Goal

- Develop knowledge, sensitivity, skill, and value competencies through an interaction of theory, practice, and analysis
Objectives

- Describe communication in the information-rich world
- Define and describe communication competency
- Define and describe the human communication process
- Identify descriptions of organizations
- Surveying definitions of organizational communication
Objectives

- Understanding communication as a key to organizational excellence
- Developing awareness of our personal communication competencies
- Understand human communication as creating shared realities, shared meanings
- Distinguish among interpersonal, small group, and organizational communication
Objectives

- Assess student’s personal development needs
- Practice analysis capabilities
Challenges for Individuals and Organizations

Issues that need to be addressed in the next 20 years…

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The Communications Era

- Nature of Innovation
  - Outsourcing

- Globalization

- Shift from informational to conceptual age
  - Increase in jobs requiring communication expertise
  - With more than half of America’s workforce and gross national product in knowledge industries, virtually all agree we are in a postindustrial information society moving to a conceptual age
Key Terms

- **Information society** - environment in which more jobs create, process, or distribute information than directly produce goods. The environment is characterized by mass production of information, which requires the constant learning of new activities and processes.
Key Terms

- **Conceptual age** – environment in which inventive, empathetic, big-picture capabilities will be required for the most fulfilling jobs. Written and oral communication, inquiry, critical and creative thinking, qualitative literacy, cultural knowledge, teamwork, synthesis of learning, and strong personal ethics will be highly valued.
Jobs of the Conceptual Age

- Teacher
- Lawyer
- Media
- Writer
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Finance
The Communications Era

- Characterized by rapid change associated with mass production of information, change requiring consistent involvement in the learning of new activities, processes and technologies
Tools That Change the Way We Work

- Wireless Networks
- Fiber-Optic Connections
- Global Telecommunications
- Discs
- Email
- Credit Card/Electronic Transactions
- Cell Phone
- Satellites
- Internet/Social Networking
Term of the day

- **Convergence**
  - Computing, wireless technologies, and more traditional media such as television converging into integrated tools for work, school, family, and leisure environments

- **Our challenge…**
  - Avoid information overload by learning how to deal with increasing information alternatives
Organizational excellence stems from dedicated people who are motivated to work together and who share similar values and visions about the results of their efforts.

Numerous scholars have suggested that organizations are essentially complex communication processes that create and change events.
Communication: The Key to Organizational Excellence

- Research has linked organizational communication to:
  - Managerial effectiveness
  - The integration of work units across organizational levels
  - Job satisfaction
  - Innovation
  - Adaptability
  - Creativity
  - Overall organizational effectiveness and performance
Communication: The Key to Organizational Excellence

- With more rapid change, more information, less certainty about complex decisions, organizations need competent communicators at all organizational levels.

- Communication scholars and active organizational members must work together to understand what contributes to organizational communication competency.
Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson (2004) identified a contemporary “good communicator” theme when reviewing research from personnel administrators throughout the United States of America.

Today’s organizations need people who are flexible and creative people who have diverse and well-developed communication abilities.

- How do we determine if we are competent organizational communicators?
- Who decides?
- On what do we base our conclusions?
Fred Jablin and Patricia Sias (2001)

- Comprehensive discussion of communication competency, suggested that the concept of communication competency is best understood by an ecological model that revolves around four systems:
Fred Jablin and Patricia Sias (2001)

**The Microsystem**
Immediate work environment

**The Exosystem**
Overarching cultural belief system, forms of knowledge, social, technological and political ideologies

**The Mesosystem**
Interrelations among various microsystems

**The Macrosystem**
Major divisions of the organization and the organization itself as a whole
Linkage between communication competence and ethics. Specifically, she identifies issues of competence related to pursuing self-interest versus the interest of others, to engaging in information sharing versus manipulation, and to recognizing the long-term effects of communication across time and diverse relationships.
Stephen Littlejohn and David Jabusch (1982)

- Communication competency involves our personal willingness and ability to communicate so that our meanings are understood and we understand the meanings of others.

- Involves interaction of three primary elements:
  - Theory
  - Practice
  - Analysis
Perception of Competency is Relative

- My impression of my own competency and the competency of others is related to my evaluation of whether we exhibited the “right” behaviors and achieved “desirable” results in a particular situation.

- How do we prepare for future communication needs?
Future Communication Needs

- Process understanding
  - Cognitive ability to understand the dynamics of the communication event

- Interpersonal sensitivity
  - Ability to perceive feelings and meanings

- Communication skills
  - Ability to develop and interpret message strategies in specific situations

- Ethical responsibility
  - Attitudinal set that governs concern for the well-being of all participants in taking responsibility for communication outcomes
Key Terms

- **Organizational excellence** - ability of people to work together and utilize technology for creative solving of increasingly complex problems.

- **Communication competency** - comprises knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values. Competence arises from interaction of theory, practice, and analysis.
Organizational Communication: A Competency-Based Approach

- Knowledge
- Sensitivity
- Skills
- Values
Key Terms

- **Competency components**
  - **Knowledge** - the ability to understand the organizational communication environment
  - **Sensitivity** - the ability to accurately sense organizational meanings and feelings
Key Terms

- **Skills** - the ability to accurately analyze organizational situations and to effectively initiate and consume organizational messages

- **Values** - the importance of taking personal responsibility for effective communication, thereby contributing to organizational excellence
Defining Communication

Communication behaviors create and shape relationships and events through a culturally dependent process of assigning meaning to symbols.
Key Terms

- **Human communication process** - attempts to construct shared realities through social interaction.

- **Sources and receivers** - individuals send messages as sources and receive messages as receivers. The process is often so rapid as to appear simultaneous.
Key Terms

- **Encoding and Decoding** - message encoding is the process of formulating messages, choosing content and symbols to convey meaning. Message decoding is the process of assigning meaning in the role of receiver to message symbols generated by the message source.
Key Terms

- **Message** - symbolic attempt to transfer meaning; the signal that serves as a stimulus for a receiver.
- **Channel** - medium through which the message is transmitted.
Key Terms

- **Noise** - distortion of interference that contributes to discrepancies between the meaning intended by the source of a message and the meaning assigned by the receiver.
Key Terms

- **Field of experience** - set of specific experiences or background that all parties in communication bring to bear on the interaction.
- **Communication context** - environment for the communication interaction.
- **Realities and Effects** - result, consequence, or outcome of communication exchanges.
Human Communication

- Our attempts to have others understand our world as we do or as we want them to understand it and our efforts to comprehend the world of those around us.
Key Terms

- **Reality or Effect** - Created social reality or result, consequence, or outcome of communication exchanges.
Communication as Constitutive of Shared Realities

- Human communication is the process of attempting to construct shared realities, to create shared meanings, social interaction realities
Key Terms

- **Shared realities** - meanings resulting from the communication process; attempts to have others understand our world as we do or as we intend for it to be understood, and our efforts to comprehend the world of those around us.
“A first-order constitutive model of communication posits that communication, rather than merely a neutral conduit for transmitting independently existing information, is the primary social process through which our meaningful common world is constructed.” As a process for the construction of shared realities, human communication is culturally and contextually influenced, dynamic, and ever-changing.
Construction of Shared Realities to Create Shared Meaning

- Interpersonal Communication
  - When this process occurs between two individuals with some type of ongoing relationship

- Group Communication
  - When the process occurs among several individuals
Construction of Shared Realities to Create Shared Meaning

- Public/Mass Communication
  - When large numbers of people are involved (either personally or through technological channels)

- Organizational Communication
  - The human communication process in organizations
The Meaning of Shared Meaning

- Shared meanings are always incomplete and characterized by ambiguity
- The human communication process as an attempt to construct shared realities can represent openness and clarity but also be characterized by manipulation, control, or deceit
- The construction of meaning is an intentional process between us related to our knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values
Key Terms

Organization - result of the process of organizing; dynamic system in which individuals engage in collective efforts for goal accomplishments.
Amitai Etzioni (1964)

- Organizations are social units or groupings of people deliberately constructed and reconstructed to strive for specific goals
- Characterized by divisions of labor for goal achievement
- Directed by relatively continuous patterns of authority and leadership
- Complex interdependence among internal and external components requires coordination through communication
Key Terms

Organizational communication - process through which organizations are created and in turn create and shape events. The process can be understood as a combination of process, people, messages, meaning, and purpose.
Organizational Communication as a Process

- An *on-going process without distinct beginnings and ends*. The process includes *patterns of interactions* that develop among organizational members and those external to the organization and *how these interactions shape organizations*

- Evolutionary

- Culturally dependent
Organizational Communication as a Process

- The on-going process of creating and transmitting organizational messages reflects the shared agreements and disagreements resulting from previous message exchanges and evolves to generate new realities that create and shape events.
Organizational Communication as a Process

In...

- Developing strategy,
- Planning,
- Decision making and executing work
- During unexpected crises
- Changes in the external environment
- Encounters with competitors,
- A host of less visible ways
Organizational Communication as a Process

- Between…
  - Individuals performing daily work or socializing

- And includes…
  - Messages to large numbers of
    - Employers
    - Customers
    - Stakeholders

All these interactions taken together create and shape the on-going organization
Organizational Communication as People

- Individuals bring to organizations sets of characteristics that influence how information is processed. Organizational communication contributes to creating relationships and assists both individuals and organizations in achieving diverse purposes.
Organizational Communication as People

Organizational communication occurs between and among people who...

- share both work and interpersonal relationships
- are geographically separated
- may speak different languages and have widely differing cultural perspectives
- exist across networks and need to obtain a variety of objectives requiring communication interactions
Organizational Communication as Messages

- Organizational communication is
  - the creation and exchange of messages
  - the movement or transmission of verbal and nonverbal behaviors
  - the sharing of information throughout the organization
Organizational Communication as Messages

- Communicators are linked together by channels, and messages described with such terms as frequency, amount, and type.

- Concern is expressed for message fidelity, or the extent to which messages are similar or accurate at all links through the channels.
Organizational Communication as Messages

- Organizational messages are increasingly telemediated (using complex technologies) which...
  - extend their geographic reach
  - change notions of time and space
  - alters who participates in communication processes
Organizational Communication as Meaning

- Organizational communication creates and shapes organizational events
- Role taking occurs as individuals engage in social interaction within the ever-changing organizational context
Organizational Communication as Meaning

- Organizational communication creates and shapes organizational events
- Role taking occurs as individuals engage in social interaction within the ever-changing organizational context
Organizational Communication as Meaning

Organizational communication...

- Is the symbolic behavior of individuals and organizations that, when interpreted, affects all organizational activities
- Does not create a singular set of meanings for organizational members and activities
- The interactions of ever-changing behaviors often create multiple perceptions of events and multiple realities that become the process through which organizational meanings are generated
Organizational Communication as Constitutive of Organizations

Organizational communication…

- Is organizing, decision making, planning, controlling, and coordinating
- Seeks to reduce environmental uncertainty
- Is people, messages, and meaning
- Is intentional and unintentional messages explaining the workings of the organization.
- Reflects the purpose of the organization
Organizational Communication as Constitutive of Organizations

- Organizational communication...
  - Is the process through which individuals and organizations attempt goal-oriented behavior in dealing with their environments.
“Communication, in the view I am suggesting, refers to the social processes by which meanings, identities, psychological states, social structures, and the various means of the contact of the organization with the environment are both produced, reproduced, or changed. In both its constitutive and reproductive modes, communication processes are central to how perceptions, meanings, and routines are held in common. In all interactions, including those in organizations, perception, meaning, and data transmission are all complex, multileveled phenomena produced out of and producing conflicting motives and structures” (p. 90)
Discussion Question #1

- What unusual communication demands are placed on the “competent communicator” today’s organizations?
Discussion Question #2

- How will you, as a “competent communicator” use each of the four components of competency (knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values) in your personal and professional life?
Discuss Question #3

- Describe a person you consider to be a "competent communicator" and describe how he or she demonstrates the four components of competency (knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values).
Discussion Question #4

- If communication competence is the key to organizational excellence, how would you encourage the members of an organization to become competent communicators?
Communication competency is described as a combination of knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values. If you had to do without one of these components, which would you think was most dispensable? If you could add a fifth component, what might be added?
Discussion Question #6

- Describe what is meant when one says that communication is to be understood as a process.
Discussion Question #7

- Describe a communication event in which you participated or observed. Identify and describe the sources/receivers, channels, noise, competence, experience, context, and effects that made up the event.
Discussion Question #8

Since we all play a part in creating the “shared realities” of our organizations, what ethical responsibilities should we recognize and assume?
Discussion Question #9

- Describe an occasion when you observed the members of an organization using communication to create and shape an event.
Discussion Question #10

- Generate your own definition of the terms “organization” and “organizational communication.”