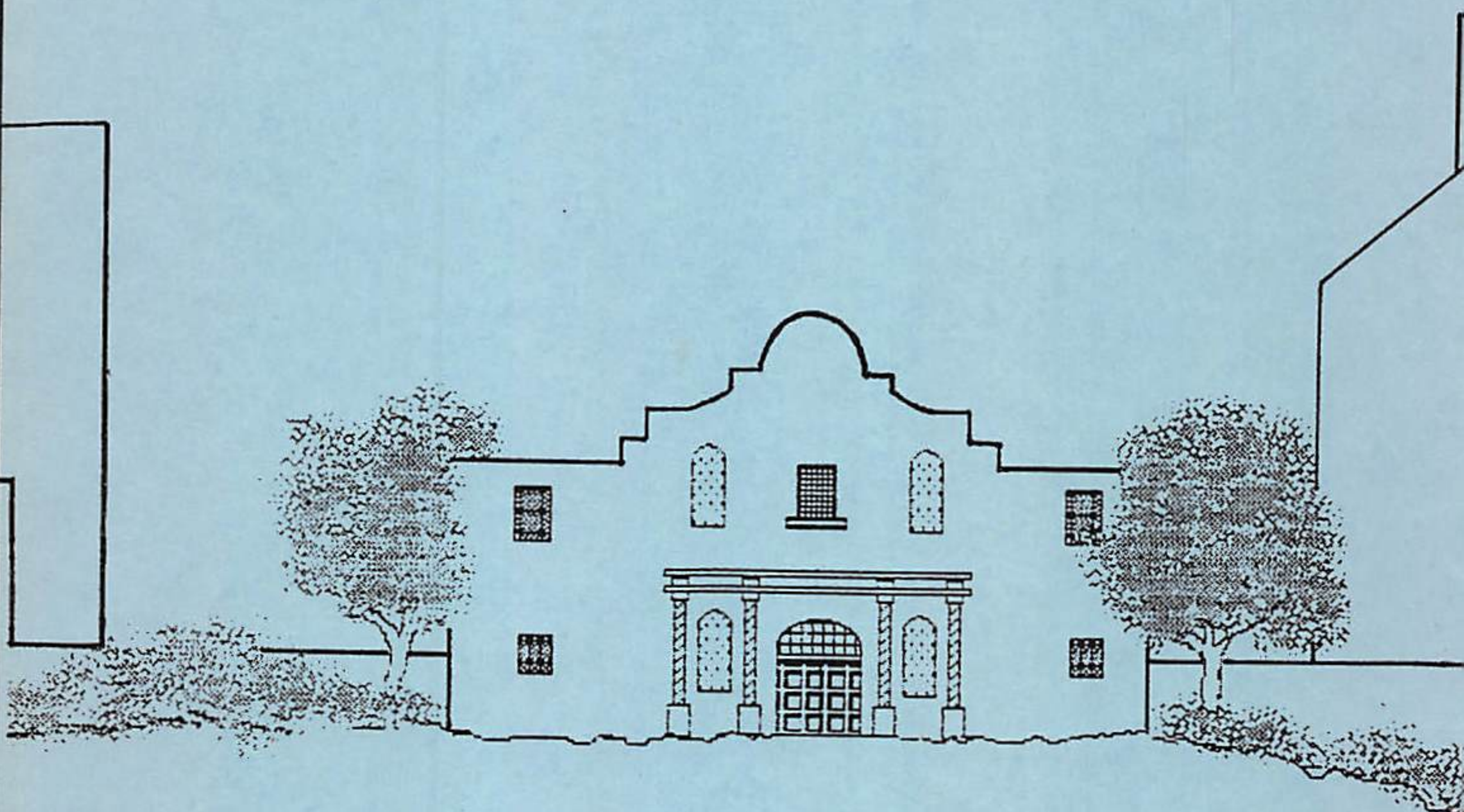
Business Communication

for Today's World



1988 Proceedings

Association for Business Communication
Southwest Region
San Antonio, Texas
Thomas L. Means, Editor

Business Communication for Today's World

1988 Proceedings, Association for Business Communication, Southwest Region

San Antonio, Texas

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Editor

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PREFACE

This volume contains refereed papers from the 1988 Southwest Regional Conference of the Association for Business Communication (ABC). Thirty-two papers were submitted for the meeting and, because of the high quality of the papers, twenty-nine were selected by reviewers and presented at the meeting in San Antonio.

After a second submission and a reviewing process, 13 of the papers were selected to be included in this volume as a permanent record of the conference.

Members of ABC-Southwest value research--pure and applied--and pedagogy and strive to maintain or raise standards in both areas. The authors of these 13 papers are to be congratulated because their works carry the tradition of ABC-Southwest forward to another year.

A thorough review of the submitted papers was possible because of the voluntary efforts of many ABC members. To those who served as reviewers for the 1988 meeting, thank you. They are

Lon Addams	Weber State University
Sallye Benoit	Nicholls State University
Dan Cochran	Mississippi State University
Don English	East Texas State University
Larry Hartman	Brigham Young University
David Hyslop	Bowling Green State University
Betty Johnson	Stephen F. Austin State University
Lynn Johnson	North Texas State University
Phillip Lewis	Abilene Christian University
Robert Mitchell	University of Arkansas-Little Rock
Betty Orr	Louisiana Tech University
Celeste Powers	Nicholls State University
Joe Pullis	Louisiana Tech University
David Ramsey	Southeastern Louisiana University
Robert Rasberry	Southern Methodist University
Sue Seymour	Cameron University
Larry Smeltzer	Arizona State University
Malra Treece	Memphis State University
Max Waters	Brigham Young University
Phil Wolf	M. P. Wolf, Consultants
Marlin Young	Stephen F. Austin State University

Special recognition needs to be given to those who have served as editors for the ABC-Southwest Proceedings--Sam Bruno and Lamar Reinsch. Their volumes have served as models, provided guidelines, and set high standards used during the preparation and compilation of this volume. Thank you for your willingness to serve and for the excellent examples.

Thomas L. Means,
Editor
ABC-SW

Louisiana Tech University
August, 1988

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Secretary-Treasurer: **Sallye S. Benoit**, Nicholls State University

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Welcome:	**Lynn Denton**, Vice President, Southwest Region IBM, Austin, Texas
Remarks:	**John M. Penrose**, 1st Vice President, ABC University of Texas-Austin
Special Presentation	The Journal of Business Communication **N. L. Reinsch, Jr.**, Abilene Christian University **Phillip V. Lewis**, Abilene Christian University

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All registered members are encouraged to attend

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Program Chair, ABC-SW

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PART 1 THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE: TECHNIQUES, CONTENT, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

SHOULD STUDENTS REWRITE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION ASSIGNMENTS?

Dr. Judith C. Simon, Memphis State University

ABSTRACT

Business communication students and instructors have indicated a feeling that writing ability can be improved by including rewriting of assignments as an option. Some organizational procedures can be developed to reduce the volume of grading when rewriting is a part of the course and to provide grading policies that encourage high-quality effort on the first writing.

INTRODUCTION

Business communication instructors have been heard to say,

"I think my students would learn more if I had them make corrections and rewrite some of their assignments, but I don't have time to grade every assignment two or three times," or

I would have my students rewrite some of their assignments, but it is too confusing having a variety of assignments coming in throughout the course." or

I don't think a student should get a higher grade from rewriting an assignment than another student received who did a good job the first time; I need a way to avoid the grading problems."

Discussions with numerous business communication instructors have indicated an interest in having students rewrite assignments if problems such as those described above could be controlled. These basic questions are involved.

1. Is there any research to indicate that rewriting of assignments possesses some educational value?
2. Because success can often be influenced by attitudes, do students and teachers perceive rewriting of assignments to have some educational value?
3. How can rewriting be included without too much additional grading for the instructor?
4. How can students who write well on the first attempt be assured of receiving a higher grade than students who require additional attempts.

RELATED RESEARCH

Previous research was reviewed in an effort to learn the value of having students rewrite some of their assignments. Results have been mixed, with some studies finding significant improvement in writing abilities of students who rewrote their assignments and others finding no significant difference. The methods used and the individual instructor's input seem to have an influence on the success rate.

A dissertation study to compare writing skills after one group participated in rewriting activities and one group did not rewrite found that independent evaluations of writing at the end of the course were significantly higher (at the .05 level of significance) for the scores attained by students who had been involved in rewriting of assignments. (Cummings, 1981)

A more informal class project involving students turning in drafts of writing projects found that students who turned in more rewritten drafts received higher grades on the finished work. (Pomerenke, 1984)

Another dissertation study involving the use of rewriting found some groups that showed improvement in writing skills, but the results were not statistically significant. The study lasted only four weeks, and development of a good writing skill could be expected to take a longer time before significant changes would be expected. This study noted that the instructor can influence the effectiveness of the rewriting activities. (Wunsch, 1982)

The available research seems to indicate that the potential does exist for helping students to improve their writing ability by including rewriting as part of their course activities. However, the instructor would need to develop efficient methods and an appropriate attitude about the value of the rewriting activities before this method can be expected to be successful.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS ABOUT REWRITING

With the various psychological theories known today, it makes sense that the use of rewriting as part of the coursework in Business Communication can be expected to be more successful if students and their instructors feel that the approach can be effective. By the same token, if students and instructors feel that rewriting would help and it is NOT included as a part of the coursework, it is conceivable that both groups could feel that the end result was not as good as it could have been.

Based on the concept that the perceptions of participants about the effectiveness of rewriting can influence its success (and that lack of its use might create negative feelings), an informal study was conducted among classes of Business Communication taught by full-time, permanent faculty members at Memphis State University near the end of the spring semester, 1987. Five faculty members were surveyed, as well as 169 students from the 11 sections taught by these five faculty members. Every student attending these classes completed the survey form.

Instructors' Responses

The responses from the instructors indicated that all believe the students' ability to write might be improved if they rewrite some assignments. Four instructors indicated that they had used rewriting in previous semesters, but only two of the five were currently using rewriting as part of the coursework. Reasons given for deciding not to have students rewrite assignments ranged from a lack of grading time to a comment that rereading is dull and monotonous. Highlights of these findings are summarized in Table I

TABLE I

REWRITING OF ASSIGNMENTS--INSTRUCTORS' RESPONSES

	Currently Used			Previously Used			Considered Beneficial	
Yes	2	(40%)	Yes	4	(80%)	Yes	5	(100%)
No	3	(60%)	No	1	(20%)	No	0	(0%)
	5	(100%)		5	(100%)		5	(100%)

Students' Responses

Of the 169 students who completed survey forms, 58 students indicated that they did have the opportunity to rewrite assignments in their Business Communication classes, and 24 indicated that they had actually rewritten some of their assignments.

A large majority of the students (86 percent) indicated that their writing might be improved if they rewrote some assignments. Of the 23 students who did not think rewriting might improve their writing, only one student was in a class where rewriting was included as an option in the course. In other words, all but one student who had some experience with the opportunity for rewriting responded favorably about the potential for improvement in writing ability from the use of the rewriting activity. Highlights of students' responses are summarized in Table II.

TABLE II

REWRITING OF ASSIGNMENTS--STUDENTS' RESPONSES

Rewriting Currently Used			Rewriting Considered Beneficial		
Yes	58	(34.3%)	Yes	146	(86.4%)
No	111	(65.7%)	No	23	(13.6%)
	169	(100.0%)		169	(100.0%)

Since most students and all the instructors in this survey generally feel that rewriting is a beneficial activity, the rewriting activity should get strong consideration for inclusion in Business Communication classes.

EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION METHODS

Before including rewriting activities, instructors must feel that rewriting of assignments can be handled without too much additional grading and paper handling. An organized system is important. Listed below are some suggested methods that have been used successfully.

1. When the initial assignment is returned to students, each paper should contain clear indications of types and locations of writing needing improvement. Students will do a better job of making changes, and instructors can limit their second reading to the areas listed on the first assignment. NOTE: Students must be required to return the initial assignment with the revised version so that the instructor will know which areas to check.
2. Use rewriting of assignments as an optional activity rather than a required activity. Students who are more interested in doing well will be more likely to rewrite and will benefit more from the activity. The volume of papers coming in is reduced when rewriting is optional.
3. Require that all rewritten assignments be submitted (along with the original version) at specified times, such as the next class meeting after the original assignment was returned. The length of time allowed would, of course, have to be extended for longer assignments. All students' rewritten versions of a particular assignment should be submitted at the same time so that the instructor can evaluate them together. The papers should be received soon after the original writing so that any special directions will still be remembered. It is much more efficient to grade all the papers for one assignment at one time.
4. Be selective about which assignments can be rewritten. It is not necessary to allow every assignment to be rewritten. The assignments to be rewritten should usually be those that students had the most difficulty writing well. The volume of papers can be controlled by setting some limitations of this type.

5. In most situations, allow students only one chance to rewrite a particular assignment. After two versions have been written, a majority of students will have gained sufficient benefit from the rewriting activity.

SUGGESTED GRADING PROCEDURES

Grading procedures must be established that are fair and simple to use. The system must reward students for working hard enough to do well the first time. If students can rewrite assignments and receive a higher grade after two writings than a student who did a good job on the first writing, students will be encouraged to wait until the second writing to work very hard. Students should be encouraged to spend the time and effort needed to do as well as they can the first time. One justification for this encouragement is that they will get only one opportunity to write a message in most business situations and they should practice writing as well as possible in the least amount of time possible.

Listed below are some specific procedures that have been used in the grading process:

1. Set a lower maximum grade possible for an assignment that is being rewritten than the grade possible on the first writing. For example, if a 10-point grading system is used, 10 points would be possible for doing good work on the first writing with 9 as the highest possible points for the second writing. This method helps encourage students to do well the first time.
2. Average the score on the second writing with the score on the first writing for the final grade on the assignment. The student should be held responsible for an initially poor effort but given the opportunity to improve the grade by rewriting. If students could use the grade on the second attempt as the entire grade for the assignment, they might not be encouraged to work as hard on the first attempt as they could. Students should expect to be held accountable for ALL their work, as would be true in a business environment.
3. Record separately the grades for the first writing, the second writing, and the average. This method provides an excellent record that shows which students are taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their writing skills. In case of questions about grades, this record can provide valuable data. A diagram of a simple recording form is shown below.

ASSIGNMENT GRADE RECORD

	Assignment Number											
Name	1 *		2		3		4		5		6	
Student 1	(a)	(b)	6	8	9		8	9				
	(C)		7		9		8.5					
Student 2	6	8	8		7	9	5	9				
	7		8		8		7					
Student 3	10		7	9	8	9	9					
	10		8		8.5		9					

*Legend: a = initial grade on assignment
b = grade for rewriting of assignment
c = final grade for assignment (average)

CONCLUSIONS

Should rewriting of assignments be included as an option in Business Communication classes? The answer appears to be "yes," with some restrictions.

The instructor must be willing to write enough information on the first submission by each student for the students to know generally what changes are needed (but the instructor should not rewrite the message for the students).

The concept of rewriting and the opportunities available for improvement must be presented positively to students and must be handled positively by the instructor.

The instructor must have well-defined procedures for such items as when rewritten assignments must be submitted and how final assignment grades are determined.

REFERENCES

Cummings, Bobby Jean. Prewriting, Writing, Rewriting: Teaching the Composing Process to Basic Writers at the College Level. Doctoral dissertation: The University of Michigan, 1981.

Pomerenke, Paula J. "Rewriting and Peer Evaluation: A Positive Approach for Business Writing Classes." The ABCA BULLETIN, September, 1984.

Wunsch, Daniel R. "The Effects of Written Feedback, Rewriting, and Group Oral Feedback on Business Letter Writing Ability." DELTA PI EPSILON JOURNAL, October, 1982.

EVALUATING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Sallye S. Benoit, Nicholls State University
Betty A. Kleen, Nicholls State University

ABSTRACT

This is a study which deals with evaluation--definition and philosophy. The term evaluation involves measurement, but it also includes the aspect of determining whether something is good or bad, desirable or irrelevant. This is the area where the skill and experience of the teacher become important. The knowledge and experience gained has been used in developing an evaluation instrument that is both reasonable and flexible. The conclusion of the report presents the evaluation sheet for an analytical report.

INTRODUCTION

This project will explore the definition and philosophy of evaluating written assignments in the business communication discipline. This project will then describe and explain an evaluation procedure used in assigning a grade to a long analytical report.

Human beings are constantly affected by some form of evaluation. Each day presents evaluative needs whether they are working in a professional or personal circumstance. Therefore, if this premise is acceptable, what is EVALUATION.

"Evaluation can be defined as the analysis of student achievement of the instructional objectives, including the determination of whether some goals are learned more fully than others." [1 p. 368] It also implies a process of making judgments and decisions in determining progress toward a goal. Evaluation is not an end in itself. Just as effective business writing styles may change significantly over time, so may acceptable evaluation practices also change over time. Evaluation of business writing is obviously not a simple objective matter; and because it is not just an objective matter, the possibility of errors is compounded.

Educators must understand that every decision they make can be defined as a value judgment; and, therefore, all decisions cannot be error free. Evaluation decisions--university to kindergarten--are being questioned more and more by students, parents, and administrators. Records show that some educators have been subjected to court cases because of inability to support their decisions of the end product of their evaluation "grade." Education is a profession. Therefore, educators are bound by professional integrity as well as by legal and ethical standards to render sound evaluation decisions.

Students are individuals in terms of innate capacity, ability, needs and interests, and these are influenced by environmental backgrounds. All factors present differences to be considered in teaching. Through evaluation, educators learn what students can do at a specific time, including their limitations, and she/he can plan to enhance the students' overall development.

How do you as a new teacher of communication approach the assigning of grades or the evaluating of written assignments? In fact, how do you as an experienced teacher of business communication evaluate written assignments? This task is perhaps the hardest one of all to do fairly and accurately. Evaluation at best is subjective; at its worst it is very, very subjective. What can make the process more realistic for you and as fair and equitable as possible to the students is to have a clearly defined method that is understandable and reasonable.

The following evaluation process is one that has evolved over several years. It is one that is under <u>constant</u> revision because of changes in acceptable writing practices and a clearer understanding by the evaluator of the objectives of the assignment.

As the assignment is read, "tally marks" are recorded in the appropriate area of the evaluation sheet; and in the margin of the report the appropriate identifying marks are displayed that key to the evaluation sheet. (Example: An error in Basics, in the subdivision grammar, would receive a margin notation of bg.) If the teacher wants to identify the specific grammatical error, then this could also be keyed to an identifying mark. (Example: Tense, would receive a margin notation of bgts.) Students cannot lose any more points than have been assigned to that particular area; however, the paper is marked so they will understand where all errors exist. There are penalties attached for certain nonconformance. These penalties are listed on the evaluation sheet, and the penalty points are subtracted from the subtotal.

So that students will be aware of the evaluation process, a copy of the evaluation sheet is distributed at the beginning of the semester. The instructor explains in class the evaluation process, and students are encouraged to ask questions about any phase of the evaluation that they do not understand.

The parts of the analytical business report evaluation include Basics, Communication Skills, Content, Documentation and Bibliography, and Visuals. Explanation for the above parts will describe and explain specifically what is included in each category.

DIVISIONS OF EVALUATION SHEET

<u>Basics</u>

The following parts of the Basics division do not need an explanation: appearance, format, proofing errors, punctuation, spelling, and word choice. Grammar includes parallelism, tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, consistency in person and formality, plurals, possessives, and double negatives. Mechanics includes number usage, word division, abbreviations and contractions, capitalization, and literary and artistic titles. Correctness is the key to all basic functions. Students will be aware of the relationship when viewing the evaluated report. The subdivisions of Basics are as follows:

Appearance	Proofing errors
Format	Punctuation
Grammar	Spelling
Mechanics	Word choice

Communication Skills

In order to communicate effectively, certain basic techniques of communication should be followed. As in any good writing, the object is for the encoder to make certain the decoder receives the message sent. The following subdivisions will enable the student to achieve this objective:

Clarity	Coherence
Completeness	Conciseness
Concreteness	Unity

Content

The content division carries more weight than other parts of the report evaluation because this is the paper. The statement of the problem should always be included in the introduction. Consideration should be given for the way secondary research and primary research are presented, as well as the introduction and analysis of data. Students are always reminded that conclusions must flow from the data they have gathered and recommendations may be made as appropriate. The subdivisions of Content are as follows:

Introduction	Conclusions
Secondary Research	Recommendations
Primary Research	Headings
Analysis of Data	Objectivity

Documentation and Bibliography

Documentation should be provided in all instances, giving credit where credit is due and adding credibility to information that is reported. The faculty member should check carefully to ensure that the student has not plagiarized the material. The instructor should ascertain that students document all end note references in the bibliography. A complete bibliographic entry for all references cited in the report should be provided in an acceptable format. Both secondary sources and primary sources should be included in the bibliography.

Primary sources would include names of people who were interviewed and accompanying data, letters from primary sources, etc. If plagiarism is established, an automatic "F" is assigned to the course. This will have to be decided according to the policy of the university involved.

Visuals

Each visual should be an appropriate selection for the idea being illustrated. The visual should be properly identified, have appropriate documentation (if from a secondary source), be properly introduced in the text and have an interpretation provided in the text to add meaning to the data beyond that which a reader may not get from studying the visual alone. Appropriate placement of the visual should also be required. Neatness and attractiveness will also be assigned points when evaluating any visuals.

CONCLUSION

The purpose and need for effective evaluation can be viewed as the improvement of teaching. Educators must also understand that they are accepting the responsibility for judging the performance of students. Evaluation is an integral part of the process of learning and it has been suggested that to evaluate what has been done is as important as performing the act itself. The following evaluation sheet is the outgrowth of research and experience in providing an instrument that will help students understand their strengths as well as their limitations. It is the instructor's acceptance of responsibility for adequately providing the students with an opportunity to view their writing as evaluated. The evaluation sheet that is presented on the following page (Appendix A) presents a system that is fair and equitable. It is an evaluation method that is flexible and, therefore, can be changed as change occurs.

REFERENCE

[1] Allen, Dwight W. and Eli Seifman. The Teacher's Handbook. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1971, pp. 368-369.

APPENDIX A

ANALYTICAL REPORT

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

		Points Possible	Points Earned
I. BASICS		50	________
Appearance	Proofing errors		
Format	Punctuation		
Grammar	Spelling		
Mechanics	Word choice		
II. COMMUNICATION SKILLS		50	________
Clarity	Coherence		
Completeness	Conciseness		
Concreteness	Unity		
III. CONTENT		70	________
Introduction	Conclusions		
Secondary Research	Recommendations		
Primary Research	Headings		
Analysis of Data	Objectivity		
IV. DOCUMENTATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY		20	________
Documentation			
Bibliography			
V. VISUALS		10	________
SUBTOTAL		200	________
Penalties:			
Lateness (20 points each calendar day)			
Insufficient pages (20 points each page)			
Insufficient references (5 points each)			________
FINAL TOTAL			________

NOTE:
NO PRIMARY RESEARCH: AUTOMATIC "0" AS REPORT GRADE
PLAGIARISM: AUTOMATIC "F" IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Approaches for Writing Problem and Purpose Statements in Business Reports

F. Stanford Wayne, Northern Illinois University
Jolene D. Scriven, Northern Illinois University

ABSTRACT

This article presents the findings of a study designed to identify the various ways and terms used in describing the problem (and any subsequent sub-problems) and purpose statements in 47 selected business communication, report writing, and research-based textbooks for an eleven-year period (1976-1987).

The conclusion is that no single definition of problem and purpose statements seems to exist to which the writers of communication textbooks adhere.

Instructors of report writing should be aware that differences do exist in the treatment of writing and problem/purpose statements for a report. Students should be advised of the different approaches for writing problem/purpose statements, as they may experience a number of these approaches used in business settings where they will be employed.

INTRODUCTION

Most textbook authors agree that an important step in preparing a written report is determining the problem. Students are urged to carefully analyze and to make certain they understand precisely what is wanted by the person authorizing the report.

As Golen, et al., point out, "The underlying purpose for every report writing project is the need to solve a problem. Fully understanding the problem is the key to success in writing a report that will meet the audience's needs" (16 p. 11). Lewis and Baker also indicate that, "The first step in the long chain of events which eventually leads to a formal business report is the identification of the problem" (26 p. 17).

Davis and Cosenza concur when they state that "proper problem identification and formulation is essential if managers are to receive the information they need to make decisions" (13 p. 45). The American Marketing Association wholeheartedly supports this viewpoint: "If any one step in the research project can be said to be more important than the others, problem definition is that step" (13 p. 45). Although Bovee and Thill do not indicate that a statement of the problem be written, they do insist that a statement of purpose be prepared which is an outgrowth of the problem being investigated (8 pp. 407-409).

As an integral part of identifying the problem and purpose of a report, authors often suggest that any statements must be written down to insure that the writer fully understands the dimensions of the task being undertaken. This step will also ultimately benefit future readers as clear, concise statements of the problem and purpose will enhance understanding.

At this point, however, the authors begin to differ in their selection of terms and approaches used in describing and recording the problem and purpose statements. Some consider a single statement of the problem to be sufficient, while others prefer to divide a problem and purpose statements or problem and research questions/hypotheses to be researched, or some similar combination. Other authors use such terms as "objective" or "goal" to describe these statements.

This article focuses on the writing of problem and purpose statements of a report and what the authors of various textbooks say about the writing of these statements. The authors of this article do not attempt to discuss the overall reason(s) for writing a report. Instead, this paper is directed toward the study of the specific treatment of problem and/or purpose statements that are commonly addressed in the introduction section of a business report.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

New teachers to the area of report writing are sometimes confused concerning the differences, if any, that exist between a problem and purpose statement. Does a difference exist, or do the words problem and purpose have synonymous meanings? A cursory examination of business communication, report writing, and research texts reveals that the textbook authors handle this dimension of reporting writing in several ways.

For example, Brown describes the problem statement in terms of the facts giving rise to the situation, while he explains the purpose statement as "the long-range goal that the report seeks to accomplish" (10 p. 25). He further states that "objectives are the immediate goals or steps that must be taken to reach this final goal (10 p. 25). Thus, Brown apparently interprets the problem and purpose as being different aspects of report writing.

On the other hand. Lesikar directs his attention to only the problem statement in his discussion within the chapters; yet, the index in his Report Writing for Business text, 7th edition, indicates that the "purpose of a report" is discussed on pages 29-30. An inspection of those pages, as well as other pages, shows a discussion of only the "problem statement" with no reference to a "purpose statement." However, in examining the illustration of types of reports in Appendix D, page 378, one section of a report is titled "problem" followed by the use of the phrase, "the objective of this study," indicating that problem and objective might have the same meaning (25 p. 378).

The authors of this study do not suggest that any one approach for teaching the problem and purpose statements of a report is superior to another. Rather, this study is designed to analyze, on an overall basis, the extent of difference or similarity in the use of specific problem and purpose statements in business report writing.

The focus of this article is to report the various ways and terms used in describing the problem (and any subsequent sub-problems) and purpose statements in selected business communication, report writing, and research-based textbooks.

METHODOLOGY

The authors of this article selected for review a total of 47 business communication, report writing, and research-based textbooks from their professional libraries. Only textbooks published during the past eleven years (1976-1987) were included in the study. The eleven-year period is believed to be a sufficient time span to encompass any recent definitions and treatments of problem and purpose statements. Further, this sample of 47 textbooks is thought to be representative of the approaches used by authors of similar textbooks to explain the problem and purpose statements of a report.

An attempt was made to locate the most recent edition of textbooks with multiple printings. Sections of the textbooks that addressed the problem and purpose statements were independently identified, reviewed, and recorded; these subjective interpretations were then evaluated for consistency by the authors. In cases where different interpretations has been made, this review helped ensure the accuracy of the subjective interpretations. Even though textbook writers and editors make every effort to present their ideas clearly, at times difficulty was encountered in fully understanding their positions concerning problem and purpose statements. In these instances, additional persons were asked to interpret the meanings that they received from reading selected portions referring to the problem and purpose statements.

Several categories for the treatment of the problem and purpose statements emerged; these categories for both the problem and purpose statements appear in Figure 1 and 2, respectively. The textbook authors' treatment of the problem and purpose statements of a report (as interpreted by the authors of this article) is shown in these figures.

The authors of the textbooks that were reviewed are listed in the first column of each figure. The relevant description that indicate how the problem and purpose statements are treated by the textbook authors are given across the top of each figure. A complete bibliographical listing of the textbooks analyzed in this study is provided at the end of this article.

In order to conclude whether the authors of the textbooks studied do agree on the approach used in describing and recording problem and purpose statements, the expectation is that two-thirds of the authors would treat the problem and purpose statements in a similar way.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Problem Statements. Nearly two-fifths of the textbook authors (38.3 percent) indicated that the problem statement should describe what needs to be solved or answered in the report. Another 21.3 percent said the problem statement provides the goals or objectives to be achieved or attained. Although these two definitions may appear to the reader to mean the same, the opinion of the authors of this study is that in context, they were handled differently. Only four authors seemed to explain problem statements in terms that both categories were apparently covered in their discussion.

Interestingly, in 21.3 percent of the surveyed books, no direct reference was made relative to a written statement of the problem. Other authors referred to a written statement of the problem and gave an example to provide clarity in understanding the concept rather than a definition (17 percent), while another 12.8 percent referred to a problem statement, but neither defined nor provided an example.

Another approach was characterized by nearly 15 percent of the authors who seemingly use problem and purpose statements as synonymous terms. These data can be examined more fully in Figure 1.

Purpose Statements. Thirteen of the textbook authors suggested that a statement of the purpose of a business report should indicate the goals or objectives to be achieved or attained (27.7 percent). Another 13 authors (27.7 percent) made no reference to a purpose statement in their discussions.

The purpose and problem statements were considered to be synonymous terms by 14.9 percent of the authors, while 12.8 percent thought the purpose statement should provide information on why the study is being conducted or the use or need for the study. Figure 2 shows the treatment accorded written purpose statements by the authors of the 47 textbooks.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the criterion that two-thirds of the authors must agree on the approach used in describing and recording problem statements and purpose statements, the conclusion is that no single definition of problem and purpose statements seems to exist to which the writers of communication textbooks adhere. This review, therefore, reinforces the belief that persons who teach report writing may continue to have difficulty in conveying to their students the meanings, similarities, and differences of these two written statements. Instructors of report writing should be aware that differences do exist in the treatment of writing the problem/purpose statements for a report.

Since these different treatments can be confusing to both teachers and students, teachers may want to explore the various treatments and select and consistently present only one. However, students should be advised of the different approaches for writing problem/purpose statements, as they may experience a number of these approaches used in business settings where they will be employed.

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FIGURE 1

AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM STATEMENTS AS IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS
(N = 47)

TREATMENT

AUTHOR	PROBLEM STATEMENT IS NOT MENTIONED	PROBLEM AND PURPOSE STATEMENT ARE APPARENTLY THE SAME	PROBLEM IS PART OF THE PURPOSE	GIVES EXAMPLE BUT LITTLE OR NO DEFINITION	THE GOALS OR OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED OR ATTAINED	WHAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED OR ANSWERED	REFERS TO BUT DOES NOT DEFINE	PROBLEM IS SPECIFIC	PROBLEM IS GENERAL
ADELSTEIN, ET. AL				✓					
ARONOFF, ET. AL	✓								
BAIRD, ET. AL				✓					
BALSLEY, ET. AL					✓	✓			
BATEMAN, ET. AL		✓							✓
BAXTER							✓		
BONNER			✓			✓			
BOVEE, ET. AL					✓	✓			
BOWMAN, ET. AL					✓				
BROWN							✓		
BURTNESS, ET. AL					✓				
BUSCHINI, ET. AL					✓				
DAVIS, ET. AL					✓	✓			
DUMONT, ET. AL	✓	✓							
FIGGINS, ET. AL					✓				
GOLEN, ET. AL					✓				
HAGGBLADE	✓								
HATCH						✓			
HILLESTAD						✓			
HIMSTREET, ET. AL						✓			
HUSEMAN, ET. AL			✓						
KREY, ET. AL	✓								
LEONARD		✓				✓			
LESIKAR				✓					
LESIKAR, ET. AL					✓				
LEWIS, ET. AL						✓			

FIGURE 1 (Continued)

AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM STATEMENTS AS IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS
(N = 47)

TREATMENT

AUTHOR	PROBLEM STATEMENT IS NOT MENTIONED	PROBLEM AND PURPOSE STATEMENT ARE APPARENTLY THE SAME	PROBLEM IS PART OF THE PURPOSE	GIVES EXAMPLE BUT LITTLE OR NO DEFINITION	THE GOALS OR OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED OR ATTAINED	WHAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED OR ANSWERED	REFERS TO BUT DOES NOT DEFINE	PROBLEM IS SPECIFIC	PROBLEM IS GENERAL
LINDAUER		✓		✓					
MOYER, ET. AL						✓			
MURPHY, ET. AL				✓			✓		
NIXON	✓								
PEARCE, ET. AL						✓			
PHILLIPS	✓								
POE, ET. AL	✓								
ROBERTS	✓								
ROBINSON					✓	✓		✓	
SEIGLE						✓			
SIGBAND, ET. AL				✓			✓		
SIGBAND, ET. AL				✓					
SORRELS						✓			
STARZYK, ET. AL							✓		
SWENSON		✓				✓			
TIMM, ET. AL				✓			✓		
TREECE		✓				✓			
VARNER						✓			
WILKINSON, ET. AL		✓				✓			
WOLF, ET. AL	✓								
WOLF, ET. AL	✓								
TOTAL NUMBER = 47*	10	7	2	8	10	18	6	1	1
TOTAL PERCENTAGE	21.3	14.9	4.3	17.0	21.3	38.3	12.8	2.1	2.1

*Total number exceeds 47 because more than one category needed to be checked for some textbooks

FIGURE 2

AN ANALYSIS OF PURPOSE STATEMENTS AS IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS
(N = 47)

AUTHOR	TREATMENT: NO FORMAL DISCUSSION OF PURPOSE STATEMENT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED OR ANSWERED FOR DECISION MAKING	THE GOALS OR OBJECTIVES TO BE ATTAINED	PURPOSE AND PROBLEM APPEAR TO BE THE SAME	WHY THE STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED--THE USE OR NEED FOR THE STUDY	PURPOSE IS ONE PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM	GIVES EXAMPLE BUT LITTLE OR NO DEFINITION	REFERS TO BUT DOES NOT DEFINE	USES SYNONYM FOR PURPOSE	PURPOSE IS GENERAL	PURPOSE IS SPECIFIC
ADELSTEIN, ET. AL	✓										
ARONOFF, ET. AL	✓										
BAIRD, ET. AL	✓										
BALSLEY, ET. AL						✓					
BATEMAN, ET. AL				✓							✓
BAXTER			✓					✓			
BONNER			✓								
BOVEE, ET. AL			✓							✓	
BOWMAN, ET. AL					✓						
BROWN			✓								
BURTNESS, ET. AL	✓										
BUSCHINI, ET. AL	✓										
DAVIS, ET. AL			✓						✓		
DUMONT, ET. AL			✓	✓							
FIGGINS, ET. AL	✓										
GOLEN, ET. AL		✓									
HAGGBLADE			✓				✓				
HATCH			✓						✓		
HILLESTAD					✓						
HIMSTREET, ET. AL						✓					
HUSEMAN, ET. AL		✓									
KREY ET. AL	✓										
LEONARD				✓							
LESIKAR	✓										
LESIKAR, ET. AL	✓										
LEWIS, ET. AL			✓								
LINDAUER				✓							
MOYER, ET. AL			✓								
MURPHY, ET. AL		✓									
NIXON					✓						

FIGURE 2 (Continued)

AN ANALYSIS OF PURPOSE STATEMENTS AS IDENTIFIED IN SELECTED TEXTBOOKS
(N = 47)

TREATMENT

AUTHOR	NO FORMAL DISCUSSION OF PURPOSE STATEMENT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED OR ANSWERED FOR DECISION MAKING	THE GOALS OR OBJECTIVES TO BE ATTAINED	PURPOSE AND PROBLEM APPEAR TO BE THE SAME	WHY THE STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED--THE USE OR NEED FOR THE STUDY	PURPOSE IS ONE PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM	GIVES EXAMPLE BUT LITTLE OR NO DEFINITION	REFERS TO BUT DOES NOT DEFINE	USES SYNONYM FOR PURPOSE	PURPOSE IS GENERAL	PURPOSE IS SPECIFIC
PEARCE, ET. AL	✓										
PHILLIPS			✓								
POE, ET. AL					✓						
ROBERTS	✓										
ROBINSON	✓										
SEIGLE						✓					
SIGBAND, ET. AL							✓	✓			
SIGBAND, ET. AL							✓				
SORRELS							✓	✓			
STARZYK, ET. AL								✓			
SWENSON				✓	✓						
TIMM, ET. AL	✓										
TREECE		✓		✓							
VARNER		✓			✓						
WILKINSON, ET. AL		✓		✓							
WOLF, ET. AL			✓								
WOLF, ET. AL			✓								
TOTAL NUMBER = 47*	13	6	13	7	6	3	4	4	2	1	1
TOTAL PERCENTAGE	27.7	12.8	27.7	14.9	12.8	6.4	8.5	8.5	4.3	2.1	2.1

*Total number exceeds 47 because more than one category needed to be checked for some textbooks

INTEGRATING THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL SKILLS INTO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES

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ABSTRACT

The lack of social skills among today's college graduates has caused concern on both educational and corporate levels. Employers who have interviewed recent college graduates have reported that while most have excellent job skills, their obvious lack of social skills is appalling. Through the use of a test administered to business communication students and a survey of selected Mid-South businesses, areas of corporate etiquette needing improvement were identified. Activities for integrating the teaching of social skills into business communication courses are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Good social skills, not a top priority of the generation of the 1960s, have become a top priority to firms interested in gaining a competitive edge in the 1980s. The current emphasis on corporate etiquette is reflected in numerous articles in various business publications and in recent books by Baldrige (1), Darling (2), and Wyse (4).

Tomorrow's managers may find that their chances for climbing the corporate ladder are greatly enhanced by skills that go beyond educational credentials, job skills, and experience. The "extra" that employers are looking for in prospective employees is etiquette--knowing what to do, say, and wear in business and social situations.

DETERMINATION OF NEED FOR TEACHING CORPORATE ETIQUETTE

Employers who have interviewed recent college graduates have reported that while most have excellent job skills, their social skills leave much to be desired. Prospective employees are often unable to communicate their job qualifications with confidence in an interview because they do not project an aura of assurance. The self-confidence needed to communicate effectively comes from knowing proper conduct and caring about good manners. According to Baldrige, an absence of caring and sloppy manners are highly visible on any job and may cost a person a promotion and even a job (1). Wyse stresses the fact that caring is the beginning, but caring is not enough. The way we communicate the caring is what company manners are all about (4).

Determination of Students' Needs

A 15-item true-false test containing questions related to business etiquette and social skills was administered to 264 students enrolled in 13 sections of Business Communication at Memphis State University in January 1988. The test, along with the percentage of students missing each question, is shown in Table 1 on the following page.

The question missed by the largest number of students (58 percent) involved the refusal of food at a supervisor's home. Exactly half of those surveyed did not know the proper procedure for introducing a person to a group. All questions were missed by some of the students. The two questions missed by the least number of students involved grooming (length of a man's hose/socks) and telephone etiquette.

Results of this survey of 264 students indicate that college students need instruction in business etiquette and social skills.

Survey of Area Businesses

A survey of 60 Mid-South businesses was conducted in January 1988 to determine which social skills personnel managers feel are needed for professional advancement to managerial levels. Respondents were asked to evaluate eight types of social skills as being "Essential," "Important," or "Unimportant." They were also asked to add items to the list.

As Table 2 shows, a majority of the 39 personnel managers who returned the survey form rated the eight areas of social skills as "Essential" or "Important." The two skills rated "Essential" by the largest number of managers were dressing appropriately (77 percent) and speaking correctly (79 percent). Items added to the list included being prompt and cooperative.

TABLE 1

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGIATE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES

	Question	Correct Response	Percentage of Incorrect Responses
1.	When dining, unfold your napkin and place it in your lap immediately upon being seated.	True	29.2%
2.	At the conclusion of a meal, place your folded napkin on the table just before rising and leaving the table.	True	19.7%
3.	When dining in your supervisor's home, you may refuse food with a polite "no Thank you."	False	58.0%
4.	The butter spreader may be used to cut and butter the bread.	False	33.3%
5.	Spoons used for soup or for stirring coffee should be returned to their service plates after use.	True	16.7%
6.	An oral "thank you" for a gift is appropriate and need not be followed with a written note.	False	13.3%
7.	An appropriate topic for business/social small talk is how much things cost.	False	18.6%
8.	One should always reply to an RSVP.	True	8.3%
9.	When introducing a person to a group, give the stranger's name first; then ask group members to introduce themselves.	False	49.6%
10.	Women should shake hands in business situations but may choose not to shake hands on social occasions.	True	21.1%
11.	If you place a telephone call and are disconnected, you should call back even if it is long distance.	True	4.9%
12.	A suit jacket or blazer may be removed when a visitor from another firm is present in your office.	False	19.3%
13.	A double-breasted jacket must always be worn buttoned.	True	34.1%
14.	It is appropriate for a man to wear a short-sleeved shirt with a suit.	False	23.9%
15.	A man's hose/socks should be long enough so that no part of the leg shows when he is seated.	True	2.7%

TABLE 2

SOCIAL SKILLS NEEDED BY MANAGERS

Social Skills	Essential	Important	Unimportant
Making introductions correctly	44%	56%	-
Using proper table manners	38%	62%	-
Managing social functions	10%	85%	5%
Knowing proper procedures for conducting meetings/seminars	44%	54%	2%
Dressing appropriately	77%	23%	-
Showing thoughtfulness by responding to invitations, writing letters of sympathy, congratulations, and appreciation	23%	69%	8%
Speaking correctly (command of language)	79%	21%	-
Speaking effectively (speaking before groups)	41%	59%	-

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES

Business Communication instructors frequently express their frustration over lack of sufficient time to cover the essentials. The following suggestions will not involve additional time; they simply involve integrating social skills into existing activities.

1. Introduce students to each other on the first day of class. Have students practice making introductions properly.

2. Ask students to write a letter of appreciation or congratulations. Also stress the importance of replying to RSVPs. Give examples of properly worded replies; have students write replies to RSVPs in class.

3. When discussing oral communication, ask students to talk for one minute on a topic that is appropriate for business/social "small talk."

4. In a discussion of preparation for the job interview, include appropriate dress, behavior, and nonverbal aspects of the interview process.

5. Written reports can be assigned on various aspects of corporate etiquette.

6. Students' assigned oral reports can involve summarizing articles written on social skills.

SUMMARY

The lack of social skills among today's college graduates has caused concern on both educational and corporate levels. The responsibility for teaching social skills, once assumed by parents, now appears to be shifting to the schools. Employers are looking to the academic world to provide instruction and guidance in developing students' social skills. Leaders of corporate America know that business decisions are often made in social settings; they know that employees with good social skills are assets to the organization. Schools, particularly institutions of higher learning, must convey to students that good manners are essential to climbing the corporate ladder. As Wakin stresses, "Business manners are part of what you're supposed to learn in order to do your job and to get ahead." (3: 48)

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES USED IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES

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ABSTRACT

In determining how to be effective in teaching business communication, one of the many tasks a communication teacher faces is that of grading. Teachers face questions regarding the number of assignments to be graded, the types of assignments to make, the use/nonuse of group assignments, the use/nonuse of grading assistants, the use/nonuse of peer evaluation, and uniformity among those who are teaching the business communication courses. Therefore, this research was designed to investigate the different grading policies and procedures that teachers use in teaching the basic business communication course.

INTRODUCTION

Evaluating student performance in a basic business communication course can be confusing, complicated, and, at best, challenging. This difficulty arises from a number of factors. Fundamentally, the instructor grapples with the dilemma of what to evaluate. The course in question may include written communication: letters, memos, proposals, and/or reports of various types. It may also include public speaking, listening, language skills and punctuation, and reading (3). A growing trend exists for including interpersonal communication, group processes, and organizational communication (1). This massive body of information nearly defies coverage in a single semester, much less evaluation.

Secondly, because competency in business communication cannot be reduced to a list of correct answers, the instructor struggles with the issue of quantifying a qualitative skill. Even if only marks of A, B, C, D, and F are used, problems emerge in establishing the dividing lines.

In addition to deciding what skills to evaluate and what marks or points to use, the instructor must also decide how much weight each assignment should carry. In a course designed to "do it all," how much attention should each topic receive?

A fourth area of controversy involves deciding how much grading is enough. Can a system which provides frequent, timely feedback to the student also be manageable from the instructor's perspective? It is unfortunate that originally composed assignments are not adaptive to

Scantron grading procedures. Can the grading task be enhanced through the use of group assignments, peer evaluation, and grading assistants?

This study addresses the issue of grading policies and procedures in the introductory business communication course in four-year colleges and universities. Norms and typical practices are identified so that individual instructors might examine their own practices comparatively.

Several studies have examined this issue from other perspectives. Johnson and White surveyed instructors of the first business communication course in AACSB schools (2). They found that nearly three-fourths of the instructors spend at least one-half of the course time on written communications. Evaluation of this component was primarily achieved through in-class or out-of-class writing problems. The greatest number of respondents agreed that the composite writing assignment grade should be equally divided among writing mechanics, organization/content, and audience/tone with less emphasis on format/style. Both examinations and writing assignments were given as a basis for assigning grades.

Ober (4), Mitchell and Crawford (3), and others studied the typical make-up of the basic business communication course. Writing activities still dominate, with the most time being devoted to letters, followed by reports.

Little research exists into grading methods. The purpose of this study is to reflect current grading practices of business communication instructors in four-year colleges and universities. The basis of the study's sampling was the 1987-88 membership list of the Association for Business Communication. ABC membership was selected, since it represents a broad cross-sampling of business communication instructors. Questionnaires were sent to 941 members from the Academic--Senior College division. The initial mailing, consisting of a cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope, was mailed on July 17, 1987. Follow-up reminders were mailed to all non-respondents on August 14, 1987. Of the 941 questionnaires mailed out, 453 were eventually completed and returned for a response rate of approximately 48 percent.

Of the 453 responses received, 61 indicated that their schools do not offer an undergraduate introductory business communication course. These respondents were asked to return the questionnaire without completing the remainder. An additional 72 questionnaires were unusable due to reasons including not presently teaching the course, retired, in business rather than teaching, etc. The remaining 320 were identified as usable; these responses formed the basis for the statistical analysis that follows.

FINDINGS

Respondents were asked to indicate which department teaches the undergraduate introductory business communication course at their colleges. The results are indicated in Figure I:

FIGURE I

DEPARTMENT THAT TEACHES INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Department	% of Responses
Administrative Services/Office Systems	22.1
English	21.0
Business/Business Administration	17.7
Management/Marketing	16.0
Business Education	6.6
Speech, Communication	5.2
Other	
Business Disciplines	6.9
Non-Business Disciplines	4.4

The level at which the basic business communication course could be taken varied among respondents. The largest category, representing 39.1 percent indicated that the course may be taken at the sophomore level or higher. The next largest category of response--23.8 percent--was those indicating that the course could be taken at the junior and senior levels only. A notable number, 19.9 percent, indicated that the course could be taken at any level, including freshman level.

Completion of English composition was indicated by 57.9 percent of the respondents as being a prerequisite to enrollment in business communication. Other prerequisites occurred in small frequencies. The second largest category of responses, however, were those indicating that no prerequisites existed for business communication.

When asked whether all of the instructors who teach the introductory business communication course at their colleges teach the course content in the same order, 30.1 percent indicated yes; 67.7 percent indicated no. Respondents were asked whether all instructors at their institutions gave the same number of assignments and whether they all graded the same number of assignments. Responses are indicated in Figure II:

FIGURE II

CONSISTENCY IN NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS MADE AND GRADED AMONG INSTRUCTORS IN SAME INSTITUTION

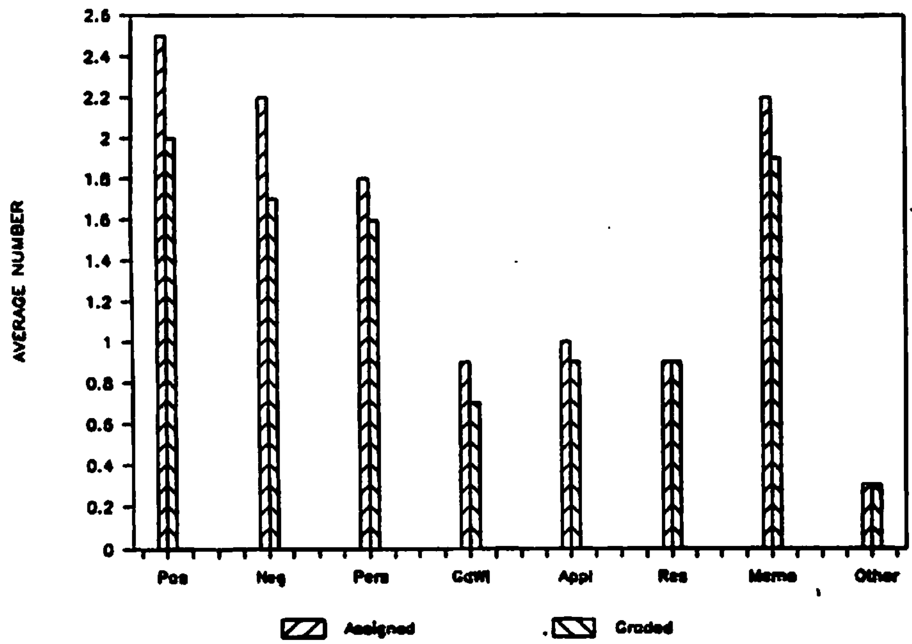
	Same Number Assigned	Same Number Graded
Yes	27.5%	27.8%
No	59.5%	53.9%
Don't Know	13.0%	18.3%

The vast majority of respondents (85.1 percent) do not have grading assistance with their business communication assignments. While 9 percent said that they did have assistance with grading, 5.9 percent did not know whether they had assistance.

Respondents were asked to indicate the types and number of correspondence assignments they made and graded. Figure III summarizes the responses received:

FIGURE III

NUMBER OF LETTERS/CORRESPONDENCE ASSIGNMENTS MADE AND GRADED



Results indicated that 83.3 percent of instructors teach report writing in the introductory business communication course; 16.7 percent do not. When asked about whether students work together on the report, the results were as follows:

FIGURE IV

COMPLETION OF REPORT ASSIGNMENTS

Work individually, each student submits own report	70.5%
Work in groups, each student submits own report	6.8%
Work in groups, one report submitted by group	11.8%
Work in pairs, each student submits own report	1.4%
Work in pairs, one report submitted by pair	2.7%
Other arrangements	6.8%

Nearly two-thirds (64.1 percent) indicated that they always give students a "guide sheet" which lists the criteria uses for evaluation of assignments; 30.6 percent sometimes do, while 5.3 percent never give guide sheets.

Questions were asked concerning the use of peer evaluation in providing feedback to student assignments. Figure V summarizes the results:

FIGURE V

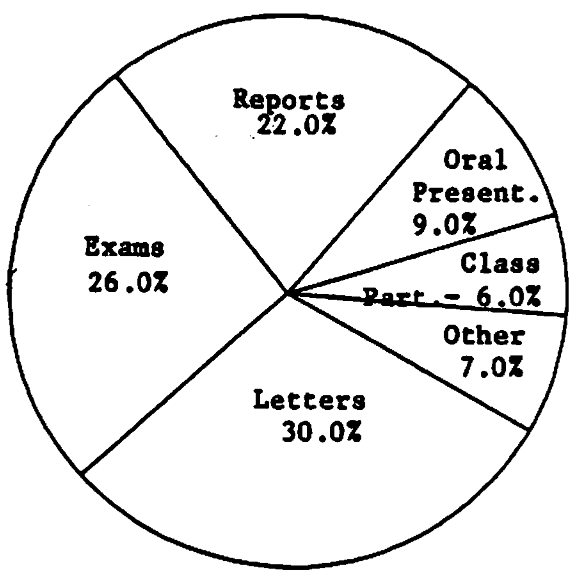
USE OF PEER EVALUATION FEEDBACK

	Always	Sometimes	Never
In Letter Writing	25.6%	54.8%	19.6%
In Report Writing	22.5%	42.3%	35.2%
In Oral Presentations	53.0%	28.3%	18.7%

When asked whether they use peer evaluation in determining grades, 68.1 percent of instructors said that they never do, 29.9 percent sometimes do, and 2.0 percent always use peer input in determining grades. Instructors indicated the components and respective weights considered in calculating students' final grades. Figure VI indicates the average breakdown:

FIGURE VI

COMPONENTS CONSIDERED IN FINAL GRADE



CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study on grading policies and procedures used in business communication courses were as follows:

1. Within individual universities, differences exist among the individual business communication instructors as to the number of assignments made and graded.

2. Typically, some assignments are made but not graded.

3. The majority of teachers do not have assistance in grading.

4. When completing report writing assignments, students most often work individually and write individual reports.

5. Peer evaluation is most frequently used for feedback in the oral presentation.

6. The majority of instructors never use peer evaluation in assigning grades.

7. The majority of instructors do give students guides which list the criteria used for evaluation of assignments.

8. In determining the final grade, the highest percentage of the grade comes from letter-writing grades, followed by examinations, followed by report grades.

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EFFECTIVE DELIVERY FOR THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTER

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ABSTRACT

Business and industry want messages that work, and effective delivery can help messages work. The essential, and even innovative features of delivery is conversationally offered in this paper. As a result, business communication educators should view this area of communication as more salient to the business communication courses.

INTRODUCTION

Communication experts have always recognized that words, in and of themselves, have no meaning. After all, words are mere symbols. They are arbitrary modes of expression that need to be placed in context in order for the "accurate" message to get across to the appropriate person. There are many ways to complement messages, and the one way that requires patience, understanding, and human sensitivity is that of delivery. But delivering a message - even passionately, is no sure cure for the insurmountable display of ineffective or inappropriate communication meandering from one sales presenter to his or her audience; or from one organizational network to another. Sometimes a salesperson will do his or her best presentation only to find a customer rejecting his or her product. This same sales representative can, a few days or even hours later, do a horrible presentation only to find another customer desperate for the product and buying it despite the poor sales "performance." So what's the answer? Is thoughtful care to delivery really important? For this author, as for numerous others in the field of communication, the answer is an unequivocable yes.

Delivery is the only sound way to demonstrate intense sincerity, considerable knowledge, general enthusiasm, and innate caring. After all: words on paper are simply a set of declarative sentences - no wit, no humor, no passion. Effective delivery makes tedious presentations into human events; much like an architect might make a blueprint into a home. But addressing the issue of effective delivery is still another issue: how can it be taught by teachers of business communication whose dramatic skills are minimal to nonexistent? This is no easy chore, to be sure.

During the elocutionary period, speech teachers would tie strings on their student's elbows, fingers and joints so that they could manipulate them like marionettes. Many speech teachers still ask their students to speak with corks in their mouths in order to enhance their diction. Everyone seems to have a special method except to submit the most important point of effective delivery. That being: delivery style is as personal as the speaker himself. And understanding some essential features about delivery can allow teachers to harness their own common sense and "natural" skills to ensure proper practice and procedure for their students. These essential features will be briefly discussed and, as a result, should offer the reader a relatively thorough understanding of human delivery as a feasible, teachable, and critical element in the business communication course.

SENSE OF COMMUNICATION

Thinking about such things as eye-contact, gestures, posture and voice are fine when trying to develop an effective style of delivery. But the most important ingredient in the comprehensive recipe for good delivery, is obtaining and maintaining an effective sense of communication.

For Bryant and Wallace (1976), a sense of communication is a feeling or awareness that two or more minds are engaged in mutual, productive interaction. It is a speaker's desire to share with an audience, a willingness to communicate, and from an audience's standpoint, a feeling that the speaker is talking to them rather than at them.

One of the best ways to produce a good sense of communication is to be totally and thoroughly sincere about your subject. Once you are convinced that you possess this "right" attitude, identify those good interpersonal skills that you have and find a way to translate them to the platform.

An eloquent speaker is not necessarily a recluse or an intellect filled with tart sophistry. But instead, an eloquent, passionate speaker is a speaker who is viewed as a caring speaker, or even a magnanimous one. Even a shy person, wanting to show anger, for instance, finds a way to show it. This seemingly shy person has found a reason - a strong passionate desire for thundering out his or her convictions. This is a true sense of communication.

POOR PLATFORM BEHAVIORS

Remember public speaking events you have observed? You probably have witnessed some rather strange modes of delivery as well as some rather effective ones. Here are some platform behaviors that usually cause major delivery problems:

Pacers: Using unmotivated pacing from side to side. If you need to pace, try to pace immediately prior to a transition. This form of pace will enhance the message, rather than detract from your message. Don't move from side to side. Your audience may become more enthralled by the rhythm of your body instead of the content of your message.

Tranquilizers: Totally lacking in enthusiasm, warmth and interest. Being a "human valium" while giving your speech is hardly your best interest. If you are bored with your own speech, you can imagine how your audience feels.

Fidgeters: Clasping and unclasping your hands; playing with your index cards; playing with a pen, buttons, watch, etc...Making a paper airplane. But doing something of that sort when inappropriate does nothing but bother the audience. Why bring your pen up there? You won't be doing any writing.

Mumblers: Seems to be speaking to self; sounds inaudible and words seem scrambled. Those who mumble are those who do not open their mouths. Your mouth is a muscle. It must be flexed, and working in conjunction with your lips, tongue and teeth, your mouth can make sounds clearly.

Jinglers: Places hands in pockets and plays with contents such as coins and buttons. Get your hands out of your pockets. You need them in order to gesture, and unless you wish to mimic the Amazing Kreskin, your audience won't want to guess how much change you have in your pocket.

The symptoms associated with these poor platform behaviors are very common. Be aware of them and follow the suggestions on how to minimize them.

THE VOICE

Delivery is nonverbal communication. This means that delivery should work in conjunction with verbal communication. Gestures can complement and/or substitute for verbal communication. Your eye-contact can intensify and/or emphasize certain points in your speech, as well as help to regulate the message flow and guide the audience.

Your voice is clearly germane to effective delivery. Your voice is the bedrock behind the nonverbal dimension of paralanguage. Paralanguage is "how something is said, rather than what is said." What a speaker needs to be especially aware of are vocal segregates. Vocal segregates are fillers such as "uh," "um," and "you know." If these fillers are used sparingly, and in a very conversation way, then they may not detract from a message. But if they are used too often, they become an absolute nuisance.

Rate of speech is also a paralinguistic tool. If you tend to speak quickly, force yourself to slow down during your presentation. It might be helpful to think in terms of rhythm. Think of a period as a 3-count; a comma as a 2-count. Count to yourself and move on. This will help you to vary your rate of speech and make better use of pausations.

One of the best ways to make your audience hear and understand your speech is to enunciate well. To enunciate, or articulate clearly refers to one's ability to pronounce words carefully and with a degree of precision. There are many examples of words which promote "lazy articulation." Some that come to mind are: "labatory" (laboratory), "histry" (history), "gonna" (going to), "tward" (toward), and "drawr" (drawer). Don't be in a hurry to articulate words. Take your time, use your speech tools (mouth, tongue, lips, teeth), and slowly articulate each syllable.

Give the proper sounds to vowels to ensure correct enunciation. Contrast "get" with "git," "again" with "agin," and "of" with "ov." How you enunciate has a great deal to do with how credible you are perceived to be by your audience. Correct enunciation is typically associated with competent, educated persons. So work hard at correct enunciation - it won't be a waste of your time.

Regional dialects add a positive dimension to one's speech, so if you have a New York, Boston, or Georgia accent, don't worry about it. New Yorkers say "soder wawtauh." A Bostonian might forget where he "pahked his cah." And a native Georgian would be proud to say he is from Atlanta "Jawjuh." After all, if we all spoke with the same dialect, human speech would be rather dull and monotonous. Be aware of your speech and use all of your speech assets. You have many.

LANGUAGE

It is the responsibility of every good speaker to "paint a verbal picture" for his or her audience. A speaker must simply use language in lieu of a paintbrush. This verbal painting is most effective when delivery is effective, and when the speaker communicates a good sense of meaning of words, and a good use of language. There are many language problems which speakers frequently have. Consider the brief discussion for each of these common language problems in public speaking. Try to minimize your use of these performance constraints.

Ambiguity:

Although a speaker's language should have color and imagery, the language should be free from ambiguity. The language should not be abstract or vague, but rather direct and clear. Rod Serling was notorious for his use of mystifying language in the Twilight Zone. It was natural for him to say something like:

> And on a cloud enshrouded night, a glimpse of an allusion sparks interest as one feigns boredom. This we offer as a bit of extracurricular diversion commonplace - in the Twilight Zone.

As a great fan of that show, I, and millions of others expected that sort of glibness from the remarkable Mr. Serling. But for most of us, simple language works best. For instance, instead of Mr. Serling's poignant prose, we might say something like:

> And on a foggy night, strange things may shock us even is we pretend not to notice. This is weird. But I guess it happens.

Not as effective you say? The word merely communicates an image. Words are symbols and nothing more. Words are arbitrary and mean nothing until the speaker (and eventually the audience) attaches meaning to that word. Words must make sense to the speaker in order to enable that speaker to paint that verbal picture.

Fixed Meaning:

The relation between a word and its meaning is not at all fixed. Speakers today might use a particular word to express a meaning from that which a previous speaker gave to the word. For example, the word "pig" once described a police officer. But today, we don't walk up to a police officer and say, "Excuse me, Mr. Pig, could you please give me directions to Solomon Street?" Make sure that words you use are meaningful to your audience. Don't assume that you are your audience share meanings to all words.

Cliches:

Cliches communicate triteness in language. Cliches are formulas so familiar to a given audience that the audience does not have to think in order to understand them. Some commonly used cliche' statements are metaphors and imagery that have lost their freshness: "the light at the end of the tunnel,. being in the same boat, there are more fish in the sea, and, going back to square one."

Euphemisms:

Euphemisms can be appropriate or inappropriate depending on the communication event. From a purely linguistic standpoint, euphemisms seem colorful and flavorful and, in fact, may take your audience on a fanciful journey into the unknown. But for most forms of presentational speaking euphemisms are mechanisms of evasiveness.

Embezzlers have become "white-collar criminals," razors are typically called "shaving systems," and even an innocent meeting with someone might garner the term "interaction session". Alcoholics or persons with drug addiction problems are victims of "substance abuse," and always remember that Uncle Edward has not died but "passed away." As a general rule, euphemisms take away the clarity needed for an effective oral presentation.

Technical Language:

There is a tendency for speakers to use technical jargon. This makes sense since it is the speaker who has done his or her homework, and the technical terminology used by the speaker will be obvious to the speaker. But the technical term will not be so obvious to the speaker's audience.

As a speaker, you are a specialist. You are asked to speak because you have something new to offer your audience. Reduce the technical elements of words and phrases while enhancing the meanings of those words and phrases. What do you mean by positive correlation, technocrats, academic freedom, median score or standard deviation?

Other Language Concerns:

Slang, off-color words, allness statements, verbosity, and extensive vocabulary can also detract from the accurate meaning of messages. Be aware of these constraints as well.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper really does only touch on a few of the areas that concern presentational delivery. But some of the areas discussed might have offered you a more refreshing approach, I hope. In doing further research in this area, you might find these terms and concepts as helpful catalysts for further reading.

paralanguage	Demothenes
elocution	Aristotle
language acquisition	Pathos
semantics	Pentad

As teachers we must "deliver" the notion of delivery to our students, because more faith can be placed in oral expression if expression is used to promote optimal message outcome. Regardless of how much we, or our students know; regardless of the profound ideas embedded in the minds and hearts of our students; regardless of how brilliant our students may be; if they cannot get a point across - truly across, then they might as well keep those great thoughts to themselves.

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PART 2 ADMINISTRATIVE SUGGESTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

FORMING A BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STUDENT ORGANIZATION

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Barron Wells, University of Southwestern Louisiana

ABSTRACT

One of the more effective ways of learning the content of a business curriculum could be to become active in a student organization. These organizations play a crucial role by giving students the opportunity to apply concepts learned in the classroom. This study provides valuable information about the need for a Business Communication student organization: What is needed to make the organization successful, the level of interest that exists in such an organization, the benefits students expect to receive from the organization, and the willingness of students to work at planning and organizing the club.

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary that students show prospective employers that they have participated in extracurricular activities during college. College graduates who have had some experience and knowledge of their academic major outside of the classroom have an advantage in the job market over graduates who have had none. Participation in activities also shows initiative on the part of the graduate. Students can participate in extracurricular activities and gain practical knowledge of their academic major by joining a professional student organization.

PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to determine the need for a Business Communication student association; (2) to determine the willingness of students to become involved in the organization; and (3) to determine how to start the organization and keep it running successfully.

Delimitations of the study. This study was limited to The University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL) campus. In addition, the study was limited to only those Business Communication majors who were not graduating seniors.

PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was given to the continuing Business Communication majors at USL. The questionnaire was designed to determine the following: (1) Is there a need for a Business Communication student association on the USL campus? (2) Are the Business Communication majors interested in and willing to get involved in all aspects of the organization--its planning, its formation, and its functioning?

The advisors for the Society for the Advancement of Management (SAM) and the Collegiate Secretaries International (CSI) were chosen to be interviewed for three reasons: (1) Both organizations are business oriented. (2) The fields of Management and Office Administration are related to the field of Business Communication. (3) These advisors have had experience in supervising successful student organization. The advisors were asked the following five questions: (1) What are the ingredients of a successful student organization? (2) How do you get students interested in joining the organization, and how do you publicize the organization? (3) What types of activities does the organization sponsor? (4) How do you keep members motivated to participate? (5) Do you integrate concepts taught in class into the activities of the club?

FINDINGS

Personal Interviews

The SAM advisor and the CSI advisor both said that active, enthusiastic, and hard working officers are a must to a successful organization. If officer enthusiasm is there, everyone will be motivated to work. Officers should include both juniors and seniors to ensure that they will know from year to year what needs to be done in the organization.

The SAM advisor added that the officers in the organization need to follow the pattern of activities, traditions, and procedures that have been established over the years. The CSI advisor stated that it was also important to have heavy involvement from the advisors; whereas the SAM advisor said his role was to attend meetings, sign forms, and answer questions. He concluded that the students should do absolutely everything in the club.

Both advisors replied that their organization hang fliers and posters in the Student Union and the Business Administration buildings. In addition, students are motivated to join because they know having professional organization on their resumes looks impressive to potential employers. CSI members and Office Administration teachers conduce personal recruiting by wearing their membership pins as a visible sign and by talking about the organization in classes.

SAM engages in several activities during each semester such as: speakers, fund raisers, parties, and field trips. CSI also engages in several activities such as: fund raisers, guest speakers, CSI State Convention, and CSI National Convention.

SAM members are motivated by a point system. Scholarships are given at the end of the year to students with the highest attendance and most activity points. The CSI advisor suggested that giving each members something to do makes everyone feel important and a part of the organization.

The SAM advisor replied that concepts are integrated indirectly through what the students learn on field trips and from guest speakers. The CSI advisor also said that members utilize the concepts and skills learned in class. All club correspondence is done on a work processor and the club's minutes are taken in shorthand.

Questionnaire

Ninety-six questionnaires were distributed, 66 of which were returned. The result was a 69 percent response rate. The specific questions asked and the percent of the respondents marking each answer choice were as follows:

1. Would you be interested in forming a Business Communication student association?

   Yes 88% No 5% Maybe 8%

2. Do you feel that a Business Communication organization would be helpful to you in developing your career?

   Yes 91% No 2% Maybe 5%

3. What specific types of activities would you like to see the club organize?

Visits to area businesses	92%	Fund raisers	41%
Speakers	79%	*Other	3%
Social activities	53%		

   *(Provide information on prospective job areas for Business Communication majors.)

4. Would you want to serve on a committee to plan and organize the club?

   Yes 39% No 14% Maybe 44%

5. Would you want to chair or serve on a committee to organize field trips, to obtain speakers, and/or to assist with other activities for the club?

   Yes 45% No 9% Maybe 44%

6. Would you be willing to help with Freshmen Orientation to enlighten beginning freshmen about the organization?

Yes 71%	No 8%	Maybe 18%

7. Would you be interested in holding an office in the organization?

Yes 33%	No 20%	Maybe 44%

8. If you are interested in holding an office, which one would be your preference?

President	8%	Treasurer	18%
Vice President	18%	Historian	5%
Secretary	11%		

9. How often would you be willing to attend meetings?

Once a week	23%	Twice a month	45%	Once a month	30%

10. How often would you like to have field trips and/or other activities?

Once a semester	26%	Whenever needed	24%
Twice a semester	23%	No response	27%

11. Additional comments

It is needed	Helps in future career plans
Will be glad to assist	Very interested
Great idea	Willing to help in every way
Visits to area business--invaluable experience	

Forming a Business Communication Association

After the preliminary steps have been followed to form the organization, the following items should be given attention:

Publicizing the organization. A publicity campaign should be implemented to inform the students about the club. Fliers should be posted around campus, class announcements should be made, articles should be placed in the university newspaper, and personal letters could be sent.

Preparing for the first meeting. Preparation for the first meeting would involve a survey of potential members for the best meeting time. A location for the meeting needs to be determined, and an agenda should be set and publicized before the first meeting.

Conducting the first meeting. The first meeting should include a warm welcome to prospective members by an enthusiastic and respected keynote speaker with knowledge of the organization's objectives. An outline of the club's goals and objectives along with a copy of the bylaws and a list of possible club activities should be distributed. In addition, officers need to be elected, and every student should be appointed to a committee. Meetings should have a time limit set of no more than one hour so as to respect the members' time.

Having successful meetings. There are three major purposes for having meetings: (1) to provide a professional atmosphere for members by having well prepared programs; (2) to conduct the business of the chapter; and (3) to provide an opportunity for socialization. Ways to accomplish these purposes include using parliamentary procedure, keeping accurate minutes, and keeping social activities informal.

Recruiting Members

The recruitment of members to an organization is of paramount importance. The reason is obvious. Without a constant influx of new members, an organization cannot survive.

Recruiting methods. The basis of recruiting is to contact, attract, and recruit members who have an interest in the organization. Recruitment can be done by word of mouth or by using print media. Once prospective members have been obtained, they should be made to feel important. They should become immediately involved with the club and not be spectators.

Recruiting tools. A well organized semester agenda serves as a good recruiting tool. The agenda assures prospective members of activities that will interest them. Another tool for enticing students to join is to make the name of the club sound prestigious. For instance, instead of using the word "club," the word "society" can be used.

Electing Officers

The organization needs leadership in order to function. The leadership should come from those members with outstanding character and abilities. There are several qualities that should be found in an officer: a willingness to work, good scholastic standing, ability to speak in public, and dependability and reliability. The duties and responsibilities of each officer should be clearly spelled out so that they know exactly what they are supposed to do. The first officers will need to be trained by the advisors. Later, old officers can train new ones. Training can take place in various ways. One way is on-the-job training; another way is by going on a weekend officers' retreat which would include a comprehensive training session.

Planning and Organizing Activities

For a beginning chapter, it is better to decide on a few worthwhile activities that can be continued from year to year than to start with too many activities and not successfully implement them. Committees need to be formed to coordinate the various activities.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results of the survey, it can be concluded that there is a definite need for and a distinct interest in having a Business Communication student association. Of those who returned questionnaires, 88 percent stated that they would be interested in having a Business Communication student organization. When asked if they felt an organization would be beneficial to developing their careers, 91 percent said yes. When asked if they would serve on a committee to plan and organize the club, 39% responded that they would. Although this number is below 50 percent, it would not be feasible to have more than 39 percent of the students involved in organizing the club. A lot of input is beneficial, but too much input can create confusion and disagreement. The 33 percent who responded that they would like to hold office is also a sound number. For a club to survive, it must have both leaders and followers.

According to the personal interviews, enthusiastic and hard working members, successful recruitment, interesting activities, and motivated members are what will make the organization successful.

For an organization to begin, grow, and prosper, it needs the interest and effort of a few good students, and exciting activities for the club members. This investigation shows that these ingredients are present and that the organization is wanted by the students. Therefore, it is concluded that a Business Communication student organization should be formed on the campus of The University of Southwestern Louisiana along the lines indicated. it is also recommended that other universities investigate the feasibility of forming such an organization on their campuses. Hopefully, this article will be helpful to those investigations.

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A COMMUNICATION BASED MODEL OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a model of the education process which focuses on communication variables and communication effectiveness in improving education. The key independent variables in the model are student (receiver), instructor (sender), course content (message) and teaching methods (channels). The model describes the relationships among communication variables and the effects of these variables on knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

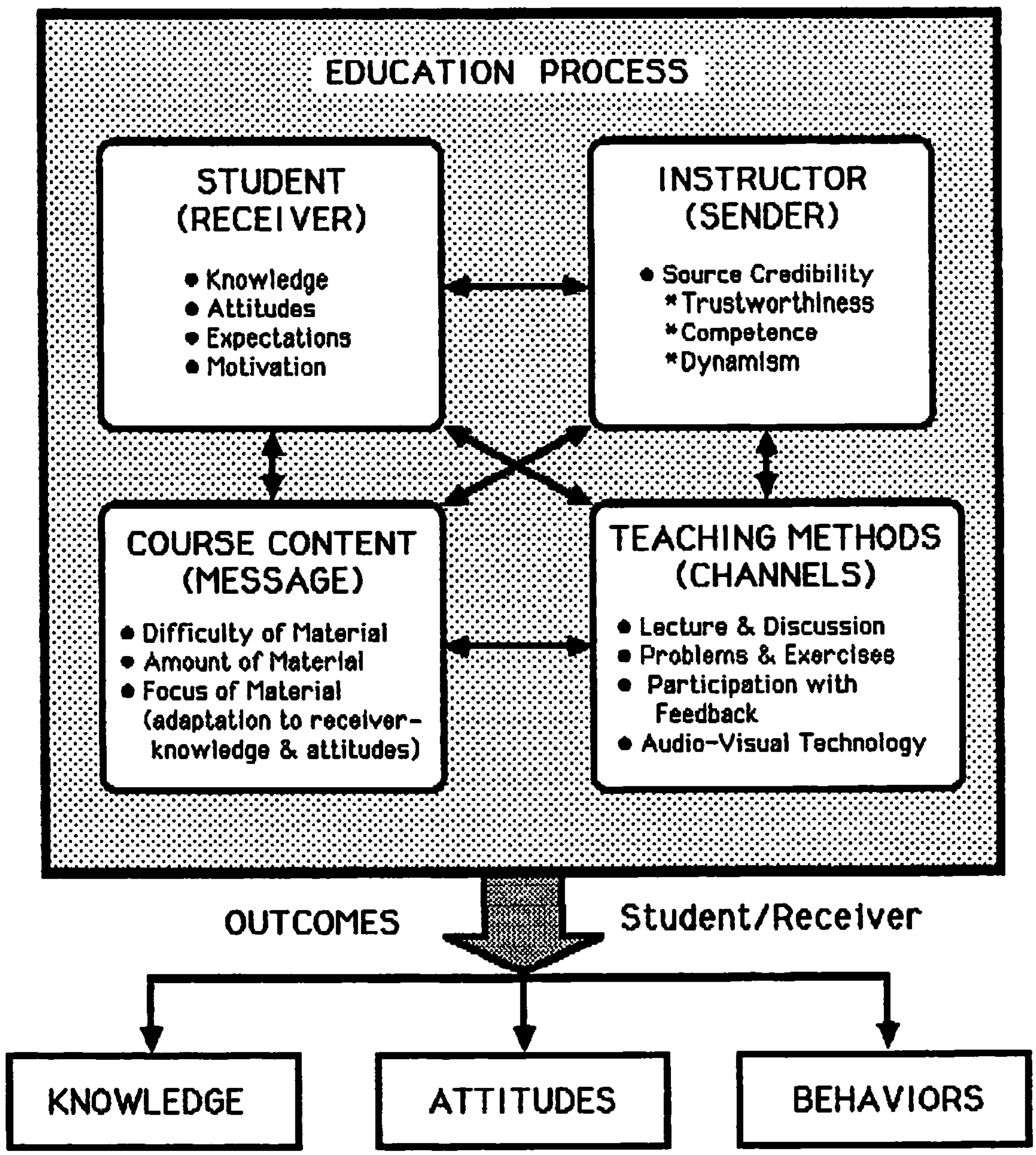
Previous communication research clearly indicates significant relationships between the communication variables of receiver, sender, message, and channel which are included in this model. Research also indicates that the communication variables in this model have an effect on the outcomes of the communication process in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. By developing a communication model of the educational process, the communication research findings can be applied to the educational process to improve achievement of desired outcomes, to evaluate educational programs, and to design research on the communication process as it occurs in educational situations.

COMMUNICATION MODEL

Figure 1 presents the communication model of the educational process. The student or receiver variable includes the receiver's knowledge, attitudes, expectations and motivation. The instructor or sender variable includes receiver's perceived source credibility in terms of trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism. The teaching method or channel variable includes the delivery methods of lecture and discussion, problems and exercises, participation with feedback, and use of audio-visual technology. The course content or message variable includes the receiver's perception of the difficulty of the material, the receiver's perception of the amount of the material, and the focus of the content in relation to the receiver's background. The outcome variables in the model are the changes in the receiver's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

FIGURE 1

COMMUNICATION BASED MODEL OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS



RELATIONSHIPS

The following are examples of applications of research findings on perceived source characteristics and desired outcomes in changes in knowledge level, changing attitudes, and changing behaviors. The higher the student's perceived trust of the instructor, the greater the desired outcomes. The greater the perceived competence of the instructor by the student, the greater the desired outcomes. The greater the instructor's dynamism (activity) as perceived by the student, the greater the desired outcomes.

The following are examples of research findings on the impact of message content on achieving desired outcomes in terms of changes in knowledge level, changing attitudes and changing behaviors. The closer the perceived difficulty of the course content to the competence level of the student, the greater the desired outcomes. The greater the adaptation of the course content to the knowledge level of the student, the greater the desired outcomes. The more reasonable the amount of material is seen to be by the student, the greater the desired outcomes. The greater the adaptation of the course content to the attitudes of the student, the greater the desired outcomes.

The following are examples of applications of research findings on communication channels and on effective use of communication channels in achieving the desired outcomes of changes in knowledge level, changing attitudes and changing behaviors. The more the teaching methods (channels) are adapted to student learning style preferences, the greater the desired outcomes. The use of a variety of teaching methods (multiple channels) will yield greater desired outcomes. The more the channels' use involve the student, the greater the desired outcome. The more the student receives timely feedback, the greater the desired outcome.

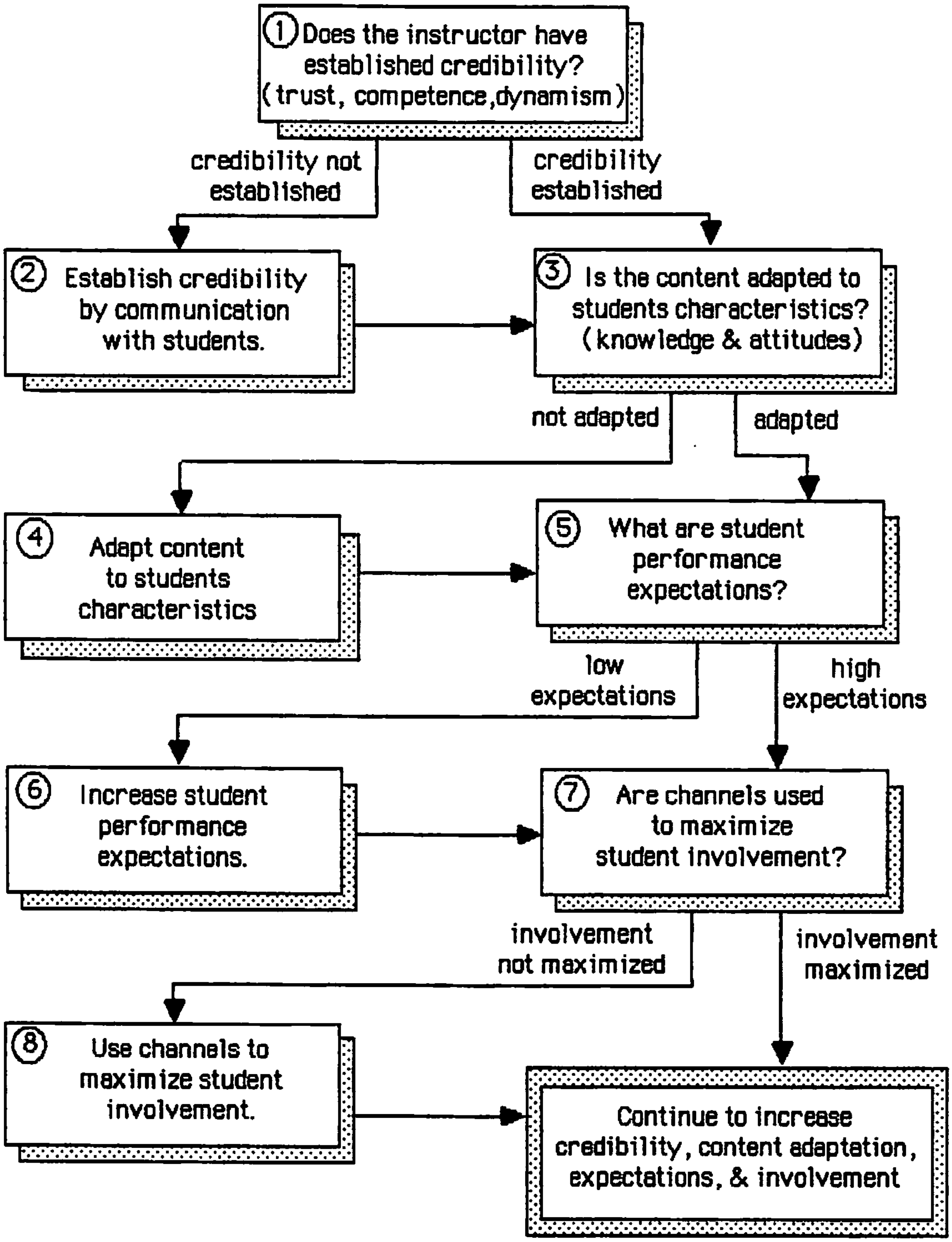
EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The following is an example of the application of basic concepts from communication research to develop a set of basic criteria as the basis for evaluating the educational process as it occurs in a classroom setting. The approach is illustrated in Figure 2 in the form of a decision tree for using the communication based model to evaluate and improve the education process. This example includes only selected basic characteristics and relationships. In practice it could be greatly expanded and adapted to specific courses and educational purposes.

The first step in evaluation and improvement of the educational process would be to establish the instructor's credibility with the student. If credibility has not been established, communication with the student should take place to produce student perceptions of trust, competence and dynamism on the part of the instructor. Once credibil-

FIGURE 2

A DECISION TREE FOR USING COMMUNICATION BASED MODEL TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION PROCESS



ity has been established, the course content should be adapted to student characteristics. In adapting the content to student characteristics, attention should be paid to student's knowledge level and their attitudes toward the course content. If student performance expectations are low, the instructor should communicate to increase performance expectations. The communications channels used should maximize student involvement. Usually student involvement would be maximized by using a variety of channels that take advantage of the differences in student learning style preferences. As indicated in Figure 2, to maximize effectiveness, the instructor would communicate to continue to increase credibility, adapt message content to the students, increase student performance expectations, and utilize communication channels to maximize student involvement.

CONCLUSION

The communication based model of the education process can facilitate the application of communication research findings to more effectively achieve educational purposes. The model can facilitate instructors improving their communication effectiveness, teaching methodologies and adaptation of course content to enhance student learning. The model can provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of communication in any educational or training setting and provide for the systematic evaluation of the communication within an educational process. With the use of decision trees, the model can serve as an aide to making decisions on communication approaches, methods and techniques.

GRADE LEVEL AND MAJOR OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS--DO THEY REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates whether significant differences exist in students' achievement of business communication grades when categorized by level (classification) and by major. An analysis of variance showed there was no significant difference at the .05 level in the grades earned by the different levels (classifications) of business communication students. When looking at students' grades grouped according to students' majors, an analysis of variance showed significant differences.

INTRODUCTION

Much discussion in the business communication realm of education revolves around the level at which business communication should be taught. According to Johnson and White (1), a majority of colleges offer the beginning (basic) business communication course at the junior level. A 1986 study conducted by Scott Ober (3) also showed that the majority of students take the course in their junior year. Another study by Luse, Nelson, and DuFrene (2) determined that the majority of students take business communication in the sophomore, junior, or senior year.

Therefore, the grade level or grade classification at which business majors take the business communication class varies among universities. At some universities, students are required to take this class at a certain level while at other universities students may elect to take this class at either the sophomore, junior, or senior level. Also, because all business students may be required to take the business communication class, a variety of majors are represented. Thus, when categorized by level and major, will significant differences in student achievement exist?

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research, then, was twofold: 1) to determine if there was a significant difference in the grades earned by the different levels of business communication students and 2) to determine if there was significant difference in the grades earned by students in the various majors.

The subjects used in this research (totaling 1,293) were those students in the college of business at the University of New Orleans (UNO) who have been enrolled in the researchers' business communication classes over the past five years (from fall, 1982, through fall, 1987). The majors of the students included in this study were accounting; business administration; economics; finance; hotel, restaurant and tourism administration; management; marketing; business communication and office systems--B.S.; business communication and office systems--A.S.; and other. The five variables used were students' business communication grades on the weighted average of three positive letters, the average of three negative letters, the persuasive letter, the analytical report, and the final grade.

Any student who did not complete the communication course was eliminated from consideration in the research. Also, when computing the means on the business communication grades used in this study by student classi fication and major, those students who did not complete an assignment were considered "missing cases" and were not included in the averaging process. In order to determine whether significant differences existed (at the .05 level), an analysis of variance was run. In addition to the analysis of variance, the data was tested using the Scheffe, Least Significant Difference (LSD), Duncan, Student-Newman-Keuls, Tukey-B, Tukey-Honestly Significant Difference, and Modified LSD multiple range tests to identify the significant differences. Also, multiple tests were run to look at the means.

RESULTS

The grade level (classification) of the 1,293 students used in the study varied. Although a slightly higher percentage of the students took the course at either the sophomore, junior, or senior level as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1

STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Percentage
Freshman	0.6
Sophomore	36.8
Junior	31.2
Senior	29.9
Graduate	1.5

Several majors were represented by the students included in the study as seen in Table 2 on the following page.

TABLE 2

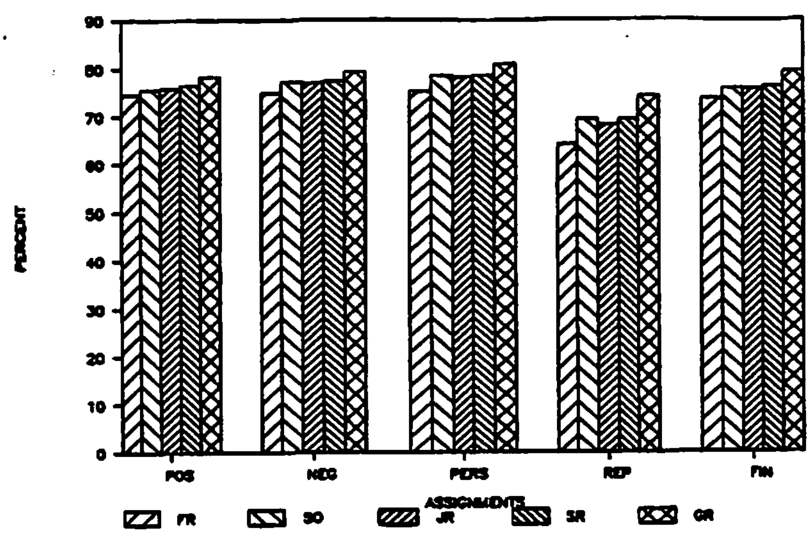
STUDENT MAJOR GROUPINGS

Major	Percentage
Accounting	30.9
Business Communication and Office Systems/B.S.	1.3
Business Communication and Office Systems/A.S.	1.5
Business Administration	28.3
Economics	1.5
Finance	10.2
Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration	6.7
Management	6.9
Marketing	11.8
Other	0.9

When looking at the mean percentages of the business communication grades on the assignments by student classification (as indicated in Figure 1), one can see that the graduate students consistently made

FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE GRADES ON ASSIGNMENTS
(By Classification)

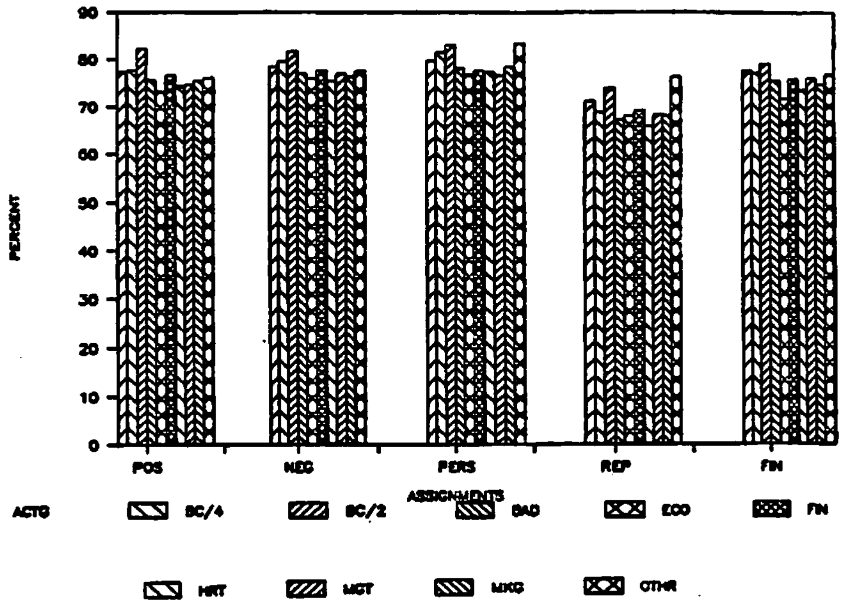


higher grades than all other students. It should be noted that the grades made by sophomores, juniors, and seniors were fairly consistent on all assignments. Also, an analysis of variance showed there was no significant difference at the .05 level in the grades earned by the different levels of business communication students.

As indicated in Figure 2, the mean percentages of the business communication grades by majors indicated that no one major consistently

FIGURE 2

MEAN PERCENTAGE ON ASSIGNMENTS
(By Major)



made higher grades on all of the assignments. However, the two-year business communication and office systems majors made higher grades on three of the five assignment categories (weighted average of three positive letters, average of three negative letters, and final grade). Additionally, the hotel, restaurant, and tourism majors made lower grades on three of the five assignment categories (average of three negative letters, analytical report, and final grade).

An analysis of variance showed significant differences existed among the students' grades when grouped according to students' majors. In order to identify where these differences existed, various statistical tests, including the Scheffe, Least Significant Difference (LSD), Duncan, Student-Newman-Keuls, Tukey-B, Tukey-Honestly Significant Difference, and Modified LSD multiple range tests--were run on the data. Since these tests were not consistent in their findings of where the differences were. multiple tests were run to look at the means. Those differences were identified by running tests and the results are shown in the following tables.

TABLE 3

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ON POSITIVE LETTERS

	ECON	HRT	MGMT	MKTG	BUSAD	OTHER	FIN	ACCTG	BCOS/4	BCOS/2
ECON										
HRT										
MGMT										
MKTG										
BUSAD										
OTHER										
FIN		*								
ACCTG	*	*	*	*	*					
BCOS/4										
BCOS/2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		

TABLE 4

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ON NEGATIVE LETTERS

	HRT	ECON	MKTG	MGMT	BUSAD	OTHER	FIN	ACCTG	BCOS/4	BCOS/2
HRT										
ECON										
MKTG										
MGMT										
BUSAD	*									
OTHER										
FIN	*		*							
ACCTG	*		*		*					
BCOS/4	*		*		*					
BCOS/2	*	*	*	*	*		*	*		

TABLE 5

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ON PERSUASIVE LETTER

	ECON	MGMT	HRT	FIN	BUSAD	MKTG	ACCTG	BCOS/4	BCOS/2	OTHER
ECON										
MGMT										
HRT										
FIN										
BUSAD										
MKTG										
ACCTG		*			*					
BCOS/4										
BCOS/2		*	*	*	*	*				
OTHER										

TABLE 6

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ON ANALYTICAL REPORT

	HRT	BUSAD	MKTG	ECON	MGMT	BCOS/4	FIN	ACCTG	BCOS/2	OTHER
HRT										
BUSAD										
MKTG										
ECON										
MGMT										
BCOS/4										
FIN										
ACCTG	*	*	*							
BCOS/2	*									
OTHER	*									

TABLE 7

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ON FINAL GRADE

	HRT	MKTG	ECON	BUSAD	FIN	MGMT	OTHER	BCOS/4	ACCTG	BCOS/2
HRT										
MKTG										
ECON										
BUSAD	*									
FIN	*									
MGMT	*									
OTHER										
BCOS/4										
ACCTG	*	*		*	*	*				
BCOS/2	*	*	*	*	*	*				

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the findings from this study indicate that there is no significant difference at the .05 level in the grades earned by the different levels or classifications of business communication students. Therefore, it would appear that student achievement is fairly consistent by the different levels of business communication students. When looking at students' grades grouped according to students' majors, findings show significant differences do exist.

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PART 3 COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATION

HANDLING INFORMATION OVERLOAD HOW FORTUNE 500 EXECUTIVES DO IT?

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ABSTRACT

Information overload is an increasingly difficult problem with which today's successful business executive must deal. This study analyzed five specific areas of information overload: types of material most often read, priority emphasis of all information received, correlation of priority of material read to profession, amount of time spent reading, and determination of what is read.

A sample of Fortune 500 executives were surveyed to respond to these concerned areas. Most of the respondents were either chief executive officers, chairmen, or presidents of their respective companies. Their input provided pertinent information which should be passed on to other business executives and business students.

INTRODUCTION

Memos, letters, reports, professional journals, forms, newsletters, government publications, newspapers, magazines, books, etc., today's business executives are inundated with mountains of information.

What are we, the business communication specialists, doing to help the businessperson deal effectively with this information overload?

This study was conducted to provide workable techniques for dealing with this problem.

PROCEDURES

Two hundred executives from Fortune 500 companies listed in <u>The 1987 Directory of U.S. Corporations</u> were randomly surveyed to determine

1. type of information they believe most important to read,

2. type of information they receive most,

3. amount of time they dedicate to reading information,

4. selection and priority of what they read, and

5. recommendations for handling information overload they could provide

The survey instrument was purposely kept short to encourage response and not to add to mounds of unread or unanswered mail received by these executives.

FINDINGS

Internal memorandums, letters for clients/customers, and letters from business associates were identified as the top three most often types of information read in the office.

Advertisements, internal memorandums, and letters from business associates were identified as the types of information most frequently received at the office.

Internal memorandums, letters from clients/customers and letters from business associates were considered the top three most important types of information received at the office.

The following table summarizes the findings

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF RANKINGS*

	Read	Received	Important
Advertisements	11	1	11
Books not related to your job	13	13	12
Books related to your job	11	14	11
Catalogues	14	8	13
Company newsletters	6	10	5
Government publications	9	11	9
Internal memorandums	1	2	1
Letters from business associates	3	3	3
Letters from clients/customers	2	6	2
Magazines related to your job	7	5	7
Newspapers	4	4	4
Personal letters	5	12	6
Professional journals	8	7	8
Seminar announcements	10	9	10
Other: Internal reports	12	NA	10

*"1" represents the most

Sixty-five percent of the surveyed executives indicated they spend two or more hours reading information during a day pertaining to their job. Nineteen percent spend four hours or more reading.

Over ninety-three percent of the responding executives have a process for selecting and prioritizing what they read and seventy-one percent of these believe their process to be effective without any limitations. The additional respondents believed their process to be effective but had limitations such as: outside influences changed self established priorities and sort is by category, not by importance of content. The overwhelming response to explaining the process of selecting and prioritizing what the executives read was to train an administrative assistant to sort, screen, and prioritize all incoming information.

Recommendations these executives provided for handling information effectively included: organize it; find a good administrative assistant; after secretary categorizes, then review and forward to designated staff for handling and subsequent timely follow-up; take a speed reading course; prioritize and put aside the rest; increase ability to scan; sort based on priority issues; and understand what you read.

Response to the survey was limited, however, those who did respond were top officials who had held their current position with a Fortune 500 industrial corporation from one to thirty-five years. The information these officials provided was consistent and helpful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the above findings:

1. Memos are most important and most read and second highest received; this indicates business communication instructors should emphasize effective memorandum writing in business communication courses.

2. Letters from clients/customers and business associates ranked second and third respectively as important to read; so continued emphasis should be on letter writing in business communication courses; however, memorandums ranked higher than letters.

3. With the high percentage of executives spending two or more hours a day reading, consideration should be given for addition of a speed reading program for students studying business.

4. Business students should also be instructed how to manage their time in regards to selection and priority of what they read.

5. Most executives use administrative assistants to sort and prioritize mail; the business students should be exposed to in-basket cases which will instruct them how to sort mail effectively.

Implementation of these recommendations should make any business communication program more realistic and effective for the business communication instructor who implements them.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A PHRASE MAKES - SELECTED CONTRACTUAL LIABILITY ISSUES

Brad Reid, Abilene Christian University

ABSTRACT

Lack of clear and definite expression in preliminary negotiations or after contract formation may result in litigation. Clear business communications will prevent many disputes.

Unjust enrichment, misrepresentation, or specific promise may cause liability resulting from negotiation.

Courts attempt to enforce the justifiable expectations of the parties when a contract is ambiguous or incomplete.

INTRODUCTION

Business communication teachers regularly recommend communication which is clear, unambiguous, complete, and explicit, and communication which accurately indicates which person or organization is responsible for an idea or action. These recommendations are grounded firmly in communication theory and, as this paper demonstrates, are also advisable for a legal perspective. Communication is critical in the negotiation, interpretation, and execution of a contract.

Contracts are the foundation of almost all commercial activity. Contract law indicates the extent to which society allows people to make legally binding promises and what excuses society accepts for breaking promises. "Communication is the transfer of thoughts and feelings by verbal and nonverbal means" [13, p. 2]. Contract, the subject of this paper, is ". . .the parties reasonable expectation about their transaction, from whatever sources these expectations may arise" [14, p. 27]. This paper will review the fundamentals of contract law, pitfalls in preliminary negotiations, and problems of ambiguity and incompleteness.

FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a general rule, the law recognizes freedom of contract and this freedom is protected by the U. S. Constitution in Article I, Section 10 ("No state shall...pass any...law impairing the obligation of contracts..."). The following is a list of the basic common law requirements of a contract:

1. Mutual assent - One party offers to enter into an agreement and another part accepts the terms of the offer.

2. Consideration - There is an exchange of value between the parties.
3. Capacity - Both parties are recognized by law as competent to contract.
4. Legality - The object of contract must not be unlawful or contrary to public policy.
5. Form - The contract must be in whatever form the law requires, such as in writing.

Assuming these requirements are met, the promise is legally enforceable.

The following types of contracts must be written to be legally enforceable:

1. Contracts involving interests in land.
2. Contracts that cannot, by their terms, be performed within one year from the date of formation.
3. Promises to pay the debt of another.
4. Promises made in consideration of marriage.
5. Contracts for the sale of goods when the price exceeds $500 [15].

A contract must include the following terms, either expressed in, or capable of reasonable implication from, the agreement:

1. Identification of the parties.
2. Identification of the subject matter or object of the contract (including quantity), with specific identification of items as goods, services, and land.
3. The consideration to be paid.
4. The time of performance.

If these terms are clearly and expressly stated in the agreement, the contract is definite. Any lack of precision concerning these terms may result in litigation.

PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS

The common law language of "offer" and "acceptance" - the exchange of proposals until an offer by one party is accepted by another forming a contract - often has little to say about the complex negotiations of modern commerce. The recent Texaco-Pennzoil litigation with its focus on when Pennzoil had a binding agreement to purchase Getty Oil properties indicates the gray area between proposal and contract.

The typical modern negotiation is a gradual process in which agreements are reached piecemeal with a succession of partial drafts. There may first be an exchange of information between managers followed by drafts prepared by lawyers. Ultimately the agreement will be embodied in a document or documents signed by the parties at the closing. If the negotiations fail, a number of questions may arise including potential liability for failure to conform to concepts of good faith and fair dealing, and recovery for out-of-pocket expenses and lost business opportunities.

If the negotiations are sufficiently complex and the potential for loss from failed negotiations of sufficient consequence, the parties may desire early on to make a preliminary agreement to allocate the risks of the negotiation. Three theories of liability based on preliminary negotiations have been developed by courts: unjust enrichment resulting from the negotiations, misrepresentation made during the negotiations, and specific promise made during the negotiations.

The unjust enrichment theory most often involves misappropriation of ideas. For example, an owner of a business in the course of negotiating its sale may disclose in confidence to the prospective buyer an idea that is subsequently used by the buyer when the negotiations fail. Some courts may find a contract by implication from the facts [1], a misappropriation of "property" [5], or a breach of a confidential relationship [12]. Careful communication may avoid this problem.

A negotiating party may be liable for fraudulently misrepresenting its intention to reach an agreement. For example, a lessor of a warehouse intentionally misrepresented to the lessee its intention to renew the lease for another three years. The lessor wanted the property occupied during negotiations for its sale. Only a few weeks before the lease expired, the purchaser gave the lessee a notice to vacate and the lessee claimed damages from the lessor for fraud. The Supreme Court of Washington concluded that the lessor had fraudulently promised "to renew the lease...and to negotiate the amount of rentals in good faith" and elaborated that fraud may be shown "if the promise is made without care or concern whether it will be kept" [6].

A party may not break a promise made during negotiations if the other party has relied on it. A classic court decision involved a promise made by Red Owl Stores to Hoffman, a prospective franchisee, that the $18,000 cash that he could contribute would suffice to obtain a franchise. Extended negotiations followed, during which Hoffman sold his bakery, bought and sold a small grocery store, moved to another town, and made a down payment on a lot. Ultimately the negotiations collapsed when Red Owl demanded a substantially larger contribution. The court granted Hoffman his reliance costs concluding: "the promise necessary to sustain a cause of action for promissory estoppel" does not have to "embrace all essential details of a proposed transaction...so as to be the equivalent of an offer" [4].

These examples contain at least the following implications for business communications: Any disclosure of ideas should be accompanied by an agreement concerning the use of the ideas; promises and representations of fact should be kept to a minimum, and external events affecting the transaction, such as the granting of financing or of governmental approval, should be clearly indicated as conditions to which the agreement is subject. For example, a real estate contract in which a developer of a shopping center agreed to buy an adjacent tract of land subject to "obtaining leases [in the shopping center] satisfactory to the purchaser" to enable him to pay for the adjacent land was held enforceable so long as the purchaser acted in good faith [7]. A letter of intent should carefully state the extent, if any, to which it is subject to acceptance and the extent, if any, to which the parties are to be bound by the terms contained in the letter. In the area of securities underwriting, for example, language to the effect that "no liability or obligation of any nature whatsoever is intended to be created as between any of the parties hereto" has been judicially upheld [2].

AMBIGUITY

Ambiguity may result from either the poor organization of what is being communicated or fundamental differences in perception that are internal to the parties. Clear and precise communication may, at least in part, overcome even internal personality differences.

The most celebrated court decision involving ambiguity was decided by an English court in 1864 [11]. In that case the parties agreed upon the date of cotton to arrive "ex Peerless" from Bombay without realizing that there were two ships named "Peerless" leaving Bombay at different times. The buyer had in mind the ship that sailed in October, and the seller had in mind the ship that sailed in December. The court held there was no mutual assent and thus no contract. Neither party had any awareness of the potential ambiguity of the word "Peerless".

In this area, the object of contract law is to protect the justifiable expectations of the parties to the agreement. This may not be the same as the "plain meaning" of the terms used. For example, what does the term "red" mean as used in a contract? According to one scholar of meaning, "stimulations eliciting a verbal response, say 'red', are best depicted as forming not a neatly bounded class but a distribution about a central norm" [10, p. 85]. Thus, language is unsatisfactory as it applies to concepts that depart from the central norm.

A more current example is the meaning of "new" as contrasted with "pretested" or "used". Chrysler Corporation faces a federal indictment for selling as new, thousand of cars test-driven with odometers disconnected. While the Federal Trade Commission prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts and practices" by merchants (15 U.S.C.A. S 52) and many states have similar legislation, the definition of "used" is often a factual issue to be resolved by a jury. The standard often becomes one of reasonable expectations and the fair market value of the product.

Strictly speaking, ambiguity refers to words that may have two entirely different connotations. Vagueness refers to words that may or may not apply to marginal concepts.

Ambiguity may result from inconsistent or conflicting language. For example, a buyer agrees to pay "at the rate of $1.25 per M" for all the timber on a designated tract, and that "the entire sale and purchase price of said lumber if $1400.00." How much must he pay for 4,000 M feet? The court said the seller could only recover the specified total price of $1400.00 since the rate price appeared designed to protect the sellers from having part of their timber taken without payment [3].

Conflict may also result from language in a printed form contract and terms typed or written by the parties to the transaction. When a printed warranty for a house requires the owner to give notice of breach "within one year from...the initial occupancy" and also provides that "notice of nonconformity must be delivered no later than January 6, 1957," this date inserted by hand; when must the buyer give notice if he moves in on May 16, 1955? The court held the handwritten date controlled since written or typed terms supersede printed forms [8].

These examples contain at least the following implications for business communications: Agreements should be expressed clearly and precisely and organized effectively; potentially ambiguous terms should be defined and each party's expectations explicitly stated; neither party should attempt to rely on a private interpretation or the other party's misunderstanding of a phrase or term; and prompt confrontation of potential ambiguities land differing interpretations is advisable.

INCOMPLETENESS

The traditional approach taken by courts in resolving problems arising out of what the parties did not say about a situation has been to determine what the parties would have said if they had said something about it. What the court decides they would have said is called an "implied term". At times the courts have clearly substituted their own judgment for that of the expectations of the parties. This is particularly true in consumer cases where the court's sense of justice has been offended. As Judge Clark expressed it, "Intention of the parties' is a good formula by which to square doctrine with result" [9].

The courts apply the following concepts in resolving cases of omission:

1. The actual expectations of the parties - form performance and inference
2. The court's perception of fairness and justice
3. The court's perception of the hypothetical reactions of the parties.

None of these methods is a substitute for complete expression in the agreement itself. It may be helpful to provide some statement of purpose or intention in the agreement to guide the parties or a court in the event that the agreement is ambiguous or incomplete. Such a statement need not be lengthy, simply a "this is what is intended" may be most helpful. The obvious implication for business communication is to encourage complete expression in written agreements and, when appropriate, to supplement agreements with written statements of intent.

CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

A person engaged in complex negotiations would be well advised to secure legal counsel but he or she will also be well served by clear, explicit communication as taught in business communication classes. In general, courts will attempt to follow the intentions of the parties to an agreement if those intentions are communicated. Some consideration of the various outcomes of negotiation or the contract itself and a general statement of what the parties intend will prevent many disputes. The following familiar techniques of improving readability will prove helpful:

1. Keep sentences short, on the average.
2. Prefer the simple to the complex.
3. Prefer the familiar word - or define technical terms. [14,p. 197]
4. Include statements of purpose and intention.
5. Clearly indicate what is or is not subject to acceptance.
6. Clearly indicate what person or persons are liable for performance.

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ERROR PATTERN ANALYSIS; A SYLLABUS FOR TEACHING TO ERROR IN YOUR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

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ABSTRACT

A sound communication training programing generally includes a section dealing with mechanics. Rather than teaching grammar in the traditional manner, this paper examines error pattern analysis to identify the errors that students actually make and constructs a syllabus that focuses on these errors.

INTRODUCTION

When constructing a sound communication training program, most instructors generally will include a section dealing with mechanics in their syllabus. Some might do this with reluctance, protesting that college students or business students who are college graduates should be long past requiring this type of review. However, whether students should or should not require grammar instruction is a moot point: in their writing they demonstrate visibly that they have need for such instruction. Therefore, at least part of a well-constructed, comprehensive syllabus should address this need.

Such grammar instruction usually takes a "models approach"; that is, it is based on the instructor's perceptions of what students will most likely need in grammar review. What results frequently goes something like this: there will be instruction about such things as subject-verb agreement, personal pronouns, or comma usage. This is followed by exercises from a grammar text that are completed by the student either in class or at home.

But how useful are such traditional instructional methods? Is student writing behavior effectively modified so that grammatical errors are gradually replaced with linguistically acceptable forms? Most instructors, after years of using such methods, would have to answer in the negative while simultaneously expressing chagrin and regret at the poor correlation between traditional grammar instruction and improved mastery of basic grammar.

ERROR PATTERN ANALYSIS

Suppose, however, grammar instruction were built upon the actual writing performance of students rather than on the models approach. In other words, grammar instruction would be determined from students' needs as actually demonstrated in their writing rather than upon instructors' perceptions of these needs. Would such an approach be effective?

Having tried both methods, I can answer in the affirmative. Building grammar instruction from students' needs produces more error-free writing than the models approach. The reason for this is extremely important yet basic at the same time. Students recognize that the grammar they are learning is directly related to their own writing! Instead of regarding the study of grammar in the same category as the study of Chinese politics--and equally irrelevant--they can begin to see the relationship grammar has to their own writing.

To develop a syllabus around student-based grammar instruction, the instructor should follow certain steps. First, the types of errors students most frequently make must be determined. Error pattern analysis, which involves establishing these types of errors, classifying them, and keeping a frequency count on them, best accomplishes this. An abbreviated error pattern analysis may result in the following:

Comma Fault	Misplaced Modifier	Overcapitalization
///	/	//
Run-On Sentence	Subject-Verb Agreement	Unidiomatic Preposition
////	/	/

Figure 1. A SAMPLE ERROR PATTERN ANALYSIS CHART

Perhaps by now, an objection might be forming that goes something like this: "That sounds very thorough and objective. But it also sounds very time-consuming. What instructor has time to do error pattern analyses in addition to running workshops, preparing lectures, and grading papers?" The answer is she or he isn't going to do error pattern analyses after the first few sets of papers. The students can, from corrected papers which are returned to them, keep track of and transfer their errors to an error pattern chart similar to Figure 1. This chart can be supplied to them by the instructor.

Another objection might center around the number of errors appearing on error pattern lists. "Won't there be as many different errors and combinations of patterns as their are students in the room?" The answer is no, amazing enough! After doing a number of error analyses, I was surprised to discover that students make a restricted number of errors. In a typical class there will be approximately twenty mechanical error, sometimes less, sometimes more. But rarely does the number of errors exceed thirty. Moreover, not only do students make a restricted number of errors but they also tend to make errors similar to those their classmates make and to repeat these same errors over and over. Thus, contrary to expectation, I didn't find myself with 20 errors multiplied by the number of students in a classroom (typically 24) for a total of 480 errors but rather the same 20, more or less, made repeatedly by the majority of students. This is an extremely important point for only with a limited number of errors is it possible to teach to error.

A prototype of an error pattern analysis chart, which is the result of my studying class error patterns for several years, can be seen in Figure 2.

Awkward Syntax	Choice of Words	Comma Fault
Lack of Colon for Lists and Definitions	Lack of Conditional Verb	Misplaced Modifier
Lack of Parallelism in Infinitives	Lack of Parallelism in Sentences	Misplaced Modifier
Misspelled Words	Not Spelling Out Numbers Ten and Below	Omitted/ Incorrectly Placed Comma
Omitted Word/ Words	Overcapitalization/ Under-Capitalization	Run-on Sentence
Subject-Verb Agreement	Typographical Error	Unidiomatic Preposition
Use of Adverb for Pronoun (Where for Which)	Use of Noun as a Verb (Effect/ Affect)	Use of Verb as a Noun (Affect/ Effect)

Figure 2: COMPLETE ERROR PATTERN ANALYSIS CHART

In such a list, several things are noticeable. The first and most immediate obvious is that there appears to be no logic to these errors, no relationship among them. You're right, there isn't! Although people might prefer logical structures for learning, such is apparently not the case when they are making errors. Chaos rather than order appears to be the rule in such cases.

Another point is that errors that might appear on one error pattern analysis chart would not necessarily appear on another. For example, unidiomatic prepositions are far more common among bilingual writers than among English monolingual writers because the second language will often employ prepositions different from those used in English. Geographical location will also influence colloquial speech and subsequent error patterns as well. Finally, the level of education will affect the confusion between homonyms such as effect/affect, with the confusion becoming correspondingly less frequent as the level of education rises.

Finally, not all errors on an error pattern analysis chart can be tied to exercises in a syllabus. Poor word choice, for example, is best corrected by enlarging one's vocabulary through reading, not exercises; misplaced modifiers and awkward syntax might involve learning to untangle sentences by shortening them and possibly using more subject, verb, object sentences; and omitted words require that a writer take more time for careful proofreading. Nevertheless, though these and other errors cannot strictly be called mechanical errors, to include and to classify them on an error pattern analysis chart is worthwhile because concentration of smaller errors into one category prevents diffusion in teaching. A further advantage is that keeping track of all errors on the error pattern analysis chart tends to focus students' attention on their own particular errors.

Once the pattern for the most common errors has been established, building a grammar syllabus upon the pattern becomes a fairly simple matter. However, grammar instruction, needless to say, should by no means occupy an entire workshop. After the first lecture, no more than ten to fifteen minutes of each lecture/workshop should be spent on such instruction.

As can be seen from the following syllabus, lecture time spent on grammar points and exercises is repeated throughout the course of instruction. Learning is best achieved, I have found, through brief, periodic repetition of material rather than through one single, long, detailed explanation. Information is also retained better, and for a longer period of time, if reinforced briefly and periodically though lecture and class exercises.

Some errors, such as the colon before lists and quotations and the use of the conditional verb, require relatively little repetition for them "to take." Other errors remain stubbornly frequent, however, and require more frequent repetition. The misuse of commas is the most prominent example of this recurring, persistent error. No matter from where the student population is drawn, between 40 to 50% of all errors involve the misuse of the comma. The run-on sentence and the comma fault will also be high frequency errors. Another commonly occurring error is misspelling, which rivals commas in frequency among students without a college degree. Misspelling does decrease as the educational level rises; nevertheless, it will remain persistently present and difficult to eradicate regardless of educational background.

A SAMPLE GRAMMAR SYLLABUS

Lecture/Workshop 1	Class review of the 20 most mechanical errors (use Figure 2 until you have prepared your own Error Pattern Analysis of the Most Common Mechanical Errors)
Lecture/Workshop 2	Lecture on the Colon and the Conditional Verb
	Homework (grammar text title to be supplied by the instructor: pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 3	Lecture on the Hyphen and Parallelism in Infinitives
	Homework (grammar text title to be supplied by the instructor) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 4	Lecture on Comma Fault, Misuse of Commas, Misspelling, Run-on Sentence
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 5	Lecture on Parallelism in Sentence Structure and Spelling Out Numbers Ten and Under
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 6	Lecture on Capitalization and Subject-Verb Agreement
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 7	Lecture on the Use of Where for Which and the Use of Noun for a Verb (Effect/Affect)
Lecture/Workshop 8	Lecture on Comma Fault, Misuse of Commas, Misspelling, Run-on Sentence
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 9	Lecture on use of a Verb for a Noun (Affect/Effect) and the Use of a Verb for an Adjective (the Return Check)
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 10	Lecture on the Colon and the Conditional Verb
	Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.

Lecture/Workshop 11	Lecture on the Hyphen and Parallelism in Infinitives Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 12	Lecture on Comma Fault, Misuse of Commas, Misspelling, Run-on Sentence Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 13	Lecture on Parallelism in Sentence Structure and Spelling Out Numbers Ten and Under Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 14	Lecture on Capitalization and Subject-Verb Agreement Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 15	Lecture on Use of Where for Which, the Use of a Noun for a Verb (Effect/Affect), the Use of a Verb for a Noun (Affect/Effect), and the Use of a Verb for an Adjective (the Return Check) Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.
Lecture/Workshop 16	Lecture on Comma Fault, Misuse of Commas, Misspelling, Run-on Sentence Homework (grammar text) pp ____, Exercises ____.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me urge you to use error pattern analysis when constructing your next business communication course or workshop. It requires initially that you do error pattern analysis for the first few weeks. Thereafter, student can do their own analyses. These patterns can then be woven into class exercises, workshops, and lectures. In return, you will have the advantage of being able to direct your teaching <u>to error</u>, thereby achieving the most effective results.

"BLAMING THE VICTIM" AND OTHER WAYS BUSINESS MEAN AND WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR QUESTIONABLE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Impression management refers to behaviors exhibited by people that allow others to ascribe specific attributes to them. This study examined impression management using three hundred and sixty two participants who responded to a scenario where they took the role of engaging in questionable behavior. Results from position papers written by the participants indicated that they attempted to avoid being associated with potentially negative interpretations of their behavior through the use of excuses and justifications. Additionally, the explanations that were used depended on gender, work experience, and education. The implications of these results for ethical behavior are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Being a manager is being under pressure to perform. Successful performance is a necessity because organizational status and power are directly related to how a manager performs. There is, however, an additional and critical aspect of achieving power and status: the evaluation of performance by others, especially those in a position to make favorable dispositions toward the person being evaluated.

Since the stakes are so high, managers do not always sit by idly while they are being evaluated, especially when that evaluation leads to promotions, raises, or other trappings of success. Frequently, a manager will attempt to influence the evaluation in the hopes of obtaining better outcomes. So, for example, when reporting to superiors, managers will often emphasize their responsibility for their successes while minimizing responsibility for failure (Miller & Ross, 1975).

Attempts to influence how one is evaluated, an activity labelled "impression management," have been examined and discussed by social psychologists for a number of years. One problem with relying on findings from social psychology for understanding impression management in the business domain is that the generalizability of the results to the business domain has not been established.

One critical business situation in which impression management occurs is that stemming from predicaments which consists of any event that casts undesired aspersions on the lineage, character, conduct, skills, or motives of an actor (Schlenker, 1980). We know from the social psychology literature that people in predicaments, in order to influence the evaluations that others make, typically provide accounts for their behavior that fall into one of the following categories: concessions, excuses, justifications, or refusals (Schonbach, 1980). Justifications are accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies any association with pejorative interpretations. Excuses are accounts in which one admits that the act in question is wrong or inappropriate but denies responsibility for the act. Concessions involve admittance of partial or total guilt, expression of regret, and/or offers of restitution. Refusals include denials of guilt, attributing guilt to others, and/or evasion.

Our goal in this study was to examine the generalizability of the findings from social psychology by determining whether people in business organizations actually use the types of accounts described in the previous paragraph when they are confronted with a dilemma or predicament in an organizational setting. The current study extends research conducted by Giacalone and Pollard (1987) by including subjects who are currently employed and by content analyzing responses using a preordained classification system provided by Schonbach. Additionally, participants in the current study were not prompted through instruction to produce excuses, thus broadening the types of "acceptable" responses. In addition to broadening our understanding of impression management, this study has implications for business ethics because of the central problem in responding to infractions of ethical standards: people generally do not admit to the guilt or responsibility in these situations.

METHOD

Subjects and Procedures

The participants in this study consisted of 362 respondents: 101 managers and executives with an average of 10 years full-time work experience, 43 fully employed part-time MBA candidates with an average of 5 years full-time work experience, and 218 full-time MBA candidates with an average of 2 years full-time work experience. Seventy six percent of the participants were men and the average age of the participants was 36.

The subjects were given a description of an actual incident involving the questionable use of a competitor's confidential computer code to gain access to information concerning the competitor's marketing strategies. The team that used the information subsequently demonstrated superior performance in a computer simulated business game. Study participants were asked to take the role of the information-user and explain why they used the competitor's computer code to access the information.

The participant's responses were rated by two raters who developed a list of accounts used by the participants to explain their actions. The raters independently coded each position paper by indicating the presence or absence of each of the accounts. The raters agreed 94% of the time on coding decisions.

The data were analyzed to determine the overall frequencies for each of the accounts and the items were examined for any significant difference in frequency across groups including gender, age, race, years of education and work experience, and managerial level. The accounts that were classified into the four categories identified by Schonbach (1980) and the data were examined at this level of analysis to determine the prevalence of different categories across the groups included in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the average, the responses of participants included with unique accounts. The minimum number per participant was one and the maximum number was seventeen. Justifications, i.e., accepting responsibility but denying pejorative implications, were the most prevalent type of account. Overall, the participants generated ten unique justifications. This was followed by excuses (seven unique examples) and concessions (four unique examples). Least likely to be presented were refusals (See Table I). Justifications were more numerous not only in the case of unique instances but also in the frequency in which each justification was used. On the average, justifications were presented 105 times. Refusals and excuses came in a distant second and third (67 and 53.3 times, respectively). Concessions occurred with the lowest frequency (10.67 times).

At the item level of analysis, there were no differences in the frequencies of accounts used among participants of different ages or races (white, black, hispanic, or latin). Additionally, no differences were found in the use of concessions (admittance of responsibility among any of the groups. There were, however, several differences among the remaining groups (sex, level of management, work experience, and education) in the use of refusals, justifications, and excuses. Managers were more likely to use refusals to avoid the issue compared to employees. Likewise, full-time MBA and executive MBA candidates were more likely to avoid the issue compared to part-time MBA students. Women, compared to men, were more likely to use the following two justifications: "merely exploiting another's carelessness" and "using all available information gathering resources" and the following excuse: "no guidelines prohibit it, therefore it is permissable." Full-time MBA students were more likely than executive MBA students and part-time MBA students to use the following justifications: "context of the game (not real world)" and "merely exploiting another's carelessness." This pattern also held in the case of two excuses: "anyone would have done the same thing" and "no guidelines prohibit it, therefore it is permissible." Finally, the use of excuses differed according to managerial level. "We were unlucky/we got caught" was used more by employees than managers.

The data were also examined for differences at the category level. The 21 accounts were categorized into one of the four categories defined by Schonbach (1980) and MANOVA was used to examine the data for group differences (See Table II). No differences were found for level in organization, work experience, education, or race. Women, however, usedjustifications more than men ($p = .056$). The use of excuses approached significance for age ($p = .079$) with people from ages 34 to 38 being least likely to use excuses while those in the age ranges 30 to 33 and greater than 39 were most likely to use excuses.

The results of this study indicated that, consistent with the social psychology literature on impression management, individuals involved in the business domain use social accounts to explain questionable behavior and that when the situation demands an explanation, those in business have no trouble producing responses that minimize their responsibility for or awareness of any negative consequences for their behavior. Participants were more likely to defend their questionable behavior by using excuses and justifications than to openly concede errors of judgement and behavior. This finding applied not only to the diversity and number of excuses and justification but to the frequency with which they were used. In our sample, this generalization held across people of all ages, races, levels of education and work experience. Thus, we can tentatively conclude that in the business domain, people actively attempt to influence the evaluations of others by "managing" impressions, especially through denying the pejorative implications of their behavior.

The data presented in this study also indicated that women and line employees used some justifications more frequently than men and organizational managers, respectively. Justifications indicate an unwillingness to admit that one's behavior has negative implications. Perhaps women and line employees realize their relative powerlessness in organizations (Pinder, 1984) and are more motivated to protect and defend their "corporate identities" compared to the others. The more frequent use of some justifications by individuals who are in the role of full-time student compared to those who are not may indicate that something about the academic environment makes people, in general, more protective of the public images they project. On the other hand, full-time students compared to part-time students may have identified more closely with the scenario used in this study because it took place in an academic setting. If so, this internalization, may have served as increased motivation to manage impressions. The findings presented above are interesting in light of the recent evidence that justifications produce the worst evaluations of an act compared to other types of accounts (Riordan, Marlin, & Gidwani, 1985). In other words, the frequency of using justifications indicates that people demonstrated some naivete with regard to managing impressions. Additionally, the data indicated that more highly educated individuals occupying managerial (compared to employee) positions were more likely to avoid the issue of guilt and responsibility altogether. This may indicate that both business education and organizational tenure contribute to an individual's capacity to manage impressions by denying guilt or avoiding discussion of the situation.

The results of this research are important for the development of ethical thinking in business. As individuals "naively" go through the mechanics of constructing their explanations for behavior and managing the perceptions of others through their use of accounts, ultimately, someone must react to the defense of questionable behavior and determine the consequences. This response must be based on some consensually established standard of ethical behavior. Over time, these ethical standards will be influenced by the ability of people to account for their behavior. It would be problematic if our ethical standards continued to erode as people became more adept at avoiding responsibility by successfully accounting for their behavior.

Table I

Overall Frequencies for the Different Excuses (N - 362)[a]

Item	Frequency
Concessions	
Admission of guilt	6
Admission of partial guilt	23
We would have turned ourselves in at the end of the game	3
Refusals	
Denial of any implication or guilt	63
Avoiding the issues	71
Justifications	
Context of the game (not real world)	164
Harvard B-school tradition	119
Learning experience	80
Merely exploiting another's carelessness	203
Using all available information gathering resources	103
Protecting company interests	157
Done in the spirit of Free Enterprise	46
Deliberately used information as an example of espionage	24
Used information to teach others a lesson	52
Excuses	
Anyone would have done the same thing	76
No guidelines prohibit it, therefore it is permissible	149
Condoned by the instructor	130
We were lucky/fortunate	30
We were unlucky/we got caught	6
The code was a gift from God	4
It's the American way to do business	8

a. The number of respondents was 362; however, each respondent may have used more than one excuse.

Table II

Group Differences in Categories of Accounts using MANOVA[a]

Category	Concession	Refusal	Justification	Excuse	F	P
Gender						
Male	.30	.194	.286[b]	.167	2.23	.056
Female	.31	.159	.327	.141		
Age[c]						
< 30	.038	.200	.289	.114	1.64	.079
30-33	.000	.187	.274	.187		
34-38	.067	.214	.254	.098[b]		
>39	.030	.152	.293	.195[b]		

a. Parallel manova analyses indicated no significant differences in the use of accounts when race, education, work experience, or managerial level were used as the independent variables.
b. One-way analyses of variance indicated that these accounts were the ones that were significantly different.
c. Categories for age were based on quartiles.

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