1981

Evaluation of Structured Interpersonal Communication in the Achievement of Business-Writing Principles.

William Lee Wohlgamuth

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

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EVALUATION OF STRUCTURED INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS-WRITING PRINCIPLES

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.  PH.D.  1981

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EVALUATION OF STRUCTURED INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS-WRITING PRINCIPLES

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Interdepartmental Program of Education

by
William Lee Wohlgamuth
B.A., Michigan State University, 1972
M.A., Michigan State University, 1976
May, 1981
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide information that might lead to a more efficient way to teach business communication. By investigating the use of structured interpersonal communication, a decision might be made as to whether or not structured interpersonal communication should be stressed, and if so, how business-writing principles might be taught more efficiently.

The problem was to determine what effect structured interpersonal communication has on student achievement of the principles of business writing in a business communication course.

The study was conducted at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana and all students in the sample were College of Business Administration majors enrolled in four sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, during the fall semester of the 1980-81 academic year.

The experimental-control group, pretest-posttest design was chosen for this study. The experimental group consisted of fifty-eight students while the control group consisted of sixty-three students.

In this experiment, the variable being investigated was structured interpersonal communication. Structured interpersonal communication in the experimental sections consisted of five structured interpersonal communication exercises. These exercises consisted of business communication problems selected from textbooks by the researcher. The problems involved a neutral message, a negative message, an informal report, an authorization letter, and a letter of transmittal.
In the experimental sections, immediately after introducing the respective topics, the class was divided into groups of three. Each group was then given the same business communication problem dealing with the respective topic. Using structured interpersonal communication, each group had 35 minutes to write a composite solution to the problem. At the next class meeting, two of these composite solutions were distributed to the class. Through class discussion, the class critiqued the solutions.

In the control sections, immediately after introducing the respective topics, two examples of solutions pertaining to these topics were distributed to the class. The class then critiqued these solutions through class discussion. Except for the structured interpersonal communication exercises in the experimental sections, the control sections were taught using the same methods and procedures.

A pretest was administered to all students the first week of the semester, and a posttest was administered to all students after the structured interpersonal communication exercises had been completed in the experimental sections.

The instrument used in the pretest/posttest was constructed by the researcher and consisted of 75 multiple-choice items. The instrument was validated by a panel of experts and a field test established a reliability coefficient of .73 for the instrument.

The results of the analysis of covariance, which was used to determine whether structured interpersonal communication increases student achievement of business-writing principles, were as follows:
1. There was a significant increase in student achievement of business-writing principles at the .05 level when pretest scores were used as the covariate.

2. There was a significant increase in student achievement of business-writing principles at the .05 level when student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were used as the covariate.

Research results indicate that structured interpersonal communication is a significant factor in student achievement of business-writing principles.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Business communication teachers are constantly searching for methods of instruction that will result in increased student performance. The principles of business writing are an area of prime importance in the field. Throughout the years, these principles have grown and become an accepted part of business communication courses. Regardless of the method of instruction used, virtually all teachers incorporate these principles in their business communication classes.

Basically, there are three methods used in teaching business communication: the functional approach, the theory-application approach, and a combination method utilizing parts of the previous two methods. All three methods, however, make use of the principles of business writing.

An additional concern of business communication teachers is student participation and involvement in the business communication class. One of the activities frequently used by business communication teachers is interpersonal communication. While most teachers utilize some form of student interpersonal communication in their classes, the quantity and quality of the activities vary greatly. In many instances, it is really no more than normal classroom discussion. Group-writing assignments are another method of increasing interpersonal communication in a business communication class.
This study focused on structured interpersonal communication, group-writing assignments specifically, as a way of increasing student achievement in business-writing principles. Since much of business communication makes use of these principles, it can be expected that increased knowledge of the principles would result in increased student performance in the business communication course.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to provide information that might lead to a more efficient way to teach business communication. Because of the limited time available to develop business-writing skills, only those methods and techniques which are most effective should be used. If structured interpersonal communication does increase student achievement of business-writing principles, then structured interpersonal communication should be stressed. If, on the other hand, structured interpersonal communication does not increase student achievement of business-writing principles, the time spent conducting these activities might be better utilized in some other activity. By investigating the use of structured interpersonal communication, a decision might be made as to whether or not structured interpersonal communication should be stressed, and if so, how business-writing principles might be taught more efficiently.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was to determine what effect structured interpersonal communication has on student achievement of the principles of business writing in a business communication course.
This study was an attempt to answer the following questions concerning student achievement of business-writing principles:

1. Is structured interpersonal communication a significant factor in student achievement of business-writing principles when the student pretest score is used as the covariate?

2. Is structured interpersonal communication a significant factor in student achievement of business-writing principles when the student Grade Point Average (GPA) is used as the covariate?

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana and all students in the sample were College of Business Administration majors enrolled in four sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, during the fall semester of the 1980-81 academic year.

The study did not attempt to determine the effects of various forms of interpersonal communication. Rather, it only considered the structured interpersonal communication exercises as detailed in the study.

The study did not in any way consider the effects of structured interpersonal communication on areas other than student achievement of business-writing principles.

The study did not attempt to determine the level of interpersonal communication achieved. It was assumed that structuring the interpersonal communication exercises would result in essentially equal levels of interpersonal communication between classes.
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because of the nature of enrollment at the University of New Orleans, intact classes were used which may limit the randomization to some extent. The students were enrolled in the sections using normal registration procedures at the University of New Orleans. An analysis of covariance was used to statistically equate the experimental and control groups.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Business-writing principles** are those factors affecting the writing and/or psychology of business communication. These factors include: "you" attitude, adaptation, planned presentation, clarity, emphasis, conciseness, positiveness, concreteness, correctness, coherence and unity, persuasiveness, active voice, and tone.

"You" attitude, sometimes referred to as empathy, service attitude, or consideration; refers to looking at the situation from the standpoint of the reader.

**Adaptation** refers to giving the reader the feeling that you have him specifically in mind.

**Planned presentation** refers to using the appropriate psychological approach, direct or indirect, in varying situations.

**Clarity** refers to the transfer of a writer's thoughts to a reader without misunderstandings.

**Emphasis** refers to the organization of material through which attention can be focused on the important or pleasant aspects of a situation while subordinating the unpleasant information.
Conciseness means that a message is no longer than it needs to be in order to accomplish its purpose.

Positiveness accent the pleasant aspects of a situation by stressing what can be done, not what cannot be done.

Concreteness refers to using vivid, specific words which convey your message clearly to the mind of the reader.

Correctness means that the message should be complete and correct in information given, in the form and approach chosen, and in English usage.

Coherence and unity refers to the thought flowing naturally and freely from the beginning to the end of the message.

Persuasiveness refers to writing which is convincing and effective.

Active Voice is constructed by making the subject of the sentence the doer of the action and thereby creating lively messages.

Tone, which can be either personal or impersonal, involves courteousness and refers to the manner in which an idea is stated rather than the idea itself.

Structured interpersonal communication involves the oral exchange of ideas dealing with assigned business communication problems within groups of more than two but less than five people.

Written business communication refers to the variety of letters and reports, excluding technical writing, encountered in business situations.

Functional approach is the method of teaching business communication which begins with business-writing principles and then applies these principles to written business communication.
Theory-application approach is the method of teaching business communication which begins with general communication theory and then applies this theory to business-writing principles and written business communication.

Student achievement refers to students' score on the pretest.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

As indicated by the literature, little research has been done in the area of business-writing principles. While research indicates that the use of business-writing principles creates a favorable image to readers, no research could be found which dealt with increasing student achievement of business-writing principles.

This study attempted to provide a controlled situation where the amount of structured interpersonal communication was the independent variable. This permitted the examination of its effect on the dependent variable, student achievement of the principles of business writing.

It is believed that findings from such a study might contribute to improved methods of teaching business-writing principles. Since business writing principles are such an integral part of a business communication course, this could prove valuable to teachers in the field.

SOURCE AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The population for this study consisted of students enrolled in four sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication at the University of New Orleans. Each of two instructors taught a control section and an experimental section.
The instrument used in the study was designed by the researcher and was approved and validated by a selected panel of experts prior to being administered.

At the outset of the experiment, the population was administered the instrument as a pretest. The students in the experimental sections were taught using the structured interpersonal communication exercises while the control sections were taught without using the structured interpersonal communication exercises. At the conclusion of the course, a posttest was administered to the population.

Scores on the pretest and the posttest, as well as student Grade Point Averages (GPA), were analyzed by the use of the analysis of covariance method. This enabled the researcher to examine differences, if any, in achievement. Differences between means of the control and experimental groups were statistically examined in an attempt to determine if structured interpersonal communication was a significant factor in student achievement of business-writing principles.

Findings were recorded in tabular form and conclusions were drawn and implications made from the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Business communication is a relatively new subject area and, as such, has comparatively little related literature. While the principles of business writing have been accepted as an important area in business communication, there has been very little research dealing with these principles (Wise, 1970). A small amount of research has been found which involves increasing student knowledge of these principles. Most research pertaining to these principles, however, focuses on other aspects of business communication while involving business-writing principles as one of the control variables.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES

As the field of business communication developed, basic principles of business writing emerged and became clarified. The early years produced some basic principles such as: planned presentation, clarity, positive tone, and correct grammar (Dobbins, 1959). By 1963 the field of business communication had grown and the principles had been expanded to include the "you" viewpoint, persuasion, and emphasis/subordination (Boyd, 1963). Industry during this period was stressing the active voice and creativity in its business writing (Royal Bank of Canada, 1963). A few years later Williams (1965) advocated the use of the additional principles of style and adaptation.

By the 1970s a set of generally accepted business writing principles had emerged. An analysis of American Collegiate Business Communication textbooks revealed the principles of business writing
to include: unity, clearness, correctness, completeness, conciseness, concreteness, coherence, emphasis, consideration, courtesy, character, personalization, tone, and "you" attitude (Sobolik, 1970). A survey of the most widely used business communication textbooks conducted five years later revealed the additional principles of adaptation, positiveness, and empathy (Stokes and Hatch, 1975). In addition to these principles, Wilkinson (1977) also includes service attitude and planned sequence of ideas as principles to be taught in business communication. Using these sources as a basis, the business-writing principles can be identified as: "you" attitude, adaptation, planned presentation, clarity, emphasis, conciseness, positiveness, concreteness, correctness, coherence and unity, persuasiveness, active voice, and tone.

Results from a survey of Indiana colleges and universities, high schools, and businesses revealed that these principles were recognized as the principles of business writing, and indeed, the survey indicated the business communication class could be improved by placing more emphasis on the application of business-writing principles to business correspondence problems (Soutter, 1978). A similar survey conducted in Iowa reaffirmed these principles of business writing (Stine and Skarzensky, 1979).

Business communication teachers recognize the importance of these principles. One objective to which all business communication teachers address themselves is the students' understanding of the principles of effective business writing (Bullard, 1971). Research involving the methods through which students can better understand these principles is, therefore, of interest to all teachers of business communication.
The value of the principles of business writing has been established through research. Pettit (1969) found that use of these principles tended to create favorable communicatee connotations. By using these accepted principles, businesses create a favorable company image. A later study involving businessmen in Mexico produced similar results (Eure, 1976). These studies strengthen the validity of incorporating these principles in business communication classes.

Research indicates that frequent writing practice does not increase the students' knowledge of business-writing principles (Dalton, 1976). Data from research also indicate that students who are taught business communication with increased emphasis upon business-writing principles achieve as high a performance level in the traditional course material as students who follow only the traditional course (Manship, 1975). This indicates that additional time may be spent concentrating on business-writing principles without achieving negative results in other areas of business communication. Recent research also indicates that increased emphasis on general communication theory has no significant effect on the students' knowledge of business-writing principles (Hart, 1979). This research illustrates the ongoing concern with student knowledge of these principles as well as the failure to identify a variable that does have a significant effect on student achievement of these principles.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

From the literature, the importance of these principles is evident. If a method to increase student knowledge of these principles
could be identified, it could prove valuable to business communication teachers and students.

An increase in student activities in business communication courses has been recommended by some in the field (Voyles, 1978). One activity frequently utilized by business communication teachers is to use "bad examples" exercises which require students to examine a letter or memo which is poorly organized, wordy, imprecise, or which features poor sentence construction and ask the students to rewrite or "discuss" the errors (Kramer, 1979). Research has shown that by using group-writing assignments in business communication classes, interpersonal communication results through which students are exposed to the exchange of words, ideas, and expressions (Knapper, 1963).

The use of interpersonal communication has been suggested as a way of getting students to communicate with one another in a business communication class (Hemphill, 1975). It has been suggested that interpersonal and small-group communication should be increased placing greater emphasis on small-group discussion in business communication courses (Swenson, 1980). Research results also indicate that frequent interpersonal communication involving a specific topic leads to information-seeking on that topic (Myrich, 1974).

IMPLICATIONS OF LITERATURE

In addition to revealing the importance of the principles of business writing, the review of literature has also suggested that group activity increases interpersonal communication. It is reasonable to expect that structured interpersonal communication involving business-writing principles will result in the student seeking
additional knowledge dealing with the principles. This may well result in increased student achievement of the principles of business writing.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The experimental-control group, pretest-posttest design was chosen for this study. The experimental group consisted of fifty-eight students while the control group consisted of sixty-three students, all enrolled in Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, at the University of New Orleans. Achievement in business-writing principles was measured by an instrument designed by the researcher. (See Appendix G).

SELECTION OF POPULATION

This study was conducted at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana. Two teachers in the Department of Office Administration participated in the study, each teaching one experimental and one control class. One instructor taught a control class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and an experimental class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while the second instructor taught a control class on Tuesdays and Thursdays and an experimental class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

The study was carried out during the fall semester of the 1980-81 academic year. Since the classes involved were intact classes, the population selected for the study was not randomized. The treatment, however, was randomly assigned to the intact classes. Although the number of students enrolled in the four classes of Office Administration 2651 was one-hundred forty-five, the actual student population for the study was one-hundred twenty-one. To be
included in the study, it was necessary for a student to have taken both the pretest and posttest.

DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT

In this experiment, the variable under investigation was structured interpersonal communication. For this reason, the researcher designated a control section and an experimental section for each instructor. One instructor taught a control section meeting Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with an experimental section meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays; the other instructor taught an experimental section meeting Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with a control section meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays. This scheme was devised to deal with any differences resulting from the frequency of meetings. Each section met three hours per week during the semester. Since students enrolled in these sections under normal registration procedures, analyses of covariance with student Grade Point Averages (GPA) and students' pretest scores as covariates were computed to statistically equate the groups.

Prior to the experiment, the researcher gave the teachers involved in the study procedures to be followed by them during the structured interpersonal communication exercises. (See Appendix A). These were read by the participating teachers and discussed with the researcher to clarify and answer any questions regarding procedures. Except for this treatment, the same methods and procedures were followed in the experimental and control groups.
At the first class meeting, a pretest focusing on the principles of business writing taught during the course was administered to both the experimental and control sections.

Structured interpersonal communication in the experimental sections consisted of five structured interpersonal communication exercises. These exercises consisted of business communication problems selected from textbooks by the researcher. The problems involved a neutral message, a negative message, an informal report, an authorization letter, and a letter of transmittal.

In the experimental sections, immediately after introducing the respective topics, the class was divided into groups of three. Each group was then given the same business communication problem dealing with the respective topic. Using structured interpersonal communication, each group had 35 minutes to write a composite solution to the problem. This period of structured interpersonal communication is the structured interpersonal communication exercise referred to previously. As stated, the experiment consisted of five such exercises.

At the next class meeting, two of these composite solutions were distributed to the class. Through class discussion, the class critiqued the solutions, pointing out strengths and weaknesses in each.

In the control sections, immediately after introducing the respective topics, two examples of solutions pertaining to these topics were distributed to the class. Through class discussion, the class critiqued these solutions, pointing out strengths and weaknesses. Except for the structured interpersonal communication
exercises in the experimental sections, the control sections were taught using the same methods and procedures.

Approximately one week prior to the end of the semester, the posttest was administered to the experimental and control sections. The students were informed that this was the same test they had taken in the beginning of the semester and that this would enable them to see what progress they had made during the semester.

Both the pretest and posttest were scored by the researcher, and the raw scores were the basis of the data reported in this study.

PREPARATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF INSTRUMENT

In preparing the instrument to be used in this study, the researcher consulted with teachers in the field and relied on questions from the teacher's handbook that accompanied the text being used in the course. Test items were selected which would evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the principles of business writing.

Guided by these principles, the researcher constructed the instrument which consists of 75 multiple-choice items. (See Appendix G). The length of time between the pretest and posttest, approximately 14 weeks, permitted the same test to be administered on both occasions. A panel of experts was selected for the validation of the instrument. (See Appendix D).

The instrument was field tested in order to establish a reliability coefficient. Using the results from the field test and the Kuder-Richardson formula 21, a reliability coefficient of .73 was established for the instrument.
STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

Since the groups in the study were not equated on a one-to-one basis, an analysis of covariance was used as the statistical procedure in analyzing the data. In using this method, adjustments of the posttest scores were made to allow for initial differences. The covariates used were pretest scores and student Grade Point Averages (GPA). The dependent variable was the posttest score, and the independent variable was structured interpersonal communication.

The following null hypotheses were tested using an analysis of covariance:

1. No significant difference results in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when business-writing principles pretest scores are used as the covariate.

2. No significant difference results in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) are used as the covariate.
The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the data which were obtained from the two administrations of the business-writing principles instrument. This instrument was validated by a panel of experts and field tested to establish a reliability coefficient of .73 for the instrument.

The instrument was administered to both groups the first week of the fall semester, 1980, as a pretest. After completing the structured interpersonal communication exercises in the experimental group, the instrument was administered to both groups as a posttest. The time between the administration of the pretest and the administration of the posttest was approximately fourteen weeks.

Both the pretests and posttests were scored by the researcher. In addition, the Grade Point Average (GPA) for each student in the population was collected. Only those students who took both the pretest and the posttest were included in this study. These scores were tabulated in columnar form and appear in Table 1.

The means of the pretest and posttest scores were computed and are shown in Table 1. As shown, the mean pretest score of the control group was 17.83 while the mean pretest score of the experimental group was 16.60. The mean posttest score of the control group, as shown in Table 1, was 36.19 while the mean posttest score of the experimental group was 39.64.

Since the groups could not be equated initially with respect to knowledge of business-writing principles, an analysis of covariance
Table 1
Frequency Distribution of
Business-Writing Principles Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Score Intervals</th>
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<th>Experimental Group</th>
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<td>Posttest</td>
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<tr>
<td>48 - 52</td>
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<tr>
<td>43 - 47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 - 42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 - 37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 - 32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 - 27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N    | 63   | 63   | 58   | 58   |
| X    | 17.83 | 36.19 | 16.60 | 39.64 |
| σ    | 8.56  | 7.91  | 6.76  | 8.59  |
Table 2
Analysis of Covariance of the Business-Writing Principles Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$SS_x$</th>
<th>$SS_y$</th>
<th>$S_{xy}$</th>
<th>$SS_{y,x}$</th>
<th>$MS_{y,x}(V_{y,x})$</th>
<th>$SD_{y,x}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among Means</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.09</td>
<td>358.9</td>
<td>-127.219</td>
<td>277.35</td>
<td>277.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>7140.96</td>
<td>8081.12</td>
<td>2380.331</td>
<td>7287.67</td>
<td>61.76</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>7186.02</td>
<td>8440.02</td>
<td>2507.55</td>
<td>7565.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F = 4.49^{**}$

**Significant at .05 level.
was used to examine the difference between means of the two groups. As shown in Table 2, the analysis of covariance using pretest scores as the covariate yielded an F-ratio of 4.49. For 1/118 degrees of freedom, an F-ratio of 4.49 is significant at the .05 level of confidence. Null hypothesis number one is therefore rejected. These results indicate that a significant difference does result in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when business-writing principles pretest scores are used as the covariate.

The means of the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were also computed for the control and experimental groups. The means of the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were tabulated and appear in frequency distribution form in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, the mean Grade Point Average (GPA) of students in the control group is 2.66 while the mean Grade Point Average (GPA) of students in the experimental group is 2.67.

The student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were used as a covariate since it was not possible to equate the groups according to Grade Point Average (GPA) initially. The use of analysis of covariance enables the researcher to statistically equate the groups with regard to the student Grade Point Averages (GPA).

An analysis of covariance was computed using posttest scores and the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) as the covariate. The results of this analysis of covariance appear in Table 4. The analysis of covariance yielded an F-ratio of 5.88 which is significant at the
Table 3

Frequency Distribution of
Student Grade Point Averages (GPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Intervals</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.76 - 4.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51 - 3.75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.26 - 3.50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.01 - 3.25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.76 - 3.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51 - 2.75</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.26 - 2.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.01 - 2.25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.76 - 2.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.51 - 1.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N = 63 \quad 58 \]
\[ \bar{X} = 2.66 \quad 2.67 \]
\[ \sigma = .598 \quad .510 \]
Table 4

Analysis of Covariance of the Student Grade Point Averages (GPA), Business-Writing Principles Posttest Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS&lt;sub&gt;x&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>SS&lt;sub&gt;y&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>S&lt;sub&gt;xy&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>SS&lt;sub&gt;y.x&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>MS&lt;sub&gt;y.x&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>SD&lt;sub&gt;y.x&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among Means</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>358.9</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>355.24</td>
<td>355.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>36.98</td>
<td>8081.12</td>
<td>187.561</td>
<td>60.42</td>
<td>7129.83</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>36.98</td>
<td>8440.02</td>
<td>187.92</td>
<td>7485.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F = 5.88**

**Significant at .05 level.
.05 level of confidence with 1/118 degrees of freedom. Null hypothesis number two is therefore rejected. These results indicate that a significant difference does result in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) are used as the covariate.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what effect structured interpersonal communication exercises have on student achievement of business-writing principles in a business communication course. This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions reached, implications that may be drawn, and recommendations which may be made from these findings.

SUMMARY

The experimental-control groups, pretest-posttest design was used to investigate the following question:

Is structured interpersonal communication related to student achievement of business-writing principles in a business communication class?

The following null hypotheses were tested using an analysis of covariance:

1. No significant difference results in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when business-writing principles pretest scores are used as the covariate.

2. No significant difference results in student achievement of business-writing principles in students taught by the lecture-
discussion method and students taught by the lecture-discussion method utilizing structured interpersonal communication in a business communication course when the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) are used as the covariate.

The subjects of the study were enrolled in four sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, at the University of New Orleans during the fall semester, 1980. The experiment consisted of five structured interpersonal communication exercises conducted during the semester.

The instrument for the study was constructed by the researcher and consisted of a 75 question multiple-choice test which was used as both the pretest and the posttest. The instrument was validated prior to the experiment by a panel of experts and was field tested to establish a reliability coefficient of .73 for the instrument. The scores from the pretest and posttest, as well as the student Grade Point Averages (GPA), provided the data used in this study.

These data were analyzed through the use of an analysis of covariance to determine if significant differences in student achievement of business-writing principles existed. Pretest scores were the covariate in one analysis of covariance while the student Grade Point Averages (GPA) were the covariate in a second analysis of covariance.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from this study indicate that both null hypotheses tested in this study should be rejected.
Null hypothesis number one was rejected since the difference between posttest means of the control and experimental groups was significant at the .05 level of confidence. An analysis of covariance indicated that this difference could not be explained by initial differences between groups, as indicated by student pretest scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that structured interpersonal communication serves to increase student achievement of business-writing principles.

Null hypothesis number two was rejected since the difference between posttest means of the control and experimental groups was significant at the .05 level of confidence. An analysis of covariance indicated that this difference could not be explained by initial differences between groups, as indicated by the student Grade Point Averages (GPA). Therefore, it can be concluded that structured interpersonal communication serves to increase student achievement of business-writing principles.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study hold several implications for business communication instructors:

1. Structured interpersonal communication can provide business communication instructors with a viable method to increase student achievement of business-writing principles.

2. Business communication instructors who have felt that students must be either writing or listening to a lecture during class, now have an alternative method at their disposal which has been shown to be an effective method of
increasing student achievement in business communication classes.

3. Proponents of interpersonal and small-group discussion in business communication courses now have additional data to justify the use of these activities in their classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study indicates that structured interpersonal communications can increase student achievement of business-writing principles, more research is needed on the relationship of these principles to business-writing skills and to other areas of business communication. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

1. That a study be conducted using less-structured interpersonal communication exercises.

2. That a study be conducted using a dependent variable other than student achievement of business-writing principles. It may be, of course, that the structured interpersonal communication exercises affect other areas and skills in business communication as well as business-writing principles.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


PERIODICALS


OTHER SOURCES


APPENDIX A

Teaching Procedures for
Structured Interpersonal Communication
PROCEDURES FOR STRUCTURED INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

On the day of a group activity, class proceeds normally until material has been introduced. At this point, the instructor either assigns or the class divides itself into groups of three. The remaining students can become the fourth in some groups.

The group assignment is given and explained. The grading sheet for the group assignment is also distributed at this time (same grade sheet that will be used for individual assignments).

The groups are instructed to write individual opening paragraphs for the problem, then critique each group member's paragraph and arrive at a composite opening paragraph. Once this has been achieved, the group continues on to the next paragraph and follows this procedure until the assignment is completed. The group has 35 minutes to arrive at a composite solution for the problem. At the end of 35 minutes, the group assignments are turned in to the instructor.

Before the next class meeting, the instructor reads the group assignments and selects two assignments representative of the groups' efforts. These are typed on a master and duplicated to be distributed at the next class meeting. The teacher may wish to evaluate or "grade" these two letters before the next class meeting.

At the next class meeting, the class is given 10 minutes to evaluate or "grade" the letters using the grade sheet for the assignment. The assignments are then discussed by the class. The instructor should bring out any strengths or weaknesses omitted by the class. About 15 minutes should be devoted to this activity, using a total of 25 minutes of the class period.
APPENDIX B

Letters of Request for Use of
Copyrighted Material
August 8, 1979

Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
470 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA 02210

REQUEST FOR USE OF COPYRIGHT MATERIAL

Communication for Business and the Professions is the required text for business communication here at the University of New Orleans. In teaching the course, I have found the questions in the Teacher's Handbook to be useful in evaluating student achievement.

I am currently working toward my Ph.D. at Louisiana State University and am considering doing my dissertation in business communication. In attempting to develop a valid measurement instrument, I have found the questions in your Teacher's Handbook to be valuable. I am, therefore, requesting permission to use some of your objective questions from the Teacher's Handbook in the Pretest-Posttest that I am developing to complete my research. I am also requesting permission to reprint these questions, with acknowledgement being given to the original publication, in any articles resulting from this research.

Your cooperation in this research will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

WILLIAM L. WOHLGAMUTH - INSTRUCTOR
DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION
August 21, 1979

Dr. Malra Treece  
Department of Office Administration  
Memphis State University  
Memphis, TN 38152  

Dear Dr. Treece,

Your book, *Communication for Business and the Professions*, is the required text for business communication here at the University of New Orleans. In teaching the course, I have found the questions in the Teacher's Handbook to be useful in evaluating student achievement.

I am currently working toward my Ph.D. at Louisiana State University and am considering doing my dissertation in business communication. In attempting to develop a valid measurement instrument, I have found the questions in your Teacher's Handbook to be valuable. I am, therefore, requesting permission to use some of your objective questions from the Teacher's Handbook in the Pre-Test/Post-Test that I am developing to complete my research. I am also requesting permission to reprint these questions, with acknowledgement being given to the original publication, in any articles resulting from this research. I have written your publisher asking for this permission but thought writing to you may be a "quicker and more efficient method."

Your cooperation in this research will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

William L. Wohlgamuth
APPENDIX C

Letters Granting Permission
for Use of Copyrighted Material
August 28, 1979

Mr. William L. Wohlgamuth  
Department of Office Administration  
Lake Front  
New Orleans, LA 70122

Dear Mr. Wohlgamuth:

You have my permission to use questions from the Teacher's Handbook for Communication for Business and the Professions, provided that you give full acknowledgment to the original source in your dissertation and all other publications.

The official written permission must come from Allyn and Bacon, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210. My editor there is Mrs. Susan Fisher.

I am gratified that you and other teachers at University of New Orleans are using my book. Please let me or the publisher know if we can be of assistance to you in any way. In addition, I will appreciate your suggestions for changes I should make in the Revised Edition, which will be released sometime in 1981.

Best wishes as you proceed with your research.

Sincerely,

Malra Treece  
Professor
September 5, 1979

William L. Wohlgamuth
Department of Office Administration
University of New Orleans
Lake Front
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122

Dear Mr. Wohlgamuth:

I have received your permission request of August 8, 1979, as well as a copy of your correspondence with our author, Malra Treece. We will be happy to grant you permission to use questions from the Teacher's Handbook to COMMUNICATION FOR BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS in your dissertation for the university, provided proper credit is given.

However, if you decide to publish articles including our material, you must reapply for permission, and indicate the exact questions and page numbers of the material you wish to use, the name of the publisher, and other pertinent information.

Thank you for your interest in this title, and best of luck with your paper.

Sincerely,

Roberta A. Lew
Permissions Supervisor
APPENDIX D

Validating Panel
VALIDATING PANEL

Dr. Randy E. Cone, Chairman
Department of Office Administration
University of New Orleans
New Orleans, LA 70122

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Nicholls State University
University Station
Box 2015
Thibodaux, LA 70301

Dr. Sara Hart
General Business Administration
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77340

Dr. Wilmer O. Maedke
Department of Business Education
and Office Administration
California State University--Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032

Dr. C. Glenn Pearce
Department of Office Administration
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23284

Dr. Marian C. Shaffer
Department of Business Law
and Office Administration
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
APPENDIX E

Letters of Request to the
Validating Panel
September 18, 1979

Dear

Your expertise in the field of business communication is well-known. I am, therefore, requesting your assistance in my dissertation research.

I am an instructor at the University of New Orleans working toward my Ph.D. degree at Louisiana State University. I plan to do my dissertation research in the field of business communication. Using some of the objective questions presented in the Teacher's Handbook for Communication for Business and the Professions by Malra Treece, I have developed the enclosed Pre-Test/Post-Test to measure student achievement in the writing of business letters and reports. In a recent field test, I found this test to have a validity coefficient of .72. To further justify the use of this test in my research, I request that you read through this test and let me know if, in your opinion, it has "face" validity.

I am grateful for your cooperation in this phase of my research. For your convenience, I have also enclosed a form for your comments concerning this test. I would appreciate receiving your comments as soon as possible so that I may proceed with my research.

Sincerely

William L. Wohlgamuth

Enclosures: Pre-Test/Post-Test
            Reply Form
            Addressed Envelope
June 20, 1980

Dear

Last September you assisted me in my doctoral research by evaluating a pre-test/post-test that I had developed for business communication. Your comments, as well as those of other experts in the field, were greatly appreciated and have resulted in changes being made in the instrument.

A revised test dealing with business-writing principles is enclosed. Would you please take the time to examine the test and comment on its validity using the enclosed reply form.

As a member of my "Panel of Experts," your cooperation in the past has been most helpful, and I am sure that your comments will prove valuable to my research. Since this project will be conducted during this fall semester, would you please return the reply form in the enclosed, addressed envelope as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely

William L. Wohlgamuth

Enclosures: Pre-Test/Post-Test
Reply Form
Addressed Envelope
APPENDIX F

Evaluation Form for the Validation of the Instrument
REPLY FORM

FOR

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TEST

I have examined the business-writing principles test developed by William Wohlgamuth and have found it

_____ to be a valid test  _____ not to be a valid test

Comments:

_________________________  __________________________
Date                        Signature
APPENDIX G

Instrument Used As
Pretest/Posttest on
Business-Writing Principles
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

DO NOT MARK ON THIS TEST. MARK ALL ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET. "Darken" the letter of the answer which corresponds to your choice.

1. Which of the following statements pertaining to the "you" attitude is incorrect?
   a. It can be used in all business writing and speech.
   b. It is by its very nature rather insincere.
   c. It is one of the most important aspects of business communication.
   d. It does not exclude self-consideration or company policy.
   e. It is not achieved by the use of the word "you."

2. Which of the following statements concerning the "you" attitude is incorrect?
   a. The writer should exhibit empathy.
   b. "You" attitude is a state of mind.
   c. "You" attitude uses more first-person pronouns than second-person pronouns.
   d. "You" attitude emphasizes reader's benefits.
   e. "You" attitude involves thinking of the reader first.

3. Which of the following statements concerning "you" attitude is the best choice?
   a. Your order will arrive on April 12.
   b. We shipped your three oak tables April 7.
   c. You should receive your tables Friday morning.
   d. I want to thank you for your order of three oak tables.
   e. Your oak tables will arrive April 12.

4. Which of the following statements concerning the "you" attitude is the worst choice?
   a. Your order was shipped today.
   b. We shipped your Judding crosscut saw today.
   c. You will receive your order shortly.
   d. We received your order for a Judding saw and shipped it today.
   e. You should receive your order within the next few days.

5. Which of the following statements concerning "you" attitude is the best choice?
   a. Our company is pleased to announce the opening of our new store.
   b. We are happy to announce that the Wanka Store is now expanding.
   c. You can now shop at our new Wanka Store.
   d. Thanks to your patronage, the Wanka Company is opening a new store.
   e. For your convenience, a new Wanka Store is opening on North Street.

6. Which of the following statements concerning the "you" attitude is the worst choice?
   a. Thank you for your order of May 18.
   b. We at the Bong Company take pride in filling orders promptly.
   c. The Bong Company thanks you for your order.
   d. We will ship your order on May 22.
   e. We have received your order of May 18.
7. Which of the following is not a method of adapting business letters?
   a. Typing the reader's name in on form letters.
   b. Referring to the reader's occupation or profession.
   c. Using a vocabulary appropriate to the reader's education.
   d. Referring to common experiences.
   e. Using the language of the reader's profession.

8. Which of the following statements best illustrates the principle of adaptation?
   a. Your merchandise was shipped today.
   b. Your three oak tables were shipped today.
   c. We have shipped your merchandise today.
   d. The Panhandle Furniture Company has shipped your order today.
   e. Your order was shipped today.

9. Which of the following is the best choice to be sent to a mailing list of parents?
   a. When your children finally go to sleep at night . . .
   b. Your child will enjoy our new . . .
   c. We know your son will spend many hours . . .
   d. We offer this special so the entire family can enjoy . . .
   e. Your daughter will get years of pleasure from this . . .

10. Which of the following is the best choice to be sent to a mailing list of recent college graduates?
    a. Your college degree allows you . . .
    b. After four years of study . . .
    c. Now that you're working in your profession . . .
    d. You will find the business world . . .
    e. You represent the quality our public education produces . . .

11. Which of the following is the best choice to be sent to a mailing list of office managers?
    a. Your secretary will enjoy the ease of operation . . .
    b. Our company offers the finest service available . . .
    c. Your office staff will appreciate the durability . . .
    d. Your employees know the quality of our products . . .
    e. Your workers will be able to quickly locate files . . .

12. Which statement would be the best in a letter sent to recent high school graduates?
    a. Your parents must be proud of your . . .
    b. Your fond memories of high school . . .
    c. After four years of high school . . .
    d. Your diploma enables you to . . .
    e. The other children in your family must be . . .

13. Which of the following statements describes an advantage of the indirect arrangement?
    a. It is often more diplomatic.
    b. It is usually more readable.
    c. It is often more concise.
    d. It is usually the best choice of arrangement unless there is a definite reason to use the direct order.
    e. It usually uses a more adapted vocabulary.
14. Which of the following is not a description of the direct-approach arrangement?
   a. It is likely to be more concise than the indirect approach.
   b. It can be too abrupt for some kinds of messages.
   c. It should ordinarily be chosen unless there is a definite reason for choosing the indirect.
   d. It makes the communication harder to read.
   e. It is usually used in good-news messages.

15. Which of the following statements is best for the last part of a letter that is supposed to serve as an action close?
   a. If you want to put this plan into effect . . .
   b. Put this plan into effect immediately.
   c. Will you come into my office within the next week and let me know how this plan is working out for you?
   d. We hope that this plan will not cause any problem for you.
   e. We hope that you don't disapprove of this plan.

16. Pick the best statement from the first paragraph of a good-news message.
   a. The information you requested is on its way to you; we are sure you will find it useful.
   b. Although it is against our policy, we are making an exception in your case and sending you the information you requested.
   c. We have received your request for information about our accounting procedures.
   d. Thank you for your letter requesting information about our accounting procedures.
   e. We are glad to know that you are interested.

17. Which of the following expressions is most appropriate in the beginning paragraph of a solicited sales message?
   a. We have received your inquiry about the Wanka Company.
   b. Thank you for inquiring about the Wanka Company.
   c. Yes, Wanka products are available in your area.
   d. We are writing to give you the information you requested.
   e. You will like Wanka products, even if they do not meet all of the criteria you listed in your inquiry.

18. Which of the following statements about an action close is incorrect?
   a. Specifically state the requested action.
   b. If appropriate, stress reader benefits.
   c. Do not mention a deadline unless in terms of reader benefits.
   d. Make the requested action easy for the reader.
   e. It is usually used in a persuasive message.
19. Which of the following statements concerning clarity is incorrect?
   a. Although meaning is in the mind, many words have generally accepted meanings.
   b. Minor differences in perception as to meanings of words can cause major errors in communication.
   c. Words intended only to convey information will not have an emotional effect upon the reader.
   d. Words have differing shades of meaning, and often their meaning depends upon their context, as well as upon the reader.
   e. It involves connotative and denotative meanings of words.

20. Which of the following statements concerning an implied decision is correct?
   a. It can be completely clear.
   b. It should not be used because it can be misunderstood.
   c. It should always be used.
   d. It emphasizes the refusal.
   e. It usually is used in a good-news message.

21. Which of the following statements concerning clarity is the best choice?
   a. Please send us a supply of leaflets for distribution to employees.
   b. There is a new office building beyond the city dump which is very beautiful.
   c. Drive by our store when shopping in the area.
   d. We sell at retail in Chicago only.
   e. The word processing unit was shown us by a salesman on sale for $5,200.

22. Which of the following statements concerning clarity is the best choice?
   a. I read about the embezzlers who were found in today's Wall Street Journal.
   b. Before you order, your stock records should be consulted.
   c. Our local warehouse will handle your needs.
   d. On the bottom shelf of the bookcase, I finally found the files I had been searching for.
   e. The friendly office manager told you what you were doing wrong with a smile.

23. Which of the following statements concerning clarity is the best choice?
   a. Come by my office in the morning.
   b. Before you order your inventory records should be checked.
   c. She yearned to have her old job back while in Chicago.
   d. We sell at wholesale only in New Orleans.
   e. A copy of the letter is enclosed under separate cover.
24. Which of the following statements concerning clarity is the best choice?
   a. The woman at the computer smoking a cigarette is breaking office rules.
   b. Working without a coffee break, I completed the telephone calls before noon.
   c. The salesman filled the order of the dead man in a hurry.
   d. Setting on my typewriter, I finally found my glasses.
   e. The executive was arrested soon after the funds had been embezzled by the police.

25. A thought receives the most emphasis when presented
   a. as a phrase.
   b. as a dependent clause in a complex sentence.
   c. as an independent clause in a complex sentence.
   d. in an implied decision.
   e. as an independent clause that comprises the entire sentence.

26. A thought receives the most emphasis when it is
   a. the first sentence in a paragraph.
   b. a one-sentence paragraph at the beginning of the message.
   c. a one-sentence paragraph near the middle of the message.
   d. the last sentence of a paragraph.
   e. a one-sentence paragraph at the end of the message.

27. Which of the following sentences is best for the ending paragraph of a letter that refuses a request?
   a. We hope this meets with your approval.
   b. Best wishes for a happy and prosperous year.
   c. We are sorry that this occurred.
   d. Don't hesitate to call on us again.
   e. When we can be of service again, be sure to let us know.

28. In order to apply the principles of emphasis and subordination in refusal letters
   a. put the refusal in the first paragraph.
   b. put the refusal in the last paragraph.
   c. state the refusal in vivid language.
   d. repeat the refusal in several different ways so that it will be understood.
   e. put the refusal in the middle of a paragraph.

29. Which of the following statements concerning emphasis is correct?
   a. Emphasis is accomplished best by using the passive voice.
   b. Emphasis is not influenced by active or passive voice.
   c. The organization or arrangement of a sentence affects the emphasis ideas receive.
   d. The buffer serves to emphasize the main idea of the letter.
   e. The buffer is an example of emphasizing information.
30. Which one of the following statements about conciseness is correct?
   a. "Brevity" and "conciseness" are synonymous.
   b. Brevity is more important than conciseness.
   c. A seven-page letter is neither brief nor concise.
   d. A one-page report can be concise; a thousand-page report can also be concise.
   e. Conciseness is more important in memorandums than in letters.

31. Which of the following does not pertain to conciseness?
   a. Omit unnecessary details.
   b. Avoid descriptive adjectives.
   c. Condense unimportant ideas.
   d. Eliminate unnecessary words.
   e. Avoid redundant phrases.

32. Which of the following statements is least concise?
   a. Thank you for your letter of December 3 concerning the price of copy paper.
   b. Please call us when you need help.
   c. The decision was the consensus of opinion of our staff.
   d. Your order for 17 luggage racks was processed April 16.
   e. Your shipment has been delayed and will not be delivered until May 8.

33. Which of the following statements is most concise?
   a. We will expect your reply sometime in the early part of the coming month.
   b. First and foremost, we want you to know we are always at your service.
   c. The basic fundamentals of the policy will be determined by the Board.
   d. Great expense and inconvenience resulted from an avoidable and serious error.
   e. When we referred back to our files, we found that we had made an error.

34. Which of the following statements is most concise?
   a. It is absolutely necessary to print all the information on the form.
   b. Industry and management demand that efficient communication leave nothing undone.
   c. For the period of a month, we have not received any orders from our Chicago office.
   d. In the near future, the Jefferson store will have a sale on computers.
   e. In the event that the levee breaks, the Board meeting will be postponed.
35. Which of the following statements is most concise?
   a. The investigation revealed the true facts.
   b. After five years of service, it was just and right that he received the promotion.
   c. Full and complete details will be sent next month.
   d. Each and every aspect of the situation must be considered before a decision is made.
   e. You may charge up to $800 worth of merchandise at any of our Samson's five locations.

36. Which of the following statements is the most positive?
   a. We look forward to a long and pleasant business relationship.
   b. We hope that you will continue to do business with us.
   c. We hope that this unfortunate circumstance will not cause you to mistrust us.
   d. We trust that you will not stop doing business with us.
   e. We trust that this will not affect our business relationship.

37. Which of the following statements is the best choice for use within a disappointing message?
   a. It's against company policy.
   b. We are sorry that we cannot do as you request.
   c. You surely understand our position.
   d. We sell only to wholesale dealers.
   e. We are surprised at your request.

38. Which of the following statements is not an accurate description of a buffer?
   a. It is used in messages that convey unfavorable information.
   b. It is usually the first paragraph, but it can consist of more than one paragraph.
   c. It says neither "yes" nor "no."
   d. It is pleasant and relevant.
   e. It should imply thenegative message.

39. Which of the following is best to include in the closing paragraph of a bad-news message?
   a. A reference to the refusal.
   b. An apology for the refusal.
   c. An idea that takes the emphasis away from the refusal or bad news.
   d. Further explanation of the reason for the refusal.
   e. A buffer.

40. Which of the following should be used in refusal letters?
   a. You should understand . . .
   b. It's against company policy . . .
   c. We cannot afford to . . .
   d. We must turn down . . .
   e. A buffer in the opening paragraph.
41. Which of the following sentences is the best choice for the last paragraph of an application letter?
   a. Please let me know when you have an opening for a person with my qualifications.
   b. If you have an opening for someone with my qualifications, will you please telephone me at 675-8935?
   c. I expect to hear from you by November 15, as I am sure my qualifications are what you are looking for.
   d. Please write me to arrange a time for further discussion of my qualifications.
   e. Telephone me at 675-8935 before November 15.

42. Which of the following is incorrect concerning concreteness?
   a. Concreteness contributes to the completeness and conciseness of a message.
   b. Concreteness utilizes word pictures.
   c. Concreteness can weaken clarity of a statement.
   d. Concreteness makes use of specific words.
   e. Concreteness makes use of sharp, vivid words.

43. Which of the following is most concrete?
   a. An extremely fast typist.
   b. A good report.
   c. A very thrilling, historic novel.
   d. A very good sales letter.
   e. A seven-page report.

44. Which of the following is most abstract?
   a. A normative study
   b. A feasibility study
   c. A year-end financial statement
   d. A research report
   e. A binary report

45. Which of the following is most abstract?
   a. security guard
   b. administrative office assistant
   c. executive secretary
   d. computer programmer
   e. payroll clerk

46. Which of the following terms is most abstract?
   a. Literary work
   b. Short story
   c. Fiction
   d. "The Black Cat"
   e. A novel

47. Which of the following descriptions is most concrete?
   a. intelligent
   b. understanding
   c. college-educated
   d. tall
   e. terrible
48. Which of the following statements is not an exact description of the necessity for correct language usage?
   a. Incorrect language usage is distracting.
   b. Incorrect language usage is usually unclear.
   c. Incorrect language usage may be unclear, although it is not necessarily so.
   d. Incorrect language usage may weaken the reader's confidence in the message or in the sender of the message.
   e. Incorrect language usage may lead to misunderstandings.

49. Which of the following statements concerning correctness is incorrect?
   a. An incomplete message violates the principle of correctness.
   b. A poorly typewritten message violates the principle of correctness.
   c. Misspelled words in a message violate the principle of correctness.
   d. Incorrect punctuation violates the principle of correctness.
   e. An inconcise statement violates the principle of correctness.

50. Which of the following statements concerning correctness is incorrect?
   a. Some grammatical errors are permissible in the informal writing style.
   b. The terms "formal" and "informal" are relative.
   c. Formal writing should not be unnatural or pretentious.
   d. Strictly formal writing will include no contractions.
   e. Most business messages are written in the informal style.

51. Which of the following statements is most descriptive of the wise use of slang in business writing?
   a. Slang should never be used.
   b. The use of slang can be dangerous and unwise, regardless of the degree of formality of the writing.
   c. Slang should be used often in order to give an impression of informality.
   d. Slang is the most likely of all expressions to be widely understood.
   e. Slang is usually used in memorandums.

52. Which of the following statements violates the principle of correctness?
   a. A business letter or a report communicates through appearance.
   b. Non-verbal communication, as well as written or spoken words, are sometimes misinterpreted.
   c. "With our compliments" means, to use less gracious language, that whatever is offered is free.
   d. You can't judge a book by its cover.
   e. Our emotions are often affected adversely by physical or mental fatigue.
53. Which of the following statements does not violate the principle of correctness?
   a. This method has not been in effect for sometime.
   b. The Personal Policy Committee will meet next Tuesday at 2 p.m.
   c. Communication systems that conform to morale principles increase employee productivity.
   d. Employees are not permitted to accept gifts from suppliers.
   e. Free advice is said to be worth as much as it costs.

54. Which of the following statements concerning coherence is correct?
   a. It is best achieved by a logical arrangement of ideas.
   b. It is best achieved by many transitional words and phrases, such as "on the other hand" and "nevertheless."
   c. It is best achieved by summary statements.
   d. It is best achieved by a subject line.
   e. It is best achieved by an implied decision.

55. Which of the following statements concerning unity is correct?
   a. It is best achieved by choosing each word carefully.
   b. It is best achieved by using concrete statements.
   c. It is best achieved by removing needless words.
   d. It is best achieved by using the active voice.
   e. It is best achieved by avoiding stereotyped expressions.

56. Which of the following statements concerning unity is correct?
   a. It can be achieved by writing the way you talk.
   b. It can be achieved by using the "you" attitude.
   c. It can be achieved by conveying only one main idea in each sentence.
   d. It can be achieved by keeping your sentences short.
   e. It can be achieved by recalling reader benefits.

57. Which of the following pair of sentences does not illustrate coherence and unity?
   a. The Linka Company has a popular credit plan. Furthermore, we give you a choice of credit terms to make payments easier.
   b. Our Gentilly store will be open until 10 p.m. on Saturday. Similarly, our Gretna stores will be open for your shopping convenience.
   c. The Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company uses ordinary credit procedures. These procedures enable our retailers to buy the goods they need now and pay for them later.
   d. I want you to come to my office to see me in the morning. I do not understand your complaint.
   e. The Lange Company takes pride in satisfying its customers. Our customers are important to us.
58. Which of the following sentences least illustrates coherence and unity?
   a. After we receive your order, we will ship you your merchandise and send you a bill.
   b. In response to your complaint, our New York representative will be in to see you May 12.
   c. In preparing the report, the executive used primary as well as secondary data.
   d. After the meeting, the Board of Directors discussed the new policy over lunch.
   e. One of the primary responsibilities of the stock clerk is to maintain an accurate inventory.

59. Which of the following is not an element of persuasion?
   a. desire
   b. interest
   c. attention
   d. promotion
   e. action

60. Which of the following is not an emotion to appeal to in a persuasive message?
   a. health
   b. charity
   c. fear
   d. social approval
   e. anger

61. Which of the following is not a method of logical reasoning?
   a. inductive
   b. syllogism
   c. denotative
   d. analogy
   e. deductive

62. The first part of a persuasive message should involve
   a. the use of a buffer.
   b. interest arousal.
   c. good news.
   d. reasons for taking desired action.
   e. an attention-getting device.

63. Which of the following statements concerning persuasion is incorrect?
   a. Persuasion involves telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
   b. Persuasion is used to convince the reader that the desired action will be for his own benefit.
   c. Persuasion is used to coax the reader to do what you want him to do.
   d. Persuasion makes use of specific language and vivid description.
   e. Persuasion avoids phrasing or exaggeration that would cause disbelief.
64. Which of the following statements is most descriptive of the passive voice, as compared to the active voice?
   a. It is more direct.
   b. It is more forceful.
   c. It is more concise.
   d. It gives emphasis to the receiver of the action.
   e. It allows the reader to visualize the idea.

65. Which of the following statements is written in the active voice?
   a. The book was sent to me about a month ago.
   b. The company should change its employment practices.
   c. More color should be included in the final design.
   d. The office was redecorated last year.
   e. Payment was approved by Mr. Kane.

66. Which of the following statements is written in the passive voice?
   a. If you will call me tomorrow, I will write the report.
   b. When planning the schedule, the secretary forgot about the meeting on Tuesday.
   c. If you will call my supervisor tomorrow, I will be given the opportunity to write the report.
   d. The district representative was late for the meeting.
   e. The new office girl typed the minutes of the meeting incorrectly.

67. The purpose of the active voice is
   a. to minimize bad news in a negative message.
   b. to persuade the reader in a persuasive message.
   c. to appear nonbiased in an informal report.
   d. best achieved with the impersonal tone.
   e. to accentuate the positive.

68. Which of the following sentences is written in the active voice?
   a. Before we can fill your order, we will need to know the quantity desired.
   b. The secretary will be given a certificate of merit at the conference.
   c. Harriet Jones was recommended for a promotion after six months of service.
   d. Several requests have been received for copies of the program.
   e. The check was not enclosed with your order.

69. Which of the following sentences is written in the passive voice?
   a. The committee could not meet at its scheduled time.
   b. Mr. Jones has cancelled his lecture tour.
   c. The water cooler will be repaired before the employees return from vacation.
   d. The company shipped the wrong color of letterhead.
   e. The Board rejected the Committee's recommendation.
70. Which of the following statements is most descriptive of the impersonal tone, as compared to the personal?
   a. It is often more objective.
   b. It is more conversational.
   c. It is more directly related to the reader and the writer.
   d. It is more informal.
   e. It is often used in memorandums.

71. Which of the following statements is not a description of the personal tone?
   a. It is appropriate for almost all letters and memorandums.
   b. It may include "you's," but not "I's."
   c. Even though the word "I" is appropriate and acceptable, the writer can use so many "I's" that the message appears not to exemplify the "you" attitude.
   d. When the writing style is informal, usually the personal tone is appropriate.
   e. It is usually used in business letters.

72. An advantage of using the impersonal tone in formal reports is that
   a. It makes the writing more concise.
   b. It keeps the report from being biased.
   c. It seems more objective and nonbiased.
   d. It places emphasis upon the writer.
   e. It sounds more natural.

73. Which of the following is an advantage of the use of the impersonal tone?
   a. It is more interesting.
   b. It is easier to read.
   c. It is more vivid and forceful.
   d. It is more natural and conversational.
   e. It is more likely to place emphasis where emphasis is due.

74. Which of the following statements concerning tone is the best choice?
   a. We were sorry to receive your letter in which you claim your lawn mower is unsatisfactory.
   b. You must realize that if we give away our merchandise you will have to pay more for what you buy.
   c. I am surprised that you say that our merchandise has not given good service.
   d. Even our limited budget will permit full payment of your expenses.
   e. Your memo indicated that you are ignorant of policies in our credit department.
75. Which of the following statements concerning tone is the best choice?
   a. Your patio will be completed as soon as the temperature rises above freezing.
   b. I was sorry to hear that you have been fired.
   c. You have neglected to reply to my letter of January 15.
   d. It will be impossible to open an account for you without credit references.
   e. If you can manage to pay your account within ten days, we will allow you a 10 percent discount.

Some of these questions come from Teacher's Handbook for Communication for Business and the Professions by Malra Treece. Copyright 1978 by Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
VITA

William Lee Wohlgamuth, son of Harold and Roberta Wohlgamuth, was born on September 10, 1950, in Toledo, Ohio. He attended Summerfield Consolidated Schools in Petersburg, Michigan and graduated from Summerfield High School in 1968. Following his graduation, he attended Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Education (1972) and a Master of Arts degree in Business and Distributive Education (1976).

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