Professionalism in the 80's

PROCEEDINGS

SOUTHWEST ABCA SPRING CONFERENCE

SAM J. BRUNO, EDITOR

School of Business and Public Administration
University of Houston at Clear Lake City
2700 Bay Area Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77058

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PREFACE

The decade we are now entering will lead to significant changes in the communication environment. Major changes often mentioned are:

- increased electronic communication;
- satellite communication for transmitting business data;
- evolving information systems;
- telecommunication instruction via live, two-way satellite link and satellite link to two-way data communications;
- government regulations dealing with adapting wording for heterogeneous audiences; and
- environmental impact of advanced technological development and computerization on human organizational communication.

These environmental changes will result in a greater dependence on business communication. Thus the communication focus of the '70's may no longer be enough.

The challenge facing us as communication professionals cannot be met by answering questions concerning these changes, their magnitude, and speed of occurrence; nor by answering questions on the likely impact of satellite communication on business communication or some other specialized area of communication. These questions, although important, ignore the fundamental issue of whether communication concepts, approaches, and methods are capable of dealing with the expected environmental changes. If they are, our job as professionals in the '80's will be relatively easy. One can expect a continuation of current trends and little difference in professional conferences. The focus of business communication is likely to continue implementing current concepts and methods coupled with occasional improvement in, and development of, new concepts or methods.

However, communication in the '80's is expected to be more complex, requiring not only a continuation of current trends, but a reexamination of some of our basic approaches to business communication problems.

So as professionals we must identify more of the likely changes and prioritize our research. Also, as professionals we must continue to be on the cutting edge of our discipline. More work in the area of communication theory is essential, not only for the development of better communication practices, but also for the advancement of our discipline. As professionals we can, and should, take a greater role in shaping the future of business communication. To do so, however, requires new innovative concepts and approaches.

Accordingly, the 1981 Conference theme, "Professionalism in the '80's," was just a beginning and should stimulate us to reexamine current theories, concepts, and assumptions and build upon and challenge them in light of the new needs of business communication. Our annual conferences are open to such effort which would help redirect our discipline to assure its relevance and contribution to the achievement of "Professionalism in the '80's."

Like previous SW-ABCA's Presidents and Program Chairmen, John M. Penrose did an excellent job of assembling talented speakers. Of the 24 papers presented at the Spring Conference, 16 appear in this volume. The complete Conference Program appears after the Table of Contents.

The sequence of papers in this publication does not correspond to the Conference Program. The order of presentation represents a consolidation of subject areas rather than individual sessions. Contributors to these proceedings prepared camera ready manuscripts. And aside from minor changes due to typographical errors in manuscripts, I took very few editorial liberties. Naturally, I assume full responsibility for these editorial alterations.

Clearly an undertaking such as this is never the work of any one person. Therefore, I owe a number of debts of gratitude. First, thanks must go to John Penrose for preparing a super program and the authors who diligently prepared their manuscripts according to a very detailed set of instructions.

Second, Cathy Penn, my talented and dedicated assistant deserves special recognition and must receive our thanks once again for her contribution to these proceedings. Cathy's careful proofreading of the entire manuscript, retyping parts of papers, correcting typographical errors and many miscellaneous jobs associated with publishing this work denote her special qualities and tireless dedication to our Association.

Finally, we Sw-ABCAers owe a special thanks to my Dean, Rosemary Pledger. Her generous financial contribution and interest in having still another proceedings published must not go unnoticed and deserves our sincere appreciation. All too often I feel we overlcok the support that Deans provide our Association. For that reason, as well as many others, I say on behalf of the Southwest ABCA region, a personal and professional "thanks," Rosemary. Additional financial support for publishing these papers was received from the SW-ABCA Treasury.

My hope is that you will find these proceedings professionally rewarding and relevant to our "Professionalism in the '80's."

Sam J. Bruno
Editor
ABCA--Southwest Region

University of Houston at Clear Lake City
July 1981

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PART I

RECEPTION OF INFORMATION: LISTENING BEHAVIORS AND LANGUAGE USAGE

IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS IN BUSINESS: A COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES

Larry R. Smeltzer, Louisiana State University

ABSTRACT

Listening skills are important in business, but there is a lack of empirical evidence on the best strategy for improving this skill. This study analyzed the effect of discussion length and incentive level on the ability to listen to and identify the main points in 22 short dialogues. Six treatment groups were compared by manipulating four independent variables: a 45-minute discussion on listening; a 90-minute discussion on listening; low incentive to do well on the listening exercise; high incentive to do well on the listening exercise. The results indicate that both length of discussion and level of incentive have an effect on the listening ability of students. An additional 45-minute discussion on listening has the same impact as additional incentive on the listening exercise scores.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of listening in business organizations is well documented. To emphasize the importance of listening Rankin's classic study is often cited. He found that 70 percent of an average adult's waking time is spent in some form of communication and 45 percent of this time is spent in listening activities.[12] Keefe reports a study which concluded that executives spend as much as 63 percent of their day listening.[11]

Although listening is important, listening skills are generally defective. Rasberry simply states that most people do not know how to listen. He reports that tests indicate the average person understands, comprehends, and can recall only 25% of what he or she hears and a rate of 10% is more often the norm.[13] Golen found the "tendency not to listen" as the number one barrier to effective communication in Accountant-Accountant Relationship and the number two barrier in Accountant-Client Relationships.[7] Also, Smeltzer reported that a lack of skills in listening was perceived by first line supervisors as a major barrier to communication.[15]

Because the importance of communication is well documented, and there is a need for improvement in listening skills, several sources which discuss the techniques that may be used to improve listening skills are available. [3, 5]

Unfortunately, there is a lack of empirical research on these techniques that are suggested for the improvement of listening skills in business. The effect of these techniques remain unknown.

Most listening situations in business involve short interactions. Unfortunately, the listening research generally involves lecture situations (i.e., listening to a 20 or 30 minute presentation). For instance, Bergovory measured the gain scores in lecture comprehension after the subjects had been exposed to training.[4] Shellen used a 28-minute message to determine that there is a relationship between interest and listening.[14] Terry conducted an extensive study to determine the effects that training in listening had on achievement in Business Communication courses. However, the effect that this training had on listening skills was not analyzed.[16]

Allison compared the effects of reinforcement activities on listening comprehension skills. He found that small discussion group treatment is effective in producing significantly higher listening scores. However, this has limited generalization to business communication because the study was conducted with fifth grade students.[2]

Goodyear analyzed the motivational effect of punishment and reward on the listening comprehension of college students. He used two levels of incentive (points toward a final grade) to determine the effect of motivation on listening. His results did not support the belief that extrinsic motivation facilitates listening as there was no significant difference in listening comprehension of the group. However, the strength of the incentive could be questioned. Goodyear discusses the fact that the students may not have believed the incentive nor perceived it as a significant contribution toward the final grade.[8]

Huseman, Lahiff, and Hatfield summarize the research that is available on listening skill improvement in business by saying:

> We would like to provide more definite conclusions about listening from research studies, but listening ability is a complex combination of factors. The important point to remember is that, given stable personality and average IQ, there is no particular personality trait or intelligence level that excludes us from being good listeners. Listening is a skill that can be learned: We can become better listeners and better teachers of listening skills.[9]

Because of the lack of empirical research, an experimental study was designed and conducted. The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect that different lengths of listening skill discussions had on listening test scores. Also, the effect that different levels of incentive had on listening test scores was analyzed.

METHOD

An experimental design was used to investigate the effect of 5 different variables on students' listening test scores.

Subjects

Subjects for the study were 347 Business Communication Students at Louisiana State University.

Dependent Variable

An audio cassette tape of 22 dialogues was used as the listening test. Each dialogue was on a different business topic, involved different dialects, and presented different organizational patterns. A group of Business Communication instructors acted as judges to determine the main points of each dialogue. Immediately after the subjects heard the dialogue, they wrote down what they considered to be the main points. The subjects' accuracy in identifying the main points in the dialogue determined their score on the listening test.

Independent Variable

There were five independent variables in this study. Each of these five variables was a different method of listening skill instruction. Each method, or treatment, was used with two different Business Communication classes. A random process was used to determine which treatment each class would receive. The same instructor was used with each treatment to insure that the instructor would not be an intervening variable.

The five variables that were analyzed were: 1) no discussion on listening; 2) 45-minute discussion on listening; 3) 90-minute discussion on listening; 4) condition of high incentive to do well on the test; 5) condition of low incentive to do well on the test.

A condition of high incentive was created by telling the students that if they did not score well on the test they would be required to write a report on listening. A condition of low incentive was created by telling the students that the test was for their own benefit and had no relation to the course or their grades.

Six different treatments were compared: 1) test without any formal discussion on listening with a condition of low incentive; 2) test without any formal discussion on listening under a condition of high incentive; 3) 45-minute discussion on listening followed by the listening test with a condition of low incentive; 4) 45-minute discussion on listening followed by the test under high incentive conditions; 5) 90-minute discussion on listening followed by the test under a condition of low incentive; 6) 90-minute discussion on listening followed by the listening test under a condition of high incentive.

RESULTS

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine if there was any difference between the six treatment groups. The F-test indicated that the difference was significant at the .01 level (TABLE 1).

TABLE 1

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY
COMPARISON OF SIX TREATMENT GROUPS

Source	DF	SS	MS	F Value
Between Groups	5	4480.83	896.1	25.63*
Within Groups	341	11921.24	34.95	
Total	346	16402.08		

*Significant at the .01 level

Because the F-test was significant, an a posteriori multiple comparison was conducted using Duncan's Multiple Range Test.

TABLE 2 shows the means of the six treatment groups.

TABLE 2

MEANS OF THE SIX TREATMENT GROUPS

Group	Mean Score on Listening Test
1. No discussion, low incentive	35.93
2. No discussion, high incentive	39.48
3. 45 minute discussion, low incentive	38.77
4. 45 minute discussion, high incentive	44.18
5. 90 minute discussion, low incentive	41.97
6. 90 minute discussion, high incentive	46.29

In Table 3, the means are organized in groups that were not significantly different from each other at the .05 level of rejection according to the Duncan Multiple Range Test.

TABLE 3

GROUPS OF MEANS THAT ARE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER

Group
*No discussion, low incentive
**No discussion, high incentive
**45-minute discussion, low incentive
***45-minute discussion, high incentive
***90-minute discussion, low incentive
****90-minute discussion, high incentive

Those groups with the same number of asterisks were not significantly different from each other.

DISCUSSION

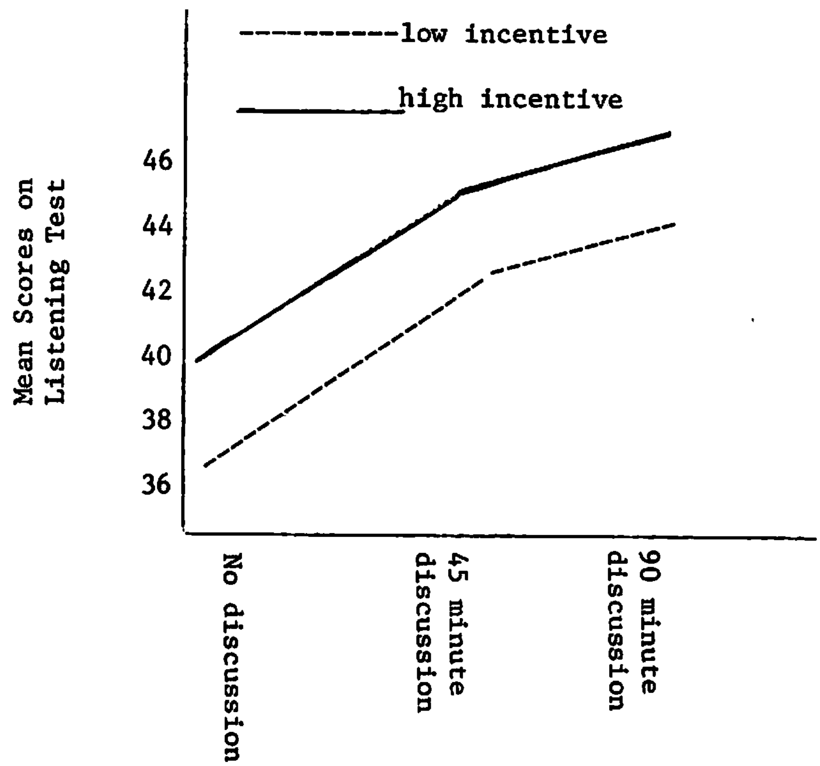
The results of this study indicate that both class discussion and level of incentive have an effect on the listening abilities of students. An additional 45-minute discussion on listening skills has the same impact as additional incentive to do well on the listening test. The results of this study have implications for both the business communication instructor and the business practitioner.

This study gives clear evidence to the business instructor that it is important to develop an incentive to listen as well as the necessary skills. The results suggest that merely telling the students that listening is essential and citing a few statistics are not sufficient. The group that was not exposed to any discussion but had high incentive did as well on the test as the group exposed to a 45-minute discussion but had low incentive. In other words, those who discussed the importance of listening and the appropriate skills did no better than those who did not participate in such a discussion but were under high incentive to do well on the listening test. Incentive goes beyond merely telling someone the importance of listening skills.

The study also indicates that increased discussion on listening skills increases students' scores on the listening test. Each 45-minute discussion resulted in a significant increase in listening scores for both the low and high incentive groups. This increase can be seen in GRAPH 1.

GRAPH 1

EFFECT OF ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION ON LISTENING TEST SCORES



This graph clearly indicates the effect that the discussion on listening has on students' listening test scores. It is important that the business communication instructor integrate both a discussion and a condition of high incentive in the classroom. A condition of high incentive can be created by going beyond merely informing students about the importance of listening.

A condition of high incentive to improve listening skills can be created by first giving students a listening skill test. There are several of these available that will indicate to students that they are rather ineffective listeners and need to improve their skills. The Jones-Mohr Listening Test may be used for this purpose.[10] Also, Adventures in Attitudes has developed a test that can be used in the classroom.[1] These tests can also be used as a competency measure in which the students would be required to obtain a particular score before completing the course.

The important point here is that merely telling a student that something is important is not the same as creating an incentive. This is probably why the results of this study differ from the Goodyear study. As previously mentioned, the incentive in the Goodyear study was probably not seen as a significant contribution toward a goal.[8] An incentive may be, "an object or external condition, perceived as capable of satisfying an aroused motive, that tends to elicit action to attain the object or condition."[6] Business instructors are continually attempting to simulate the business environment, but merely telling students about the importance of a skill is not creating an "incentive" to improve that skill. It is recommended that a minimum listening competency be required to complete the business communication course to provide the incentive for skill improvement.

It may initially appear to be a difficult task to develop a listening incentive for students when the course is already attempting to meet an array of objectives. However, it would not be too difficult to initiate a listening competency procedure. A module on listening and a corresponding test could be required of students where communication labs are available. If a business communication lab is not available, it may be possible to work with the foreign language department to develop a time sharing arrangement with their lab so that students could complete their listening competency.

Both Xerox Learning Systems and Dun-Donnelley have listening programs that can be self-administered in a lab situation. Both programs have a pre and post test that could be easily administered by a student assistant.

What implications does this study have for the business practitioner or the trainer developing listening skills in business? This study indicates that the trainer must develop an incentive for the employees to be effective listeners. It is not enough to simply tell employees that listening is important.

The incentive that may be used for listening is improved performance and reduced costs. It is possible to show that improved listening improves performance by asking the participants to cite specific examples. Most employees can cite many concrete situations where listening skills helped overcome problems or where poor listening created problems. Once a person can detect the relationship between listening and performance, it is possible to see the incentive to use effective listening skills.

This study indicates the importance of further empirical research on the development of listening skills. Research needs to be conducted to determine the effects of different types and levels of incentive. The effects of different instructional strategies should also be analyzed. Finally, the effects of different classroom approaches to on-the-job behavior need to be tested.

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A GUIDE TO LISTENERS: RECOGNIZING IMPORTANT BODY BEHAVIORS

Jean W. Vining, University of New Orleans

ABSTRACT

In an era of continuing emphasis on performance and output productivity in all phases of education and business, how can recognizing nonverbal body behaviors prove helpful? Learning to "hear" and listen for selected body movements that accompany sending and receiving of ideas can help the listener receive accurate, clear messages that can be responded to correctly and efficiently. The categorizing of selected body behaviors can aid in the study of nonverbal communication and can show the researcher, the business communication professor, the student, and the business communication consultant specific applications of selected nonverbal behavior concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Why is listening for body movements important? What benefits can the individual, the business professional, or the educator derive from developing the ability to recognize and react to that category of nonverbal communication called body movement? Objectives of the paper are to answer the questions:

1. What are some of the classifications of body behaviors that an individual might consciously or subconsciously display?

2. Can the individual be taught to consciously exhibit or send positive nonverbal movements to reinforce verbal communication and thus achieve a clearer, more concise, more understandable message for the listener/receiver?

3. How can attention be focused on the importance of selected body movements in all communicating activities but especially in activities where stress accompanies communication?

4. What illustrations could be presented to explain the use of nonverbal movements as accessory behavior to positive message transmission?

5. How can communication teachers and business professionals utilize the techniques and concepts of nonverbal body movement?

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING NONVERBAL FACTORS

Why are body movements important? Dr. Lyman T. Steil estimates that eighty percent of each day is devoted to communicating with forty percent of that time consumed in listening activities and only twenty-five percent of listening time spent in efficient listening [3]. How costly the inability to listen has become at a time when increased efficiency, higher productivity and output, and performance are more and more frequently measured. Learning to "hear" certain body movements that accompany message transmission can help the listener receive accurate messages that can then be responded to quickly, accurately, and correctly. The communication cycle is thus more effectively completed and continued.

CLASSIFYING AND INTERPRETING NONVERBAL MOVEMENTS

In considering nonverbal body behaviors, the adage "Actions speak louder than words" rings true. When attempting to categorize nonverbal behavior, a reliable taxonomy is difficult to find for modeling. Nierenberg and Calero present numerous considerations for the nonverbal investigator [2]. The following categories are presented as a framework for studying body behaviors in the communication setting:

Category One: Walking

Several types of walking movements may be observed. The more common walking motions are walking at a rapid, striding gait with arms swinging by the person's sides and a second kind of walking called pacing.

Walking with a rapid, striding gait with swinging arms is generally thought to convey pleasantness, positiveness, a receptive mood, sureness, and confidence of the individual. The person who walks with striding gait is viewed as goal oriented, ready to pursue objectives. Teachers might practice the striding gait when entering the classroom to project a positive, goal-oriented image or to motivate students.

Pacing is practiced by many Americans when attempting to arrive at a difficult decision, when considering available alternatives, or when seeking objectivity and fairness during the deliberative process. Authorities suggest that the pacer, whether student, superior, or client, should not be interrupted until the pacer initiates the interruption or reaches a decision and ceases the pacing behavior.

Category Two: Common Arm Movements

Three types of common arm movements are often observed: folded arms, arms spread out or open, and arms behind the back.

The folded-arms movement signals defensiveness, closed mindedness, often causes defensiveness in the observer, is a difficult behavior to reverse, and may become contagious body behavior in groups. When transmitting messages, the communicator is cautioned to avoid folded arms.

Open, spread-out arms indicate openness, honesty, and receptiveness to ideas.

With the arms-behind-the-back behavior, the meaning depends on the exact hand position. Interpretation of this behavior usually indicates that the individual is attempting to control emotions.

Category Three: Gestures

Psychologists and communication theorists have discovered numerous gestures and gesture combinations. The value of studying gestures is in recognizing what Nierenberg and Calero call "gesture clusters" [2]. Effective transmission and receptiveness of messages may depend on the listener's empathy for the gestures that accompany the sender's words. Although strict rules cannot be given for foolproof interpretation of gestures, the following gestures have frequently been studied and supported by authorities: covering one's mouth while speaking, using a karate chop action with the hands while delivering a message, and getting-together gestures.

Policemen found the covering-of-the-mouth-while-speaking gesture to signify unsureness of the speaker, whether the speaker was the criminal or a witness [2].

Using a pounding, karate chop action while lecturing or explaining new, complex material will not encourage students to ask questions after a presentation.

When individuals unbutton jackets, uncross legs, move toward the edge of chairs, and move closer to each other across the table, such movements indicate agreement or willingness to listen.

Covering of the mouth could be interpreted in negotiating situations to signal a point of misunderstanding or uncertainty. If interpreted as unsureness, the individual can be taught to change behavior to convey a more open, positive tone.

In studying gestures or combined movements, congruency is important if nonverbal motions are to be accurately assessed. Reading gestures is difficult to measure for many variables enter into the process. For example, a manager might say to an employee, "Come by any time and discuss a problem," while shaking a fist at the employee and escorting the individual to the door.

Category Four: Object Use

People often use numerous objects while transmitting messages. Objects most often used to accompany messages include eyeglasses, pipes, pencils, or pens. Dropping glasses to the bridge of the nose, often an unconscious habit, while communicating, especially with subordinates, elicits negative reactions. Removing glasses deliberately to clean during a conversation or verbal communication, indicates stalling-for-time behavior. In industry negotiation confrontations, the removing of a person's glasses indicated the individual needed additional time to consider his/her own situation before presenting opposition, before asking for point clarification, or before asking a question [2].

Pipes as objects are often used in the same ways as glasses and can detract from message transmission in similar ways that glasses detract from positive communication.

Category Five: Eyes

Authorities generally agree that the speaker who fails to look at the listener when communicating risks noncommunication or miscommunication. Argyle reported [1]:

1. People look at each other thirty to sixty percent of the time when sending and receiving messages.

2. People have more eye contact when listening than when talking.

3. Gaze-aversion action(s) may be used when trying to avoid a question response.

4. Abstract thinkers, less likely to be distracted, practice more eye contact than concrete thinkers.

Some people will thrust out a jaw or purse the lips when becoming antagonistic or when assuming feelings of noncommital behavior.

ASSESSING BODY BEHAVIOR

An instrument designed to aid in studying and assessing body behavior knowledge was developed in this study and is presented as Figure One. The instrument was designed by the investigator to help communication students learn about nonverbal body behavior and is presented as an instrument on which researchers can build and around which further communication experiments might be designed. The instrument might also be used by industry consultants and by communication students in studying body behavior and nonverbal communication theory and application.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Individuals can be taught to exhibit positive nonverbal body movements to accompany message transmission. Body movements, while difficult to assess quantitatively as communication factors, can help the communicator, especially in negotiation activities and in job hunting where stress may be present. The study of nonverbal body movements might be used for research studies. For example, results of use of the folded-arm movements might be evaluated in a controlled environment or setting. Administrators might practice the open, spread-out arm behavior when conducting meetings with subordinates, when attending meetings with superiors, in supervisory activities, in conferences, and in industry consulting and contract proposal sessions and evaluate the results.

Studying and using the body behavior assessment instrument may aid communication research, may help teachers and students of communication, and should aid communication practitioners. Research to determine positive consequences of listening for nonverbal behavior should continue.

FIGURE ONE

ASSESSING BODY BEHAVIOR INSTRUMENT

Directions: Respond to the following situations by marking what you believe to be the best choice.

_____ 1. At a conference table, the person who sits at the head of the table is generally considered (a) to be the leader or the would-be leader, (b) to have arrived at the conference room first, (c) to have prepared all needed research and data for the subject to be discussed, (d) all of the above, (e) none of the above.

_____ 2. In a professional gathering the person who rests a foot or leg in his/her chair indicates what kind of behavior? (a) interest, (b) dominance, (c) boredom, (d) restlessness, (e) tiredness.

_____ 3. At a meeting or conference the person who sits to the right or left of the chairperson indicates which of the following? (a) probable support of the chairperson, (b) that the individual is willing to consider ideas to be presented, (c) openness to objective discussion, (d) none of the above behaviors, (e) all of the above behaviors.

_____ 4. When offered one of two chairs during an interview, the prospective applicant should (a) select the chair nearest the interviewer, (b) select a chair fartherest away from the interviewer, (c) ask which chair to take, (d) select some other behavior.

_____ 5. The most positive chair arrangement that encourages positive exchange of ideas between two people in a professional discussion or conference is (a) to arrange chairs facing across the desk, (b) to arrange chairs side by side, (c) to arrange chairs at angles away from the executive desk, (d) none of the above.

_____ 6. Moving the hand near the face during verbal communication is generally assessed as (a) positive action, (b) a somewhat positive action or reaction, (c) an action with little or no significant meaning, (d) a questionable action, (e) to be avoided.

_____ 7. Unbuttoning one's coat is a good indication that (a) the room is too hot, (b) the person is a latent exhibitionist, (c) the person wishes to leave, (d) positive agreement is about to be reached, (e) all important facts have been presented.

_____ 8. A speaker who rubs his/her nose is expressing which of the following? (a) discomfort, (b) nothing of importance, (c) doubt, (d) need to scratch the nose, (e) none of the above.

_____ 9. In a seminar or presentation most participants' heads should assume what position? (a) tilted slightly, (b) held erect, (c) glancing, moving position.

_____ 10. Duration of eye contact of the speaker with an audience or with a person indicates (a) confidence of the speaker, (b) correctness of the speaker's facts, (c) positive speaker behavion, (d) all of the above.

Answers: 1 a, 2 c, 3 a, 4 a, 5 c, 6 a, 7 d, 8 c, 9 a, 10 a.

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THE USE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE BY AUTHORS OF ARTICLES IN THE JOURNAL OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Because instructors of business communication could be presumed to "lead the attack" on discriminatory language in business situations, the authors asked these questions about articles written by business communication professionals:

Did the use of nondiscriminatory language increase over time?

Did the use of discriminatory language decrease over time?

The Journal of Business Communication was chosen because of its prominence in the field. Over a 12-year period (1968-1979), 112 articles were selected randomly and examined carefully. It was found that nondiscriminatory language did increase (.05) and that discriminatory language did decrease (.10) over time. Additionally, it was noted that the number of women authors increased over time (.05), that there was no discriminatory occurrence of ethnic, racial, or minority terms, and that 77.7 per cent of the 112 articles were written in the personal style.

INTRODUCTION

Messages reflect the values of their senders. This fact is particularly important to teachers of business communication who, in turn, instruct their students and consultees in language appropriate for business situations. It is the purpose of this paper to test the major publication in the field of business communication--The Journal of Business Communication--to determine language usage by business communication authors. Of special interest in the examination of the Journal is the appearance of discriminatory versus nondiscriminatory language, racist terms, or distinctions demeaning to a specific portion of the business environment.

HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

Racist terms that were present in popular magazines were, for the most part, eliminated by the end of the turbulent and race-concious 1960s.

In 1974 the American Psychological Association became one of the first publishers of scholarly journals to give strong suggestions for avoidance of discriminatory language [9]. This trend expanded to other scholarly publications--including The Journal of Business Communication in 1979 [11]--and to various textbook publishers [1; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10].

Distinctions of various sub-parts of the business scene continue to occur by the use of such expressions as "business and labor" instead of "labor and management."

Since discriminatory language currently is receiving much attention in business communication pedological and research literature, and because the transition from discriminatory to nondiscriminatory language is still in process, this paper focuses on that element of language communication.

SEMANTIC AND LINGUISTIC REASONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

Among the first twentieth-century linguists to confront discriminatory language is Lee [12], who argues for completeness and accuracy through appropriate noun and pronoun selection. The most accurate word should be chosen. Stereotyping must be avoided. If a group of males is being discussed, "men" is a more precise term than "people." Likewise, if a group of both females and males is being discussed, "people" is the word that includes each one, regardless of sex.

Stead [16] observes that discriminatory language forms attitudes, while nondiscriminatory language can remove barriers. Supporting this view, Fleishman [2] states that language should not degrade. Further, Persing [13; 14] asks directly that language not hinder equal treatment of all human beings. Shapiro [15] brings these humanistic observations into the world of semantics by explaining that stereotyping is opposed to the principles of general semantics.

METHODOLOGY

Two main research questions were posed:

1. Did nondiscriminatory language increase over time in The Journal of Business Communication?

2. Did discriminatory language decrease over time in The Journal of Business Communication?

Three additional minor questions were asked:

1. Did the number of women authors change over time in The Journal of Business Communication?

2. Was ethnic language present in The Journal of Business Communication?

3. Were articles in The Journal of Business Communication written in personal or impersonal style?

To answer the five research questions, a study of 112 Journal articles was made. Issues published between 1968 and 1979 were used in the research.

Selection of Sample Issues

Two issues of The Journal of Business Communication were selected randomly by using a table of random numbers to determine the sample copies for each year.

Selection of Sample Pages

Random sample pages for each issue were chosen by referring to a table of random numbers and selecting one page per article. Specifications were that:

1. Only articles were used. Editorials, guest editorials, presidents' addresses, and reports were eliminated.

2. Only pages of article text were examined. Pages containing tables or illustrations were omitted.

Selection of Sample Passages

Rudolf Flesch's Readability Formula [3] served as the basis for choosing text passages. Because one page per article was observed, samples were comprised of 200 words rather than 100 words. The adaptation of the Flesch procedure was as follows:

1. Two consecutive blocks of 100 words each were counted in accordance with the Flesch method.

2. Passages began with the first paragraph that started on the sample page and ended with the sentence completed nearest to the 200-word point.

3. Pages were eliminated if they did not meet the 200-word, begin-with-first-paragraph-on-page requirement.

4. Pages that contained an insufficient number of words between the first paragraph point and the end of the page were replaced with the first consecutive page that had the required amount of text.

5. Exhaustion of article pages, when the random selection was a page other than the first, and did not contain 200 words, could present a problem with short articles. In the event that neither the page randomly selected nor those that followed had 200 words, the researchers returned to the first page of the article and continued the elimination process from the first page forward.

Categories of Language

Language examined in the samples was divided into two broad categories of discriminatory and nondiscriminatory. Usage applied in the present study is denoted as follows:

I. Nondiscriminatory Usage

A. Personal Pronouns

1. First person, singular
2. Second person, singular
3. Third person, singular, including
    he or she
    her or him
    her or his
    hers or his
    he, him, his, as specific referents
        (e.g., John invested his money)
    she, her, hers, as specific referents
        (e.g., Jane invested her money)

B. Personal Nouns

1. Personal names (e.g., John Doe, Janet Smith)
2. Personal names in groups or items (e.g., Bell System; count "Bell")

C. Plurals

1. Personal pronouns, third-person plural, including
    their, theirs (referring to people)
    them (referring to people)
    they (referring to people)
2. Common noun "people"; "folks" included by Flesch, is not applicable here

D. Impersonal

Includes only pronoun referents to things (e.g., It was a difficult decision. Company cars are small, but they are adequate for local driving.)

II. Discriminatory Usage

A. "Generic" masculine, personal pronouns, including
he, him, himself, his

B. Man/men combination words; "generic" man/men
(e.g., businessmen, chairman, man's task)

C. Other, including low-occurrence words, such as stereotypical usage
(e.g., housewife, mother ship)

Analysis of Data

Four regressions were made against time to determine its effect upon each of the three dependent variables. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used for the computer analysis.

Dependent variables are as follows:

1. Nondiscriminatory language, mean occurrence per sample article per sample year;

2. Discriminatory language, mean occurrence per sample article per sample year;

3. Women authors, mean percentage representation per sample article per sample year.

FINDINGS

Major Research Questions

Nondiscriminatory languaged increased significantly at the .05 level in the sample passages. The occurrence of nondiscriminatory terms is given in Table I and is presented also in Chart I, which appear on the next two pages.

Discriminatory language decreased significantly at the .10 level over the 12-year period. The data for these terms are found in Table II and Chart 2, which follow immediately Table I and Chart 1.

TABLE I

NONDISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE USAGE

IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES

YEAR	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	NONDISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE MEAN OCCURRENCE
1968	7	0
1969	7	0
1970	8	4.125
1971	8	2.500
1972	8	2.375
1973	9	3.556
1974	14	2.214
1975	10	0.400
1976	9	1.222
1977	13	4.769
1978	12	4.900
1979	7	4.428
TOTALS:		
12 YEARS	112 ARTICLES	2.54 MEAN FOR PERIOD

CHART 1

NONDISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE USAGE

IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES

TABLE II

DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE USAGE

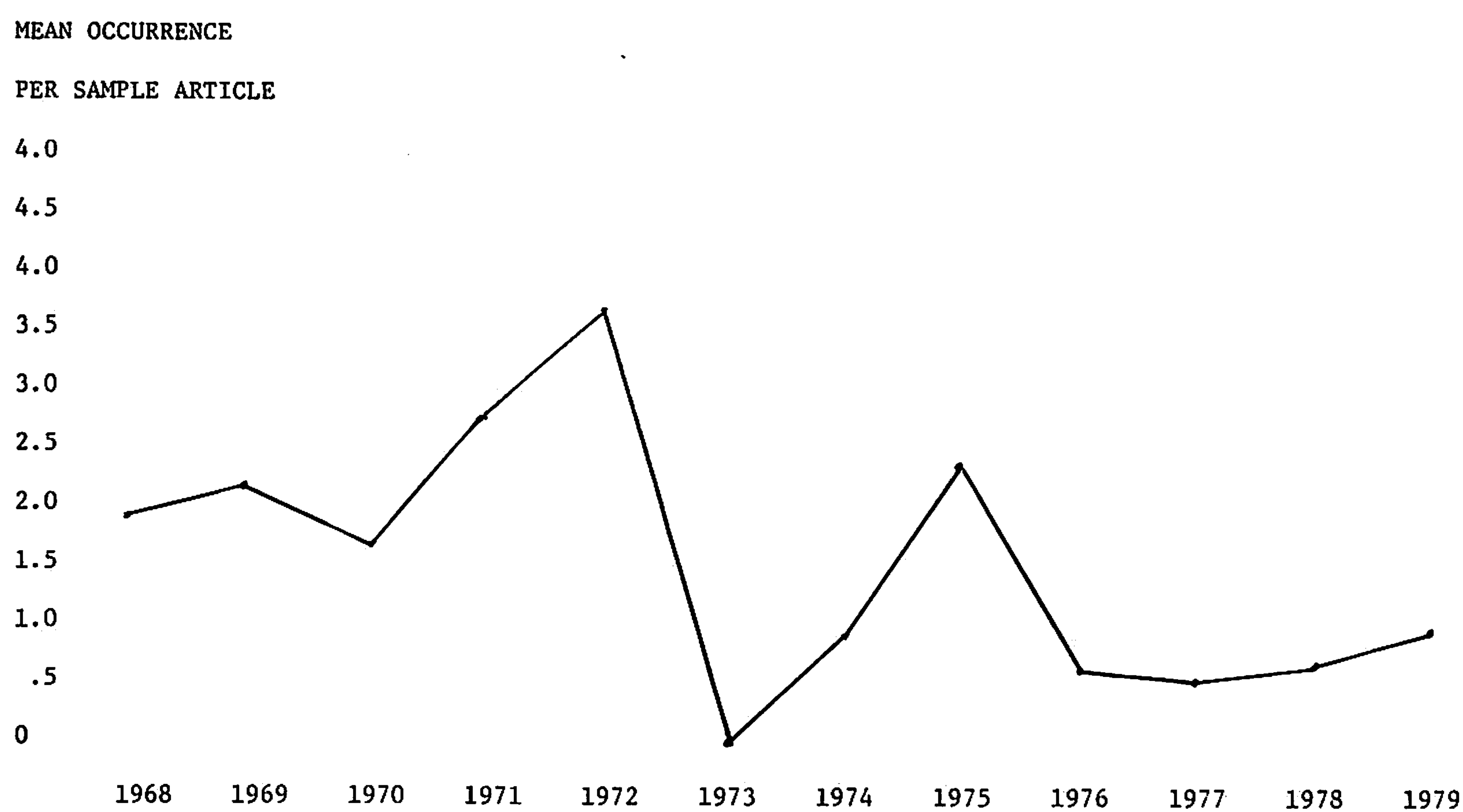
IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES

YEAR	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE MEAN OCCURRENCE
1968	7	1.857
1969	7	2.142
1970	8	1.625
1971	8	2.750
1972	8	3.625
1973	9	0
1974	14	.875
1975	10	2.300
1976	9	.667
1977	13	.533
1978	12	.600
1979	7	.857
TOTALS:		
12 YEARS	112 ARTICLES	1.490 MEAN FOR PERIOD

CHART 2

DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE USAGE

IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES



Minor Research Questions

Representation of women among Journal authors showed an increase significant at the .05 level. The figures are shown in Table III on the next page.

There was no discriminatory ethnic, racial, labor, or minority-group language noted within the 112 articles sampled.

In viewing the use of discriminatory and nondiscriminatory language, the appearance of pronouns was tallied. Since impersonal style is encouraged for scholarly writing, the question of relative-personal versus impersonal-style articles could be answered easily. More than three-quarters of the 112 sample articles (77.7 per cent) were found to be written in personal style (See Table IV).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Nondiscriminatory language usage increased significantly at the .05 level over the 12-year period.

2. Discriminatory language usage decreased significantly at the .10 level over the 12-year period.

3. Representation of women among Journal authors increased significantly at the .05 level over the sample years.

4. Authors used personal-word language in 77.7 per cent of the sample articles.

5. Nondiscriminatory personal-word usage increased significantly at .05 over the 12-year span.

6. The Journal editorial staff and the contributing authors are to be commended for evidence of progress in the use of nondiscriminatory language from 1968 through 1979.

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AUTHORS

IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES

YEAR	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	NUMBER OF WOMEN AUTHORS	PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AUTHORS PER ARTICLE
1968	7	1	14.28%
1969	7	1	14.28
1970	8	0	0
1971	8	0	0
1972	8	0	0
1973	9	0	0
1974	14	0	0
1975	10	0	0
1976	9	1	11.11
1977	13	3	23.07
1978	12	4	33.33
1979	7	5	71.28
TOTALS:			
12 YEARS	112 ARTICLES	15 AUTHORS	13.4 MEAN

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE

OF IMPERSONAL AND PERSONAL ARTICLES

IN 1968-1979 SAMPLE ARTICLES

YEAR	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	NUMBER IMPERSONAL	PERCENTAGE IMPERSONAL	NUMBER PERSONAL	PERCENTAGE PERSONAL
1968	7	1	14%	6	86%
1969	7	1	14	6	86
1970	8	1	13	7	87
1971	8	1	13	7	87
1972	8	2	25	6	75
1973	9	4	44	5	56
1974	14	1	7	13	93
1975	10	1	10	9	90
1976	9	2	22	7	78
1977	13	5	38	8	62
1978	12	4	33	8	63
1979	7	2	20	5	80
Totals:					
12 YEARS	112	25	22.3%	87	77.7%
			MEAN		MEAN

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PART II

PRODUCTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION: IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

American productivity has declined significantly in recent years. The causes of the problem are complex, but communication professionals may offer an important solution. The authors describe their literature search of empirical studies in management, social science, and psychology. They summarize strong initial evidence which indicates a direct relation between productivity and communication skills. These studies suggest that corporations which invest in the improvement of such skills among managers and employees may find an inexpensive long-term improvement in productivity.

INTRODUCTION

A steady and significant decline in the growth of American productivity since the 1960's offers communication professionals--scholars, researchers, and consultants--a unique opportunity to influence improvement in corporate communication. The climate is ideal for persuading more corporations to invest in programs to improve their communication. During the 1970's decade, many top managers were reluctant to spend money on programs to improve communication because (1) the need to improve productivity was not urgent, and (2) claimed savings could not be directly measured. But giving today's economic instability the need to reduce cost is especially urgent. Further, researchers have now linked improved communication to improved productivity. The task at hand is to inform corporate managers that the field of communication studies can contribute to the improvement of productivity. This can be done by sharing certain studies reported in the social research literature. This article summarizes studies relevant to productivity and discusses their application.

THE PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEM

To the economist, productivity is defined as the quotient of output divided by labor input. Hence, a company can improve its productivity by either of two ways: either it can produce more 'widgets' than the year before, without extra cost; or it can produce the same number of 'widgets' as the year before, but at a lower cost.

Unfortunately, American companies have not improved productivity at a rate equal to that of companies of other industrial nations. During the 1960's, U.S. productivity grew by more than 3 percent a year; however, during the 1970's American productivity grew by only 1.4 percent. And by 1979, U.S. productivity actually declined by 2 percent while Japanese productivity increased by 8 percent.

Although American industry is acutely aware of the problem of declining productivity, today's corporate managers know that there is no productivity panacea. Many managers now conclude that the traditional methods for improving productivity are too costly, ineffective, or unlawful. Low profits and high business taxes, for example, presently preclude many companies from investing in new plants and modern equipment. Sharp reductions in government funding of research, coupled with pressure to reduce costs in order to combat inflation, now cause many companies to reduce research and development budgets. Finally, government regulations in the areas of antipollution, safety, and health equipment currently prevent companies from reducing support budgets.

In addition to their workability problems, conventional solutions, if adopted, would provide only partial answers to the production problem. Edward F. Denison of the Brookings Institute, a respected authority on U.S. productivity, has identified a list of sources that affect economic growth--amount of government regulation, capital investment, level of knowledge, etc. [1]. Denison observes, however, that since 1973 productivity has declined in ways that his factors do not fully explain. He concludes that the impact of government regulations and other traditionally accepted barriers to productivity are not by themselves sufficiently strong to account for the dramatic slump in productivity [2].

COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

David T. Kearns, president of the Xerox Corporation, is representative of those corporate managers who agree with Denison's analysis and have begun to seek alternative solutions to declining U.S. productivity. While Mr. Kearns concedes that Washington is part of the productivity problem, he contends that business management is also to blame [4]. To support his thesis, he cites a 1979 study conducted by Theodore Barry and his Associates of Atlanta, Georgia that blamed management for low productivity [10]. This survey concludes that workers are only 70 percent efficient because of improper scheduling, staffing, discipline, and communication of assignments.

Joseph F. Toot, Jr., president of the Timken Company, argues that low levels of worker productivity are the result of failures in supervision [6, p. 237]. Among other shortcomings in supervision, Mr. Toot cites the absence of open channels of communication and then illustrates by relating an incident that occurred at one of his company's manufacturing plants. When one of two machines operated by a worker in this plant broke down about mid-morning, a utility helper who was nearby began to work on the machine. The worker continued to operate his second machine but took no action to inform his supervisor about the down machine. By early afternoon, the supervisor learned of the down machine from a bystander. Upon checking, the supervisor learned that the machine had been down two hours and seven minutes; moreover, the required repair was only a simple adjustment of tooling [7].

One can only wonder why the worker had not alerted his supervisor. Surely, the supervisor expected to be informed, but had the supervisor communicated his expectation to the worker? Did the worker share the supervisor's concept of what a down machine meant--an urgent situation demanding immediate attention? Had the supervisor motivated the worker to communicate with him? Were the channels of communication between the worker and supervisor open?

IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Given the link between improved communication and improved productivity, this incident and many of the tens-of-thousands of similar incidents that occur daily need never happen. But are communication and productivity linked? Beyond the testimony of those in the work-a-day world, what is the basis for concluding that improved communication makes a difference in the level of productivity?

In order to answer this question, the authors conducted an extensive literature search. This search utilized four computerized data bases: Comprehensive Dissertation Abstracts, 620,000 citations; Management Contents, 56,000 citations in organization behavior and administration; Social Scisearch, 700,000 citations from social science journals; and Psychology Abstracts, 288,000 citations also from social science journals. These computerized data bases allowed the 'coordination' of the concepts "communication effectiveness" and "productivity" to produce a list of publications that pertain to both headings.

The results of the computer search were surprising. More than fifty citations were reported; however, after excluding those studies that did not pertain to organizational settings or that were dated, the authors were left with a total of four studies. To clarify, the authors have divided the relevant literature into two categories: (1) descriptive studies that report the experience of communication consultants, and (2) empirical studies that report experimental research.

Descriptive Studies

The computer search identified two articles of interest in this category. John Zenger, writing in the October, 1976, issue of Personnel Journal, reported that research conducted at Syntex Corporation provides convincing evidence that supervisory behavior affects the productivity of a work group [9, p. 513]. Honest communication in the form of free and open feedback, information sharing, and discussion was identified as important to the improvement of productivity.

Stewart Tubbs and Robin Widgery, writing in Management Review, November, 1978, report increased productivity in a large manufacturing plant following their recommendations as consultants [8]. Productivity was improved by implementing a program designed to improve management style. This program stressed the importance of four management behaviors: (1) supportive relationships, (2) strong emphasis on goals, (3) the building of team effort, and (4) helping to facilitate the work of subordinates. The program also sought to strengthen the interpersonal communication skills and group skills of managers. Significant improvements, both statistical and financial, were reported.

Empirical Studies

In his 1977 dissertation, A Study of the Relationships Between Organizational Communication and Worker Performance, Kenneth Jenkins found evidence that a supervisor's communication effectiveness does indeed have an impact on worker performance [3]. The subjects of this study were two hundred thirty-eight workers in six manufacturing and service organizations. Dr. Jenkins employed the dimensions of perceived trust, perceived influence, perceived accuracy, and a desire for interaction as measures of the independent variable, communication effectiveness. Worker performance, the dependent variable, was measured using four dimensions: quantity, quality, net performance (quantity minus performance quality), and absenteeism. Correlation between independent and dependent variables was found statistically significant using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and moderated regression.

A dissertation by Rudi Klauss titled Dimensions of Managerial Interpersonal Communication Behavior and Their Measure of Satisfaction and Performance also reported evidence of a link between communication effectiveness and level of productivity [5]. Three hundred forty-eight managers from manufacturing and marketing operations served as subjects for this study. Using a two-stage communication model, Dr. Klauss tested the relationship between the independent variable, interpersonal communication behavior, four intervening variables (subordinate role clarity, manager trustworthiness, manager informativeness, and manager dynamism) and three dependent variables (subordinates' satisfaction with supervision, job satisfaction, and work unit effectiveness). Employees rated managers on six dimensions: careful presentation of ideas; open, two-way communication; frankness, careful listening; brevity; and informality. Dr. Klauss then employed these scores as a measure of the independent variable, communication effectiveness. Employees rated managers on their trustworthiness, informativeness, and dynamism as measures of the intervening variables. Finally, employees completed surveys designed to measure their satisfaction and performance. The relationship between independent, intervening, and dependent variables was tested using multiple regression analysis, partial correlation analysis, and path analysis. Open, two-way communication showed a strong relationship between the intervening and dependent variable measures. Lesser levels of relationship between communication effectiveness and productivity were reported for brevity, informality, frankness, and careful presentation and listening.

In addition to breaking new ground toward assessing the effects of communication within organizational settings, these studies illustrate the methodological problems encountered when researchers address the link between communication and productivity. How should the independent variable of communication effectiveness be operationally defined and subsequently measured? How should the dependent variable of productivity be operationally defined and then empirically measured? And most difficult of all, how can intervening variables be controlled? The link between communication and productivity is complex and multivariate in nature.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, more studies are needed before the effects of communication effectiveness on productivity can be fully understood. Methodology must also be tightened and standardized. No doubt, however, communication researchers will improve their methodology and conduct additional studies of the link between communication effectiveness and productivity because they must if the expenditure of corporate money and time is to be justified.

Yet communication professionals need not await all the evidence before acting to persuade more corporations to invest in the improvement of their communication. The time is at hand. The opportunity before communication scholars and researchers may never be greater. There is no doubt that corporations need to increase their productivity. Strong initial evidence suggests that the advice and training programs offered by communication professionals are linked to the achievement of the business community's top priority--productivity. Corporations need the expertise of communication professionals and that advice should be forthcoming.

Such advice might include the following: Managers would be well advised to keep employees aware of the importance of their job to the organization, to indicate frequently to their employees that their work is appreciated, and to inform their employees about developments in the company. Communication of this nature affects employee motivation and morale. Motivated employees are generally more productive.

It also appears important that managers adopt a "problem orientation" when communicating what needs to be done and how to do it. The goal of this kind of communication is to identify tasks and methods that are mutually acceptable to both the manager and the employee. A problem orientation is characterized by questions, descriptive, and provisional language. Communication of this nature affects employee cooperation. Cooperative employees are likely to be more productive.

Finally, managers should frequently talk with their employees and carefully listen to what they say. Most employees are in a better position to observe problems than are managers. Moreover, many employees have high analytical skills and are able to formulate solutions that are more objective than those of managers. Communication of this nature uncovers problems and encourages innovation. Listened to employees are apt to be more productive.

Achieving effective communication within the organization is a difficult task that is linked to the overall effectiveness of the organization. Management increasingly is becoming aware of the importance of this and is willing to invest in programs to improve their communication.

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MEASURING PRODUCTIVITY: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of the "productivity crisis" business communication specialists are faced with avenues for needed research and with the problem of updating business communication course content. Suggested research areas include a delineation of information management as well as corporate information systems. Also, research is needed on the value of the communication process and on the costs of various types of communication activity. Current business communication courses may not be meeting students' needs for the automated business world. In addition to writing skills, students should also learn dictation skills and group conferencing techniques. Furthermore, the business communication class should familiarize the student with data bases, integrated systems concepts, and information resource systems.

INTRODUCTION

In 1969, William J. Lord, Jr., wrote "Business needs creative people to stay competitive. Nowhere is the need more apparent than in the field of communication and management information systems, and problem solving that leads to decision making." [20, p.32] In that same year, Lucian Spataro suggested that all communications in an organization should be viewed "as a management network of information flows." He posed the question "What controls should be inserted into this system so that the company can evaluate effectiveness and efficiency on the basis of certain criteria and in terms of certain objectives." [37, p.17]

These two ideas form the basis of this paper. Eleven years after these ideas were published, the literature is filled with articles declaring that the United States is deep in the throes of a "productivity crisis." Finding remedies for the productivity crisis has become a top priority matter for both the public and the private sectors of the economy.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

This paper concerns two areas of the "productivity crisis" as it applies to business communication. The first area of concern is how can business communication professionals use their creative ability in the field of communication and management information systems to explore evaluation measures of the communication process. A sampling of the literature in the area of measuring productivity of managers and other professionals suggests possible directions for future research.

The second concern is a corollary to the first. Are business communication students adequately prepared to function efficiently in the real world. This concern also has received recent emphasis in the literature, even to the extent that the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business has conducted two seminars (September 1980 and March 1981) to explore improved communication methods for business graduates. In this second area, studies concerning business communication course content are presented. The paper concludes with suggestions for possible new techniques in the business communication class.

THE PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEM FOR MANAGERS AND PROFESSIONALS

The declining productivity in the United States has been widely discussed in the literature and by news media. From an average productivity gain of 3.2 percent in the 20 years following World War II, U. S. productivity gained only an average of 1 percent between 1973 and 1978. Between 1978 and 1979, productivity declined .9 percent. Between 1971 and 1977, office worker productivity increased by only .4 percent each year.

One explanation for the poor showing of office worker productivity has been the relatively small capital investment of approximately $2,000 for each office worker as compared to capital investments of $70,000 for farm workers and $35,000 for factory workers. The emphasis, therefore, has now turned from improving blue-collar productivity to improving that of white-collar workers--managers, professionals, and clericals--those who work with information.

The Impact of Information Workers

Statistics indicate that not only have the number of "information workers" dramatically increased but so also has the definition of an information worker been expanded. [30, p.28] According to Commerce Department estimates, approximately 60 percent of the Gross National Product already involves information production, storage, transfer, and utilization. In the last 15 years, "more people have been working on processing information than any other type of job." [1, p.102] The total cost in 1979 for this group of information workers was estimated at $800 billion. Managers accounted for 41 percent of this $800 billion while professionals accounted for 32 percent of the total cost. [2, p.130]

The Problems of Measuring Managerial Productivity

Although attention has been turned to measuring productivity, little concrete research exists for the vital area of measuring managerial communications from a "productivity" standpoint. As one author states, "If secretarial productivity quantification is somewhat difficult, it's a piece of cake compared to the issue of quantifying professional and managerial productivity, which raises far more questions as to its value or its feasibility." [2, p.136] On the one hand are those who say that "management is an art which cannot be quantified." On the other are the pragmatists who say that "management is a science and as such should be subject to quantifiable measures."

Some effort has at least been made in this area, but much more remains to be done. The starting point in measuring productivity logically is to determine how people at the management level use their time.

Research on Management Time Measurement

Mintzberg has summarized several studies in The Nature of Management Work. Among the methods used are secondary sources, questionnaire and interview, critical incident and sequence of episodes, diary, activity sampling, unstructured observation, and structured observation. [25]

In his own study, Mintzberg noted that the manager's activity is characterized by "brevity, variety, and fragmentation." Based on a five-week observation period, Mintzberg found that the typical manager he studied spent an average of 15 minutes on each incident of desk work, 6 minutes on each telephone call, 68 minutes for each scheduled meeting, 12 minutes for each unscheduled meeting, and 11 minutes on each "tour." [25, p.33]

He summarizes his findings in this way

> . . . the manager demonstrates a strong preference for the verbal media of communication. He seems to dislike using the mail, and consequently it is used primarily for formal correspondence and for lengthy documents. The informal means of communication--the telephone call and the unscheduled meeting--are used to transmit pressing information and to deliver informal requests. Scheduled meetings are used for formal delivery of information and requests, and for time-consuming events that involve a number of people, notably events concerned with ceremony, strategy-making, and negotiation.
>
> One further point merits emphasis. Unlike other workers, the manager does not leave the telephone or the meeting to get back to work. Rather, these contacts *are* his work. The ordinary work of the organization--producing a product, undertaking research, even conducting a study or

> writing a report--is seldom undertaken by its manager. The manager's productive output can be measured primarily in terms of verbally transmitted information. [25, p.44]

Other studies indicate similar results. For example, Rader and Wunsch surveyed individuals who received undergraduate degrees from the College of Business Administration at Arizona State University from 1973-1977.

> Respondents indicated that they spent the greatest proportion of their work time speaking, with a mean response of 37 percent. Listening comprised 19 percent of the work day, followed by writing (16 percent), and reading (13 percent). Other activities comprised 15 percent of the reported average work day. [33, p.35]

Business organizations began several years ago to study the productivity of "support staff" as modern technology moved into the office. Technology was the catalyst causing companies to examine the methods employed to process information within a firm.

After some years of studying support personnel, analysts within industry found that the bottleneck in improved productivity appeared to be the professionals and managers rather than the support staff. For example, the Office Systems Research Group and Cornell University, in a study of one large oil company, found that 66 "principals" spent 79 hours a week at the copier, 104 hours a week trying to reach someone on the telephone, and 654 hours at the office or at home doing longhand. [19, p.43] A Booz, Allen and Hamilton study found that "senior executives commonly spent 10%-to-30% of their time on lower-level administrative or wasted tasks. . . ." [2, p.130]

With findings such as these, at least two companies (Exxon and Shell) in the Houston, Texas, area are now turning their attention to an extensive investigation of how executives in these companies actually spend their time. The form used by Shell Analyst Eunice Stigall is an example of the way private industry is beginning to develop a means of measuring managerial productivity. Of the current daily activities surveyed, "written communication, telephone, filing, copy, scheduling, meeting and conference, reading, statistical, and research," more than half are directly concerned with communication. [39]

The next step after determining how managers spend their time is logically to determine how efficiently or how productive that time is spent. If typical managers spend some 70-75 percent of their time communicating, how can this activity be measured as productive or non-productive. Here, the research findings become rather meager.

The Communication Audit

The business communication literature mentions the communication audit--a device to determine the efficiency of communication policies, networks, and activities. For example, Hickson advocates an open systems model for auditing the effectiveness of organizational communication. [14]

Greenbaum and White emphasize the "biofeedback" technique. [11] Downs and Hazen explore the "communication satisfaction" variable in the communication audit process. [8] Goldhaber and Krivonos summarize the International Communication Association (ICA) Communication Audit process and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this process. [10] Sincoff and Goyer also comment on the positive and negative standpoints of the ICA communication audit from a researcher's perspective. [36]

Although the communication audit appears a valuable tool for monitoring communication within an organization, it does not enable the researcher to quantify from a productivity standpoint the effectiveness of communication activities.

Accounting's Approach

To provide a basis for measuring properly the changes which occur within a firm, the Management Accounting Practices Committee, through a Subcommittee on Productivity, studied the subject of productivity measurement. As a result, three articles, summarizing a series of papers sponsored by the subcommittee, appeared in the May through July 1980 issues of Management Accounting.

The first article covers the relationship between measurements of the national economy and measurements on a firm or component level. [44] The June article outlines an approach to correlating productivity measurement at the firm level with income statement analysis. [24] The last article, appearing in the July issue, contains criteria to be considered when implementing a productivity and analysis program. [23]

Two statements from these articles would deserve attention. A conclusion from the third article is that "The last ingredient necessary for a comprehensive productivity measurement approach is an integrated management information system." [23, p.44] Thus, accounting recognizes the importance of a management information system but views this system as its province. The second statement is "Furthermore, the subject continues to be in a state of development and, therefore, pronouncements as to preferred practices would not be in order. Experimentation and development, not codification, seems to be needed at this time." [44, p.24]

Organization Efforts

One of the leaders in the endeavor to measure productivity is the American Productivity Center in Houston, Texas. An APC brochure entitled "Eight Ways You Can Increase Your Organization's Productivity" lists the center's seminars, video tape programs, customer services, publications, etc. For example, one of the seminars which has been presented to representatives of industry is "How to Measure Productivity in Your Organization." The participants in this seminar received a copy of APC's Total Factor Productivity Index—a 67-page document containing indexes which "match the weighted inputs of capital and labor for each industry or segment of the economy against its deflated "value added" output, using the Department of Commerce's Gross National Product Series." [43, p.1]

The center's Multi-Input Productivity Index is scheduled for publication in April 1981. In addition to these endeavors, the American Productivity Center has received much publicity for its five-year research project, IMPRINT. IMprovement of PRoductivity with INformation Technology is a cooperative effort between APC and its sponsoring companies to conduct empirical studies in the area of white-collar productivity improvement.

The Buffalo Organization for Social and Technological Innovation, funded by the National Science Foundation and several private companies, is surveying government agencies as well as the private sector. BOSTI is seeking "to identify the ways in which physical office environment impacts office worker productivity and the quality of working life." [7, p.3]

Booz, Allen and Hamilton is completing a "Multi-Client Study" of managerial and professional productivity, sponsored by office equipment companies. After experimenting with various methods for gathering information about managers, Booz, Allen and Hamilton used a notebook with easy-to-log activity records and a "credit-card" size timer scheduled to sound an alarm at 20-minute intervals. Preliminary results of this study of managerial use of time indicate that "a substantial potential for productivity improvement exists . . . ." [7, p.4]

Because the technology for improving productivity has already been developed, many organizations are devoting major efforts to the behavioral aspects for improving productivity. These efforts generally involve group efforts to study work processes, generate ideas to improve productivity, and devise measures for measuring productivity. WORK PAD (Work Productivity Analysis and Design), a technique developed by the American Productivity Center, and the Nominal Group Technique, used by the National Micrographics Association, are illustrations of these processes.

POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The problem, from the viewpoint of the business communication professor, is not "do we want to be involved?" but rather "how can we be involved?" If information management is at least a part of business communication, what should be done to investigate the productivity problem in this area.

Several ideas for research, then, become apparent. The ideas are not new, but the questions do not appear as yet to have answers.

1. What is information management? Can this area be defined as a discipline? What skills or knowledges are needed in this area? Connell cites the need for the "emerging new discipline" as he states "Direction in the form of dialogue and research opportunities is needed to define the new discipline of information management." [6, p.3]

2. Are there examples of corporate information systems? What are their cost-effective practices? How are technologies and the human element integrated in such systems?

3. How can costs be allocated to the communication process? In 1971, John D. Pettit compiled his "Guidelines and Suggestions for Research in Business Communication." Under the miscellaneous category, he listed "Time and Cost of Executive and Organizational Member Communication." He stated

   > Various studies and estimates have been made about the amount of time businessmen spend in communicating activities. Still, more research is needed in this area, particularly on the cost of various types of communication activity. [28, p.25]

   Ten years later, this research topic would still seem to be a timely one.

4. What is the value of "communication" in the drive for improved productivity. Madeline states "productivity--the chief goal of any industrialist--comes not from working harder as many believe, but from working smarter. And there's always a communications element in that achievement." [22, p.15] The manager of the productivity system group for Ernst & Whinney's Los Angeles Management Consulting Services Division, has been quoted as saying that communication, with emphasis on feedback, is the second step in productivity realization. [34, p.2] How, then, can a value be placed on the communication activity?

5. What are the quantifiable measures used to judge the effectiveness of such group processes as WORK PAD and the Nominal Group Technique? Can gains in communication productivity be measured on the individual micro level as well as on the firm macro level with these methods?

With these questions still unanswered, attention is turned to academia. Are business communication students being prepared to function efficiently in the real world?

IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Productivity measurements are ineffective unless improvements are made in the way in which work is completed. Can communication become productive without changing the way communication is completed? Is productivity stressed in business communication classes? Are the topics emphasized the topics most needed by graduates to prepare them for productive positions in the world of work? A survey of the literature reveals the current content of the business communication class.

Present Content of Business Communication Classes

The American Business Communication Association developed course standards in business/organizational communication. From the ad hoc Committee on Course Standards, William J. Lord reported five broad subjects for inclusion in business communication. These were communication theory, scientific method of inquiry, applied logic, expository techniques and strategies, and the psychology in communication behavior. [21]

The 1977 ABCA Committee composed of Persing, Drew, Bachman, and Galbrath conducted a survey in three areas of business communication. Their study included course content, classroom procedures, and a summary view of the course. The course content section included letter writing, report writing, oral communication, job application, listening, nonverbal communication, theory and semantics, barriers and psychology of communication. In order of recommended time spent, their respondents ranked letter writing, listening, and report writing as their top three choices. [27]

Also in 1977, C. B. Stiegler suggested five content categories for a basic communication course: communication fundamentals, business letter writing, library skills, report writing, and oral communication. [38]

Glassman and Farley surveyed schools accredited and affiliated with the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. Faculty members who teach business communication were asked to respond to the questionnaire. Topics, as rated in order of perceived importance, were clear writing principles, report writing, word effects, business letter writing, and resume writing/letter of application. [9]

Richard D. Rowell surveyed business communication instructors in Michigan to determine the degree of similarity (or dissimilarity) of the basic business communication courses. The five most important topics and mean instructional hours devoted to each were letter writing (16.0), report writing (5.7), communication theory and semantics (3.8), job applications (3.7), and English fundamentals (3.2). [35]

A Comparison of Actual and Perceived Requirements

The literature contains a number of studies that include informed respondents' perceptions of the content of business communication classes. This informed group includes former students, business people, other college professors, and communication consultants.

Tesch found professors of accounting, management, marketing, and finance basically agreed on the content of business communication classes. These instructors indicated that report writing requiring 24 percent of the course time was the most important topic. Letter writing was listed second, consuming 14 percent of the course time. These professors then ranked oral communication third, communication theory and English fundamentals fourth, followed by job applications/resumes, memorandums, listening and miscellaneous topics. [41]

Stine and Skarzenski found teachers and business executives generally agreed on the content of a business communication course in their 1979 study. The most important basic skills in rank order were clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar, and spelling with letters, memorandums, and reports being the most important business forms. The study also demonstrated a strong support from business executives and educators for classroom emphasis on mechanical correctness. Executives supported tough grading standards for grammar and spelling. [40]

Need for Increased Emphasis on Oral Communication

However, as noted by Barron Wells, "Today, a letter writing course will not meet the communication needs of the business world, and therefore neither will it meet the needs of the modern college of business." [45]

Graduate business respondents surveyed in a follow-up study conducted by the ABCA ad hoc Committee on Standards recommended the following for the college business communication class: In content there should be less emphasis upon letter writing and long reports. Topics that should be increased include interoffice memorandums, platform speaking, interpersonal and small group communication, interviewing, listening, nonverbal communication, barriers to communication, and psychology of communication. [27]

Heugli and Tschirgi found that supervisors expect greater skills in both oral and written communication from their employees than the employees actually had or even perceived they should have. This study indicated that oral communication skills were used more frequently than written skills at the beginning corporate levels. Particular importance was placed upon lateral (peer) and upward (to superior) communication. Written reports (information and proposals) were next in importance. Supplier and customer conferences were relatively infrequent and formal public speaking rare. [15]

O'Connell, a professional communication consultant, offered four desired kinds of expertise for professional communicators. These were (1) be knowledgeable in a broad range of communication processes; (2) be well grounded in theory; (3) possess the ability to bridge the gap between theory and application and move between these two worlds; and (4) have some understanding of the business environment. [26]

These skills are consistent with the skills others identify as important for the professional. Bennett concludes that oral and written communication are both of vital importance to business executives and neither should be neglected. He reports that 34 percent of the business executives surveyed in his study indicate that business communication curricula should give strong emphasis to communication theory. [3]

In a research study conducted by the business communication faculty at the University of Houston comparing perceptions of business students with perceptions of personnel directors, personnel officers tended to rank listening, committee meetings, report writing, telephone communications, and memorandum writing slightly higher than students. Students tended to rank letter writing, public speaking, and resume writing slightly higher than personnel officers. [29]

Hart and Williams found in their study of college graduates that most graduates believe business communication should consist of a balance among human behavior, linguistic mechanics, and composition. They do not perceive business communication as having narrow objectives relating it to technical writing; neither do they perceive it as having broad objectives emphasizing the study of human behavior. [13]

TECHNOLOGY AFFECTING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

These research studies indicate the primary emphasis in the majority of the business communication classes has been on the written word--letters and reports. It is interesting to note that the professors of business communication and students perceive the written word to be the most important topics of the class whereas the business people often mention other factors--oral communication, group presentations, interpersonal communication, and communication theory. This leads one to question the relevance of the current communication class content. Educators perhaps should listen to business people and develop an awareness for the current business environment.

The Office of the Future

Predictions for the year 2000 suggest a paperless office--with the exception of those papers required for legal purposes and those papers will not be the traditional 8 1/2- by 11-inch rag bond. [12] The typical business environment graduates may expect to find in the next ten years will consist of such things as advanced word processing systems, centralized and distributed data processing systems, electronic mail and correspondence systems, teleconferencing systems, executive workstations, and the telecommunications-based interconnection of these technologies in integrated networks reducing the necessity of paper flow. A closer look at each of these areas reveals interesting possibilities for the business communication class.

The Effect of Word Processing Systems

Decentralized word processing centers appear to be meeting the needs of many business organizations in a cost effective manner. If the clerical force becomes more productive, then the next level--management--can spend more time doing what they're supposed to do, which is to think. [32]

By using machine dictation, desk and portable pocket units and central dictation systems, principals reduce managerial time spent on text generation, proofing, and editing. Machine dictation is approximately six times faster than longhand, and approximately twice as fast as shorthand dictation. [16]

Once a manager is trained properly in the art of machine dictation, that manager usually becomes more effective in the processing of information. Writing quality may be improved as more drafts are permitted through the use of the automated word processing equipment. Studies conducted by Lodahl and Meyer have demonstrated that by reducing initial dictation time the extra new work done by the authors tends to be more self-initiated and proactive rather than reactive. [18]

Moreover with the increasing use of the portable dictating equipment and communication links, managers will be able to work out of their homes and suitcases. [32]

However, in her study, Burford found communication terminals, data retrieval, computer knowledge, and telephone techniques were viewed by a greater number of respondents to be more important than dictating and transcribing equipment in the next five years. [4]

The Impact of Data Processing Systems

The vast data bases, available through interactive query systems, offer another high-leverage approach to office productivity. The range of services includes news wires, historical data, professional and technical journal abstracts, market data, and many, many more. [18]

Current data-based research systems are being expanded so that businesses can take advantage of all published information available in a rapidly changing society. These data-based systems will diminish the time necessary for research for reports and documents from hours and days to seconds and minutes.

The Development of Electronic Mail and Correspondence Systems

Robert Mitchell, Market Planning Manager of 3M's Business Communications Products states that the emergence of electronic mail will have the greatest impact on the automation of the office. [43] This concept evolved from a capability added to word processing equipment so that material typed in one location can be printed out in another. However, the widely used term "electronic mail" may include a variety of transmission tools such as Telex/TWX and private teletype networks, facsimile or "intelligent" copiers as well as word processing equipment.

The Benefits of Teleconferencing Systems

Computer conferencing and teleconferencing networks allow groups of people who are geographically separated to communicate either in real time or on a delayed basis--and in many instances more quickly, effectively and at a lower cost than telephone, Telex, or electronic mail. [31] Grouped under the term "teleconferencing" are audio conferencing, videoconferencing, and computer conferencing.

As with all of the newest technologies, the future of teleconferencing depends not on the technology but on the behavioral implications of use. It can reduce the need to have people travel long distances to attend meetings, but few believe it will ever be a complete replacement for face-to-face business meetings.

The Emergence of Executive Workstations

Text-handling tools intended for direct use by managers and professionals include a "desktop" or management workstation approach to office automation. In the next ten years, workstations will be commonplace on the desks of middle managers predicts Carl Masi, Vice President of Marketing Support for Wang. [43]

This workstation consists of a terminal that allows immediate access to the collection of communication and information systems within, and relevant to, the organization. The workstation may be envisioned as an extension of word processing, with additional functions such as structured files, calendar and reminder features, scanning and formatting capabilities, and user programmability. [5]

Furthermore, the workstation is a special breed of terminal designed to be acceptable in executive offices and to be used by business people and others who have no expertise in the operation of computers. It will not be necessary to understand computer technology in order to use the workstation. Someone makes a phone, but the user does not have to be familiar with its inner workings to use it. The same is true with the workstation. [32]

Automation will enable managers to become more productive by allowing them to have easier access to terminals. Hopefully in ten years, managers will use information terminals as easily as they use the telephone. [32] The volume of paper produced by the manager can be drastically reduced by the use of the workstation. The information is accessed on image based screens. Files may be retrieved, reviewed, up dated, and refiled without a piece of paper. Memorandums may be initiated, written, and sent through the workstation without a single piece of paper, and those communications which require paper will be greatly simplified. But the stigma regarding managerial keyboards remains an integral part of the business culture.

STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CLASSES

This review of the changes that have occurred and are occurring in business indicates several changes--some drastic--which need to be made in the present course content of most business communication classes. The more readily apparent revisions include but are not limited to the following:

1. The use of the direct letter and report style and AMS Simplified or block form of formatting letters should be stressed as a conscious effort to increase productivity. Lee and Benoit predict most letters and reports will be written in the deductive approach. [17] This

will allow the busy executive to conserve time and energy. Reports will be shortened by increasing the use of visual aids and decreasing the amount of text. Memorandums designed for fast replies will aid management decision making. The message-reply form will continue to gain in popularity.

2. Students should be taught to dictate. Students may be required to dictate letters and short reports instead of writing their assignments out in longhand. Kruk stressed this point in a recent Journal of Business Communication article. [16] Perhaps an agreement can be reached with office administration classes in machine transcription or shorthand to allow the transcription/shorthand students to transcribe the communication students' dictation. Each could be graded on their performance by their respective teachers.

3. Kruk also stressed the importance of teaching writing skills. Basics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling should be taught. Executives in the future may no longer have a private secretary to correct grammar or spelling. In addition to emphasizing dictation skills, Kruk suggested emphasis be given to form-letter design. [16] With the use of word processing equipment, form-letter paragraphs may be stored and retrieved at a later date to compose a similar letter without wasting additional managerial time.

4. Typewriting should be encouraged for all students--particularly for those students who plan to become managers. Every attempt should be made to overcome the executive keyboard stigma. Executives of the future will be keyboarding. Typewriting ability will greatly enhance the student's ability to fully utilize the workstation.

5. Emphasis should be given to library research through the use of data bases. If data bases are unavailable, students should be required to use indexes such as the Business Index to familiarize themselves with microfilm searches and retrieval.

6. The use of data processing should be integrated in the business communication class. Students should be required to collect and analyze data using the SPSS or similar computer programs. This process will reinforce the integrated systems concept commonly found in business today.

7. Face-to-face and small group presentations should be emphasized to give students experience in conferencing and nonverbal communication. More emphasis should be placed on the small group presentation and on committee work than on the large group, formal presentation.

8. The concepts of information resource systems should be taught. The importance of interconnecting technologies to attain a common goal should be stressed. [12] The three old technologies of word processing, data processing, and telecommunications have merged; and managers need to realize that not only are the technologies being integrated but so also are the management processes derived from them.

Technology should not be used to push paper faster but should be utilized to its fullest potential to make the job of the manager easier. Automation should be viewed in terms of tools--tools which allow human hands and heads to work more effectively.

The manager's goal over the next ten years will be to organize and direct the technologies that fit into his or her organizational scheme. Increased productivity is contingent upon the most effective use of the technology currently available.

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PART III

VIEWS ON WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS REPORT WRITING ACTIVITIES OF SUPERVISORY BANKING PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to identify the report writing practices of supervisory banking personnel and to determine the topical areas which should be emphasized in a business report writing course. A questionnaire was administered to 136 supervisory personnel attending the Louisiana Banking School for Supervisory Training at Louisiana State University. The results of this study indicated that writing effective reports is a common requirement for bank supervisors.

INTRODUCTION

Training directors are contracting with writing consultants to teach supervisors how to write effective reports, letters, and memos. The reason why consultants are called into an organization is that the senior executives are complaining that they cannot read their subordinates' reports [3, p. 3]. Also, many organizations are requiring their employees, including high-level supervisory personnel, to attend report writing seminars [2, p. 56].

The banking industry holds no exception to this problem. Stapleton, writing in Banking magazine, said bankers, "as much as any other service-oriented group, often contradict the way they come across in person by the way they come across on paper. Most banks are proud of their personalized service. Yet bank letters, statements, and reports are all too often depersonalized and mechanical "[1, p. 63].

Many bank executive development programs include training in report writing. Therefore, report writing instructors, as well as training directors, should be aware of the specific skills in report writing needed by supervisory personnel.

PROBLEM

The problem studied in this project was two-fold. The first goal was to identify what the report writing practices were of supervisory banking personnel. The second objective was to determine which topical areas should be emphasized when teaching report writing.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

One hundred thirty-six supervisory personnel, who attended the Louisiana Banking School for Supervisory Training at Louisiana State University in June 1980, responded to a questionnaire. The data gathered from the questionnaire were in two parts. The first part determined the frequency of their report writing practices. The second part indicated the degree of emphasis that should be given to various report writing topics that are typically included in a report writing class. The responses were based on a business report as a written presentation of factual information which provides data for business purposes. This definition did not include routine letters and/or office memoranda. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and a z test was used to determine if there was any significant difference based on some demographic information.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age and Sex Profile (N=136)

Forty-seven percent of the participants were between the ages of 21-30; 29 percent between 31-40; 18 percent between 41-50; and 6 percent were over 50. Sixty-two percent of the banking personnel were females, and 38 percent were males.

Type and Location of Bank (N=136)

Forty-nine percent of the respondents were employed in national banks, and 51 percent were employed in state banks. One hundred eighteen respondents were from Louisiana; eight from Texas; four from Florida; two from Alabama; and one from Arkansas and Kentucky, respectively.

Number of Deposits (N=132)

Thirty-eight percent of the participants worked in banks that had $100 million or lower in deposits; 42 percent had $101-499 million; and 20 percent had $500 million or higher.

<u>Functional Area</u> (N=134)

Twenty-one percent of the respondents were employed in the accounting area; 7 percent in personnel; 3 percent in marketing; 20 percent in credit; 12 percent in data processing; 22 percent in branch administration; 11 percent in management trainee programs; and 4 percent in other functional areas.

<u>Level of Management</u> (N=119)

Eight percent of the banking personnel were in upper management; 52 percent were in middle management; and 40 percent were in lower management.

<u>Years in Position</u> (N=128)

Seven percent of the participants had been in their present jobs for less than one year; 53 percent from 1-5 years; 24 percent from 6-10 years; 11 percent from 11-15 years; 3 percent from 16-20 years; and 2 percent had been in their present jobs over 20 years.

<u>Number of Employees Supervised</u> (N=117)

Seventy percent supervised from 1-10 employees; 22 percent supervised 11-20; 5 percent supervised 21-30; 2 percent supervised 31-40; and 1 percent supervised more than 40 employees.

<u>Educational Profile</u> (N=121)

Concerning the highest level of formal education, 27 held bachelor's degrees; 1 held a master's degree; 10 held an associate's degree; and 83 held a high school diploma.

<u>Completion of Report Writing Course</u> (N=127)

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents completed a collegiate course in report writing, and 72 percent did not complete such a course. Nineteen percent completed a non-credit course, and 81 percent did not complete a non-credit course.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study will be presented in two parts. First, the business reporting practices of supervisory banking personnel will be discussed. Second, the topics that should be emphasized in the teaching of business report writing will be presented.

Report Writing Practices of Banking Personnel

The banking personnel write reports and make oral presentations of these reports to personnel within the bank once or twice a month. However, the banking personnel do write reports to individuals outside of their bank about once or twice every three to six months. Personnel who have completed a collegiate course in report writing write more business reports and direct them to individuals outside the bank organization more often than those personnel who have not completed such a course.

Management trainees write reports to individuals within and outside their bank less than any other bank personnel from the various functional areas. Also, those personnel with a high school diploma as their highest educational degree write reports and direct them to individuals outside their bank less than those personnel with higher degrees.

Personnel from banks with $100 million or less in deposits write reports more often to individuals outside their bank than personnel from the larger banks. Also, males write reports more often than females to personnel within and outside their bank.

Topics to be Emphasized in Report Writing

The information presented in this section is divided into eight parts, and each part represents major topical areas that are covered in a report writing class. Within each major topical area, the specific items which should receive more emphasis are identified. TABLE 1 contains a summary of the report writing topics that should have more emphasis.

Techniques of Data Collection

The use of primary sources of data collection should be given more comprehensive emphasis than secondary sources. Traditionally, more emphasis was given to collecting data through secondary or library sources in report writing classes; however, this emphasis does not seem to be the trend for supervisory banking personnel.

Pattern of Report Organization

The supervisory banking personnel believe that more emphasis should be given to the direct, deductive, or psychological pattern rather than the indirect, inductive, or logical pattern of organization. Perhaps this result indicates the time constraints many bank supervisors have; therefore, they favor the direct pattern. However, the credit and personnel department personnel would prefer more emphasis on the indirect, inductive, or logical pattern.

Techniques of Writing Style

Using shorter sentences and familiar words, being readable, adapting to the reader, and being concrete are topics which the bank supervisors believe should be given the most comprehensive emphasis. Also, some coverage should be given to clarity, objectivity, sentence structure, and conciseness.

Banking personnel who have completed a collegiate course in report writing would put more emphasis on readability, audience adaptation, and conciseness of reports than those personnel who have not completed a course. Supervisors from the personnel department, however, would give less emphasis to audience adaptation than supervisors from any other functional area. Also, upper management personnel would give audience adaptation more emphasis than both the first line and middle management supervisors.

Data processing supervisors would give more emphasis to concreteness than supervisors from the other functional areas. Also, personnel from national banks would give more emphasis to improving sentence structure than the personnel from state banks. Management trainees would give less emphasis to the topic of jargon and technical language than all the other supervisory personnel.

Techniques of Writing Mechanics

More emphasis should be given to the writing mechanics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. However, supervisors from banks with deposits of $500 million or more would put more emphasis on grammar and punctuation than supervisors from smaller banks.

Upper management would give more emphasis to spelling than both first line and middle management. Also, branch administration personnel would emphasize spelling more than all the other functional areas.

Use of Graphic Aids

The use of graphic aids such as tables, figures, and charts should be given more emphasis in report writing. Upper management would emphasize graphic aids more than both first line and middle management.

Personnel who have educational degrees beyond high school would give more emphasis to the use of graphic aids than those personnel with only a high school diploma. Also, males would emphasize this topic more than females.

Format of Reports

The letter and memorandum report form should be given more emphasis than the long, formal report. Perhaps the reason for this result is the frequency that reports are written by bank supervisors; therefore, the length of the reports would probably be shorter. However, data processing personnel would emphasize the long, formal report more than the personnel from the other functional areas.

Function of Reports

Progress and examination reports should be given more emphasis than the other report functions such as analytical and informational reports, process description, and writing for publication. However, supervisors in upper management and supervisors who have completed a course in report writing would give more emphasis to analytical reports. Supervisory banking personnel in bank administration would emphasize progress reports more than any other functional area.

Oral Presentations of Reports

The techniques of oral presentations of reports, along with the use of visual aids, should be given more comprehensive coverage in the report writing class. This topic is extremely important because the supervisory banking personnel make frequent oral presentations of their reports.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS REPORT WRITING
TOPICS IN ORDER OF EMPHASIS

1. Techniques of Oral Presentations
2. Use of Shorter Sentences and Familiar Words
3. Readability
4. Adaptation to the Reader
5. Concreteness
6. Grammar
7. Direct, Deductive, or Psychological Pattern of Organization
8. Clarity
9. Use of Primary Sources of Data Collection
10. Indirect, Inductive, or Logical Pattern of Organization
11. Objectivity
12. Sentence Structure
13. Conciseness and Brevity
14. Letter Reports
15. Punctuation
16. Spelling
17. Use of Graphic Aids
18. Memorandum Reports
19. Progress Reports
20. Examination Reports

General Reactions Regarding the Report Writing Course

Eighty-eight percent of the supervisors indicated that their bank did not offer in-service training in report writing. Of those supervisors in banks that did not offer in-service training in report writing, 81 percent stated that their bank should offer training in report writing.

Also, 48 percent of the bank supervisors indicated that the collegiate business report writing course should be a required course in the business curriculum. Thirty-eight percent stated that the collegiate course should be an elective, and 14 percent had no opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Report writing is a common requirement for personnel in supervisory banking positions.

2. Oral presentations of written reports are required regularly.

3. Most reports are written to personnel within the bank organization, with only occasional reporting to individuals outside the bank.

4. Instructors should give more emphasis to specific report writing topics that are needed by supervisory banking personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study provided the basis for the following recommendations:

1. Instructors, as well as training directors, must keep abreast of the report writing requirements which are most important to supervisory banking personnel.

2. Oral presentations of all written assignments should be required in the report writing class.

3. Instructors should develop more supervisory in-service training programs in report writing.

4. Instructors should prepare manuscripts on effective report writing for banking trade journals.

5. Further research should be conducted by analyzing the report writing practices of other industries.

6. Report writing should be either a required or recommended elective course for students planning careers in banking.

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DEGREE OF SIMILARITY BETWEEN ACTUAL BUSINESS REPORTS AND TEXTBOOK PRESENTATIONS OF REPORT WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Report writing is a very necessary part of business, offering input for making decisions, bringing about change, and forming the very "...basis for the businessperson's execution of managerial duties." [9, p.21].

The importance of successful articulation from the report writing classroom to the real world of work is evident. This study provides a step toward achieving that successful articulation by reaching out into the business world and studying various reports utilized in the decision-making process.

An in-depth analysis of one dozen textbook presentations in report writing produced twelve criteria upon which to base an examination of actual reports secured from a random sampling of businesses in Northeastern Oklahoma and Northwestern Arkansas.

The findings do indicate some degree of variation in textbook presentations and actual report writing practices of businesses. Those deserve full attention of report writing instructors and textbook authors. On the other hand, several factors studied further solidify textbook presentations. One of the objectives of this research is to provide the business instructor, in particular, with information of both similarities and differences so that such information can supply documentation for those instructors in those inevitable confrontations with students who question the validity of the report writing assignment and its particulars.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

In the business community, "success" is oftentimes equated with the ability to express oneself in writing, particularly in the preparation of the business or technical report. Shaw points out that "Nothing is quite as final as the printed word, or as certain as the identity of the man who wrote it....Acceptance...will become largely synonymous with the degree of success he has in becoming a true pro." [11, p.18]. Davis offers one brief striking conclusion to his advice to the engineer who hopes to advance: "To succeed, one must write well." [3, p.216].

Unfortunately, "The evidence that the quality of writing has been declining in the last decade or two is both well documented and widely known." [5, p.20] Dodge, writing instructor in business at the University of Texas at Austin, further asserts that "Student writing is currently so very poor that showing students how to get a message across to an audience or how to compose a basic report is the first order of business." [5, p.20].

> Indeed, the criticism which employers make of college graduates more frequently than any other is their inability to write a clear sentence or a well-phrased report and to handle an oral presentation effectively. [12, p.9].

Surveys of business people and college graduates add validity to Stoddard's statement, yielding such results as that reported by Woodcock, who found that "...in the area of reports, managerial trainees rated the preparation of an analytical report to be the item that presented the greatest difficulty." [15, p.48].

Woodcock's study also revealed that reports tended to be the second most time-consuming type of writing, "with 48 percent of the respondents ranking reports as highest or next highest." [15, p.39].

Thus, the big question for instructors of report writing is whether classroom instruction is adequate to equip the business student with the necessary skills for success in this important aspect of employment.

> Although there may be some conditions under which some departures from standard do not affect the effectiveness of a written message, clearly there are many others under which they do. It would be naive to think otherwise...To oversimplify greatly--the way we write it makes a difference--sometimes. Our research must find out when and, if possible, why. [4, p.22].

Therefore, the purpose of this study is directed to the "when" and "why"--and to determine if, in reality, there are significant differences between the actual report writing practices of business and report writing instruction in the collegiate classroom.

DESIGN OF STUDY

General Design

This study was limited to the more formal business report rather than the informal memorandum or letter report. The selection process was also directed toward "prescriptive" (also called "problem-solving," "analytical," "initiation," and "justification") reports rather than status, annual, descriptive, or financial reports.

The business reports used for this research represent a random sampling of businesses in Northwestern Arkansas and Northeastern Oklahoma, and include the following types of organizations:

Public Schools	CPA Firms
Research and Consulting Firms	Hospitals
Consulting Engineering Firms	Retailers
City Government	Civic Organizations
Banks	

The time period represented by the reports covers the years 1974 through 1980.

Methodology

Textbook analysis. The research consisted of a detailed study of sample business reports following pre-established criteria based on an analysis of one dozen communications and report writing textbooks. The twelve textbooks used in developing the criteria include:

Brown, Harry M., Business Report Writing, New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1980.

Brown, Leland, Effective Business Report Writing (Third Edition), Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

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Pearsall, Thomas E. and Donald H. Cunningham, How to Write for the World of Work, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.

Treece, Malra, Communication for Business and the Professions, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978.

Wilkinson, C. W., et al., Communicating Through Letters and Reports, Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1980.

Wolf, et al., Effective Communication in Business (Seventh Edition), Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1979.

Criteria. The twelve general areas chosen for analysis as a result of the study of the texts listed above are as follows:

Directional flow	Body
Documentation	General typographical form
Length	Terminal section
Readability level	Supplemental parts
Prefatory parts	Graphics
Introductory parts	Grammatical errors

Each of the twelve general areas included specific factors to be measured. Thus, the final compilation of the data represents 50 different factors involved in the report writing process.

Procedure. Each report was analyzed and frequencies tallied, along with special notes of significant findings. Then the individual report analyses were combined for a composite picture of factors contained in the reports for a comparison with that presented in the textbooks.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study do indicate some significant variations in report writing techniques practiced in business and industry and those presented in report writing textbooks. On the other hand, some of the results further solidify textbook presentations and can serve as documentation for report writing instructors in those inevitable confrontations with business communication students who question the validity of the report writing assignment and its particulars.

Directional Flow

Further validating textbook emphasis on upward flow of prescriptive-type business reports, all of the sample business reports were upward in directional flow. However, included in that upward flow were a surprising number of externally prepared reports, having been done by outside consulting agencies. These externally prepared reports were labeled "upward" in the sense that the consultants were responsible to management of the firm during the time the study was being conducted.

No doubt, if this study included other types of reports such as informational, status, or annual reports, directional flow would include horizontal and downward. However, textbooks and current literature emphasize the need for instruction in the type of report which leads to or aids management in making a decision and/or solving a problem. Watt, in his presentation in the ABCA Bulletin in 1979, asserts that "research effort should lead to a report which presents an effective solution to the problem." [14, p.24] Garman's study in 1972 [6] found the function of the majority (57.7%) of the reports studied to be analytical, and Woodcock's study indicated that the analytical report is the one which presents the "...greatest difficulty" [15, p.21] for managerial trainees.

Considering that the largest percentage of business reports are analytical or prescriptive, and that "...most business reports are authorized reports commissioned by a superior in response to a business problem," [9, p.21] it is conceivable that "upward-bound, prescriptive-type" reports should receive the most emphasis in the report writing classroom.

Documentation and References

Only 10% of the sample reports used any formal documentation, but well over one-half referred to the source within context of the discussion and presentation; thus, the information was given validity although very few formal footnotes or supplemental references were incorporated into the reports. Partially accounting for this is the fact that the reports consisted almost entirely of primary research which reduced the demand for references.

Such findings point to the need for report writing instructors to teach the writing of business reports emphasizing primary research--not simply the writing of term papers.

Length

Garman's study in 1972 [6, p.16] found that 18.2% of the students' reports were one page, 38.3% were two to three pages, 21.4% were four to five pages, 5.4% were ten to eleven pages, and 10.6% were twelve or more pages.

However, a full 90% of the actual business reports sampled in this study were over 30 pages, with 40% of these being over 60 pages. This figure includes narrative, illustrations, and appendices as indicated in Table 1 on the following page. An average of 38.42% of the report length of the sample reports consisted of tables and graphics. Further detail on the use of tables and graphics will be presented in a later section.

Although educators most often recommend shorter reports, the results of this study indicate that, in reality, graduates of report writing classrooms will be writing much lengthier reports than those generally required by most report writing instructors.

TABLE 1
COMPOSITION OF REPORTS AND
PAGES DEVOTED TO EACH

Composition of Reports	Percent of Sample Reports			
	1-10 Pages	11-30 Pages	31-60 Pages	Over 60 Pages
Narrative	10	30	50	10
Illustrations*	30	40	10	10
Appendices*	50	20	10	10
Total Length	0	10	50	40

*10% of the reports had neither illustrations nor appendices.

Readability Level

"Too often...we find reports that exhibit good organization, yet the content is still not clear and certainly not readable." [13, p.71]. Robert Gunning attributes the largest percentage of the readability problem to writers who, "Through pomposity, stupidity or carelessness...use more elaborate signals, from sentence to sentence, than their message requires." [8, p.11].

Perhaps the authors of the sample reports used in this study could benefit from a study of readability indexes since the average index for all the reports was 14.3, with none of the reports registering below 9.7 and some going as high as 18.5 (see Table 2)--OR would the higher readability index be justified because of the technical nature of the reports and the fact that the directional flow was upward?

It would be well for students in report writing to be made aware of readability indexing and subsequent variations due to directional flow, although it is a generally accepted rule of thumb that business reports not exceed a readability level of the twelfth grade. Rootle, in his article in the ABCA Bulletin in 1979, encouraged the use of a readability index in the report writing classroom, explaining that "Readability can be covered in one or two class periods, or it can be used as a basis for an extensive review of many of the elements that are important in writing effectively." [10, p.26].

TABLE 2
READABILITY LEVEL

Fog Index	Percent of Reports in Each Category
8 and below	0
9 - 10	10
11 - 12	30
13 - 14	10
15 - 16	30
17 - 18	20

Prefatory Parts

This study confirms the use of the same prefatory parts as suggested in most report writing textbooks. Table 3 depicts all of the prefatory parts studied in this research and shows the precentage of reports using each.

It is interesting to note that the letters of transmittal ranged from one to three pages in length, with 75% of them being three pages long and only 25% of them one page long. There was a tendency for the letters of transmittal to include such information as a brief summary of the findings, design of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and background of the study, although not always bearing the specific respective titles.

The table of contents format varied considerably among the various reports. To guide the reader from the entry to the corresponding page number, 40% of the reports used the period, 10% used the hyphen, and 40% used no leaders at all. (10% of the reports had no table of contents page)

Various titles were employed for the listing of tables included in the report. These included "List of Tables," "Table of Illustrations," "Tables," "Index of Exhibits," "Map Exhibits," and "Figures."

The term "Summary" was used more often than "Abstract" or "Synopsis."

This study of prefatory parts, as well as other areas which will be mentioned later, points to a need for flexibility in teaching the various titles to be employed in each division of the business report.

TABLE 3
PREFATORY PARTS

Prefatory Parts by Name	Percent of Reports Including Part
Title Fly	30
Title Page	100
Letter of Authorization	0
Letter of Acceptance	0
Letter of Approval	0
Letter of Transmittal	40
Acknowledgments	20
Table of Contents	90
Table of Illustrations	40
Abstract (Summary)	60
Foreward	10

Introductory Parts

Although only a few of the introductory parts as taught in most report writing textbooks were included by exact title, most of them were included in the context of the introduction or in the transmittal letter as shown by Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
INTRODUCTORY PARTS

Introductory Part	Percent of Sample Reports		
	Included by Title	Included in Introduction (No Heading)	Included in Transmittal Letter (No Heading)
General Paragraph Introduction	40	0	0
Statement of Problem	0	50	0
Purpose of the Study	20	60	10
Scope of the Study	20	30	10
Design of the Study	30	20	20
Limitations of the Study	0	10	20
Definition of Terms	0	0	0
Background of Study	20	30	10
Hypothesis	0	0	0
Plan of Presentation	0	20	0

The general paragraph introduction was usually written with no heading of its own, but preceded by the main heading using such titles as

"General Introduction," "Introduction and Summary," "General," and also specific subject headings depicting content to follow.

The "Purpose of the Study" was sometimes referred to as "Objectives," and often sections were combined under such titles as "Purpose and Scope," "Background and Scope," "Background and Objectives," "Approach," and "Study and Action to Date."

This study of introductory parts, like that of prefatory parts, indicates that report writing instructors need to maintain a degree of flexibility in choice of titles utilized and location of specific sections in the various divisions of the report.

Body

Title. Main headings such as "Findings and Analysis," "Discussion," "Presentation of Data," etc., as generally suggested in textbooks, were not found in any of the reports with the exception of the heading "Results" which was used in 20% of the sample reports. Instead, 80% of the reports introduced the body of the report by using specific subject headings descriptive of the content to follow.

Heading format and structure. All of the reports utilized the noun structure for the main headings and 60% used noun headings for the side heads and paragraph heads. Phrase headings were used as side heads in 30% of the reports, although noun structure was used for the main headings.

Several styles of headings were used throughout the reports. The traditional main heading in all caps was used in 80% of the reports, with 20% of those headings being underscored as well as in all caps. Initial caps centered was another form used for main heads in 10% of the reports, and 10% of the reports used initial caps centered for subheads. Side heads in all caps were used in almost three-fourths (70%) of the reports, with 60% of the reports using the traditional side heads in initial caps and underscored. Obviously, from the overlap in percentages, some of the reports used both styles in the same report. The average number of headings used per report ranged from 4.5 to 33 as illustrated in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5
HEADING FORMAT

Type of Heading	Average Number per Report
All Caps Centered	5.43
All Caps Centered and Underscored	4.50
Initial Caps Centered	
As Main Heads	5.00
As Subheads	10.00
Side Heads in Initial Caps	33.00
Side Heads in Initial Caps and Underscored	20.83
Paragraph Heads	12.00
All Cap Side Heads	20.57

Organizational approach. All the reports studied were organized around the criteria to be presented. A bit more than one-half of them also incorporated additional approaches, such as chronological (10%), inductive (30%), and deductive (30%).

The findings from this study of the body of the report hint that these parts of report writing instruction be scrutinized carefully, particularly the titles used for the main heading of the body and the form suggested for the specific headings, such as the all-cap side head. But whichever form and approach the report writing instructor may teach, students should be encouraged to "...use plenty of headings and subtitles." [1, p.203]

Terminal Section

All the sample reports included either summary, conclusions, or recommendations, with some including all three. However, not all authors chose to place these sections at the end of the report; but rather, some were located in the front of the report. Table 6 gives the specific percentages of those appearing in the various locations in the report.

Since at least 50% of the reports included either summary, conclusions, or recommendations as a terminal section, no need for change from the traditional textbook presentation is recommended.

TABLE 6
TERMINAL SECTION

Title	Percent		
Terminal Section	In Back	In Front	Omitted
Summary	50	30	20
Conclusion	30	10	60
Recommendation	50	10	40

Supplemental Parts

The only supplemental part included in the sample reports was the appendix, with 80% of the reports adding an appendix of two or more pages. The average number of pages for an appendix was 10.14, and this figure was derived by omitting from the calculation one report with 351 pages of appendices so as to avoid skewing the results. Actual pages devoted to appendices (except for the one of 351 pages) ranged from 2 to 28.

With a notable percentage of the reports utilizing the appendix for illustrations, maps, etc., it seems advisable that the report writing instructor strongly encourage the use of the same in student reports.

Use of Graphics, Tables and Illustrations

All of the sample reports incorporated graphics and/or tables in the presentation of the data. Table 7 itemizes the types of illustrations employed and the degree to which each was used. The average percent of the reports devoted to graphics and tables was 40.58%. By eliminating from the calculation the lowest of 9.09% and the highest of 89.42%, the average becomes 38.42%, with individual reports ranging from 25.75% to 74.19%. The table was the type of illustration used most often, occupying 60.58% of all space used for illustrations. The second most often used was the line graph, occupying 29.03% of the total space devoted to illustrations. These two were by far the most common type, with the next highest percentage dropping all the way to 4.44% for space occupied by maps, as shown in Table 7.

This study, in keeping with the findings of Ridley Gros in 1974, [7, pp.21-27] indicates that written plus graphic communication is more effective than either written or graphic alone.

TABLE 7
USE OF GRAPHICS

Type of Graphic	Percent* of Total Graphic Space Devoted to Each Type
Maps	4.44
Tables	60.58
Line Graphs	29.03
Bar Graphs	.81
Special Forms	2.02
Flowcharts	1.61
Blueprints	.81
Schematics	.81

*The one report which devoted 89.42% of the entire report to graphics was eliminated from this computation to prevent skewing the results.

In the results of a survey performed by students who interviewed 94 business people, "increased emphasis was recommended on the preparation of tables and figures," [2, p.2] which would certainly be in agreement with the results of this report showing that well over one-third of most business reports is devoted to graphics, tables, or other illustrations.

Garman's study [6, p.16] points out the lack of emphasis on graphics showing that only 10 to 20 percent of the students in the report writing classroom used any form of graphics at all in their reports; hence, the need for more attention to this important area of report writing.

> Maybe a picture isn't worth a thousand words, but illustrations and diagrams can do wonders to relieve the tedium of a long highly detailed report. Dress up your reports with diagrams and drawings that can reinforce your major points. [1, p.203]

Methods of Data Collection

Over one-half (60%) of the sample reports used data collected directly from company and/or government records, with the other 40% using the survey method. Thus, the authors used primary research in 100% of the reports studied. Secondary research was added to 10% of the reports, primarily for background, substantiating evidence of need and/or purpose of study.

As mentioned on page 6, the need for a classroom emphasis on primary research is apparent since most business reports utilize little or no secondary research at all.

Grammatical Errors

The average number of errors detected per page equaled .874; however, by removing one report which was particularly high in errors, the average number of errors per page dropped to .513. Errors in punctuation accounted for 37.93% of these errors, with spelling errors falling in second at 19.31%. Typographical errors accounted for 18.62%, errors in verb agreement for 9.66%, in sentence structure 5.52%, in word usage 3.45%, in pronoun usage 2.76%, in parallelism 2.07%, and in capitalization .69% (see Table 8).

All of the reports contained errors in punctuation, 60% contained errors in verb agreement and spelling, and 50% contained errors in use of a wrong word. These figures, along with the less significant percentages, are presented in Table 8 below.

TABLE 8
GRAMMATICAL AND TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

Type of Error	Percent of Reports In Which Error Occurred	Percent of Total Errors
Verb Agreement	60	9.66
Punctuation	100	37.93
Spelling	60	19.31
Capitalization	10	.69
Sentence Structure	30	5.52
Word Usage	50	3.45
Parallelism	10	2.07
Pronouns	20	2.76
Typographical	40	18.62

With so little time being available for grammar instruction in most communications' classes, perhaps instructors could spend this time best emphasizing punctuation and spelling since those are the two areas indicating a higher degree of error occurrence.

General Typographical Format

Body

Single spaced in 60% of the reports
Double spaced in 30% of the reports
One-half spaced in 10% of the reports

Paragraph Indentions

Five spaces in 60% of the reports
Three spaces in 10% of the reports
Ten spaces in 10% of the reports
Flush with left margin in 20% of the reports

Spacing Between Paragraphs

Double spaced in 60% of the reports
Triple spaced in 30% of the reports
Single spaced in 10% of the reports

Spacing Around Side Headings

Triple space before and double space after in 50% of the reports
Double space before and double space after in 20% of the reports
Triple space before and triple space after in 30% of the reports

Back and/or Front Copy

One-sided copy (front only) in 70% of the reports
Two-sided copy (front and back) in 30% of the reports

Location of Page Number

Upper right-hand corner in 20% of the reports
Centered bottom in 20% of the reports
Centered bottom with hyphens in 50% of the reports
Lower right-hand corner in 10% of the reports

The general typographical format is very much like that illustrated in report writing textbooks; however, two features deserve special attention: the single-spacing of the body of the report and the location of the page number--centered at the bottom preceded and followed by a hyphen--in one-half of all reports examined.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because success in the business world is oftentimes dependent upon one's ability to write an effective report, the findings of this research become increasingly important to the report writing instructor.

The results of this study do indicate some variations in report writing techniques presented in report writing textbooks and those practiced by business and industry. On the other hand, some of the findings further solidify textbook presentations. Hence, it is important that the report writing instructor and textbook author review each of the twelve areas analyzed in this study, noting in particular the conclusions and recommendations at the close of each of the twelve sections.

Since this study was completed using a random sample of business reports, the validity of setting the business report up as the desired model is questionable. In fact, perhaps the findings in some areas call for business practices to be updated to conform to those guidelines presented in the report writing textbook and classroom. However, it is recommended that particular attention be given to those areas where the majority of the report writing practices of business differ from those presented in the textbooks.

In addition, it is recommended that further research be done in the area of report writing, using a standard measure of success in selecting a stratified sampling of businesses.

It is imperative that the report writing instructor recognize the urgency of providing proper training for students in report writing. Assuming that Dodge is correct in asserting that writing is a useful skill which "can be taught...we can teach almost anyone to write," [5, p.23] the challenge lies before report writing instructors to utilize such findings as these and usher the report writing student into the real world equipped to handle the most important of writing assignments.

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PART IV

INSTRUCTION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

INCORPORATING WORD PROCESSING IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Word/information processing is a topic receiving much attention today, as it represents the greatest technological change in business since data processing. Various curriculum options are available for providing students with the competencies needed for word processing, one of which is integration of these skills and knowledges in existing courses. Because the two skills most needed by word processors are language arts skills and communication skills, business communication instructors are remiss in their responsibilities if they are not addressing these needs. This paper discusses specific competencies needed by word processors that are logically a part of the business communication course; it further suggests strategies for teaching toward those competencies.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of word/information processing is receiving much attention today. With words like telecommunications, micrographics, reprographics, standalone, on-line, etc. being bounced around, there is a tendency to think that word processing is almost magic. Actually there is nothing magic about it at all (in spite of the fact that the University of Houston Central Campus has named its word processing center the Magic Center).

Like all systems, the word processing system consists of input, procedures, and output. Input is the creation and communication of an idea. Procedures involve trained people using specialized equipment and precise procedures. Output is the typewritten document and communication. The word processing system results in communication with the greatest accuracy, produced with the least effort, and at the lowest cost.

The history of word processing is a short but changing one. It began in the mid 1960s in Germany when IBM introduced the Magnetic Tape Selectric Typewriter. To streamline the communication process, all dictation was to go through a central transcribing location. However, because such a system proved to have problems, the trend today is to work clusters, satellite centers, or work rotation. Today's approach requires more than ever that people involved in word processing have a broad range of skills.

The two skills most needed by word processors are language arts skills and communication skills. Developing a curriculum for word processors does not require a drastic change in the business communication component. Rather, what is called for is a refocusing of instruction to address those skills that are needed. For example, general agreement exists that all business students should be taught how to dictate; yet, this skill is not taught in a course that most students take (the usual course is secretarial or office procedures). Logically, dictation skills should probably be taught in the business communication course.

COMPETENCIES NEEDED BY WORD PROCESSORS

Competencies for the word processing curriculum have been derived and are available from a number of sources, such as the Illinois Office of Education. A look at those competencies quickly shows that most are not equipment oriented and, in fact, are communication oriented. These include verbal communications (telephone usage; organizing and dictating material for letters, documents, and reports; and giving clear explanations and directions). Also included are written communications (composing letters, reports, and memos; using correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and numbers; proofreading and editing; and composing instructions for procedures manuals). Word processors also need some skill in planning, organizing, and decision making (i.e., organizing work stations; setting priorities; managing time; researching information; analyzing data and presenting it in visual formats). Some supervision skills are needed, along with a broad range of interpersonal skills (from listening attentively to having a good sense of humor).

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WP COMPETENCIES

Various strategies can be used with success in providing students with the communication competencies presented above. General kinds of information about word processing can be acquired by students through oral or written reports of films, field trips, books or periodicals.

Skill development in speaking lends itself to the use of oral reports, oral critiques, and videotaped oral reports with feedback. Listening can be taught through instructor-created exercises or commercially available materials such as the Xerox Effective Listening Program. As all business communication instructors know, several strategies exist for teaching written communication: practice in letter composition, films, oral critiques of practice letters. The teaching of business English, while a definite challenge, can be accomplished with remedial labs or audio-visual-tutorial materials.

Spelling, the biggest complaint of employers, deserves time spent on regularly scheduled spelling tests (oral or written) taken from a variety of word lists. Likewise, proofreading and editing abilities are crucial and can be developed through instructor-created exercises or commercially available materials--or even through the use of a reward system such as extra credit and awards. Students can learn the use of reference materials through library visits, library assignments, and exercises requiring the use of various reference books.

To teach dictation, teachers might include outlining and organizing and dictation by telephone and machines. An effective method is to have a secretarial procedures class transcribe the material dictated by the business communication students and provide feedback about their dictation style. Telephone techniques can be taught with the use of a telephone company teletrainer or films.

Probably the best strategies for teaching planning, organizing, and decision-making are the use of a timed situation (such as tests) and the use of a group term project. The group term project also helps develop supervision and administrative skills and interpersonal skills.

SUGGESTION

Obviously not every business communication course will be able to include all the competencies and strategies discussed above. However, the instructor whose business communication course is helping to prepare people for word processing should insist on being involved in the word processing curriculum development--to ensure the inclusion of all needed skills and to avoid unnecessary overlapping and repetition.

CREATIVITY AS A SPECIFIC TOOL IN TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

An open-ended questionnaire was administered to 200 graduate and undergraduate Business Administration students to find personality types and creative techniques that were felt to aid or not aid the learning process. An open, honest, enthusiastic person with a caring and positive attitude are favorable characteristics to have. Lack of communication skills are primary in hindering the learning process. Creative techniques that are used the most are considered the least effective by the students.

INTRODUCTION

An open-ended questionnaire was administered to 200 business students in the Spring of 1981 to ascertain coursework, teaching aids, equipment and exercises exposed to, and to determine student's perception of their effectiveness. The students were enrolled in a graduate fundamental management class, a graduate and undergraduate personnel management class, a senior level business policy class and a senior level organizational behavior class. Sixty percent were male and forty percent were female. The students represented all majors in Business with Management, Marketing and Accounting being the three most common majors.

The Objectives

The objectives of this paper are three in number. First, to examine the creative process to enhance knowledge of the paper. Second, to distinguish creativity as a separate entity which must be individually developed and nurtured. Third, to report on a survey of student responses to creative elements used in the classroom.

The Process

Dr. John Petitt cites De Bono's concept of "lateral thinking" to describe the creative process when he states:

> Physiologically, the left side of the brain is the more analytical, functional side and is the more developed because of the emphasis on rational thinking that is part of culture and education and contributes to the development of the inhibiting conscious mind and the filter. The right side of the brain is the appreciating, connecting part and functions consciously in putting here-to-fore unrelated ideas, elements, and concepts together. Because of the emphasis on "rational thinking," the right side of the brain is usually less developed and increasingly deactivated as behaviors and patterns of thinking are established. Therefore, it is important to reactivate and stimulate this part of the brain to allow connectional thinking -- creative expressing.
>
> ...An individual is creative when the left side of the brain is deactivated and the right side of the brain comes into conscious use. Thus, methods are needed to allow the left side to take a vacation while stimulating the right side to function consciously. [1]

Creativity must be exercised and developed, it requires an extra effort. The question is frequently asked, why are some people more creative than others? The answer lies in the desire, the individual's openness to the procedures, and the effort applied.

We are faced with what Newman and Warren of the Columbia Business School call two types of psychological barriers: cultural and perceptual. Our cultural attitudes, fears, indeed the traditional structures of our thinking patterns prevent us from extending the process to a point we consider risky. In effect, by our own sacred logical mentality we are barred from being as creative as potential suggests. Psychologists tell us we develop only a small percentage of our mental potential, and this is logically a major reason.

Traditional designers and artists produced in pragmatic, traditional, and functional value systems when they created square rooms with logically functional overstuffed furniture. Early artists were compelled to the creation of exact replications of their subject. It took the impressionists of the late nineteenth century to defy these cultural barriers and innovate with new and abstract art forms. Contemporary designers, create holistic living environments with creative uses of color, lines, light and glass.

Several prominent group techniques have been developed to stimulate the collective creativity of people working together. Most of you have used the brainstorming technique in classes. Synetics, or the Gordon technique enhances the creative element by using analogies, either personal, symbolic, or fantasy in overcoming barriers in the design or problem solving areas. The Delphi technique, pioneered by the Rand Corporation as a feedback technique for modifying scientific method to answer the unanswerable has made a contribution to the use of the creative element in research.

Ideas in the use of creativity in the classroom are limitless. Two specific examples include: First, the U. S. Air Force Academy and their use of taped presentations of class lectures which are available in the library for students who missed class due to illness, etc. Second, several business communication programs have made use of video recording equipment to tape student presentations for instant feedback. In fact, even toward the absurd; a history professor at a small Virginia college dressed as the historical figure he was discussing. He was convinced of the success of his technique due to student interest levels and evaluations.

Creativity is important in every facet of business. Whether in fine arts, advertising, design, or in the more technical areas of research, development, product marketing strategies, etc. It seems logical to recognize the importance of this valuable tool as a specific and distinguishable vehicle to enhance the educational process.

RESULTS

Casework

The students were asked to list three courses they learned the most (least) in and three courses they enjoyed the most (least). Generally speaking, the students said they learned and enjoyed courses in their major, i.e. accounting majors learned/enjoyed accounting class, marketing majors learned/enjoyed marketing classes. When all listings are combined, the results are as follows:

Learned Most	Learned Least
1. General Management	1. Statistics
2. Marketing	2. Economics
3. Organizational Behavior	3. English

Enjoyed Most	Enjoyed Least
1. Management	1. Statistics
2. Marketing	2. Accounting
3. Accounting	3. Finance and Data Processing

Personality Types

The students were to list three specific traits, talents or techniques of a teacher that the student found most and least conducive to learning. The results indicate that students are looking for the same specific traits in a teacher that many teachers are looking for in students. Specific traits listed most often included enthusiasm, pleasantness, realistic expectations, knowledgeable, intelligence, relating to real life. There were also many comments on being open, honest, flexible, sympathetic, non-intimidating and responsive to students' needs. Basically, the students want a teacher with a caring and positive attitude.

Many students feel most teachers have an attitude and ego problem. Listed also were, too aristocratic, cold, insensitive, rigid, boring, uninterested and uninteresting. Students feel many teachers do not relate subject matter to real life.

What was found is that communication skills (both verbal and nonverbal) are considered important. Specifically, talking too fast (are students too slow?), not understandable (meek, mumbles), excessive pacing, poor eye contact, smoking, dirty jokes, being improperly groomed, unalert, using poor English, being rude and interrupting.

Teachers should be aware that students are looking and listening to them. Many things take away from effectiveness in the students' eyes. All students indicated they have been exposed to poor teachers in their college career. Many indicated they have had more poor teachers than good ones. When asked to indicate on a seven point scale how much effect the manner of presentation has on how much they learned, the average was 6.2.

Creative Techniques

The students were asked to list six teaching aids, support equipment, or exercises used to supplement lectures that they have been exposed to. They were also asked to list the three that were most conducive to learning and the three that were least conducive to learning. Results are compiled in Table 1.

TABLE I

Techniques Used	% of Exposure	Least Effective	Most Effective
1. Overheads	48%	22%	12%
2. Films	48%	10%	27%
3. Speakers	31%	—	23%
4. Handouts	27%	7%	12%
5. Cases	20%	6%	11%
6. Group Projects	14%	6%	—
7. Slides	12%	6%	—
8. Field Trips	23%	-	10%
9. Presentations	10%	-	—

The two most commonly used supplement (overheads and films) are the two that are considered to be the least effective. The comments of students centered around the fact that overheads and films are used to fill time or replace the lecture - not as a supplement or aid. While films are considered least effective by 10% of the students, 27% said they are most effective, making this the top rated technique. Many students listed this as effective with the qualification, "if not used to fill up time." The conclusion here is that while there is much potential for use in these two areas, there is much potential for abuse. Speakers are rated a close second to films as being the most effective and was not rated as being an ineffective method of presentation. The conclusion is that more outside speakers should be sought.

When divided into graduate students and undergraduates, and listing techniques that helped present material in a creative manner, important differences are found. Graduates listed (1) class presentations, (2) role playing, (3) audio visual, (4) charts and graphs, (5) overheads, and (6) films. Undergraduates listed (1) real life experiences, (2) discussions, (3) cases, (4) blackboards and (5) examples. Because of the differences in the types of techniques used, graduates may be more aware and think of creativity more because of exposure to techniques such as presentations, role playing and audio visual. When asked to indicate on a seven point scale how much effect these techniques have on learning, the average was 5.3.

Eighty-four percent of the students say that they think creativity is a separate entity in itself. Ninety-two percent say they "think" about creativity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The students were asked to describe, as best they could, a creative person. Data generated was standard textbook answers. Comments generated around "the ability to bring something new in existence." One person said that a creative person is "original, new, unique, right hemispheric dominance, slightly feministic, high activity in reticular activating system and much frontal lobic stimulation. Ability to be flexible in society and able to relax enough to create random thought matrixes. Ability to handle new stimuli and do something with them productively."

The most creative response, however, was "a creative person is one who can be caught in bed with his/her best friends' wife/husband and leave the house on friendly terms." Now <u>that's</u> creativity!

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A SIMULATION OF REAL-WORLD BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Typically, students enrolled in business communications classes think only in terms of homework assignments. They rarely think that classwork relates to anything they may do later in the "real world."

The simulation involving alternating customer/manager relationships was developed to approximate business transactions which students may experience while in the classroom.

Activities in the simulation are sequential and may be completed in seven class periods of one hour each; or cover a number of weeks.

Sequential steps include an order-instruction letter and acknowledgement, adjustment request and response, statement and remittance. Each step requires a role change. Evaluation is deferred until each customer/manager set of correspondence is completed.

INTRODUCTION

One course of business communications is required of every major in Northeastern State University's College of Business and Industry. A prerequisite for the course is typewriting ability, and it is taught in a room equipped with typewriters and desks. This setting enhances the premise that business people must be able not only to compose effective communications, but also to put them into final form for mailing.

After reviewing principles of writing and routine types of business letters and memos, order letters are presented. Most students can relate well to composing order letters, as a customer.

SIMULATION SEQUENCES

Activities in the simulation are sequential and may be completed in seven or eight class periods of one hour each; however, they can be alternated with class discussions, and supplemented with text readings.

Step 1: The Customer Orders

Students are given instructions to compose an order letter for five items, personal business style, to a given mail-order firm. They are to type and sign their name as a customer. Shipping instructions include one ordered item to be a birthday gift, wrapped, sent to a separate address. One item of the order is to be sent to a friend. The order must be charged to a previous account number.

This assignment requires clear writing and specific mailing instructions within a time restriction.

Step 2: The Manager Responds

Every student has written a customer order letter; now every student responds to a letter by his customer (classmate). As a manager of the mail-order firm this time, students compose an acknowledgment to the order letter given them. As managers they are to use a modern letter format, either full block or AMS. The manager indicates just what action is being taken with the order, types, signs, and staples the response to the order letter.

Step 3: The Customer Requests an Adjustment

At this point, each group of two letters is returned to the original customer who writes a request for an adjustment, since (a) the gift was broken when it arrived and it should be replaced, and (b) one item was not the correct color.

This calls for great writing skill on the part of the student to word a replacement adjustment without sounding too accusatory. And the customer must say whether the incorrect item is being returned for credit on account, or replacement. Letters are to be typed in personal business style, signed, and stapled to the stack.

Step 4: The Manager Responds to The Request

On this step, the manager is to take the set of correspondence for response. Students are free to decide whether or not to grant an adjustment based on the situation as presented by each set of correspondence. Since students in the role of customers are not told how to ask for an adjustment, neither are the managers told how to make an adjustment. They may replace the broken gift at no cost to the customer, or charge for the replacement; credit the customer's account, or replace the incorrect item. The students are really on their own and the instructor does not interpret their incoming letters for them or help them decide what to do.

Step 5: The Manager Sends a Statement

The manager for each set of correspondence prepares a statement for the amount his customer owes. (This is more realistic about two weeks following Step 4, but can follow sooner.)

Statement forms may be duplicated for the class, especially if time is short. The manager must compute and type correct information, interpreting debits and credits. These statements are stapled to the correspondence.

Step 6: The Customer Pays His Bill

Duplicated sample checks are taken to class, along with the stacks of correspondence, sometime after the statements have been written. The customer writes a letter of remittance and encloses a check paying the bill for his set of correspondence. Checks bearing a fictitious bank name have SAMPLE written on them for security's sake.

Step 7: The Manager Acknowledges The Payment And Writes A Resale Letter

As a final assignment, the manager for each set of correspondence writes a sales letter on a specific product offered by the mail-order firm. If this activity occurs near a holiday period, special sales on a theme may be used. Otherwise, students choose a product in advance of the writing period and research it, gathering data on which to compose a persuasive letter stressing the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) pattern. Creativity is encouraged as students design a suitable letterhead.

The whole cycle of simulation could begin again, with the customer ordering whatever the resale letter is stressing. Or it can stop with Step 7.

Note

According to the organization of the business communications text in use, assignments for reading appropriate chapters should accompany this simulation, if not covered prior to beginning Step 1.

Evaluation

No grading is done until the entire simulation is finished. Letters in each set are read and errors marked. Each set of correspondence then has two grades established--one for the customer and one for the manager. A scale (curve) of grades/errors is developed.

Each student has been a customer for one set of correspondence and the manager in another set. In each set, the customer writes three letters and a check; the manager writes three letters and a statement. But there are interesting differences which appear when the students change roles!

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TEACHERS: PERCEPTIONS OF ABCA MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

Three hundred and thirty-eight members of the American Business Communication Association provided ratings of either the ideal, best, or worst business communication teacher on the Tuckman Teacher Feedback Form (TTFF). Initial analysis of the data suggested that the worst teacher differs from both the ideal teacher and the best teacher in perceived creativity, dynamism, organized demeanor, and warmth. Subsequent factor analysis indicated, however, that the ideal, best, and worst teachers may not be directly comparable on the original TTFF factors since the factor structures for the three types of teachers are not identical.

INTRODUCTION

The study of teaching effectiveness is the study of teaching outcomes--outcomes assumed from assigned grades and student evaluations. Burton believes that students are in a better position than are teachers or administrators to judge the quality of instruction that they are receiving; the prime requisite is that the instructor be willing and able to face up to what students think of his or her work [5]. Costin and his colleagues emphasize that student ratings fall far short of a complete assessment of an instructor's teaching contribution; they say other factors should be taken into account in any overall measure of instruction. One of these factors is the classification of teachers into categories such as seminar leader, lecturer-teacher, clinical teacher, laboratory teacher, teacher of required or elective courses, or teacher of graduate courses [6]. Other factors could include the data collection method, use of instructional media, the educational environment (including the number and quality of other teachers), and perceived equity [26].

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*The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of John Sherblom in data analysis.

However, it appears that there is no one best way to measure the existence of teaching effectiveness. As of 1978 the most significant conclusion to emerge from the research on teaching and learning was that no single method or style of teaching is best for all students or for all objectives [13, p. 24]. McKeachie and Kulik state that research comparing the effectiveness of various teaching methods and behaviors has been inconclusive [24]. This indicates how hard it is to evaluate any teacher in any learning situation including, of course, a business communication teacher.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into what ABCA members perceive as desirable and undesirable traits for business communication teachers and, secondarily, to explore the usefulness of a particular teacher rating instrument, the Tuckman Teacher Feedback Form (TTFF) [33]. The TTFF has been used to collect ratings of actual teachers in a variety of settings [34; 35; 36]; in this instance we used the TTFF to collect perceptions of extreme teacher behavior (ideal, best, worst). The two research questions were:

1. Do ABCA members perceive the "ideal," "best," and "worst" business communication teachers as differing in creativity, dynamism, organized demeanor, and warmth?

2. Will factor analysis of ABCA member perceptions of "ideal," "best," and "worst" business communication teachers reveal the four-factor structure assumed in the TTFF?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Few articles in the 1970s in either business communication journals or speech communication journals deal with effective teaching in higher education. One of the reasons for this may be the declining number of openings in college teaching and the increasing competition for the openings which do exist. Whatever the reason, many programs place little emphasis on training students for college teaching. One survey suggests that possession of the Ph.D. does not indicate that one is a good teacher, and that the present graduate colleges train researchers not teachers [4].

Little formal teacher education in communication seems to occur. Many of the teacher education articles for speech communication teachers in higher education deal with helping teaching assistants (TAs) determine their distinctive style of teaching, measuring teaching effectiveness in TAs, and outlining strategies for changing teaching behaviors of TAs. Articles on teaching effectiveness in business communication have centered around the business communication course, not the teacher. For example, ABCA has published research dealing with:

1. course content, classroom procedures, quality of instruction, and quality of the business communication course [1; 30];

2. the effect of selected techniques taught in business report writing, i.e., graphics [16]; and

3. different approaches in teaching business communication, i.e., theory vs. application [18], competency bases [31], etc.

There seems to be little information in the communication literature concerning the behavioral characteristics of an effective teacher.

Characteristics of Teachers

Because communication is a unique process, specific training is required. The communication educator, perhaps more than a teacher of any other subject, must possess certain personal qualities: above average proficiency in written and spoken expression, an attractive personality, unusual energy, a genuine liking for young people, and a combination of judicious frankness with tact and judgment [8]. Other areas for competency in communication teachers include a critical awareness of research, the use of models, and appreciation of the beauty of language [23, p. 23]. Reasonably consistent findings about the earmarks of good teaching stress knowledge and organization of subject matter, skills in instruction, and personal qualities and attitudes useful to working with students [9, p. 18].

Bad teaching is commonly associated with such characteristics as stupidity, arrogance, narrowness, sluggishness, cynicism, dullness, or insensitivity [9, p. 18]. Observations of the behavior patterns of college teachers over a 19-year period have identified the following undesirable traits of a college teacher: nervous reactions, speech peculiarities, careless personal habits, careless professional habits (such as tardiness, self-centeredness, inconsiderateness, and excessive moralizing) [3].

The best communication teachers appear to be those who are "human" in the fullest sense of the word. That is, they have a sense of humor, empathy, a sense of fair play, a more democratic than authoritarian classroom climate, and an ability to relate on a one-to-one basis. Their classrooms seem to be more open, spontaneous, and adaptable to change [11]. An investigation at the University of Washington concerning students' high or low opinions of their college teachers, as measured by a set of verbal statements, revealed ten items which contribute most to overall judgment of teachers. Students said that the best teachers:

1. interpret abstract ideas and theories clearly,

2. get students interested in the subject,

3. increase their skills in thinking,

4. help broaden their interests,
5. stress important material,
6. make good use of examples and illustrations,
7. motivate them to do their best work,
8. inspire class confidence in their knowledge of the subject,
9. give them new viewpoints or appreciations, and
10. are clear and understandable in explanations [25, p. 154].

A study conducted at Western Washington State College of the "ideal professor" gathered responses from 443 randomly selected students. The five most important criteria were: knowledge of subject, interest in subject, flexibility, daily course preparations, and vocabulary [12]. The ideal professor's most important roles were teaching and learning; i.e., she or he was well informed on the subject she or he taught, was interested in it, and was able to inspire students [12].

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Two researchers have suggested combinations of characteristics as models for effective teaching. Gage suggests that successful teaching behavior is based on warmth, indirectness, cognitive organization, and enthusiasm [14, p. 27]. Tuckman argues for four similar factors: creativity, dynamism, organized demeanor, and warmth and acceptance [32]. Tuckman's four concepts are briefly discussed in the following four paragraphs.

Being creative, i.e., being uninhibited in thought and method is sometimes of value to the teacher in maintaining the attention of students used to mass media. Many teachers know the value of change and inventiveness in lesson planning and manner of presentation. Such terms as imaginative, willing to experiment, original, and adventurous are used to talk about creative teachers. Each teacher, apparently, should bear a distinctive mark of individuality without flaunting rules, traditions, and precedents.

Staton-Spicer and Nyquist state the best predictor of student evaluations of teachers is dynamism--the more dynamic the teacher, the higher the rating [29]. An effective teacher's performance remains essential to most teaching and learning. However, teachers do not need to court media popularity to lay claim to their student's attention, although they can learn from the performing arts [9, p. 10].

Roberts and Becker found that supervisors rated teachers more effective if their delivery skills were good [28]. To deliver 50 to 80 minutes of lecture or lead a guided discussion, the teacher must be cognitively organized, i.e., understand what she or he is to teach, and sequence ideas in a meaningful way [14, p. 54]. Teachers rarely fail from lack of knowledge; they fail more often because they are unable to communicate what they know so that it makes a difference to their students [17]. Teachers who effectively exhibit organized demeanor show the following behaviors:

1. maintain a proper balance between theory and practice,

2. take into account the wide range of individual differences in students,

3. provide atmosphere of controlled permissiveness, and

4. use "silent time" well--when they listen and watch [8].

Gage defines warmth as the overall tendency to emit positive reinforcements [14, p. 52]. Warm teachers are perceived by students as liking them, and they reciprocate the affection. In a group setting the focus is on interpersonal skills, and leader or teacher empathy makes a difference in the learner outcomes. Teachers who give more positive reinforcement and spend a lot of time in direct contact with students are highly rated.

PROCEDURES

In December 1979 a teaching effectiveness questionnaire was mailed to an unbiased sample of one-half the members of ABCA. One-third of this group (247 members) was asked to rate the ideal business communication teacher, one-third to rate the best business communication teacher they knew, and one-third to rate the worst business communication teacher they knew. The rating scale used was the TTFF.

The TTFF consists of 28 pairs of adjectives (see Figure 1) that were selected through factor analysis. These 28 adjective pairs are grouped into four clusters (or dimensions) that presumably have the same general meaning for people in regard to teaching. The four labels--creativity, dynamism (dominance and energy), organized demeanor (organization and control), and warmth and acceptance--give a shorthand summary of the assumed meanings of the clusters.

Each adjective pair is used to label a seven-space, semantic differential type scale. The positive poles are alternated to minimize a bias in responding to the adjective pairs; a person cannot simply go down the left or the right hand side to check off everything without careful consideration of each pair. To balance out the positive poles being on either side there are plus and minus numbers in Tuckman's formulas.

Useable responses were returned by 338 persons for a response rate of 45.6 percent. The response rate varied from 53.4 percent (n = 132) for those asked to rate the ideal teacher, to 49.0 percent (n = 121) for those asked to rate the best teacher they had observed,

FIGURE 1

TUCKMAN TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

Adjective Pairs

1. original--conventional
2. patient--impatient
3. cold--warm
4. hostile--amiable
5. creative--routinized
6. inhibited--uninhibited
7. iconoclastic--ritualistic
8. gentle--harsh
9. unfair--fair
10. capricious--purposeful
11. cautious--experimenting
12. disorganized--organized
13. unfriendly--sociable
14. resourceful--uncertain
15. reserved--outspoken
16. imaginative--exacting
17. erratic--systematic
18. aggressive--passive
19. accepting (people)--critical
20. quiet--bubbly
21. outgoing--withdrawn
22. in control--on the run
23. flighty--conscientious
24. dominant--submissive
25. observant--preoccupied
26. introverted--extroverted
27. assertive--soft-spoken
28. timid--adventurous

Tuckman's Summary Formulas

1. Item (1 + 5 + 7 + 16) - (6 + 11 + 28) + 18 = Creativity
2. Item (18 + 21 + 24 + 27) - (15 + 20 + 26) + 18 = Dynamism
3. Item (14 + 22 + 25) - (10 + 12 + 17 + 23) + 26 = Organized Demeanor
4. Item (2 + 8 + 19) - (3 + 4 + 9 + 13) + 26 = Warmth

to 34.4 percent (n = 85) for those asked to rate the worst teacher they had observed. A Chi-square test [10, pp. 166-177] indicated that the response rates differed significantly among the three groups (Chi-square = 19.73, df = 2, p = .01) and the magnitude of the relationship was estimated roughly at .161 with the Coefficient of Contingency [19, p. 171]. Additional Chi-square tests indicated that, while the ideal and best rates did not differ from each other, both differed from the response rate for the worst teacher. We suspect the differing response rates were a reflection of the pleasantness of the task; presumably rating an ideal teacher or an excellent teacher is relatively pleasant while recalling and rating a "worst" teacher is relatively unpleasant. The differing response rates indicate that inter-group comparisons in this data should be interpreted cautiously.

RESULTS

As an initial analysis we chose to duplicate Tuckman's methodology in using "factor-based" [20] scores; we summed appropriate scale scores and computed means for each dimension (creativity, dynamism, organized demeanor, warmth) for each of the three groups. We then analyzed the scores on each dimension with a one-way ANOVA [27], using Duncan's New Multiple Range Test [21, pp. 93-94] adapted by Kramer [22] for unequal ns as a follow-up test. All four ANOVAs were statistically significant (p = .01); means and the results of the DNMR test are reported in Table 1. In each case both the ideal teacher and the best teacher ratings differed from the worst teacher ratings. The ideal teacher and best teacher ratings did not differ from each other; the ideal teacher ratings were marginally higher on two dimensions (dynamism, organized demeanor) and the best teacher ratings were marginally higher on two dimensions (creativity, warmth). These results indicate that the ideal and the best business communication teachers are perceived as very similar on these four dimensions. This might be interpreted to indicate either that the best business communication teachers approach the ideal, or that our respondents defined the ideal teacher on the basis of the best teacher in their experience. In contrast, those who described the worst teacher in their experience gave responses which differed markedly from either the ideal teacher or best teacher ratings; this must be interpreted cautiously in light of the differing response rates but would seem to indicate that respondents can use all four of Tuckman's categories to differentiate among teacher behaviors. However, as the remainder of this paper will demonstrate, the situation is not as simple as this initial analysis would seem to indicate.

As noted above, we had initially followed Tuckman and relied on factor-based scores rather than true factor scores. To derive genuine factor scores we performed a factor analysis (principle factoring with iteration, Varimax rotation) [27] and were surprised to note that Tuckman's four factors did not emerge--warmth and organized demeanor scales loaded on a single composite factor and several individual scales did not load as expected. It occurred to us that this might be the result of grouping together ratings from three different groups each of which had responded to a different concept; Cronkhite and Liska have argued that such an approach may yield "a sort of 'average' factor structure" which may not accurately fit any of the specific concepts rated [7].

TABLE 1

MEAN RATINGS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TEACHERS

Dimensions*	Ideal Teacher	Best Teacher	Worst Teacher
Creativity	29.67[a]	30.67[b]	14.13[ab]
Dynamism	29.24[c]	28.84[d]	17.52[cd]
Organized Demeanor	38.57[e]	38.26[f]	10.69[ef]
Warmth	34.96[g]	35.95[h]	10.60[gh]

*Means with the same superscript differ at $p = .01$. Range is from 1 to 43; midpoint = 22.

We separated the three groups and performed a factor analysis on each of the three sets of data. This meant that our sample sizes were smaller than we would have liked (n = 132, 121, 85) but still in excess of 50, the necessary minimum [2, pp. 6-7]. In each case we determined how many factors to retain by "examining varying numbers of factors" [15, p. 156]. We initially extracted all factors with eigenvalues in excess of 1.0 but discarded as trivial those "without a unique set of defining variables" [15, p. 156]. We defined a "unique set of defining variables" as three scales loading on the factor with a primary loading at least .20 higher than any secondary loading. Each of the three factor analyses yielded a four factor solution and in each case the four factors roughly resembled Tuckman's factors. Closer examination indicated, however, that the factors differed considerably in content.

The results for the ideal teacher, as shown in Table 2, resembled Tuckman's most closely. The dynamism factor gained one creativity scale (adventurous--timid), the warmth factor lost one scale, and both the organized demeanor and creativity factors lost two scales each. These results are, then, generally consistent with Tuckman's findings.

TABLE 2

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX FOR IDEAL TEACHER

Scales*	Dynamism	Warmth and Acceptance	Organized Demeanor	Creativity
extroverted--introverted	617	073	135	-140
assertive--soft-spoken	608	-031	085	-215
outspoken--reserved	600	-071	-038	-042
adventurous--timid	579	116	161	-327
bubbly--quiet	579	175	-167	-007
outgoing--withdrawn	572	280	204	-053
aggressive--passive	562	004	172	-154
dominant--submissive	464	-222	238	006
warm--cold	153	716	135	-197
amiable--hostile	116	662	130	-058
patient--impatient	-046	573	260	-056
gentle--harsh	-079	507	005	213
accepting(people)--critical	-100	440	120	-066
sociable--unfriendly	146	383	078	-035
purposeful--capricious	152	166	717	-070
in control--on the run	150	065	660	-101
organized--disorganized	043	138	648	095
systematic--erratic	071	174	502	143
conscientious--flighty	037	178	498	-056
creative--routinized	-109	-173	-036	761
original--conventional	030	-102	-185	737
experimenting--cautious	-204	-153	-046	623
imaginative--exacting	-190	-127	056	571
iconoclastic--ritualistic	-144	-022	154	447
Eigenvalue	5.95	3.12	2.52	1.66
% of variance	21.3	11.1	9.0	5.9

*All non-loading or factorially complex scales have been omitted.

As shown in Table 3, the results for ratings of the best teacher showed that dynamism had gained one creativity scale (adventurous--timid), organized demeanor had gained two warmth scales (patient--impatient, fair--unfair) and lost one scale, creativity had lost three scales, and warmth had lost four scales. These data demonstrate a partial merging of organized demeanor and warmth, suggesting that in the best real teachers characteristics such as patience and fairness may be perceived as aspects of (rather than independent of) an organized demeanor.

Table 4 summarizes the ratings for worst teacher. The organized demeanor factor emerged first and lost one scale. Warmth lost three scales. Dynamism lost two scales but gained one creativity scale (adventurous--timid). Creativity lost three scales. These data suggest the importance of organization (or rather the lack of organization) in perceptions of the worst teacher.

Further insight can be gained by examining the scale content of each factor in the three different rating situations. Dynamism remained basically the same in all three cases; in each case dynamism gained one creativity scale (adventurous--timid), and retained all of Tuckman's scales except that the dominant--submissive scale did not load in the ratings of the worst teacher. Creativity also remained relatively stable. In all three cases three of the scales were the same but one scale (iconoclastic--ritualistic) loaded only in ratings of the ideal teacher and worst teacher, and one scale (imaginative--exacting) loaded only in ratings of the ideal teacher and best teacher. But scale structures for both organized demeanor and warmth shifted more significantly.

Five scales loaded on organized demeanor in ratings of the ideal teacher and these same five scales also loaded in ratings of the best teacher and the worst teacher. But an additional scale (observant--preoccupied) loaded in ratings of both the best and worst teacher while ratings of the worst teacher gained one additional scale (resourceful--uncertain) and ratings of the best teacher gained two warmth scales (patient--impatient, fair--unfair).

Only one scale (warm--cold) loaded on warmth in all three cases. Two scales (amiable--hostile, sociable--unfriendly) loaded only in ratings of the ideal and best teachers and three scales (patient--impatient, gentle--harsh, accepting--critical) loaded only in ratings of the ideal and worst teachers. It is our impression that in rating the best teacher our respondents saw "task warmth" (patience, fairness) as a part of instructor organization while "person warmth" (sociability) was seen as a separate dimension. In contrast, when rating the worst teacher our respondents saw a lack of "task warmth" (impatience, harshness, criticalness) as a separate factor and, apparently, did not distinguish a "person warmth" factor. Perhaps even the worst business communication teachers observed by ABCA members have, despite their lack of "warmth" toward people, at least not been actively "cold" toward people.

TABLE 3

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX FOR BEST TEACHER

Scales*	Dynamism	Organized Demeanor	Crea- tivity	Warmth and Acceptance
assertive--soft-spoken	729	-048	-077	-004
aggressive--passive	708	-076	-185	-075
outgoing--withdrawn	669	-174	-240	328
outspoken--reserved	652	206	-311	-004
bubbly--quiet	642	195	-233	349
extroverted--introverted	612	123	-250	299
adventurous--timid	577	-021	-365	195
dominant--submissive	545	-014	033	-116
observant--preoccupied	-009	648	291	080
in control--on the run	-044	534	-126	-137
conscientious--flighty	-024	533	-127	-185
patient--impatient	136	521	165	-136
fair--unfair	-023	514	041	-192
systematic--erratic	041	512	-258	-136
purposeful--capricious	014	479	-008	058
organized--disorganized	019	472	-086	-198
creative--routinized	-283	032	728	-070
original--conventional	-120	082	656	-052
experimenting--cautious	-109	-065	575	-164
imaginative--exacting	-162	-105	530	-226
sociable--unfriendly	091	-189	-084	638
amiable--hostile	019	-365	-057	602
warm--cold	276	-238	-248	573
Eigenvalue	6.00	4.01	2.04	1.62
% of variance	21.4	14.3	7.3	5.8

*All non-loading or factorially complex scales have been omitted.

TABLE 4

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX FOR WORST TEACHER

Scales*	Organized Demeanor	Warmth and Acceptance	Dynamism	Creativity
in control--on the run	808	-065	-152	129
conscientious--flighty	783	338	-040	-006
organized--disorganized	724	138	-118	149
purposeful--capricious	706	359	202	-039
resourceful--uncertain	690	164	-165	-155
observant--preoccupied	680	127	-254	-134
systematic--erratic	635	324	146	119
patient--impatient	052	788	-112	085
gentle--harsh	198	724	004	-157
warm--cold	202	718	-240	-085
accepting(people)--critical	074	546	027	-135
outgoing--withdrawn	-274	-285	668	075
extroverted--introverted	-111	-102	590	262
adventurous--timid	-325	-182	576	271
assertive--soft-spoken	-209	172	571	136
bubbly--quiet	028	-198	510	102
outspoken--reserved	151	042	501	014
creative--routinized	-003	-036	160	871
experimenting--cautious	-059	029	141	714
original--conventional	-062	-147	098	706
iconoclastic--ritualistic	060	115	120	486
Eigenvalue	7.61	4.00	2.76	1.86
% of variance	27.2	14.3	9.9	6.7

*All non-loading or factorially complex scales have been omitted.

These results are somewhat difficult to interpret since there are not other factor analytic studies of the TTFF with which to compare these findings. At least two possible explanations, however, are available and both are potentially accurate (at least in part) and of interest to ABCA members.

First, the differences between our results and Tuckman's suggest that business communication teachers may differ from other teachers--or at least that ABCA members' perceptions of business communication teachers differ from perceptions which Tuckman's subjects have had of other teachers. Specifically, for example, ABCA members viewed the "adventurous--timid" scale as an indication of dynamism rather than creativity because, perhaps, the sorts of creativity seen as appropriate to teaching business communication do not require that one be adventurous or, perhaps, because the adventurousness appropriate to teaching business communication does not require creativity. Also, in our data the inhibited--uninhibited scale did not load on any factor at any time because, perhaps, these terms do not, within the business communication discipline, have stable referents. Other similar differences could also be noted. While it is difficult or impossible to identify the causes of such differences it does seem quite likely that ABCA members do not perceive business communication teachers in exactly the manner assumed in the construction of the TTFF.

Second, the differences within our data indicate that perceptions of real business communication teachers (whether good or bad) may differ from the assumptions of the TTFF so as to render the "as is" use of the TTFF inadvisable. If, for example, one used the TTFF formulas to calculate ratings of excellent ("best") business communication teachers one would derive a "creativity" score based on four "creativity" scales, one "dynamism" scale (adventurous--timid), and two non-loading scales; the resultant score would not be a good index of creativity. A TTFF formula calculation of warmth would be based on three "warmth" scales, two "organized demeanor" scales (patient--impatient, fair--unfair), and two non-loading scales, and would yield a very poor index of actual perceptions of warmth. In short, we suspect that the use of the TTFF in its current form with a variety of populations and a variety of stimulus objects (teachers) yields data which at best includes error variance from non-loading scales and at worst is positively erroneous due to scales being assigned to the wrong factors. In the future scholars should use the TTFF only after re-factoring the scales for a given population and set of stimulus objects, and then derive true factor scores. (One should, therefore, be somewhat skeptical of the results reported in Table 1 -- while they may appear impressive they suffer from the weaknesses here discussed and, in particular, the "warmth" and "organized demeanor" results are both partial measures of a single conglomerate factor.)

These results clearly demonstrate that Tuckman's scales are not equally appropriate for ratings of perceptions of all sorts of teachers. It appears that different populations use the scales differently. It also appears that the best teachers are not merely perceived as more organized than the worst teachers, but rather that best teacher "organization" is somewhat different from worst teacher "organization." In the same way best teacher "warmth" seems to differ from worst teacher "warmth." (But due to our relatively small sample sizes we are reluctant to claim that our results provide superior delineations of factor structures for ideal, best, and worst teachers.)

Finally, our results must be qualified in several ways. The varying return rates and relatively small sample sizes have already been mentioned. It should also be remembered that these data represent perceptions of ABCA members rather than students or principals, or other potential groups of respondents. Despite these limitations we believe that our results clarify some of the limitations of the TTFF instrument.

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
AS MINI COURSE
IN RESEARCH METHODS

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ABSTRACT

Business communications is ideally suited as a vehicle for teaching methods of library research. Writing skills are greatly enhanced by practice in sifting, categorizing, and summarizing materials from disparate sources. And knowledge of library tools, particularly those useful to the businessman, can be a valuable by-product of this writing exercise.

Typical assignments include informative memos on subjects which introduce students to census information, commercial atlases, and similar standard reference materials; reports which acquaint them with investment manuals, company reports, and The Wall Street Journal; and bibliographies and summaries utilizing periodicals in their own fields. Students recognize the value of such knowledge and work hard to acquire it.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the traditional "term paper," the long research theme which was supposed to familiarize the student with the library and basic research methods, has fallen steadily out of favor. Not merely by coincidence, this change has been contemporaneous with the rise of "paper mills," those infamous establishments which advertise that for a fee they will write a term paper on any subject. Their ads appear in many nationally circulated publications and even, most blatantly, in student-edited college and university newspapers. This increase in sophisticated, professional cheating has alarmed educators and made them more aware of the clumsier amateur cheating which has always been associated with term papers. The length of time between assignment and due date and the relative freedom in choice of subject, which are almost a necessity for the long research paper, make this valuable assignment particularly vulnerable to abuse. For this reason the traditional long research paper has been virtually abandoned in many disciplines.

To fill this void many teachers have developed a series of short library assignments, for which the student is given a very limited preparation time. This substitution, far from being an educational loss, is actually improving the quality of education. The shorter assignments, being more flexible, allow for greater variety and tend to expand the student's knowledge of the library at a faster rate.

Many short assignments are particularly beneficial to the business communications curriculum. They bring the student in contact with more valuable and interesting library resources, thereby enlivening the course. But their greatest value is that they require the students to gather material for themselves, in contrast with typical business communications problems in which most of the pertinent facts are furnished. Students become practiced in choosing material as well as presenting it.

A series of library-related assignments can be developed which are related to such traditional business communications units as the sales and employment units, but which at the same time introduce the students in easy stages to basic library tools. Use of the card catalog, linodex, periodical indexes, company reports, government publications of census information useful to businessmen, and the most commonly used business reference sources can be incorporated easily and naturally into the course. The series of assignments which follows are one such plan for accomplishing this goal.

INFORMATIVE MEMO

Many business communications courses begin with relatively simple assignments designed to acquaint students with standard business forms and to inform the teacher of various students' levels of basic writing skills. Such assignments can be given greater value by incorporating simple library research.

As an example, the teacher may require the students to look into a book of quotations such as <u>Bartlett's Familiar Quotations</u> (or even better, <u>Bartlett's Unfamiliar Quotations</u>) to find suitable material for a speech on work, education, advertising, automation, or some other common topic. By chance the student has heard the supervisor talk about needing to give a speech on this topic and wishing for some good material. Writing an informative memo to one's superior suggesting usuable quotations can be an exercise in tact as well as fact, and often intrigues students of considerably varying ability. Some of the advantages of this assignment are that the materials are entertaining and the task challenging, thus creating high interest.

Another informative memo assignment may be to find out where to buy some unusual commodity and transmit this information by memo. <u>The Thomas Register of American Manufacturers</u> may be suggested as a source of this information, and the teacher may want to browse in this most interesting source book in order to pick out the unusual product--or products--which are needed.

Students can be taught how to use basic secretarial handbooks through the informative memo. Any number of questions concerning names, addresses, and the proper form of address can be adapted to this form of assignment. And the more complex biographical materials of the library, such as Who's Who and other biographical dictionaries can be used as the source material for other types of informative memos.

Indeed, informative memos can be the basic form for transmitting almost any information which a businessman might find useful, and other business professors can be consulted to compile a list of sources valuable to the businessman which might be introduced in this manner.

CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Library resources such as the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide, your state's Statistical Abstract, the Census of Population, and the Census of Business are ideal for generating charts and graphs. The demographic profile of a county, for instance, can be turned into a pie graph or a bar graph, and comparisons of two or more counties often become clearer when expressed in such graphs.

Assignments of this sort often fit quite well into the traditional sales unit. Students can be directed to furnish their supervisors with information and/or recommendations concerning the relative merits of two or more counties as locations for new stores or as areas to mount a direct mail sales campaign. Such information can be transmitted through charts, graphs, memos, or more complex and formal reports, if desired.

REPORTS

One assignment most useful to students can be a report designed to prepare them for employment interviews. Students may be directed to the annual reports of the companies where they desire employment and instructed to prepare a much shorter report of the information which would be desirable for a prospective employee to know. They may also be instructed to look into more objective sources and include information in their reports which would aid them in deciding whether or not they want to work for this company.

Great flexibility in length and complexity is inherent in this assignment. But its greatest advantage is that it always elicits a high degree of student interest and cooperation. For this reason, if no other, it is an excellent vehicle for the introduction of report form.

Another type of assignment of high practical value is the comparative report concerning periodicals. This assignment can be tailored to fit the needs of individual students reporting on the periodicals in their various fields. In this report the students are asked to find certain specific facts concerning professional magazines and report them according to a prearranged form, usually a form which teaches the use of headings and sub-headings, although this information may also be transmitted by chart. The choice would be determined by the form in which the student needs more practice.

A relatively complex report can be developed as a recommendation concerning the advisability of buying one or more stocks. The students should be directed to investment manuals such as Standard and Poor and Moody and should be told to consult the company reports but to be careful of the optimism usually expressed in such reports. Many students will pick stocks which have been in the news, and hence some information will come from more varied sources. Most business communications professors will not want to evaluate these reports on the basis of student judgment, but rather on thoroughness, clarity, and relation of the details presented to the recommendation. Such reports are usually accompanied by a line graph charting stock prices over a period of months, and the information for such a graph can best be procured by consulting The Wall Street Journal, a source with which every business student should be familiar.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC FORMS

Perhaps the most efficient way to teach bibliographic forms--the knowledge of which is often part of the "service" expected of business communications courses--is simply by assigning a bibliography on some subject of interest to the student. If this assignment is given late in the course, the student's familiarity with the library will help locate such materials. If methods of footnoting also need to be taught, they can generally be worked into one or more of the reports suggested above. By introducing these forms in this manner, the forms needed for a long research report can be taught without actually assigning such a report.

CONCLUSION

The program outlined in this paper can easily be expanded or curtailed according to need. Indeed, one great advantage of library research is its flexibility. It can be combined with existing units in large or small amounts. It can be quite extensive or very limited. It can be treated as a valuable body of knowledge in its own right or merely as a means of developing writing skill. But in so far as it is used, it greatly enriches the curriculum of business communications, giving students practice in molding raw materials into usable forms, and acquainting them with resources which they may find valuable both in other business courses and in their careers.

LEARNING THEORIES APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Maxine Barton Hart, Baylor University

ABSTRACT

Over the years, many learning theories have been developed and presented to teachers. The theories can generally be placed into two groups: behaviorists' theories and cognitivists' theories. Following is a review of several theories, including both behavioristic and cognitivistic theories.

David Ausubel's advance organizer, Albert Bandura's modeling, Kurt Lewin's group dynamics, and Gestalt theories apply to the business communication instruction most effectively. Edward L. Thorndike, B.F. Skinner and Robert M. Gagne also have presented learning theories that can be followed by business communication instructors.

FOUR MAJOR LEARNING THEORIES

Ausubel's Theories

Because business communication instruction depends upon reception learning, the advance organizer presents an interesting deviation from the lecture method used in so many college classrooms. An example of an advance organizer is the presentation of a question, a comparison or an anchoring thought which guides the student in applying the knowledge the teacher is relaying.

Of Ausubel's two conditions for learning, the one of most concern to the business communication teacher is that which states the material must be meaningful to the students. The other condition, that concepts presented are stable with respect to those in the student's cognitive structure, is important, too, but of less concern because the junior-senior level student should have the cognitive structure to learn the material presented in a business communication class.

Ausubel's two principles for governing the programming of content can be applied in a business communication class. Progressive differentiation (going from the simple to the complex) can be followed by having the teacher present general communication theory at the beginning of the semester, followed by specific details concerning all written communication, then direct letters, indirect letters, persuasive letters, and reports.

The principles of integrative reconciliation can be followed, too, by reconciling and integrating new ideas (for example, indirect letters) with previously learned content (communication theory, principles for writing, and direct letters). These principles allow the teacher to build the discipline gradually in the minds of the learners by approaching it from the top down.

Ausubel's emphasis on proper practice should be positively accepted by the teacher. Practice must be meaningful; and with each presentation, additional ideas are incorporated into the cognitive structure. Each written assignment builds knowledge and skill which the student can apply to the next level of learning.

The advance organizer aids the student in transferring knowledge learned earlier in the semester to the tasks assigned later in the semester. Not only does the advance organizer provide a conceptual framework on which the student can develop the new material, but also it presents the student with anchoring thoughts to guide him in transferring knowledge and skills from the classroom to the job. One type of advance organizer is comparison.

Bandura's Theories

The technique of comparing letters leads the teacher to utilize Bandura's modeling concept. Although the main emphasis in a business communication class is not on social learning, Bandura's theories can be "bent" a little to apply. His belief that most of the behaviors people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of examples gives support to the business teacher's use of model letters. Model letters can be letters from the teacher's manual, letters that the teacher has written, or outstanding letters written by students during previous semesters. Sometimes examples of effective letters sent by businesses are shown. Even ineffective letters are used to show students examples of poor business communication.

By providing model letters for the class to study, costly mistakes can be avoided. Unguided learning is a waste of time in the business communication class where reception learning is most effective. Providing the model letters is an interesting way to present principles of writing. The students pay better attention and have a clearer understanding of how to write after studying model letters. The process of acquisition of writing skill is considerably shortened by providing appropriate examples.

Bandura believes learning takes place when the students are aware of what they have to do to produce the desired results. The model letters provide this awareness of what is expected; therefore, students are better prepared to produce the desired results. The student must be interested enough to want to produce the desired outcome or the model letters won't help.

The modeling approach is also beneficial in teaching social business behavior such as interviewing, using the telephone, and dictating to a secretary or to a machine.

Lewin's Theories

Lewin's group dynamics is appropriate for a business communication class because the writing assignments allow the students to share ideas and produce a better letter than any one individual student would be able to write. One major criticism of the course is too many writing assignments. By assigning one type of letter to each group instead of having each student write several letters, the amount of writing is reduced considerably. Yet, the students still get enough writing practice; and by observing each group's presentation, they are exposed to the different types of letters.

The group dynamics approach offers other advantages. It teaches students to function in a group setting and it allows them to gain experience in selecting a group leader and offering suggestions for solving the problem, etcetera. Also, the students must learn to transfer their knowledge gained from the group to individual problem solving.

Gestalt Theories

The Gestalt view, the work of three German psychologists, dominated thinking in psychology from about 1925 to 1960. Kurt Koffka, Wolfgang Kohler, and Michael Wertheimer developed the basic idea that perception is organized and dictated by several properties of the perceptual field. Perception of the parts takes on a special wholeness in their totality. In this case, the whole is something different from the sum of its parts--hence the term Gestalt.

This whole-learning approach can be applied effectively in the business communication class. The teacher introduces the students to the whole picture of communication. Communication theory is taught first, then the written part of communication is introduced. The principles that are appropriate to all types of written communication are taught next, then principles that pertain to specific types of writing are taught. Recent findings through empirical studies (by Maxine B. Hart) indicate students who have first been given the overall picture of communication (through the teaching of communication theory) attain better communication skills and knowledges.

The inclusion of communication theory helps the students understand how and why people communicate effectively and what causes miscommunication. Students learn the principles of good communication and gain an understanding of why the principles are effective. Facts alone are unimportant; when they become part of total concepts and understandings, they become significant.

The Gestalt business communication teacher emphasizes the perceiving of relationships, awareness of the relationships between parts and whole, and of means to consequences. She aids the student in solving problems sensibly and structurally rather than mechanically or by prior habits. Although the students are presented with a checklist of principles, they do not follow the list blindly but adapt the principles to each situation for best results. They acknowledge the problem; they think; they select; they write effective letters.

OTHER THEORIES

Readiness

Edward L. Thorndike, B. F. Skinner, and Robert M. Gagne all emphasize the importance of readiness. And since so many business communication students feel unqualified to take the course because of lack of required skills, readiness is of prime concern to the business communication teacher. Thorndike's Law of Preparatory Adjustment states: students must be ready by having the necessary prerequisite skills and the proper attitude toward learning.

Gagne's theory that several factors contribute to readiness sheds some light on why business communication students aren't ready. The attentional set of some students is deficient--they don't have proper cognitive strategies developed to govern their information-getting behavior. These students are in serious trouble if they have not developed these strategies by the time they are upperclassmen in college.

Motivation

The second factor of Gagne's--lack of motivation--is more applicable to college students. Different views are held regarding motivation, but all theorists recognize its importance. According to Gestalt theory, motivation is viewed as placing the student into a problem situation where rewards and punishment act to confirm or disconfirm attempted solutions of problems.

Thorndike believed students are motivated by being rewarded for the proper responses. Skinner and Bandura also recommend reward as reinforcement of preferred behavior.

Ausubel believes that although learning is an important condition, it can take place without motivation. He prefers intrinsic motivation (doing an assignment because doing it is somehow satisfying) over extrinsic motivation (performing just to get a good grade.)

Applying these thoughts on motivation to a business communication class, both the behaviorists' emphasis on rewards and the cognitive theorists' insistence upon purpose can be effective. The goal of the business communication teacher, then, is to get across to the students the purpose of the class (competency in business communication) and to reward them (praise, good grades) for work well done.

Students are also motivated by success. If students earn praise from the teacher and their letters are displayed on the overhead, then the other students are motivated to strive to earn this recognition. Although instant feedback can be a motivator to college students in some situations, the teacher should give the students the solutions only after they have had an opportunity to solve the problem.

Repetition

Once the student is motivated to learn, the role of practice is important. Thorndike states that mere repetition does not guarantee learning, but repetition can be effective if the learner receives feedback concerning whether the response is correct or incorrect. He said also that learning occurs if the immediate results are pleasing. Skinner advocates schedules of reinforcement to insure repetition. The fact that practice, to be effective, must be experimental, that is, accompanied by a questioning attitude, supports the notion that the role of practice is not to strengthen neural connections (Thorndike) but to contribute to the development of insight (Lewin.)

Too much repetition usually decreases motivation to learn. Students develop bad attitudes toward the class--they lose interest. This is one of the major problems in the business communication class. Recent empirical studies by Maxine Hart found that students with less writing practice can, by the end of the semester, write as effectively as the students who have completed more writing assignments.

Transfer of Knowledge and Skills

The last important condition of successful learning for writers is transfer. New situations are met by identifying them with old situations, and transfer of knowledge is accomplished. Skinner says that induction (generalization) is the basis for transfer. The student will take knowledge learned to apply to a specific situation and adapt it to apply to a similar situation. The Gestalt concept of transfer is called transposition. Knowledge discovered or understood in one situation may be applicable to another. The capabilities learned in school should enable the students to perform some acts of practical value to them, whether in their everyday lives or in connection with an occupation. Also, the student uses the knowledge obtained at one level to build toward a higher-order learning. Transfer depends on previous learning; therefore, the business communication student must learn the necessary competencies in order to advance to each new task and to perform successfully on future jobs.

Since transfer is dependent upon methods of teaching and learning which use lifelike situations, the business communication teacher should provide such an environment. She should teach for large generalizations which have transfer value.

SUMMARY

Motivation depends upon purpose and reinforcement of desired responses; readiness is a function of experience and purpose as well as maturation; and whole learning is preferred to part learning. Meaning and motivation influence retention of knowledge, and information is transferred through generalization.

The wise teacher realizes that the principles of learning are not limited to one person's theories--they may be equally consistent with more than one competing system. The business communication teacher can apply the learning theories of both the behaviorists and the cognitivists. Although the behaviorists' theories lead to teaching which is considered mechanistic by some psychologists, such teaching can bring about desired results in the business communication discipline. The cognitive theories are quite applicable, too, because they lead to teaching with emphasis on reflection and creativity--highly desirable traits for writers.

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PART V

DIMENSIONS OF THE JOB-GETTING PROCESS

A FOLLOW-UP OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION GRADUATES TO DETERMINE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Barron Wells, The University of Southwestern Louisiana

ABSTRACT

The University of Southwestern Louisiana is one of the few schools in the nation to offer a Bachelor's Degree with a major in Business Communication. Since the Publication of an article entitled "Planning A Program For A Major In Business Communication" in the September, 1978 issue of the ABCA Bulletin, the Business Communication faculty at the University of Southwestern Louisiana has received many inquiries about the kinds of jobs that graduates from this program obtain. Hopefully, this paper will shed some light on that question.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION MAJOR

First, it may be necessary to review the Bachelor's Degree program at the University of Southwestern Louisiana that leads to a major in Business Communication. Some of the objectives of this program are:

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

B. To develop a broad and sound foundation in Business Administration
   1. Management
   2. Marketing
   3. Finance

4. Economics
5. Accounting
6. Other General Business Administration Areas (Business Law, Statistics, etc.)

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

The curriculum for the Business Communication major can be examined on the last pages of this paper. The Business Communication major is made up of the following courses:

Business Communication -- 4 courses; 12 semester hours
Speech -- 2 courses; 6 semester hours
Journalism -- 1 course; 3 semester hours
English -- 4 courses; 12 semester hours

In addition to these courses, the program requires 12 semester hours of Management, 6 semester hours of Marketing, 3 semester hours of Finance, 6 semester hours of Economics, 6 semester hours of Accounting, 6 semester hours of Business Law, and 6 semester hours of other Business administration courses. This provides a good foundation in Business administration, and the 9 required semester hours of psychology are supportive of the behavioral nature of the program.

The Business Communication courses themselves consist of the following:

BCOM 203. BUSINESS LETTER WRITING. Study of effective business correspondence techniques with practical applications in the preparation of business letters and other written communication. Emphasis on business English and business vocabulary.

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

BCOM 304. BUSINESS RESEARCH AND REPORTING. Research designs for gathering information for the solution of business problems, techniques for gathering and interpreting data, and methods of reporting the results of business research.

BCOM 403. SEMINAR. A study of the current research and literature in the field of Business Communication under the direction of faculty. Emphasis on readings and publications of professional organizations in communications.

BCOM 497. INDEPENDENT STUDY. Approved business research in areas of the student's need. Preq: BCOM 304 or approval of instructor.

SURVEY OF GRADUATES

The number of students enrolled in this program has grown from 12 in the Fall Semester of 1973 to 137 in the Fall Semester of 1980. The program has proved popular with students on campus, and none of the graduates have reported any difficulty in obtaining jobs. However, only recently has the Business Communication faculty known much about the jobs these graduates obtained. A questionnaire was sent to the 46 persons who had graduated from the program at least one year prior to the time of the survey. The questionnaire asked a variety of questions concerning their jobs, but sought primarily to determine (1) the industries in which the respondents are employed at the present time, (2) the fields in which they feel their work should be classified, (3) their present job titles, (4) the industries in which they feel their initial work should be classified, and (6) their initial job titles.

1. Almost all of the graduates were employed in Louisiana. Most were concentrated in the Lafayette and New Orleans areas.

2. The industry area in which the majority of the graduates are presently employed is Retail Trade. Government ranked second. Petroleum and Related Services, Manufacturing, Health Care, and Financial Institutions tied for third, while Insurance, Wholesale Trade, and Legal tied for fourth place.

3. In declining order, present job fields were listed as Marketing, Personnel Management, Production Management, Business Communication, General Business Administration, Finance, General Management, Merchandising, and Secretarial.

4. The current annual salary earned ranged from under $10,000 to over $50,000. The largest percentage fell in the $25,000 to $30,000 bracket.

5. The job title reported by the largest percentage of the graduates was "Manager."

6. Fifty-four percent of the graduates had supervisory authority over other employees. The number of subordinates ranged from 1 to 15.

7. Approximately 58 percent of the respondents believed the Business Communication curriculum was particularly helpful in obtaining and performing on their present job, while 25 percent stated that it was not particularly helpful beyond what any other Business Administration degree would have done for them. Seventeen percent felt that they could not answer this question.

8. The most frequently made suggestions for improving the curriculum were: advanced courses in Business Communication, more emphasis on writing and journalism skills, and more courses in Public Relations, Management, and Speech. They also expressed a need for more practical experience for BCOM majors, and for program recognition.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES AMONG INDUSTRIES (Present Job)

1. Financial Institutions -- 8%
2. Insurance and Real Estate -- 4%
3. Manufacturing -- 8%
4. Government -- 17%
5. Wholesale Trade -- 4%
6. Retail Trade -- 21%
7. Petroleum and Related Services -- 8%
8. Health Care -- 8%
9. Legal -- 4%
10. Other: Manufacturer's Representative, Newspaper, Media Sales, Communication, Fraternal Benefit Society

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES AMONG FIELDS (Present Job)

1. Finance -- 4%
2. General Management -- 4%
3. Personnel Management -- 8%
4. Production Management -- 8%
5. Marketing -- 13%
6. Merchandising -- 4%
7. Accounting -- 4%
8. Business Communication -- 4%
9. Secretarial -- 4%
10. General Business Administration -- 8%
11. Other: Dental Hygenist, Advertising, Drafting, Television Production, Sales, Banking, Instructing Fighter Pilots, Federal Law Enforcement

PRESENT JOB TITLES (Reported by one or more respondents)

Television Producer/Director
Field Underwriter
Owner/Manager (Jefferson Battery Co., Inc.)
Sales Representative
Assistant Manager
Secretary
Drafting Engineer
Advertising Account Executive
Advertising Sales Representative
Dental Hygenist
Manager of Production
Bank Employee
Marketing Support Representative
Secretary/Receptionist
Manager Trainee/Salesperson
Management Analyst
Executive Vice President
United States Postal Inspector and External Crimes Prevention Specialist
Fighter Pilot Instructor
Director of Fraternal Services

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES AMONG INDUSTRIES (Initial Job)

1. Financial Institutions -- 8%
2. Manufacturing — 4%
3. Government — 13%
4. Wholesale Trade -- 13%
5. Retail Trade — 21%
6. Petroleum and Related Services — 13%
7. Education — 4%
8. Health Care — 4%
9. Other: Construction, Religious Institution, Newspaper, Office Work

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES AMONG FIELDS (INITIAL JOB)

1. Finance — 4%
2. General Management -- 8%
3. Personnel Management -- 8%
4. Production Management -- 8%
5. Marketing — 13%
6. Merchandising -- 13%
7. Accounting -- 4%
8. Secretarial -- 4%
9. General Business Administration -- 4%
10. Other: Drafting, Journalism, Residential Housing Construction, Banking, College Instructor, Federal Law Enforcement

INITIAL JOB TITLES (Reported by one or more respondents)

Bank Employee	Sales Consultant
Marketing Support Representative	Carpenter
Assistant Restaurant Manager	Assistant Manager
Executive Editor	Drafting Engineer
Assistant Buyer	Advertising Sales Representative
Secretary	Secretary/Receptionist
United States Postal Inspector	Assistant Vice President
College Instructor	Food Broker
Program Consultant	

This study is subject to the possible weakness of being based on a total population of 46 graduates of the Business Communication program that had received their degrees at least one year prior to the time of the survey. The vagueness of many of the responses is another possible weakness. Another similar survey is planned for the future, when a much larger population of graduates will be available. That survey should reveal an even more valid picture of the job opportunities that are available to the graduate with a major in Business Communication.

CURRICULUM

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MAJOR: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

First Semester

Course	Hrs.
ENGL 101 Rhet & Comp	3
GBUS 101 Intro to Business	3
MATH 101 Basic Concepts I	3
OFAD 100 Elementary Typing	3
SOCI 100 General Sociology	3
PEDA or Aerospace Studies	2
	17

Second Semester

Course	Hrs.
ENGL 102 Comp & Lit	3
MATH 102 Basic Concepts II . . .	3
POLS 220 Intro to Politics . . .	3
PSYC 110 General Psyc I	3
Elective (History) . . .	3
PEDA or Aerospace Studies	2
	17

Third Semester

Course	Hrs.
ACCT 201 Principles of Acct I . .	3
ECON 201 Principles of Econ I . .	3
JOUR 200 Introduction . .	3
Elective (English) . .	3
Elective (Humanities). .	3
	15

Fourth Semester

Course		Hrs.
ACCT 202	Principles of Acct II .	3
BCOM 203	Business Letter Writing	3
ECON 202	Principles of Econ II .	3
	Elective (English) . .	3
	Elective (Science) . .	3
		17

Fifth Semester

Course		Hrs.
BCOM 303	Comm in Business . . .	3
GBUS 307	Business Statistics .	3
MGMT 360	Organizational Behavior	3
MKTG 345	Principles of Mktg . .	3
SPCH 300	Public Relations . . .	3
		17

Sixth Semester

Course		Hrs.
BCOM 304	Bus Res & Reporting . .	3
CMPS 305	Comp for Comm Application	3
FNAN 300	Business Finance . .	3
MGMT 382	Production . .	3
SPCH 334	Discussion and Conf . .	3
		15

Seventh Semester

Course		Hrs.
GBUS 407	Business Law I . .	3
MGMT 420	Org Theory & Dynamics.	3
PSYC 310	Business Psyc . .	3
PSYC 401	Social Psyc . .	3
	Free Elective . .	3
		15

Eighth Semester

Course		Hrs.
BCOM 403	Seminar	3
GBUS 408	Business Law II	3
MGMT 430	Policy	3
	Elective (Mktg)	3
	Free Elective	3
		15

THE REFERENCE PERSON AS A COMMUNICATOR

T. J. Halatin, Southwest Texas State University
Jack D. Eure, Southwest Texas State University

ABSTRACT

The reference for a job candidate must communicate effectively with prospective employers. This paper presents an overview of the reference relationship and suggestions for improving reference communications.

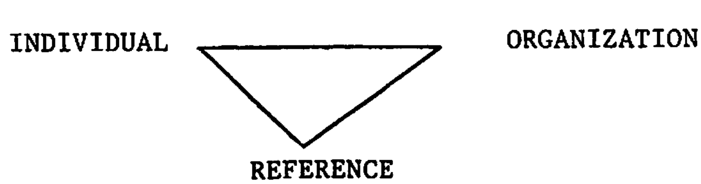
INTRODUCTION

Statements by references are often a very important factor in personnel decisions. Such statements, whether written or oral, can be important for the employer considering an applicant for employment with the organization. Remarks by references can assist selection committees in evaluating and selecting candidates for special programs. Supporting materials prepared by references are often used to determine winners of scholarships and other academic awards.

There are many other instances when the communications from references are important. It is possible that the statement by a reference can be used to break a tie between two persons with a same score or ranking. Some organizations may even use information supplied by references to offset weak scores on standardized testing instruments.

TRIANGLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The reference relationship has many overtones of responsibility for each party to the relationship. A common objective of the applicant, reference, and information seeking organization is the foundation for this responsibility. This common objective is the transfer of factual information about an individual from a knowledgeable person to an organization involved in a personnel decision.



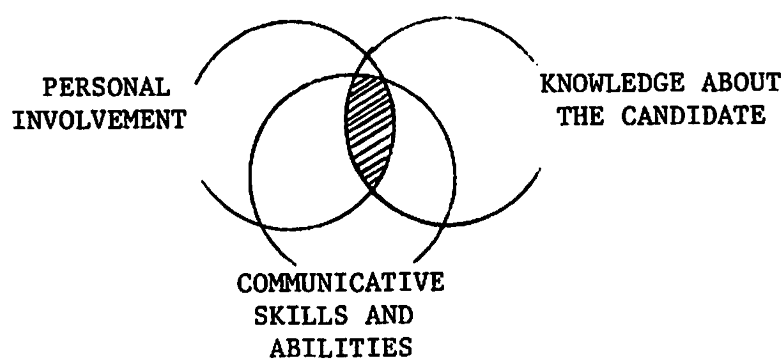
The applicant seeking a reference statement has an obligation and responsibility to locate and use those persons who will best serve the objective. Meeting this obligation and responsibility helps the organization and reference as well as the candidate.

The reference has the responsibility to assist the candidate. Although it is implied that the reference will support the candidate, the reference also has an obligation to maintain personal integrity and provide useful information to the organization. The information should be supportive, objective, factual, and truthful.

The information seeking organization has a responsibility to seek needed information and to use it in an appropriate manner. Such responsibilities include contacting references when information is actually needed, indicating what kinds of information are needed, and using the information obtained. The organization should respect the time and effort of the candidate and the person preparing a reference statement.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

Three essential ingredients are necessary for effective reference statements. They are (1) personal involvement by the reference, (2) knowledge about the candidate, and (3) communicative skills and abilities of the reference. The three essential ingredients must support each other.



It is only when all three ingredients are combined that the candidate is able to receive a strong and effective reference statement.

MISSING INGREDIENTS

Missing ingredients, in whole or part, can severely limit the effectiveness of a reference statement. A missing support can actually have a negative effect and create an impression that the candidate is inferior.

The possibilities for missing ingredients are great when contributing factors are considered. The missing factors are discussed below.

Missing ingredient: Personal involvement by the reference.

The reference who lacks a sincere desire to assist or familiarity with the candidate may find it difficult to prepare strong personalized statements. The lack of personalization may surface during an interview and limit the value of statements made by the reference. The lack of commitment to helping the applicant may appear in short letters or comments that show limited support and enthusiasm for the candidate. The "canned" or format letter or statement usually appears when the commitment is minimal.

Among the many causes for this lack of involvement and commitment are desperate applicants, format responders, and low priority applicants. Applicants desperately searching for references often turn to the sources available without any thought of the consequences. An open door is a possibility for a reference. Often a student will approach a former college professor from a course taken several years ago and request that the professor serve as a reference. The passage of time and lack of continuing contact can limit the enthusiasm of the reference for the candidate.

Some persons find it easier to agree to serve as a reference for all persons rather than be selective. They enjoy the feeling of popularity as many candidates visit seeking references. They feel that they are helping the greater number of individuals. When the many requests for statements arrive, it is often easier or necessary to use a standard format than to prepare a personalized message for the requesting information.

Too many obligations and a limited amount of time often require the reference to prioritize activities. References may give more attention and time to some special candidates and appear to avoid or neglect others. The low priority candidate may experience delays and format responses that can be costly in terms of personnel decisions.

Missing ingredient: Knowledge about the candidate.

The reference with limited knowledge about the candidate will be hard pressed for information to support ratings or generalizations. The lack of examples and specific facts may cause the reference to rate the applicant lower than the applicant who can be supported. Information seekers using references for decisions may challenge and discount ratings that are not supported.

Several causes can be mentioned regarding this lack of knowledge about the candidate. A primary cause is the limited personal contact with the candidate. The reference has not observed the candidate often enough to form general inpressions or have information that is needed to prepare positive specific statements about the candidate.

Very often the candidate holds a different impression of the relationship than does the reference person. Although the candidate may recall activities and performances that should be remembered by the reference, the reference may view such accomplishments as standard and not memorable. The candidate may have been just one of many who performed assigned tasks that were also being performed by others.

Limited knowledge about the candidate can also stem from a lack of timeliness. The reference may have forgotten or be reluctant to comment on specifics that were accomplished years ago. It is also possible that additional observations over a period of time make the reference limit positive remarks about the candidate.

The reference may have had only limited or restricted personal contact with the applicant. The type of contact may not have resulted in any additional specific information other than that which is already documented.

Missing ingredient: Communicative skills and abilities.

References who lack the skills or abilities to communicate may not be able to provide information about the applicant. Although the reference may be an effective communicator in certain situations and have a sincere desire to assist the applicant, serious communication gaps may hinder the reference.

Many factors contribute to weak communications by references. Some people are not able to write a persuasive letter. They lack an understanding of the types of letters and the importance of the persuasive letter as an action seeking selling brochure. They are factual without the positive emotional spirit and tone that will sell the person as the very best.

It is possible that the letter writer is unaware of the nature of personnel processes and fails to respond with statements that make the candidate competitive. The reference may not be considering the environment in which the reference letter or statement will be used.

The reference who has difficulty with spelling or grammar may demonstrate such weaknesses in written statements about the candidate. Words that are misspelled or statements that are difficult to read may receive greater attention than the qualities of the candidate.

The person who is too busy with daily activities may lack the time necessary to communicate about the applicant. The lack of time may result in no response or a hurried response that is damaging to the applicant. The person who mails a statement with spelling errors may convince the reader that the candidate may also be lacking in communicative skills.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED REFERENCE COMMUNICATIONS

Each of the ingredients for effective statements can be controlled and improved with care in the selection of references. There are specific suggestions for each ingredient.

Ingredient: Personal involvement.

A discussion between the candidate and the reference should precede any decision regarding a reference ralationship. Both the candidate and reference should consider the willingness and ability of the person to serve as a reference. The candidate should be concerned with the person's involvement as a reference for others.

Ingredient: Knowledge about the candidate.

The candidate should prepare a list of positive facts that should be used in reference statements and negative points that hopefully will be avioded. The candidate can assist the reference with an updated resume and supporting documents that identify specific facts.

The candidate and reference should complete a rating checklist to determine what the reference knows about the candidate. Supporting statements will be very important to justify high evaluations. Materials provided by the candidate should be kept on file by the reference to assist in the preparation of forms and statements.

Ingredient: Communicative skills and abilities.

The applicant and reference should work together on statements to assure that the correct information is being presented.

The reference who is weak in writing should ask for assistance from colleagues who possess stronger skills. When a person is weak in spelling or grammar, others should be asked to proofread statements before they are mailed.

A reference who is uncertain about the requirements of an organization should contact that organization prior to preparing a reference statement. A telephone call can help with information about the personnel process and result in a more effective letter or evaluation.

CLOSING NOTES

A candidate should seek references who possess the necessary ingredients for preparing effective statements. A major factor is the selection of the proper references. Qualifying references according to the three essential ingredients can result in a successful reference-candidate relationship that produces results.

WHEN DOES THE INTERVIEWER DECIDE? A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Students are sometimes told that employment interviewers make final decisions about job applicants within the first four minutes of an interview. A review of the relevant literature does not reveal adequate support for such a claim. It is also suggested that the search for a decision time reflects a misunderstanding of decision making in an interview.

INTRODUCTION

In one recent review of employment interviewing literature the authors suggested that "clients should be coached to offer positive, job-related information about themselves succinctly within the first few minutes of the interview"; the apparent reason for this conclusion is the belief that interviewers "make an overall evaluation of the applicant . . . within the first four minutes" [8, pp. 23-24, 21]. Grapevine reports of studies (not published in scholarly journals for some reason) showing even more rapid decision making (on the order of 30 seconds) also circulate on some campuses. Do interviewers make their decisions so quickly? And if so, why do interviewers continue to schedule 20 or 30 minute interviews?

This paper is a critical review of some--perhaps all--of the published, data-based research bearing on the question of when an interviewer makes his or her final decision about an applicant. The paper is divided into two major sections, a review of specific research reports, and a statement of conceptual perspective.

The employment interview has been the object of scholarly study since at least 1933 [42]. In the intervening years there have been literally hundreds of studies [45; 29; 43; 50; 35; 8]. There are many

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studies with some indirect relevance to the question considered in this paper. For example, the research indicating the importance of attractiveness [6; 7; 9; 10; 20] is consistent with the possibility of early decisions since such information is available to the interviewer almost immediately, while research indicating the importance of other traits (e.g., being well informed about the job being applied for, or providing appropriate content answers) [16; 21; 24] seems more consistent with the notion that the interviewer must interact with the applicant for a time before reaching a decision. Research on primacy-recency effects [3; 12; 13; 33] and on liking [14; 25; 34] is also relevant.*

Only a few studies, however, bear directly on the question addressed in this paper, and this review will focus on those few studies. Specifically, this paper focuses on research which examines real (or at least realistic) interviews and which attempts to determine how long it takes an interviewer to reach a decision about an applicant. Several of the investigations reviewed in this paper were conducted as part of Webster's early and influential program of research [47; 48].

Springbett studied eight senior personnel interviewers in interviews with a total of 20 applicants [36 as cited in 47; and 48, pp. 13-14]. He asked the interviewers to rate the applicants after examining a written application, again after about 30 seconds of face-to-face contact, again at a "decision time" whenever the interviewer felt he had formed a definite opinion which was unlikely to change, and finally at the conclusion of the interview. He noted that 16 of the 20 applicants were given nearly identical ratings at all four stages. He also reported that the average length of the interview was 15 minutes and that the average "decision time" was slightly less than four minutes. These and other data collected by Springbett, seemed to indicate that interviewers make decisions relatively early in interviews [37].

Anderson examined the speaking times of applicants and interviewers in Canadian army employment interviews [1; 48, pp. 27-34]. He found that interviews in which the applicant was accepted did not differ significantly in length from those in which the applicant was rejected (acceptance = 24.96 minutes; rejection = 25.36 minutes). Anderson also reported that while interviewers tended to talk more in the second half of an interview than in the first half, this tendency was stronger in acceptance interviews than in rejection interviews. This finding is consistent with the notion that interviewers begin to identify applicants as acceptable or not acceptable in the early portions of an interview; the finding is, however, also consistent with the possibility

*Many of the studies in these indirectly relevant areas have, however, relied on students as interviewers or used resumes in place of interviewees. While the use of these techniques does not automatically render the results inapplicable it does suggest that the results must be generalized with caution [2; 15; 31].

that more highly qualified applicants behave differently and call-forth different interviewer behaviors. In other words, the "accept" decision may have followed the shift in verbal behavior rather than preceding it.

Sydiaha studied 160 actual interviews conducted by nine different interviewers; at the conclusion of each interview he sought to elicit "critical impressions" from the interviewers [48, pp. 47-49]. He found a significant positive correlation (r = .39) between the time at which the critical impression occurred and the duration of the interview. The average time of occurrence of the critical impression was 8.3 minutes, near the end of the first half of the interview (average duration = 19.3 minutes). The nine interviewers included six Canadian Army personnel selection officers, one RCAF career counselor, one industrial employment interviewer, and one psychologist in private practice; the "applicants" varied accordingly.

Downs collected questionnaire responses from recruiters visiting the Northwestern Graduate School of Business; among other things he asked them to indicate at what point during a 30-minute interview they felt that "most interviewers have made a rather conclusive judgment" [11]. Responses were as follows: based on resume -- 3%; 5 minutes -- 5%; 10 minutes -- 26%; 15 minutes -- 20%; 20 minutes -- 20%; 25 minutes -- 4%; 30 minutes -- 3%; post interview review -- 14%. Downs reports the average as 17 minutes [11, p. 11]; the modal response was 10 minutes. Downs' data also suggest a tremendous range of answers from "based on resume" to "post interview review." While Downs focused on actual on-campus selection interviews it should be noted that Downs' data consist of questionnaire responses concerning what the respondents think "most interviewers" do.

A study by Washburn and Hakel may have included some form of decision time as a variable [46, p. 138, Table 1, Item #2]. The published report does not, however, discuss the concept.

Tucker and Rowe observed 28 experienced interviewers interview the same role-playing applicant [40]. They asked the interviewer to record an initial decision to accept or reject the applicant at the exact moment during the interview when such a decision was made; at that point the experimenter interrupted the interview and asked the interviewer to fill out a questionnaire concerning the applicant. The average time to initial decision was 9.0 minutes for interviewers with access to a completed "application form" and 9.1 minutes for interviewers who did not see the "application form"; the interviewers who did have access to the "application form," however did have more knowledge of the applicant (based on their questionnaire responses) at the initial decision time. The interviewers were from manufacturing firms, employment agencies, insurance companies, and one educational institution.

Tschirgi and Huegli monitored 183 actual college placement center interviews, asking interviewers to throw a switch when beginning an interview, at the point when a decision was made to recommend or not recommend a student, and at the end of the interview [39]. Results were as follows: prior to interview commencement -- 1.1%; first quarter of interview -- 9.8%; second quarter of interview -- 15.3%; third quarter of interview -- 13.1%; fourth quarter of interview -- 37.7%; after the interview -- 23.0%. Their data showed a tendency for positive decisions to occur later rather than earlier in the interview (first quarter = 13.2% of the positive decisions, second quarter = 22.4%, third quarter = 19.7%, fourth quarter = 44.7%) but this effect was even stronger for negative decisions (first quarter = 12.7% of the negative decisions, second quarter = 17.5%, third quarter = 14.3%, fourth quarter = 55.6%). Overall, 60.7% of the decisions were reported to occur in the last quarter, or after the interview. Tschirgi and Huegli suggest that in their research the interviewers may have delayed their decisions in order to "'second guess' their initial assumptions" [39, p. 38]. It is also possible, of course, that the interviewers simply took more time to reach a decision.

Tullar, Mullins, and Caldwell conducted an experiment in which each of 60 experienced employment counselors observed a video-taped role-play interview and evaluated the applicant [41]. They derived two measures of the interviewer's decision making. The first, "decision time," was that point at which the subject physically marked a decision sheet indicating either acceptance or rejection. In a subsequent review of the video-tape the subjects were asked to describe their thoughts while watching the tape and to indicate what piece of information "clinched" the decision; this measure was designated "talk-through time." Average "decision time" was 9.16 minutes; average "talk-through time," 6.12 minutes. Both "decision time" and "talk-through time" were significantly longer when the subject was told to expect a 30-minute interview than when told to expect a 15-minute interview; and both dependent variables were also significantly longer when the applicant was high-quality (decision time = 11.51 minutes) than when the applicant was low-quality (decision time = 6.83 minutes). The experimenters also noticed that when rating the low-quality applicant interviewers who waited longer gave higher ratings, while interviewers who waited longer gave lower ratings when rating the high-quality applicant; they suggest that there may be a different relationship between rating and decision time depending on the quality of the applicant. This research, the best of the published studies on this subject, controls several variables such as time expectation and applicant attributes; it directly supports the notion that these variables affect decision making.

As can be seen, the available studies span many years (1954-1979), many types of jobs, many types of interviewers, and many types of interviewees. This makes it difficult to compare the results of one study with another; it is, for example, quite likely that interviewing fashions changed from the mid 50's to the mid 70's. The operational definitions of "decision time" also vary considerably, including Springbett's "definite opinion," Sydiaha's "critical impressions," Tucker and Rowe's "initial decision," Tschirgi and Huegli's "decision to recommend or not," and Tullar, Mullins, and Caldwell's two measurements ("decision time" and "talk-through time"). There are also a variety of potentially relevant variables such as expectations of interview length, applicant qualifications, interview training, etc. [19], which have not been systematically controlled and which, therefore, may have affected results. Despite these variations between studies, however, at least two initial conclusions can be drawn. First, the four-minute estimate is not well supported. Second, if one (mistakenly) insists on identifying a single average decision time, that time should be 8-10 minutes.

The most widely quoted estimate of decision time, less than four minutes, is supported by only a single study, Springbett's. That study, which is methodologically much weaker than some subsequent research seems to be widely cited for only one reason--it was first. This seems to be an example of the "Matthew effect" [32], in which an early study exerts a continuing influence and brings honor to its author--but in this case the decision time results seem to be wrong and not to deserve repeated citation.

If one were to insist on identifying an average decision time in the employment interview that time would be in the 8-10 minute range; this estimate is consistent with Anderson (first half of 25 minute interviews), Sydiaha (critical incidents averaged 8.3 minutes), the modal response (10 minutes) of Downs' respondents, Tucker and Rowe (9.05 minutes), and Tullar et al. (9.16 overall average). It is strange that this estimate has not replaced the "less than four minute" estimate. It should be noted, however, that the two studies which investigated actual on-campus college placement interviews [11; 39] yielded somewhat different results; Downs' respondents averaged 17 minutes and Tschirgi and Huelgi reported that more than 60% of the decisions were made in the last quarter or after the interview. In addition the entire effort to identify a single decision time seems, in retrospect, to have been misconceived. Researchers seem often to have viewed interview decision making as a single all-or-nothing choice affected in a strictly linear and additive fashion by a variety of interviewee variables. It would be more accurate to conceptualize interview decision making as a process affected by communication and by a variety of other variables.

A PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE

No attempt will be made here to develop a model of interview decision making; such an effort would require drawing on a variety of research findings not reviewed in this paper. But an effort will be made to identify the major topic areas where the necessary research would be found.

An adequate understanding of an employment interview must include an appreciation for at least three dimensions. First, the interview should be seen as an occasion of impression formation. It is known, for example, that individuals rely on an "implicit theory of personality," an unconscious model of how personality characteristics "go together," to form relatively complete impressions of persons almost immediately upon meeting them [18]. Persons may make a decision concerning another's suitability as a conversational partner after about four minutes [51]. It is also clear that impressions and relationships are not fixed but rather continue to develop over time [26]. The research on interview decision time does not reflect a sufficient degree of awareness that impression formation is an on-going process which may include several specific "plateaus" (e.g., first impression, suitability as conversation partner, etc.). Springbett, for example, may have unintentionally investigated evaluations of others as potential conversation partners; such a judgment probably influences a decision to hire an applicant but it is not identical to such a decision.

A second important notion is the view that the selection interview is a decision making process. An interviewer is frequently called upon to make a decision for which he or she must accept personal responsibility. Janis and Mann have conceptualized decision making as including five stages: appraising the challenge, surveying alternatives, weighing alternatives, deliberating about commitment, and adhering (to the chosen alternative) despite negative feedback [23]. The Janis and Mann model does not lead one to focus on questions such as how quickly a decision is made but rather on what factors affect the amount of time used and on how time spent in decision making may relate to post-decisional regret. The Janis and Mann model clearly implies that the speed of decision making is dependent upon a variety of intrapersonal and situational factors (e.g., the amount of time believed available, the individual's decision making style, etc.) and that as decisions are made more rapidly there is an increased risk of post-decisional regret.

Third, an interview should be conceptualized as an occasion of interpersonal communication. The interview is not an event distinct from all other human interaction but is rather a special form of a pervasive phenomenon (interpersonal communication), and can best be understood when it is so viewed [38]. Communication is a complex and dynamic process which certainly affects (and is affected by) impression formation and decision making. One's communication habits, for example, are developed and maintained within various communication communities and can be properly understood only when seen in context. In interviews one might expect at least minor variations between differing industries (e.g., accounting firms vs. religious organizations) and perhaps major shifts over time as "fashions" change [17; 27].

Taken together the notions that a selection interview is an occasion of impression formation and decision making within an interpersonal communication context provide an adequate perspective from which to understand an interviewer's decision making--both Schmitt [35] and Cahn [5] have made some initial efforts toward developing such a viewpoint. This perspective has several specific implications for both teaching and research on the subject of decision time in selection interviews; several of these are identified in the following paragraphs.

One implication is that the amount of time needed to make a decision should be affected by the importance of the decision. That is (to use Janis and Mann's terminology), to the extent that one is aware of risking serious negative consequences one is likely to remain intellectually aroused (vigilant) and to continue to examine various courses of action for a longer period of time. In other words, one would expect interviewers to require more time in making an important decision (e.g., when the job open is especially important) than in making a less important decision.

Two, the interviewer's decision making should be affected by her or his training. To the extent that one is aware of, or has altered, or has been taught not to rely on his or her implicit theory of personality, one may reach a decision either more or less rapidly. Latham, Wexley, and Pursell found, for example, that training could reduce "first impression" errors [28]. Also, the extent to which one has received training concerning the decision making process or training in eliciting information may affect how quickly decisions are reached.

Three, variations in quality and quantity of pre-interview information may affect decision time. If pre-interview information allows an interviewer to assess certain risks that may permit her or him to reach a decision more rapidly or require him or her to spend more time exploring a specific risk. The research by Tucker and Rowe [40], however, does not support this notion.

Four, since communication is affected by situational variables such as time [4, pp. 98-104], one would expect that expectations concerning the length of an interview would influence the speed of the decision making process. Decisions may be reached more rapidly in 10 minute interviews than in 30 minute interviews; this notion is supported by Tullar, Mullins, and Caldwell [41].

Five, since communication is purposive and since purposes affect behavior [38, Chapter 1], the interviewer's goals may affect his or her decision making. Stano and Reinsch have argued, for example, that "employment" interviews may actually be "information giving" interviews, "recruitment" interviews, or "selection" interviews [38, Chapter 6]. And even selection interviews take various forms ranging from initial "screening" interviews to final "home office" interviews just before extending an offer. How the interviewer views the situation and her or his purposes could markedly affect how rapidly she or he reaches a final decision.

Six, applicant attributes should affect the interviewer's impression of the applicant and the decision making process. In general one would expect more rapid decisions concerning those applicants who are clearly either excellent or grossly unqualified. Less rapid (and more difficult) decisions would be expected on "borderline" applicants, i.e., those who are near the accept/reject "cut-off" point [41]. The "visibility" of the relevant attributes may also affect decision making--a highly apparent attribute such as substandard English [22] may, if relevant to the interviewer, permit a relatively rapid decision.

Seven, interviewer characteristics should affect the decision making process. Several studies, in fact, point to large differences between interviewers [11; 30; 39; 44].

In short, there is not a single decision time and to search for such is to misunderstand interview decision making. There is rather a multitude of interacting variables which can be manifest in an almost infinite variety of configurations and which both can and should influence decision making. Researchers should focus on those variables which affect the making of valid or invalid decisions. And teachers should not permit their students to be alarmed by poorly-supported claims that interviewers always make final decisions about applicants within the first few minutes of an interview; it's just not that simple.

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