University of the Incarnate Word
COMM 2341
Session Notes
Chapter 1 – The Communications Process

I.   Communication defined
    A. Communication is not simply the process of transferring thought and ideas from one person to another.
    B. Communication is the process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways.

II.   The Basic Model of Communication
    A.   Person A/Person B, the sender and the receiver, both send and receive messages simultaneously.
    B. Stimulus and motivation are two requirements that trigger a sender to send a message.
C.   The coding process involves encoding and decoding.
        1. Encoding is the process of putting a message into the form in which it is to be communicated.
        2. Decoding is the process the receiver goes through in trying to interpret the exact meaning of a message.
    D. Frames of reference are the background and experiences of both sender and receiver.
        1. No two people have identical frames of reference.
        2. Everything we experience through our senses must pass through our frames of reference.
        3. Managers and employees have different frames of reference.
        4. As messages progress up and down levels they are leveled, condensed, sharpened, assimilated, and embellished.
        5. Therefore, 100% communication is a communication fallacy and so the effective communicator prepares for possible misunderstandings ahead of time.
    E. The symbols that carry the message are communicated through codes.
        1. The three basic communication codes are
            a. *Language* (the verbal code) involves either spoken or written words.
            b. *Paralanguage* (the vocal code) involves the vocal elements that go along with the spoken language.
            c. *Nonverbal* (visual code) involves all intentional and unintentional means other than the written or spoken word by which a person sends a message.
        2. The codes must be consistent for effective communication.
        3. People tend to believe what they see over what they hear when conflicting messages occur.
    F. A channel is the medium selected to carry the message.

        1. Fewer codes that are used in the channel selected mean the greater the

chance of communication breakdown.
2. Considerations for choosing a channel in the business setting are the:
   a. Importance of the message.
   b. Needs and abilities of the receiver.
   c. Amount and speech of the feedback required.
   d. Necessity of a permanent record.
   e. Cost of the channel.
   f. Formality or informality desired.
3. Memos and emails are often the channel of choice.
   a. Selection of words can affect the receiver's perception.
   b. Readers judge a company favorably when flexible- sounding words are used in emails and unfavorably when strict-sounding words are used.

G. Feedback involves the verbal and visual response to a message.
1. Feedback improves the accuracy and productivity of individuals and groups and it increases employee satisfaction.
2. Feedback also has disadvantages.
   a. It can cause people to feel under attack psychologically.
   b. It is time consuming.
   c. It can be difficult to elicit.
   d. It is risky and may have resulted in negative past experiences.
3. When receiving feedback from others you should
   a. Tell people you want it.
   b. Identify in which areas you want it.
   c. Set aside time for regular feedback sessions.
   d. Use silence to encourage feedback.
   e. Watch for nonverbal responses.
   f. Ask questions.
   g. Paraphrase.
   h. Use statements that encourage it.
   i. Reward feedback.
   j. Follow up.
4. When giving feedback to others:
   a. Direct it toward the behavior, not the person.
   b. Use descriptive, not evaluative, language.
   c. Use it to share ideas, not give advice.
   d. Give only as much information as the person can take at one time.
   e. Give it immediately and at an appropriate time.
   f. Allow face-saving when possible.

H. Environment includes the time, place, physical and social surroundings in which the communicators find themselves.
I. Noise is anything that interferes with communication by distorting or blocking the message.
1. External noise includes distractions within the environment.
2. Internal noise refers to conditions of the receiver.

III. Communication and Ethics
A. The American public has lost faith in the honesty and ethics of most professional people.
B. To avoid unethical practices and be more likely to succeed, several theorists

recommend four ethical rules:
1. The utilitarian rule.
2. The moral rights rule.
3. The justice rule.
4. The practical rule.
C. Companies should encourage discussion of ethical issues.
D. Management must model ethical behavior in order for ethics codes and training to be meaningful.
C. Avoid the traps that tempt business and professional communicators:
1. The trap of necessity
2. The trap of relativity
3. The trap of rationalization (This isn't as bad as others have done.)
4. The trap of self-deception (No one will find out.)
5. The trap of the end justifies the means.
D. Understand the practical reasons for being ethical.
1. If people lose faith in you or your company, failure is inevitable.
2. People enjoy dealing with ethical people.
3. Unethical behavior can weigh heavily on your conscience.

IV. Summary
A. Effective communication is not easy; it's hard work.
B. Developing good communication skills can help ensure your success in the business setting.
C. Understanding the importance of ethical communication behavior can help you develop good communication skills.
D. Effective communicators are able to analyze communication problems and avoid the same mistakes in the future.