

CHAPTER 1

Communicating at Work

Resource Guide

The opening page of each chapter in *Communicating at Work* lists desired learning outcomes. The Resource Guide will assist you in locating activities and resources from the text and Instructor's Manual that are relevant to each objective.

Chapter Objectives	Resources
Explain the role of communication in career success, providing examples to support your claims.	In the text: Activities: 1, 2 Career Tip: Recovering from a Communication Blunder Case Study: Derogatory emails Lead to Firings Instructor's Manual online: Discussion Launchers: 1–3 Classroom Activities: 1–4 Written Application Exercises: 1
Apply the key principles of communication, knowledge of the basic elements of the communication model, and considerations of effective communication channel use to a specific situation, showing how each one affects the outcome of the interaction. Key terms: asynchronous communication, channel, decoding, encoding, feedback, instrumental communication, message, noise, receiver, relational communication, sender, synchronous communication	In the text: Activities: 3 Technology Tip: The Virtues of Going Offline Instructor's Manual online: Personal Reflection for Individual Journaling Assignment Discussion Launchers: 4–8 Classroom Activities: 5–7 Written Application Exercises: 2 Video Activities: 1–5
Describe how formal and informal communication networks operate in a given situation in your career field; then create a strategic plan of personal networking to accomplish your goals within an organization.	In the text: Activities: 4–7 Career Tip: Getting Recognized by Your Bosses Career Tip: Your Elevator Speech

Key terms: downward communication, formal communication networks, horizontal communication, informal communication networks, networking, organizational charts, upward communication	Technology Tip: Using LinkedIn Effectively A Professional Perspective: Albert Ramon, Chief Meteorologist Culture at Work: <i>Guanxi</i>: Networking Chinese Style Instructor's Manual online: Discussion Launchers: 9–13 Classroom Activities: 8–12 Written Application Exercises: 3 Video Activities: 6
Apply the concepts of ethical communication discussed here to one or more ethically challenging situations.	In the text: Activities: 8 Ethical Challenge: Ethical Communication Choices Instructor's Manual online: Discussion Launchers: 14 Classroom Activities: 13, 14 Written Application Exercises: 4

About Chapter 1

This chapter stresses the importance of communication for entering and advancing in a career. It establishes the central role of communication skills and principles in the inventory of competencies students need in the workplace.

The chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the nature of communication. Communication is unavoidable, strategic, and irreversible; it must be understood in context; it involves instrumental, relational, and identity goals; and it is not a panacea. Each communication context is a unique combination of factors.

Communicators can become more effective by recognizing the role that each of the communication model element (sender, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, noise, feedback) plays in the process of building shared meaning. Readers are alerted to the impact of noise (environmental, physiological, and psychological). Channel characteristics are discussed, enabling readers to make informed choices.

Formal (upward, downward, and horizontal) and informal networks or organizational communication are introduced, with tips for using each to effectively manage our professional identities. The importance of personal networking is also discussed. Several approaches to examining the ethics of communication are presented.

While emphasizing that communication is not a panacea for all business and professional

concerns, this chapter heightens awareness of the many choices and channels available to communicators, and it spurs appreciation for the implications and consequences of those choices. The goal is to encourage students to become more astute analyzers of the communication process and to become more aware of their own and others' choices while communicating in various business environments.

Each ensuing chapter builds on ideas introduced here. The instructor can reinforce this groundwork by referring back to Chapter 1 concepts as they are expanded on throughout the rest of the text.

Personal Reflection for Individual Journaling Assignment

Before reading this chapter, write down what communication means to you. After reading the chapter, reread your initial response. In what ways was your description similar to the characteristics pointed out in the text? In what ways did your description differ? How could your new knowledge about the process of communication help you become a better communicator?

Discussion Launchers

1. From your own work experience, add to the reasons given in the text for the importance of communication in the workplace.
2. In this course, you will be studying several communication skills such as listening, giving clear instructions, interviewing, writing reports, participating in groups, and delivering presentations. Select a career or hobby that interests you, and explain which of these communication skills would be most important to your success in that area.
3. Choose one of the principles of communication explained in the text. Provide three examples that illustrate this principle. How could you apply your knowledge of this principle in a future interaction to prevent or reduce misunderstanding?
4. One of the first models of communication was based on the telegraph. Known as the linear model of communication, it represented the communication process as: Sender–Message–Receiver. Compare and contrast this model to the transactional model presented in your text. How accurate is each of these models as an illustration of the communication process?
5. Does meaning reside in words, in people, or in the interactions that take place among people? Use the communication model from the text to justify your answers.
6. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of relying solely on oral communication to send your ideas? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of relying solely on written communication?
7. Recall instances you've witnessed of inappropriate or rude use of mobile phones or voice mail. Identify the consequences of each example. What can be done to educate the public about appropriate usage?
8. "New technology ensures better communication in the workplace." Take a stand on this statement, and use examples to bolster your position.
9. As a new employee, why is it especially important to be able to identify your organization's conventional (formal) communication networks?
10. Describe an effective and an ineffective use of downward communication you have experienced in an organization. Why was the communication effective or ineffective? What was the outcome? What improvements would you suggest?
11. Upward communication in many organizations is neither open nor frank. Have you (or

someone you know) ever distorted a message to your superiors? Why did you (or your acquaintance) distort the information? Would the distortion be considered ethical in light of any of the ethical principles you read about in this chapter? Explain your answer.

12. Can you think of situations in which there are clear advantages to using only the formal or informal networks in an organization? Can you think of situations in which using both is preferable?
13. Describe situations when communication goals would be better met by using informal networks *before* formal ones, and other situations when goals would be better met by using informal networks *after* formal ones. What difference does the chronological context make? What is the impact of each message when the order is switched? (For example, is there a difference between asking for a raise in person and then following up with a letter versus asking in a letter and then following up with a personal request?)
14. Think of a “white lie” you have told. Why did you tell the lie? After reading the section on ethical challenges in this chapter, do you believe the lie was justified? What guidelines would you use for deciding when lying can be justified?

Classroom Activities

1. Students’ Hopes, Concerns, and Expectations for the Course

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to discuss students’ hopes, concerns, expectations, and/or goals for the course that might serve as a guide or checklist for their progress during the semester.

Procedure: First, have students write down several communication goals they would like to accomplish as a result of completing this course and several expectations they have of the course. (Provide some 5" × 8" note cards for their use.) Be sure to tell the students *not* to write their names on the cards, and then collect them.

Class Discussion: Spend some time on each goal or purpose and the reasons why it is important. Relate these goals to your goals as the instructor and to the goals outlined in the textbook. Point out where your goals and the students’ goals are similar and where they are different. In the next class, you might want to point out any modifications you made to your goals as a result of student input. Throughout the semester, you can call attention to student goals as they relate to each chapter or project.

Variation: This activity could be done with the nominal group technique, with each group giving you five to six goals and expectations. This provides for individual input, student discussion, and an introduction to NGT, which will be taught in Chapter 8.

2. Communication in Your Local Job Market

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to allow students to apply information on the importance of communication in the workplace to the current trends in one's own locale. Further, students should be able to identify the various types of skills that are associated with enhanced communication.

Procedure: Have students bring in the classified ads from your local (or nearest metropolitan area) newspaper or screenshots of online ads. In class, divide students into small groups or pairs. Have students scan ads and keep track of the number of ads scanned and the number that ask specifically for communication skills. They can make a quick graph, like one of the following:

Number of Ads Scanned	Number Requesting Communication Skills	%

Number of Ads Scanned	Number Requiring Communication Skills by That Name	Number that Used Other Words That Connote Communication Skills	Type of Field

After about 10–15 min, tally up the totals from each group and compare the results with information in the text.

Variation: Ask students to bring to class descriptions of their current jobs or jobs they are or will be interested in applying for. (You can have several descriptions on hand that represent a variety of career areas that you obtained from local businesses or from job placement services on campus.)

Class Discussion: After completing this activity, class discussion could focus on the value placed on communication skills and students' ability to identify the variety of skills associated with enhanced communication.

- Can you identify any trends?
- Are there specific items unique to your region of the country?
- What types of new or unfamiliar terminology do you see?
- How many jobs emphasize communication skills?
- What types of jobs seem to emphasize communication skills?
- Which communication skills are stressed?

3. Communication Is Unavoidable

Objective: This activity reinforces the impact of communication behaviors in professional settings.

Procedure: Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to take out a piece of paper. Instruct them as follows: “Fold the paper to create three columns (i.e., two vertical creases). In the first (left) column, list six examples of communication behaviors you have witnessed that unintentionally left a negative impression on others in a workplace setting. Describe the behavior in concrete, observable words. Do *not* include your interpretation of the behavior. Skip a few spaces between each example.”

After the groups have completed their lists, have them exchange papers with another group. For each example, the new group will write their interpretation of the behavior in the middle column. Exchange papers again. In the third (right) column, the third group will write an alternative interpretation of the original behavior.

Class Discussion: In round-robin fashion, ask each group to share a behavior and two possible interpretations. Groups may wish to enact the behaviors. After each interpretation, elicit from the class possible alternative interpretations. Encourage students not to jump to conclusions when interpreting others’ behaviors. Elicit reasons why any communication behavior does not have a single clearly identifiable meaning. Tie the discussion to the communication model. Discuss ways we can become more aware of our own unintended messages.

4. Communication Is Irreversible

Objective: This activity reinforces the impact of communication behaviors in professional settings.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups. Instruct students within each group to share examples from their experience of excellent and/or ineffective business and professional communication. As a group, discuss the lessons they learned from each experience. You may wish to read a couple of examples to get students thinking:

- “I once had a professor who was blind. After 1 day of class, he had memorized the names of all 30 students, and he could recognize them by voice and their position in the classroom. This experience reminded me how it’s possible to do almost anything with enough focus and that I have no business complaining when things get a little hard for me. It also reminded me how much people like being remembered by name. Now I try to apply that lesson to people I meet.”
- “I work at a local golf course. After being there for almost a year and getting lots of good

feedback from our customers, I asked my boss for a small raise. He replied, “Are you kidding? I could train a monkey to do your job.” Even though I knew the comment wasn’t fair, it hurt. I hope I remember never to toss off thoughtless comments without thinking about their potential to hurt others. The experience also taught me a lesson about how *not* to manage employees!”

Class Discussion: Ask each group to summarize their favorite example for the class. After each example, discuss how these lessons in effective or ineffective communication can be useful for all students. Point out the irreversible nature of these communication acts. The ways we communicate may be remembered and talked about for years!

5. Formulating Communication Models

Objective: After completing this activity, students should be able to (1) identify various models that are used to describe the communication process and (2) discuss the relationships that exist among models developed by other class members.

Procedure: Place students into groups and assign them the task of drawing their own model of communication. Although students will have examined the model presented in the text, they still should be able to develop their own. If you wish, provide the class with several examples to get them started. Once they are finished, have each group pick a representative to describe its model to the rest of the class.

Class Discussion: Class discussion could center on the similarities and differences among student models and those described in the text.

- What are the relationships among the models that each group has created?
- What are the similarities and differences that exist among the various models?
- If we were to develop a model as an entire class, which elements would we keep from the various models, and which ones would we leave out?

6. The Communication Model

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to familiarize students with the elements of the communication model and to help them understand how this model applies to their daily interactions.

Procedure: Distribute a placard to each student on which you have printed the name of an element from the communication model (sender, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback, environmental noise, physiological noise, psychological noise).

Ask students to form groups so that each group contains all the elements of the model. Each group will then create a skit that (1) describes the process that occurs as the message flows from sender to receiver; (2) explains how meaning is affected by individual perceptions, noise, and channel; and (3) examines how feedback functions throughout the process.

The best skits will identify a specific sender, receiver, message, channel, and type of noise, and will explain how each element affects the message. For this reason, it's helpful to encourage students to base their skits on a situation they have recently participated in. For less mature students, you could supply a specific message and situation for each group to enact.

Class Discussion: After each skit, ask the class for suggestions for improving the communication. For example, could the message be encoded more clearly? How could the noise be reduced? How might a different channel affect the message?

7. Choosing the Optimal Communication Channel

Objective: Students will become more aware of effective and ineffective uses of communication channels in the workplace.

Procedure: Briefly explain to students the concept of media richness theory. Rich media (e.g., face-to-face; teleconferencing; telephone) are those that provide a variety of communication cues. Lean media (e.g., email, memo, bulletin board) provide few communication cues. Rich media are preferred when messages are nonroutine (unexpected, urgent, very important, or complex). Lean media should be used for routine (predictable, noncomplex) messages. If a rich channel is used for routine messages, there will be an information glut. It's a waste of resources. If a lean channel is used for a nonroutine message, there will be an information gap. This can lead to confusion and/or resentment.

Draw the following chart on the board. Elicit examples from students that illustrate appropriate and inappropriate uses of rich and lean communication channels.

	Noncomplex Messages	Complex Messages
Rich channels	Too much information	Effective communication+
Lean channels	Effective communication	Not enough information

Adapted from Lengel, R. H., & Daft, R. (1998). The selection of communication media as an executive skill. *The Academy of Management Executive*, *12* (3), 126.

8. Understanding Communication Flow

Objective: This activity helps students tease out some of the confusions they may have regarding communication flow.

Procedure: Ask each student to write out three questions they have about how communication flow applies in real workplaces. To encourage divergent thinking, you could read some of the sample questions listed below.

Defining the direction of communication flow:

- Do we decide if communication is upward or downward because of job titles or because of tone of voice?
- Can downward communication be supportive?
- Can upward communication be disconfirming?
- Is horizontal communication always respectful?

Distinguishing formal from informal communication

- Do we decide if communication is formal or informal based on the location, the activity, the topic, clothing style, tone of voice, or other?
- Where and when does informal communication occur?
- Can informal communication take place in the office during work hours?

Using communication in the workplace

- Is informal communication constructive or destructive to work quality?
- If my friend gets promoted so she becomes my supervisor, how does that change the way we talk during work? Does it change the way we talk after work?
- Why should we study communication flow? How can it help us?

Class Discussion: Collect the questions. Read them out loud one at a time, inviting the class to suggest answers. Guide them to a clearer understanding of these concepts.

9. Effective Upward and Downward Communication

Objective: Students will understand differences in language style and word choice used in upward versus downward communication.

Procedure: Summarize for the class the article titled “Email language tips off hierarchy affects” (available at <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120214121734.htm>). As you read the article, have students list examples of typical phrases used in upward communication and those used in downward communication.

Class Discussion: Follow up by discussing the findings. You may wish to ask questions such as:

- What differences did you notice between the language used in upward and downward communication?
- What type of instrumental goals does each type of language seem to convey?
- Think of your own upward and downward communication, in jobs you may have held, or in the classroom. Has the upward and downward communication you’ve experienced shown similar characteristics?
- Can you think of some workplaces where there might not be distinct differences between the language of upward and downward communication?

10. Formal Networks

Objective: After completing this activity, students should be able to better identify formal communication networks in organizations. Additionally, they should be able to distinguish communication characteristics that are representative of the various types of formal networks.

Procedure: Copy for the class some organizational charts from local organizations. To access a variety of organizational charts, you may ask students to bring in charts from campus or other organizations they belong to or places they work (some organizations may not allow their charts to be shared). Using information in the chapter, ask students to identify the type of information that flows through each of these formal networks. Illustrate the principle by displaying an organizational chart of your college.

Students are often amazed when they see an organizational chart for their own school. Some students are unaware of who answers to whom in athletics, student activities, or their own major area of study.

Class Discussion: After students have studied the chart and asked their questions, ask them to speculate on the path that certain information could take.

- What kind of information is communicated at and among various levels on the chart?
- What types of channels are used to communicate at and among various levels on the chart?
- How does an organization direct the type of information that occurs at each level?

11. Functions of Downward Communication

Objective: This activity helps students develop an understanding of the functions of downward, upward, and horizontal communication in real organizations.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group the task of contacting several people who work as supervisors or managers in various organizations. Students should ask the supervisors to give examples of the kinds of information they communicate with their subordinates. They should then compile a list of examples and classify them according to the types of downward communication listed in Table 1-2 in the text.

Class Discussion: After students have assembled and categorized their lists, discuss the following questions:

- Which types of downward communication were mentioned most frequently?
- Did you collect any examples that you had trouble classifying? If so, what were they?
- Are there any types of downward communication listed in Table 1-2 that you didn't get examples for? If so, come up with some examples of your own.
- In what ways might the types of communication vary according to the type of organization?

Variations: Assign the class to investigate upward and/or horizontal communication flow.

12. Analyzing Your Choice of Networks

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to allow students to predict and analyze the choices they would make about using formal and informal communication networks in an organization.

Procedure: Have students consider your college or university as the organization. Ask them to consider which networks they would use for each of the following situations, and why:

As a student:

- a. You want to appeal a grade that you believe was unfair.
- b. You want to find the best chemistry teacher.
- c. You want to let an instructor know that you will miss the first week of class.

As an instructor (employee of the college):

- a. You have a student who is appealing a grade and you want to know the best way to handle the situation.
- b. You want to take a class in another department and want to find the best instructor.
- c. You rarely miss class, but your daughter is graduating out of state, and you will miss the last week of class before finals.

Class Discussion: Compare and contrast the formal and informal networks available to each type of individual in each situation.

- What factors influence your choices?
- In what situations would you choose only formal networks? Informal networks?
- In what situations would you choose both formal and informal networks?

13. Ethical Dimensions of Communication

Objective: This activity presents students with an opportunity to evaluate actions in light of various ethical perspectives. Students will become more familiar with various ethical perspectives by comparing analyses. This will reinforce the knowledge that no single perspective is always the best to use. Finally, students will generate a guideline for deciding which ethical perspective(s) to apply in various types of situations.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to select one of the following situations or to describe a situation from their own lived experience in which ethics may have been compromised.

- Alexi sees a coworker falsify her time sheet. Alexi doesn't tell the manager because she's worried that her coworker would find out who "tattled" and would get her back in some

way.

- Raúl starts his own lawn care business. When he fills out his income tax form, he does not report several payments that were made to him in cash.
- Brenda is the treasurer on the Board of Directors for a Homeowners Association. Brenda takes several road trips for her own benefit. On each trip, she purchases an item for the association's use. In truth, the item could have been bought closer to home. Brenda then writes herself a check from association funds to reimburse herself for mileage expenses.
- Stuart recently received his driver's license. He is backing out of a crowded parking lot and accidentally dings a parked car, causing a dent that is a little unsightly but not too serious. No one is in sight. Stu drives off, thinking, "Boy, am I lucky no one saw that."
- Duane needs a suit for an important ceremony he has to attend, but he is struggling to pay tuition and feels he can't afford to rent one or to buy one. Instead, he purchases a suit, wears it for the event, and then returns it to the store the next day and gets his money back.
- Sigi asks her older sister Heather to tell their Mom that Sigi is not at home doing her homework because she is attending the Youth Night activities at church. Actually, Sigi has gone to see a graphic movie that Mom disapproves of. Trying to be a good sister, Heather goes along with this. Later, a friend reveals to Mom that Sigi was not at church.

Ask the groups to analyze their chosen situation from the perspective of three different ethical principles from this chapter. From the view of each perspective, would the actions taken be considered ethical or not? Each group should be prepared to justify their answers. Each group should also write down a few sentences they could say to the person in the scenario to help them make a principled decision when faced with a conflict between what they believe is right versus what is practical.

Class Discussion: Ask groups to summarize their analyses to the entire class and to share the advice they have written to the person in the scenario. Ask the class to recommend which of the ethical principles they would find most helpful (and why) in making decisions about their own behavior.

14. Ethical Dilemmas in Organizations

Objective: This activity presents students with an opportunity to evaluate real case studies in light of various ethical perspectives. Students will become more familiar with various ethical perspectives by comparing analyses. This will reinforce the knowledge that no single perspective is always the best to use. Finally, students will generate a guideline for deciding which ethical perspective(s) to apply in various types of situations.

Procedure: Select one of the actual case studies from the IGE Ethical Fitness Seminar. Present the case study to the class.

Class Discussion: Analyze the dilemma from the perspective of three different ethical principles from this chapter. What action would each perspective suggest? Which of the perspectives do they find most helpful in guiding them to a principled decision when faced with a conflict between what they believe is right versus what is practical.

Written Application Exercises

1. Communication in Your Own Life

- A. Read the section of your text titled “The Importance of Communication” and the Career Tip in your text titled “Careers in Communication.”
- B. Visit the National Communication Association website and explore some of the links under the Education/[Student Resources](#) section. For example, you might want to read about [Famous Graduates in Communication](#) or [Areas of Interest within Communication](#).
- C. Browse through the Table of Contents of your text.
 1. Select a topic that interests you.
 2. Use the Table of Contents, the glossary, and the index to locate material in your text about that topic. For example, if you chose “Relational Listening,” you will find this phrase cross-referenced in the Table of Contents, the glossary, and the index.
- D. Summarize what you learned as you browsed the text to read about your chosen topic. How can this effective communication skill benefit you in your career (and/or personal life)? How will you go about applying what you’ve learned? Include at least one very specific example.

2. Model of Communication

To complete this exercise, choose one of the case studies below *or* use a communication scenario from your own life. For this exercise, you will submit a completed table, plus a paragraph.

CASE STUDIES FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 2:

CASE STUDY 1: The nursing report

While doing clinical rotations at the hospital, we would record a report regarding our patients just before we left duty. When the next RN would come on, they would play the recording. We would record information such as their current status, level of consciousness, what medications were given and which ones are due. It would get confusing to me at times while listening to the recordings. I found it helpful to listen to the entire message first, and then to listen to it again while taking notes. I would also pause the recording if I needed extra time. It was very helpful when the previous nurse didn’t ramble and was able to talk about one patient at a time.

CASE STUDY 2: Student email

You are a professor of an online public speaking class that requires students to upload videos of their speeches. At the end of the second week, several days after the first video was due, you receive the following email from a student enrolled in your class:

<<hey teacher now i can get in the page the you gave us „the other day that you help us me and Bob. well now i tryed to put a video into the page but it wont let me do it.. its taking foverer if just keeps donwloading. what whould i do??>>

CASE STUDY 3: No shared enthusiasm

Last week I started my first nursing internship. I was really excited, because as soon as I complete these hours, I'll graduate from nursing school. But I was also nervous, because finally the time had come to rely on myself making critical decisions. My mom is a nurse, so I knew she would understand how I felt. I called her on my way to my first shift. She reassured me that everything was going to be okay. She said to call after my shift was over to tell her all about it. After my thirteen-hour night-shift was over, I called her. There was no answer. At first, I didn't mind much because I was exhausted. I slept for a couple hours. Then I called her again. Still no answer. Instead I received a text, "That is great your shift went well" and that was all it said. I could not help but get upset inside because I thought she would have had a little more interest in it than that. I texted back, "That is a little rude that you can't even answer the phone and listen to all the cool things I experienced." Then I got the phone call I thought I had been waiting for. What a shock. She told me that my grandma had been in a car accident. My grandma was okay, thankfully. Then I realized I had jumped to conclusions and overreacted, so I felt guilty inside.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 2:

Review the communication model, as explained in your text. Use the table below to assess the communication elements from one of the case studies below or from a communication scenario in your own life.

After you complete the Table below, write a paragraph describing in your own words what "communication is a process" means. Submit both the completed table and the paragraph to your instructor.

DATA TABLE FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 2:

Element of Communication Model	Specific Example	Did This Element Hinder Shared Communication? If so, How?	How Could This Element Be Modified to Improve Shared Meaning?

Message (as encoded by sender)			
Message (as decoded by receiver)			
Channel (how was the message sent)			
Environmental Noise			
Physical Noise			
Psychological Noise			
Feedback			

3. Formal Communication Flow

Contact two or three people who work as supervisors or managers in various organizations. Ask the supervisors to give examples of the kinds of information they communicate with their subordinates (downward communication), with their upper level managers (upward communication), and with their peers (horizontal communication).

After you gather this information, use the three tables below to classify these types of information as downward, upward, or horizontal communication. For each, suggest characteristics that might make each message effective or ineffective. Complete at least three of the five rows for each direction of communication. One example is completed for you.

Part 1: Downward Communication Flow

Function of Message	Example	What Might Make This Message Effective?	What Might Make This Message Ineffective?
Job instructions			
Job rationale	Why management will be changing	If management provides an honest reason that employees	If management gives a fake reason, when we know there's another reason

	our billing process again.	can relate to.	behind it that management wants to hide.
Feedback			
Indoctrination			

Part 2: Upward Communication Flow

Function of Message	Example	What Might Make This Message Effective?	What Might Make This Message Ineffective?
What subordinates are doing			
Unsolved work problems			
Suggestions for improvement			
How Subordinates feel about each other and the job			

Part 3: Horizontal Communication Flow

Function of Message	Example	What Might Make This Message Effective?	What Might Make This Message Ineffective?
Coordinating tasks			
Solving problems			
Sharing information			
Resolving conflicts			
Building rapport (harmony)			

4. Ethical Dimensions of Communication

To complete this exercise, choose one of the case studies below *or* use a communication scenario from your own life. For this exercise, you will submit a completed table, plus a paragraph.

CASE STUDIES FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 4:

CASE STUDY 1: The time clock.

At my workplace, one day I noticed two coworkers (I'll call them Amy and Beth) leaving without clocking out. A few hours later, I saw them come back with takeout food from a local restaurant, go into the break room, eat their lunch, and reemerge about an hour and a half later. This went on for several weeks. I began to note the dates and times in a notebook. While these two were gone, the rest of us had a lot more work to do. Some important calls were missed.

CASE STUDY 2: The spaceman

I stated a few times in a report that I was giving in front of a class, when talking about astronauts, the term "spaceman." I received a good grade on my report; however, I was pulled aside by the male teacher and was informed that "spaceman" wasn't the correct term to use. He said that the term could be considered demeaning to our female astronauts. "Astronaut" or "spaceperson" was a better term to use. I didn't really think about sexist terms like that because I had heard it said so many times by people that I looked up to that it didn't enter into my mind that what I was saying could be offensive. That got me thinking. The next week, the guitar player in my band used the term "I nigger-rigged it" when referring to

keeping his amp functioning until he could take it in to a professional. With my new knowledge of the power of words, this bothered me.

CASE STUDY 3: The “borrowed” shirt

I had a really great date for the school dance. I was excited to go. But the dance was a dress-up occasion. I looked through my closet and couldn’t find a good shirt I liked. I looked in my wallet and couldn’t find much cash...only enough to buy groceries for the week. I already owed my brother \$60, so I couldn’t ask him for a loan.

The day of the dance, I went to Walmart and used the rest of my cash to buy a shirt I really liked. I wore it to the dance. I felt good, and I had a good time. But I was still short of cash, so, the next day, I went back to Walmart and returned the shirt. I hadn’t really sweat in it, so it was just like new. Walmart will never know the difference. Besides, those fat cat managers who run those big stores have plenty of money to spare.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 4:

Review the ethical dimensions of communication as explained in your textbook. Use the table below to assess *one* communication scenario *three* times (i.e., from *three* differing ethical views [dimensions]). This ability to view an interaction from more than one perspective will help you improve your “other-orientation,” a skill that is critical for effective communication. You may assess one of the case studies below or a communication scenario in your own life.

After you complete the Table below, write a paragraph explaining which ethical dimension you find *most* useful for this situation and which you find *least* useful, and why. Submit both the completed table and the paragraph to your instructor. Scroll down below the blank data table to view an example that has already been completed.

BLANK TABLE FOR YOUR USE:

Data Table—Situation Analysis Using Ethical Dimensions of Communication

Ethical Guideline	Meaning of This Guideline —in Your Own Words	Your Ethical Words

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED DATA TABLE AND EXPLANATION FOR APPLICATION EXERCISE 4 (don’t use this example; use a different scenario):

***Sample Ethics Scenario:** You work in the Human Relations Department of a large company. Your CEO has informed you that the firm is about to deliver a huge number of totally unexpected layoff notices. She admonishes you that your job will be in jeopardy if you tell anyone about these layoffs ahead of time. You know that one of your coworkers is signing a purchase agreement tomorrow on an expensive home with a large mortgage payment. You would like to warn him that he might be losing his paycheck soon, but you are afraid.*

Sample Data Table—Situation Analysis Using Ethical Dimensions of Communication

Ethical Guideline	Meaning of This Guideline —in Your Own Words	Your Ethical Words
Rights Approach	“Never tell a lie” is an absolute principle.	“My boss told me not to tell anyone, but I can’t lie to you, even if it’s a lie of omission. Our firm is having a lot of layoffs next month, so maybe you should wait until we hear more.”
Fairness Approach	Don’t favor one group (such as managers) over another (such as lower level employees).	Talk to my boss: “I know these layoffs are confidential, but I think we should warn some of the employees ahead of time, to give them some time to adjust.”
Professional Ethic	In business, employees are expected to keep confidential information secret.	Ask my boss: “Does this information have to be strictly confidential?” If the answer is yes, and there is a good reason, then I am obliged not to say anything.

Sample Explanatory Paragraph for Ethics Analysis:

In this situation, I would prefer to use the Fairness Approach to decision-making. I don’t know if my boss would buy off on it, but at least I could try. It’s least likely that I would use the Rights Approach, because then I might jeopardize my job. I could be the next person on the chopping block. That wouldn’t help any of us. From this exercise, I learned how helpful it can be to think about situations from several viewpoints before I decide what to do. There isn’t just one right or one wrong. Also, I learned not to be too judgmental of other peoples’ ethics. It’s not easy, but I’m learning to sort of see where they’re coming from. This ties in with what the text taught us about “decoding” a message. Each person might attach a different meaning and value judgment to a statement.

Video Activities

1. Principles of Communication

Objective: Students will become more familiar with principles of communication by viewing and analyzing examples.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups. Assign to each group one principle of communication to observe. Show a 5-min segment of a video clip portraying a meeting or business conversation that takes place in a professional setting. After the segment ends, allow each group 7 min to discuss examples they observed in the clip that illustrate their assigned principle.

Discussion: Ask each group to present their findings to the class. Elicit additional examples from the class.

2. Model of Communication

Objective: Students will become more familiar with elements of communication by identifying them in a video scenario.

Procedure: Show a 5-min segment of a video clip portraying a meeting or business conversation that takes place in a professional setting.

Discussion Questions: Stimulate discussion about the applicability of the communication model with questions such as:

- Describe the physical, social, chronological, and cultural context of this interaction.
- What instances of noise (external, physiological, and psychological) occurred?
- Given this context, how effective were each sender's choices (words, nonverbals, and channel) for encoding the message? Explain.
- How effective was each receiver's feedback? Explain.
- What did you learn about effective communication from viewing this interaction?
- What suggestions do you have for improving this communication interaction?

3. The Nature of Communication: Review

Objective: This exercise gives students an opportunity to review the elements and principles of communication.

Procedure: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group a topic from the chapter (e.g., the communication model or one of the principles of communication). Show a clip from a film such as *The Four Seasons*, *Terms of Endearment*, *ET*, *Stand and Deliver*, *The Waking Dream*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Seabiscuit*, or *The Notebook* that illustrates interpersonal communication. (Preview the clip first to be sure it clearly demonstrates the topics you assign.)

Class Discussion: After showing the clip, give each group 5 min to do the following:

- Define their assigned concept in their own words
- Identify examples of their assigned topic from the scene they viewed
- Evaluate the examples in terms of their communication effectiveness
- Explain how understanding this concept can help students improve their communication effectiveness

4. “The Phone Message”

Objective: After viewing this *Seinfeld* clip, students should be able to better understand the various characteristics that are often associated to the qualities of communication. You can find the episode here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSkVQiW6NI8>.

Procedure: Before showing the clip, write the discussion questions on the board. Have students take notes so they can answer the questions afterward.

Synopsis: “The Phone Message” (aired February 13, 1991) can help students understand how the principles of communication apply to interpersonal interactions. In the beginning of this episode of *Seinfeld*, George is just finishing up a date with a new girlfriend who asks him to accompany her up to her apartment for coffee. George declines because he doesn’t drink coffee at night; it keeps him awake. While driving home, he realizes what her true intentions were, which leads into a discussion with Jerry and Elaine about what the true meaning is behind being invited up for coffee late at night by your girlfriend. After a lengthy discussion, George decides to call his date, but gets the answering machine instead. Not knowing what to say, George leaves an ultimatum for her to call him back because the ball is now in her court.

Days later, after no return calls, George makes various attempts to get a hold of the date, but she doesn’t return his calls. Frustrated, George states, “I don’t drink coffee, I don’t like coffee. I wish I could get another shot at the coffee so I can spit it in your face.” Soon George finds out that she has been out of town and has not been getting the messages, so he and Jerry work up a scheme to sneak into her apartment to replace the tape in the machine before she can listen to it.

Discussion Questions:

- In this video clip, identify an example to illustrate each of the principles of communication from your text.
- Are there times when communication can be reversed?
- What characteristics of George’s communication undermined his desired identity management?
- What characteristics might affect the way George’s girlfriend interprets his message?
- Will more communication help George’s relationship or hurt it? Explain.

5. Communication From the Linear Perspective

Objective: After viewing a short clip from the film *Uncle Buck* (1989, Universal Studios, directed by John Hughes), students should obtain an understanding of what human communication would consist of if the linear perspective/model were representative of everyday communication.

Procedure: After a brief discussion of the linear model, show the clip that starts as Uncle Buck (played by John Candy) walks into the principal's office of his niece's elementary school and ends as he leaves the office. Ask students to be prepared to discuss the impersonal communication that results and to apply the example to similar situations they have encountered within their own work experience when dealing with a supervisor. The clip focuses on Uncle Buck's visit to his young niece's principal. When he enters the room, he is confronted with an unpleasant message about his niece's performance in school. After hearing the principal's perspective, Candy takes his turn by presenting his interpretation of what characteristics 8-year-old girls should possess. Both messages are very confrontational, allowing for no replay from the original sender once Candy has spoken.

Discussion Questions:

- In what way does this clip suggest that the linear perspective is an effective method for communicating with others?
- What problems with the linear model are presented in this clip?
- What would the conversation be like if a more transitional perspective were used?
- Does the structure of an organization suggest that the linear model should be used to help facilitate appropriate interactions? Why or why not?

6. Hudsucker Communication Network

Objective: After watching a clip from the film *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994, Warner Home Video, directed by Joel Coen), students should have a better understanding of the various types of communication networks that exist within an organizational structure. Students will also be able to understand the implications of the use of written versus oral communication.

Synopsis: The appropriate clip to use starts with the credits and ends almost 20 min into the film, once Paul Newman falls out the window. In *the Hudsucker Proxy*, Tim Robbins plays a new college graduate who takes a job in the mailroom of Hudsucker Industries on the day that Mr. Hudsucker has killed himself. While learning the procedures and rules to the mailroom from both formal and informal sources, Robbins is eventually sent up to the vice president's office to deliver a letter. Mishaps occur, which result in Robbins's saving the vice president from falling out the window. Recognizing his ability to control Robbins, the vice president of the company, played by Paul Newman, promotes him to president.

Class Discussion:

- In what ways does downward communication occur in this organization?
- Is the way that superiors communicated with subordinates effective or ineffective?

- Does this organization foster methods of upward communication?
- How does the informal network function in Hudsucker Industries?

Additional Resources

Print:

Communication for careers: Oral communication competencies needed by community college graduates entering careers. National Communication Association.

This pamphlet lists very specific communication skills reported by career advisory committees as critical for various careers.

Isaacs, E., Walendowski, A., Whittaker, S., Schiano, D., & Kamm, C. (2002). The character, functions, and styles of instant messaging in the workplace. In *Proceedings of the 2002 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work*. Association for Computing Machinery.

This study found that heavy IM users rarely switched from IM to another medium when the conversation got complex.

Joinson, A. N. (2001). Self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication: The role of self-awareness and visual anonymity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 31, 177–192. A commentary on the relationship between anonymity and self-disclosure.

Kaplan-Leiserson, E. (2004, April). Workforce of tomorrow: How can we prepare all youth for future work success? *Training and Development*, 58(4), 12–14.

Points out that employers are “practically begging” for employees who can communicate and collaborate.

Morreale, S. P., Osborn, M. M., & Pearson, J. C. (2000). Why communication is important: A rationale for the centrality of the study of communication. *Journal of the Association of Communication Administration*, 29, 1–25.

This article summarizes reasons for studying communication.

Stringer, D. M., & Cassidy, P. A. (2003). *52 activities for exploring value differences*. Nicolas Brealey Publishing.

Learning exercises to help employees with various work styles function together. Exercises include action plans.

Video:

Communication in a Wired World: Be Smart, Be Safe (2009). 20 min. Learning Seed Video.

A “Davey Award” Winner. Shows how unwise online posts can harm reputations. Addresses the pitfalls of multitasking. Gives tips for wise use of email and social networking.

Ethics 4 Everyone. 15 min. CRM Learning.

Presents ethical dilemmas in which individuals' sense of what's right conflict. Provides an action test to help students decide which decisions are most ethical.

Manners at Work (2006). 20 min. Learning Seed Video.

Good manners at work give you a competitive edge. Includes cubicle courtesy and electronic etiquette.

Perception: The Art of Seeing (1997). 24 min. Learning Seed Video.

Demonstrates how we create our own realities through our perceptions. Includes several perception "experiments" that viewers can participate in.

Social Media: Reduce the risk. 21 min. CRM Learning.

Discusses the impact of new technologies in the workplace. Provides suggestions for managing the risks engendered by these new technologies.

Ten Powerful Networking Skills (2007). 18 min. Insight Media.

Shows how networking builds career and personal success. Depicts differences among passive, active, and proactive networkers.

Undeliverable: Email Etiquette for Today's Workplace. 40 min. CRM Learning.

Teaches etiquette and clarity for writing effective workplace emails.

When the Phone Rings: Telephone Skills for Better Service (2009). 20 min. Insight Media.

Telephone skills for effective customer service.

Workplace Communications (1993). 40 min. RMI Media

Overview of communication that focuses on the need for sending and receiving messages in the workplace. Some focus on context and timing and the importance of feedback and listening in the communication process.

Web:

ABC News—Medical Errors, Past and Present: <http://abcnewsgo.com/Health/story?id=3789868&page=1>

Examples of medical errors resulting from poor communication.

American Communication Association (ACA): <http://www.americancomm.org>

ACA is a not-for-profit organization created to promote academic and professional research, criticism, teaching, practical use, and exchange of principles and theories of human communication. This site includes numerous useful links to communication studies and other resources.

Association for Business Communication (ABC): <http://www.businesscommunication.org>
ABC is an international organization committed to fostering excellence in business communication scholarship, research, education, and practice.

Business Week online: <http://www.businessweek.com>

Center on Education and Training for Employment (CETE): <https://ceteosu.edu>
The goal of CETE is to help individuals gain valuable work skills.

Central States Communication Association (CSCA): <http://www.csc-net.org>

Certification Magazine: <http://www.certmag.com>
Type “communication skills” into the Search Box to find articles on the need of engineering personalities for interpersonal skills.

Computer-Mediated Communication Magazine: <http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/>
Edited by John December, this magazine discusses current issues related to computer-mediated communication.

Corporate Communication Institute (CCI): <http://www.corporatecomm.org>
CCI attempts to build a bridge between theory and practice by encouraging students, professionals, and scholars to share ideas and information.

Eastern Communication Association (ECA): <http://www.ecasite.org>
ECA is the oldest professional communication association in the United States.

Free Management Library: http://www.managementhelp.org/mrktng/org_cmmhtm
Compares downward and upward communication and outlines common causes of problems in internal communication in organizations.

Institute for Business and Professional Ethics: <http://www.depaul.edu/ethics>
The Institute of Business and Professional Ethics encourages ethical deliberation.

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC): <http://www.iabc.com>
IABC provides resources for public relations; employee, business, and marketing communication; and public affairs.

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication: <https://academicoup.com/jcmc>
Publishes research about issues related to computer-mediated communication.

National Communication Association (NCA) (703-750-0553, fax 703-914-9471) 5105 Backlick Rd Blvd E, Annandale, VA 22003: <http://www.natcom.org>
NCA (formerly the Speech Communication Association) can provide comprehensive resources such as bibliographies, videos, and information on national and regional meetings.

Southern States Communication Association (SSCA): <http://www.ssca.net>

Workplace etiquette: <http://www.business-marketing.com/store/etiquettearticle.com>

Handy advice for workplace etiquette.