Remove sex-object and descriptive adjectives for women, or introduce them for men: Expand to "Gerald Davidson, II, a handsome blonde . . . ." or omit ". . . attractive brunette . . . ."

   f. Maintain equivalence in sex reference. In the illustration, either call Davidson a "boy" or change "girl" to "woman."

   g. Remove the concept of beauty queens from the culture; they make women into sex objects. Certainly never honor such titles by communicating them. Note the typical "Miss" in the title; the desired "virginity" of sex objects is apparent in the use of that title.

   h. Do not add sex markers to words for women: ". . . is an attorney."

   i. Eliminate the "-ess," "-ette," and "-ix" endings; they are sex markers. The word is "executor," not "executrix." If words like "actress," "waitress" or "hostess" are retained, the generic reference must be to "actress/es and actor/s," "waiter/s and waitress/es," and "hostess/es and host/s." Again, the sexist communicator cannot have it both ways. Too many instances exist of dogged determination to retain sex markers for women, but the male forms for generic references.

4. The ship's captain brought her through the storm. His control over her was complete, for he kept her purring like a kitten.

   a. Do not assign pronouns to nonhuman things on the basis of the male-superiority, female-inferiority dichotomy: Use "it" or role reversal ("him") to refer to the ship in this example.

b. In hypothetical sentences do not stereotype the roles; in this sentence, why not talk about "The captain . . . she . . . ."?

c. Do not use animal references for humans; they are particularly destructive of females. The "purring like a kitten" concept makes a subhuman of the female.

5. As head of the household and breadwinner, every worker should exercise his right to vote. His wife and children depend upon him to see that legislators pass laws supportive of workmen.

a. Do not treat words like "head of household," "breadwinner," "voter," and "worker" as if they refer exclusively to males. Do not perpetuate the dependency lumping of "women and children." In this example the "wife" also has the right and responsibility to vote. Do not use "-man" words. A correction could be: "As head of the household and breadwinner, every worker should exercise her or his right to vote; she or he must see that legislators pass laws supportive of workers."

EXORCISING SEXIST COMMUNICATION

In summary, then, these few examples only hint at acceptable alternatives to sexist communication. However, communication professors and practitioners have the opportunity and responsibility for eradicating sexism. Whether they are aware or unaware, women are being demeaned in an insidiously destructive way by communication that professors and practitioners use and unfortunately defend and perpetuate. In the process a new generation of perpetuators and defenders of sexist communication is being created. To break the vicious sexist cycle, communication leaders must care enough for humans to contribute to their fullest development.

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WHEN WE COMMUNICATE TRUST

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the characteristics and possibilities of a trusting relationship. The purpose is to describe this relationship so that you can sense its importance, can learn what to expect from it, and can discover some psychological clues that may help you build and preserve trust.

Trust makes possible shared feelings, of closeness, of friendships. It is therapeutic, for it reduces fear and threat. It is creative, for it makes it possible for you to become more than you were. Costs are involved, however, for trust involves the risk of rejection and betrayal. Trust must be both valued and preserved because it keeps you from feeling alienated and alone in your world.

INTRODUCTION

Trust begins with warmth and openness. Someone must make the first move, so I make mine. I am friendly, I smile, speak, show an interest in you. I begin by showing you my feelings--of interest, warmth, acceptance. By word, by look, by act, I am saying: "to me you are good--a person worth knowing . . . will you make this a mutual feeling--each of us accepting the other." The offer is to move from trust, to shared feelings, to closeness. This can be the beginnings of friendship, perhaps of love.

My move makes me vulnerable. If you are cold, or withdrawn, if you are cautious, and unfriendly, this I perceive as rejection. Your rejection tears down trust. Suspicion makes a barrier and makes trust impossible. Each of us has within us the remembrance of past fears, pain, anger. If these old feelings are aroused, suspicion grows, trust is gone. Trust offers to reduce fear and threat. As trust grows, fear and threat are unnecessary.

My offer of trust says, "as you trust me you will find I will not hurt you. You can let your defenses (against possible fear, pain and anger) come down. My trust says "I accept you, just as you are. I have made my move. The next step is yours."

Trust is a gift. I offer you freedom. Freedom to be who you are. Not to have to win, to measure up, to pretend. Our mutual trust creates feelings of closeness. Alone before, now there is a solution for our aloneness. Trust says, "you can depend on me, you can have faith, you are safe in my presence." My trust gives you hope. Hope can change your world; with hope, right things can happen.

Trust is therapeutic. In trust we appreciate each other. We relax, we feel relieved. The relationship changes. You may have my support and I have yours. We are both stronger.

Trust comes gradually. Little by little I reveal who I am. I tell of my past experiences. Some of these things have happened to me, "and what has happened to you--"? I need not ask, but to continue the trust, you must offer something in return. We begin telling each other. Of what we have known, of what we think about the world, how we feel about church, and fishing, and walking in the woods.

Trust is built slowly and carefully. If we plunge ahead too strongly, if we hurry to tell all, we may seem to offer too much, and demand too much. The other person may not be ready yet. He cannot move this fast into trust and closeness, and our offering too much, too soon can lose him.

So we begin by offering friendship, and sharing. We create the expectation that we are open, and accepting, and to be trusted. We are willing to risk suspicion and rejection. The expectation of trust we can create, but it is only sustained if our trust reciprocated. My trust can only grow if yours grows too. Your trust must answer mine. Then, together, we create mutuality, shared feelings, closeness, friendship. We have found someone we can depend on. The therapy begins.

What we are talking about here can affect many of your relationships: "how to make--and keep--friends," "how to get along with your boss," "how to make your marriage last." A trusting relationship does not just happen, we create it and sustain it by what we say and do, by what we communicate to others in so many ways. So we want to be aware of what feelings and thoughts we want to create to sustain this trust, this wonderful closeness and feeling of security.

One idea I must communicate is this: I am not trying to hurt you. More than this, I am not trying to, and not going to let this happen. I am, in effect, trying NOT to hurt you. By my actions and my words, I must convey to you that I am trying hard not to hurt you. Then you need maintain no barrier of suspicion, you need not suspect and fear me.

Of course, it is virtually impossible not to injure another person occasionally if you live around him or are with him a great deal of the time. Misunderstanding will occur, our interest will conflict, one of us will fail to do what we intend. We may be careless or at some time not thinking of the other. Sometimes I will not be aware of your needs and my actions may injure you without intention. This will happen even when we try very hard to prevent this. So there is always the possibility of injury. But if we can, over time, convince the person that we sincerely don't want to injure him and will do all that is reasonable to prevent this, we can develop faith in our intentions.

Sooner or later in any close relationship, we will be disillusioned. The other person will not completely live up to what we hoped and expected. Pursuing his own interests--a natural act--he will violate ours. As the song says, "You always hurt the one you love." Those most vulnerable to hurt are those closest to us. Those who love us expect the most from us, so we are most likely to hurt them when the same actions might not be noticed by a casual friend. A close relationship makes certain impossible expectations. That you will always understand, will always be there, will never let me down. These we cannot always live up to, even though we try very hard. You and I are only people, and it is hard, being human. We will make mistakes, we will forget ourselves and others, we will lapse into selfishness, will say things without thinking. We will just be human, and doing so, we will disillusion the other person.

Then comes the feeling; "How can you do this to me." Eventually in some way both of us may get the feeling of being betrayed, or realize the other person has let us down. If we are going to develop trust we have to be willing to accept some disillusionment. This means we will forgive. If we can be assured that good intentions are still strong, that the other person wants to make amends, that he will try very hard to be trustworthy once more, we must forgive to save trust and to save us both.

There is here the problem of imperfection. People are imperfect, and relationships between them are imperfect. So what do we do about imperfections? First of all, we must be "willing to be found imperfect" by others. So I made a mistake. I am willing to admit this. I don't have to hide from it, or deny it, or attack you because you see me in an error. This means I can make a mistake and not be defensive about it. I don't feel injured if you know about it. I don't have to loudly deny it. I don't get suspicious about your actions.

But also, my not being defensive means I don't tear down YOUR trust, either. Not suspecting you, not denying the truth, not attacking you for uncovering me, I still maintain your trust in me. I am open. I admit what I said or did, and we can both go on from there without strong feelings, or suspicions. I don't have to go around saying "I'm sorry" and proving I am <u>for</u> you when, of course, I am.

I had this dramatically brought home to me the other day. A friend--a very close friend of long standing--had stopped to visit in my office. She had lost her husband six years ago and was struggling to be both mother and father to a rebellious teen-age son. She told me of her worries; lately he had gotten into real trouble. "But it is too much to ask," I remarked innocently, "that you be both mother and father, to support three children . . ." I got no further. "How can you say I am not doing my job? I've tried hard to do it all. They need a father and I know this. You are telling me how I'm doing wrong, and I can't keep on hearing this."

In a few seconds her anger had escalated and she was hostile, suspicious of my whole attitude. It took time to restore her confidence and trust. This was almost a classic situation. Old feelings of anger, pain, and fear--and old feelings of guilt--had been aroused. She suddenly felt she was being attacked. And I had to reassure her: "I am not accusing, I don't mean to hurt, I don't want to judge you. You can relax, because I accept you as you are, without judging."

So to maintain trust, we must avoid judging. Just as we are willing to be found imperfect, we are willing to accept the other person's imperfections. So you did something "wrong". This is not a friendship or a marriage of two saints. We've both got our feet on the ground and we'll both make mistakes. We learn to expect this, to prepare for it. So I don't expect you to be perfect, either. This means you don't need to keep on proving you are right, or worry about my suspecting or judging you.

Some people are such a burden to others, because they make a big thing of being RIGHT all the time. They may not be attractive, or powerful, or famous, but they insist that they are right about things. This usually comes out as "more right than you are." And too often they put their rightness on other people. "Let me tell you where you're wrong." Or, "but it wasn't really like that, was it?" They can't let a small misstatement or a slight inaccuracy go by without their correction. "We paid $5 for that, didn't we?" "No, it cost $4.95." "We were there last year, the last part of July." "No, it was the first of August." Often their correction is valid, but it demands a higher degree of accuracy than we can manage, or than we feel is necessary here. People who keep correcting us keep showing us how wrong we are, and that becomes a terrible burden. It is hard for us to say what is on our minds, because it might not come out right, and we'd just be corrected again. This makes us keep quiet when we should talk. It keeps us from being open and trusting. We don't feel it is safe to say what's on our minds. We could be so relaxed and relieved, but correcting us makes a barrier that blocks openness and love. It takes away some of our "freedom to be." Instead, it is so much easier to live with and be with you if you will accept my imperfections, my failures to say precisely what I am trying to, at all times.

We must try very hard not to do or say certain things that imply a kind of rejecting, of not caring. This brings us to another rule: we must not ridicule or make fun of the other person, and we must not refuse to take him seriously. We must not joke at his expense. It's fun to watch Archie Bunker and his son-in-law making their clever put-downs. But the put-down is not funny when it happens to us. A well-known marriage counselor warns: one of the hardest things for your marriage to survive is a succession of put-downs. People are injured even when they don't show it. Of course, some people seem to enjoy verbal battling--probably because they end by feeling they are the winner. For most of us, our peace of mind can survive an occasional small put-down, but we reach a point where the next one is just too much. This may activate a flood of feeling about all those we've suffered in the past. And the more close the relationship, the more sensitive we are likely to be as to just what that put-down realy meant.

The put-down tells me I am somehow lacking somewhere, not good enough, not worth listening to. Ridiculing makes us afraid to be ourselves, so we must erect the barrier once more, and be silent or pretend we didn't notice. It destroys our trust in the other person. How can we be sure they really care. Keep in mind that experiencing put-downs from another person also develops expectations that we will have more put-downs the next time we are together. So we must brace ourselves, keep up the pretense, stay tense rather than relax, be careful not to be really ourselves.

This goes directly counter to one of the main tenets of maintaining good mental health. "Avoid anxious pre-occupation with the self-image." But if we are being ridiculed or continually put down, this person is making us anxious about who we appear to be.

Another way to destroy trust is to preach, to moralize, to tell the person how he should change. This is what he is doing wrong, and here is what he should be doing. He should be doing this, wearing that, doing what YOU say is right. Here, as with the put-down, he gets the feeling, "you don't want to take me as I am, but to change me." The evidence is fairly conclusive that preaching is a waste of words, if we hope to change others. They didn't ask for our suggestions, and even if they did, asking for your opinion usually means asking for your agreement.

To maintain trust, we must try very hard not to judge others. To blame them for their mistakes. No one wants to live with a judge, to feel he is on probation, that he always has to measure up. Blaming is a kind of punishing. It is the opposite of forgiving. Forgiving draws us closer together, blaming keeps us apart. Blaming makes it hard for me to forget my weakness. Harder yet to forget the blamer. When the parent is a blamer, the child may fall into self-hate. He may become a self-blamer who keeps on punishing himself because of the "bad person" someone has told him he must be. "The trouble with you is . . ." "why don't you stop doing . . ." "I won't judge you so much this year. So I will give you the freedom to BE." This promise would make a wonderful gift; it would help me through my year. The way it is, I may be getting along fine through my day until suddenly you tell me what I did wrong. My spirits drop, and I have to pick myself up again.

We also undermine trust when we somehow act superior. What we say or do implies we know better, or <u>are</u> better than the other person. We may become take-over artists, taking over the task at hand, taking over the conversation, using the "let me do this" or "let me handle this" approach. This kind of attitude sometimes comes over when we insist on showing how right we are. It may come out when we act as a nit-picker, always ready to pick minor flaws, making a lot out of little insignificant points. It may appear as a nagging, complaining attitude. No matter what we are into, something is wrong about it. They hold the negative up so close to themselves, they cannot see the positive and good things all about us. No matter what has been done, they can only remember and point out what was wrong. How terrible it must be, having to build your own shaky self-esteem by showing others the little mistakes they make.

Another question we might ask ourselves, if we want to develop trust, is: are we really listening when the other person talks? Are we listening, or only waiting for a chance to interrupt? Or perhaps going on as though there was nothing to hear. Perhaps as you talk the other person is reading, shuffling papers, consciously or unconsciously not paying attention. This tells you something about how unimportant you--and what you were saying--really are.

Another symptom of the non-listener is the habit of interrupting or changing the subject. "The team was on the ten-yard line with thirty seconds left. A field goal would win it and . . . "What's the name of our veterinarian?" Such interruptions tell us how unimportant our talking was. It can operate as a kind of put-down. In a very real way it judges us and what we are saying. You are saying something and before you are through the other party is off on his own, somewhere. "You feel like saying: Why don't you let me finish?" This is dramatic evidence there wasn't any listening going on. If we're subject changers or interrupters, we don't realize what we are communicating is: "what you talk about is of no importance" (and maybe you aren't either).

We can think about this, and discover other clues about what is happening to create or destroy the relationship of trust. What we are hoping to build is a "climate of trust."

We need to be aware that trust does not just happen. We can't just leave it up to someone else, we must do our part. Trust is based on reciprocation; it cannot survive if only one of us will act, will risk, will take the responsibility.

We must also continue to trust. We cannot just trust "sometimes". Trust is built slowly, takes much time to grow. But trust may be destroyed by a single act. So we need care to maintain it.

When we trust, we do risk something. We make ourselves vulnerable. We give others temporary power over us. They can reject us, or betray us, they can take away much of our peace of mind. But we have another choice. Trust no one. Refuse to respond; be indifferent; be shy, withdrawn, suspicious. Then we create the situation we had feared. "I knew they wouldn't like me, and they didn't." If others feel you do not trust them, they live up to THAT, too.

But that choice is also the choice of being alone. Not sharing our experiences and our feelings with others. And not having others we can count on when life gives us those bad endings and terrible disappointments--when we may need others to help us or it won't be worth GOING ON.

Trust-mutuality-shared feelings-closeness-friendship. What a promise if we are ready to respond.

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PART III
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, AND COMMUNICATION: INTRAPERSONAL PROCESSES AND THE UTILIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the utilization of knowledge to solve contemporary problems and addresses itself to issues in this area, specifically, the individual's adoption of or resistance to new ideas or values. Six possible tactics are suggested for solving value and attitudinal differences in intrapersonal communication.

INTRODUCTION

Probably at no other time in history have human beings been more interested in the potential of systematic knowledge in the solution of day-to-day problems. A few of the more important problems that science promises to solve include the individual interface with complex organization, alternative energy sources, pluralistic interactions among business, government and labor, and ecological-imperatives. All of these problems possess social, political, and scientific implications.

A fundamental issue in the questions of using knowledge to solve problems has to do with why people do and do not adopt new and/or different ideas. This issue brings to the forefront some basic propositions from the communication theory.

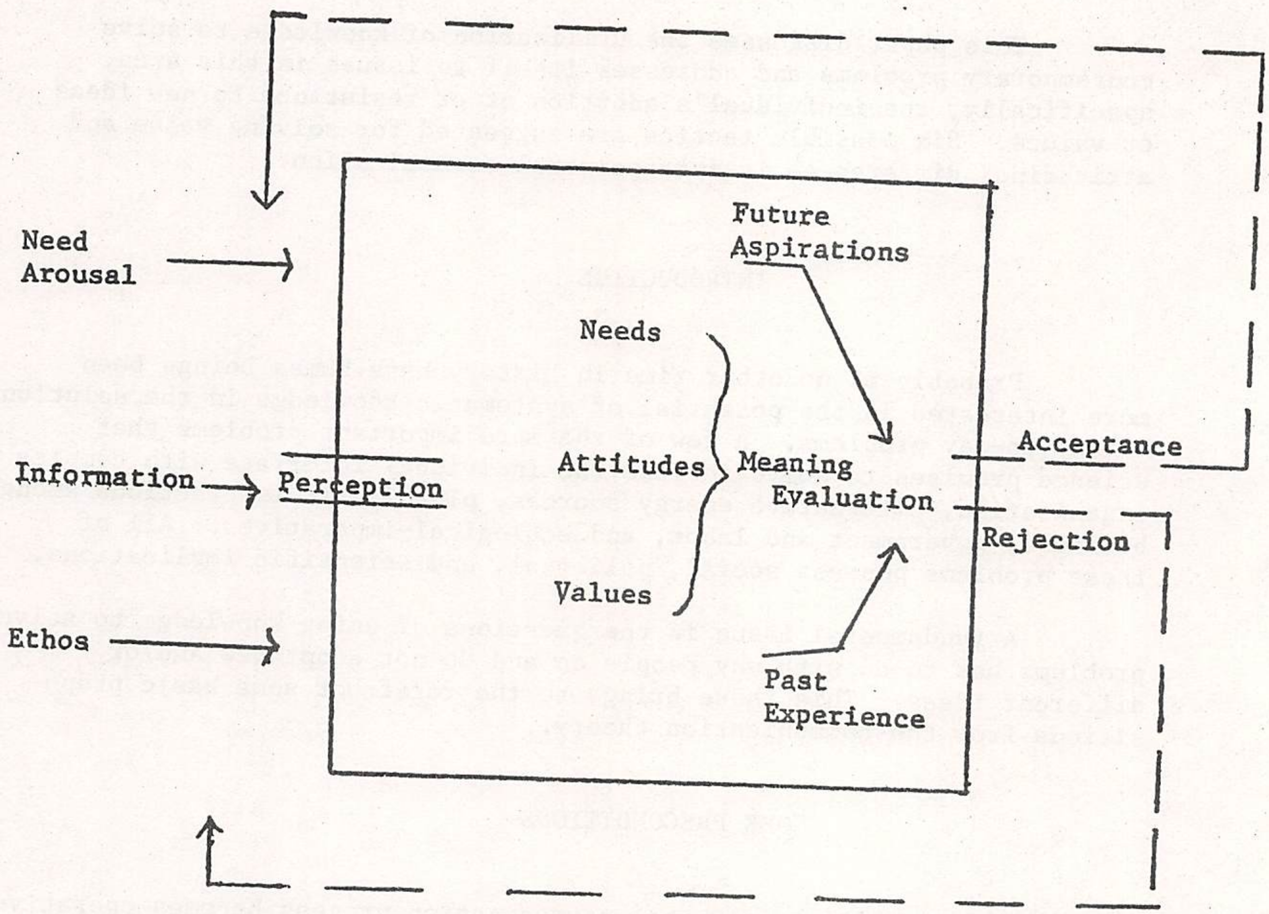
SOME PRECONDITIONS

Before the intrapersonal communication process becomes operative within the knowledge utilization framework, certain preconditions must exist. Figure 1 illustrates some of these factors. First, there must be a perceived need to be aroused. Frequently, this is a problem to be solved. Next, there must be some information that has the potential to satisfy the need or solve the problem. This collective information is perceived by the individual and integrated into the psychic.

The information is combined with attitudes, needs, and values and assigned meaning. The meaning is evaluated relative to past experiences and future expectations. The decision to accept or reject the

FIGURE 1

THE ACCEPTANCE-REJECTION PROCESS



proposed solution is made. If accepted, a new search process is initiated with regard to another problem. If rejected, needs are intensified and the search for a solution to the existing problem is initiated.

VALUES: A KEY DIMENSION

The acceptance-rejection decision is obviously multi-dimensional. Therefore, we shall restrict the analysis to the single factor of values for purposes of simplicity. This factor is considered because of its particularly troublesome nature.

Values, in this sense, are defined as a highly integrated set of attitudes about particular persons or objects in the environment. (Katz and Stotland, 1959). When ideas are reinforcing to values they tend to be accepted. When they do not, they are rejected. (Nichoff, 1964).

Values influence the adoption-rejection decision through a complex process which is essentially communicative in character. The ethos or "all embracing field" is the context within which values develop. (Walton, 1969). Values evolve into operational or adaptive modes and influence behavior accordingly. (Dow and Duncan, 1974). The resulting value-orientations influence all phases of the decision making process including problem perception, alternative generation and search, choice, and implementation. (Duncan, 1974). Figure 2 illustrates the process.

THE DISSONANCE MATRIX

Research has shown that one of the most important barriers separating management researchers and practitioners is their failure to effectively communicate. This problem is fundamentally attitudinal or value-centric in character. Table I summarizes some of the primary points of dissonance between managers and researchers and illustrates where they develop in the problem solving process.

CONCLUSIONS

Havelock has itemized six potential strategies that are useful in resolving value issues in the adoption-rejection framework. (Havelock, 1969). These are:

1. Place emphasis on values shared by both the source and receiver.

2. By-pass value issues. Avoid the issue if possible.

FIGURE 2
VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND DECISION MAKING BEHAVIOR

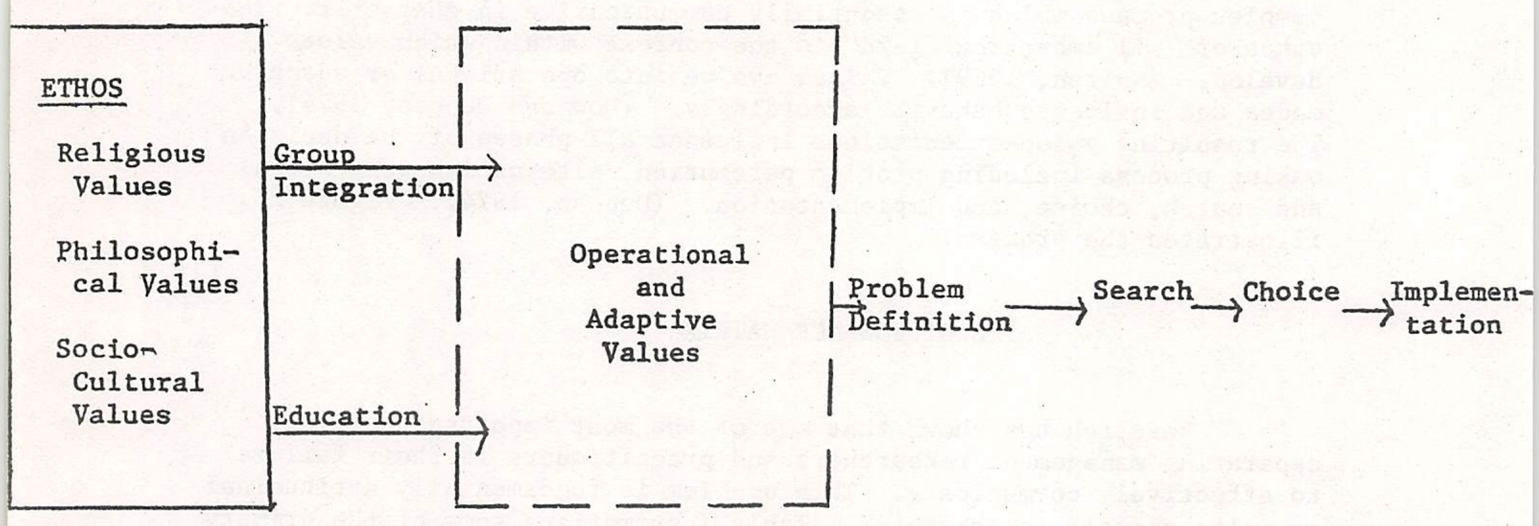


TABLE I

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INVESTIGATIVE ORIENTATIONS OF RESEARCHERS AND MANAGERS

Investigative Stages	Researchers	Managers	Differences in Orientations	Proposed Intervention
1. Criteria of Determination of Problem Significance.	Intellectual curiosity. Potential payoff in continuing research. Contemporary interest in academic [and maybe the applied] community	Pressing nature of the organizational problem. Usefulness in improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness.	Variance relates to the outcome of research and its outcome on specific organization.	Improved quality of interaction to acquaint both groups with the realities of research and practice.
2. Point of Search for Data-Evidence.	Observation of behavior. Empirically based research literature.	Observation of behavior and historical information. Personal experience.	Variance in the perceived value of historical, small sample, and localized data.	Increased and improved training in the methodology of scientific investigation.
3. Criteria Applied to the Evaluation of Valid Theory.	Empirical foundations. Logical preciseness. Potential usefulness.	Profitability of expected results. Ease of implementation. Relevancy.	Variance relative to perceived value of empirical content, theoretical preciseness, and profitability of eventual utilization.	Improved interaction directed toward communication and mutual understanding.
4. Acceptability of the Rules of Evidence.	Nature of experimental design, model construction and reproductability of results.	Simplicity of application to specific problem. Ease of communication to those who must implement.	Variance in the perceived values of conventional science and pragmatic imperatives.	Cooperative involvement of managers and researchers in all phases of research design and program implementation.
5. Applicability of Knowledge.	Advancement of science. Visibility of results. Generality of findings to diverse environments.	Problem solution. Applicability to relevant problems in specific environment.	Variance with regard to epistemological rigor and problem solving potential.	Positive effort by both groups to build enthusiasm for action oriented research designs.

Note: Appreciation is expressed to Professor Paul Gordon of Indiana University for first suggesting to the author this matrix form as a means of highlighting the important aspects of this comparative analysis.

3. Negotiate. Values, like other phenomena, are subject to negotiation.

4. Expose value orientations. Problem recognition is necessary for solution.

5. Locate key values and appeal to them. Disregard unimportant or behaviorally unimportant values.

6. Respect value differences. This will assist in resolving problems that develop.

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DISTORTION OF UPWARD INFORMATION FLOWS AND SUPERIOR COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Communication activity within a superior/subordinate relation is analyzed with respect to subordinate distortion of information. The study's findings show a significant relationship among interpersonal trust, supervisor influence, upward mobility, supervisor openness in communication and distortion of information by subordinates. The organizational structure also reported a significant relation to distortion of upward information flows by the subordinate. The analysis of factors is followed by a discussion of the implications for supervisors.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The significance of communication to the management of organizations can be shown in many ways. One of those ways is clearly our presence here today as well as our individual work with organizations "back home." The organization without communication is impossible. One of the more widely known writers in organization theory, Herbert A. Simon, reflects on the importance of communication to social organization in the following:

> Communication may be formally defined as any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organization to another. It is obvious that without communication there can be no organization, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behavior of the individual.[1]

In a broad sense, Simon is arguing that the principal activity of organization is communication. Communication pervades the organizational activity of man; or as C. I. Barnard suggests, "the first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of communication."[2]

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[1]Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 154.

[2]Chester, I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 226.

The achievement of favorable conditions through which communication may take place would seem critical to the professional manager and his organizational activities.

To aid the manager in the organizational environment, the study and investigation of communication has taken perhaps as many different approaches as there are authors. One of the more common of the various approaches to the study of organization interactions is through the directional flow of communication. Many studies have dealt with communication problems based on the direction of movement, i.e., upward, downward, or horizontal.[3] While the importance of upward communication is clearly recognized in the literature, the process of study and investigation has not been developed to the degree found in downward communication. The importance of clear, accurate upward information flows can be seen in every hierarchal structure. In many companies, as size increases, the superior may be come insulated from what is actually taking place. The information received is at times incomplete or at best filtered. The result is, as Robert McMurry suggests, "undertakings of great magnitude and of critical significance to the integrity of the business are often entered into on the basis of incomplete, inadequate, or incorrect information."[4] Undistorted information is a valued and important asset of a manager. Yet, for the executive discribed by McMurry and others, the questions remains as to what behavior should be exercised to preserve the decision making role of the executive. This study is directed at identifying the behavior characteristics of supervisors which results in the receipt of the most accurate information.

The primary objective of this paper is to report the subordinate's views or perception of communication activity that is associated with the subordinate's distortion of information. For example, the research attempts to determine if the subordinate's perception of the quantity of information, media used, or openness in communication has a significant association with the subordinate's distortion of information. In addition, the subordinate's perception of interpersonal trust, superior influence and upward mobility were included. These three factors--interpersonal trust, superior influence, and subordinate's upward mobility--have been important variables in several previous distortion studies.[5] The objective in the selection of the above factors was to get a better understanding of the superior's roles as a facilitator of accurate upward information flows.

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[3]John Anderson, "What's Blocking Upward Communication?," Personnel Administration, Vol. XXXI (1968), pp. 5-8, A.B. Chase, "How to Make Downward Communication Work," Personnel, Vol. XLIX (1970), pp. 478-482, and H.H. Kelley, "Communication in Experimentally Created Hierarchies," Human Relations, Vol. IV (1951), pp. 39-56.

[4]Robert M. McMurry, "Clear Communication for Chief Executives," Harvard Business Review, Vol. XLIII (1965), p. 131.

[5]Arthur Cohen, "Upward Communication in Experimentally Created Hierarchies," Human Relations, Vol. XLIX (1970), pp. 41-53, W.H. Read, "Upward Communication in Industrial Hierarchies," Human Relations, Vol. XV (1962), pp. 3-15, and K.H. Roberts and C.A. O'Reilly, "Failures in Upward Communication: Three Possible Culprits," Academy of Management Journal, Vol. XVII (1974), pp. 205-215.

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDY

The research design used in this study rests on the dyadic relationship of the superior and the subordinate found in the selected sample. The sample consisted of 298 managers selected from the banking, manufacturing, and hospital industry. To accomplish the purpose of this research, the selected behavioral characteristics for study were: superior's leadership style, downward communication flows, and selected communication activity of the superior. In addition, the measurement of distortion of upward information was required.

This paper will briefly describe the primary methodology for the research project, with selected results presented. The methodology and results will be concentrated on organizational setting, and perceived communication activity. First, the measurement of distortion in upward information flow is described.

The measurement of distortion required two readings of subordinate's communication behavior--a reading in which the subordinate does not feel the need to alter or distort information and a reading when the subordinate has a sense of being evaluated.[6] These two readings accept the instrumental nature of communication--suggesting that the individual engages interpersonal communication in an effort to convey to others the impressions that are favorable to oneself.[7]

The first reading of communication behavior is derived by the investigation of the individual's perception of self, as obtained through the use of Gordon's Personal Profile and Personal Inventory.[8] The Gordon instruments provide scales for measuring of eight independent aspects of personality: ascendancy, reliability, emotional stability, sociability, cautiousness, originality, personal relations, and vigor. The index derived from the summation of a subject's score on the eight traits--when administrated under assurance of anonymity--is assumed to measure the self image that an individual maintains when not distorting information.

The second reading or index needed to provide a measure for distortion of upward information flows must indicate the accuracy of information conveyed to the superior. As the final step of the interview process, the subject is asked to respond to the eight personality factors through the use of the remaining half of the Gordon instruments. However, prior to the administration of this final questionnaire, the subject is

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[6]J. C. Athanassiades, "The Distortion of Upward Communication in Hierarchical Organizations," Academy of Management Journal, Vol. XVI (1973), pp. 207-210.

[7]Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 2-5.

[8]O. K. Buros, Sixth Mental Measures Yearbook (Highland Park, New Jersey: Gryphon Press, 1974), pp. 227-232.

informed that his responses--on the final questionnaire--will be shown to his superior for purposes of a cooperative evaluation. The respondent is answering the final questionnaire with the additional condition that the responses will be communicated to the supervisor at some future time. The communication of information will be as it occurs, with or without distorted information. A comparison of the first and second readings will indicate those managers with a tendency to transmit distorted information.

In addition to measuring distortion of information, this study investigated communication activity as perceived by the subordinate. Each subordinate in the sample was asked to complete a perceived communication activity questionnaire as part of the entire battery of tests and questions presented. The questions used in the perceptual questionnaire were designed to investigate the subordinate's perception of: the openness of communication, oral vs. written media norms, superior task competence, organizational climate for sharing information, consideration of ideas/ suggestions, qualitative aspects of communication, interpersonal trust, superior influence over the subordinate's career, and the subordinate's upward mobility aspirations.

RESULTS

The rationale behind the use of the two measurement devices was the belief that distortion of information can be adequately assessed only by the subordinate's projection of self, since personal and corporate values and goals will receive different emphasis. The subordinate who receives similar scores on the first and second measurement was considered a "low distorter" of information. Conversely, the subordinate making highly different scores was considered a "high distorter" of information.

Of the eight personality factors summarized in Table I, all eight reflect some increase in the mean scores between the first and second observation. Six of the personality factors--ascendancy, responsibility, emotional stability, sociability, cautiousness, and original thinking--indicate a statistically significant difference between observations. The subordinate may be viewed as trying to project an image to the superior as active-self assured in group discussions, able to stick to any job assigned, well balanced/free from anxiety, gregarious, careful in decision making, and able to work difficult problems.

The eight factors were submitted to an analysis of variance to investigate the differences by organizational grouping. The analysis by group revealed a significant difference among group scores for the responsibility factor. The remaining distortion scores contained in Table I did not indicate a significant difference by organization group.

The responsibility factor reflects a difference between the hospital subordinate and the remaining organizations. The hospital subordinate's score for responsibility is very similar for both observations. While the hospital subordinate was reflecting accurate

TABLE I

MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR GORDON'S PERSONALITY PROFILE AND GORDON'S PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Personality Factor	Observation	
	First	Second
Ascendancy:		
Mean	10.55	10.98*
Standard Deviation	2.61	2.69
Responsibility:		
Mean	14.43	14.96*
Standard Deviation	2.66	2.34
Emotional Stability:		
Mean	12.61	13.16*
Standard Deviation	2.82	2.99
Sociability:		
Mean	9.59	10.15*
Standard Deviation	2.91	2.68
Cautiousness:		
Mean	14.10	14.76*
Standard Deviation	2.79	3.03
Original Thinking:		
Mean	12.05	13.27*
Standard Deviation	3.09	2.99
Personal Relations:		
Mean	12.42	12.51
Standard Deviation	3.27	3.33
Vigor:		
Mean	13.59	13.70
Standard Deviation	2.94	2.77

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

information concerning responsibility, the banking and industrial subordinate appear to be distorting information about responsibility.

With the objective of the communication activity questions in mind, the results should provide a better understanding of the supervisor that receives undistorted information from subordinates. Communication activity is measured by asking the subordinates to rate the superior or organization on various items. The respondent's supervisor is the primary focus for the questions about communication activity.

The means and standard deviations for the perceived communication activity questionnaire are reported in Table II. Statistics are presented by topic question and group response. The five-point Likert type scale yielded a wide range of scores based on the number of questions used to investigate a particular communication activity and the scoring used in tabulating the responses.

A tendency for the hospital subordinate to provide a more positive response is reported in Table II; the subordinate provided the highest positive response for seven of the nine topics. The more positive score was recorded by the hospital subordinate for the topics: openness, oral vs. written, superior task competence, sharing information, qualitative aspects, interpersonal trust, and superior influence. To expand on one of the above factors, the communication factor consisting of the most questions is referred to as qualitative aspects. Each of the questions included dealt with communication initiated by the superior. As a total score, the hospital subordinate responses provide a lower mean score than either of the other two groupings. These scores would indicate a hospital supervisor who initiates communication that shows greater confidence and appreciation for subordinates and less criticism, as compared with industrial or banking organizations. The general tendency of a more positive communication climate for the hospital subordinate was tested through analysis of variance. These results are reported in Table III.

The analysis of variance by group reported in Table III indicates that a statistical difference exists for three of the nine factors. The factor of perceived superior openness in communication and the factor of sharing information suggest a difference in the organizational climate for information processing. For each factor, the hospital organization indicated agreement with each statement, as compared with some indecisiveness on the part of the industrial and banking organizations. These results lend support to other research[9] suggesting that the professional work group produced a better climate for communication processes.

The remaining factor reporting a statistical significant difference among groups was perceived superior influence over the subordinate's future career. The hospital subordinate indicated a superior could affect the career only sometimes, where the other two organizations indicated superior influence most of the time.

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[9]B. A. Georgopoulos and F. C. Mann, The Community General Hospital (New York: MacMillan, 1962), pp. 290-298.

TABLE II

MEAN SCORES FOR PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

Communication Activity Factors	Banking Organizations		Industrial Organizations		Hospital Organizations	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Openness	2.20	1.125	2.03	.969	1.70	.805
Oral vs. written	6.72	1.179	6.86	.95	6.66	1.027
Superior competence	1.68	.683	1.86	.817	1.68	.663
Sharing information	2.55	1.138	2.56	1.227	2.02	.955
Consideration of ideas/suggestions	1.84	.817	2.00	.792	1.83	.732
Qualitative aspects	13.22	4.132	13.44	2.947	12.43	3.222
Interpersonal trust	3.36	1.82	3.30	1.38	3.17	1.34
Superior influence	1.78	.91	1.72	.321	2.21	.977
Upward mobility	1.46	.93	1.59	1.107	1.53	.83

TABLE III

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR GROUP ON THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Communication Activity Factors	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value
Openness	2	2.895	2.901*
Oral vs. written	2	.561	.503
Superior competence	2	.579	1.096
Sharing information	2	2.905	2.893*
Consideration of ideas/suggestions	2	.462	.755
Qualitative aspects	2	13.887	1.154
Interpersonal trust	2	.463	.197
Superior influence	2	2.964	2.913*
Upward mobility	2	.236	.253

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

The next step in the analysis was a correlation study between the communication activity factors and the distortion reported by the subordinate. The correlation coefficients are presented in Table IV.

As mentioned previously, several studies have investigated interpersonal trust, influence, and mobility with respect to distortion. The present study, as Table IV indicates, found significant relationships between subordinate distortion and each of the above three factors. Generally, subordinate distortion of upward information is decreased when: interpersonal trust increases, perceived supervisor influence over the subordinate's career is decreased, or subordinate's upward mobility aspirations are decreased.

This present study identified supervisor openness of communication as showing a significant relationship to distortion. If the subordinate perceived the supervisor to be open and free in communication, the subordinate was more likely to transmit accurate information to the supervisor. This finding adds to the importance of the openness factor as a variable in communication research. It would appear that, as the subordinate would not only participate more freely, but also would do so with more accurate information.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study supported several conclusions. Distortion of upward information flows occurs in the communication patterns of certain subordinates. The distortion is most likely to be found in the personality factors: ascendancy, responsilility, emotional stability, sociability, cautiousness, and original thinking. While finding distortion associated with subordinate communication behavior, this paper does not define the functional or dysfunctional nature of distortion with respect to the individual or the organizational need satisfaction or achievement. Further research is clearly required to answer the question.

The results of this study with respect to communication activity indicate new and additional relationships for communication research. The hospital organization reported generally a more positive communication atmosphere. The service, nonprofit-oriented professional subordinate perceived the supervisor as more open and the organization as highly supportive for sharing information.

In relating communication activity to distortion, the study's findings show a significant relationship among interpersonal trust, supervisor influence, and upward mobility. Beyond these factors, the subordinate's perception of supervisor openness and freeness in communication proved a significant factor to distortion. These conclusions should provide added tools and resources for the supervisor concerned and interested in the accuracy of information received from subordinates.

TABLE IV

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE AS RELATED TO DISTORTION

Question Groupings	Correlation Coefficient for Over-all Distortion	Significant
Openness	.1802	*
Oral vs. written	.0012	N. S.
Superior competence	-.0431	N. S.
Sharing information	.0395	N. S.
Consideration of ideas/suggestions	.0347	N. S.
Qualitative	.1131	N. S.
Interpersonal trust	.3073	*
Supervisor influence	.1809	*
Upward mobility	.2713	*

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

N. S.: Not Significant.

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THE GODFATHER--A WAY TO GET THE DOCTORAL STUDENT THROUGH CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

What circumstances make doctoral work very difficult and possibly threaten failure? When the candidate reaches a crisis point, what factors help him through? And what actions/feelings/ personal self-talk give him the necessary support when the going is toughest?

Principal problems of these 247 doctoral candidates include coping with faculty biases and handling high anxiety levels. Many factors may help pull him through, but most often mentioned was personal effort and next important was help from faculty, especially from unofficial "godfathers" who accepted responsibility for helping the candidate learn and play by the rules of the game.

REPORT OF THE STUDY

Several years ago at a summer seminar in Cornell, a number of us who had survived a doctoral program got to telling of our experiences, about those of friends we knew, and of what we wished we had known before we ever began. Were there common obstacles, dangerous pitfalls to look out for, actions both straightforward and devious that might make the difference between success and failure? Some of us had faced a series of bad endings, shattering disappointments, unnerving put-offs and delays. Some of our colleagues struggled and lost while others made it. Were there lessons to be learned, useful clues to be passed on?

Two years ago I began a study of some two hundred Ph.D.'s, sending out questionnaires, promising anonymity of responses, keeping returns highly confidential. To help mask the findings, and to broaden and make the study more useful, I asked each Arkansas graduate to give a duplicate questionnaire to a person similar in experience, but graduating from another university. This would prevent the study's being a kind of "inside study about Arkansas". The response was heartening, 247 usable questionnaires, 31 from persons not finished with the terminal degree, all from business administration graduates.

The study centered on several areas:

1) Problems/circumstances making graduate work very difficult, threatening possible failure.
2) Crisis. "Did you reach a crisis point so serious as to make you question whether it was possible or worth going on?"
3) Factors helping candidates through crisis.

4) Actions/feelings/personal self-talk providing candidate support when going was toughest.

What were such "factors and circumstances"? First of all, many students brought serious problems into the system with them. Some acknowledged having poor academic background, "just not ready for that level of graduate work". Others began with poor study habits, an inability to organize time. Lack of stamina and sagging energy levels threatened and sometimes overcame candidates. Health problems appeared, or former health problems got worse.

Beginning at this point, what were the "factors and circumstances" and which ones were more important? Three critical factors were mentioned more than any others:

TIMES MENTIONED	
162	difficulty with instructor, academic and/or personal
109	anxiety and worry (both a cause and a symptom)
81	financial problems

How do these factors compare with the others? First let us note five of the "more usual problems", each one scoring from 30 to 32 mentions:

30 to 32	course overload difficulties with grading system destructive attitude of other students atmosphere lacking ethics, non-professional could not inquire openly, give honest opinion in class

If we score these five "more usual problems" as a base of 1.0, we can rank all factors on a continuum. Relative importance is revealed:

BASE SCORE (Relative times mentioned)	
3.16	difficulty with instructor, academic and/or personal
2.06	defensive attitude of instructor
5.22	INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT difficulties (also confirmed on later question as MOST CRITICAL FACTOR)
3.52	worry, personal anxiety
2.61	financial problems
1.22	hard to adjust to system
1.0	course overload, difficulties with grading system; destructive attitude of other students; atmosphere lacking ethics, non-professional; could not inquire openly or give honest opinions in class
.9	poor time organization

.6 marital problems
.4 personal health problems

Details and examples of personal experience occurred most often in these problems:

trying to cope with biases (or suspicions of them)
worry, extreme anxiety, extreme lack of confidence
comprehensives, failed or failure expected
dissertation problems
frustrated by professors having outside interests, not teaching

Coping With Biases

In highly competitive system, students sense that some must fail so that others pass. One's record is usually vulnerable at some point. The student seems to be always comparing his own with others' scores. He knows some of his competitive peers are seeing their professors. He tries matching grades with his answers compared to someone else's. The heat is on, the pressure is great, and anxieties grow with pressures. When it is hard to know the reason for your low score, and hard to admit it when it is damaging, the cry of "bias" may be raised as reason. My own knowledge of the system leads me to feel that the large majority of my associates decry the use of bias, and act on such conviction. But unless carefully corrected for, bias can insinuate itself into any evaluation process. There is evidence for its existence in academia.

"I was to get a "B" if I got a strong final exam, which I did. Then he checked with his department head who had given me a "C", and so he did, too." "X is known to check your grade-point before giving a grade, especially with an "unknown". "Some students were supposed to make A's, and usually did." "Found the only way to survive is to learn the rules of each prof, and play their games." "Personality conflict with one instructor, so he refused to pass me on the field exam. Never had the bastard for a class, but made the mistake of calling him a dumb son-of-a-_____." ". .competition from people who had an abundance of time to spend visiting and B.S.- ing profs to secure brownie points."

One prof is remembered "for never giving a woman an A." Another for forcing students out of a field area when they openly dissented in class. "After all residence work was completed, S. told me I didn't have it and would never make it. I had to leave his field and lose a year working up another one. My mistake--I came 'from that southern school'."

"First crisis when Dr. Y gave a "team grade" and lowered my B-plus individual grade to a C." "Passed stat but was not given credit for passing. Final grade F based on final test--prof destroyed papers and left university."

Comprehensives

Comprehensives are often "the biggest crisis of all." Raising the spectre of a total failure too large to contemplate, these exams involve problems of competence, anxiety level, total stress load, the ability to persist when all seems lost, and the existence of or lack of external psychological supports. There are very strong reactions here. "I had a deathly fear of taking the comprehensive exams." "I had some weird, almost psychotic thoughts at this time." "Three times I put off taking the comps, my fear was too much." "One month before comps, I almost quit the program rather than run the risk of failing." "Just before comps began, I felt that if some accident would just happen to me, I would be spared the disgrace of failing myself and my family." "I had a deathly fear of taking the comps. I got the feeling that there was NO Way I could pass them. I realized I should have no problems, but the feelings of failure become quite intense. I would sign up for a comp. Then, the next day or the week before, would scratch my name off the list. I did this for two years." "The pressure at comp time was maddening." "A crisis point occurred when two of us took a comp and were orally promised results in a week or two and did not get the results for over 9 weeks. That was way too much pressure for grading two exams. Fellow students always asked if we'd heard yet, family and friends were always bringing it up." "I had the feeling of having flunked the Econ comps before taking them." "While studying for comps, the situation almost seemed hopeless. Only one or two questions would determine success or failure." "On final re-take of comprehensive exam, mistake was getting advice by mail on how to prepare. Failed and left. Have finally completed doctorate at another school."

Dissertation

The dissertation stage has crises of its own. One candidate reported that only his third completed thesis was accepted, and that after a complete change in committee. Another: "Third dissertation topic rejected, but took a year for the rejection." Here are other accounts: "Once drove 700 miles to meet my committee and found no one had read my draft except my chairman and he had only read 37 pages out of 150." "Prof X never knew what he wanted, except right before defense when major revisions were required." "After over two years of data collection and thesis rewriting, I had one committee member comment that my dissertation (in completed final copy) might make a good master's thesis but was certainly not enough. This was four weeks from my defense date, and he had not given any prior input." "At the dissertation, 'cruel and inhuman punishment', 99 per cent unnecessarily so." "Ph.D. committee composed of two warring factions. me in the middle." "Faculty member did an about face on prior agreements after dissertation was completed." "During final stage of dissertation, eager new professor challenged my approach and committee didn't back me up." "Procrastination by committee members." "Extreme difficulty finding dissertation topic and a dissertation chairman, over period of one and one-half years." "Professors had indicated that defense was at hand. Then 6 weeks later received 2-sentence letter saying more work was needed--but no indication of what."

<u>The Anxiety Problem</u>

If the candidate is, by genetic inheritance, natural temperament, and learned behavior patterns, an anxiety-prone individual, the stressful situation common to a doctoral program will only aggravate his problems. The candidate lives as though bracing himself for the worst. His tension and anxiety create a constant stress overload. Add, now, the candidate's share of bad news and disappointments, and let him witness the periodic failures and occasional academic dismissals of his peers, and he is likely to become so anxiety and suspicion prone that he becomes downright suspicious of any part of the system that is not working for him. He then exaggerates the dangers and suffers the added burden of living with his distortions of reality. One successful graduate later admits: "At the time I was practically paranoid with fear. Now, looking back, I realize much of this was not justified." ". . .treated as step-child by many faculty members." (This may be overdrawn.) "I was constantly worried about what was the right thing to do/say around each instructor and whether I was doing it or not." (Might apply to some situations.) "During dissertation, the chairman got mad and refused to talk to me for a day." (This could keep him anxious for days or months.) ". . .cruel and inhuman punishment during my dissertation." "Almost reached the point of saying 'the hell with it all' during dissertation stage." "I had a deathly fear. . ." ". . .extremely tense situation." "Situation almost seemed hopeless." ". . .lack of concern of professor did not help alleviate my anxieties." "Pressure lead to an exceptionally nervous stomach." ". . .threats from the dean that breaking my contract with the university would forever be on my record."

<u>Other Causes of Difficulty</u>

The accidents, misfortunes, pains and sorrows of everyday living go right on happening, and add to the burden of the academic struggle. "Divorce was granted just prior to start of school. Trying to avoid communications with ex-spouse caused some anxiety. Then Dr. X informed me my grade was F minus-minus. It was imperative that I pass to get a pending job." ". . . exhausted all funds causing severe hardship on wife and children. . . ." "Financial pressures, growing dissatisfactions in our personal lives, and constant demands of the Ph.D. program finally sank our marriage." "During my last term I was involved in a serious motorcycle accident and suffered amnesia" (nine months later completed course work which was in process). "Wife's nervous breakdown made me think again about the terrible costs and only possible benefits." ". . . auto accident and subsequent whiplash effects. . . ." ". . .had a chronic problem with self-esteem. . . felt completely isolated with no one to talk with about problems."

* *

<u>Did You Have A Crisis?</u>

The stage is set for a major life crisis. The goal is so important that it may seem impossible to accept losing it. "I'd rather be dead than not get a Ph.D." But things keep happening and even very strong candidates are never sure until the end. "Crisis with language faculty. . . ." ". . . though I was getting heart trouble." ". . . am totally determined to get the Ph.D." ". . . had a deathly fear of failing." ". . . failed comp second time, but Ph.D. was absolutely necessary for life I wanted."

Did respondents report having such a crisis? Only one of four respondents indicated "having no problems or situations of such serious nature . . . that may have threated failure". Of the other three-fourths who answered the response on having a crisis the response was:

24% definitely yes
21% yes, almost
39% no

This leaves 16 percent "don't know" or "no response". Since the question is stated so strongly: "where everything was on the line, where perhaps total failure was imminent, where it seemed impossible or not worth going on", the 45 percent "yes" and "yes, almost" seems to present strong evidence of there being crisis or near-crisis situations with a very large portion of doctoral students.

What Factors Pulled You Through?

So we have the problem situation, achieving an important life goal (possible THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE), and the characters in the scene: doctoral student, student peers, student family and friends, professors. "What factors pulled you through this?" They follow:

own effort (31%)
faculty and graduate office (29%)
spouse/family (27%)
colleagues, friends (13%)

Separating factors out further, they are:

FACTOR	PERCENTAGE
own effort	30.8
faculty	22.1
spouse	19.8
colleagues	10.7
other family	7.5
grad office	6.4
others	2.7

Major confrontations with the most critical problems of life find the person with two major resources open to him:

his own inner strength, competence, ability to act,
external sources of psychological support

Responses confirm this, and help to validate the study. The single most important factor (according to times mentioned) appears as "own effort." But note how important the role of external factors--almost 70 percent of the answers fall here.

The Primary Factor--Inner Strength

This may be characterized as "I know who and what I am, and what I can do." (Jennings includes this under his idea of strong self-identity and adds "and how I am going to do it.") Or it may be simply stated as: "I can be effective--can make things happen." Couple this with an understanding of the situation and you have: "This is the situation I face, and here is what I am going to do about it." This attitude is encompassed by some writers under "the will to be and the will to do." Here are summary answers to the question: to survive this crucial time, what thoughts did you hold in mind, what did you "tell yourself," what particular action did you take--which helped carry you through when things were toughest? Again, responses confirming a strong feeling of self-identity are the same ones identified as psychological components of "the will to be and the will to do."

Times Mentioned	
57	self confidence, competence
56	determination not to give up, to work hard
42	the goal "achieving the good life"
39	faith in God
23	past experiences remembered

Competence and Self-Confidence

This feeling was expressed in various ways. "I was just as smart as the others." "If you believe in yourself, bite the bullet." "I would succeed if I put forth maximum effort." ". . . my own conviction that I was right and I could handle it." ". . . kept telling myself that I would do it if I studied hard enough." ". . . strong realization that I could survive." "I am reasonably intelligent. I am well prepared." "I know some folks that made it through that are no better equipped than I am." ". . . convinced myself that I was as competent as those judging me." "The thought that I CAN'T FAIL allowed me to work at 125 per cent capacity for four years." "I kept telling myself I could do it."

In such statements, and other related feedback, there runs four principal thoughts: 1) I am confident of my ability, 2) I'm as good as others who've made it, 3) I'm mature about this situation and have found what to do, 4) I know what hard work is and what it takes.

Determination Not To Give Up, To Work Hard

The determination not to give up appears again and again in studies of the will, of accounts reporting how persons survive shipwreck, concentration camps, and many other forms of severe deprivation and hardship. Our academic survivors are telling themselves the same things that men do on life rafts adrift at sea: "I determined never to give up." ". . . will do whatever necessary to make it." "Persist! Persist! Persist! Don't give up." ". . . an attitude of I'll show the ***#$*." "No one is going to do that to me and get away with it--and they haven't." ". . . made up my mind to repeat the course under the same prof. 'I'll show the b______.' Made a solid 'A' on repeat." "If those stupid ________ could do it, I could." "They would have to throw me out, but I would never quit." ". . . was totally determined to get a Ph.D. regardless of obstacles."

The Goal: "Achieving the Good Life"

"When I get through the degree then I can start living." This is the idea behind many statements of determination and "how I got through." "It was and is my desire to teach students, to help them become better individuals so that they might make a worthwhile contribution to this world." "Teaching is very rewarding for it gives me a sense of satisfaction to think that I may have helped students. I knew I had to hold the Ph.D. to continue in the profession." "I wanted to continue, partly for the prestige that goes with the title, and I didn't want to think of myself as a quitter." "I always felt it was worth going on no matter what problems. I was committed to the goal." ". . . a strong realization of the need to succeed in the profession I did, and still do love." "Life had to end up better." "More than anything, I love teaching, but I want to teach in a good college."

Faith in God

Belief in and faith in God was mentioned at least three-fourths as often as any other feeling. Again and again, in times of deep distress, when people discover that much of life is "an experience in standing up to failures and sorrows," they often find comfort and strength in "leaving the rest to God." This is one way to quiet anxiety and restore peace of mind. "I thought about God a lot." "A strong religious faith was vitally important." "A religious belief that an ultimate resolution of conflict does occur." "God has never failed me." "My faith in God leads me to believe that as long as I am in His will, He will help me be successful in what I undertake." ". . . luck, God's blessing, a great wife, a handful of good teachers." "I prayed. I've always felt that for some reason God has protected me, in college, in Vietnam, etc."

Remembering Past Experiences

If the person can remember former times that were good, experiences that turned out right, tough times he has survived, this tends to create hope, optimism, and trust in the future. According to Erikson, the developing personality must acquire a certain schedule of inherent strengths. Allport agrees with Erikson that "the very basis of ego-identity is provided by enough mothering to develop 'the tap root' of trust." Erikson, Allport, Kinsella, and Mowrer and Kluckhahn believe that during the child's first year of life he must develop an attitude towards self and the world that leads him to rely on OTHERS, THE ENVIRONMENT, and the CAPACITY OF THE SELF. Other writers write of the importance of "early positive experiences" which develop positive expectations.

"I thought about good times I had as a child. I though about Mom a lot, she is a VERY strong person. I feel that I could draw strength from my Mom." "I remembered hard times at home. I guess it helped having hard times when I was young." "I knew from past experiences. . ." "was better prepared than some. . . could remember what I'd had to go through before." ". . . had gone too far to give up now." "I've always had a tremendous desire to succeed. God has never failed me."

External Sources of Support

Even though the candidate has a strong identity structure and a strong determination to succeed, sometimes too many things seem to be turning against him. A close family member is seriously ill, family finances seem ready to collapse, he gets a "B" when only an "A" will keep him in the system on a teaching appointment. Dr. X has rejected the second rewrite of a term paper and implies he should drop the field. The candidate fails a comp, perhaps for the second time. After a series of disappointments and defeats, he may walk the halls feeling that no one respects him, that his peers shun him, that faculty are trying to avoid him. At this point, and even long before it, the doctoral student may be sorely in need of some other source of support--something that will help hold him in the system.

Here the faculty sponsor--unofficial friend and a kind of Godfather figure--may be able to do what others cannot. Whose words ring more true and sound more reassuring than those of the experienced faculty member, who says, "I know you can make it. I have known many others like you, no more capable and no more experienced, who have made it here. You can, too." Perhaps the student needs scholarship or loan funds, help on a statistics tool, advice on scheduling courses, or an idea on how to deal with retaking a comprehensive. Again the faculty sponsor can suggest a solution, or possibly intercede personally. Two of the top five "helping professors" were department heads cited numerous times for "going to bat" for the candidate.

To help the candidate survive, to intercede or advise, hopefully, long before the crisis point, were 44 different faculty members. These 44 totaled 119 mentions, and the most active five were mentioned 49 times. Of the top five, two were department heads in accounting, one in management, but 79 of the 119 mentions were of the NON-department heads. These are the "volunteer Godfathers" who were not officially designated as advisors or sponsors, but offered their help. Three of the most active "Godfathers" were mentioned a total of 42 times. This compares with the three most active department heads totaling 19 mentions.

"I remember the few, but important, words of expressed confidence given by Profs. L. and R." A second graduate names the same pair: "What pulled me through was their support." ". . . times when I would feel lonely or a bit depressed, yet a friendly greeting on his part, a smile, an inquiry about my work, would change everything." "He took time to listen to my situation and give me encouragement. This may have happened to strengthen my faith in God--it has." "Also having great advisors A, B, C, and D who went to bat for me many times." Another student mentions his professor's "understanding of the internal political workings of the college, his suggestions and understanding." "I am not sure I would have continued in it had not been for the help and encouragement of Dr. X." ". . . gained a great deal of confidence from the faculty members that treated me like a friend." "The one thing that helped greatly was to realize that there were some professors who were honestly interested in people and were always ready to help in any way they could." ". . . professors who gave encouragement. . . ." ". . . a few words of expressed confidence. . . ." ". . . a great source of comfort and courage to me. . . " ". . . professors both reasonable and helpful." ". . . religious commitment and faculty understanding." ". . . the help and encouragement of a great man, Dr. ___." "The encouragement is perhaps different than you might think, more in the form of intellectual stimulation." ". . . having people who exhibited an interest, were friendly, were not distant." ". . . hard work and encouragement of the accounting faculty." "Dr. ___ has probably inspired more students to find real meaning in life than most other profs. His teaching helped me face reality and cope with life's ups and downs."

* *

Response to a final question, "If you had to do over again, would you do it again?" Two out of three said "yes", some did not know, and only one in ten said definitely "no."

Any special clues on "what brought me through" or "what I finally decided to do?" Of quite a number, these appeared among those most useful and <u>quotable</u>:

"I treated Graduate School as a job and took it on a day-to-day basis."

"I studied more intensely than I ever had before. I was convinced that I was as competent as those judging me and that if I could persevere, I would make it."

"Belief that the system was basically a just one and that I would succeed if I put forth maximum effort."

". . . kept telling myself that 'I could do it' if I just played the game, smiled when it was expected, and didn't challenge anyone's authority or background. The thought that 'I can't fail' allowed me to work at 125 per cent capacity for four years."

"Tenacity and unwillingness to conclude an activity until I felt I had it down perfectly were two elements that helped me get through the program."

"Insight into situations that existed. Did not accept nor conform to conflicting situations, but worked out my own way to cope with that which I could not alter, rather than letting it upset me and create problems over which I had no control."

"I told myself I would try my best and if I didn't make it, it would be no problem since I had already achieved more than expectations when I began my B. S. degree."

"Why quit? Say nothing but carry a big academic switch. Maximum contact with those whom you respect and/or like; ignore rest. Selected a FEW classmates who I felt were no better than I academically, but who were given preferential treatment, were terrific brown-nosers, and were apparently going to make it. I competed with them, without their knowing it, in order to maximize my efforts."

"When I reached such a low point that all seemed hopeless, I cheerfully became willing to try anything that might benefit me either spiritually or physically. When the going gets so tough that you feel you can't go any further, the best course of action is to 'just put one foot in front of the other and take one more step'."

Excerpts from book in process, DIFFICULTIES AS CHALLENGES, may be pertinent here: (Copyright privileges reserved, Franklin S. Williams, 1977.)

Anxiety, conflict and uncertainty are "part of the human condition." They are unavoidable because we can never be totally confident that we can cope with whatever happens. So we learn to welcome conflict, risk and struggle because from these may come competence and wisdom. Risk, challenge and action make our future possible.

We must avoid "extremes of caution", for out of this can grow cowardice, anxiety, and shallow living. We can enjoy but must periodically move out of "closed and comfortable living." We must be "open to our possibilities." We must have the courage to choose hope rather than despair. When we act against fearful odds, when we find who we are because we have faced and lived with our sufferings, we have entered into the state of being born again. Our most creative act is one that shapes and renews our own best selves. We must act to change the meanings of our lives, yet retain our sensitivity to the sufferings of all men.

"Strife is father of us all" - Heraclitus

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PART IV

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING BUSINESS COMMINICATION

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: A MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The ability to communicate is an important aspect of life and success. Teaching others to write clearly and effectively is a difficult science to identify and an equally difficult art to develop.

Most teachers will agree that students learn at different rates. They will also agree that various teaching strategies will improve student interest and assist in content mastery.

Written communications has a common core of information to which every student should be exposed. An illustrated lecture may be the most effective method for teaching core material but additional information should be presented through various other techniques.

A multi-media approach for teaching written communications involves flexible application of material and methods from the traditional, laboratory, and modern media approaches. These may include video tape, case studies, taped message recall, creative writing and analysis of writing by business management.

INTRODUCTION

Educational literature contains numerous books, articles and papers about teaching. Methods for teaching written communications, however, has received limited analysis and prognosis.

Conversations with managers reveal that an ability to plan, organize, make decisions, control actions, and communicate are key leadership characteristics. An ability to communicate was cited as the most important quality that personnel managers seek when selecting people for managerial positions. In fact, 88.3% of 274 key personnel people list communication skill as very important. The remaining 11.7% felt it was important.[1] Probably this has always been true, but teachers of written communication must develop teaching techniques which stress communication skill for business careers.

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[1]"Skills for Management," Administrative Management, Vol. XXXVII, No. 7, (July, 1976), p. 7.

Perhaps a traditional view of writing-type courses has caused the limited treatment. More than likely though, it may stem from a feeling that little innovation in teaching can be applied to the written communication classroom.

Edward P. Morgan, in an article concerning the effect of media on the viewer, made the following statement:

> "We pride ourselves on being the best informed nation in the world. That should be turned around. We're the least badly informed. ... What we don't have is the facility of penetration. We've educated ourselves in a bulk way, but without selectivity. The mass of facts and information is not being digested."[2]

Perhaps a major reason for the lack of multi-media applications in the business communication classroom is the result of a critical view of television and radio. The decision, then, might be to not perpetuate an ineffective system.

Written communication has commonly been a lecture course. Proponents of this method believe that learning to write is a precise skill which is best developed via the teacher dominance system.

Writing laboratory advocates on the other hand believe that students learn best through concentrated writing with a minimum amount of formal lecture.

Nearly everyone would agree that either of the preceding methods could be successful if proper planning and organizing preceded the instruction. Then there is no problem--right? Wrong! A major problem exists when a teacher is in between the two methods or is a believer in one method but required to use the other.

Some teachers believe in teaching about writing through the use of lecture and laboratory. A methodology compromise is difficult because it forces a teacher to be in between two established procedures.

Inman summarized the essential qualities for effective management.

> "These are the ability to plan, organize, make decisions, control actions and most important of all, communicate those ideas to people."[3]

Any teaching technique which proves to be effective must provide exposure to and experience in communication improvement skill.

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[2] Edward P. Morgan, "Morgan on Media," Psychology Today, Vol. 2, No. 6, (November, 1968), p. 5.

[3] Thomas H. Inman, "Five Ways to Improve Organizational Communication," Management World, Vol. 6, No. 3, (March, 1977), p. 9.

WHAT TO DO?!

Most experienced teachers will agree that some material is most effectively taught through a straight lecture. They will also agree that learning to write is enhanced when students express their thoughts on paper. This seems to indicate that a combination of the lecture and lab method is best. Any technique, such as the multi-media, that can draw on the strength of other methods and add a few extra features should be acceptable to all three groups and yet be highly effective.

A PROPOSED METHOD

Perhaps no method is really new or innovative. Therefore, the method described in this paper will be referred to as: "A multi-media approach for written communications." It will involve flexible application of material from the traditional, the laboratory, and modern-media approaches.

Lecture Component. Every course has a common core of learning which serves as the basis for skill application or related knowledge. For written communications, a teacher should design 4-7 lectures covering material that each student must know. To assist the student, the lecture should be illustrated using transparency ideas which make an impression. Teachers are always looking for material or transparency mats to purchase. They seldom consider preparing them or having them drawn to fit the material and techniques used in their classroom. Having some drawings made to illustrate a point can be rather inexpensive if you shop around. Some students have an artistic talent which they are more than willing to donate or sell at a reasonable rate. Teachers who are fortunate enough to have budgets for the preparation of teaching materials can take their ideas to media experts. Creative teaching is initiated by teachers who want to become more effective facilitators of learning.

Video-Tape. An illustrated lecture plus meaningful written assignments still does not bridge the gap between the classroom and a position in business. Five to seven video taped presentations can help to make communication theory appear more alive and important. The tapes may be black and white or in color. An important aspect is to keep them current.

Green and Cotlar experimented with filmed cases to test student comprehension and retension. They concluded that presenting case materials on film does improve the case method. "Although the film approach did not promote greater transferability, those students using film-based simulation demonstrated a superior performance in comprehension of management principles and concepts, and a more realistic understanding of the environment in which the manager interacts."[4]

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[4]Thad B. Green and Morton Cotlar, "Do Filmed Cases Improve the Case Method?" Training and Development Journal, Vol. 27, No. 5, (May, 1973), p. 30.

Specific questions must be designed for the taped interview. A time limit of 15-20 minutes should be enforced. What topics should be covered? Each teacher must decide. Some recommendations are:

a) The importance of written communication.
b) Learning to think while you talk - dictating.
c) A view from the other side: The sales letter.
d) Preparation of answers: Letter of inquiry.
e) Communication and human relations
f) Things you always wanted to know--!!

Following the viewing of each tape, the student should be required to prepare a memo, manuscript or letter explaining the central message. Without the writing requirement, the students may adopt the television mentality position when the tape begins. Score the papers on comprehension and effective transfer of meaning.

CASE STUDY OR DEPENDENCY?

Most students learn to prepare written messages by responding to cases or problems which appear in a text or from duplicated handouts. Many business messages are answers to letters, memos, or reports, previously received. It still must be remembered, however, that a large percentage of written messages result from a telephone conversation, a visitor's comments, or an unwritten need to inform or communicate with another person. If students are going to acquire writing skill which transcend the traditional "answer the following case" technique, a new method called the Taped-Message-Recall should be implemented.

Taped-Message-Recall. Each student should have an opportunity to prepare a response to a verbal message. This is realistic preparation for the business world. It will require precise listening and accurate note taking. Play the tape through once. Then have the students prepare a letter or memo which responds to the identified need in the taped message. Using the Taped-Message-Recall procedure will allow a teacher to keep cases current and will help eliminate the overuse of special examples. With this technique a teacher can draw cases and problems from actual situations, from the active mind, or adapt cases from other reputable sources. Listening is important to effective communication and Taped-Message-Recall emphasizes listening.

Now You See It--! Every class has a point at which the students and material appear to be at odds. Sometimes this occurs around midsemester but more commonly it sets in at about the three-quarter mark. Effective teaching in written communication should allow for a change of pace to reestablish enthusiasm and recharge the learning batteries. Use a slide picture of some ornate object. Have half the class view the picture, then have them write a description of what they saw and present it to another student who did not see the picture. After receiving the description, the second student should draw the picture as it is described. This exercise is an excellent change of pace and still maintains emphasis on learning to write--namely encoding and decoding of messages. Many combinations of pictures, words and puzzles can be used for the "Now You See It--!" exercise.

Evaluation--Verbal. A most time consuming teaching activity is the grading of written assignments. We would all agree that written assignments are necessary. However, written comments are difficult to make without spending considerable time on each paper. Sometimes there is not an easy way to outline improved writing techniques for a student. To rewrite a sentence or a paragraph involves too much time and is only marginally effective for student learning. An alternative method for grading is the "Evaluation Verbal Method."

Rather than writing comments on a student's paper, you may choose to make your comments on a tape cassette. Have each student purchase a blank cassette tape and an appropriate envelope. (Note: all envelopes should be the same size and color). University and College bookstores will package the required materials for your students if you so desire. Record your comments on the tape by making suggestions for rewriting or improving techniques. You can suggest certain pages of the text or other articles to read. What are the advantages?

The first advantage is the additional information you can relate to each student using your voice rather than your hand. A second advantage is the reassurance to each student that you gave some of your time to his paper rather than letting a graduate assistant make the comments. A third advantage is the action required of the student. You will not have marked the message--only talked about improvement. If the student is to rewrite he must listen, follow directions, make a decision and produce. All of this should provide excellent exposure to skills required of managers.

Each time an additional message is handed in you simply record over the last comments. This technique can actually save an instructor's time and energy.

A Mission--Possible. William R. Sears, managing partner of Sears and Company of San Francisco was interviewed by Nations Business staff. He was asked: "Who are the best communicators in business?" Mr. Sears's answer was: "Those who communicate best are those who understand that communication starts with what the other guy needs... they are concerned about getting feedbacks whether it is written, verbal, or even a mass meeting. Communication is a function of exchange."[5]

Innovative teaching should seek to bridge the gap between current practice and future reference. To do this a student must see first hand how his writing would appear to people in business.

Have each student prepare a portfolio of letters, reports, and manuscripts he has written. With the instructor's guidance, the student should present his messages to a business leader for review and suggestions. For a final semester report, have the students prepare a short manuscript summarizing the analysis of their written messages.

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[5] "Why Best Managers Are Best Communicators," Nations Business, Vol. 57, No. 3, (March, 1969), p. 82.

Conclusions. Teaching suggestions for written communication have traditionally concentrated on diagnosis rather than on prescriptive techniques. Several studies can be cited which stress the importance of skill in writing for managerial and other leadership positions. But how can business communication instructors best prepare students for the world of business?

A multi-media approach utilizes the best of the lecture and laboratory methods. It goes one step beyond in adding multi-media aspects to make the classroom a unique career-oriented experience. Any method by itself is not enough - but the multi-media approach described in this paper will come closer to getting the job done than any other.

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PART V
HOW AND WHAT TO WRITE

CREATIVITY IN BUSINESS WRITING

Francis W. Weeks, University of Illinois

ABSTRACT

Dullness is the great curse of business communication; yet communications do not have to be dry and dull. There are writers in business who are fresh, original, creative, and even exciting, writers such as Don Fabun of the Kaiser Companies and John R. Heron of the Royal Bank of Canada. But Fabun and Heron have retired. Are any of the students we have educated creative enough to take their places? Will there be in the future? Possibly--if we do not ruin them for creative writing; if we encourage creativity in the business writing classroom.

INTRODUCTION

If you think written communications in business:

1. Suffer from poor command of English fundamentals--they don't.

2. Are dull and boring--they are.

3. Can be done skillfully and interestingly--they not only can be but frequently are.

Whatever the state of fundamentals elsewhere may be, they are alive and well in the offices of American business. That does not mean business is happy about the situation--it is paying for it. That, however, is the subject of another talk. The subject of this talk is dullness and its cure--more creative writing.

Writing in business is dull undeniably. Dullness is the great curse of business communication. That it does not have to be dull is also undeniable, because there are many writers who are fresh, original, creative, interesting, and even exciting.

CREATIVE WRITERS IN BUSINESS

When students have asked who are the creative writers in business, I have always answered--Don Fabun of the Kaiser Companies and John R. Heron of the Royal Bank of Canada. I would also name Bill Jayme, John

Shimek, and Jack Maguire, writers of direct-mail advertising copy. But Fabun and Heron have retired. It is perhaps a mark of their greatness that their publications, The Kaiser News and The Monthly Letter of the Royal Bank, have been discontinued by their companies. It would appear that adequate successors for these great writers could not be found. Who is next? Maybe some of our students. If we don't ruin them.

The names of Fabun and Heron may not be familiar to all of you. Don Fabun began his career with Kaiser Companies as a technical writer and editor and progressed to the position of editor of The Kaiser News. You may be familiar with some of his work published by Glencoe Press under the title Three Roads to Awareness. The three chapters in that book were originally issues of The Kaiser News--"On Motivation," "You and Creativity," and "Communications."

John R. Heron was a different writer altogether. He wrote what might be considered old-fashioned essays. One of his frequent topics was communication, and some of his essays on communication have been published in book form by the Royal Bank, The Communication of Ideas. You can probably get one free of charge by writing the Royal Bank and asking for it.

As you look at the work of Fabun and Heron, you will note how widely different they are. And perhaps may wonder how two writers so different can both be great. Simply because there is no one mold from which business writers are cast. Fabun is great because of his visual imagination. He sees his work in the context of art. In fact, he conceives of the art first and then forms the writing to fit it. Heron is a classical, 19th Century essayist, a writer who has read widely in the classics of literature. His work is not as dramatic as Fabun's, and students will not react to it as enthusiastically. They will think him even pedestrian. But he writes beautifully. See his essay, "Imagination Helps Communication," Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter, Vol. 41, No. 7.

It is very difficult to rank Jayme inasmuch as he is a writer of advertising copy and a very specialized brand of advertising copy--namely, direct-mail advertising. And a specialized brand of advertising in that he writes almost exclusively for sophisticated magazines. If you have subscribed to the Smithsonian Magazine as a result of an appeal you got through the mail, you succumbed to the creative persuasiveness of Jayme. Not but what you should have. I did, and I have been glad ever since.

The point here though is that Jayme works in a different area with a different kind of talent. Note the beginning of this paper. That device came from Jayme. In a letter selling Natural History, the magazine of the American Museum of Natural History, he wrote:

> If you still believe there are only nine planets in our solar system, that wine doesn't breathe, and that you'd recognize a Neanderthal Man on sight if one sat next to you on a bus, check your score. There aren't, it does, you wouldn't. And if this intelligence startles you, blame it on Natural History, the magazine of the American Museum of Natural History, where among other monthly offerings, many a sacred cow is brought to slaughter.

My students listen to a tape of an interview with Jayme in which he explains how he writes his copy. This takes them behind the scenes, as it were, and they see a writer at work.

SET FORMS AND FORMULAS

Maybe some of our students will be the next generation of great writers in business if we don't ruin them. How could we ruin them? We who sweat blood trying to draw good writing out of students who seem to resist our every effort? Part of our problem stems from the attitude that students bring with them to a business writing class. They think business writing is a highly formalized type of writing in which forms and formulas are all important, in which there is a set way of saying things and all they have to do is learn the set way and they will be "home free."

Their point of view is similar to that of Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1458, who explained:

> Sir, the law is as I say it is, and so it has been laid down ever since the law began; and we have several set forms which are held as law, and so held and used for good reason, although we cannot at present remember that reason.

Students, and many businessmen as well, have the set forms in mind though they would be hard put to remember the reason for those forms.

HOW TO STIFLE CREATIVITY

There is a little film put out by the Utah State Department of Education on creativity. It shows a child in an art class and the teacher says, "Today, we are going to draw." She passes out the crayons and a little boy picks up a red crayon and starts to work on the paper, and the teacher says, "Tommy, stop! What are you doing?" "I'm drawing a red truck going up a hill." "No, no," says the teacher, "now you wait until I give the instructions. We're all going to draw a red flower with a green stem." And then the teacher carefully went around the room to be sure that everybody drew a red flower with a green stem.

The next year Tommy transferred to another school. And again, the teacher passed out the crayons and said, "Today we are going to draw." So all the children started to draw. Tommy sat there. The teacher said, "Tommy, you aren't drawing anything." "Well, I don't know what I'm supposed to draw." "Oh, you can draw anything you want to." So he sat a while, and then he drew a red flower with a green stem.

The moral of the story is obvious. It will be even more obvious if you show your students a model of a business letter or report or advertisement or any other kind of communication, and then ask them to be creative. As a controlled experiment once, I gave students data for a retail credit report and asked them to take the data and form them into a business report. Another class received the same data, the same instructions, but were shown an example of a Dun and Bradstreet retail credit report. In the second class, every assignment turned in looked like a Dun and Bradstreet credit report. Having seen the example, the students could not think of any possible way of presenting the data differently although, as the other class proved, there are several ways it can be done.

APPLICATIONS AS CREATIVE WRITING

Since the job market became somewhat tight for college seniors, there has been a revived interest in the writing of application letters and resumes. We cover this in our business writing courses, but many students who have not had our courses either phone or come in, and their plea is something like this: "I am going to graduate in May, and I need to apply for a job. Can you tell me what book I should read that will tell me how to write a good resume?" Or they may say, "Have you got an example of a resume that I can follow?"

They do not like the advice I give them. Even in my own class I tell the students, "If you can possibly manage it, do not read anything in the textbook about applications. Do not go to the library and look for books on the subject. Above all, do not look for an example upon which you can model your own letter or resume." Even good students quail before such advice. To be thrown out completely on their own? To try to figure out what to say and how to say it? How cruel!

Well, not quite that cruel. I do have some advice for them:

> Now just forget all the forms and all the examples and anything that might be in the book. Sit down and write three good paragraphs. The overall subject of these paragraphs is: "How what I have been doing during the last five years of my life has prepared me for what I am to be doing the next five years, hopefully in a position with your company." The three paragraphs are:
>
> 1. An analysis of your education. How it has prepared you for your future.
> 2. A discussion of the jobs you have worked at (possibly part-time or volunteer jobs), what you learned from these jobs that will be useful to you in the future.
> 3. A description of some of the important activities you have participated in during the course of your education and how they have contributed to your personal development.
>
> You may discover that three paragraphs are not enough. So be it. Write as much as you can so long as what you write meets the test of being relevant to your subject matter and is not trivial. Having been elected Queen of the Plowboy Prom is not necessarily a qualification for a job unless there is more to being a prom queen than I am aware of.

With your paragraphs written, you may then design a form to contain them. Such a form may be an application letter. Your letter, of course, will have to have an identifying and attention-getting and interest-arousing opening, but then you can get into the paragraphs you've written. Then at the close, you will need another good paragraph asking for an interview as if you really wanted it. Or you can put these paragraphs into a resume, combined with tabulated data giving dates, places, names, etc. Or you could design a brochure. This would be particularly effective if the position you are applying for is in the communications industry or is a job where evidence of creativity will be regarded favorably.

The upshot of all this is that the students will have to realize that content precedes form, and that the content must be presented in a lively and interesting fashion. If the prospective employer is bored with it all, he is under no compulsion to continue reading.

"TEACHING" CREATIVITY

So how do I bring out creativity in my students? I say "bring it out," because I doubt that I have ever taught anybody how to be creative. To begin with, I offer encouragement--constant encouragement. I urge them to be daring. On the job they may not be able to afford that kind of courage. In the classroom, they certainly can, since it is guaranteed that they will not be graded down because in my subjective judgment their ideas are too far out or impractical or even ridiculous. They will be graded on their execution, on the quality of their writing. But it is a constant battle to try to get them to forget grades. Some of them always want to outguess me. "What do you suppose old Weeks wants on this?" They cannot outguess me, and I try to convince them that what I want is evidence of talent. "If you have it, flaunt it. If you think you haven't got it, try. You may surprise yourself."

First they read Fabun's essay "You and Creativity," and each writes an analysis of himself as a creative person. Then they see a great variety of creative material. Some examples:

Company Publications--like <u>Exxon USA</u> and <u>Caterpillar World</u>, and some of the old issues of <u>Kaiser News</u>.

Company Films--like <u>Toward Tomorrow</u>, produced for United Technologies Corporation.

Corporate Annual Reports--like some of the old Litton Industries reports and the current United Technologies report.

(I've mentioned United Technologies twice because the President, Chairman of the Board, and Chief Executive Officer, Harry J. Gray, formerly taught business writing at the University of Illinois before embarking on his business career. He is very conscious of good writing in his company's publications, and the reports put out by Litton Industries, when he was their Executive Vice President, and by United Technologies, where he is now, are good examples to show students.)

Print Media Advertisements--particularly advertisements for sophisticated products such as leather-bound books and first editions (e.g., Franklin Mint promotions).

Direct-Mail Advertising--the book ads from Time-Life Books; the letters from National Geographic, Smithsonian, etc.

Brochures--either accompanying direct-mail letters or sent in answer to inquiries.

Fund-Raising Appeals--particularly from university foundations.

Plus--anything which shows freshness and originality. Students are expected to be on the lookout for and to collect examples of creativity. Each student gives an oral report analyzing an example from his collection.

I hope that seeing all of these examples--and never a dull or trite one--will at least set a standard for students, if not spark some creativity within them. I remind them that there is no copyright on ideas and that they are free to experiment with the ideas of others.

For example, I will show them some great copy written by John Shimek who now writes for the Thompson Cigar Company in Tampa. Shimek's copy features narratives, and he is a great storyteller. So I tell my students if they think they can tell a good story, by all means try it and see. If they think they can encode a message in verse (which is very difficult), they are welcome to try. They will not be the first to have done so. If they think they can be humorous (and that is harder than writing poetry), they are welcome to try. But whatever they do, it must not be ordinary. They have a whole lifetime ahead of them where, no doubt, they will do much ordinary writing because of the force of circumstances. They do not have to do it in class, and they certainly do not have to be taught how to be ordinary.

They also see the ABCA Convention promotion letters (Philadelphia and Houston) written by Jack Maguire.

Whenever they say, "But where can I get ideas to put into my writing?" I tell them what Ross Mayor, fund-raiser for the University of Illinois Foundation, told a class of mine once. "I can't walk across the campus without getting a dozen ideas for something that might work in a fund-raising appeal. I keep a file of them. The problem isn't getting ideas; the problem is getting one that can be developed into a successful appeal. Often I have to try several before I find one that works to my satisfaction. The others I put in the file for possible future use."

I also encourage the students to do likewise--try several approaches, see what works best. This may seem like a lot of writing, but that is the only way they can learn.

There are enough challenges in business communication to keep students turning out creative, interesting, skillfully executed, and exciting business writing.

AUTHOR'S INDEX