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Why Communication is Important: A Rationale for the Centrality of the Study of Communication

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ACADEMIC disciplines in higher education are routinely called upon to explain and justify their role in the educational enterprise. Some academic fields such as history and philosophy are more central in the pursuits of liberal arts, while others such as business administration and engineering are more related to career development. The discipline of communication is fairly unique as it crosses these boundaries. As a result, a need exists to provide a rationale for the study of communication. The National Communication Association, in response to requests from communication departments and administrators for evidence supporting the centrality of their discipline, has collected and annotated nearly 100 articles, commentaries, and publications which call attention to the importance of the study of communication in contemporary society. Four of five major themes in the bibliography provide support for the importance of communication education to: the development of the whole person; the improvement of the educational enterprise; being a responsible citizen of the world, both socially and culturally; and, succeeding in one's career and in the business enterprise. A fifth theme highlights the need for communication education to be provided by those who are specialists in its study.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Competence in oral communication – in speaking and listening – is prerequisite to students' academic, personal, and professional success in life. Indeed, teachers deliver most instruction for classroom procedures orally to students. Students with ineffective listening skills fail to absorb much of the material to which they are exposed. Their problems are intensified when they respond incorrectly or inappropriately because of poor speaking skills. Students who cannot clearly articulate what they know may be wrongly

judged as uneducated or poorly informed. Additionally, some speech styles of students can trigger stereotyped expectations of poor ability: expectations that may become self-fulfilling. Of equal concern, students who are unable to effectively ask for help from a teacher will not receive it, and typically reticent students progress more slowly despite what may be a normal level of aptitude.

Beyond the confines of school, oral communication competence can contribute to individuals' social adjustment and participation in satisfying interpersonal relationships. Youngsters with poor communication skills are sometimes viewed as less attractive by their peers and enjoy fewer friendships. Antisocial and violent behavior often accompany or occur with underdeveloped social and conflict management skills. On the positive side, the ability to communicate orally supports sound psychological development. One's self concept is acquired through interaction with others. In psychological terms, achieving self-actualization involves communication activities such as making contributions in groups, exerting influence over others, and using socially acceptable behavior.

As individuals mature and become working adults, communication competence continues to be essential. Communication skills are required in most occupations. Employers identify communication as one of the basic competencies every graduate should have, asserting that the ability to communicate is valuable for obtaining employment and maintaining successful job performance. The communication skills essential in the workplace include basic oral and writing skills, and the ability to communicate in work groups and teams with persons of diverse background, and when engaged in problem solving and conflict management.

Given the importance of the ability to communicate competently, the communication discipline should be viewed as central on college campuses. Humans are born with the ability to vocalize; but not with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that define communication competence. The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately is learned and, therefore, must be taught.

To provide credence for this argument, this article provides a description of nearly one hundred articles, commentaries, and publications, which emphasize the importance of communication and the role of the study of communication in contemporary life. These publications include books, journals, newspaper articles, and conference papers, which have utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. From these materials, five major themes, developed and supported by sub-themes, emerge. These include the role of communication education in developing the whole person, in improving the work of education, in advancing the interests of society and in bridging cultural differences, and in advancing careers and the business enterprise. A final theme is that these contributions can best be realized when communication is taught by specialists in departments that are devoted to the study of communication.

The five themes and subthemes are presented in Table 1. In the annotations that follow, at least one study or article is provided for each subtheme; in some cases, a number of articles supporting the subtheme. At the beginning of the annotations for each theme, a summary of the content and significance of that theme is provided.

TABLE 1
Five Themes and Subthemes in Support of the
Centrality of the Study of Communication

Theme I: Communication Education
Is Vital to the Development of the Whole Person

- A. Communication Enhances Relationships to the Self, Others, and Society, and is therefore Central to General Education.
- B. Communication Education Should Begin Early and Continue into Adult Education.
- C. Students Place High Value on Communication Education, but Often Underestimate the Importance of Certain Skills.
- D. Communication Education Improves Critical Thinking.
- E. Communication Education Helps Students Become More Critical Consumers of Modern Media.
- F. Communication Education Develops Leadership Skills.
- G. One Must Understand Communication Dynamics to Build a Successful Family.
- H. Educators Understand the Importance of Communication Education.
- I. To Acquire Communication Knowledge is to Gain Power; to Teach Communication is Profoundly Political.

Theme II: Communication Education
Improves the Educational Enterprise

- A. Communication Education Enhances Classroom Instruction.
- B. Communication is the Key to Successful Collaboration in the Educational Environment.
- C. Are We Neglecting Oral Communication in the Language Arts Classroom?
- D. Communication Skill is Most Important Trait for School Administrators.
- E. Communication Education is Vital in the Selection of Teachers.
- F. Communication Education Fosters Leadership among Librarians.
- G. Oral Communication is among Basic Skills Required for Faculty Leadership.

Theme III: Communication Education
Is Vital to Society and to Crossing Cultural Boundaries

- A. Communication Education Helps Develop Skills and Sensitivities that Shape our Social and Political Lives.
- B. Developing the Ability to Speak Qualifies One to Participate in Public Life.
- C. Good Family Communication Helps Prevent Delinquent Behavior.
- D. Nonverbal Communication Influences Decisions in Courts of Law.
- E. Communication Education Can Enhance Cross-Cultural Understanding.

**Theme IV: Communication Education
is Vital to Career Success and the Business Enterprise**

- A. Communication Education can Help Students Gain a Desirable Job.
- B. Oral Communication and Listening Abilities are among the Basic Job Skills Desired by Employers.
- C. Developing Desirable Communicative Behaviors is Essential in Specific Professional Careers [accounting, auditing, banking, engineering, industrial hygiene, information science, public relations, sales, etc.].
- D. Communication Education can Increase Upward Mobility in One's Career.
- E. Communication Education Helps Make Business/Customer Interactions more Satisfying and Productive.
- G. Learning Communication Skills Promotes Human Resources Training.
- H. Communication Education Enhances the Effectiveness of Business Executives.
- I. Communication Skills are Top Priorities for Entrepreneurs.

**Theme V: Communication Education Should be Taught
by Specialized Faculty in Departments Devoted to the Study of Communication**

- A. Communication is a Research Discipline of Emerging Importance.
- B. We Should Explore Strategies for Curriculum Revision to Better Impart Communication Skills for Business.
- C. Teaching Basic Speaking and Writing Skills are Both Important to Business Communication Curricula.
- D. Professional Colleges Provide a Special Setting for Communication Study.
- E. Law School Doesn't Provide Essential Education in Non-verbal Communication Sensitivities.
- F. Making the Case for Communication Education.
- G. How Smart Communication Education Programs Survive in Tough Times.

**THEME I: COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IS VITAL TO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WHOLE PERSON**

The first theme is that communication education is vital to the development of the whole person. Educators and researchers within and outside the discipline attested to the role of communication in self-development. As a discipline which enhances relationships with one's self, others, and society, communication is viewed as central to general education requirements. Communication should be included in early childhood education and should continue through adult education. Students recognize the importance of communication education, but may underestimate the importance of some skills. Communication education improves specific skills and abilities including critical thinking, media literacy and criticism, leadership skills, and family relational development. Educators understand the importance of communication and that acquiring communication knowledge allows one to gain personal power. Teaching communication, then, may be viewed as profoundly political.

A. *Communication Enhances Relationships to the Self, Others, and Society, and is Therefore Central to General Education*

Backlund, P. (1989). What should be the role of speech communication in the general education of students? In *The Future of Speech Communication Education*. Annandale, VA: NCA.

Backlund constructs an argument concerning the role of speech communication in general education. The author first outlines how education "...seems to come down to the fundamental notion of, 'if we are doing it right, what would an educated person look like?'" The author addresses this premise by charting descriptions of educated persons throughout history. Then Backlund refocuses his argument upon the objectives of the speech communication educator. The author presents (1) goals related to the individual's relationship to society, (2) goals related to other individuals, and (3) goals related to the self. Backlund concludes that many of the objectives of general education are realized through speech communication education.

Bruskin & Goldring. (1993). America's number 1 fear: Public speaking. In Bruskin & Goldring (Eds.), *Bruskin & Goldring Report*.

This news article presented the results of a nation-wide survey of adults who were asked to rank their greatest fears. The results indicated that "speaking before a group was the greatest fear among the respondents." Women reported more fear of public speaking than men did.

Ford, W. S. Z. & Wolvin, A. D. (1993). The differential impact of a basic communication course on perceived communication competencies in class, work, and social contexts. *Communication Education*, 42, 215-233.

This study examines the impact of the basic public speaking course on students' perception of their communication competence in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. The results are gathered from three hundred and forty-four students at a large public university in 1991. The students perceived that their communication competence was greater in all of the above stated contexts. The most dramatic improvements in communication competence were seen in four specific areas: (1) feeling confident about oneself, (2) feeling comfortable with others' perceptions of you, (3) reasoning with people, and (4) using language appropriately.

Harrington, E. W. (1955). The role of speech in liberal education. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 41, 219-222.

Although the essay is somewhat dated, the issues raised by Harrington remain current. The author defends liberal education in general and communication education in particular. He defines the goal of liberal education as "the creation of the whole [person], a thinking, feeling, acting [person]." Harrington argues that it would be satisfactory if speech communication served no purpose other than simple skills training. Beyond such training, however, speech communication is the key that opens the door to a liberal education.

Kim, Y. & Wright, C. E. (1989). *A study of general education requirements in vocational education programs*. Menlo Park, CA: Educational Evaluation and Research, Inc. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 312482)

This study surveyed the perceptions of people who completed California community college vocational programs and their employers. The survey requested job-related competencies and knowledge of general education that people should possess in order to succeed and advance in their careers. A sample of 2,330 people who completed the programs and 306 employers completed questionnaires that contained a list of 46 job-related competencies and general education outcomes. Responders identified competencies in interpersonal skills, communication skills, and problem solving as especially important.

National Communication Association. (1995). Results of speech communication association survey of communication as a component of general education requirements. Annandale, VA: NCA.

This two-page summary describes the results of a 1995 survey of the participation of community college and university speech communication departments in general education programs. Three hundred and eighty-four institutions were randomly selected from the NCA departmental membership list. Seventy-nine percent of the responding schools report that they offer one or more communication-related courses among their institutions' general education requirements.

B. Communication Education Should Begin Early and Continue into Adult Education

Berko, R. (1994). Adult learning and lifelong learning: A communicative perspective. ***Rationale kit: Information supporting the speech communication discipline and its programs.*** Annandale, VA: NCA.

This article argues for education in the communication arts throughout a person's lifetime, based on the premise that "Communication is the vehicle which allows humans to recall the past, think in the present and plan for the future." The author emphasizes the role of oral communication in our daily and occupational lives. Within our experience as communicators, we typically spend 75 percent of our time speaking and listening, and only 25 percent reading and writing. Concerning the role of communication in business, the author cites "Corporate managers report that they spend 60 percent of their day communicating orally in face-to-face contexts." The author also examines the negative effects of poor communication abilities as well as the criteria used to evaluate communication effectiveness.

Mann, L. (1999). Speaking and listening: The first basic skills. ***Education Update: Newsletter of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development***, 41, 1, 6-7.

This article argues that instruction in a broad range of basic speaking and listening skills should begin during the high school years. A course offering such instruction, including training in leadership, teamwork, and small-group communication, is now mandated by the state of Texas for every graduating student. Students need to learn how to communicate in a variety of contexts – the home, the hallway, the playground, and the workplace.

C. Students Place High Value on Communication Education, but Often Underestimate the Importance of Certain Skills

Belcher, M. J. (1996). ***BSU's impact on skills valued by graduates.*** Boise, ID: Boise State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 393334)

This report presents the findings of a 1995 survey of 1992-93 and 1993-94 graduates of Boise State University which sought to identify what students valued in a college education and the extent to which they felt BSU had helped them grow in these areas. The mail survey of 1465 graduates asked them to rate the importance of a series of 17 skills or abilities that individuals might hope to attain from going to college, then to rate the extent of impact BSU had in their attaining these skills. It found that graduates especially valued the ability to communicate and to solve problems."

McPherson, B. (1998). Student perceptions about business communication in their careers. ***Business Communication Quarterly***, 61, 68-79.

While communication skills are commonly recognized as vital to success in business, students still often underestimate how essential some of these skills may be to their careers. In particular, this study reveals that business students underestimate how much of their time may be spent in meetings, the importance of international communication skills, how often they may have to interact with other employees, the importance of oral presentations, and

the ability to use multimedia technology. A more realistic awareness of the importance of these skills might motivate students to prepare more carefully for their communication lives in the workplace.

D. Communication Education Improves Critical Thinking

Allen, M. & Berkowitz, S., Hunt, S., & Louden, A. (1999). A meta-analysis of the impact of forensics and communication education on critical thinking. *Communication Education*, 48, 18-30.

The article "considers the impact of various methods of improving public communication skills on critical thinking. The results indicate that communication instruction improves the critical thinking ability of the participants." The authors concluded that "Forensic participation demonstrated the largest positive impact on critical thinking improvement, which provides important evidence to support the maintenance of forensics programs in an era of increased educational accountability, downsizing, and budgetary cutbacks."

E. Communication Education Helps Students Become More Critical Consumers of Modern Media

Metallinos, N. (1992, September-October). *Cognitive factors in the study of visual image recognition standards*. Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association, Pittsburgh, PA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED352936)

The paper points out the importance of reading nonverbal communication messages in the form of images. The author argues that viewer knowledge of the technical and artistic aspects of any given visual communication medium is important in providing criteria for evaluating its messages. The implication is that learning the processes and effects of the major visual communication media of our time is now part of the essential knowledge of the educated person.

F. Communication Education Develops Leadership Skills

Grace, W. (1996, February). *Values, vision, voice, virtue: The 4 'V' model for ethical leadership development*. Paper presented at the Annual International Conference of the National Community College Chair Academy, Phoenix, AZ. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED394542)

The paper suggests that "students should be trained in group processing and facilitating skills, oral and written communication, conflict management, shared decision making, and team management. The four V leadership model incorporates all of these crucial elements in leadership development: values, vision, voice, virtue. The ability to communicate and accomplish goals, or the 'voice' element, is taught through exercises developing both interpersonal and intergroup communication skills, and utilizes mentoring and role-models to help student development."

G. One Must Understand Communication Dynamics to Build a Successful Family

Pearson, J. C. & Sessler, C. J. (1991, May). *Family communication and health: Maintaining marital satisfaction and quality of life*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED335722)

The paper argues that "communication exists within the family as a dynamic and essential force in the maintenance of relationships, and facilitates the development of the satisfied and healthy family." The authors conclude that "roles within contemporary families are

changing: people play a variety of roles and both women and men are expected to play an increasing number of roles in many families." Therefore, "communicating role expectations is related to family satisfaction. Supporting, disclosing, negotiating, positively distorting, communicating needs, and demonstrating understanding of other family members are just a few of the communicative behaviors crucial in creating a family which is healthy and happy."

H. Educators Understand the Importance of Communication Education

Diamond, R. (1997, August 1). Curriculum reform needed if students are to master core skills. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. B7.

The author has spent years conducting workshops for faculty members to aid in the construction of curricula across the country. He has asked more than 1,000 faculty members from a cross section of academic disciplines and institutions the same question: "What basic competencies or skills should every college graduate have?" The responses have been remarkably consistent and typically include: skills in communicating (writing, speaking, reading, and listening), as well as interpersonal skills such as working in groups and leading them, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and the ability to adapt to innovation and change.

Haigh, G. (1989). Speech remarks. *Times Educational Supplement*, 3823, 41.

The inclusion of speaking and listening in the recommendations for changes in the British national curriculum reflects the growing conviction that speaking and listening are of central importance to children's development. Suggestions for improving children's speaking and listening skills in an educational atmosphere are presented.

I. To Acquire Communication Knowledge is to Gain Power; to Teach Communication is Profoundly Political

Hart, R. P. (1993). Why communication? Why education? Toward a politics of teaching. *Communication Education*, 42, 97-105.

In this eloquent personal essay, Hart argues that "Communication is the ultimate people-making discipline . . . Those who teach public address and media studies teach that social power can be shifted and public visions exalted if people learn to think well and speak well." Hart paraphrases Isocrates: "To become eloquent is to activate one's humanity, to apply the imagination, and to solve the practical problems of human living." Moreover, Hart suggests that freedom goes to the articulate, and it is the teacher of communication who helps the voiceless find their voice. He feels that the teaching of communication often attracts critics who want to protect the established order and who recognize that articulate people will not long be powerless.

THEME II: COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IMPROVES THE EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE.

Communication education improves the entire educational enterprise. It enhances classroom instruction and is key to successful collaboration in the educational environment. While Congress in 1978 officially added "effective oral communication" to required basic skills, some state curriculum guidelines seem to neglect oral communication instruction. Communication skills are important for school administrators, teachers, librarians, and for faculty interested in leadership roles.

A. *Communication Education Enhances Classroom Instruction*

Garmston, R. J. (1995). The persuasive art of presenting. The magic of non-verbal communications. *Journal of Staff Development*, 16, 60-61.

This article emphasizes the importance of non-verbal communication in pedagogy. "Most classroom messages come from nonverbal communication. By consciously controlling their own nonverbal expressions, presenters can maintain positive relationships with the audience while maintaining participants' attention, transitions, and directions. This allows educators to teach content more effectively."

B. *Communication is the Key to Successful Collaboration in the Educational Environment*

Price, J. P. (1991). Effective communication: A key to successful collaboration. *Preventing School Failure*, 35, 25-28.

This paper points out the importance of special educators' communication skills in effective collaboration. The basic components of face-to-face communication are discussed, emphasizing the roles of speaking and listening. The process of active listening is viewed as of particular importance.

C. *Are We Neglecting Oral Communication in the Language Arts Classroom?*

Witkin, B. R., Lovern, M. L., & Lundsteen, S. W. (1996). Oral communication in the English language arts curriculum: A national perspective. *Communication Education*, 45, 40-57.

This study asks whether the neglect of oral communication instruction in classroom practices is a reflection of official policy, as articulated in state curriculum guidelines. That neglect is cause for concern in light of the fact that in 1978 Congress officially added "effective oral communication" to the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics for all schools (Public Law 95 561, amending Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). The law anticipates that students should demonstrate an understanding that speech and writing are tools of communication; and they should be able to speak clearly and write legibly, use standard language patterns, and be able to use oral language for a variety of purposes.

D. *Communication Skill is Most Important Trait for School Administrators*

Geddes, D. S. (1993). Empowerment through communication: Key people-to-people and organizational success. *People and Education*, 1, 76-104.

The article discusses the importance of communication in order to maintain organizational success. The article argues that school administrators must be effective communicators in order to empower teachers. Recognizing the content and relational aspect of verbal messages, and realizing the importance of perceptions, positive reinforcement, active listening, flexible listening styles, and nonverbal messages are all essential for effective communication.

Kowalski, T. J. (1992). Perceptions of desired skills for effective principals. *Journal of School Leadership*, 2, 299-309.

This study examined teachers' and principals' perceptions of skills required for principal effectiveness, using Katz's classification of managerial skills as technical, human, and conceptual. Both groups regarded effective communication as principals' most important skill.

E. Communication Education is Vital in the Selection of Teachers

Johnson, S. (1994). A national assessment of secondary-school principals' perceptions of teaching-effectiveness criteria. *Communication Education*, 43, 1-16.

A questionnaire was sent to a sample of 1,000 public school principals asking them to rate skills, factors, and courses as they relate to teacher selection, teacher evaluation, and teacher preparation. The results indicated that communication-related skills, factors and courses were rated highest in importance by principals as they consider candidates' preparatory coursework.

F. Communication Education Fosters Leadership among Librarians

Stewart, S. (1988, July). *Importance of effective communication to library leadership*. Paper presented at the Library Administration and Management Association President's program at the Annual Convention of the American Library Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED304141)

This discussion of the nature and role of communication skills in implementing job responsibilities of librarians and information specialists argues that the most important foundation of effective library leadership is communication. It suggests practical ways of assisting librarians, from first line supervisors to library directors, to enhance their communication skills.

G. Oral Communication is among Basic Skills Required for Faculty Leadership

Miller, M. T. (1996). *Process and task orientations of faculty governance leaders*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED405754)

In this study, a survey questionnaire was developed and mailed to 100 faculty governance leaders at research and doctoral institutions. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they held their faculty status in the liberal arts or humanities, followed by science and education. Just over two-thirds were male, and 86 percent were tenured. These faculty leaders identified the following skills as necessary for effective leadership: judgment, oral communication, organizational ability, written communication, and leadership."

H. Communication Skills are Essential to a Successful Research Scientist

A guide to training and mentoring in the Intramural Research Program at NIH. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director.

This guidebook for research fellows at NIH calls for training and experiential practice in communication skills. "Fellows must be trained in the art of communicating the results and conclusions of their research orally and in writing. Skill in oral presentations can be enhanced by giving fellows the chance to rehearse before a small group and by training in the preparation and use of visual aids such as graphic and text slides."

THEME III: COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IS VITAL TO SOCIETY AND TO CROSSING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

Communication education is vital to the continuation of our society and to erasing cultural boundaries. Education in communication allows the development of skills and sensitivities that shape our social and political lives. Through communication instruction, we develop the ability to speak, which qualifies us to participate in public life. Effective family communication is a deterrent to delinquency and nonverbal communication influences legal decisions. Finally, communication education serves to enhance our understanding of individuals from multiple cultures.

A. Communication Education Helps Develop Skills and Sensitivities that Shape our Social and Political Lives

Blumer, J. G. (1983). Communication and democracy: The crisis beyond and the ferment within. *Journal of Communication*, 33, 166-173.

A useful and insightful critical analysis of the developing importance of communication media in society. The author argues that journalism has great influence on the direction of U.S. democracy. "At a time when so many forces—volatility, apathy, skepticism, a sense of powerlessness, and intensified group hostility—appear to be undermining political stability, media organizations have become pivotal to the conduct of public affairs." This developing influence provides a key rationale for the study of communication processes.

B. Developing the Ability to Speak Qualifies One to Participate in Public Life

Stotsky, S. (May, 1992). *The connection between language education and civic education*. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Digest. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 348318)

Stotsky draws a relationship between civic responsibility/education and language education or oral communication. He defines civic responsibility/education as the "...continuing study of the basic concepts and values underlying our democratic political community." The author argues that educators play an essential role in the development of these skills, and concludes, "Students should learn to see reading and writing as vital support for the most direct way that citizens can express themselves and participate in public life—as public speakers. Public speaking was the primary medium for participation in public affairs at the birth of democracy in ancient Athens, and even today public dialogue or argument is, for most citizens, the chief means for participating in public life."

C. Good Family Communication Helps Prevent Delinquent Behavior

Clark, R. D. & Shields, G. (1997). Family communication and delinquency. *Adolescence*, 32, 81-93.

The importance of positive communication for optimal family functioning has important implications for delinquent behavior. The subjects of this study were 339 high school students from a small, rural, mostly white Midwestern city. Adolescents were administered the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS; Barnes & Olson, 1985) which was developed to measure the extent of openness or freedom of exchange related to ideas, information, and concerns between parents and their adolescent children. Results indicate that communication is related to the commission of delinquent behavior. The analysis suggests that good family communication appears to deter delinquent behavior.

D. Nonverbal Communication Influences Decisions in Courts of Law

Remland, M. S. (1994). The importance of nonverbal communication in the courtroom. *New Jersey Journal of Communication*, 2, 124-45.

The article reviews empirical research on nonverbal communication in the courtroom environment. It introduces a model to explain how nonverbal signals of courtroom participants can influence a jury. The study suggests that nonverbal communication has a role in five key areas: "voire dire and jury analysis; opening and closing statements; client demeanor and direct examination; cross-examination; and judge demeanor and communication. Understanding these dynamics and how to control them becomes essential for participants in the legal process.

E. *Communication Education Can Enhance Cross-Cultural Understanding*

Herring, R. D. (1985). *A cross-cultural review of nonverbal communication with an emphasis on the Native American*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 324708)

This paper documents the importance of nonverbal behavior and nonverbal communication across cultures, their relevance to interpersonal communication between ethnicities and cultures, and discusses their relevance to Native Americans. It presents an historical survey, a selective review of the literature, an overview of accepted theories of nonverbal behavior and nonverbal communication, and finally, a synthesis of the theoretical bases of the topic as applicable to Native Americans.

Herring, R. D. (1990). Nonverbal communication: A necessary component of cross-cultural counseling. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 18, 172-79.

This article reviews the importance and rationale for the study of nonverbal communication and its relevance for cross-cultural counseling. Cross-cultural counselors can begin to eradicate many misunderstandings and misconceptions by understanding that people and cultures are different, especially concerning their nonverbal communication patterns.

Parratt, S. (1995). Effective nonverbal communication. *Legacy*, 6, 30-33.

The article "discusses the importance of understanding nonverbal communication in enhancing the personal and work relationships of language interpreters and increasing their effectiveness in meeting the needs of customers." It discusses "the mystique of body language, cultural variation in the use of gestures, the stages of an encounter, interpreting gesture clusters, and gaining rapport through mirroring, anchoring, and strategy replication."

Potoker, E. (1993, April). *Management and training across cultures: Importance of non-verbal communication studies – a case study*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference on Language and Communication for World Business and the Professions, Ypsilanti, MI. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED367029)

Noting that cross-cultural and language barriers pose formidable challenges to managers, a case study examined the application of selective nonverbal communication strategies (non-verbal cues, learning by observation, and the organization of learning) for management and training development efforts within diverse cultural environments. Source material was drawn from fieldwork conducted at a Japanese-owned business located in the United States with operations in North America, Europe, and Japan. Preliminary results indicated that attention to "visuals" was evidenced in production, training, and development at all organizational levels, communication efforts, research and development, and hiring practices. These procedures were so ingrained procedurally that they were not even recognizable to interviewees until questioned about them.

THEME IV: COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IS VITAL TO CAREER SUCCESS AND THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Communication education is fundamental to career success and the entire business enterprise. People entering the workforce are assisted by communication skills and employers endorse communication skills as basic to most jobs. Communicative skill is essential in multiple professional careers including accounting, auditing, banking, engineering, industrial hygiene, information science, public relations, and sales. Upward mobility is more probable as communication skills increase. Business and customer interactions are more satisfying and productive with the development of communication skills. Communication skills are essential to those in human resources development. Both business executives and entrepreneurs benefit from communication education.

A. *Communication Education can Help Students Gain a Desirable Job*

Bardwell, C. B. (1997). Standing out in the crowd. *Black Collegian*, 28, 71-79.

Bardwell discusses experts' advice for college students on successfully handling on-campus interviews and job fairs, including the importance of being computer literate and having strong verbal and written communication skills.

Cockrum, K. V. (1994). Role-playing the interview. *Vocational Education Journal*, 69, 15-16.

The article suggests that "the mock interview is one way to drive home the importance of communication skills to vocational education students. Role playing the interview demonstrates that self-expression can be the key to landing a job."

Curtis, D. B. (1988, November). *A survey of business preferences for college grads*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED297407)

To answer questions regarding the factors that contribute most to job search success in business and a business career, specific courses that contribute most to career success, and the basic skills of an ideal manager, this study surveyed 1,000 personnel managers listed as members of The American Society of Personnel Administrators in the United States. Based on 428 usable sources, findings revealed that "the skills most valued in the contemporary job-entry market are communication skills (including oral communication, listening, and written communication)."

Peterson, M. S. (1997). Personnel interviewers' perceptions of the importance and adequacy of applicants' communication skills. *Communication Education*, 46, 287-291.

A questionnaire sent to personnel interviewers at 500 businesses in a Midwestern city asked whether (a) oral communication skills significantly impact hiring decisions, (b) higher level positions require more communication skills, (c) job applicants currently display adequate communication skills, (d) increased communication skills are needed for jobs in the 21st century. Over 90% of the 253 respondents indicated that communication skills are essential for success, but many applicants lack effective communication skills in job interviews. Problems occur in areas of topic relevance, clarity of response, grammar, and response feedback.

Ugbah, S. D. & Evuleocha, S. U. (1992). The importance of written, verbal, and nonverbal communication factors in employment interview decisions. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 29, 128-37.

This research study focuses on the importance of communication as one of the influential factors in employment interviewing in hiring new college graduates for entry-level positions. Results of the survey reveal six dimensions of influential communication factors in employment interviews: resourcefulness, written credentials, impromptu support for arguments, social attributes, comportsment, and style.

B. *Oral Communication and Listening Abilities are among the Basic Job Skills Desired by Employers*

Buskirk, D. (1988, December). *A comparative study of industrial arts / technology education: Competencies between industrial teacher educators and production plant managers of manufacturing industries*. Paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention, St. Louis, MO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED303635)

Both educators and industrial managers rated interpersonal skills, oral communication skills, and problem solving techniques high among competencies desirable for employees.

Data was collected from 132 production managers of manufacturing companies throughout the United States and from 55 teacher educators.

Carnevale, A. P. (1990). *Workplace basics: The essential skills employers want. ASTD best practices series: Training for a changing work force*. Jossey-Bass Management Series.

This book provides readers with an in-depth understanding of the 16 skills that employers believe are workplace basics. Part four deals with oral communication and listening, the skills that enable people to communicate effectively on the job. Part seven examines interpersonal skills, teamwork, and negotiation, the group effectiveness skills that enable people to work together productively.

Crocker, J. (1979, May). *Speech communication instruction based on employers' perceptions of the importance of selected communication skills for employees on the job*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Philadelphia, PA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED172280)

To determine which communication skills employers in business and industry perceive as important for employees, a questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of personnel directors in business and industry in the Greater Cincinnati metropolitan area. Analysis of the responses indicated that communication skills judged as important for employees included accurate listening, credibility, ability to organize ideas in an orderly way, a clear and distinct voice, personal confidence when speaking to others, sensitivity to others, correct grammar and persuasiveness, establishment of face-to-face contact with others, and ability to use the formal organizational channels of communication to make decisions cooperatively with others.

Curtis, D. B., Winsor, J. L., & Stephens, R. D. (1989). National preferences in business and communication education. *Communication Education*, 38, 6-14.

The authors presented the results of a questionnaire sent to one thousand personnel directors of various organizations throughout the U.S., seeking to ascertain which skills are most influential in the success of a person in a given field. The 42% who responded concurred that most valued in the contemporary job-entry market are communication skills. The skills of oral communication (both interpersonal and public), listening, and written communication . . . are seen as most important.

First steps to success. A guide to preparing students for the job market (1991). Brooklyn, NY: New York City Board of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED337572)

This guide, based on a survey of more than 100 New York City employers, lists the qualifications needed for 20 entry-level positions. The results indicate ability to communicate as one of the five essential work skills.

Graduates are not prepared to work in business. (1997, June). *Association Trends*, p. 4.

This newspaper article highlights a report by the Business Higher Education Forum, an organization of Fortune 500 executives. The report found that "...newly hired graduates have impressive academic skills. However, graduates lack communication skills and the ability to work in teams and with people from diverse backgrounds." The article outlines the problems educators face in attempting to reach the expectations described by the business community.

Hanna, M. S. (1978). Speech communication training in the business community. *Central States Speech Journal*, 29, 163-172.

On the basis of responses from 55 CEO's of various companies, this article argues that courses offering communication education for the business community should help stu-

dents develop the skills involved in motivating people, delegating authority, listening, direction giving and group problem solving.

Harper, S. C. (1987 Summer). Business education: A view from the top. *Business Forum*, 12, 24-27.

Deans of 200 schools of business and chief executive officers from 200 corporations were surveyed to determine the most important skills for graduating business students. The deans ranked oral and written communication skills as the most important of the key learning areas; CEO's selected the same skills but also ranked them with interpersonal skills. The article concludes that if there is not ample time to present all relevant areas of business study in a standard curriculum, then the schools need to concentrate on those areas that most enhance success and corporate performance.

Jones, L. K. (1996). Job skills for the 21st century: A guide for students. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394042)

This guide, intended for middle and high school students, explains how job skills are the keys to success in the work force and provides a strategy for developing the various types of abilities needed for work in the 21st century. The guide stresses the importance of communication as foundation skills for all people.

Kerka, S. (1990). *Job related basic skills*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 318912)

This author writes, "The importance of workplace literacy has been underscored by the link between basic skills and productivity." Oral communication and listening, and group effectiveness including interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork, are identified among seven job related basic skills sought by employers.

Lankard, B. A. (1990). *Employability — The fifth basic skill*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 325659)

Communication skills are regarded both as essential for employability and career progression. "Because of the changing nature of today's employment picture, employers need creative, flexible workers who have a broad range of interpersonal and managerial skills." Being able to communicate effectively is central to these skills.

Maes, J. D., Weldy, T. G. & Icenogle, M. L. (1997). A managerial perspective: Oral communication competency is most important for business students in the workplace. *Journal of Business Communication*, 34, 67-80.

This report states that, "Results of two studies show that oral communication is the most important competency for college graduates entering the workforce." It identifies the oral skills most important for entry level graduates as: following instructions, listening, conversing, and giving feedback. In the first study, 354 managers identified and ranked the competencies and characteristics they consider when hiring college graduates for entry-level positions. Findings revealed that the top three competencies are oral communication, problem solving, and self-motivation. Based on the first study, study two identified the most important functions graduates perform associated with oral communication competency such as handling customer complaints and meeting skills.

Report of the National Association of Colleges and Employers. (December 29, 1998). *Wall Street Journal, Work Week*, p. A1.

The ability to communicate ranked first among the personal qualities of college graduates sought by employers, in a survey of 480 companies and organizations. Work experience was second, motivation third, academic credentials sixth, and ethics was tenth.

Natriello, G. (1989). Do we know what employers want in entry-level workers? (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED309251)

Fourteen recent surveys of employers' needs for worker education revealed two emphases, one on attitudes, the other on basic skills. Employers were particularly interested in the development of communication and problem-solving abilities, including linguistic skills and oral and written communication.

Parnell, C. L. (1996). Effective business communications: It is not just for the communications department. *Executive Speeches*, 11, 9-13.

The article discusses the importance of effective communication as one of two main skills necessary in today's business environment. The article describes communication as "the ability to communicate one's expertise to others." It suggests that "effective communication is essential in business both for organizations and for individuals. The importance of effective communication is discussed in business in general, and in the personal lives of individuals."

Pollock, T. (1997). Are you getting across to them? *Automotive Manufacturing and Production*, 109, 10-11.

The author describes the positive relationship between good communication and good organization morale, and presents questions that should guide organizational managers:

- (1) Do you recognize that listening is an active, not passive, communication skill?
- (2) Do you watch a speaker for nonverbal clues to his or her meaning?
- (3) Do you break complicated procedures down to more easily understood steps?

Rooff-Steffen, K. (1991). The push is on for people skills. *Journal of Career Planning and Employment*, 52, 61-63.

The article notes that good communication skills are becoming a requirement for almost any job and that corporate leaders and human resources managers are realizing the importance of strong interpersonal communication skills to the performance of all employees, not just those in supervisory and managerial positions.

Murnane, R. J. (1996). *Teaching the new basic skills: Principles for educating children to thrive in a changing economy*. New York: Free Press.

Using case studies of high-wage companies, two economics professors outlined essential skills future workers will need. Included in the list are the ability to solve problems and work in groups, and to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

U.S. Department of Labor. (1992). What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000. *Economic Development Review*, 10, 16-19.

This study conducted by the Department of Labor assesses the competencies that will be of most value to employers into the new century. These competencies comprise a foundation of "reading, writing...listening and speaking." The SCAN researchers conclude: "Tomorrow's worker will have to listen and speak well enough to explain schedules and procedures, communicate with customers, work in teams, understand customer concerns...probe for hidden meanings, teach others, and solve problems."

Winsor, J. L., Curtis, D. B., & Stephens, R. D. (1997). National preferences in business and communication education. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 3, 170-179.

This study is a replication of Curtis, Winsor, & Stephens (1989) investigation of the factors that help graduates obtain employment; the factors that influence job performance; and, the courses that are most valuable in entry-level positions. One thousand human resource managers were surveyed concerning the above questions. The results indicate, "...that the

most frequent factors deemed important in aiding graduating college students obtain employment are basic oral and written communication skills." In addition the authors find that, "Three of the top four—public speaking, listening, and enthusiasm—largely are oral communication skills." This study clearly reiterated the salience of communication skills as most valued by employers.

C. Developing Desirable Communicative Behaviors is Essential in Specific Professional Careers [accounting, auditing, banking, counseling, engineering, industrial hygiene, information science, public relations, sales, etc.]

Hanzevack, E. L. & McKean, R. A. (1991). Teaching effective oral presentations as part of the senior design course. *Chemical Engineering Education*, 25, 28-32.

The article "discusses the importance of engineering students having effective communication skills so they will be able to discuss their work, present their findings, and propose a course of action."

Horton, G. E. & Brown, D. (1990). The importance of interpersonal skills in consultee-centered consultation: A review. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 68, 423-26.

The article explores empirical research on importance of interpersonal communication skills in consultation. Studies have found consultants' facilitative characteristics, along with an appropriate use of verbal and nonverbal skills, are important in the consultation process, especially when counselors must deal with problematic people. Developing a desirable battery of such characteristics and skills would help both counselors and their clients.

LaBar, G. (1994). Putting together the complete hygienist. *Occupational Hazards*, 56, 63-66.

The article discusses the importance of communication and management skills, as well as technical skills, to the professional development of industrial hygienists. Faced with increasing demands for communication and management skills, industrial hygienists can no longer rely simply on technical expertise.

Leathers, D. G. (1988). Impression management training: Conceptualizing and application to personal selling. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 16, 126-45.

The article "discusses the importance of impression management, an individual's conscious attempt to exercise control over selected communicative behaviors and cues for purposes of making a desired impression. Provides a comprehensive conceptualization of the impression management process, and demonstrates how this process can facilitate effective training of salespeople."

Messmer, M. (Aug, 1997). Career strategies for accounting graduates. *Management Accounting*, 4-10.

The article stresses the importance of specific skills required for entry-level accountants and concludes that, "Along with certifications, today's team-oriented finance department has placed an increased focus on interpersonal and communication skills."

Nisberg, J. N. (1996). Communication: what we hear, what we say vs. what they hear, what they say. *The National Public Accountant*, 41, 34-38.

Most every profession values, to some degree, the role of communication. Good communication is useful in that it produces an effective and smooth organization. The author pictures communication skills as being useful to locate better applicants for accounting positions, and concludes that "Only when we understand how we are being perceived by others will we be able to tear down communication barriers and trust the information we receive."

Park, L. J. (1994). Good accounting skills: What more does a successful accountant need? *Journal of Education Business*, 69, 213-234.

Accounting professionals, employers, and college graduates in accounting express concern that recent accounting graduates are inadequately prepared in oral and written communication skills. Results of a survey (n= 189) of undergraduate accounting students at California State University, Los Angeles, reveal that students agree on the importance of such skills in hiring. The Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC), in its Position Statement # 1, Objectives of Education for Accountants (1990), stresses that successful accounting graduates must be taught and be adept in basic communication skills.

Ridley, A. J. (1996). A profession for the twenty-first century. *Internal Auditor*, 53, 20-25.

The article suggests that internal auditors need to focus on five general areas in order to grow and prosper in the next century. Facilitation and communication are one of those areas. The paper concludes with changes in the nature of internal auditing that will require more focus on communication skills.

Simkin, M. G. (1996). The importance of good communication skills on 'IS' career paths. *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, 26, 69-78.

Simkin examines whether the good writing and speaking skills required in general management positions are also important in computer jobs. The discussion includes "roles good communication skills play in advancing information science career paths."

Staats, W. F. & Golen, S. P. (1985). Overcoming communication barriers between bankers and their customers. *Journal of Retail Banking*, 7, 14-20.

An effectiveness study of banker-customer communications questioned 193 supervisory banking personnel to pinpoint communication barriers and problems. Results indicated that the major barriers are (1) customers' resistance to change, (2) tendencies of customers and bankers not to listen, (3) customers' lack of trust in bank employees, (4) hostile attitudes of customers due to changes in banking products and terminology, and (5) too many intermediaries. Problems arise especially from lack of clear oral instructions, confusion about new technological terms, and lack of human contact. To overcome these barriers and problems, top management must stress to front-line employees the importance of good communication and provide training to personalize the banker-customer relationship.

Trippe, W. L. (1988). It's not a speech anymore, it's a presentation. *Graduating Engineer*, 9, 41-43.

The article "describes the importance of communication skills to engineers" and emphasizes the use of a step by step method for preparing and giving a professional presentation at the corporate level in engineering.

Wakefield, G. (1986, April). *Communication competence in public relations' management counseling function*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Central States Speech Association, Cincinnati, OH. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED270833)

The paper concludes that "as the practice of public relations continues its rapid movement and expansion, the field of speech communication should be recognized as increasingly important to the education of future practitioners and the upgrading of practitioner abilities. Indeed, success in public relations often depends on oral and nonverbal communication. The paper suggests that "a need exists for development of communication competence as a part of management."

D. *Communication Education can Increase Upward Mobility in One's Career*

Dauphinais, W. (1997). Forging the path to power. *Security Management*, 41, 21-23.

The article argues that employee empowerment requires strong leadership, and strong leadership requires effective communication skills. Accordingly, "To empower employees while maintaining strong leadership, managers must understand the characteristics of leadership and empowerment. A new generation of corporate leaders relies more on the power of influence to motivate rather than on command and control. Leaders must develop and communicate a vision in a way that includes employees."

E. *Communication Education Helps Make Business/Customer Interactions more Satisfying and Productive*

Arthur, G. (1990). *Customer service training for public services staff at Temple University's central library system*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED335042)

The paper argues that "good interpersonal interactions between library staff and their patrons is a major determinant of overall patron satisfaction. This paper describes Temple University's customer service training program for its public services staff. Dubbed the A+ Service program, the program places communication skills as one of the six main focuses." Also highlighted in the report are the origins of the customer service program; staff responses to the program; and on-the-job considerations.

Atkinson, J. (1993). *The basic skills needed at work: A companion report to "Basic Skills and Jobs."* London, England: Institute of Manpower Studies. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED362706)

"This directory details the requirements for and supply of basic skills in the work force of England and Wales as determined in a survey of 73 Training and Enterprise Councils that covered approximately 1.3 million jobs below the professional and technical level in 24,000 establishments." The report classifies oral communication skills among the basic skills required by employers. It identifies oral communication as getting information from others face to face or on the phone. The findings revealed that nine out of ten jobs require this ability to get information from others.

F. *Learning Communication Skills Promotes Human Resources Training*

Burn, D. (1997). Heading up HR's agenda. *People Management*, 3, 32-34.

A recent survey found that leadership training is one of the most important issues facing HR specialists. Among the 10 top qualities that are crucial for leadership, vision topped the chart, followed in order of importance by communication, initiative, judgment, motivation, commitment, strategic thinking, decisiveness, inspiring trust and possessing team spirit. The article discusses methods used by companies to discover people with leadership potential and to train them.

Gladis, S. D. (1985). Notes are not enough. *Training and Development Journal*, 39, 35-58.

This report examines the importance of nonverbal communication skills to a human resources development trainer. The author discusses facial expressions, eye contact, physical distance between trainer and trainee, movement, gestures, touching, and vocal characteristics (tone, tempo, volume).

G. *Communication Education Enhances the Effectiveness of Business Executives*

An executive assessment of business communications (1996). New York: American Management Association.

This nine-page publication describes the results of a 1996 survey that examined communication in the business setting. Nearly six hundred executives were randomly selected and surveyed. Collectively, the executives put a high priority on communication and pledged greater commitment to it from top management. Moreover, they expressed concern that too few have mastered the techniques of tailoring their messages and obtaining feedback. Guidelines provided by AMA for the executives include: "Listen – and then listen some more, assess your need to communicate, and actively manage communications."

Argenti, Paul A. & Forman, J. (1998). Should business schools teach Aristotle? *Strategy & Business*. (<http://www.strategy-business.com/briefs/98312>)

The article states that "while most chief executive officers say that more than half of their daily work involves communications, little in their education prepares them for the task." Indeed, "the level of training and skills can be dismal." The article concludes that "executives who have invested time and effort in learning strategic communication approaches clearly have what we call a communication advantage."

Bradshaw, M. E. & Chaney, L. H. (1992). Do experts and students agree on the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication skills for business success? *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 34, 99-113.

These authors write that, "Surveys of 21 chief executive officers and 1565 business communication students found strong agreement in both groups' opinions of the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication skills."

Dilenschneider, R. L. (1996). Social IQ and MBAs: Recognizing the importance of communication. *Vital Speeches*, 62, 404-405.

Dilenschneider, chairman of The Dilenschneider Group, believes that one's social IQ or communication sensitivity is a more important determinant of success than cognitive intelligence. He is convinced that individuals cannot stand out from the crowd unless they possess excellent interpersonal skills. He explains the deficits in communication skills and suggests developing four capabilities to overcome them. Being able to understand and control your own emotions and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others are key capacities.

O'Donovan, C. (1997). Which Master's matter? *Communication World*, 14, 36-40.

Experts discuss and compare the importance of an MBA or MA to communicators' success. Patricia Hafer, director of corporate affairs for Kraft Foods, states that whether communicators should get an MBA or MA depends on their life plan and their goals. Bill Kokontis, vice president of marketing programs for the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, notes that his company prizes those who have business expertise as well as first-rate communication skills. According to Jim Shehan, executive director of the Mayor's Office of Special Events, basic communication skills are most important when hiring someone.

Reinsch, L. & Shelby, A. N. (1996). Communication challenges and needs: Perceptions of MBA students. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 59, 36-52.

This paper discusses communication difficulties in MBA students' on-the-job experiences. The two primary research questions were (1) What types of communication events at work challenged MBA students the most? (2) What personal communication needs do MBA students perceive?

The authors questioned 348 students in the MBA program at Georgetown University. The most challenging episodes were oral events that required the individual to function as a

message source. The authors concluded: "The predominance of oral communication in the challenging episodes may indicate a lack of confidence, if not formal training, in presentation skills." Concerning the second research question, "respondents wish to increase their abilities in a variety of areas, most particularly self-confidence, persuasion, explanatory skills, situation analysis, and controlling nervousness. The authors conclude that the research may suggest changes in pedagogy.

Stegman, J. D. (1988). The importance of managerial communication. *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication*, 51, 25-26.

An annotated bibliography of references that: (1) argue for offering management communication courses in business programs, and (2) show the importance of communication skills in business. The article "annotates 17 references that argue the value of management communication courses in business programs, and demonstrate the importance of communication skills in business."

H. Communication Skills are Top Priorities for Entrepreneurs

Montagno, R. V., Kuratko, D. F. & Scarcella, J. H. (1986). Perception of entrepreneurial success characteristics. *American Journal of Small Business*, 10, 25-32.

This study investigated the perceptions of small business owners and bank loan officials concerning entrepreneurial success characteristics. Survey results showed that six of the ten top-ranked characteristics were oral communication, listening, problem analysis, planning, self-motivation, and determination.

THEME V: COMMUNICATION EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT BY SPECIALIZED FACULTY IN DEPARTMENTS DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION

Communication education is most appropriate and effective when it is taught by faculty trained in the discipline and in departments that are devoted to the study of communication. Communication is a research discipline that has emerged in importance. Communication curricular revision may be most effective when undertaken in conjunction with other departments. Speaking skills are as essential as writing to business communication education. While professional colleges provide a special setting for communication study, these colleges cannot deliver essential communication education by themselves. Communication education is central to all disciplines, and communication administrators know how communication programs can survive in difficult circumstances.

A. Communication is a Research Discipline of Emerging Importance

McCloskey, D. (1994). The neglected economics of talk. *Planning for Higher Education*, 22, 11-16.

McCloskey, Professor of Economics at the University of Iowa, argues that speech or "talk" has become central to interdisciplinary research and that the communication field has become one of the most pragmatic fields of study in academia. McCloskey presents three basic premises to support this claim: a nation of new minorities needs better communication; we are living in a communications revolution comparable to the invention of printing; and, many people now earn their living from talk. McCloskey concludes that communication studies are central to interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Macke, F. J. (1991). Communication left speechless: A critical examination of the evolution of speech communication as an academic discipline. *Communication Education*, 40, 125-143.

This paper chronicles the history of the communication discipline. The author begins with a study of communication as a field concerned with matters of oral performance. As the field progressed, according to Macke, the emphasis shifted toward the influence of social science, and finally the discipline has evolved into one that concerns the importance of language, ideologies, and communication technologies.

Rogers, E. M. & Chaffee, S. H. (1983). Communication as an academic discipline: A dialogue. *Journal of Communication*, 33, 18-30.

Rogers and Chaffee discuss the past, present, and future of the communication discipline in the U.S. In one of the more interesting exchanges, Rogers notes: "Looking back...1959 was really a time of transition, as communication research moved out of departments of sociology, psychology, political science...into departments of its own." Chaffee responds, "Communication research wasn't really a 'field' then, but more of a gathering place." The authors discuss more recent trends in communication, including theory concerning computers and new technologies.

Schramm, W. (1983). The unique perspective of communication: A retrospective view. *Journal of Communication*, 33, 6-17.

A noted scholar looks at the history and future of the communication discipline. Since the time of Aristotle and Plato, communication study has stimulated controversy, because it is coupled with change. Schramm then turns his attention toward the growth and development of modern communication departments. He draws an arguable distinction between departments that emphasize skills and those that stress research (to which he attributes the social scientific approach). His aim is towards understanding communication as a social dynamic, pointing towards developing a science of man (sic) and society.

B. We Should Explore Strategies for Curriculum Revision to Better Impart Communication Skills for Business

Scott, J. C. (1988). *Facilitating communication for business*. National Business Education Yearbook, No. 26. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED295042)

This yearbook suggests that "business persons need to enhance their communication skills and that business educators have opportunities to fulfill that need." The yearbook discusses the importance of communication skills in the business world and identifies aspects of communication that businesspersons believe ought to be developed. It reviews the foundations of communication for business and suggests how business educators can improve their communication skill instruction by minimizing communication apprehension, building communication skills of non-native speakers of English, and developing intercultural communication skills for the global business community.

Smith, J. H. & Turner, P. H. (1993). A survey of communication department curriculum in four-year colleges and universities. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 1, 34-49.

The purpose of this analysis was to (1) examine contemporary communication course offerings, (2) compare them, and (3) offer suggestions for curricular revision. The authors collected data from graduate catalogs across the United States; they then compared these curricula with skills business professionals are seeking for prospective applicants. One of the specific suggestions made from the analysis is that the communication curricula should be arranged so that performance skills come before theoretical and application courses. Courses should also meet specific needs of communication professionals in the work force.

C. Teaching Basic Speaking and Writing Skills are Both Important to Business Communication Curricula

Plutsky, S. (1996). Faculty perceptions of students' business communication needs. *Communication Quarterly*, 59, 69-74.

This study began on the assumption that "employers view effective communication skills as a key to success in business." Ninety-nine faculty members at California State University were questioned regarding a business communication course offered in the spring of 1995. While the emphasis of this course was on writing skills, the faculty concurred that the course should offer students instruction in making oral presentations as well. Based on this conclusion the author recommends that the curriculum should focus on topics that relate directly to oral and written communication [and] should provide students with more opportunities to speak and write.

D. Professional Colleges Provide a Special Setting for Communication Study

Brenton, A. L. & Gray, J. (1992). Seeing our discipline through a new lens: Speech communication in a professional college. *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin*, 81, 13-18.

This commentary focuses on the benefits and challenges of speech communication at the professional college level. Special benefits noted at the professional college level are the internship opportunities often available to the students and the interdisciplinary nature of communication studies. The most significant problem faced by professional college teachers was the lack of formal accreditation procedures, which hurts the credibility of the study. Overall, although there may be substantial problems at the professional college level, the importance of the study overcomes such impediments.

E. Law School Does Not Provide Essential Education in Non-verbal Communication Sensitivities

Willett, T. H. (1984, Nov). *Reading the client: Nonverbal communication as an interviewing tool*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED250723)

The importance of effective communication skills between lawyers and clients is equaled only by the imperative need for sustained instruction in the development of communication skills for the lawyer. Especially important are nonverbal communication skills in "reading the client" during interviews. The author argues that courses in law school rarely provide more than trial practice, trial preparation, or settlement and negotiation. Fledgling attorneys must look elsewhere in the academy to develop the nonverbal communication skills required for effective interviewing.

F. Making the Case for Communication Education

Chesebro, J. W. (1991). *Standards for evaluating and justifying a department of communication*. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association.

Chesebro outlines the various standards for communication departments to evaluate and justify their existence to administrative entities. One specific standard states that "The curriculum should offer the breadth and depth essential to provide a meaningful educational experience for students." Additionally, the author writes that, "Comparative and longitudinal data should be maintained which provide an objective measure of total productivity of a department." Among various other standards, the author concludes by stating that a department should have a formal statement of its educational mission comparable to those found in other departments.

Chesebro, J. W. (1997). Rationale for speech communication as an academic program. In *NCA communication programs rationale and review kit*. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association.

Chesebro argues that communication, as an academic program, is essential to the academic landscape for various reasons. First, the author states that oral communication is the most frequently used medium of communication. Chesebro also cites several national studies in support of his belief that the lack of oral communication training is one of our most critical national problems. Finally, the author asserts that oral communication will be one of the most essential skills students will require when they enter a career path.

Engleberg, I. N. & Wynn, D. R. (1995). DACUM: A national database justifying the study of speech communication. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 1, 28-38.

This article proposes that DACUM (Developing A Curriculum), a standardized curriculum development process, be used to justify the study of speech communication in higher education. The author states that DACUM's purpose is to identify the duties, tasks, and skills performed in a particular occupation. The author further states that DACUM could justify the role of communication by listing the skills employers need and require. Communication is expected to be a prominent factor in most employer requisites. Finally, the authors conclude that by identifying communication competencies critical to every occupation, the study of communication becomes essential to every curriculum.

G. How Smart Communication Education Programs Survive in Tough Times

Engleberg, I. N. (1996). Let's get political: Strategies for departmental survival and growth. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 2, 143-149.

Developed from a seminar at the 1994 NCA Convention, this paper identifies some of the major principles for survival and growth of communication departments. By using the very successful communication department at Prince George's County Community College as a case study, Engleberg identifies five principles that account for its success. These include avoiding isolation, political positioning, strong leadership, adjunct faculty contributions, and departmental cohesion. Engleberg feels that these principles "provide a climate in which faculty productivity is supported and rewarded at both the professional and personal level."

Nelson, P. E. (1995). A summary of ideas for sustaining communication programs. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 2, 115-123.

This article summarizes a number of ideas which may prove useful to communication departments that are making long-range plans for survival and success. The author suggests that departments concentrate on (1) attracting outstanding faculty and students, (2) using the grading scale, (3) cultivating alumni, (4) aggressively pursuing funding, (5) creating an event that celebrates the department, and (6) keeping accurate records and establishing an identity. The author concludes that, "every administrator does have to make intelligent moves to strengthen the unit, to protect it from adversaries, and to defend it from a variety of attacks."

O'Neil, H. F., Jr. (1997). *Workforce readiness: Competencies and assessment*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This edited volume summarizes the competencies (skills) that students need when entering the world of work from both high school and college. It examines and summarizes the results of some of the recent research and policy endeavors and reports that have examined workforce readiness (e.g. Department of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills

— The SCANS Report; Michigan Employability Skills Task Force and Economic Development; New York Department of Education; and the National Academy of Sciences). Accordingly, many types of communication skills – interpersonal skills, working in teams, speaking and listening, and writing – are estimated as essential to well over half of the jobs in the world of work.

CONCLUSION

The communication discipline is an essential component of the educational enterprise – from preschool to adult education. The field is particularly important in the arena of higher education. The results of the studies reported herein clearly indicate that communication education develops the whole person, improves the work of education, advances the interests of society, bridges cultural differences, and advances careers and the work of business. That being the case, it is essential that communication curricula should be led and taught by specialists trained in the discipline and in departments that are dedicated to the study of communication.

NOTES

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