

ONLINE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN  
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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the Faculty of the Communication Department  
at Southern Utah University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts in Professional Communication

by  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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a candidate for the degree of Master of Art in Professional Communication,

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# ONLINE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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## ABSTRACT

This project develops an online course in organizational communication. The project includes a summary of key points in academic literature about online instruction, the best practices used by learners and facilitators in an online environment and examines theoretical approaches to teaching an organizational communication course, including a bracketing of what concepts and theoretical approaches have influenced and formed the researcher's personal online teaching philosophy.

Also included in the appendixes of this paper are the guiding principles used in the creation of the online environment, course, assignments, and lists of readings as well as documentation of the organization of an online environment course.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the memory of Russell W. Pincock and Eldred E. Bair, my grandfathers who both passed away while I was completing my Masters Degree. All who knew them will remember their legacy of hard work, sacrifice, and love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

As schools prepare for the future of instruction, online learning will continue to influence how students will interact with curriculum, instructors, and fellow learners. Technology has changed the way we approach teaching. According to Hauck (2006), citing Allen, and Seaman (2004), almost two million students enrolled in online courses in the fall of 2003, an increase of 19 percent over the previous year.

This not only reflects the types of students now enrolling in classes, but also administrators' belief that in order for universities and colleges, especially community colleges, to compete with large schools great financial resources, they must increasingly offer a wide variety of online courses to meet the needs of future and possible students (Cox, 2005). In the competitive world of higher education, providing students with additional reasons for selecting a specific school or program over another is a strong motivation for designing and mandating online education programs.

Beyond the benefits institutions gain by offering online or web-based learning, many users of select programs are now discovering this method of instruction to allow both faculty and students to utilize university and personal resources in the most effective way (Cole, 2000). Online instruction will continue to challenge the ideas and processes of the traditional face-to-face course and in the future could change dramatically instruction in the university classroom.

### *Rational*

Keeping growth in mind, the researcher proposes the following project: the development of an online course in organizational communication. The researcher will serve as the course developer, content manager, and producer. In addition to using the knowledge gained in the Master's courses at Southern Utah University, the researcher will also bring a background in graphic design, instructional technology, and podcasting to complete the project.



The researcher contacted the Communication Department at Brigham Young University-Idaho, who expressed interest in the course. When the course is completed an internal BYU-Idaho online course review board will review it, the researcher will teach at least one section every semester. In order to receive BYU-Idaho approval, several elements must be included within the course. These will be described in depth within the following chapters.

Overall, this project will better prepare the researcher as a faculty member both within the traditional classroom and in an online environment. The researcher will complete a survey of the literature about the best practices of online pedagogy and andragogy, ways to improve the student experience, the selection of rigorous course content, the design of variety of assessment tools, and multimedia elements. This process will enable the researcher's scholarship to form his teaching and course development.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review of Online Practices

In 2000, there were an estimated 275 million Internet users. Just a year later, that number had grown to approximately 605 million users. The growth of the Internet has drawn students to online education and estimates predict 80 million students will be enrolled in online classes by the year 2025 (Hosie, and Schibeci, 2005 citing Bell, Bush, Nicholson, O'Brien, and Tran, 2002).

Flexibility is one of the most compelling arguments for the creation of online learning environments. Students and faculty do not have to report to a specific room at a specific time, allowing them to work on their online classes whenever or wherever they choose. Oliver, and Omari (2001 citing Herrington, and Oliver, 1997) report ~~technology~~-supported learning environments strongly suggests that the forms of access and flexibility being sought could be achieved through purposeful design and implementation of an environment in that [*sic*] contemporary multimedia and communications technologies were employed” (p. 36).

While flexibility alone may not be compelling enough to undertake the labor-intensive process of developing an online course. Goodyear, Salmon, Spector, Steeples, and Tickner (2001 citing Drucker, 2000) suggest that understanding how to develop and deliver an online course could tap the faculty member into a large undeveloped global market of continuing education which could be ~~potentially~~ worth hundreds of billions of dollars” (p. 66) both to universities and faculty members.

University faculty members will play a key role in the development of content and the future of online instruction both within the classroom setting as well as within the corporate setting. Goodyear et. al. (2001 citing Masie, 2000) report when working within a corporate setting —88% of learners and 91% of managers want a trainer assigned to this e-learning experience . . . 62% of learners and 63% of managers would be more likely to select an e-learning class if a

trainer were part of the package” (p. 66). Goodyear, et. al. (2001) also reports that several new institutions are recruiting faculty to teach in a complete online environment.

Online education has replaced distant education programs at many institutions; however, unlike the traditional distant program, online classes offer increased flexibility and more automated features. These changes decrease the upfront institutional costs of wiring classrooms on two ends and paying for the development of unique courseware systems. Now, online courses can be taught to anyone anywhere in the world who has access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection. This reduction in cost will allow universities to offer more courses and will increase expectations among students to have access to online courses (Hosie, and Schibeci, 2005).

The growth of online courses will require new approaches and experimentation on the part of both faculty and students. The literature is rich in detailing the benefits of online learning and how effectively online courses are developed in a variety of fields. The first, faculty must consider how they will be impacted.

### *Faculty*

While demands from administrators and mandates via policy may be a starting point for online instruction, it does not make a great online class. As Bates, and Watson (2008) points out, the faculty must re-train themselves before attempting to teach an online course. They are no longer the “sage on the stage” and must now think of themselves as a “learning coach” or someone who assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the students in a specific area of study and determines what must be done to help the students improve and learn the material of the course.

Online faculty members must develop a presence in the course. In the traditional classroom, this occurs by showing up, but in an online learning environment, one key way of developing a presence is in using an asynchronous discussion board. Students comment, ask questions, discuss concerns on the discussion boards. Other students are welcome to add to this

discussion but the faculty member must take a guiding role in supporting or channeling the discussion (Blignaut, and Trollip, 2003).

As professors design and deliver online courses, the way the course is delivered must evolve to meet the needs of students in an online learning environment. Most researchers suggest effective online courses use guided discovery where ~~—~~students learn on their own by observing the phenomena, asking questions, allowing time for inquiry, or conducting activities and experiments followed by feedback. All the while, the professors are supplying appropriate levels of guidance” (Bates, and Watson, 2008 p. 40).

A faculty member’s key responsibility of providing feedback is the same in both face-to-face courses and online courses. Feedback as defined by Wiggings (1998 as citing Collis, De Boer, and Slotman, 2001) means to provide each student with ~~—~~information about how a person performed in light of what he or she attempted—intent vs. effect, actual vs. ideal performance” (p. 307). The literature also states there is an important difference between feedback and debriefing. Collis, De Boer, and Slotman, (2001) contend that debriefing allows the faculty member to help participants understand possible outcomes of an experience. Debriefing is especially effective when there is no truly right or wrong answer to the situation. In an online environment, debriefing allows for a low-stakes learning experience as well as shifting participants towards certain activities.

No matter what assessment tools are selected to use in traditional or online courses, assessment provides a way to open lines of communication between the faculty member and students. In the grading process, students should not only receive a grade but in-depth feedback about their performance, ways to improve future work, and possible goals or weaknesses which need to be corrected before entering the workforce (Macdonald, 2004).

Unlike a typical course, online instruction depends on the teacher and his or her commitment to the course. The process of teaching online requires more collaboration, improved teaching technique, and constant evaluation of the teaching process (Young, 2004). A great deal

of success in an online environment depends on the faculty member, but students also have a responsibility for the success of class.

### *Students*

Faculty members are not the only individuals who must rethink the online teaching process. Students who have been educated in the United States have learned starting from kindergarten in a face-to-face environment (Yelon, 2006 as cited in Bates, and Watson, 2008). Often, when faced with the possibility of learning in an online environment, students falsely assume they must have detailed and vast technological knowledge; however, a properly designed course uses technology that anyone with basic computer skills could soon master (Li, and Akins, 2005). While the method of instruction and interaction may be different, the outcome of an online-learning environment should be similar to those found in a face-to-face classroom.

Beyond these simple differences, online learning can be very time-consuming and requirements for the course are more rigorous when compared to traditional face-to-face instruction. Often students in an online environment will spend more time working on course projects than their counterparts in a traditional classroom. Additionally, students will spend more time navigating the course technology (Marsden, 2003). In order to be successful in an online course, there are specific activities and knowledge a student should understand.

Students in an online environment must have background and know how to use the learning interface. They should feel comfortable with troubleshooting and using technology to participate in the course. Consistency has increased importance in an online-learning environment from the way information is presented to the process of submitting homework. Consistency also is important at the department, college, and university level. By selecting a similar instruction frameworks and patterns, students are better able to cope with the use of technology (Macdonald, 2004).

Online courses have an extremely high attrition rate, and many students who do not drop the course, fail to pass because of uncompleted assignments. Students who succeed in an online

course must be motivated, use time well, meet deadlines, and set goals (Eom, Wen, and Ashill, 2006). The majority of undergraduate students on campus across the country do not fit this description. It is up to faculty members to provide motivation and, in some cases, clarify that an online course is not for all students.

However, non-traditional and degree-seeking professionals are a much better match to the profile of an effective online student. Research indicates certain types of students perform better in online learning environments. Hoskins, Newstead, and Dennis (1997 as cited in Hoskins, and van Hooff, 2005) found older students receive higher grades than younger and less-experienced students do. Age is often a sign of higher levels of maturity and therefore, those students who are mature and dedicated perform better than those who are not.

A variety of learning styles may be the reason behind high attrition rates in online classes. However, in a study conducted by Eom, et. al. (2006), found no significant connection between learning style and the ability to complete an online class.

While an online course may not fit everyone's needs, an online course provides benefits in a way not available in the conventional face-to-face course. Students have the ability to access course information and readings as well as fellow students and faculty members at a time that is convenient for them. —Students need no longer work in isolation, but belong to an electronic community of learners” (Macdonald, 2004, p. 215).

#### *Creating a Community of Learners*

The concept of a community of learners is rooted deeply in the epistemological concept of social constructivism. As Chinnappan (2006 citing Littleton, and Light, 1998) suggests, —ensuing collaboration with other members increases the ability for learners to critique their own idiosyncratic perceptions and revise conceptions in the light of new information and alternative perspectives from their colleagues” (p. 356). By framing an online course using this theoretical perspective instructors are ensuring that students better understand and process the information being presented to them.

In order to achieve a community of learners, Nagel, Blignaut, and Cronje, (2007) when examining what helped students succeed in online environments, found scaffolding is an important aspect of course development. —Scaffolding is the provision of extrinsic contextual support, especially when students encounter new challenges and the subsequent removal of the extrinsic support when it becomes redundant. Slowly removing the support, requiring the students to assume more responsibility” (p. 1348). Without sufficient scaffolding, students will lose motivation and grow increasingly frustrated with the course, the instructor, and the overall experience. Appropriate course design will help students learn content and meet course requirements to the fullest.

Scaffolding also increases course involvement and activity and, as Davies, and Graff (2005) found, students who have high levels of course involvement by logging on often, posting frequency, and reading others’ comments are the students who achieve high performance in the course. This design of the course directly influences the ways students perform in the course. However, the aspect of teaching in an online environment requires continually changes to perfect the teaching craft. According to Trentin (2006), one suggestion is to use faculty who have experience with teaching online to train faculty members who do not have a background in online instruction. This training will help faculty understand what works and what will not without using trial and error methods. Training also exposes faculty to new and different creative ideas in approaching online teaching. Training needs to be on going to provide teachers with ideas at all stages of the course development process.

In addition to working with other faculty, researchers suggest the importance for faculty to develop a course with the users or potential users giving continuous feedback during the development process. The faculty member in theory could select several students to work in an online environment during the development process, soliciting feedback on all elements including usability of the technology interface, assignments, and course processes (Crowther, Keller, and Waddoups, 2004).

While the process of developing and teaching an online course is difficult and time consuming, this process can be very rewarding. Ruth (2006) discusses how the process of designing a course for an online environment changed the way she teaches her face-to-face class. Designing an online course allows a rare opportunity to understand what is and is not working well in a course. Additionally, this process often requires a review of the teaching process and understanding of the most effective way for students to learn. While online learning can be difficult and time consuming, the benefits for both faculty and students clearly are defined in the literature.

### *Benefits*

Ellis, Marcus, and Taylor (2005) suggest that learners who engage in classes where the curriculum is case-based, problem-based, or project-based have a significant advantage to traditional teaching methods that rely on lectures to convey information and tests to assess the students' ability to recall information. In classes where students must learn material in order to solve a problem, provide answers to a case, or complete a project, —develop understand[ing] and knowledge and the necessary skills relevant to the context” (p. 240).

Case, problem, or project-based instruction relies on this simple premise. Oliver, and Omari (2001 citing Bligh, 1995) define it as a —curriculum approach which helps the learner frame experience through a series . . . [of] activities and where the process of learning unfolds through the application of knowledge and skills to the solution of real world problems” (p. 36). This type of learning shifts the responsibility back to the students who now must learn and apply in order to complete specific task-based assignments.

Yet schools and classes who engage in these types of highly effective learning methods have traditionally been brick and mortar institutions. However, the study of online and face-to-face instruction conducted by Ellis, Marcus, and Taylor (2005) found no significant difference between the attitudes of online students and students in a traditional classroom towards case, problem, or project-based learning. Additionally, the researchers found that students who used



these types of learning methods were able to recall and retain the knowledge much longer than their counterparts in a strict lecture and test environment.

Online environments provide the perfect opportunity for students to extend learning beyond the classroom. Cox, Carr, and Hall (2004 citing Jonassen, 1994) state online learning in fact —“presents the collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation” (p. 184). Social negotiation occurs as the instruction develops an environment of trust that allows students to be —“participant, co-respondent, und [sic] a facilitator.” In turn, this type of environment breeds collaboration, attention to different perspectives, and increased self-direction (Dabbagh, 2003, p. 40). This process more closely reflects the types of situations students will face once they enter the workforce.

While there are benefits to students and faculty who engage in problem, case, or project-based learning, it is not without its difficulties. The literature suggests a variety of challenges, especially on the part of students. Oliver, and Omari (2001 citing Pilling-Cormick, 1997, Biggs, 1987, and Lan, 1996) found that the learners who were inexperienced or new to problem, case or project-based learning have a difficult time adjusting to being self-directed without the physical presence of a teacher directing every single step in the process. In addition, success in these types of learning environments depends on how well the student can participate in —“self-monitoring and self-regulation” (p. 37). Therefore, the course designer needs to build assessments and monitor activities to protect students from themselves, as well as inform students upfront of the exceptions and pitfalls of learning in this manner.

Most students will be exposed to online learning during their college career or in future work experiences; the underlying assumption of online courses is the teacher’s philosophical approach to teaching is androgogical in nature. This assumption means students will enter the course with life experiences to draw upon, students will be self-directed, and students will value the educational process (Cuellar, 2002). With an androgogical theoretical underpinning, the traditional idea of simply recording or streaming a lecture on the World Wide Web has a

significant disadvantage. In most cases, the class is one-sided. Students traditionally would not interact with each other or even be aware of the feelings or beliefs of fellow classmates.

Additionally, this process could limit the ability of students to draw upon life experience and have self-direction in the course. Advancement in academic technology now allows students to have a virtual conversation via a discussion board. Use of this technology has significant benefits in not only understanding and assessing students' knowledge about a subject, but also meeting the needs of androgynous learners. (Kapitzke, and Pendergast, 2005 citing Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, and Haag, 1995)

Students feel they contribute more to an online discussion than a classroom discussion. A constant theme of student interviews found students who categorized themselves as shy or less likely to contribute in a classroom for fear of their peers. Yet these same students seem to feel empowered and report that they make more comments in an online discussion (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser, and O'Hara, 2006).

While there are any number of short-term benefits, researchers also discuss long-term benefits for students who engage in online learning. Gallacher, Crossan, Field, and Merrill (2002 as cited in Allan, and Lewis, 2006), discuss how students who have online learning experience can shift their "career trajectories" dramatically by engaging in training offered to keep individuals current in their fields of experience. This technology also allows adults to return to degree programs without sacrificing careers and positions.

More importantly, experience in an online environment will benefit students as they move into the workforce. Organizations large and small around the world are starting to use technology in a variety of new ways to increase productivity, enhance marketing abilities, and provide information to both internal and external publics. However, many large organizations are now using technology to give employees increased flexibility and freedom in their work environment. A virtual employee theoretically could work at the local Starbucks or in some exotic location anywhere in the world.

In the future, there is the possibility that a virtual employee may never step foot into the office, may not develop personal connections to coworkers, and may not be committed fully to the organizational mission. However, with a stretching global community, telecommuting may become the only option some companies have in order to access the type of expertise needed for the organization to succeed. Two major areas an organization must examine before hiring a virtual employee or moving towards a virtual organization are first, the historical developments and concerns when building a virtual organization, and second, the limitations and problems of using virtual employees.

At the beginning of the personal computer revolution, virtual meant an organization without walls or physical space. Many theorists including Giuliano 1982; Hiltz 1994; Davidow and Malone 1992 as cited in Mowshowitz, and Kawaguchi, (2005) believed organizations would no longer need to have a fixed location where employees, clients, or customers would come to work or buy a product or service. These structures would simply serve as a monument to the business and brand. However, few, if any, organizations completely are virtual even now, twenty-five years later. Many still build offices, stores, and facilities to meet the needs of the organization, but increasingly companies are asking employees to work in virtual environments.

Ariss, Nykodym, and Cole-Laramore (2002) reported that all virtual organizations fall into one of three categories. The first is internal in nature where employees who have specific talents and skills work on a project for the organization. Employees use technology such as email, fax, cell phone, and video conference to communicate or connect with each other when separated by time and distance. The second type of virtual organizations is where two companies or organizations collaborate on a project, commonly marketing, or manufacturing. Technology creates an environment where two different organizations can work to achieve a single project. In the case of manufacturing, technology brings together engineers, project managers, and builders. The third type of virtual organizations uses technology to provide specialized services outsourced to other businesses and countries. These typically include accounting, record keeping, and

customer service.

Online courses not only should teach students the principles needed in their chosen career, but should also prepare students for the types of work environments they may face in the future. The literature not only discusses benefits and possible changes that need to happen to prepare both students and faculty for futures in online education. It also outlines ways faculty and course designers can approach the process of building an online course.

The next chapter will focus on the recommendations within the literature regarding the best practices of course design and steps for faculty members as they complete the process of developing an online course. The researcher examines three specific models to aid in the design of an online course.

## CHAPTER 3

### Models of Course Design

Another critical aspect of the literature discusses the implementation and creation of effective learning environments. While the literature offers a variety of models and concepts for development of an online course, three models seem appropriate to discuss in this project because

#### *Cook and Dupras Model*

Cook, and Dupras (2004) while examining effective medical course development, found ten clear steps that lead to effective online courses. Step one, the course designer or faculty member should examine the needs the course will meet, as well as the specific goals and objectives students will achieve after they enroll in the course. At this time, the faculty should estimate the number of students who will enroll in the course. This estimate will help the faculty determine the amount of time that will be spent grading, responding, and engaging in discussion.

Once the faculty member understands the goals of web-based instruction, the second step in the process is for the faculty member to know of the technical resources available that they must have in order to complete the course. Cook, and Dupras (2004) also recommend that the faculty pre-determine their own ability in using the technology and areas where they need to improve.

In addition to understanding the resources faculty have available to them, the third step suggests the importance of examining other types of commercial software that may help them in the course development process. Fourth, the faculty member must help the organization clearly understand the benefits to moving to an online learning environment. Often members of the organization who have little understanding or ability in technology-related areas will be hostile to teaching online. If the move to online has come in the form of a mandate, faculty members should lobby for rewards and compensation for the time spent building and developing the course.

Once these four steps have been completed, the faculty now can turn their attention to developing the course content and creating the learning interface. The fifth step in Cook, and Dupras' (2004) process calls for the development of content. They caution the faculty from simply transferring their course teaching notes to an online format. Doing so may build a course quickly, but it does not create a learning environment. Cook, and Dupras' (2004) design process requires faculty to determine the teaching tools they will include in the course. Such tools can and should include multimedia, hyperlinks, and online communication, but it is important the faculty member select the appropriate combinations of these tools.

In addition to step five, the sixth step asks the faculty to encourage an active learning environment by using interaction among members of the learning community. This interaction is created by developing problem, case, or project-based assignments, and design assessment tools that give students specific and direct feedback.

Once the course has been completed, it is now time for the faculty to determine how they will encourage the students who enroll in the course. This seventh step can be done by incorporating several things into the course, including a demonstration of how the site can be used and built-in time for students to experience using the course.

When compared to face-to-face courses, online courses are much easier in assessing both the teacher's ability and the course content. The faculty members' eighth step in online course development is to build-in multiple levels of course evaluations from individual assignments to overall learning objectives. The type of data should be closely examined and improved each time the course is taught.

The last two steps of Cook, and Dupras' (2004) process involve implementation and maintenance of the course. In the ninth step, faculty members should undertake a pilot of the entire course before offering it to the general public. The pilot study should help the faculty member to understand areas of confusion, possible weakness in the course, and any errors that may surface.

Finally, the faculty member should engage in constant upkeep of the course. Technology continues to change and advance and so should the courses that use technology. Those who teach online courses cannot simply build the course and then not test it. Each semester the faculty member will encounter a host of new technical questions and issues, in addition to ever-changing course content. Time must be scheduled to make improvements and to learn more about technology.

#### *Minasian-Batmanian Model*

Another strong online model is presented by Minasian-Batmanian (2002) for faculty undertaking development of an online course. First, the faculty member should identify the target groups who will enroll in the course as well as basic demographic information about the students who are taking online courses at the institution. The better the faculty understands the type of students, who are likely to enroll in online courses, the better the course will fit the needs of the individuals who are pursuing an online education. Once the faculty has a complete understanding of the target audience of the class, they can then start the actual course development using the following five stages: analysis, design, development, testing, and evaluation.

During the analysis process, the faculty would identify and articulate learning objectives and goals for the course as well as state key learning outcomes. This is an appropriate opportunity for the faculty member to examine the learning methods they hope to use while teaching the course. As the design process begins, the faculty member completes both the course content and assessment process and finds ways for students to engage in the learning process. The third step of development is where faculty starts to examine possible multimedia to be included in the course. Special attention should be paid to securing access and copyrights to material that needs to be included.

During the testing phase, Minasian-Batmanian (2002) suggests the faculty enlist individuals not associated with the development of the course to review the content, the methods of delivery and find any “bugs” in the course. Once the course has been offered, the faculty

member should complete the final step by using feedback from students to evaluate the effectiveness of the course, individual learning exercises, and how well students were able to learn and use the information presented to them.

### *Ellis and Hanfer Model*

The model of online course development offered by Ellis, and Hanfer (2003) is deeply rooted in the educational work of Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956), who presented a taxonomy for learning outcomes. The development of learning outcomes has three steps: —(1) identify the specific topic or subject matter to be learned, (2) decide what level of cognitive activity is necessary for satisfactory mastery of that topic and (3) identify what student behavior is necessary to demonstrate that cognitive activity” (Ellis, and Hanger, 2003, p. 643).

Once the development of the course outcomes has been completed, attention is then turned to matching those outcomes to resources available to teaching online. Ellis, and Hanger (2003) suggest faculty must first determine the time requirements of the course and whether the course will be asynchronous, synchronous, or hybrid in nature. Each of these course designs would be dramatically different in both setup and potential outcomes. This leads to the second step of selecting appropriate tools to meet the needs of students in the course, depending on the time requirement. While a faculty member may use any number of tools in course design, some tools are stronger in certain learning environments than others. After the tools have been selected, it is up to the faculty member to design and build assignments and assessment around the selected tools. Finally, the faculty completes this process by offering these tools and assignments to students in a form they will use in the course.

These three models for online course development are just a sample of what is included in the literature. It is especially for first-time course designers, to follow and use some type of model to help guide the project.

In conclusion, the process of designing, building, and teaching an online course is not easy and requires faculty to step out of their comfort zone. Ellis, and Hanger (2003) offer this to



faculty who are exploring teaching in an online environment: “Teachers who are experts in their subject area and masters of their craft when in a classroom find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to relearn how to teach in a new environment with little or no support” (p. 640). The technology will continue to change the way faculty members teach students. The best way to meet these new challenges is head-on.

The design of an online course and its use of technology can be critical in the success of students in the online-teaching environment; however, before selection of a design model, faculty should articulate an individual, theoretical approach to teaching. Al-Bataineh, Brooks, and Bassoppo-Moyo (2005) caution faculty to not simply rework a classroom model of instruction for an online course but create and develop models to fit the needs of an online-learning community. The process of developing an online class should allow faculty to think beyond what they have traditionally done to teach a subject, examine what must be done to improve instruction, and design a quality experience for students in an online-learning environment (Al-Bataineh et. al., 2005 citing Forte-Turner, Schultz, and Miller-Dunleavy, 1999). This next chapter will examine literature about both pedagogy and andragogy –two theoretical frameworks that influence instruction and the learning process. In addition, the researcher will examine the literature for the best approaches to teaching organizational communication and other concerns of which online course faculty should be aware.

## CHAPTER 4

### Theoretical and Practical Approaches to Online Teaching

The literature regarding theoretical approaches to teaching offers two very different and often contentious frameworks for instruction. The difference between pedagogy and andragogy may only be semantics for the passive reader, but their meaning has created a raging debate in the scholarly community. This debate becomes even more intense when discussing education principles and frameworks for a college or university campus (Muirhead, 2007). Depending on the theoretical orientation of the course designer or the faculty member, the course and students' experiences may be surprisingly different.

These theoretical frameworks can directly influence design, content, and the approach a faculty member will have to teaching online. Pedagogy, as defined by Weiss (2005 citing Gibbons, and Wentworth, 2001 p. 1), is the ~~tr~~aditional instructional approach based on teacher-directed learning theory." Muirhead (2007) formulates the definition as teaching of children or a faculty-centric approach to teaching.

When the design of an online course is viewed with a pedagogical lens, five key principles become critical to the course designer or faculty member as defined by Weiss (2005). First, students in a pedagogical environment are highly dependent on the teacher; second, the students' main goal is to gain knowledge for themselves and not help other students in the learning process; third, the content being presented to the student is gauged by specific objective criteria; fourth, the course is designed around specific subjects, and fifth, students are motivated to learn or complete assignments by external rewards or punishments.

This framework creates a learning environment that may not fully meet the needs or expectations of the learners. According to Bird (2007), often faculty teaching an online course see themselves as a content expert first and as a teacher and course designer second. This dichotomy often creates rich content but a poor teaching environment.

As an answer to helping faculty improve an online-learning environment and encourage students to change roles from a receiver of information in a traditional classroom to an active participant in an online course, Frederick (2006 citing Grantham, 2002) suggests that the use of andragogy may allow students to quickly transition out of a passive-learning mode into an active-participant mode.

Malcolm Knowles proposed much of the modern research concerning andragogy and adult education in the late 1960s. In his original definition, he claimed andragogy was “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Rachal, 2002 citing Knowles, 1980, p. 42). Knowles’ original definition has been refined and transformed to become, according to Birzer (2004), a type of “education [that] advocates the self-directed learner and the teacher fulfilling the role as facilitator, not merely the guardian of knowledge” (p. 397).

An andragogical lens views students in a completely different light. Weiss (2005 citing Knowles, 1992) acknowledged these types of students are more self-directed. The students also balance their role in the course between learning and teaching others, increase life experience, which will influence their orientation to course content, and are motivated to learn intrinsically.

This theoretical lens can be used to improve the experience for adult learners but can also enrich the totality of the classroom environment. An example of such a difference in course design was articulated by Gold (2005, citing Bowden, and Merritt, 1995), suggesting it is not enough to offer students new theories or concepts in an andragogical environment. Students would be encouraged, if not required, to view a new theoretical perspective or concept in terms of their own experience. Faculty who engage in andragogical teaching would reinforce new concepts by the creation of specific assignments. Beyond design difference, the andragogical course would encourage a faculty member to place the highly theoretical concepts into a practical application, as well as embrace some students’ possible expertise in areas of course content.

Beyond the shift of how a faculty member would approach teaching, the use of andragogy would have significant impacts on the practices used in the classroom. In *The Modern*

*Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*, Knowles (1980) outlines such implications. The learning climate is broken into two subcategories: the physical setting of the teaching and learning and the treatment of students as adults. The classroom environment should be a place where an adult would feel comfortable. This would require an examination of everything from the size of the classroom furnishings to the decorations on the walls. The physical setting would be less important for an online-learning climate, but the faculty member could still address this setting by discussing the importance a learning environment can have on outcomes. Andragogy involves a learning environment where faculty members ensure they first treat the students as adults and second —determine what are the symbols of childishness to particular groups of adults, and to remove them” (p. 47). Careful attention should be paid to course elements, including the design and development of assignments information being presented, and the way classroom communication is handled.

The second implication is the diagnosis of needs; this occurs as the faculty member and learners determine an appropriate course of study. This process of “self-diagnosis” allows learners to determine what areas should be studied, as well as what it means to be a “good” student or speaker and what a “good” paper or response would include. Learners would then compare personal abilities against this standard, determine gaps in abilities, and create a course of action to correct behavior and fill-in gaps of knowledge.

The third implication is based on Knowles’ (1980) belief that “human beings tend to feel committed to a decision to the extent that they have participated in making it or planning it.” This belief means the more active role students play in developing the course of study, the more committed they will be to ensure they successfully complete the course and assignments. This could include a determination of the order of content examined, outcomes of the course, and the learning experiences that should be included. This process shifts key learning decisions from a sole decision made by a faculty member to a negotiation between faculty and students comparable to any real-life setting.

Fourth, andragogy changes the way the learning experiences occur in the classroom. In the traditional classroom, the students are passive participants. However, in an andragogical learning environment both teachers and learners have mutual responsibility during the learning process. The role of the teacher shifts from simply conveying knowledge to one of providing guidance, supporting learning, and supplying feedback to learners.

Fifth, the evaluation of learning is dramatically different with an andragogical lens. The paradigm of andragogy encourages students and instructor to work together to determine the amount and quality of learning that has occurred during the course. Often students are required to make supporting claims as to why they believe they have earned a specific grade or reached a level of achievement. This process often includes an assessment of core competences, a discussion of the course, its objective, its outcomes, and the creation of goals for future learning.

Additionally, (Knowles, 1980) suggests faculty who frame a course using andragogical principles must be prepared to connect theories, concepts, and principles to experiential learning and practical application.

As the researcher examined the andragogical theoretical perspectives and andragogy orientation to teaching, learning, and interaction, it became clear andragogy is a learning environment where the researcher has had the most positive and deepest learning experiences. Second, andragogy fits within the framework of a Brigham Young University –Idaho education, and andragogy provides a supportive environment for nontraditional students but will also strengthen the experience of traditional students enrolled in the course.

#### *Approaches to Teaching Organizational Communication*

The overarching theme in the literature of how to teach organizational communication is the classroom experience must effectively translate organizational communication theories, concepts, and practices used in industry. Downs (1999) observed a distinct difference between studying organizational communication and doing organizational communication. Downs (1999)

suggests students are instructed about theories and concepts without seeing and experiencing how such concepts are used within an organizational context.

Allen (2002) noted the difficulties senior students of organizational communication had when completing an internship or capstone experience. Many students could not connect theoretical concepts from the classroom to direct application for the boardroom. Allen (2002) saw this problem and began requiring students to complete assignments designed to illuminate the connection between academic knowledge and real-world application.

Additionally, Allen (2002) recommends faculty use their personal organizational communication scholarship to improve working environments and increase productivity within a department, college, school, or university. Beyond faculty members associated with the department, there are numerous groups on a college campus who could benefit from the application of organizational communication scholarship.

This scholarship could involve creating an opportunity for students to gain organizational experience in a controlled situation. Such activities, while beneficial to students, may be difficult for faculty in a university setting to facilitate and should be approached with careful consideration and full knowledge of possible implications.

There are a variety of instructional applications that could allow a faculty member to help students learn the theoretical underpinnings of organizational communication while at the same time engaging in activities designed to enhance students' ability to apply organizational scholarship in a broad and beneficial context. A review of the literature found three distinct areas used at the postsecondary level that allow students to make these connections between classroom knowledge and application. The literature contains three key methods: service-learning, case-based learning, and project-based learning.

### *Service-Learning*

One of the most concise definitions of service-learning in the literature is offered by Jacoby (1996), —A form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that

address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5). In an organizational communication context, service-learning could be a driving force behind a variety of assignments. In completing these assignments, students would not only learn key principles of organizational communication but also offer services that would greatly benefit a community.

One such project as outlined by Shelby, and Reinsch (1996 as cited by Braun, 2001) would involve a complete communication audit for a local business or organization. At the graduate-level, such a project can be very challenging and expose students to a variety of new theoretical aspects, which may not be covered within a course.

A full communication audit would be very difficult for members of an introductory organizational communication course to complete. However, the underlying concepts of an audit could be altered to allow for an appropriately challenging experience for beginning students. The main purpose of the assignment would be to expose students to organizational principles, theories, and concepts while providing a service to the community.

No matter the project assigned to students, Rosenberg (2000) emphasizes, —Service-learning combines community work with classroom instruction, emphasizing reflection as well as action. It empowers students by making them responsible in a real-world context while giving them the support, encouragement, information, and skills to be effective” (p. 8). Students should feel they are learning and gaining the appropriate skills needed to complete the assignment, as well as gaining the skills needed to succeed in a professional environment.

Faculty members should carefully select, design, and monitor service-learning aspects of a course. Braun (2001) found students who engaged in service-learning activities had a better understanding of course materials and gained a deeper insight into the functioning of an organization than students who did not participate in a service-learning component.

Service-learning has many benefits to students, but faculty who use service-learning in a course must also realize there are specific issues that must be discussed. Braun (2001) cautions

faculty to allow students plenty of time to complete the assigned task, encourage students to start the assignment early, and ensure students have autonomy to complete the task while receiving appropriate levels of guidance from the instructor.

### *Case-Based Learning*

A key expectation of college graduates is that upon completing a designed course of study, a student would be able to enter the workforce with specific skills in “communication, interpersonal relations and self-management, creativity, decision-making, and problem solving” (Sawyer, Tomlinson, and Maples, 2000, p. 257). These skills are critical to success in a variety of jobs and careers, and potential employees will not require additional training to develop or improve these skills. A traditional lecture course tends to focus on transfer of information from professor to student and is not the best method for helping students acquire skills demanded by potential employers (Weinstein, and Bloom, 1998 as cited by Sawyer, Tomlinson, and Maples, 2000).

A case study within an andragogical framework, according to Wright (2006), allows students to use personal life experiences to interpret the context and content of the case study. Second, with careful selection of a case study, students will gain theoretical knowledge and how such knowledge can be used in a practical manner.

The typical case experience includes students reading and analyzing the case individually, meeting in small groups, and discussing their individual observations and detailing any personal experience that may be helpful in understanding or providing context to the case. Finally, the whole group meets and the faculty leads a Socratic method-based discussion and debriefs the case (Wasserman, 1994 as cited by Kim, Hannafin, and Kim, 2004). The case study traditionally has been used in a face-to-face course and group meetings typically occur in real time, but much has been done to help faculty replicate the case experience in an online course.

The online case study has many similarities with its face-to-face counterpart. First, the students would read the case, make a list of the key information being presented, and define the



key questions within the case study. Students would then post personal feelings and opinions about the case on a discussion board for other students to read. The faculty member may also require students to answer specific questions about the case and post their responses. This process is time consuming; however, it allows students to have a similar case study experience as students in a face-to-face class (Kim, Hannafin, and Kim, 2004 citing Bonk, Hara, Dennen, Malikowski, and Supplee, 2000). The experience may not be exactly the same in the online process but still can provide students with the opportunities of using case studies in an online course.

An online case study can be a valuable tool for faculty developing an online course; however, there are several recommendations by Morris, Adair, Calhoun, Rodgers, and Scoresby (2005) course developers should keep in mind when using a case study in an online course. First, the faculty member should select an appropriate case. The case should be challenging to the students as well as allow them to apply concepts and theories examined during the course. Second, students must have access to resources and materials to help them successfully complete the case study. Third, the course designers and/or faculty member should carefully select any additional media to help the students better understand the case study. Finally, the faculty member should help the student understand the case study process, how they will be assessed, and other expectations the faculty member will have during the process.

The literature also examines the new trend in online education and the use of weblogs for the discussion segment of the case method. This technology is easy for students who have little to no technological background. Second, the programming of many weblogs allows students to communicate and collaborate on ideas and concepts using both asynchronous and synchronous means. This ability to communicate quickly also helps students develop a sense of community with their classmates. Finally, a weblog can also increase participation within the course as students can post multiple questions or comments. Weblogs allow time to develop answers or additional comments and post those comments from any location at anytime.

*Project-Based Learning*

Project-based learning allows students to complete assignments they would receive in a traditional work setting. The shift to this form of assessment represents a growing desire to allow students to gain more practical knowledge and skills to help in their transition from the classroom to a career (Rhodes, and Garrick, 2003). More and more, educators are incorporating practical examples and experiences into course materials and experiences for students' benefit. DeFillippi (2001 as cited by Rhodes, and Garrick, 2003) defines project-based learning as "the theory and practice of utilizing real-world work assignments on time-limited projects to achieve mandated performance objectives and to facilitate individual and collective learning" (p. 5).

Research also suggests students who learn in a project-based environment have several key advantages over students who are only exposed to a lecture and test methodology. First, the learning experience and environment is more exciting for the students, who are responsible not only for the knowledge gained in the classroom but also for the outcome of the project. Second, students who are exposed to this type of teaching methodology have a greater responsibility for learning. Finally, project learning allows students not only to gain knowledge to succeed in a work environment but also creates a deeper mastery of fundamental needs in specific fields (Savage, Chen, and Vanasupa, 2007). While the majority of research has been conducted in a traditional face-to-face classroom, several sources in the literature do discuss project-based learning in an online environment.

By incorporating small groups into a project-based learning framework, students often develop higher-level thinking and reasoning skills as well as learn how to solve complex problems while working in an online environment (Lou, 2004). These skills, while not directly related to the course content, will continue to serve the needs of students well into the future. From a design standpoint, Lou (2004) suggests students work in groups of three to five; students develop a project focus and react accordingly. Students who perform best under these types of

situations are able to be self-directed, can work well in groups, and have learned to apply content knowledge to real-world situations.

Thomas, and MacGregor (2001 as cited by Lou, 2004) report one of the key benefits to including project-based assignments into an online course. Online technology allows students to collaborate with fellow team members using both asynchronous and synchronous means. The flexibility has an important advantage to the online learner. Hargis (2005) reports project-based learning in an online environment allows students who may not normally have opportunities to work in groups the chance to be a full member of a team.

In order for students to gain the full benefits of project-based learning, Helic, Krottmainer, Maurer, and Scerbakov (2005) outline several important factors to be included in the design of the course. First, the faculty must allow time for the students to work within their groups on the project. During this period, students should be given a great deal of autonomy to complete their work; however, faculty should be ready to provide a supportive role when asked by a group or individuals. Second, student should also present their findings, project, or product in the same manner they would be asked to do in their field of study. This presentation should be very realistic and assessed using the same paradigm of typical work environments. Third, learners and the course curriculum should be the center of the project. This will allow students to gain important theoretical knowledge or skills needed to complete the project before the faculty member assesses how well they were able to complete the project. Fourth, the design of the online environment must give students the opportunity to collaborate with each other and manage the project effectively. This may include developing a group discussion board, wiki, or other collaborative tool for students to communicate with each other over the course of the project. Fifth, the project must also include opportunities for students to learn and practice problem-solving skills, reasoning skills, researching, and doing an in-depth investigation, as well as improve their ability to communicate in an online environment.

### *Copyright*

An online faculty member should not only have the qualifications to teach in a specific content area, but also a strong background in using technology to teach and a basic knowledge of copyright law. One of the biggest challenges faculty may face in creating an online course is gaining and receiving permissions or licenses for copyrighted materials. In this section, the researcher will provide a brief history of modern copyright law and current legislation, and context on how it impacts on online education.

While copyright protection was provided under the Constitution, many of the specifics regarding modern copyright protection is found in the Copyright Act of 1976. This act also creates specific exceptions and rights for educational usage. Section 110(1) of the Copyright Act of 1976 grants faculty members who teach in a face-to-face environment at a nonprofit educational institution the ability to perform or display copyrighted works or material in their classroom without seeking or obtaining a license or permission. Online courses did not receive the same rights or protections under the Copyright Act of 1976 and in this situation faculty must receive direct permission or licenses to use any copyrighted material in the online environment (Hutchinson, 2003). A common misconception in academia is any text, video, or audio may be used in a classroom because educational activities are protected by a doctrine in the Copyright Act of 1976 called the fair-use doctrine; however, this does not apply to online courses.

Faculty do receive increased protection for copyrighted material they use in a face-to-face classroom as outlined in Section 107 of the Copyright Act 1976. These materials must be used —for the purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright” (Juettner, and Girasa, 2001 p. 114). While the courts have allowed nonprofit institutions of education a wide range of freedom in the type and scope of copyrighted materials used for instruction, Juettner, and Girasa (2001 citing Diotalevi, 1999) examine the main reason why there is a difference between the protections of a traditional face-to-face classroom and an online course. This difference is in

the way material is made available to students. In an online course, the material is presented to students in a digital format, which can be easily copied or stored.

In an attempt to allow online faculty similar protections and rights, Congress passed the Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization Act or the TEACH Act in 2002. The TEACH Act allows online faculty the ability to display or perform copyrighted material. However, in order to gain the rights to use copyrighted material, online educators must provide additional protections for these materials beyond what traditional faculty members do to protect a copyright. The protection of copyrighted material must include the following: First, educators should follow and understand any university or department copyright policies in place and comply with these policies; second, online courses must include technological protection to prevent the transmission, distribution or retention of copyrighted works; and finally, students must be instructed as to what they must do to protect copyrighted material and what the consequences are for breaching copyright. This places a great deal of responsibility on educators, institutions, and students in ensuring the protection of copyrighted material (Hutchinson, 2003).

The TEACH Act outlines some practical applications for online instructors using copyrighted material. Seadle (2006) gives seven important guidelines in using copyrighted material in a course. First, an instructor must ensure that any copyrighted material is available only to registered students in the course. Often this is achieved by creating a password-protected environment where the information can be stored. Second, copyrighted material is available to students only for a limited period. Third, copyrighted texts should be used in small portions that would match the amount being used in a face-to-face classroom. Fourth, an online course should include only images that would be used in a face-to-face classroom. Any photos or images should be saved at a low resolution and the instructor should cite the original source. If the rights to the image can be purchased at a low price, the institution should seek a license to the image. Fifth, when using multimedia, a common rule of thumb for musical works is the course should include —no more than 30 seconds or 10 percent, whichever is shorter.” For a movie or video, the class

should include ~~no~~ more than 3 minutes or 10 percent, whichever is shorter.” Sixth, if the copyrighted material is available at another location on the internet, the course should include links to these sources rather than using the original copyrighted source. Finally, any copyrighted material being used in a course must be cited using the same type of rules for an academic paper.

Many legal scholars question if the TEACH Act has given enough protection to the owners of copyrighted material. Critics cite that the legislation requires copyrighted material to be accessed in a secure environment, but there are no protections or guarantees that students are not copying or storing this material outside of this secure environment (Cantos, Linn, Porcelli, and Selby, 2001). Faculty may receive protections under the law, but they should also carefully use copyrighted material within the course. Additionally, state-of-the-art measures should be taken to protect all of the course material, especially copyrighted material.

Another element where an online instructor can easily violate copyright law occurs during the development of lecture or other pieces of course content. The temptation is to use the materials from a face-to-face course to develop materials for an online section; however, faculty members usually use textbooks to organize and develop materials for a course. If these texts are not used in the online section, the faculty member does not have the permission or right to use these same materials, including examples, organization, and assessment (Cole, 2000). Faculty should also recognize the role students’ play in protecting copyrighted material as well as understanding what faculty members must do to protect themselves from legal repercussions for violating copyright law.

Bobak, Cassarino, and Finley, (2004 citing Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, and Zvacek, 2003) discuss the importance of teaching copyright laws to a generation of students who, for the most part, have been able to find any song, picture, or paper on the internet and download it without giving proper credit to the owner, author, or creator. Often, simply building-in requirements for citation of copyrighted material in the syllabus and then modeling these requirements may be enough to change bad habits among students.

### *Personal Teaching Philosophy*

One practical way a faculty member can examine a theoretical approach to teaching is to develop a personal teaching philosophy. Pratt (2005) defines a teaching philosophy as a roadmap to understanding someone's teaching. It allows both the faculty and the students to know how the course will be structured, what the teachers' values are in the educational process, and what the outcomes of the course will be.

As a researcher begins to develop his/her personal teaching philosophy, one of the major theoretical principles that guide the process is positioning theory, as defined by Paz Dennen (2007) who describes how this social psychology framework is a theory that can benefit both the faculty and students in an online environment. Positioning theory examines speech acts, utterances, and gestures made by a speaker. An examination of these elements allows a researcher to see the positions being constructed by a speaker, thus allowing an audience to understand specific attributes of a speaker. Harre (2005 as cited by Paz Dennen, 2007) believes these attributes include "power, composure, confidence, and authority" (p. 96). While a faculty member can relate to speech acts in a face-to-face environment, faculty in an online setting must develop different means to use positioning theory.

In order to use positioning theory in an online educational environment, Paz Dennen (2007) recommends faculty create and develop a great deal of information to help students understand who the faculty member is and how they will run the course. Positioning theory originally applied to spoken communication, but researchers such as McKenzie (2003) Drewery (2005) and Jones (2006) have had great success in applying the positioning framework to other communicative applications, including asynchronous one-way communication. Faculty most commonly achieve positioning in an online course by allowing elements of their personality to enter in their writing, course practices, and interactions with students. This type of communication allows students to know and better understand the instructor.

Online communication should be created with positioning theory in mind by including several characteristics of written communication as outlined by Paz Dennen (2007). First, written communication would often be more “reflective and deliberate” than spoken communication. Second, the author must locate and remove any word, sentence, or portion that may misconstrue the original meaning. Finally, this communication should be uniform in tone and style, which will create a consistent persona throughout the course.

The researcher attempted to balance positioning theory and the face-to-face teaching approach of high touch which is defined by Kulchitsky (2008) as instruction that tends to be professor centric, relies heavily on direct two-way communication between class members and faculty and the majority of communication is conducted in real time. High-touch teaching relies on immediate responses such as feedback, nonverbal cues, and direct communication to help students understand information, make social connections with both the faculty and fellow students, and allow the faculty member to lessen the possibility of information overload during the course (Fortune, Shifflett, and Sibley, 2006 citing Hughes, Ryan-Jones, Smith, and Wickersham, 2002; Hutchins, 2003). This definition reflects any face-to-face course and therefore, it is hard to imagine that a high-touch teaching approach would fit well in a high-tech environment. Yet research suggests it is possible for a faculty member to create a high-touch classroom in a high-tech environment.

High-tech instruction is asynchronous in nature and follows a student-centric model; students tend to view the faculty member in a supervisory or consultative role and do not often communicate directly with other learners (Kulchitsky, 2008 citing Larson, 2002). The concept and definition of high-tech instruction is deeply rooted in a distance-education approach where students would receive a list of readings and assignments. Students would complete the material and then return it to the instructor for feedback (Kulchitsky, 2008).

List (2001) provides five elements of high-touch teaching that can easily translate into a high-tech environment. She maintains faculty members who have enthusiasm, command of the



subject, organization, faculty/group interaction, and faculty/student contact can create a high-touch environment. These interrelated principles easily can be created, found, and nurtured in an online environment. Therefore, the researcher believes a faculty member could create a high-touch classroom in a high-tech environment.

As part of a teaching philosophy, the researcher believes the first responsibility of a teacher is to encourage and help students to learn how to think for themselves, as John Dewey suggested in his essay *Thinking in Education* (1916). The mark of a true andragogical teacher is to create an environment where students are allowed and required to think and learn for themselves.

There are three steps the researcher believes educators should take in a course to promote high-level thinking and reasoning. The first step is to establish an environment with honest and open communication. To create this environment, the teacher should build a climate where students who may not participate in other classes because they are insecure would feel safe in making comments or asking questions. One way this can be accomplished is by knowing students' personalities and other key details of current situation. Additionally, all communication and interaction with students should be treated in a professional manner. This may require the teacher to answer questions and point students in a direction, without providing students an easy way out.

Second, the teacher should develop a course with a great deal of academic rigor. A quality course should challenge students to achieve their very best. In *What the Best College Teachers Do*, Ken Bain (2004) discusses how a course should be difficult, but the faculty member continually should express their faith that each student has the ability to achieve the individual goals within the course. A teacher should set high standards and then express to students their belief that they can achieve those high standards

Third, assessment tools of development should encourage students to improve critical thinking and reasoning skills. Assessment tools should include open-ended questions requiring

students to process and synthesize course information. Assessment tools of this type would require students to understand underlying theories, concepts, and principles being discussed within the course. The faculty member may also use assessment to help students discover more about themselves, how they learn information, and how they can do better in the future (Bain, 2004). One way this can be done is by using assessment to provide feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses of the students, suggestions on ways to improve writing or research, and feedback on how to improve not only in the course but also in the future.

Beyond developing assessment tools to encourage students to use critical thinking and reasoning skills, the researcher also believes students have a great deal to teach and learn from one another. Students have a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge other students in the class may or may not have. As students share these backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge, others in the class can see how a concept can be applied to a real-life situation. However, in order to gain these benefits, it will require a faculty member to give up some control of the classroom environment and be more flexible in their approach to teaching. In an online environment, students' backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge are even more critical to the success of the course. Providing students with opportunities to share backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge will allow students to understand how concepts and theories in communication work and the application they have to a real-world setting.

The researcher also would require individual preparation within the course. Individual preparation is a key factor to success in the classroom and students should be given the responsibility to prepare for classroom instruction and discussion. This preparation should include more than simple assignments and reading. Students must learn to question the material being presented to them, search for additional knowledge that could share or shift their points of view. Students should also be asked to take a position and defend their position to fellow classmates and the instructor. This will help students learn about themselves, what they believe and the meaning behind such beliefs and actions. Out-of-class preparation may also include small group

meetings that require students to test their positions and the knowledge they have gained before contributing to the larger course discussion.

Learning a principle or theory is part of the educational process, but students must also be prepared to apply this knowledge in a practical way. The principle of application of classroom knowledge is deeply rooted in andragogy and for the practical field of communication, it is important to see how the discipline works in a real-life environment. Application assignments should include a rough outline and during the process of completing the assignments, students should make decisions on what should be included, how they should move forward and what must be done to complete the assignment.

Finally, a good teacher can never be comfortable in their teaching. A teacher should always find areas for improvement such as knowledge of the subject, incorporation of new approaches, and a wiliness to try new approaches. Teaching is a craft that needs continued care and attention in order to improve.

## CHAPTER 5

## BYU-Idaho Online Course Expectations

In order for the course to be taught online at BYU-Idaho, the instructional designers and Academic Vice President's Office have developed eight areas of requirements and recommendations to aid in the creation of an effective online class. These suggestions are grounded in seven guiding principles of instruction at BYU-Idaho, which include the following:

- 1) the course encourages contact between students and faculty, 2) the course develops reciprocity and cooperation among students, 3) the course encourages active learning, 4) the course materials and/or instructor give prompt feedback, 5) the course and instructor emphasize time on task, 6) the course and instructor communicate high expectations, and 7) the course and instructor respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

*Course Characteristics*

The instructional designers encourage the development of a specific and continual due date for assignments in the class. For example, many instructors have adopted the standard Friday by 5 p.m. deadline for all written assignments, blog posts, and other assignments. In classes where an instructor uses a standard deadline, the instructors reported that students do not complain about not knowing when assignments are due and several instructors noted a dramatic decrease in student email about incomplete assignments.

In courses where assessment comes largely from mid-term and final tests, the instructor must make a decision of requiring a proctor for online tests, using the timed-test feature, or giving take-home tests. If the faculty members select the proctor route, they must include forms to aid students in the process of finding a proctor. Students may select an adult who is not a relative in order to complete necessary proctor training and forms. While this is a popular method of examinations, many faculty members select essay questions for the students to complete within a certain time limit to avoid the filing of the proctor forms with BYU-Idaho Testing Services.

Faculty members may develop a test that would allow students to take the test home and complete using notes and other resources.

#### *Textbook and Other Recommendations*

Concerning texts for the class, BYU-Idaho suggests working with textbook companies to deliver both electronic and print formats. Online students may purchase electronic and print copies of the text through the BYU-Idaho Bookstore. Beyond a textbook, the university has access to the Harvard Business School teaching library, which allows classes to use multimedia, case studies, and modules in classes. Instructors also have the option of working with a content-specific librarian to acquire access to scholarly journals and other copyrighted material for a specific area of content.

#### *About the Course*

Much of the academic literature is devoted to the creation of a learning environment. The next area of suggestions is devoted to creating an effective learning environment. While there will be students in the course who have used iLearn (a modified course-delivery system), many perspective students are mid-career professionals who will not be familiar with the academic learning software. To this end, specific tutorials have been designed for students so they can learn how to use the course interface. Faculty members are encouraged to include links to these tutorials in all courses.

The second requirement for online courses is that the faculty include a course introduction and overview, a list of course objectives, a list of required textbooks, and/or other required materials. Faculty should include information about how to access any required resources, strategies, hints for being a successful online learner, course-specifics, and frequently asked questions. Courses that have not contained this type of information were the courses that received the lowest ratings from students. The more information students are given upfront, the more comfortable they seem with the process of learning online.

One of the keys to developing an effective learning environment is for the faculty to

develop a presence in this virtual classroom. In a normal classroom, a faculty member would achieve this goal by simply being in class, but in an online course, the faculty should develop a human image that a student would feel comfortable reaching out to. Faculty members are encouraged to disclose information about themselves in a short biography. Some possible information to include are academic credentials, research interests, hobbies, favorite foods, and other information the faculty member would feel comfortable disclosing to people they have never met before. In addition, faculty members have found that students should also disclose similar information with the faculty and other students to help create a positive learning environment.

Finally, effective online courses include the traditional types of information found on a syllabus but must also include additional information such as description of learning activities, assignments with specific requirements, expectations, file formats and how an assignment should be submitted. The faculty member should also include expectations for participation and interaction in the course.

#### *Course Outcomes and Assessment*

As with any course, the faculty member must clearly define how any assignment would be assessed and provide that information with the assignment details to the students. The Academic Vice President also suggested that the faculty demonstrate what an “A” paper or post would look like with information as to why this assignment had earned an “A.”

Not only should students have information about how their assignments will be graded, but also faculty should provide feedback in a timely manner. Faculty should also use the Grade Book function of iLearn to record and report grades to the student. Using this function allows students to check their standing in the class at any moment in time.

#### *Course Content and Media Types*

BYU-Idaho is very concerned about having copyright clearance of any media being used in the course. Faculty members should clearly cite and reference all works being included in the

course. If the faculty member selects articles from the university's electronic reserve, the article should be linked to the course using a perm link to the content. By simply copying or uploading a .pdf file, the university may be in violation of certain copyright agreements with electronic reserve providers.

One of the challenges of teaching an online course at BYU-Idaho is the fourteen-week calendar. While face-to-face instruction uses this calendar, they have the benefit of classroom time. In an online environment, faculty must carefully select the course content. Most courses examine thirteen areas of content or seven units of instruction. This standard format helps to organize the course clearly.

Faculty members must design the course with usability in mind. The recommendations of the instructional designers are to break up chunks of text into 600 words or less. Large areas of text decrease the readability for students and can hide important information. Other important aspects of improving usability include making the course easy to navigate. Any large media files should also be available on a CD or DVD or placed on a streaming server to make sure students who do not have high-speed Internet access can upload these files. The faculty member should also check hyperlinks to ensure they are current and up-to-date.

### *Interaction*

A BYU-Idaho online course must be centered around interaction. The concept is that an online course does not become a correspondence course but instead a learning environment. An effective online course should give learners opportunities to collaborate with the instructor and other students on a regular basis. Several online tools provide ways to achieve an interactive course. Interactive forums such as discussion boards, wiki, blog, and chats can be organized to provide all learners an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the class.

The technology can allow students to contribute to a discussion over a period of time. Often the faculty member would ask a question or several questions about the material and then have the students post their feelings. This is often done in rounds with round one requiring

students to make a comment about the questions and then round two requiring students to read other posts and add comments that support or reject the claims made by others.

Another way a faculty member can encourage discussion is to divide the course into discussion groups of five to ten students, forcing the students to go deeper in the material. These groups can remain the same throughout the course to increase the students' comfort level with one another in a virtual environment. In upper division courses, the students may have a different group for every discussion. The process of assigning groups is easy. Simply name the discussion group and randomly select the students to be included in the discussion group.

Many faculty members grade students' discussion contribution to encourage students to first engage in classroom discussion and second, to help them improve their logical reasoning and critical thinking skills. If this is the case, faculty members are encouraged to provide examples and a rubric in order to help students understand what they will be graded on.

Another aspect of interaction that must be examined is how students can interact with the faculty to ask questions, get input, and improve within the course. Online teachers are required to respond to student e-mail or phone messages within one business day. Often online teachers select multiple methods of communication for students' most-commonly-asked questions and concerns would be addressed via email. Other faculty members use instant messenger during virtual office hours or provide a phone number where the faculty member can be reached to discuss issues during a set period. It is important to note some of these office hours should be in the evening to include students who are non-traditional and may work during the day.

### *Strategies for Learning*

A common theme in the literature is the importance of low-stakes evaluations during the course to provide opportunities for learners to practice and receive feedback without penalty. This will allow students to improve overall performance in the course as well as detail the limits of their knowledge for faculty.

One of the pillars of a BYU-Idaho education is preparation for the workplace. This is



achieved by incorporating authentic case studies, problems, or projects included in the course curriculum. The online course should reflect the professional experience the students will face after graduation.

Courses should also include elements of peer-to-peer instruction where students work closely together and learn by working together. Recommendations to improve peer-to-peer instruction include allowing students to provide feedback to each other and developing team-based approaches on assignments.

### *Evaluation*

The development of an online course should also include different types of evaluations to test the effectiveness of each element of the course, as well as the overall effectiveness of the course. All online courses will have an official BYU-Idaho student course evaluation conducted each time the course is taught, but faculty members may also include their own tools of assessment in course effectiveness.

Once the evaluation has been completed, results are reviewed and necessary changes are made to the course. After this review, the faculty member needs to develop a course maintenance and update schedule.

### *Elements for completion of the project*

After carefully reviewing the literature and BYU-Idaho's expectations for an online course, a researcher will complete the following elements for an Introduction to Organizational Communication online course.

1. The design of a syllabus that will include detailed information about course policies and procedures. The syllabus will also include tips for success in the online course, an overview and specific instructions for both major and minor assignments to be completed in the course, a grading rubric for online discussion boards, overall grading scale, information about virtual office hours and a course calendar with embedded hyperlinks to course material.

2. Selection of course curriculum including textbook, appropriate scholarly articles, and cases and other items from the Harvard Business School site license. Course material must be selected to provide important theoretical frameworks of organizational communication as well as provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge using projects, problems, or cases.
3. A weekly podcast/lecture outlining the material being covered during that week and how the learning community will approach understanding and applying the material. It is planned that each podcast will be 10 to 20 minutes in length depending on the material and direction of the topic. Each podcast will require visual elements created in Photoshop, scripting elements and in some cases, possible storyboards for creative direction.
4. Development of assignments for the course. These assignments will provide scaffolding for further discussion and upcoming assignments. It is anticipated that these assignments will rely on problems and projects as well as have a heavy research concept. An example of such could be an evaluation of an organization the student is currently involved in and understands well. The paper would examine the structural make-up of an organization, management theories, organizational culture, conflict, etc. The students would make observations and then turn to the literature to support or find a deeper understanding of how similar organizations are structured.
5. Weekly discussion groups to increase understanding about individual topic areas in organizational communication. In addition to being a contributor in the course, the instructor will also develop the prompt questions to get the discussion groups started. This question should be thought provoking as well as be open-ended. This will also require the development of a rubric for grading the student's contribution to discussion. One of the suggestions of the literature is to develop examples of both good and bad

discussion contribution. These examples should also include strategies for evaluating the material and making appropriate comments.

6. The creation of assessment tools for the course includes weekly reading quizzes, a mid-term and a final test. In addition to selecting the material for assessment, it is also important to develop tools that would not promote unethical behavior when a student takes a test in an unsupervised environment. With this in mind, it is most feasible to develop essay tests for the mid-term and final with time limits and allow the students to use notes and other materials they have created over the semester. As for the weekly reading quizzes, these short quizzes will only give students 90 seconds to complete a multiple-choice question; this is not enough time for them to access course material before answering the question.
7. The literature is also clear that an instructor needs to develop a presence in the online environment. This will be done by developing online chat hours where students can ask questions and receive real-time responses from the faculty member. Many of the non-traditional students will not have experience using chat, so it will be important to provide instruction for them to develop their own chat identity. The faculty member will also develop his own web site, which would contain biographical information, interests, links to research and photos of the instructor to allow students to gain a better understanding of who is grading their work and what the personality of the instruction is like. The instructor will also be an active member of the learning community to help in the discussion process. These discussions will take the place of lectures in a normal class and will require participation, both on the part of the students and the instructor. The students will also be given a phone number where the instructor can be reached during certain hours of the week, as well as time after-hours for students who work full-time in addition to attending class. All of these elements will work to provide a feeling that the instructor is human and can be approached with concerns and comments during the course.

8. The course will also include a Harvard Business School case study to be conducted online as a final experience for the course. This will be a challenge because traditional case studies involve individual as well as group preparation time and are normally taught in a face-to-face environment. This will be an introductory level course and in order for the students to perform well, there will need to be appropriate case selection, as well as long-term course preparation for the experience. In addition, the instructor will need to break down the elements of effective case studies and then determine ways to have similar experiences in an online learning environment.

### *Reflections of Project*

After reviewing a variety of literature ranging from the legal perspectives of online education to the best practices used in an organizational communication course, the researcher gained new perspectives about online learning during the completion of the project, both as a student and a teacher.

First, as a teacher, technology can greatly enhance and enrich individual ability and connection to students. While I prefer to teach in a face-to-face environment, there are elements of online education that can be used in any course. The use of course management software can greatly reduce the day-to-day receptiveness of teaching. For example, placing a test or quiz on iLearn will allow students to have access to the test on their own timetable, but more importantly create more time for instruction and interaction in the course itself. Additionally, the faculty can use a feature to automatically score and record the results of the test in the online grade book, greatly reducing faculty workload.

Beyond the timesaving function, technology can allow students to connect with each other in an online environment. Recently, my students completed a writing assignment and I allowed them to collaborate in a wiki within iLearn and edit, question, and improve drafts before submitting a final form. While I have had students peer edit before in class, this was a more effective use of time. Students were assigned to spend at least 60 minutes evaluating other

students' writing. Not only was the writing greatly improved from early work in the course but also, I was able to track how much time students spent reading and what edits they suggested in their fellow students' papers.

One of the common suggestions I have received from students in the past is improvement of how I organized the course syllabus and course readings. I have created CDs, emailed, or created a shared drive for students to access this information. But frequently students would comment they were not sure what to read, if they were prepared with the correct material, etc. However, as I have used course management software, this suggestion is no longer included in my evaluations. By using iLearn, I can add all readings to the specific week folder. This folder will appear two weeks before it is due in class and after the week is completed, the folder will disappear from the students' view, allowing the students to clearly see what they must read or complete in a specific week. There are numerous organizational and managerial benefits for a faculty member who uses course management software to track grades, communicate with students, and post readings and assignments.

As a student, I also see benefits with increased technology in the classroom, mainly the ability to access material or the faculty member's podcasts, lectures, or comments at anytime during the course. Using an online discussion board where members of the class must post comments about their feelings, opinions, or interpretation of a specific theory or principle can greatly enhance the classroom discussion. The use of technology can benefit a student's ability to process key concepts and deepen the learning that is taking place.

The vast majority of students come to college with laptops, cell phones, iPods or other digital music players that can all be used for an educational purpose. Laptops can allow students to use electronic versions of textbooks that come bundled with other learning aids including video, podcasts, and study guides for each chapter. While it is possible that a faculty member can also create these same elements and resources for a printed textbook, many textbook companies will package these elements only with their electronic textbook. While the future and possibilities

of technology in education in the researcher's assessment may be unlimited in scope and potential, there are direct benefits a faculty member can receive from the process of designing an online course.

First, the process of designing an online course has improved the researcher's ability to clearly outline and develop measurable objectives for a course. By starting with clearly defined learning outcomes in mind, the course material and assignments define themselves. This allows the faculty to continually ask, "Is this assignment, reading, or assessment going to help students reaching a specific learning outcome or objective?"

Second, the process of designing a complete online course will produce material that will greatly improve a face-to-face section of the course. By using the same textbook or material in both sections, the faculty member can use podcasts and other tools developed for the online course in the face-to-face section. Additionally, students in a traditional setting will be able to use a scaled-down version of the online course.

Third, the process of designing an online course will enhance the ability of a faculty member to learn new technology applications that can improve teaching in an online, hybrid, or face-to-face class. Often faculty may not understand the types of resources or software and their capability until they see and use these resources in a functional way.

Fourth, the design of an online course allows a faculty member the rare opportunity to review and develop their beliefs about education and teaching, as well as finding areas of their teaching that can be improved by the use of technology and playing to the strengths of their individual teaching. While this period of reflection may not be unique to an online course, it is common for faculty who have been asked to develop an online course to receive additional university resources and the possibility of a reduced teaching load that can facilitate this examination of teaching for a faculty member.

Finally, the researcher's process of designing an online course has influenced his personal teaching philosophy. While this project reflects an organizational communication course

in a fully online environment, the researcher believes this may not be the most effective type of instruction for all types of students. It is the combination of elements of both an online course and a face-to-face course or a hybrid course that will be able to impact the most students.

Additionally, the researcher has always believed that technology can positively impact education, but it was not until the researcher designed an online course that he had a clear understanding of the scope of resources available in the design of an online course and their potential use in other courses. While the researcher is still fully committed to the personal teaching philosophy included earlier in this paper, he now believes that software and technology can both greatly improve his teaching ability. In the future, his face-to-face course will include more technological elements and may begin to reflect a true hybrid style of teaching.

As the researcher reflects on the organizational communication course designed in the project, there are several areas that will require development over the time of the course. While the materials within the project have been used to design and execute a functional online course, as with any course the current outline will change over time to meet the needs of students and correct mistakes or misconceptions in the original design.

The first area that will need to be revamped over time is how students will use and develop critical thinking skills. An introduction of a critical thinking model and specifics of how it will be used in case studies within the course will greatly improve students' ability to develop and use this important life skill. Additionally, assignments should be reviewed to include an element of critical thinking.

Second, the course readings and materials may also shift over time, depending on the types of students in the course. The current course is designed for a demographic of mid-career professionals who are seeking a degree. If the university plans to offer this course to traditional students, it would be appropriate to change some of the readings and offer a more basic approach to organizational communication.

Third, the assignments will become more specific over time with additional student feedback, as the researcher teaches the course, and reflects on the effectiveness of assignments. Students will benefit from more specific details, questions, and a clear focus of these assignments. Additionally, course readings may also be more focused and academic as the course moves forward. While the current course reflects both professional as well as academic sources, in the future students may spend more time with academic material and less with professional perspectives of organizational communication.

Fourth, this course cannot be static. It will require constant updating, changing, and improving to remain effective. By piloting this course, the researcher hopes to clearly understand what limitations exist within the current course structure, what changes need to be made to the course, and how the course will evolve in the future. No matter how much time has been dedicated to designing and developing assignments and a course, it is not until it is reviewed by students and peers that a course designer can see what elements of the course will work and what elements of the course will not.



## Appendix A

### Course Syllabus

#### **COMM 250 Introduction to Organizational Communication Online**

Instructor: Adam Bair

Email: baira@byui.edu

Virtual Office hours: Tuesday 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Course Description**

The study of Organizational Communication examines the interactions of people and groups within organizations. During the course, students will examine communication principles and practices in organizations from a theoretical perspective; investigate methods of improving communication practices and review career opportunities in the field. The course will combine the theoretical perspectives of the field with practical applications of the classroom principles.

#### **Online Class Overview**

This course is not an independent study course but will require students to interact with each other, complete weekly assignments, and contribute to classroom knowledge. Instruction within the course will rely heavily on the selected textbook with additional reading of scholarly journals and articles. You will be required to participate with the class each week and complete the activities outlined by the weekly deadline. Each assignment will detail the instructions for completing the assignment, as well as how to turn the assignment into me. To begin the course, please complete the tutorial found under the “Start Here” button. Good luck and I look forward to learning with you and from you this semester.

#### **Course Objectives**

- 1) Develop a foundation in organizational communication theory and practice
- 2) Understand how organizational communication theories are used in the “real world”
- 3) To create and maintain a collaborative online learning environment
- 4) Provide practical application of course knowledge through a variety of assignments

**Guiding Principles/Policies/Procedures*****Learning Environment***

As the instructor, I see my role more as a conductor and less as a lecturer. I have carefully selected reading and designed activities that will require you to examine the world around you and collaborate with fellow students. We will work together to create an environment where all members of the class are students, teachers and learners. Each student will have personal experiences and examples that relate too many of the course topics; your experiences and examples will greatly enrich and benefit your fellow students.

***Student Expectations***

To facilitate your success in this course I have the following suggestions:

- 1) In a traditional class, attendance is key and in an online class, the principle is the same. Set aside time each day to work, read, or log on to I-Learn. I would recommend roughly about an hour each day.
- 2) Be prepared and do not procrastinate. The number one reason students drop out of an online class is because they fall so far behind they cannot catch up. By waiting until the last second to complete assignments and quizzes, you are asking for problems. From personal experience, I always experience some type of technical problems when I am wait to the last minute to start or finish a project.
- 3) Engage in the class and with your classmates. The amount of time you put into the course will relate to the quality of your learning experience. In many cases, you will work together to complete a group assignment. While I will grade the finished product, your fellow group members will grade your performance as a group member.
- 4) Complete assignments and turn them in using the directions provided. Each assignment has a sheet that provides a description of what is expected in the assignment, the deadline, and the format to be used. Failure to complete tasks before the deadline or not correctly using the format is not a valid excuse. Do not wait until the last possible second

to complete an assignment. Although I work for the university and want you to succeed in the course, I will not be available to help you at 11:59 p.m. on Friday.

### ***Late Assignments***

All assignments must be submitted by Friday at midnight unless otherwise noted. Late work will not be graded; however, because this is an online class, I understand that technical difficulties will occur. I will give you ONE mulligan, meaning you will have an additional 48 hours for ONE assignment or quiz. Let me know as soon as possible what the issue is so we can fix the problem. A mulligan cannot be used for the discussion board.

### ***Honor Code***

—Brigham Young University-Idaho students should seek to be totally honest in all their dealings. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

### ***Definitions***

- 1) Intentional Plagiarism- the deliberate act of representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own without providing proper attribution to the author through quotation, reference or footnote.
- 2) Fabrication or Falsification- a form of dishonesty where a student invents or distorts the origin or content of information used as authority.
- 3) Cheating- is a form of dishonesty where a student attempts to give the appearance of a level of knowledge or skill that has not been obtained.
- 4) Other Academic Misconduct- includes other academically dishonest, deceitful, or inappropriate acts which are intentionally committed" (BYU-Idaho Honor Code.)

### ***Consequences***

Individuals involved in plagiarism and other unethical behaviors will fail the class. Additionally, your name will be referred to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary

actions at the university level. If you have questions or concerns about using APA formatting or academic procedures, please ask me to avoid these serious consequences.

### ***Reasonable Accommodation***

If you have a learning disability or other condition that makes it difficult for you to complete some of the assignments discussed in the syllabus, you must disclose these conditions to me within the first week of class. I will make reasonable accommodation to help you learn and succeed in class. Any disability or condition must be on file with the Academic Learning Office, and they will provide me with written descriptions of specific accommodations that may be made in your behalf.

### ***My Rights as the Instructor***

I reserve the right to change the syllabus, the calendar and assignments as needed during the semester. These changes will be published and announced in advance. You will be held responsible for these changes in the course.

### ***Tips for Success in an Online Course***

The BYU-Idaho Academic Technology Department has outlined four of the most common problems students experience in an online environment. Technology provides a powerful tool for learners to acquire new skills and knowledge at their own pace, outside of the boundaries of the traditional classroom. While online learning provides great advantages, it will also present you with a few challenges that are not found in the traditional classroom.

#### ***Common Problem 1 – Procrastination***

Schedule time everyday to work on your online class, just as you do for your traditional classroom classes. Write down your schedule and stick to it. If you do not complete an assignment before the due date, the assignment will no longer be available. If you have specific questions about the due dates in your course, make sure to ask me.

***Common Problem #2 – Avoiding Help Resources***

Learning on your own can be challenging, but help is available. Use the available resources designed for online learners at BYU-Idaho. 1) Make sure you contact me for help in understanding the material you are studying. 2) Contact the student help desk for help with technical difficulties. They can assist you with almost any technical problem. 3) Fellow classmates can be a valuable resource in understanding the requirements of an assignment, a difficult concept covered in class, or clarification about expectations in the class. Make sure you develop open lines of communication with your fellow classmates.

***Common Problem #3 – Technology Problems***

Working with technology can present problems if you are not prepared to deal with them. While BYU-Idaho has many skilled computer and network specialists, on occasion there are computer issues that may take minutes, hours, or days to fix. Combine this with your personal computer and you can have challenges that may turn into nightmares. However, planning, designing a plan B, and working ahead in the course will allow these serious problems to be just a bump in the road.

***Common Problem #4 – Communication***

The official form of communication at BYU-Idaho is email and the same is true in this course. You need to log on to both iLearn and your email at least once a day. Students who fail to check these resources miss updated information that is necessary to succeeding in the class.

***Types of Assessment***

During the course of the semester, you will complete both an essay midterm and final test. I will provide you with a list of eight questions; you will complete three of the questions. You may use any notes or papers you have completed during the course of the semester, but you may not use your book. It will be important for you to answer the questions completely with the key points covered in the text and additional readings. I will provide you with a study guide a

week before the test that will detail key subjects and topics that will be included on the test. Each test will be worth 100 points.

We will not have a weekly reading quiz unless I get the impression you are not reading the text and assignments completely.

***Types of Assignment***

In the following pages, I have given you a description of all of the assignments you will be asked to complete during this course, including both individual and group assignments.

***Syllabus Quiz and Online Learning Tutorial***

This assignment is due on or before midnight Friday of Week 1.

**The Purpose:** This assignment will help you feel more comfortable with working in an online environment and help you to understand more about the expectations of the course. First, you will review the syllabus (reading the whole document). You will then complete a syllabus quiz. The quiz will be open-syllabus and include questions about general classroom policies, specific assignments and classroom procedures. Second, if this is your first time in an online course, please complete the online learning tutorial found under the –Start Here” button. However, it may be helpful for everyone to review this tutorial.

**Grading:** Failure to complete the assignment within the first week of class will result in future assignments being returned ungraded until this quiz has been completed. The quiz is worth 20 points and will include 10 questions.

***Worth a Thousand Words Parts I and II***

**The Purpose:** This assignment will serve as an introduction to your fellow classmates. This exercise will also help you become more comfortable with working in an online environment and some of the functions of iLearn.

**Part I:** First, select 3 to 5 photos to introduce yourself as well as write an explanation as to why you selected the specific photo, what is happening in the photo, or why this photo is important to you. These pictures can be of you, taken by you, or found online. I will provide an example online for you to examine. The first part of the assignment will be posted under “Assignments” section and will be called “Worth a Thousand Words.”

**Grading:** This assignment will be worth 25 points and is to be completed before Friday at midnight on Week 1.

**Part II:** The second part is to read all of the posts and make a list of individuals who share common interests, have similarities, or may be in a similar situation. In order to complete this section of the assignment, please create a word document entitled “Worth a Thousand Words Your Name.” As an example, I would save this file as “Worth a Thousand Words Adam Bair.” This will help me in the grading process and will help me to know each of you better.

**Grading:** The second part is also worth 25 points. Please submit this file to my digital drop box on or before Friday midnight of Week 2.



### ***The Perfect Organization***

You will start this assignment the first week and it will be due before midnight Friday of Week 4.

**The Purpose:** This assignment is designed to help you see how the basic theoretical approaches of organizational communication are used in organizations. This will be an opportunity for you to design a perfect organization using basic approaches to organizational communication. Second, this assignment will require you to collaborate with group members. This will help you get to know fellow students better as well as provide your first opportunity to work as a group in an online environment.

**The Assignment:** During the first four weeks of the course, you will be divided into groups of four and given the task of designing your perfect organization from the perspective of a leader. During the first week, you will outline how you would design your organization. With each week, we will cover specific theories of organizational communication. Then, as a group, you will suggest possible changes, additions, or deletions to your original idea of the perfect organization. During week four of class, you will identify which approach to organization best describes your organization and list the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

Be sure to include the following information:

1. How the organization would communicate with both those at the top and bottom of the organizational structure as well as how these two groups would communicate with each other.
2. What pro's and con's would an autocratic, democratic or laissez-far leader bring to the organization and how this will influence the organization as a whole.
3. Include specific types and examples of organization rituals and practices to be used in the organization. Also, discuss and develop a dress code for employees. When you have made a decision on a dress code, and then determine other corporate values and the overall corporate culture.

4. How will the organization motivate employees to perform at their best levels? What cost will these measures have on the company both as far as monetary and also in terms of the impact on employees.
5. Discuss in detail how the organization will make both external and internal decisions. What will the organization do in a time of crisis and how will decision-making model change in a crisis.
6. Use Pondy's levels of conflict to discuss how the leadership team will deal with conflict at each of its levels. How will the organization encourage a healthy level of conflict without making the organization toxic?
7. What types of surveillance and control will be used in the organization? What affects, if any, will this have on employees?
8. Discuss the types of ways your organization will survive in an increasingly globalized environment.
9. Finally, include your organizations beliefs about diversity. Be sure to include how your organization will promote and protect a diverse working environment.

**Grading:** This assignment will be worth 200 points for the final report of your group's perfect organization. In addition, you can receive up to 100 points from your group members for your participation.

***Organizational Cultural Artifact***

This assignment is due on or before midnight Friday of Week 5.

**The Purpose:** This assignment will help you to understand how organizations use cultural elements as they communicate with both internal and external publics.

**The Assignment:** You will be asked to post an example of a cultural artifact that represents some aspect of an organization's culture. This can include objects, artwork, language/jargon, dress, stories, mission/values statements, etc. Some examples that may help you in finding an artifact may include McDonalds' "golden arches"; BYU-Idaho's "smiling student"; and Washington Mutual Bank's "advertising campaign."

In addition to posting your example, you must write a 1-page explanation of what the culture artifact means, the groups the artifact is designed for, and how the artifact is being used within the organization. Please be sure to answer the following questions:

1. What is the artifact?
2. What does it represent?
3. How is it used?
4. What underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions does it symbolize?

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 50 points.

### ***Organizational Analysis Assignment***

This assignment will be due before midnight Friday of Week 12.

**The Purpose:** This assignment is designed to expose you to the work that an organizational consultant may perform as a preliminary report when working for a company or organization.

Please start this assignment early because it will be impossible to complete in just a few days. To start this assignment, you should select an organization you are familiar with. It could be an organization you have worked with in the past or a group to which you currently belong. I would personally suggest selecting something small that has fewer than a hundred members. The problem with selecting a large organization is that each level of the organization will increase the complexity of the final paper. If you are currently working at a large organization, select just a portion of the organization.

**Format:** After selecting the organization, take a few minutes to write some rough notes that summarize the organization, its mission, and important events that have shaped the current structure of the organization. You will then take these notes and write a formal 1- to 1.5-page overview of the organization, using APA formatting.

You will then address each of the following specific areas. Ideally, this section will be from your own perspective but you may need to interview someone in the organization to develop this section of your paper.

First, detail your job or a specific job in the company. Make sure to include information about the types of tasks and duties associated with this job. If available, please include the official job description; if not, please write one for the position. Include what types of knowledge, skills, or abilities are needed to complete these tasks within the organization. Make sure to include a list of the most important tasks they perform in the organization and how much time is spent to complete them in a given day, week, or month. What other duties does this person perform that are not officially connected to their job description? Where does the person fall within the organization? Who do they report to? Do they have individuals who report to them?

Second, describe the culture of the organization, how the culture of the organization is learned by employees, and what types of trainings and meetings are held for new employees of the organization. Describe the typical person who fits well within the culture of the organization and then describe the type of people who do not fit well within the organization. Give example of the organizational culture from physical signs and layout of the building to the employee handbooks and manuals. Are there subcultures within the organization? What areas of the organization have these subcultures and how are they different from the overall culture of the organization?

Third, discuss the following questions about the communication of the organization. How well do your superiors know and understand problems faced by subordinates? What are the goals and motivations communicated most commonly to employees in meetings and interviews? How well do your supervisors listen and respond in your communication with them? How can this type of communication be improved across the organization? Give an example of the most recent guidance your supervisor gave you concerning a problem within the organization. How do you receive communication from top management, your supervisor, and those who report to you? This is communication done face-to-face, over the phone, via email, etc. How does the way you communicate with them affect the message being sent? What are the organization's overall views about communication of problems, concerns, or issues that need to be addressed?

Fourth, how does the organization deal with conflict? What areas of the organization seem to have the most conflict? What are the reasons for conflict within the organization? Describe a work-related conflict you have been involved in. What happened? What impacts did it have on the climate of the organization? What steps did you take to resolve the conflict? What impacts did it have on your communication within the organization?

Fifth, discuss power and control within the organization. Who has power because of their title within the organization? Who has power in the organization because of their knowledge, experience, network, etc.? In what ways is the power expressed to those in the organization?

Identify gatekeepers within the organization and what are their official and non-official roles?

How do people get around the gatekeepers? What real power do these gatekeepers have and what impacts does this power have on the organization?

At a minimum, please discuss these issues. If there are other areas we cover in class that also apply to your organization, please include a discussion of those points in addition to the questions I have already given you.

**Grading:** The overall paper should be no longer than 10 pages with a minimum of seven pages. The whole document should conform to APA style and those papers that do not conform to APA style will be returned ungraded until corrections are made. This assignment is worth 200 points.

### ***“A” Project***

This is due before midnight Friday of Week 13

**The Purpose:** It is possible for every student to earn an “A” in the class; however, an –A” means you have gone beyond the course requirements. That is why I have developed an “A” project. It will require you to spend time beyond the course requirements and will hopefully be a useful addition to your education.

**The Assignment:** You will select a book from a list on I-Learn; it should be a book you have not read before. Once you have finished reading the book, you will be required to write a 5- to 7-page paper, double-spaced, that provides a brief summary of key principles learned, your personal reaction to the book and a discussion of whether you would recommend this book to others.

**Grading:** If you have not completed the project, you will not receive an “A” in the course.

#### **Sample of “A” Project Books**

The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century

by Thomas L. Friedman

Freakonomics: A rouge economist explores the hidden side of everything

by Stephen D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

Affluenza: The all-consuming epidemic

by Thomas Herbert Naylor

Good to Great: why some companies make the leap—and other don’t

by Jim Collins

In their time: The greatest business leaders of the twentieth century

by Anthony J. Mayo & Nitin Nohria

Blink: The power of thinking without thinking

by Malcolm Gladwell

The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference

by Malcolm Gladwell

Breaking the Barrier to Upward Communication: Strategies and Skills for Employees, Managers, and HR Specialists

by Thad B. Green & Jay T. Knippen

Information Seeking: An Organizational Dilemma

by J. David Johnson

Communication and Organizational Crisis

by Matthew W. Seeger, Timothy L. Sellnow, & Robert R. Ulmer

How come every time I get stabbed in the back my fingerprints are on the knife?

by Jerry B. Harvey

Principle-center leadership

by Stephen R. Covey

The leadership factor

by John P. Kotter

Breaking the glass ceiling: Can women reach the top of America's larger corporations?

by Ann M. Morrison, Randall P. White, Ellen Van Velsor, and the Center for Creative Leadership

The electronic version of these books will be available to students via paramlink in iLearn.



### ***Learning Blog***

The blog will be graded at the end of the semester.

**The Purpose:** One of the principles of the BYU-Idaho learning model is that students must reflect on learning experiences. As you reflect on learning experiences, you better understand what the most important elements are that you will take away from an assignment, how you learn best, and what you need to do in the future to improve your ability to learn.

**The Assignment:** To help you achieve the benefits of reflection, you will be required to keep a learning blog that must contain at least three entries for every week of the course. It should include insights you have gained after reading, an experience you had while completing group assignments, or any other information you have learned during the course. Each entry could be a few paragraphs or as long as a few pages.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points.

### ***Weekly Discussion Board***

This is due before midnight every Friday.

**The Purpose:** This assignment is meant to deepen your understanding of the materials being covered each week in our readings. This assignment will serve as the element that will connect everyone in the course. Think of the weekly discussion board as a classroom lecture where you question, respond, and gain understanding.

**The Assignment:** Each week I will ask you a single, open-ended question based on the material. This assignment will require you to take a position, support the position, and then defend that position to your fellow classmates and myself.

In addition to my question, I will ask at least three members of the class to develop additional questions for discussion. Also, if you have an element of the reading you do not understand, this is a perfect place for you to get input from me and, most importantly, your fellow students.

Do not think that adding a few sentences once a week will earn you full points. You should develop an initial statement about something you have learned from the reading, and be prepared to defend this statement. You should also read your other classmates' postings and question their claims and statements or add your support to their position.

**Grading:** Your contribution will be worth 40 points each week.

***Decision-Making Group***

This is due before midnight of Week 9.

**The Purpose:** This assignment will provide you with practical experience in making decisions within an organization.

**The Assignment:** You will be divided into a group of 6 to make a decision regarding a complex problem within an organization. As a group, you will work together to develop a list of recommendations for the CEO (me), as well as the decision you as a group would make. However, the challenge will be that every member of the group must agree on your recommendation and the decision your group makes. In addition to the group recommendation and decision, each member of the group must write a small paper about their experience in making a decision as a group.

**Grading:** This assignment will be worth 100 points for the final report of your recommendation. In addition, you can receive up to 100 points from your group members for your participation. Your individual write-up will be worth 20 points.

### ***Reaction Wiki***

You will complete three-reaction wikis during the course of the semester.

**The Purpose:** This assignment is designed for you to test ideas about complex theories with fellow students. It will allow you to clarify your thoughts and feelings about complex issues we will be discussing in class.

**The Assignment:** You will work in small groups of two to three students to develop a 1 to 2-page reaction of the material being presented in the course. This will require you to engage in the material being presented. To do this, you should question areas you do not fully understand and provide additional examples that support or refute the position taken by the author. This should not be a summary or review of the material but a selection of specific areas in order to dig deeper into the material. You will work together as a group to develop your position, conduct possible additional research, and share personal examples to be included in the final reaction.

**Grading:** It will be worth 30 points and be graded based on content, organization, grammar, and the thought and effort put into the finished product. You will be asked to complete three-reaction wikis during the semester. You will also receive 30 points from your group members based on your participation.

***Living with Generation Y***

This is due before midnight Wednesday of Week 13.

**The Purpose:** This will be the final experience in the course and will require you use all of the information and knowledge you have gained over the course of the semester to complete. You will work in small groups of three to four students to complete this assignment.

**The Assignment:** You will be presented with a case study involving Generation Y, both in a college and in an organization. You will work with your group to develop a strategy that will help an organization cope with changes in employee dynamics.

**Grading:** This assignment will be worth 50 points for the final report of your recommendation. In addition, you can receive up to 50 points from your group members for your participation.

## **Grading Rubric**

“A” represents outstanding understanding, application, and integration of subject material and extensive evidence of original thinking, skillful use of concepts, and ability to analyze and solve complex problem. It also demonstrates diligent application of Learning Model principles, including initiative in serving other students.

“B” represents considerable/significant understanding, application, and incorporation of the material that would prepare a student to be successful in next-level courses, graduate school, or employment. The student participates in the Learning Model as applied in the course.

“C” represents sufficient understanding of subject matter. The student demonstrates minimal initiative to be prepared for class. Sequenced courses could be attempted, but mastering new materials might prove challenging. The student participates only marginally in the Learning Model.

“D” represents poor performance and initiative to learn, understand, and apply course materials. Retaking a course or remediation may be necessary to prepare for additional instruction in this subject matter.

“F” represents failure in the course.

**Total Course Points**

Syllabus Quiz	20 points
Worth a Thousand Words Part I	25 points
Worth a Thousand Words Part II	25 points
Organizational Cultural Artifact	50 points
Organizational Analysis Paper	200 points
Learning Blog	100 points
The Perfect Organization	200 points
The Perfect Organization Group	100 points
Decision-Making Group	100 points
Decision-Making Group Grade	100 points
Decision-Making Group Write-up	20 points
Reaction Wiki	30 points
Reaction Wiki Group Grade	30 points
Living with Generation Y	50 points
Living with Generation Y Group	50 points
Midterm Test	100 points
Final Test	100 points
Weekly Discussion (11)	40 points each
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>1740</b>

**Grading Scale**

<b>A</b>	93% and Above
<b>A-</b>	92% - 90%
<b>B+</b>	89% - 87%
<b>B</b>	86% - 83%
<b>B-</b>	82% - 80%
<b>C+</b>	79% - 77%
<b>C</b>	76% - 73%
<b>C-</b>	72% - 70%
<b>D+</b>	69% - 67%
<b>D</b>	66% - 63%
<b>D-</b>	62% - 60%
<b>F</b>	59% and Below



## Virtual Office Hours

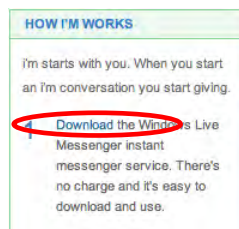
One of the key ways we will communicate with each other in this class is via instant messenger. This will enable us to communicate in real time with each other. Although you may always email me with questions or comments, instant messaging will help us have a live two-way conversation. While there are a number of services we could use for this process, I selected to use MSN Messenger because it is most commonly used and very compatible with both PC and Mac platforms, and it is free.

### *PC users*

1. If you already have a Windows Live Messenger, you can skip to step 6. If you do not, you can download the program free online.
2. Go to [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com). Below Welcome, you see a link to ~~Messenger~~.” Click on this link.



3. This will take you to the ~~Windows Live Messenger~~” page. In the center of this page, click on the download link.

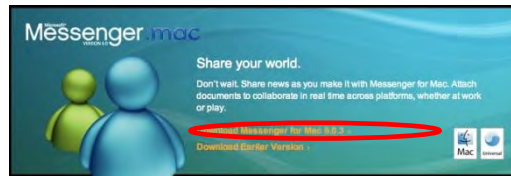


4. Complete the online instructions to complete the download of the program.

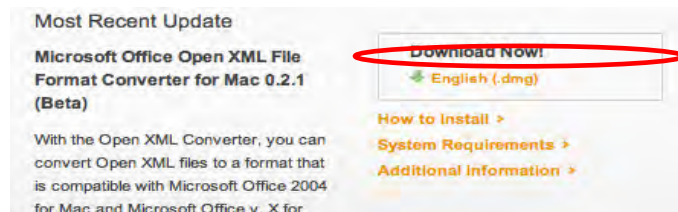
5. Once you have downloaded the program, you need to set up a free hotmail account that will serve as your MSN Messenger sign-in.
6. Launch MSN Messenger and enter your hotmail account.
7. Congratulations! You have successfully started your MSN Messenger account. Be sure to add me to your buddy list. My screen name is abaircomm@hotmail.com.

### ***Mac Users***

1. You may already have MSN Messenger on your machine if you have Microsoft Office. You can check by going to the —Finder” and then look in —Applications” for Microsoft Office; in this folder, you should see —MSN Messenger.”
2. If you do not have MSN Messenger, you can download it for free at <http://www.microsoft.com/mac/products/messenger/default.mspx>
3. Click on —Download Messenger for Mac”



4. Then click on download now



5. Complete the online instructions to complete the download of the program.
6. Once you have downloaded the program, you need to set up a free hotmail account that will serve as your MSN Messenger sign-in.
7. Launch MSN Messenger and enter your hotmail account.
8. Congratulations! You have successfully started your MSN Messenger account. Be sure to add me to your buddy list. My screen name is abaircomm@hotmail.com.

## Course Calendar

### Week 1-- Introduction to Organizational Communication

*Readings:*

*Assignments:* Syllabus Quiz, Online Learning Tutorial, and Worth a Thousand Words

*Due:*

### Week 2-- Classical Approaches

*Topics:* Classical Management-Henri Fayol, Theory of Bureaucracy-Max Weber,  
Theory of Scientific Management-Frederick Taylor

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 16-32.

Drucker, 2002, p. 70-78.

Rimer, 1993, p. 270-275.

*Assignments:* Worth a Thousand Words Part II

*Due:* Syllabus Quiz, Online Learning Tutorial, and Worth a Thousand Words

### Week 3-- Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches

*Topics:* The Hawthorne Studies, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, McGregor  
Theory X and Theory Y

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 36-54.

Morse and Lorsch, 1970, p. 61-68.

Meeker, 1982, p. 500-511.

*Assignments:*

*Due:* Worth a Thousand Words Part II

### Week 4--Systems Approaches

*Topics:* Cybernetic Systems Theory, Theory of Organizing-Karl Weick, —NewScience”  
System Theory

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 57-76.

Coutu, 2003, p. 84-89.

Weber and Glynn, 2006, p.1639-1716

*Assignments:* Organizational Cultural Artifact

*Due:*

### Week 5-- Cultural Approaches

*Topics:* Strong Cultures-Deal and Kennedy, Excellent Cultures-Peters and Waterman,  
Organizational Culture- Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 79-96.

Bernick, 2001, p. 53-59.

Charan, 2006, p. 60-70.

Smith and Eisenberg, 1987, p. 367-380.

*Assignments:*

*Due:* Organizational Cultural Artifact

### Week 6-- Critical Approaches

*Topics:* Ideology and Hegemony, Control, Feminist Theories

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 99-118.

Simons, 1995, 80-89.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

#### Week 7—Midterm Test

#### Week 8 -- Assimilation Processes

*Topic:* Organizational Socialization, Newcomer Information-Seeking

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 120-135.

Rollag, Salvatore, and Cross, 2005, p. 35-4

Filstad, 2004, p. 396-410.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

#### Week 9 --Decision-Making Processes

*Topics:* Decision-Making Process, Group Decision Making, Individual Roles in Decision Making

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 139-154.

Hammond, Keeney, and Howard, 2006, p. 118-127.

Coman, 1996, p. 245-256.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

#### Week 10 --Conflict Management Processes

*Topics:* Conflict Process, Conflict Styles, Deal with Conflict

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 159-175.

Wetlaufer, 2000, p. 114-125.

Knapp, Putman, and Davis, 1988, p. 414-430.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

#### Week 11-- Organizational Change and Leadership Processes

*Topics:* Who Moved My Cheese, Leadership in Organizations

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 179-195.

Kotter, 2007, p. 96-105.

Bunker and Wakefield, 2006, p. 3-6.

Seeger, Ulmer, Novak, and Sellnow, 2005 p. 78-96.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

#### Week 12 --Organizational Diversity Processes

*Topics:* Multicultural Organizations, Discrimination, Organizational Barriers, and Women within an Organization

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 217-233.

Thomas, 2004, 98-107.

Brett, Behfar, and Kern, 2006, p. 84-93.  
Zane, 2002, p. 334-355.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

Week 13 --The Changing Landscape of Organizations

*Topics:* Globalization, Generation Y in the workforce

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 257-271.

*Assignments:*

*Due:*

Week 14—Final Test

## Appendix B

### Titles of Text, Scholarly Articles, and Cases

#### *Textbook*

Miller, K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

#### *Rational of selection*

The researcher wanted to select a textbook that included both theoretical and practical application of organizational communication principles. Additionally, the text should clearly present elements of organizational communication an introductory student would need to understand to prepare for additional scholarship in this area.

After reviewing several possibilities, the researcher selected to use the Miller textbook. Miller has clearly frame organizational communication principles in such a way to allow students to understand the basics elements of the discipline as well as encourage application of these principles in realistic situations and scenarios.

#### *Scholarly Articles*

In addition to readings from, the Miller text student will also read a variety of articles from the Harvard Business School. These readings have been selected specifically to clarify aspects of organizational communication and allow students to see how theories and concepts are used in a variety of settings. These readings will prepare students to engage in a variety of case, problem, or project based assignments.

#### *Rational of selection*

While the researcher found other articles from a variety of sources that could have achieved the same results the selection of Harvard materials is a specific design issues to help with copyright concerns. BYU-Idaho is the only school besides the Harvard Business School that has a site license to the complete catalog of HBS resources. Under the terms of the site license faculty can select and use any HBS resources for both their face-to-face or online

class. The only condition is that materials can only be accessed but students who are currently enrolled within the course via a password interface, which is achieved by the course management software iLearn. Thus, while other resources could be used within the course the course designer has made a decision to first exam resources offer via Harvard and if the content does not meet the specific needs of the course than seek outside resources.

Below is a complete list of the articles to be included within the course.

Bernick, C. L. (2001, June). When your culture needs a makeover. *Harvard Business Review*, 79 (6), 53-59.

Brett, J., Behfar, K., & Kern, M. C. (2006, November). Managing multicultural teams. *Harvard Business Review*. 84(1), 84-93.

Bunker, K. A., & Wakefield, M. (2006, May). Leading in Times of Change. *Harvard Management Update*, 11(5), 3-6.

Charan, R. (2006, April). Home Depot's blueprint for cultural change. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(4), 60-70.

Coman, A (1996).Competence, power and conflict in group decision making. *Human Systems Management*, 15(4), 245-256.

Coutu, D. L. (2003, April). Sense and reliability: A conversation with celebrated psychologist Karl E. Weick. *Harvard Business Review*, 81(4), 84-89.

Drucker, P. F. (2002, February). They're not employees, they're people. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(2), 70-78.

Filstad, C. (2004).How newcomers use role models in organizational socialization. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 16 (7), 396-410.

Hammond, J. S., Keeney, R. L., & Howard, R. (2006, January). The hidden traps in decision-making. *Harvard Business Review*. 84(1), 118-127.

- Knapp, M.L., Putman, L.L., & Davis, L.J. (1988). Measuring Interpersonal conflict in organizations: Where do we go from here?. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 1(3), 414-430.
- Kotter, J. P. (2007, January). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(1), 96-105.
- Meeker, S.M.E. (1982). Theory Y: Another look. *Southern Review of Public Administration*, 5(4), 500-511.
- Morse, J. J., & Lorsch, J. W. (1970, May/June). Beyond theory Y. *Harvard Business Review*, 48, 61-68.
- Rimer, E (1993). Organization Theory and Frederick Taylor. *Public Administration Review*, 53(3), 270-275.
- Rollag, K., Salvatore, P., & Cross, R. (2005, Winter). Getting New Hires Up to Speed Quickly. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46(2), 35-41.
- Seeger, M.W., Ulmer, R.R., Novak, J.M., & Sellnow, T. (2005). Post-crisis discourse and organizational change, failure and renewal. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18, 78-96.
- Simons, R. (1995, March). Control in an age of empowerment. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2), 80-89.
- Smith, R. C., & Eisenberg, E. M. (1987). Conflict at Disneyland: A root-metaphor analysis. *Communication Monographs*, 54, 367-380.
- Thomas, D. A. (2004, September). Diversity as strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(9), 98-107.
- Weber, K., & Glynn, M.A. (2006). Making sense with institutions: Context, Thought and Action in Karl Weick's Theory. *Organization Studies*, 27 (11), 1639-1716.
- Wetlaufer, S. (2000, January/February). Common sense and conflict: An interview with Disney's Michael Eisner. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 114-125.



Zane, N.C. (2002).The glass ceiling is the floor my boss walks on: Leadership challenges in managing diversity. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 38(3), 334-355.

## Appendix C

### Digital Samples of Podcasts

## Appendix D

### Weekly Discussion Board Questions

Week 1-- Introduction to Organizational Communication

Week 2-- Classical Approaches

*Topics:* Classical Management-Henri Fayol, Theory of Bureaucracy-Max Weber,

Theory of Scientific Management-Frederick Taylor

1. If you were asked to select the perfect approach to managing an organization, which theorist model or approach would you select? Why this specific approach? What are the advantages the organization would gain from the structure? What potential drawbacks could the approach provide?
2. How would specific organizational approaches change based on the type of organization? In your opinion, what approach would best work in a high-tech company, a heavy-duty manufacturing company, or in an organization with hundreds of locations and variety of division and produces? Be sure to state each claim and be prepared to defend your position.

Week 3-- Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches

*Topics:* The Hawthorne Studies, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, McGregor's

Theory X, and Theory Y

1. As you reflect on McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, what do you think to be true about people? What theory applies to you as an individual? What theory do you use as a leader? How can individuals and organizations as a whole use McGregor's Theory to better themselves and their organizations?
2. What do we understand about people in organizations from the Hawthorne Studies? Do you have similar experiences from your own life? What can an organization learn from Mayo's studies at Hawthorne?

#### Week 4--Systems Approaches

*Topics:* Cybernetic Systems Theory, Theory of Organizing-Karl Weick, "New Science"

##### System Theory

1. How does the systems metaphor for organizing move us from a prescriptive consideration of organizational communication to a descriptive and explanatory approach? Which aspects of the systems metaphor are particularly helpful for you in explaining organizational communication processes?
2. Discuss how the system properties of holism, equifinality, negative entropy, and requisite variety would affect the actions of an organization. What can we learn from these principles? What examples of systems organizations do we see in our own lives?

#### Week 5-- Cultural Approaches

*Topics:* Strong Cultures-Deal and Kennedy, Excellent Cultures-Peters and Waterman,

Organizational Culture- Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo

1. As you reflect upon organizations where you have had experience, what are some of the impacts of organizational culture? Be sure to include specific examples that have direct application to this topic. Some possible areas of discussion should include the rules of the organization, the people within the organization, and the communication between members of the organization with coworkers, managers/director, or customers.
2. Discuss how organizational culture can be both a benefit and a liability to an organization. What advice would you give to help an organization avoid letting their organizational culture hinder their goals?

#### Week 6-- Critical Approaches

*Topics:* Ideology and Hegemony, Control, Feminist Theories

1. How would a critical organizational scholar view a typical bank branch? Be sure to include all three approaches as outlined in the book: Ideological, Hegemonic, and

Feministic frames. This may require a trip to the bank in order to examine the organizational structure or advertising of a specific bank.

2. If you are a woman, do the studies of feminist organizing described in this chapter ring true for you? Do you have other stories about the challenges of being a woman in a patriarchal organization? If you are a man, do these studies reveal something new to you? Do you think men suffer from similar constraints in the workplace?

#### Week 7—Midterm Test

#### Week 8 -- Assimilation Processes

*Topic:* Organizational Socialization, Newcomer Information-Seeking

1. Anticipatory socialization is a process that begins early in childhood as kids learn about work, careers, and organizations. When you were a child, what did you want to be —when you grew up”? How realistic were your aspirations? How have they changed based on anticipatory socialization processes?
2. As you reflect on your first job, what processes of socialization occurred during this experience? Were these experiences positive or negative? How did the process of socialization influence your attitudes about work, your boss, and your co-worker? What roles does socialization play in shaping how we perceive a job, career, or relationship in the workforce?

#### Week 9 --Decision-Making Processes

*Topics:* Decision-Making Process, Group Decision Making, Individual Roles in Decision-Making

1. In what ways does group decision-making parallel individual decision-making? How does group interaction change and influence the decision-making process? If the group is part of an organization, how do organizational factors influence decision-making?

2. Miller outlines approaches to the decision-making process in Chapter 8. What process do you use most frequently to make a decision? What process do you use the least? What are the strengths and weaknesses of a specific type of decision-making process?

#### Week 10 --Conflict Management Processes

*Topics:* Conflict Process, Conflict Styles, Deal with Conflict

1. Conflict is defined in this chapter as requiring the ~~three~~ "three I's": incompatible goals, interdependence, and interaction. Why are these three components necessary? What situations might arise when only one or two of these components are present?
2. If you were Adam Shapiro in case study, what actions would you take in dealing with Mike and Jill's conflict? Support your proposed actions with the theories outlined by Miller in Chapter 9.

#### Week 11-- Organizational Change and Leadership Processes

*Topics:* Who Moved My Cheese, Leadership in Organizations

1. What is the role of leadership in organizational change? Which of the models of leadership discussed in this chapter are most appropriate for times of change? Would the different models advocate different kinds of leadership communication during planned change?
2. Have you experienced organizational change? If yes, how was the change perceived across the organization? Did your co-workers embrace or reject the change? Did the leadership of the organization accurately and honestly express the reason for the change and the possible benefits?

#### Week 12 --Organizational Diversity Processes

*Topics:* Multicultural Organizations, Discrimination, Organizational Barriers, and Women within an Organization

1. What have your experiences told you about the differences in organizational life for white men and for women and people of color? If you are a white male, do you believe

these differences are real and viable? If you are a woman or a person of color (or both), do you think your workplace experiences are influenced by your gender, culture, or ethnicity? In what ways?

2. When you examine organization diversity from the position of a leader, what benefits do organizations gain by having diversity and what are some of the challenges diversity presents in an organization? How can a leader shape the organization's opinions of diversity within a work environment?

#### Week 13 --The Changing Landscape of Organizations

*Topics:* Globalization, Generation Y in the workforce

1. How will globalization continue to change organizations? What steps should leaders, employees, and organizations take to prepare for these changes? What benefits and/or drawbacks does globalization present to organizations?
2. What changes and conflicts will present themselves to organizations as Generation Y enters the workforce? Will these changes and conflicts alter the face of organizations? What should leaders in an organization do to prepare for these difficulties?

#### Week 14 --Final Test

## Appendix E

### Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- 1) Know, understand, and develop a foundation in organizational communication theory and practice.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate this knowledge by completing both individual and group assignments that will require synthesis of all the salient aspects of organizational communication. In addition to assignments, students will be responsible to contribute to a weekly discussion that will require them to understand basic principles from each section, take a position, and then defend their position.

- 2) Know how organizational communication theories are used in the “real world,” such as a corporate setting, small business, and in an individual life.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate the application of organizational communication skills by completing an application paper where they will assess an organization they are involved with and describe the process of that organization, using common theories and terminology. Additionally, several discussion board questions will require students to observe or reflect on organization settings and apply this common experience to complete the question.

- 3) Know how different organizational approaches are used and how these approaches change the way an organization is viewed by a scholar.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate understanding by working in a group to determine what organizational approach they would use in an organization. Students will also examine these approaches across a variety of industries and organizational sizes. Students will also examine a bank branch using three different critical perspectives: define how a critical scholar would view a bank, what assumptions each perspective provides to a scholar, and what limitations or benefits each critical perspective provides.



- 4) Know the theoretical perspectives and scholarly suggestions of how to manage and mitigate conflict and make important decisions, both as individuals and as a group within an organization.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of these key theoretical perspectives by completing a case study and application assignment. These assignments will require students to collaborate in discussing a complex situation, determining a list of recommendations, and discovering organizational structures or methods that may correct possible problems.

- 5) Know how to create and maintain a collaborative online learning environment.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will demonstrate their ability in using technology to collaborate with each other in an electronic environment. Students will complete group assignments, teach one another key principles, and maintain and develop a strong online classroom environment.

## Appendix F

### Copies of the Learning Interface

Figure 1. JPEG of announcements page on the learning interface.

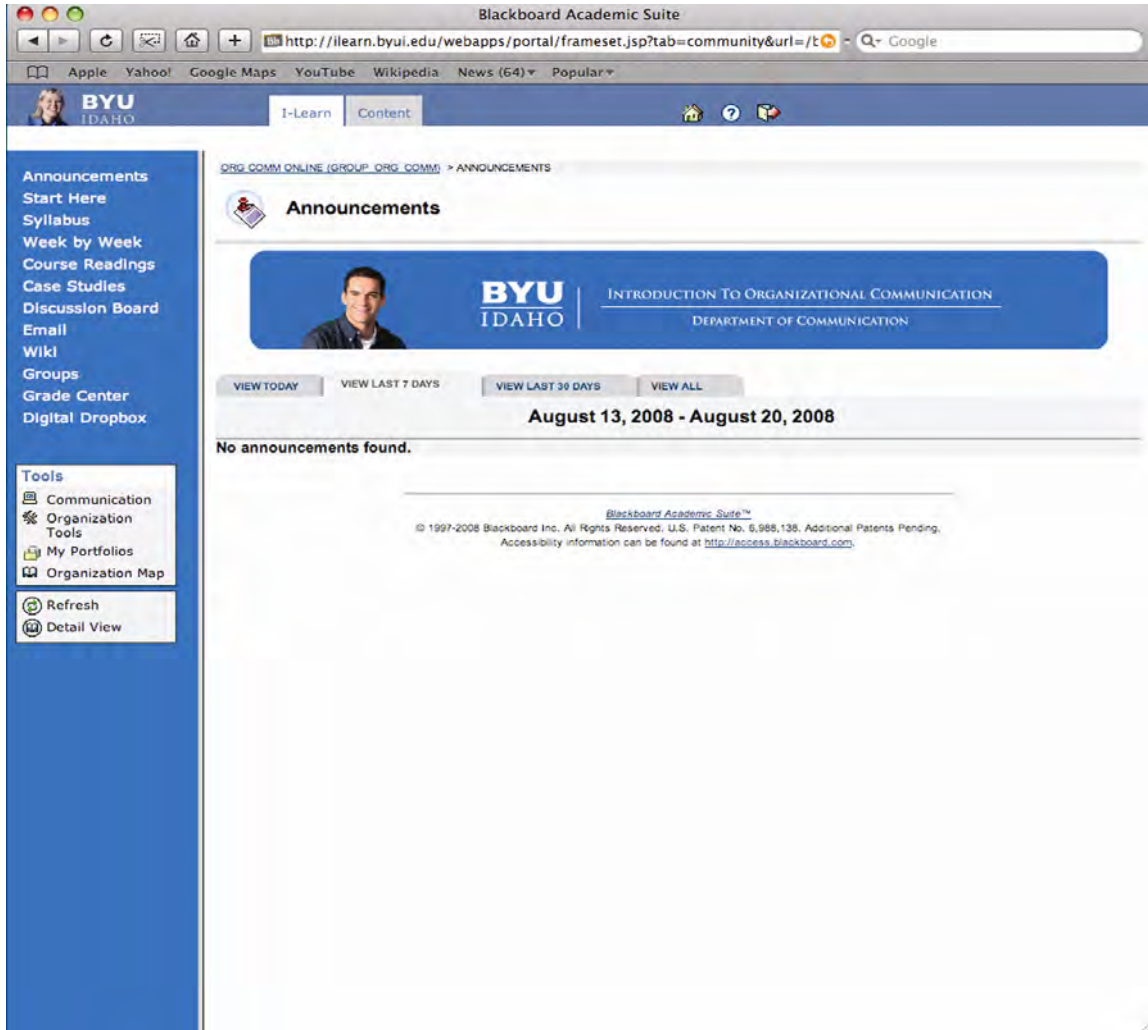


Figure 2. JPEG of start here page on the learning interface.

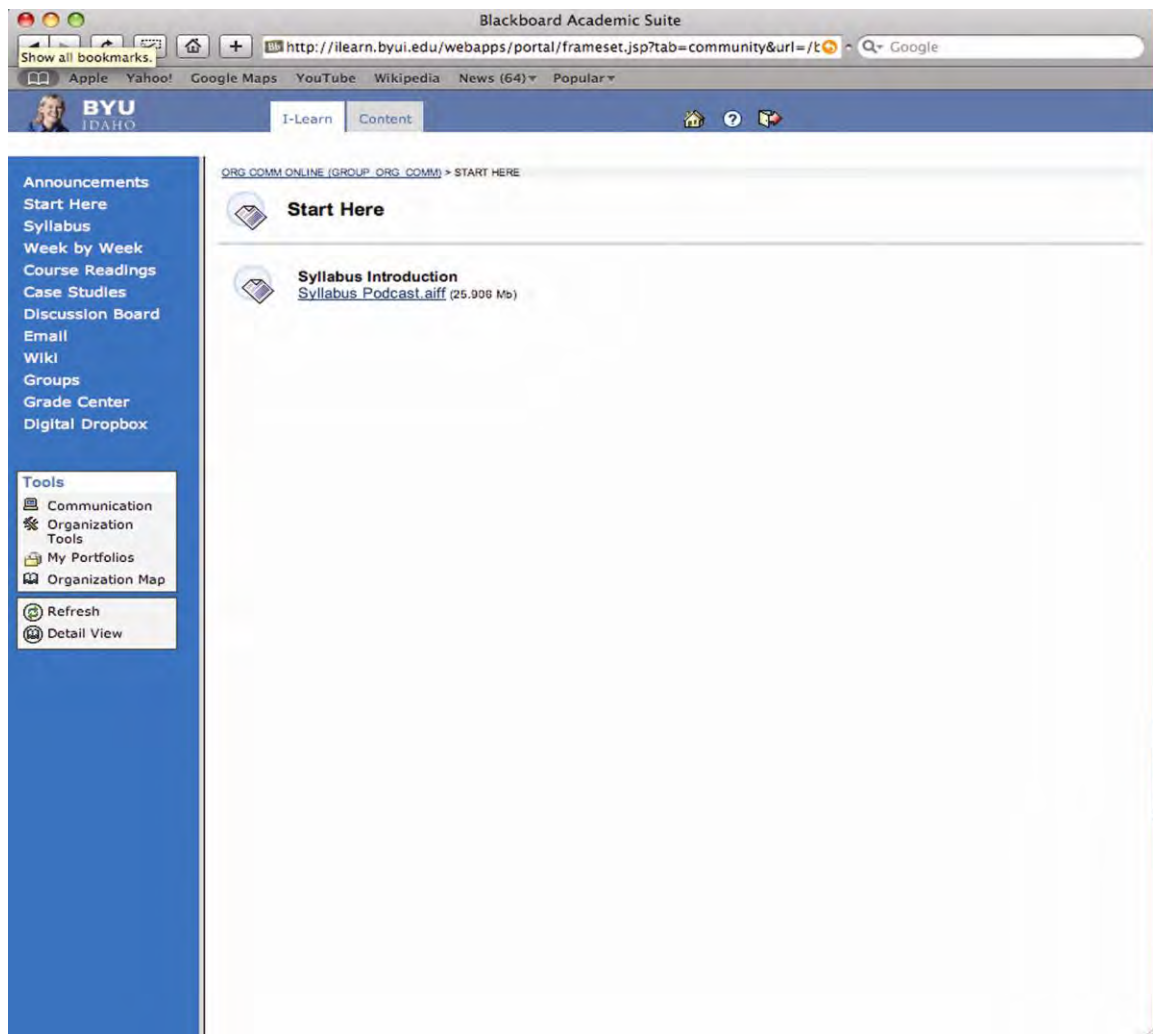


Figure 3. JPEG of syllabus, course calendar, and tips for success page on the learning interface.

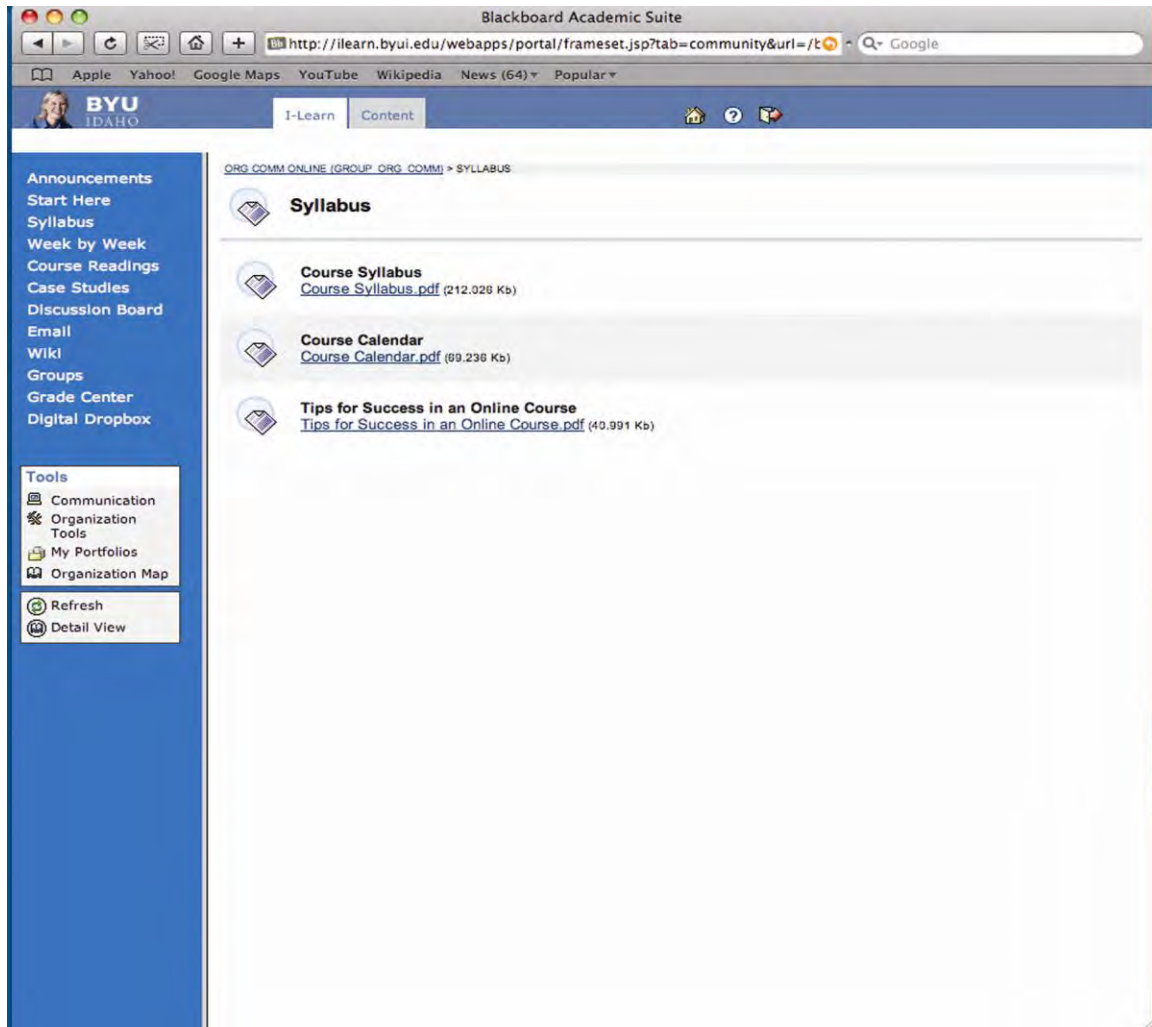


Figure 4. JPEG of course syllabus on the learning interface.

Blackboard Academic Suite

http://ilearn.byui.edu/webapps/portal/frameSet.jsp?tab=community&url=/t... Google

Apple Yahoo! Google Maps YouTube Wikipedia News (32) Popular

BYU IDAHO I-Learn Content

Announcements  
Start Here  
Syllabus  
Week by Week  
Course Readings  
Case Studies  
Discussion Board  
Email  
Wiki  
Groups  
Grade Center  
Digital Dropbox

Tools  
Communication  
Organization Tools  
My Portfolios  
Organization Map  
Refresh  
Detail View

Find

1 / 9 87.6% Sign

Course Syllabus  
**COMM 250 Introduction to Organizational Communication Online**

Instructor: Adam Bair  
Email: baira@byui.edu  
Virtual Office hours: Tuesday 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Course Description**  
The study of Organizational Communication examines the interactions of people and groups within organizations. During the course students will examine communication principles and practices in organizations from a theoretical perspective, methods to improve communication practices and review of career opportunities in the field. The course will combine the theoretical perspectives of the field with practical applications of the classroom principles.

**Online Class Overview**  
This course is not an independent study course but, will require students to interact with each other, complete weekly assignments, and contribute to classroom knowledge. Instruction within the course will rely heavily on the selected textbook with additional reading of scholarly journals and articles. You will be required to participate with the class each week and complete the activities outlined by the weekly deadline. Each assignment will detail the instructions for completing the assignment as well as how to turn the assignment into me. To begin the course please complete the tutorial found under the "Start Here" button. Good luck and I look forward to learn with you and from you this semester.

**Course Objectives**

- 1) Develop a foundation in organizational communication theory and practice
- 2) Understand how organizational communication theories are used in the "real world"
- 3) To create and maintain a collaborative online learning environment
- 4) Provide practical application of course knowledge using a variety of assignments

**Guiding Principles/Policies/Procedures**

**Learning Environment**  
As the instructor, I see my role more as a conductor and less as a lecturer. I have carefully selected reading and designed activities, which will require you to examine the world around you as well as collaborate with fellow students. We will work together to create an environment where we all members of the class are students, teachers and learners. Each student will bring personal experiences and examples that relate to many of the topics to be discussed in the course, your experiences and examples will greatly enrich and benefit your fellow students.

**Student Expectations**  
To facilitate your success in this course I have the following suggestions:

- 1) In a traditional class, attendance is key in an online class the principle is the same. Set

Figure 5. JPEG of the week-by-week layout on the learning interface.

The screenshot displays the Blackboard Academic Suite interface for a course titled "ORG COMM ONLINE (GROUP: ORG COMM)". The browser address bar shows the URL: <http://ilearn.byui.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=community&url=/t>. The interface includes a top navigation bar with "I-Learn" and "Content" tabs, and a left sidebar with various course tools and announcements.

**Left Sidebar:**

- Announcements:** Start Here, Syllabus, Week by Week, Course Readings, Case Studies, Discussion Board, Email, Wiki, Groups, Grade Center, Digital Dropbox.
- Tools:** Communication, Organization Tools, My Portfolios, Organization Map, Refresh, Detail View.

**Course Content:**

**Week by Week**

**Week 1**

The weekly break down of assignments, readings, and instructions. Please review carefully.

Week 1-- Introduction to Organizational Communication

*Readings:* Strengthen Faith as You Seek Knowledge, Gray L. Crittenden Business Summit

*Remarks*

*Due:* Syllabus Quiz, Online Learning Tutorial, and Worth a Thousand Words

**Week 2**

The weekly break down of assignments, readings and instructions. Please review carefully.

Week 2-- Classical Approaches

*Topic:* Classical Management- Henri Fayol, Theory of Bureaucracy- Max Weber, Theory of Scientific Management- Frederick Taylor

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 16-32.

Drucker, 2002, p. 70-78.

*Due:* Worth a Thousand Words Part II

**Week 3**

The weekly break down of assignments, readings and instructions. Please review carefully.

Week 3-- Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches

*Topic:* The Hawthorne Studies, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, McGregor Theory X and Theory Y

*Readings:*

Miller, 2008, p. 36-54.

Morse and Lorsch, 1970, p. 61-68.

*Due:* Discussion Board

**Week 4**



Figure 6. JPEG of the additional course readings included on the learning interface.

The screenshot displays the Blackboard Academic Suite interface. The browser address bar shows the URL: <http://ilearn.byui.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=community&url=/t>. The page header includes the BYU IDAHO logo and navigation tabs for "I-Learn" and "Content".

On the left side, there is a blue sidebar with the following menu items:

- Announcements
- Start Here
- Syllabus
- Week by Week
- Course Readings
- Case Studies
- Discussion Board
- Email
- Wiki
- Groups
- Grade Center
- Digital Dropbox

Below these items, there is a "Tools" section with the following options:

- Communication
- Organization Tools
- My Portfolios
- Organization Map

At the bottom of the sidebar, there are "Refresh" and "Detail View" buttons.

The main content area is titled "Course Readings" and lists several PDF documents with their titles and file sizes:

- Bernick Reading**  
[Bernick.pdf](#) (197.259 Kb)
- Brett, Behfar, and Kern Reading**  
[Brett, Behfar, and Kern.pdf](#) (255.268 Kb)
- Bunker and Wakefield Reading**  
[Bunker and Wakefield.pdf](#) (128.432 Kb)
- Charan Reading**  
[Charan.pdf](#) (283.545 Kb)
- Drucker Reading**  
[Drucker.pdf](#) (107.835 Kb)
- Hammond, Keeney, and Raiffa Reading**  
[Hammond, Keeney, and Raiffa.pdf](#) (225.818 Kb)
- Kotter Reading**  
[Kotter.pdf](#) (279.294 Kb)
- Morse and Lorsch Reading**  
[Morse and Lorsch.pdf](#) (74.402 Kb)
- Rollag, Parise, and Cross Reading**  
[Rollag, Parise, and Cross.pdf](#) (252.307 Kb)
- Simons Reading**  
[Simons.pdf](#) (804.875 Kb)
- Thomas Reading**  
[Thomas.pdf](#) (232.745 Kb)
- Weick and Coutu Reading**  
[Weick and Coutu.pdf](#) (232.745 Kb)

Figure 7. JPEG of course readings in .pdf format on the learning interface.

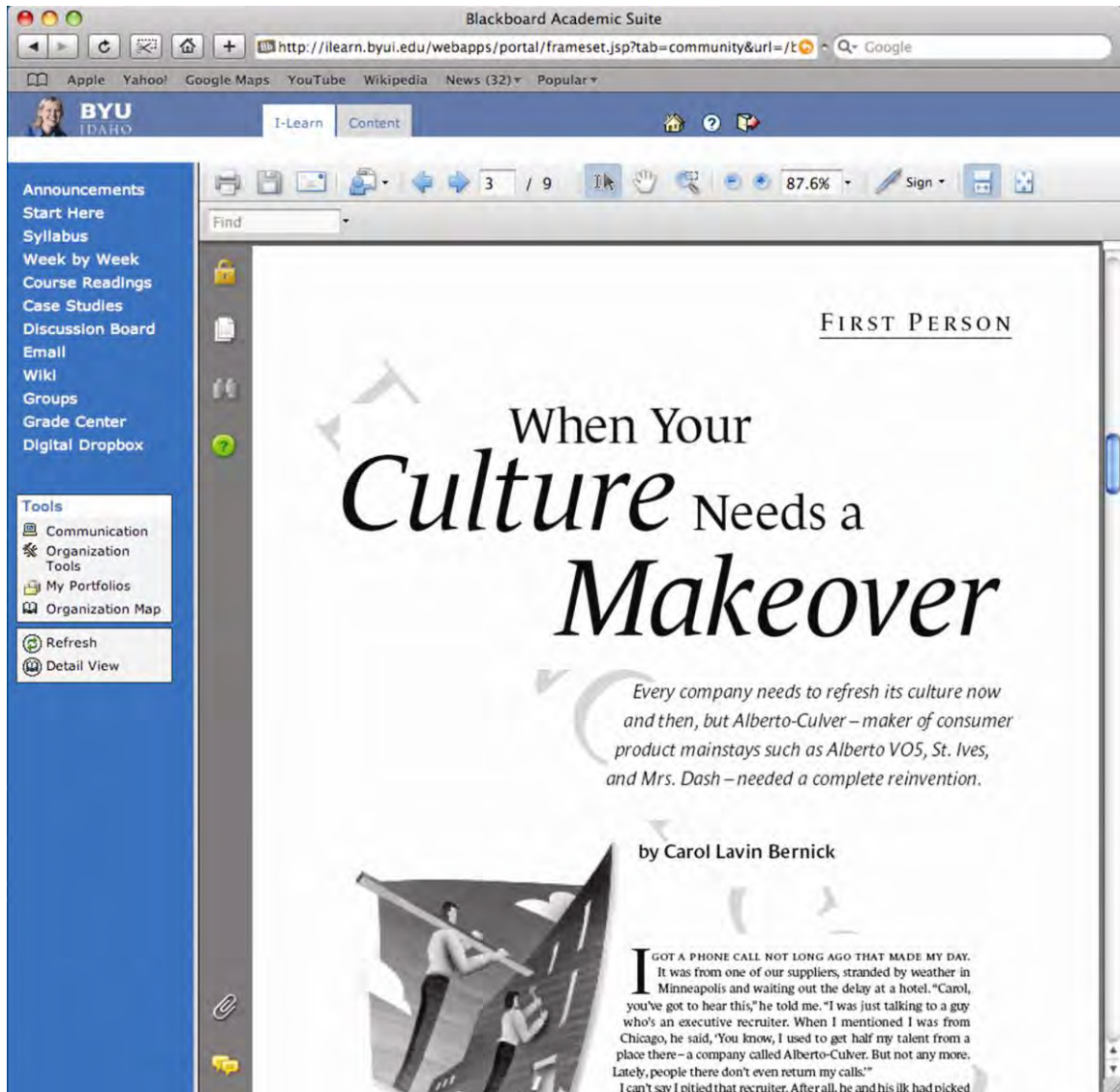




Figure 8. JPEG of case studies page on the learning interface.

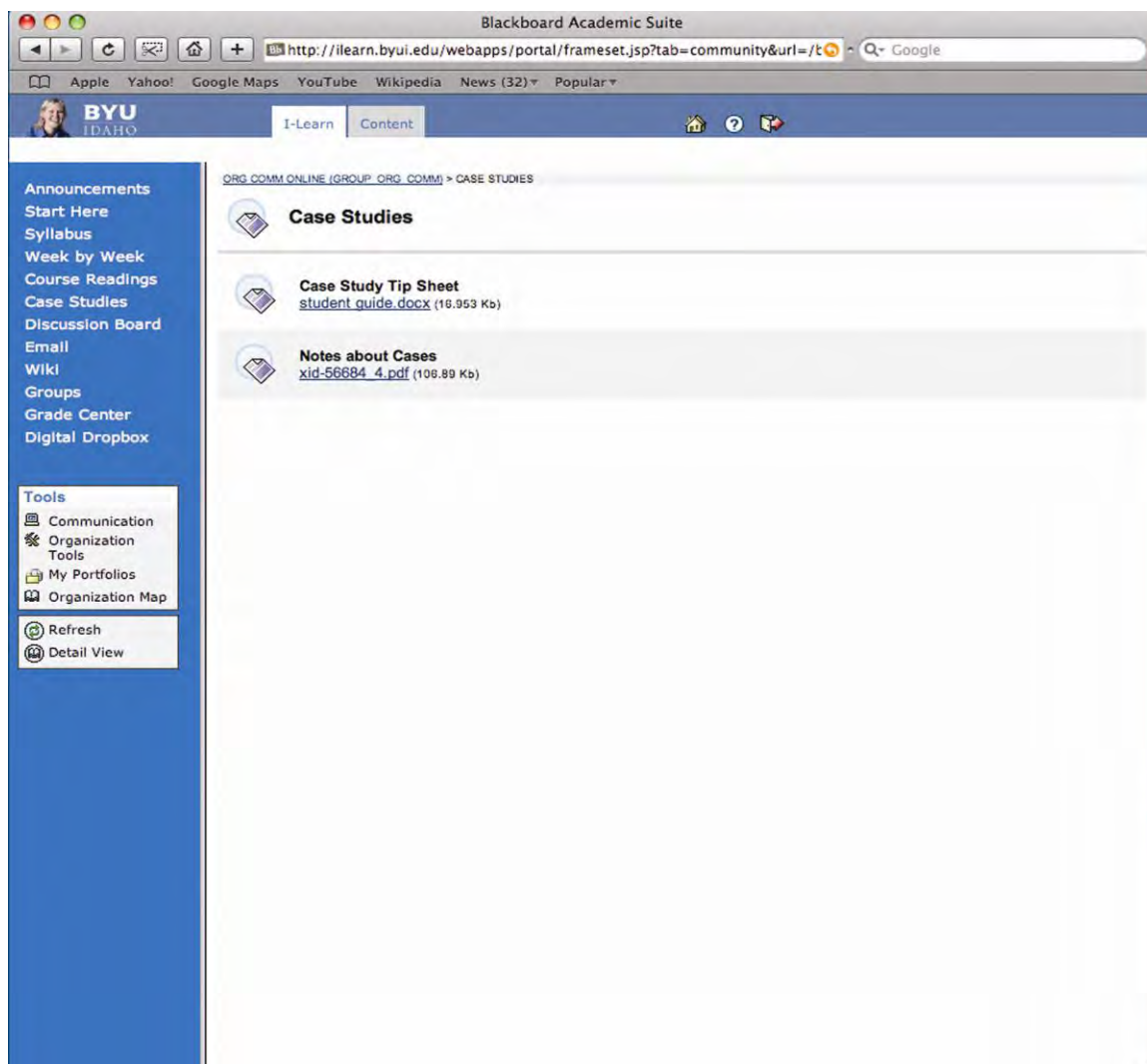


Figure 9. JPEG of case studies in .pdf format on the learning interface.

The screenshot displays a web browser window with the address bar showing a URL from <http://ilearn.byui.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=community&url=/t>. The browser's address bar also includes a search bar with the text "Google".

The main content area of the browser shows a PDF document titled "A Note on Case Learning" from Harvard Business School. The document is displayed at 87.6% zoom. The left sidebar of the PDF viewer contains a "Find" search bar and a list of navigation icons. The right sidebar of the PDF viewer contains a "Sign" button and a "Print" icon.

The PDF document content includes the Harvard Business School logo and the following text:

**Harvard Business School** 9-899-105  
Rev. April 27, 1999

### A Note on Case Learning

In March, a salesperson for Dominion Motors & Controls (DMC), calling on the Hamilton Oil Company (HOC), DMC's largest customer for oil well pumping motors, discovered in tests started the previous October, that the DMC product was rated third against two competitive offerings. The tests were conducted by John Bridges, HOC's chief electrical engineer, to determine the specifications of a motor that would be most economical for the application. Tests indicated that the ideal oil well pumping motor would be in the 3-5 horsepower (HP) range and would have a starting torque in excess of 70 pounds-feet (pft) to energize pumps in temperatures as low as -50 degrees Fahrenheit. (Starting torque is the twisting or turning power of the motor which enables it to overcome initial load resistance.)

A motor meeting such specifications would have to be custom designed. (So far, it may be noted, the Canadian motor markets had been served by general purpose motors meeting National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) code requirements.) Among the available brand offerings, Bridges was believed to have ranked the Spartan 7½ HP motor with 102 pounds-feet of starting torque as the preferred unit. Universal's 7½ with 97 pft was second choice; DMC's 7½ with 89 pft was presumably third on Bridges' list.

Until these tests were performed, Hamilton had been using DMC 10 HP motors with 105 pft. According to the DMC salesperson, Bridges was scheduled to report his findings to HOC top engineering and purchasing personnel in May.

One factor that had apparently inspired the chief electrical engineer's initiatives was a determined drive on the part of Canadian electrical utilities to curtail the practice of overmotoring, that is, using larger motors than were required for a particular application. Overmotoring resulted in the inefficient usage of electricity. To discourage the use, say, of 10 HP motors where 7½ or 5 HP units would do the job, the Canadian power companies had recently announced a rate change. Henceforth, the base rate for 5 HP motors would be \$125 per month, \$161.25 for 7½ HPs, and \$200 for 10 HP units.

#### Options

DMC executives had to decide what action, if any, the company could take to maintain its share (50%) of the Canadian oil well pumping market. Options under consideration included the following:

Figure 10. JPEG of case studies page on the learning interface.

Blackboard Academic Suite

http://ilearn.byui.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=community&url=/t... Google

Apple Yahoo! Google Maps YouTube Wikipedia News (32) Popular

BYU IDAHO I-Learn Content

ORG COMM ONLINE (GROUP: ORG COMM) > DISCUSSION BOARD

### Discussion Board

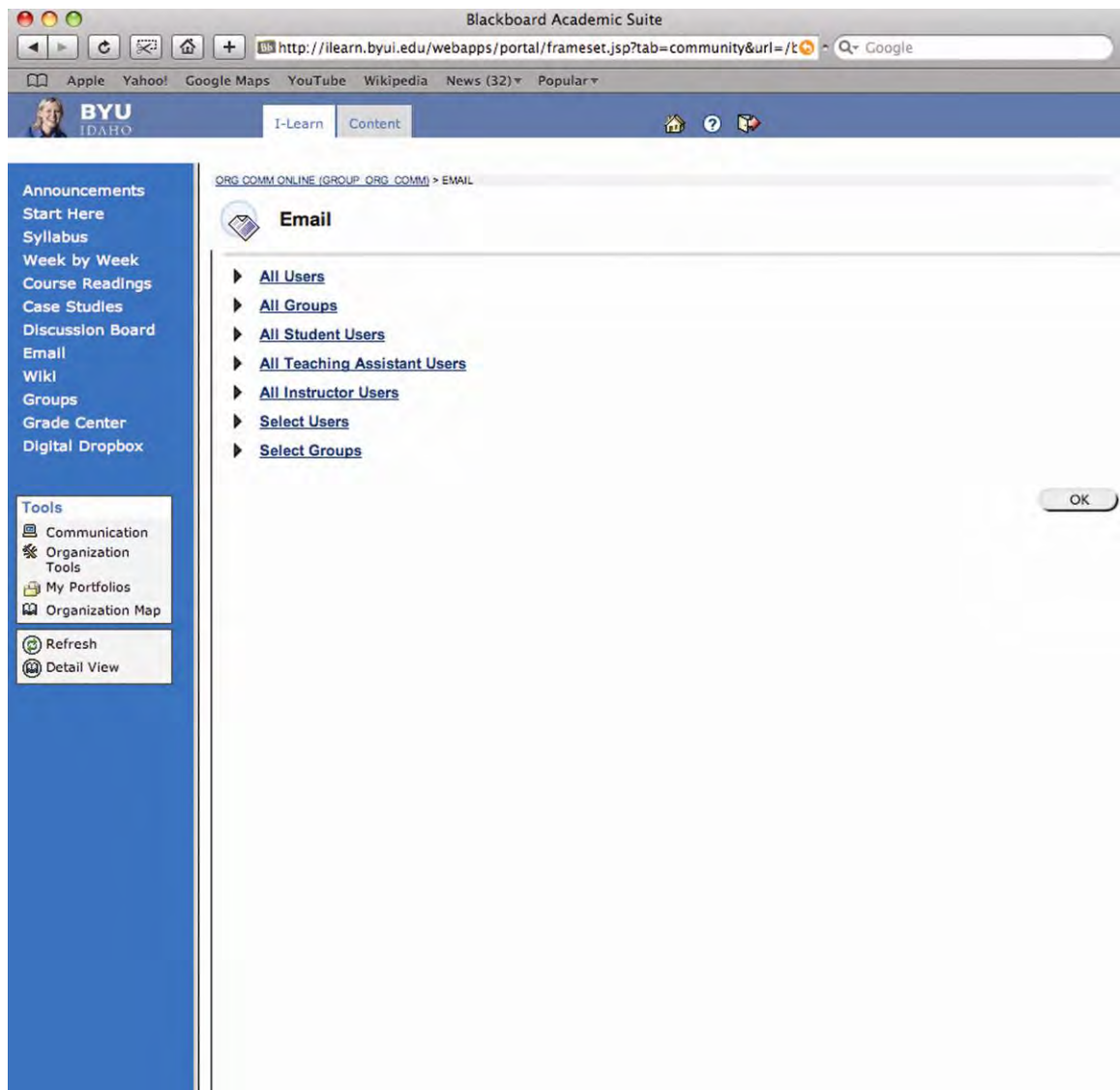
Search  ☐ After Aug 20 2008 12 00 AM  ☐ Before Aug 21 2008 12 00 AM

Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<u>1st Week Questions</u>	0	0	0

1. How can we use the Gifts of the Spirit to help us in our learning activities? How is this type of learning different from the ways you have learned in the past?
2. How will you incorporate the principles of the BYU-Idaho Learning Model into your study and routine?

OK

Figure 11. JPEG of email options on the learning interface.



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## VITA

Adam R. Bair was born in Twin Falls, Idaho and grew up in Heyburn, Idaho, where he attended Paul Elementary, West Minico Junior High, and Minco Senior High.

After graduating from high school, Adam attended Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho, where he earned his associate degree. He then attended Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication with a minor in Political Science in April of 2005. He was named the Communication Department Man of the Year for 2005. In addition to completing course work, he was a competitive debater, winning several gold medals and other awards at the regional and national level. He worked for the university paper on the copy desk, as a section assistant editor, as advertising representative, and as a production manager.

Adam began work for the College of Business and Communication at BYU-Idaho after graduation where he worked as Special Projects Director for the Dean. In this capacity, he completed both an internal and external marketing campaign for the college, planned and supervised events, and completed a leadership model.

Adam has also worked as an adjunct professor in the Communication Department at BYU-Idaho. It was in this position that he gained a true passion for the educational process and a love of working with students. The topic of communication in the education process is one of his scholarly interests that he plans on studying in-depth.

In addition to his scholarly achievements, Adam also speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese, a talent that requires many hours of practice and study to remain conversant. One of Adam's most important priorities is serving others and the community. Following the events of 9/11, Adam had the opportunity to work as disaster relief volunteer for the American Red Cross in New York City for five months.