AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES'

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF

BUSINESS WRITING TOPICS EMPHASIZED

IN THE MOST COMMONLY ADOPTED

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

TEXTBOOKS

By

JOAN CHADWICK RODERICK

Bachelor of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
May, 1968

Master of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
May, 1983

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
December, 1985

AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES'

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF

BUSINESS WRITING TOPICS EMPHASIZED

IN THE MOST COMMONLY ADOPTED

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

TEXTBOOKS

Thesis Approved:

Clayton Millington
Thesis Adviser

Jeanine H. Rhea

Lloyd L Garrison

Bill F Elsom

Norman N. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

1251846

ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The support and cooperation of many people made this study possible.

The valuable assistance and helpful suggestions given by my chairman, Dr. Clayton Millington, are sincerely appreciated. To the rest of my committee, Dr. Bill Elsom, Dr. Lloyd Garrison, and Dr. Jeanine Rhea, my gratitude is extended for their guidance in this study.

My sincere and heartfelt appreciation is expressed to those people who were not directly involved in my study but who provided the impetus for me to complete my degree program.

My parents, John and Annabel Chadwick, instilled in me the importance of an education and the internal motivation to finish what I started. I will always be grateful to them for their constant support and never-ending confidence.

A debt of gratitude is extended to a very special friend, Herbert Jelley, for the continuing encouragement and advice he gave me during the past year. Because of his quiet reassurance, I was able to withstand the rigors of graduate school.

To Karen Forcht and Debbie Renshaw, I offer my appreciation and thanks for always "being there" when I needed to talk.

Most of all, however, I want to thank my two daughters, Jennifer and Allison, for being a constant source of strength throughout the last three years. Their encouragement, confidence, and cooperation made it possible for me to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Written communication has long been regarded as one of
the most effective methods to convey messages and ideas.
The prehistoric hieroglyphics found on cave walls by arche-
ologists indicate that even the cavemen of our early world
did not want to depend solely upon oral transmission of
messages. Although the cave etchings are crude and some-
times unintelligible to 20th-century man, they do provide a
positive confirmation to modern communicators: the primi-
tive Neanderthal knew that certain information needed to be
expressed in written form to be more accurate and sustaining.

As in prehistoric times, today's business people depend
on the written word to convey messages. Research studies
have shown that the ability to communicate effectively is
considered by most people to be essential for a successful
career (Adkins, 1980; Johnson, 1980; Lemley, 1981). In most
organizations, the written word is a prime means of communi-
cating with customers, with superiors, with subordinates,
and with peers. Written communication, whether it be in the
form of a letter to a customer, a memorandum to a co-worker,
or an order for additional supplies, represents the

lifeblood of an organization; the amount of paperwork flowing
through a business firm every day constitutes one of the
arterial conveyances of that firm. Without the daily paper-
flow, the company would wither and die because

> . . . new orders would not be filled, supplies
> would not be received, credit would not be estab-
> lished, new techniques would not be devised,
> research would be slow and plodding, and manage-
> ment's decisions would be based on inadequate
> information (Krey and Metzler, 1976, p. 2).

Correspondence takes a significant part of a business
person's day. Letters and memorandums fulfill a variety of
business functions, from adjusting customer complaints to
scheduling appointments or meetings. Janis (1967, p. 65)
emphasizes the importance of written communication in busi-
ness when he says, "Even when the telephone or in-person
conversation is more convenient, the businessman often
prefers the letter because it leaves a record for future
reference." Because correspondence costs are on the rise,
business people have cause to be concerned about the knowl-
edge of employees, both present and future, in the area of
written communication.

The 1984 survey from the Dartnell Institute of Business
Research, Chicago, indicates that the average cost of a busi-
ness letter is $8.10, representing a 6.6 percent increase
over the $7.60 cost per letter in 1983 ("1984 Business Letter
Cost is $8.10", August/September 1984). Because the cost of
business correspondence has escalated to approximately $70
billion a year (Fieldon et al., 1984), business firms are
demanding that their employees have high levels of skill in

business communication. A statement issued in 1984 by the
Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education
("This We Believe About the Teaching of Business Communica-
tion," October 1984) cites the need for students to have a
solid foundation in the total communication process so they
will be better able to function effectively in both their
personal and professional lives. This statement directly
parallels the pleas of business people to provide college
students the communication skills necessary to become more
efficient and effective employees.

With these facts in mind, collegiate business communi-
cation instructors need to be concerned about teaching their
students a relevant skill, a skill so finely honed that the
graduating senior will feel competent in his/her ability to
communicate effectively. Jeanne W. Halpern (1981) encourages
business communication instructors to teach students the
underlying strategies of business writing. She further
states that educators should be teaching students the pro-
cesses of business communication rather than the specifics so
the student can apply his/her knowledge in actual, on-the-job
situations.

Collegiate instructors, however, may be limited in
teaching the practical applications of business communica-
tion as business people perceive them because the textbooks
available for adoption may not be emphasizing the areas most
important to business. Because of this concern, this present
study will look at the emphasis given to topics in written

business communication textbooks and compare them to the topics which business executives believe are important for successful writing.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to make available the opinions of business people concerning the relative importance of key business communication topics.

Many studies in the area of communication indicate that effective communication skills are essential for successful business careers. Quible et al. (1981) state that the ability to communicate has been cited as the most important quality that personnel managers seek when interviewing candidates for managerial positions.

In view of this fact, written communication courses are prevalent in most colleges and universities in the United States, and in some cases, are requirements of certain degree programs. Many students complete these courses each semester; but are they learning the skills necessary to help them in the business world? Glassman and Farley (1979) report findings in their study which indicate that executives are criticizing business schools for graduating students who cannot write. Therefore, educators might well seek answers to the following questions.

1. Is there an agreement between the perceptions of business executives concerning the importance of certain communication topics and the space devoted

to these topics in the six business communication

textbooks having the largest number of adoptions in

1982?

2. Are business communication instructors teaching

    their students the practical skills which are most

    widely used in business as perceived by the

    business executives surveyed for this study?

Design of the Study

This study analyzed the perceptions of selected

business executives concerning the importance of business

writing concepts that are emphasized in the most commonly

adopted communication textbooks in 1982.

Explanation

A questionnaire was sent to the chief executive officer

of 122 companies that conducted employment interviews during

the Fall, 1984, semester on the Oklahoma State University

campus. Data was collected from the questionnaire con-

cerning the business person's perception of the importance

of various areas of business communication. Ober and Wunsch

(1983) conducted a study which identified the six business

communication textbooks most widely adopted for classroom

use at the postsecondary level (see Appendix A). A content

analysis was undertaken for this present study to ascertain

the major topics discussed in reasonable detail within each

book, as follows:

1. APPLICATION LETTERS AND RESUMES (including appropriate length of resumes; using class time to compile; including personal information; stating an "objective" for employment)

2. BAD NEWS LETTERS (including refused adjustments; denying credit requests; and the inability to grant a request)

3. COLLECTION LETTERS (including number of reminders sent; use of form letters for collection; use of an ultimatum letter)

4. COMMUNICATION THEORY (including organization; you-attitude; tone; and the seven C's of business writing: correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, consideration, and courtesy)

5. FORMAL REPORTS (including research methods involved to collect data; using tables and graphs; using technical jargon; using the inductive or the deductive approach to present information)

6. INFORMAL REPORTS (including the direction in which information flows within a company; justification, progress, credit, and annual reports; using the inductive or the deductive approach to present information)

7. MEMORANDA (including the arrangement of information; reader reaction; using the inductive or the deductive approach to present information)

8. PERSUASIVE LETTERS (including asking for special favors and asking for adjustments)

9. ROUTINE/GOOD NEWS LETTERS (including granting credit to a customer; writing a favorable reply to a claim letter; placing/acknowledging orders; and requesting/supplying information

10. SALES LETTERS (including the unsolicited approach; using an "attention getter"; stating desired action in specific terms; and providing a stimulus to quick action through word choice)

11. SPECIAL LETTER (including how to write and/or reply to congratulatory letters; how to write and/or request letters of recommendation; how to write thank you letters)

The analysis involved a comparison of the amount of space (as revealed through a word count) devoted to the 11 selected topics in the textbooks.

Based on the word-count analysis, a questionnaire was constructed to gather data. Following this, the results were interpreted by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) to provide data for answering the following questions:

1. What areas of business communication do business people consider most essential?

2. How does the percentage of words devoted to each selected topic in the six textbooks most often adopted in 1982 for postsecondary use in business communication courses compare with the areas of written communication considered most important in business?

3. How many of the selected business executives
completed a collegiate business communication
course and to what extent does having completed
such a course influence their perception of what is
important in written business communication?

Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to the chief executive or
the person responsible for college recruiting (or his/her
designated representative) of 122 companies which sent repre-
sentatives to conduct employment interviews during the Fall,
1984, semester on the Oklahoma State University campus.

2. The textbooks selected for the content analysis
were delimited to the six textbooks most often adopted in
1982 for use in a business communication course at the
postsecondary level, as researched by Ober and Wunsch (1983).

3. This study used a five-stroke average word count to
define the approximate amount of space devoted to certain
topics in the six textbooks selected for this study.

Limitations

1. The perceptions of business communications held by
the respondents (the chief executive officer, the college
recruiter, or his/her designated representative) may not be
totally representative of the perceptions held by executives
of other companies.

2. The amount of space devoted to the topics may not

be indicative of the authors' perceptions of the importance of the topics in relation to actual business practices.

Significance of the Study

While there is a plethora of literature discussing the need for effective communication in business and the opinions of educators concerning what should be taught in a collegiate business communications course, there is a dearth of reported research related to the correlation between percentage of space devoted to certain topics in business communication textbooks and business people's perceptions of the importance of these topics. Although the amount of space devoted to subjects in textbooks is an imperfect indication of the importance placed on the topics by textbook authors and professors, it is a good indication of the time spent on the topics (and thus the attention given to them) (Good, 1966). Furthermore, it is a readily available measure. Because of the paucity of research-based information and because of the vital role effective communication plays in an organization, this study was conducted.

Definition of Terms

BAD NEWS LETTERS contain a message that is considered disappointing or unfavorable to the reader (Murphy and Peck, 1976).

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION is all means of communication with business-related thought (Sobolik, 1970).

COLLECTION LETTERS strive to obtain action (or payment) from the receiver while maintaining good will.

COMMUNICATION THEORY relates to behavioral concepts of communication theorists, such as tone, style, you-viewpoint, and the seven C's of letter writing.

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS are business messages which the receiver can easily understand and react to favorably (Murphy and Peck, 1972).

FORMAL REPORTS are generally at least ten pages in length with such inclusions as a title page, an index, a table of contents, and an appendix.

GOOD NEWS LETTERS convey favorable thoughts and ideas to the reader.

GOODWILL is a human blending of positive ideas and emotions communicated by words or other symbols and provided by helpful, appropriate, productive action (Wolf et al., 1979).

INFORMAL REPORTS are generally less than ten pages in length and more casual than are formal reports in design.

MEMORANDUMS are medium of internal written communication, most commonly used within the company to communicate policies, provide information, or attempt to persuade.

PERSUASIVE/SALES LETTERS attempt to sell a product or an idea to a reader who might be expected to resist taking the desired action (Himstreet and Baty, 1984).

REPORTS contain carefully sequenced material conveying information for making decisions, solving problems, or providing a permanent record; also, for dispensing information

to parties outside an organization; for developing or generating additional ideas; or for helping to ensure efficient company operations (Quible et al., 1981).

SEVEN C'S OF LETTER WRITING include the concepts of correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, concreteness, consideration, and courtesy.

STYLE is the manner of expressing thought, including the conventions of design, word usage, punctuation, and organization of material.

TONE is the way a statement sounds--its general overall effect on the reader.

YOU ATTITUDE incorporates facts within the letter which point to benefits for the reader (Wilkinson et al., 1983).

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The contents of the chapters are summarized in the following paragraphs:

1. Chapter I contains information relating to the purpose and the need for the study, the statement of the problem, limitations, delimitations, and definition of terms.

2. Chapter II reviews literature related to the gap between education and the business world.

3. Chapter III describes the research procedures used in this study.

4. Chapter IV presents the data analysis and

interpretations of the research findings.

5. Chapter V focuses on a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Are business people satisfied with the written communi-
cation skills college graduates acquire during their aca-
demic preparation? This chapter is organized to present a
review of literature pertaining to this question.

Willard Wirtz (1975) called major attention to the gap
between school and the world of work. He indicated that,
historically, school and work have been viewed as separate
entities. Even though much of American achievement has been
dependent upon school and work as coordinate forces,
learning and working were considered to be totally isolated
protects.

The gap Wirtz emphasized is clearly indicated in the
area of business writing. To illustrate the need for a
coordination of business and academia, the School of
Management at Brigham Young University prefaced its evalu-
ation guide for a specialized business writing course with
the following statement:

> Of the communication forms necessary for the
> everyday operation of almost every business acti-
> vity in today's society, written communication is
> perhaps the most important. However, the inabil-
> ity of students to communicate effectively through
> writing has received widespread attention in many
> circles. The editors of the Yale Alumni Magazine
> state flatly that 'students can't write.'

> <u>Time</u> speaks of 'the decline in writing ability.'
> Sidney Marland, president of the College Board
> refers to 'the inability of students to express
> themselves.' John Fielden, writing in the <u>Harvard</u>
> <u>Business Review</u>, notes that businessmen, when
> asked, 'What's the most troublesome problem you
> have to live with?' frequently respond by saying,
> 'People just can't write! What do they learn in
> college now? When I was a boy . . . !' And
> <u>Business Week</u> reports that many companies today
> are sending their executives through company-
> sponsored training programs just to teach them how
> to handle routine writing assignments satisfac-
> torily ("Building Business Students' Communication
> Skills," 1981, n.p.).

Colleges of business administration have been critized
for graduating students who lack basic communication
ability, especially writing skills (Glassman and Farley,
1979). Stine and Skarzenski (1979) quoted in their
study a business executive who stressed the importance of
emphasizing communication in colleges and universities:

> I do not feel that educational institutions place
> enough emphasis upon the importance of communica-
> tion skills. In my experience, the most success-
> ful executives are those who can communicate their
> own ideas to others, both superiors and
> subordinates (p. 27).

One businessman alumnus wrote to his alma mater: "Don't
send our company any more applicants who have graduate
business degrees until you teach them to write. The company
does not have time to teach them. That's your job!" ("The
Mystery of the Business Graduates Who Can't Write," 1977,
p. 61).

Colleges of business administration have the responsi-
bility to educate students in the area of written communica-
tion to meet the needs of business. However, there is
evidently a discrepancy in the information being taught in

business communication courses and the skills needed in the world of business. What basic principles, then, are needed to bring closer together the training given in collegiate schools of business and the expectations of business firms?

The content of business communication can be examined in two general ways: (1) the communication skills business people believe important and (2) the communication skills educators believe important as evidenced by the content being recommended for business communication curricula. This chapter will begin with the former and examine first the relationship between communication skills and managerial success. Following this, studies will be reviewed that point to the positive correlation between good communication and cost effectiveness. Next, the general communication requirements perceived necessary for business firms will be examined.

The communication skills believed important by educators also must be considered because these professionals influence curricular content. Many educators have indicated the content they believe essential in business communication courses. After a review of the opinions of educators, the chapter will conclude with a general look at the topics being covered in business communication courses.

Managerial Skills and Communication

Few people question the assumption that college graduates need effective communication skills to succeed in

their chosen profession. Research has indicated that good communication is a necessary factor in managerial efficacy, resulting not only in better relationships with employees, but also in promoting increased productivity and better cost effectiveness. "Employers are demanding higher levels of skill in business communication because every function in the business world depends upon effective communication" ("This We Believe About the Teaching of Business Communication", October, 1984, p. 11). Cole (1969) and Matthiesen and Pogge (1979) also concluded that written communication is vitally important to business and industry. Myra Kruger, manager of the communication consultant firm of Towers, Perrin, Forster and Corsby, expressed to a group of Oklahoma City executives the increasing complexity and demands of communication in business. She emphasized the reason for this increase is the basic premise that so many business issues are now communication issues ("Broad Education Vital in Business Communication," October 28, 1984). Bowman and Branchaw (1977) found that in the last 20 years the business community has been increasingly aware that many of its problems are directly related to communication.

Because poor communication seems to be an ongoing plight of many business people, communication issues have been the thrust of numerous studies comparing management skills with communication knowledge and expertise. A large majority of these studies have indicated that managerial skills and good communication are concomitant. Angrist

(1953) stated that communication is necessary for the super-
vision of the work of others, and that it is basic in all
interpersonal relations. More specifically, Flatley (1982)
found that surveyed managers overwhelmingly perceive written
communication as an important management tool. A study con-
ducted by Bennett (1971) revealed that 66 percent of
selected California executives felt a formal course in busi-
ness communication was essential for success in management.

Communication skill, then, is a key skill that managers
or prospective managers must possess in addition to tech-
nical and job skills (Newburg, 1980). Stine and Skarzenski
(1979) go so far as to suggest that the abilities to com-
municate and to work with other people are frequently the
deciding factors in selecting candidates for promotion.
Hilkert (1956) stated that in matters of promotion, with
other things being equal, the person who can write effec-
tively is more valuable to the organization and has a
greater opportunity for advancement. Hulbert (1979) and
Allred (1979) both stated that business executives agree
that the ability to communicate is a prime requirement for
managerial success and repeatedly attest to the fact that
good communication skills lead to promotions.

Good, solid communication skills seem to be necessary
for managerial effectiveness and promotion opportunities.
As will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, a
basic reason for emphasizing capabilities in the area of
communication is the cost involved in miscommunications
within or without a company.

Communication Skills and Cost Effectiveness

Dulek and Suchan (1983, p. 69) emphasized the importance
of good communication as a managerial skill by stating,
"Human resources managers have important messages to convey--
to subordinates, to other managers at all levels in the
organization, and to the public." Poor communication can be
a tremendous cost to any company in terms of the time
involved to correct the misunderstanding. Campbell (1981)
stressed the aforementioned statement by saying:

> The results of poor writing can consume days.
> Follow-up letters sent to clarify original
> correspondence are wasteful. Hours lost on the
> telephone explaining the intent of a report is
> time used for unproductive activity (p. 36).

R. R. Kay (1965, p. 55) underscored this point when he said,
"Poor communications cost companies billions a year in ill-
conceived actions based on misunderstandings and baseless
rumors."

Adkins (1980) concluded that business people are under-
standably concerned with avoiding any misunderstandings due
to a breakdown in communication. Serious business failures
can sometimes be attributed to faulty communication or the
lack of communication. In addition, the cost of communi-
cating is increasing at a rapid pace.

The Dartnell Institute of Business Research, Chicago,
estimated that an average letter increased in cost from $7.60
in 1983 to $8.10 in 1984, reflecting a 6.6 percent gain in
one year for that same letter ("1984 Business Letter Cost is
$8.10," August/September, 1984). Fieldon and Dulek (1984)

reported that one large international corporation with which
they work estimated the average cost for every memo or
letter written in that corporation to be more than $10.
Because letter writing takes a significant part of a
business person's time (Janis, 1967), apparently business
executives are demanding a high level of proficiency in
written communication. This demand will undoubtedly
increase as the volume of communication within a company
increases.

Over 70 percent of managers surveyed by Flatley (1982)
predicted that the volume of their communication will
increase in the next five years. Therefore, those managers
who are proficient in business communication would seem to
be a valuable asset to their companies.

<center>General Communication Requirements</center>
<center>Perceived by Businesses</center>

According to Levine (1980), the lack of adequate com-
munication skill in managers remains a major concern to
those in business. Many top executives are convinced that
communication effectiveness is a key element in productivity
and job satisfaction. The number of in-house training semi-
nars being offered by organizations is further evidence that
people are being graduated from colleges and universities
with inadequate communication skills.

> Businesses are spending millions of dollars
> annually in employee development on projects such
> as tuition assistance to employees attending
> college courses, in sponsoring employees at

professional seminars, conferences, and workshops
offered by outside educational organizations, and
in providing in-house programs arranged by the
company, covering such areas as management
development, sales, and communication skills
(Stroback, 1976, p. 30).

John F. Regan, manager of training at Hercules, advocates

continuing education for employees by stating,

Many companies today are no longer asking what it
will cost to provide continuing education for
their employees. Rather, they are asking what it
will cost the company not to train its people and
not to keep them up to date (Sanders, 1974,
p. 18).

The demand for in-house training in written business

communication is increasing, and employers are recognizing

the need for training in effective writing. Edna West

(1957) surveyed 100 large corporations in the United States

to ascertain what opinions the respondents held concerning

their employees' communication skills. West discovered that

over 50 percent of the respondents in her study indicated a

need for improvement in the writing ability of company

employees, and over one-third had taken steps to improve the

business communication skills of their employees. "Numerous

banks, insurance companies, and industrial corporations have

hired specialists to help them improve their letters and

reports" (West, 1957, p. 3).

L. W. Denton (1979) analyzed 268 separate in-house

courses in effective writing. He concluded that 38.8 per-

cent of responding organizations offer one or more in-house

writing programs for employees, and that "86 percent of the

training managers foresee increased demand for writing

courses during the next five years" (p. 13). Denton further
reported that 72 percent of surveyed organizations indicate
favorable support from top management for company-sponsored
training programs. They tend to view the course costs as
cost savings rather than merely cost.

> Generally response from top management has been
> quite favorable. Some 72 percent of the organiza-
> tions indicate that top management is very pleased
> with the written communications courses and with
> the results exhibited by employees completing the
> courses (Denton, 1979, p. 12).

The content of these company-sponsored writing courses
generally consists of communication areas in which business
people feel their employees are deficient. Allred and Clark
(1978) concluded that the current interest and concern over
the inability of some individuals to write reinforces the
need for training in business communication. In addition,
the most frequently needed competencies identified by busi-
ness firms will be in the area of communication (Thomas and
Sireno, 1980). Denton (1979) reported the following
types of writing courses most commonly offered through in-
house training seminars:

	Number	Percent
General courses in writing	84	31
Technical report writing	53	20
Business report writing	51	19
Business letter writing	51	19
Proposal writing	16	6
Other	13	5

(p. 6)

Stine and Skarzenski (1979) reported an agreement among
business executives on two important points regarding

communication within their organizations: (1) letters, memorandums, and reports are the most important business forms; and (2) clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar, and spelling are the most important basic skills.

A report published by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States stated that about 80 percent of surveyed managers put "skill in writing" at the top of their list of competencies needed by employees ("Skills Businessmen Use Most," 1960, p. 88). Donna Stine and Donald Skarzenski (1979) surveyed both business and academic leaders on their opinions of what communication skills and practices are most important in the world outside the classroom. They surveyed 120 business firms in Iowa and 70 faculty members at Iowa State University. A questionnaire was sent to companies with 100 or more employees. The response from business was an impressive 69 percent; and, for the most part, the questionnaire had been completed by top level management. When asked "What kinds of writing do your employees do most often?", the response was as follows:

1. Memos (2.65 ranking)
2. Letters (2.7 ranking)
3. Short reports (10.7 ranking)
4. Instructions and procedures (11.9 ranking)
5. Progress reports (12.5 ranking)
6. Evaluations (12.9 ranking)

(The ranking scale was based on the frequency with which employees use the above forms of writing, where 1 was the most frequently written form and 21 equalled no response.) (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979, p. 17).

Radar and Wunsch (1980) reported that memos tended to be the most time-consuming form of communication in a

business, with 63 percent of the respondents ranking them as the highest or next highest category. Flatley (1982) stated that managers reported using memorandums 41 percent of the time, with an anticipated increase of 1.8 percent over the next five years.

The executives surveyed in Stine and Skarzenski's study (1979) rated short reports as third in importance when citing business writing competencies. Furthermore, they criticized business communication teachers for not including units of instruction in report writing, proposals, progress reports, and evaluations:

> When ranking the kinds of writing employees do
> most often, business executives listed some forms
> which too many business communication texts and
> courses tend to ignore. Among the seven most com-
> mon forms, business executives listed instructions
> and procedures 4th, proposals 5th, progress
> reports 6th, and evaluations 7th. Business execu-
> tives' responses suggest that instructors who give
> little or no emphasis to such forms might wish to
> reconsider their course content, and that teachers
> may have to supplement their textbooks with
> material from other sources (Stine and Skarzenski,
> 1979, p. 29).

The ability to communicate effectively through memoran-dums seems to be the number one concern of most business people. Flatley (1982) surveyed managers from the private business sector in San Diego to determine if the present training in most business communication courses is providing for the needs of business. Managers rated the kind of written communication they are currently using and those they expect to use in five years:

> Memorandums were used most often. Those reporting
> now using memorandums 41 percent of the time or

more amounted to 46.0 percent of the managers.
Reports were used 41 percent or more of the time
by 20.9 percent of the managers, while letters
trailed with 15.9 percent and forms with 9.1
percent. Five years from now the results are
similar. Those anticipating using memorandums
were 42.8 percent, reports were 22.3 percent,
letters were 19.5 percent, and forms with 10.0
percent (Flatley, 1982, p. 41).

Business people tend to view the memorandum as the most

important medium of communicating in writing. Additional

areas which have been targeted by business people as being

very important in communication are clarity, conciseness,

and organization.

When Stine and Skarzenski (1979) asked what future

employees should be taught in college writing courses, an

overwhelming number of business people cited clarity

(simplicity) as the top response. "Too many employees try

to impress with complex sentences, big words, and lengthy

memos, forgetting that communication is the name of the game

(p. 17). Wilkinson et al. (1980) emphasize that immediate

clearness is a fundamental of good writing. They further

stated that the writer must make his/her material easy to

read, have it carefully planned, and use correct grammar,

punctuation, wording, and sentence structure. Simplicity in

words, sentences, and structure seem to be necessary factors

in writing clear, effective business communications.

President Carter was aware of the problem of unclear

writing when he directed all federal regulations to be

written in "plain English." His direction was summed up as

follows: "Write what you mean, mean what you write, and

don't waste words" (Pedersen, 1978, p. 23). Unless the receiver of the message understands it in the same way the sender intended, miscommunication will undoubtedly occur.

Wordiness seems to be a problem for many writers of business communication. Adelstein (1971) defined concise writing as that which is complete, clear, and courteous, but with no unnecessary words or ideas. Einbecker (1977) felt that a major problem area in business communication was wordiness. She estimated that many 200-word messages could be reduced to as few as 50 words or less. Business people tend to want their employees to communicate all necessary information in as few words as possible to alleviate the possibilities of misunderstanding or misconceptions.

In the survey conducted by Stine and Skarzenski (1979), business executives ranked conciseness as the second most important skill their future employees should have; they indicated that wordiness was the most common writing problem among their employees. In addition, the comments made by the responding executives linked conciseness with profits.

Organization and planning written correspondence are essential for clear, concise, effective communication. Weiss (1977) emphasized this statement when he said:

> There is no more effective a timesaver for a
> business writer than an outline, and no more
> essential an ingredient of a sound methodology.
> Serving as a framework on which to hang
> development and detail, an outline is indeed an
> indispensable tool for business writers (p. 54).

Organization, then, is a key element in business communication. Hueber and Josso (1977) found that business

people rank clear, concise, simple, natural, and easy-to-read writing style as very important in written communication. Allred and Clark (1978) concluded those communication areas in which beginning employees had the most difficulty were: conciseness, making meanings clear, making message accomplish purpose, spelling, sentence construction, organization, and paragraph construction.

Summary

This portion of Chapter II has reviewed literature pertaining to the following categories: (1) the relationship between communication skills and managerial success, (2) the positive correlation between good communication and cost effectiveness, and (3) the general communication skills perceived necessary by business firms. The literature suggests the following general conclusions:

1. Good communication skills are the key to managerial effectiveness.

2. Good communication is considered by business people to be very cost effective.

3. The general communication skills needed by employees (and future employees) include proficiency in writing memorandums, letters, and short reports, using a clear, concise, organized method of writing. (In individual cases, however, preferences for other forms of written communication also have been indicated.)

Educators and the Business

Communication Curriculum

Many research studies indicate a large majority of people are being graduated from schools of business without adequate communication skills. Business people hurl criticisms at the colleges and universities citing the mediocre or insufficient training college students receive in their communication classes. Barry Woodcock (1979) emphasized this imbroglio when he said,

> There has been and continues to be a disagreement between businessmen and educators concerning what areas in business communication future executives should be emphasized to them in a basic business communication course (p. 44).

Allred and Clark (1978) stated that business communication instructors are often bombarded with criticism from faculty and people in business concerning what should be taught in a business communication course.

The reviewed literature in the first portion of Chapter II gives credence to the premise that good communication skill is a key element in managerial effectiveness. The main thrust of this present section, then, is to review literature concerning what topics and concepts educators perceive important for inclusion in a collegiate business communication course. Additional literature will be cited which may provide insight on how educators can structure their business communication courses to include information convergent to the needs of business.

Communication in the Business Curriculum

A statement issued in 1984 by the Policies Commission

for Business and Economic Education gives general guidelines

for the curriculum and instructional strategies to be

included in business communication courses.

> Employers are demanding higher levels of skill in
> business communication because every function in
> the business world depends upon effective communi-
> cation. While many variations exist in definitions
> of business communication, the following serves as
> the premise for this statement: Business communica-
> tion is the interchange of verbal and nonverbal
> information within the business environment.
>
> Students need a solid educational foundation in
> their total communication process to function
> effectively in their professional and personal
> lives. This foundation can be achieved through
> separate business communication courses and/or
> units in other business courses.
>
> We believe that the best way of achieving this
> foundation is to offer separate business communi-
> cation courses taught by business teachers. In
> addition to separate courses, business communica-
> tion instruction should be integrated throughout
> the business curriculum ("This We Believe About the
> Teaching of Business Communication," October,
> 1984, p. 11).

The main purpose for teaching courses in a college of

business administration is to prepare students for

successful careers in business. Jeanine Rhea (1984)

recapitulated this statement when she wrote,

> The primary objective of business schools is to
> prepare graduates for successful careers in
> today's changing environment, and business
> educators should ask themselves if what is being
> done in the communication classes adequately con-
> tributes to this objective (p. 6).

Students who attend colleges and universities expect to

receive information and learn skills which will adequately

prepare them for a future career. Students tend to rely on their teachers to guide them and instruct them in the necessary skills and knowledges needed to achieve success in business.

Rhea (1984) further stated that business educators teaching communication courses should examine the content to determine if some of the needed skills are being ignored. Many businesses are investing a considerable amount of time and money in an attempt to increase communication competencies in their employees. Denton (1979) reported that companies spent an average of $8,999.31 on communications training during 1978, with reported figures ranging from $100 to $78,000.

Companies continue to provide in-house training in communication for their employees. This is true despite the fact that educators and business people are in agreement concerning the goals and objectives of communication training. According to Rhea (1984), educators and business people seem to concur that communication is an essential part of education for and about business. Branshaw (1978) suggested a possible reason for the continuance of the need for in-house training offered by businesses is the fact that a business communication course will often stress just one aspect of communication--writing business letters, for example--and sidestep the other needed communication skills. In order for educators to meet the needs of future executives, they need to realize what is deficient in the course

content in relation to business requirements and concentrate on those areas.

Stoddard (1980) suggested that even though effective written communication is considered to be one of the most basic skills students are expected to master in a general education program, Angrist (1953, p. 277) expressed the following opinion: "There is little systematic knowledge of what should be taught in business communication courses, and of what should be included in a company's entire communications program." At the 1975 meeting of the Southwestern Business Administration Association, Gros (1976) said it was imperative that colleges of business make adaptations in their curriculum to meet the needs of those who are served Unfortunately, there may be a continuing disagreement between educators and business people as to the importance of certain topics to be included in a collegiate business communication course. Barry E. Woodcock (1979) stated the following:

> . . . what the teacher believes to be the most important is in many cases not what the business-man perceives to be most important. The result is that many beginning executives, i.e. managerial trainees, are armed with the wrong communication skills, or, at least, have had the wrong concepts stressed (p. 43).

Gary Benson (1983) conducted a research study designed to collect data concerning the specific courses of study and/or types of classes most valuable in helping prepare business students for mangement/administrative positions. The responses indicated that business people consider communication courses to be very important. Several of the

respondents felt that communication courses are the most valuable skills graduating business students can have or acquire in their college career. One of the most interesting conclusions reached by Benson is the apparent difference between the way in which the academic community (that is, schools and colleges of business administration) and the business community (that is, companies and personnel managers) evaluate the importance of specific factors, skills, courses of study, and classes:

> The survey results show that communication skills
> and courses, both written and oral, are very
> important for business students. The message
> seems to be that most graduating students do not
> communicate well. Perhaps the academic community
> should do a better job of preparing such students
> in this area (Benson, 1983, p. 64).

Business Communication Instructional Priorities

Hilda F. Allred and Joseph F. Clark (1978) conducted a study to determine the major problems in communication and what should be considered priorities in teaching. A questionnaire was directed to selected personnel executives in Rhode Island and to College of Business faculty at the University of Rhode Island. The results indicated differences in opinion between business people and educators in the areas of report writing and letters:

> . . . more personnel participants considered infor-
> mational reports as essential while business
> faculty considered analytical reports as essential
> . . . . Long, formal reports were considered of
> more importance for inclusion in a college business
> communication course by faculty than by personnel

people. On the other hand, the personnel partici-
pants more strongly indicated memorandums and
letter reports for inclusion in the course (Allred
and Clark, 1978, p. 33).

To determine if the same amount of time should be spent

on the various types of letters included in an average busi-

ness communication textbook, Allred and Clark (1978) listed a

series of letter types so respondents could indicate which

were essential, very important, etc.

Two types of letters were rated 'essential' by 25
percent or more of the personnel group: acknowl-
edgment letters (30%) and letters of inquiry
(27%). Three types of letters were rated as
'essential' by 25 percent or more of the faculty
group: job application letters and resumes (41%),
letters of inquiry (34%), and acknowledgment
letters (25%) (p. 34).

Swenson (1980) conducted an interview with 34 personnel

officers who identified the most important writing skills in

business: (1) ability to write letters and informal

reports; (2) ability to write acceptable notices; (3)

ability to write long, formal reports; (4) ability to write

acceptable procedures; and (5) ability to write policy

statements. Radar and Wunsch (1980) reported memorandums as

being the most time-consuming of all business writing with

reports being second and letters third. In addition, the

business school graduates who were surveyed indicated that,

not only do they spend more time writing memorandums than

any other form of communication, they write _more_ memorandums

in an average week than they do letters, reports, or other

types of writing.

Clayton Millington (1984) surveyed selected Oklahoma

State University College of Business Administration grad-
uates to determine their perceptions and recommendations in
relation to the written communication course offered at
Oklahoma State University. The respondents recommended more
writing based on actual business cases. In addition, when
asked what form of business communication was used most
frequently, the business letter received the highest rating,
with memorandums second, and long reports third. It should
be noted, however, that all forms of business communication
received relatively high ratings.

The majority of research reviewed tends to suggest that
business communication teachers spend more "writing time" on
memorandums and short reports rather than on business
letters. Bennett (1971) indicated that more emphasis be
placed on informational reports, memorandums, and (sales)
letters; minor emphasis (in the business communication
course) should be given to communication theory and gram-
matical usage. Woodcock (1979) further supported this
assumption when he stated:

> The fact that managerial trainees indicated the
> problem area of 'letters and memorandums' as being
> the one which presents the most difficulties for
> them seems to indicate that writing practice is
> still a valued and needed area of concern (p. 46).

Glassman and Farley (1979) conducted a survey of
colleges affiliated with the American Assembly of Collegiate
Schools of Business (AACSB) to determine how colleges
prepare their students to communicate in business careers.
Even though 76 percent of the schools responding to the

questionnaire offered one or more business communications

courses, the results were disappointing to the researchers:

> It is disappointing that, even with this emphasis
> on written communication, executives are criti-
> cizing business schools for graduating students
> who can't write. Why can't business school gradu-
> ates write well enough to satisfy their employers,
> despite a four-year college education that
> includes freshman English, and in 50 percent of
> the cases, a semester of written business communi-
> cation? The answer is simple--practice. Students
> do very little writing. They write seldom while
> in college, and they don't write in their day-
> to-day postgraduation lives (Glassman and Farley,
> 1979, p. 46).

The study conducted by Stine and Skarzenski (1979) supports

emphasizing in-class writing in business communication

classes. Woodcock (1979) suggested that instructors in busi-

ness communication have been more effective in the presenta-

tion of theory than in providing practical application. He

further suggests that written solutions to business communi-

cation problems should continue to be an area of prime con-

sideration in the business communication class.

Summary

The reviewed research has indicated that business com-

munication courses will be more relevant if students are

made aware of the communication competencies necessary for

success in business. Rather than attempting to cover all

communication problem areas in one class, the business com-

munication instructor might be well advised to focus on

specific problem areas which business people perceive most

important.

The research reviewed for this study has indicated that
the following areas in business communication should be
given the most emphasis in a collegiate business course:

1. More in-class writing

2. Memorandums and short reports

3. Acknowledgment and inquiry letters

Educators and business people seem to agree that com-
munication skills are important in business even though they
tend to disagree on the particular skills and knowledges and
their relative importance. When business communication
faculty begin to reinforce the importance of effective com-
munication in business and provide for more writing time
based on actual business cases, the course will become more
relevant to the needs of business.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

To conduct this research, a plan of study was devised
involving seven major steps:

1. Developed list of participants from whom the
   data would be collected.

2. Conducted a content analysis of the six most
   widely adopted business communication text-
   books, as cited by Ober and Wunsch in 1983.

3. Developed a survey instrument based on the
   content analysis of the six most widely
   adopted business communication textbooks.

4. Conducted a pilot study to determine the
   accuracy and completeness of the survey
   instrument.

5. Conducted an approximate word count on the
   major topics covered in the six most widely
   adopted business communication textbooks and
   convert the approximate word count into
   percentages for comparisons.

6. Collected the data by sending a questionnaire
   to a selected list of participants.

7. Processed and analyzed the data collected from

the survey instrument through the use of the
Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
(SPSS-X).

List of Participants

A group of businesses having representatives who
conduct on-campus interviews was selected as the population
from which to gather data.

Business people from various types of organizations may
have a variety of problems in communicating and thus have
contrasting opinions concerning the written business commu-
nication skills and knowledges needed by college graduates.
The listing of businesses used for this study contained the
names of 122 companies and organizations; therefore, it was
possible to elicit responses from a diverse population.

Because the aim of this study is to provide data that
may prove helpful in providing written communication skills
for prospective business people, an effort was made to iden-
tify organizations hiring new university graduates. At
Oklahoma State University, a typical comprehensive state
university, more than 100 firms each semester arrange on-
campus interviews with graduating students. These firms
represent a variety of industries and constitute an important
group of business firms served by the university. In this
study, then, the population was limited to 122 companies and
organizations which sent representatives to conduct employ-
ment interviews during the Fall, 1984, semester on the

Oklahoma State University campus. The list of companies was
obtained from Dr. Don Briggs, Oklahoma State University
Placement Director; although the list of companies having
representatives who conduct on-campus interviews is not a
static one, Dr. Briggs determined that the Fall, 1984, list
was typical of the companies recruiting new employees at the
Oklahoma State University campus.

Many of the companies on the list were accounting
firms, manufacturing firms, or financial institutions;
however, a wide diversity of businesses conducted on-campus
interviews at Oklahoma State University during the Fall,
1984, semester. A further breakdown of the types of
companies within the targeted population is as follows:

1. Accounting

2. Beef Processing

3. Communication

4. Construction

5. Financial

6. Manufacturing

7. Petroleum/energy-related

8. Public Utilities

9. Research and Development

10. Retail/Sales

11. Service (food, computer, educational)

12. Transportation

Although a large majority of the companies were located
in the states of Oklahoma and Texas, the list included 122

businesses and organizations from 22 states and one foreign
country. Table I indicates the number of firms from each of
the 22 states and one foreign country which sent representa-
tives to conduct on-campus interviews in the Fall, 1984, at
Oklahoma State University.

Although the list does not contain representatives from
all of the 50 states, the assumption is made that the
responses given by the business people who participated in
the study may be typical, but such responses may not be
generalizable to a larger or different population.

Because this study was restricted to business firms,
all government-related organizations, such as the United
States Air Force, were eliminated from the list provided by
the Oklahoma State University Placement Office.

Conducting a Content Analysis

Ober and Wunsch conducted a study in 1983 to determine
which business communication textbooks were the most widely
adopted for post-secondary use. The six textbooks found by
Ober and Wunsch to be the most widely adopted were used as
the sources to conduct analysis and an approximate word
count for this present study. These textbooks are listed in
Appendix A.

A cursory review of these textbooks revealed that 11
major areas were discussed in reasonable detail within each
book and are listed below. Those areas within the textbook
which did not pertain directly to written communication were
excluded from this study. These excluded areas included

TABLE I

NUMBER OF FIRMS FROM STATES AND COUNTRY WHICH SENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO CONDUCT ON-CAMPUS
INTERVIEWS IN THE FALL, 1984, AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

State or Country	Number
Arkansas	1
California	5
Colorado	4
Delaware	1
Idaho	1
Iowa	2
Kansas	7
Louisiana	2
Michigan	3
Minnesota	1
Missouri	4
Nebraska	1
Nevada	1
New Mexico	1
New York	2
North Carolina	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	36
Pennsylvania	1
Tennessee	1
Texas	44
Utah	1
France	1

such topics as interviewing, oral communication, nonverbal communication, electronic technology, and the formatting of letters, memoranda, and envelopes.

Developing a Survey Instrument

The questionnaire method was identified as the most suitable means to gather data because of its objective nature, efficiency, and economy. Thus, a 108-item questionnaire based on the skills and knowledges identified in the aforementioned 11 topics was constructed. The purpose of the survey instrument and the study specifically was to determine whether the most widely adopted business communication textbooks are devoting an appropriate amount of space to those topics perceived very important or important by business people.

Provision was made to rate each item within the 11 broad categories derived from the textbook analysis. Scaled responses with the same psychological weights were used. Stated differently, an item with the same measure of psychological distance (intensity) constituted the measurement between each response alternative. A value of "5" was given to the highest category on the Likert scale and "1" to the lowest category. The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections:

Part I--Communication Theory, Letters, Reports, and Memorandums

Part II--Application Letters and Resumes

Part III--Collection Letters

The first two sections, illustrated in Table II, consisted of the following rating categories and pertained to items 1-96:

The last section in the survey instrument included 12 items pertaining to collection letter. Those business people whose companies are not specifically involved in the billing and collection process were asked to disregard this section of the questionnaire. The categories on Section III were to be rated according to a five-point scale, as indicated in Table III.

The highest categories of the Likert Scales, Very Important and Always, give an indication from the respondent that the topic or concept is very essential to effective communication and should be included in the learning experience of every student who is enrolled in a collegiate written business communication course.

The lowest categories of the Likert Scales, Not Important and Never, pertain to those topics or concepts which the respondent perceives as non-essential in a business communication class and could be omitted from the course outline.

A space was provided after each of the three sections for additional comments by the respondents.

To assure confidentiality and anonymity of research data collected from the participants, a space was provided at the top of each questionnaire for identification numbers rather than names of the individual companies or organizations.

TABLE II

RATING SCALE FOR SECTIONS II THROUGH X

Category	Weighted Points
Very Important	5
Important	4
Average Importance	3
Low Importance	2
Not Important	1

TABLE III

RATING SCALE FOR SECTION XI

Category	Weighted Points
Always	5
Almost Always	4
Usually	3
Almost Never	2
Never	1

Conducting a Pilot Study

To ensure that the topics and concepts were characteristic of written communication in business and that the instrument was capable of eliciting meaningful responses, a pilot study was conducted. More specifically, opinions were solicited from the respondents in the pilot study in order to determine the accuracy and completeness of the topics selected on the basis of the textbook content analysis. Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 20 businesses and organizations within the Stillwater, Oklahoma, area. A cover letter, written on Oklahoma State University stationery and co-signed by Dr. Clayton B. Millington, thesis adviser, was addressed individually to the chief executive officer or president of each company and was included with each questionnaire. The letter asked the respondents to complete the questionnaire and to make any changes which would make the questionnaire more accurate or easier to read (see Appendix B).

A 50 percent return was received from the pilot mailing, and no changes were suggested by the respondents on the original draft of the survey instrument. The questionnaire was then printed professionally and consisted of four pages, front and back, in addition to a demographic page stapled to the front of the survey packet (see Appendix C).

Conducting the Word Count

Operating under the assumption that the space textbook authors devote to various subjects tends to vary in proportion to the importance of the subjects, a word count was made of 11 major topics dealing with written communication discussed in the six business communication textbooks most widely adopted for post-secondary classroom use, as listed in Appendix A. An attempt was first made to estimate the number of words contained in each line; but because the words in each line varied so greatly in length from book to book, it was necessary to estimate words according to the "five-stroke average" used in calculating words in typewriting textbooks.

An estimate of strokes per line first was made by counting the number of strokes, including punctuation and spacing, for each of 10 lines of explanatory material and examples on random pages. The total number of strokes was then divided by 10 (lines) to determine the average number of strokes per line for explanatory material and for examples. The average stroke number was subsequently divided by five (strokes) to ascertain the average number of words per line for the explanatory material and for the written examples. Thus, the average words per line for the explanatory material and for the written examples were totalled and divided by two to obtain the mean number of words for calculating the estimated words devoted to each topic.

Next, an estimate was made of the total number of lines
devoted to each written communication topic in the six
textbooks. To do this, the average number of lines per page
was determined. This was accomplished by counting lines,
including explanatory materials and examples within the
written text on ten pages chosen at random for each book.
Those examples which were set apart in a blocked area or on
a page separate from the explanatory material were omitted
from the approximate word and line count. The resulting
total of the lines counted on the random pages was then
divided by 10 (pages) to obtain an estimate of the number
of lines on each page.

To facilitate comparisons among the six business com-
munication textbooks, the ratio which each specific topic
bears to the 11 major categories of written communication
topics is expressed as a percentage. For example, approxi-
mately 9,841 words were used to discuss the application
letter and resume process in a textbook which devoted about
91,639 words to written communication topics. Thus, 10.74
percent of the discussion in this book is devoted to the
preparation and writing of application letters and resumes.
By considering all of the six textbooks as an entire unit,
it is possible to generalize concerning the relative
importance of each of the topics.

Appendix D presents a comparison of the percentage of
space which each of the six most commonly adopted business
communication textbooks devote to 11 major categories of

written business communication. Appendix D also contains a
table listing the approximate number of words devoted to
each of the 11 major topics. In many cases, textbook
authors weave several different communication topics into a
single discussion. This is especially true when a portion
of the chapter is organized around a specific example or
case study. In these instances, judgment was exercised in
estimating words used to discuss a particular business com-
munication topic. It is unlikely, therefore, that two
individuals would agree completely on a word count of topics
contained in any textbook. It follows, then, that the word
counts reported in this study are probably not the same as
would be reported by another researcher, even though the
same techniques were used. Such limitations should be
recognized in the interpretation of Table IV which expresses
the combined percentages of space devoted to 11 major cate-
gories of written communication.

The study in no way attempted to evaluate the effec-
tiveness of any of the six business communication textbooks;
the approximate word count was conducted for the expressed
purpose of determining the relative percentage of 11 broad
categories included in these textbooks and comparing these
percentages with the perceptions of surveyed business people
as to the importance of each of the topics.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED TO 11
MAJOR CATEGORIES IN SIX WRITTEN
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

Written Communication Topic	Percentage
Communication Theory	25.87
Formal Reports	16.05
Routine/Good News Letters	13.10
Application Letters/Resumes	10.75
Sales Letters	7.90
Bad News Letters	7.28
Collection Letters	5.69
Informal Reports	4.77
Special Letters	4.50
Persuasive Letters	3.55
Memorandums	.56
Total	100.02*

*The total does not equal 100.00 percent because the percentage for each topic has been rounded.

Collecting the Data

As part of the data collection for this study, the
questionnaire was mailed on April 10, 1985, to the chief
executive of each of 122 businesses. A form letter typed on
Oklahoma State University stationery and signed by the
researcher was included with each questionnaire packet in
addition to a self-addressed, stamped envelope (see Appendix
C for initial cover letter). Each company was assigned an
identification number which was written on the line provided
at the top of the questionnaire to correspond with the
company name on the mailing list. By employing this method
of identification, anonymity of the firms was maintained
while keeping a check on the business people who responded
to the survey. A total of 41 completed questionnaires was
returned as a result of the first mailing. One company name
was eliminated from the original mailing list because the
address given on the list was incorrect.

A follow-up mailing was undertaken on May 1, 1985, to
those companies and organizations which did not return the
questionnaire on the first mailing. To aid in increasing
the response rate, a letter typed on Oklahoma State
University stationery was addressed to the individual
responsible for college recruiting at Oklahoma State
University (as indicated on the list of companies provided
by the Oklahoma State University Placement Office) and co-
signed by Dr. Clayton B. Millington, thesis adviser, and the
researcher. The individualization of the form letter was

accomplished through the use of the merge feature on the A. B. Dick Magna-SL word processor (see Appendix C for the letter used for the second mailing). Again, a self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for convenience in returning the completed questionnaire. Of the 80 packets sent for the second mailing, 32 completed questionnaires were returned.

The response rate for the mail survey was 60.3 percent, calculated by the following method recommended by Dillman (1978):

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Initial Mailing Number Returned}}{\text{Number in Sample} - \text{Noneligible \& Nonreachable}} \times 100$$

$$60.3\% = \frac{73 \text{ returned}}{122 \text{ in sample} - 1} \times 100$$

A further breakdown of the percentages of returns and nonreturns is shown in Table V.

Processing and Analyzing Data

As the questionnaires were returned from the respondents, the data were recorded on NCS Trans-Optic MB01-15514-32 scanner sheets provided by the Bureau of Tests and Measurements, Oklahoma State University.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) was used to analyze the data. This package determined frequencies, cross-tabulations, descriptive and demographic rankings, and chi-squares. According to the Oklahoma State Computer Center User Manual (1984),

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS AND NON RETURNS

Category	Number	Percent
Total Population Less One Unreachable Respondent	121	100.0
Total Returns from the First Mailing	41	33.9
Total Returns from the Second Mailing	32	26.4
Total Respondents	73	60.3

> SPSS-X is an integrated system of computer pro-
> grams for the analysis of social science data.
> The system has been designed to provide the social
> scientist with a unified and comprehensive package
> enabling him to perform many different types of
> data analysis in a simple and convenient manner.
> SPSS-X is a major revision of SPSS . . . most of
> the changes between SPSS and SPSS-X affect file
> definition (p. 4134).

The data analysis provided in Chapter IV was divided into four sections: Frequency Distributions; Ranking of Topics of Questionnaire by Means; Rankings of Textbooks by Percentages; and Cross-Tabulations of Demographic Information. The SPSS-X Statistical Package and the approximate word count of six business communication textbooks provided the data for the four analyses to be made.

Section I. Frequency Distributions

Percentages were calculated on demographic information and on 25 key items within the questionnaire. Those respondents disregarding an entire category or certain items within each of the 11 categories of the questionnaire indicated they did so because they felt those particular items were not applicable to the communication function of their company. These non-responses are duly noted in the appropriate tables.

Category I consisted of 14 items pertaining to communication theory concepts. Because these items were diverse in nature, they have been addressed individually in the appropriate tables and ensuing discussion in Chapter IV.

Section II. Rankings of Topics of

Questionnaire by Means

Again, the 14 items within the first category of
Communication Theory were first ranked separately. Then,
the mean of the broad category, Communication Theory, was
compared with the remaining ten broad categories. In this
manner, the 11 broad categories of the questionnaire were
ranked using the means of the respondents' answers as the
criteria.

Section III. Rankings of Textbook

Topics by Percentages

The major topics included in the six business communi-
cation textbooks selected for this study were ranked
numerically according to the percentage of space devoted to
each topic.

Section IV. Cross-Tabulations of

Demographic Information

The demographic information provided by respondents
were compared and cross-tabulated as follows:

1. Type of company with

   a. the estimated percentage of office employees
     who write memorandums, letters, and reports

   b. the number of respondents who had taken a
     college business communication course

   c. the number of companies providing in-service
     training in business communication

2. Size of company with

    a. the estimated percentage of office employees who write memorandums, letters and reports

    b. the number of respondents who had taken a college business communication course

    c. the number of companies providing in-service training in business communication

3. The number of respondents who had taken a college business communication course with

    a. the number of companies providing in-service training in business communication

    b. the number of years with the company

These cross-tabulations were then analyzed using chi-square to test for significance. "The two-way chi-square is a convenient technique for determining the significance of the difference between the frequencies of occurence in two or more categories with two or more groups" (Bartz, 1981, p. 324). This statistical measure was used to determine if there were any significant difference between the demographic responses provided by the participants of this study.

Summary

Chapter III contains a detailed description of the development of the plan of study to undertake this research project.

Six major steps were necessary to collect the data for

this study:

1. Develop a list of participants from whom the data would be collected.

2. Conduct a content analysis of the six most widely adopted business communication textbooks.

3. Develop a survey instrument based on the content analysis of the six most widely adopted business communication textbooks.

4. Conduct a pilot study to determine the accuracy and completeness of the survey instrument.

5. Conduct an approximate word count on the major topics covered in the six most widely adopted textbooks and convert the approximate word count into percentages for comparisons.

6. Collect the data by sending the questionnaire to the selected participants.

Following the collection of data, the information was compiled, computed, and analyzed. A thorough analysis of the data interpretation is presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The survey instrument designed for this study was sent
to 122 companies and organizations which sent representatives
to conduct on-campus interviews during the Fall, 1984,
semester at Oklahoma State University. This population was
selected because the firms represent a variety of industries
and constitute a reasonably good sample of business firms
served by a typical comprehensive state university. The list
contained names of companies and organizations from 22 states
and one foreign country.

The items selected for inclusion in the survey instru-
ment were chosen after thoroughly reviewing literature
relating to questionnaire design and construction, analyses
of numerous dissertation studies involving the survey method
of collecting data, and consultations with various faculty
members in the College of Business Administration at
Oklahoma State University.

The data collected from the survey instrument focused
on the perceptions of business people concerning 11 major
topics normally included in a post-secondary business com-
munication textbook (in alphabetical order):

1. Application Letters and Resumes

2. Bad News Letters

3. Collection Letters

4. Communication Theory

5. Formal Reports

6. Informal Reports

7. Memorandums

8. Persuasive Letters

9. Routine/Good News Letters

10. Sales Letters

11. Special Letters

Approximate word counts were undertaken, using the six most widely adopted business communication textbooks (see Appendix A). The word counts pertained to the 11 broad categories of written business communication listed above and were converted into percentages. A comparison was then made of the percentage of space devoted to these 11 topics with the perceptions of business people as to the importance of each of these topics.

To ensure completeness and accuracy of the communication concepts cited in the questionnaire, a pilot survey was mailed to 20 businesses selected at random from the Stillwater, Oklahoma, area. Because the respondents to the pilot study suggested no changes be made in the questionnaire, it was subsequently mailed to the business firms representing the population surveyed.

The findings represent a detailed analysis of the responses given on the questionnaire by respondents on both

the demographic items and on 25 key items dealing with writ-
ten communication.

Space for additional comments was provided at the end
of each of the three parts of the questionnaire. The com-
ments made by respondents are listed and discussed in a
later section of this chapter.

Plan for Analyzing the Gathered Data

The survey instrument was divided into four separate
areas: the demographic page and three major parts within
the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked to provide the following
demographic information:

1. Type of company

2. Number of years with company

3. Number of office employees in company

4. Estimated percentage of office employees involved
   in written business communication

5. College course (or courses) completed in written
   business communication

6. Extent of in-service training in written business
   communication provided by the firms

The instrument contained 108 items and was divided into
three major parts consisting of a total of 11 broad cate-
gories. Part I pertained to communication theory and eight
forms of communication commonly used in typical business
settings. This part of the questionnaire contained 85

items, and the respondent was asked to rate the importance
of each item for personnel who handle written business
communication in the company. The following Likert scale
was employed for rating of the items in Part I:

1. Very Important

2. Important

3. Average Importance

4. Low Importance

5. Not Important

Part II pertained to application letters and resumes.
Most companies require prospective employees to submit a
letter of application and a resume prior to an employment
interview; yet this communication process is not one that is
part of the actual business activity of a firm. Therefore,
this aspect of written communication was placed in a
separate section of the questionnaire and contained 11 items
relating to the application/resume process. The rating
scale contained the same five-item scale used for Part I.

Twelve items concerning collection letters comprised
Part III of the questionnaire. The respondents were
directed to disregard this section of the instrument if
their company did not send billing notices for goods and/or
services rendered. A Likert rating scale consisting of five
responses was used:

1. Always

2. Almost Always

3. Usually

4. Almost Never

5. Never

A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSS-X) program was used to tabulate the responses to each item of the questionnaire. The results of each response were tabulated according to the frequency of occurence, cumulative frequency, percentage, and cumulative percentage. Two-way tables (cross-tabulations) were used to compare the demographic information given by the respondents. Chi-squares were also computed on the cross-tabulations.

Tables of specific findings are presented in the following discussion. Interpretation of the statistics follows each table.

Data Analysis

Responses were received from 73 companies and organizations from 22 states and one foreign country. One company name was deleted from the original list due to an indication from the United States Postal Department that the address shown was insufficient.

The analysis of the data, therefore, is based on a total of 73 respondents from the original list of 122 companies and organizations. This represents a 60.3 percent return from the original and the follow-up mailings. The analysis is divided into six sections:

1. Frequency distributions that analyze 25 of the most important written communication concepts within an actual business setting

2. Ranking by means of topic importance as perceived by the respondents

3. Ranking of topic importance in the six most adopted business communication textbooks, as indicated by an approximate word count converted to a percentage

4. Chi-squares on the demographic information to test for significance

5. Interpretative Summary of the comments made by respondents

6. Summary

Section I - Frequencies

The first portion of the survey instrument consisted of the following nine communication areas:

I.   Communication Theory

II.   Good News/Routine Letters

III. Bad News Letters

IV.   Sales Letters

V.   Persuasive Letters

VI.   Special Letters

VII. Formal Reports

VIII. Informal Reports

IX.   Memorandums

X.   Application Letters and Resumes

XI.   Collection Letters

The first area consisted of 14 items regarding a wide

variety of elements relating to communication theory. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of such topics as communication models, correct sentence structure, and the "you viewpoint." A total of 11 non-responses (12 percent) were received on this section of the questionnaire because the respondents indicated that the item(s) was (were) not directly applicable to the writing required in his/her company.

Due to the diverse nature of this portion of the questionnaire, a complete listing of the 14 items, their frequencies, and their percentages are illustrated in Table VI. The rating responses are abbreviated as follows:

Very Important - VI

Important - I

Average Importance - AI

Low Importance - LI

Not Important - NI

No Response - NR

In the following discussion, the items in the questionnaire are indicated by major section and item number. Thus, I-1 refers to Section I, Communication Theory, and Item 1 in that section.

I-1

The response on the first item, which pertained to the various communication theories and models in communication, indicated that 41 of the 73 respondents, or 56.16 percent,

TABLE VI

CONCEPTS INCLUDED IN COMMUNICATION THEORY
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES

	VI	I	AI	LI	NI	NR	TOTAL
I-1. Relating communication theories and models to the written communication problems of business.							
Frequency	7	15	21	20	9	1	73
Percent	9.6	20.5	28.8	27.4	12.3	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	9.7	20.8	29.2	27.8	12.5	---	100.0
I-2. Identifying the behavioral concepts of different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.) concerning the changing nature of people's desires and applying them to written communication in business.							
Frequency	3	8	20	26	15	1	73
Percent	4.1	11.0	27.4	35.6	20.5	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	4.2	11.1	27.8	36.1	20.8	---	100.0
I-3. Using correct sentence structure when writing.							
Frequency	49	21	1	---	---	2	73
Percent	67.1	28.8	1.4	---	---	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	69.0	29.6	1.4	---	---	---	100.0
I-4. Using correct punctuation when writing.							
Frequency	50	19	4	---	---	---	73
Percent	68.5	26.0	5.5	---	---	---	100.0
Valid Percent	68.5	26.0	5.5	---	---	---	100.0
I-5. Knowing the correct parts of speech.							
Frequency	34	26	11	2	---	---	73
Percent	46.6	35.6	15.1	2.7	---	---	100.0
Valid Percent	46.6	35.6	15.1	2.7	---	---	100.0
I-6. Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement (the positive or negative aspect of a statement and how it sounds to the reader).							
Frequency	49	20	3	---	---	1	73
Percent	67.1	27.4	4.1	---	---	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	68.1	27.8	4.2	---	---	---	100.0

TABLE VI (Continued)

	VI	I	AI	LI	NI	NR	TOTAL
I-7. Recognizing the effect of such factors as sentence length and word size on readability.							
Frequency	33	29	9	1	---	1	73
Percent	45.2	39.7	12.3	1.4	---	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	45.8	40.3	12.5	1.4	---	---	100.0
I-8. Emphasizing ideas through placement (position) in letters/reports.							
Frequency	25	32	14	1	---	1	73
Percent	34.2	43.8	19.2	1.4	---	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	34.7	44.4	19.4	1.4	---	---	100.0
I-9. Emphasizing ideas through repetition of words.							
Frequency	11	33	23	5	---	1	73
Percent	15.1	45.2	31.5	6.8	---	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	15.3	45.8	31.9	6.9	---	---	100.0
I-10. Emphasizing ideas through the space allotted to the idea.							
Frequency	12	26	30	5	---	---	73
Percent	16.4	35.6	41.1	6.8	---	---	100.0
Valid Percent	16.4	35.6	41.1	6.8	---	---	100.0
I-11. Making an outline before beginning a letter/report.							
Frequency	11	25	24	13	---	---	73
Percent	15.1	34.2	32.9	17.8	---	---	100.0
Valid Percent	15.1	34.2	32.9	17.8	---	---	100.0
I-12. Possessing a large vocabulary.							
Frequency	3	24	33	12	1	---	73
Percent	4.1	32.9	45.2	16.4	1.4	---	100.0
Valid Percent	4.1	32.9	45.2	16.4	1.4	---	100.0
I-13. Keeping in mind the "7 C's of Communication" when writing (correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, concreteness, consideraton, courtesy).							
Frequency	30	25	14	2	1	1	73
Percent	41.4	34.2	19.2	2.7	1.4	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	41.7	34.7	19.4	2.8	1.4	---	100.0

TABLE VI (Continued)

	VI	I	AI	LI	NI	NR	TOTAL
I-14. Using a "you viewpoint" when writing. (Example: "Your widgets should reach you in three days . . ." rather than "We have sent the widgets . . . ") length and word size on readability.							
Frequency	9	27	21	13	1	2	73
Percent	12.3	37.0	28.8	17.8	1.4	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	12.7	38.0	29.6	18.3	1.4	---	100.0

perceived this topic to be of average or low importance. Only 9.6 percent felt that the knowledge of communication theories and models was important in written business communication.

I-2

Identifying the behavioral concepts of different theorists, such as Maslow and McGregor, received a 4.2 percent rating in the Very Important category, with 83.56 percent responding that this concept was of average importance or below.

I-3, 4, and 5

Using correct sentence structure, using correct punctuation, and knowing the correct parts of speech were ranked by the participants of this survey as very high on the rating scale. Forty-nine people, or 69.0 percent, responded that using correct sentence structure when writing was very important; twenty-one people, or 29.6 percent, rated this item as Important. Only one person indicated that knowing correct sentence structure was of average importance.

Knowing correct punctuation when writing received a 68.5 percent rating, with 50 people responding in this classification. No nonresponses were indicated in this item, reflecting the importance of correct punctuation in business writing.

Over 97 percent of the participants ranked Item 5,

knowing the correct parts of speech, as Average Importance
or above. Only 2.7 percent indicated that this concept was
of low importance.

I-6

Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement and how
that statement sounds to the reader received a 68.1 percent
in the Very Important category. The categories of Important
and Average Importance garnered ratings of 27.8 percent and
4.2 percent, respectively.

I-7

Thirty-three people, or 45.8 percent, perceived that
recognizing sentence length and word size on readability was
Very Important. Only one person ranked this item low in
importance, and no one perceived the readability factor as
being of no importance.

I-8, 9, and 10

Emphasizing ideas through placement, repetition, and
space received a majority percentage of ratings in the
Important category. Item 8, emphasizing ideas through
placement (position) in letters and reports, obtained a
higher rating (34.7 percent) in the Very Important category
than did the other two items regarding the emphasis of ideas
in writing.

I-11

      Over 34 percent of the respondents considered making an
outline before beginning a letter or report Important;
almost 33 percent judged this aspect of written communica-
tion as average in importance.

I-12

      Only three people, or 4.1 percent, felt that possessing
a large vocabulary was Very Important in written business
communication; 45.2 percent believed this concept to be of
average importance, and 1.4 percent considered possessing a
large vocabulary as Not Important to business writing.

I-13

      The "7 C's of Communication" received an overwhelming
73 percent rating of importance, with 55 people marking the
Very Important or Important response. Only one person
thought this item was of no importance.

I-14

      The final item in this section was concerned with using
the "you viewpoint" when writing. More than 65 percent of
the respondents judged this idea to be Important or of
average importance, while 12.3 percent perceived the "you
viewpoint" as Very Important. Two people considered this
concept to be "non-applicable" to their company's business
writing.

Sections II through XI of the questionnaire pertain to
the following forms of communication most typical to a
business or organization (listed in order appearing on
questionnaire):

    II--Good News/Routine Letters

    III--Bad News Letters

    IV--Sales Letters

    V--Persuasive Letters

    VI--Special Letters

    VII--Formal Reports

    VIII--Informal Reports

    IX--Memorandums

    X--Application Letters and Resumes

    XI--Collection Letters

Table VII lists the frequencies and the percentages of ten
key items within Sections II through X. The same abbrevi-
ations are used for the rating categories in this table as
were used in Table VI.

II-19

Knowing how to write good news and/or routine
letters was perceived by respondents as Very Important or
Important for the most part, as indicated by the fact that
39.7 percent rated the item Very Important and 35.6 percent
rated it Important. Only 2.7 percent of the people surveyed
indicated this category to be of no importance.

TABLE VII

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS II THROUGH X
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES

	VI	I	AI	LI	NI	NR	TOTAL
II-19. Knowing how to write good news or routine letters.							
Frequency	26	29	13	3	2	---	73
Percent	35.6	39.7	17.8	4.1	2.7	---	100.0
Valid Percent	35.6	39.7	17.8	4.1	2.7	---	100.0
III-28. Knowing how to write bad news letters.							
Frequency	26	22	15	4	4	2	73
Percent	35.6	30.1	20.5	5.5	5.5	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	36.6	31.6	21.1	5.6	5.6	---	100.0
IV-43. Knowing how to write sales letters.							
Frequency	25	21	13	5	4	5	73
Percent	34.2	28.8	17.8	6.8	5.5	6.8	100.0
Valid Percent	36.8	30.9	19.1	7.4	5.9	---	100.0
V-46. Knowing how to write persuasive letters.							
Frequency	28	22	15	3	1	4	73
Percent	38.4	30.1	20.5	4.1	1.4	5.5	100.0
Valid Percent	40.6	31.9	21.7	4.3	1.4	---	100.0
VI-53. Knowing how to write special letters.							
Frequency	21	19	25	5	1	2	73
Percent	28.8	26.0	34.2	6.8	1.4	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	29.6	26.8	35.2	7.0	1.4	---	100.0
VII-65. Knowing how to write formal reports.							
Frequency	29	22	44	4	2	2	73
Percent	39.7	30.1	19.2	5.5	2.7	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	40.8	31.0	19.7	5.6	2.8	---	100.0
VIII-78. Knowing how to write short, informal reports.							
Frequency	24	29	13	2	1	4	73
Percent	32.9	39.7	17.8	2.7	1.4	5.5	100.0
Valid Percent	34.8	42.0	18.8	2.9	1.4	---	100.0

TABLE VII (Continued)

	VI	I	AI	LI	NI	NR	TOTAL
IX-85. Knowing how to write memoranda.							
Frequency	30	31	10	---	---	2	73
Percent	41.1	42.5	13.7	---	---	2.7	100.0
Valid Percent	42.3	43.7	14.1	---	---	---	100.0
X-87. Using class time to write sample application letter.							
Frequency	14	32	17	7	2	1	73
Percent	19.2	43.8	23.3	9.6	2.7	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	19.4	44.4	23.6	9.7	2.8	---	100.0
X-96. Using class time to compile a sample resume.							
Frequency	17	27	15	9	4	1	73
Percent	23.3	37.0	20.5	12.3	5.5	1.4	100.0
Valid Percent	23.6	37.5	20.8	12.5	5.6	---	100.0

III-28

Forty-eight business people, or 65.8 percent, indicated that knowing how to write bad news letters was Important or Very Important. Four people, or 5.5 percent, responded to this item by placing it in the Not Important category. Two people indicated that writing bad news letters was not applicable to their particular business or company.

IV-43

Twenty-five of the 73 people marked the Very Important category of the Likert scale for this item pertaining to sales letters and 21 people chose the Important category. Only four people considered this knowledge Not Important.

Five people did not respond to this item, and in some cases omitted the entire section, because their divisions were not involved specifically with selling a product or a service.

V-46

Knowing how to write persuasive letters received a combined percentage total of 89.0 in the Average Importance, Important, and Very Important categories of the Likert scale. Twenty-eight out of 73 people considered this form of communication Very Important; 22 rated it as Important; and 15 felt it was of Average Importance. Four people did not respond to this item.

VI-53

Knowing how to write special letters was rated in the
Average Importance category by 35.2 percent of the respon-
dents. The highest category, Very Important, was checked by
29.6 percent of the persons completing the questionnaire.
The Not Important category garnered 1.4 percent of the
respondents. A total of 2.7 percent of the people surveyed
chose not to respond to this item or to the entire section
pertaining to special letters.

VII-65

The section of the questionnaire pertaining to formal
reports elicited an overwhelming response of 89 percent in
the top three categories of Very Important, Important, and
Average Importance. Only 2.8 percent considered this knowl-
edge to be of no importance, and 2.7 percent did not respond
to this item.

VIII-78

As with the item dealing with formal reports, Item 78,
knowing how to write short, informal reports, garnered the
most responses in the categories of Very Important,
Important, and Average Importance, with 34.8 percent, 42.0
percent, and 18.8 percent reported, respectively. A non-
response rating of 5.5 percent was indicated on this item.

IX-85

Most of the surveyed business people responded in the
highest three categories on the item pertaining to memoran-
dums. Knowing how to write a memorandum received 14.1 per-
cent of the responses in the Average Importance category,
42.5 percent in the Important category, and 41.1 percent in
the Very Important category. A 2.7 percent non-response
rate was recorded.

X-87 and 96

Item 87 related to the importance of using class time
to write a sample application letter, and Item 96 pertained
to using class time to compile a resume.

The highest rating percentage received on Item 87 was
in the Important category, with 44.4 percent of the respon-
dents indicating that using class time for writing a sample
application letter was important. Only 2.7 percent per-
ceived this area to be of no importance.

Item 96 obtained a 37.5 percent response rate in the
Important section of the Likert scale, the Very Important
section a 23.6 percent response, and the Not Important
section a 5.6 percent response.

One person disregarded this part in the questionnaire,
making the non-response rating a 1.4 percent for Item 87 and
for Item 96.

TABLE VIII

SECTION XI – COLLECTION LETTERS
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES

	A	AA	U	AN	N	NR	TOTAL

XI-12. Do you think it is important to know how to write collection letters?

	A	AA	U	AN	N	NR	TOTAL
Frequency	12	8	10	1	5	37	73
Percent	16.4	11.0	13.7	1.4	6.8	50.7	100.0
Valid Percent	33.3	22.2	27.8	2.8	13.9	---	100.0

<u>XI-12</u>

The frequencies and percentages for Item XI-12 are shown in Table VIII, using the following abbreviations for each category:

Always - A   Almost Never - AN

Almost Always - AA   Never - N

Usually - U   No Response - NR

Over 50 percent of those companies surveyed disregarded Part III of the questionnaire because the collection process was not used in their companies or divisions. Only 36 people out of 73 responded to Part II of the questionnaire. Of those 36, five people felt that this form of communication was Never Important. The highest category, Always, was indicated by 12 people.

Demographic Information

Written communications play an important role in the successful operation of a company or organization; the importance placed on written communications could vary, however, with the size and type of company. The ensuing discussion addresses six to eight items included in the demographic page of the questionnaire.

The population surveyed for this study was a heterogeneous one. Seventy-three companies and organizations responded by returning a completed questonnaire, with 12 types of firms being represented. Manufacturing firms and oil/gas-related companies comprised the largest majority,

with a 23.3 percent of the total falling in each category.

Service companies represented 16.4 percent of the total

respondents, and the accounting firms representing 13.7

percent. (See Table IX for a detailed listing of the types

of companies represented in this study.)

Of the 73 respondents, 32.9 percent had been with their

companies from 1 to 5 years. Only 6.8 percent had been employ-

ed with their respective companies for less than a year, and

17.8 percent had a tenure of more than 20 years (see Table X).

Over 50 percent of the companies surveyed in this study

employed more than 100 people in their firms or divisions

(see Table XI). A total of 71.2 percent of the respondents

reported that more than 50 percent of the employees in their

companies or divisions were responsible for writing business

communication (see Table XII).

Table XIII shows that 47 people out of 73 surveyed, or

64.4 percent, had taken a college course in written business

communication. Those people not taking a written business

communication course numbered 26, or 35.6 percent.

Fifty of the 73 surveyed companies (68.5 percent) pro-

vided in-service training in business communication for

their employees. Those companies not providing any business

communication in-service training numbered 23, or 31.5 per-

cent (see Table XIV).

Summary of Section I

The majority of respondents perceived the following

items of communication theory to be the most important for

TABLE IX

TYPES OF COMPANIES REPRESENTED
IN THIS SURVEY

Type of Company	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
Manufacturing	17	23.3
Oil/Gas-Related	17	23.3
Service	12	16.4
Accounting	10	13.7
Financial	6	8.2
Retail	5	6.8
Communication	2	2.7
Beef Processing	1	1.4
Construction	1	1.4
Research and Development	1	1.4
Transportation	1	1.4
TOTAL	73	100.0

TABLE X

NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED WITH COMPANY

Type of Company	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
Less than 1 year	5	6.8
1 to 5 years	24	32.9
6 to 10 years	16	21.9
11 to 20 years	15	20.5
More than 20 years	13	17.8
TOTAL	73	100.0

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN COMPANY
OR DIVISION

Number	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
1-25	13	17.8
26-50	9	12.3
51-75	5	6.8
76-100	8	11.0
More than 100	38	52.1
TOTAL	73	100.0

TABLE XII

ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF OFFICE EMPLOYEES WHO
WRITE MEMOS, LETTERS, AND REPORTS

Estimated Percentage	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
Fewer than 30%	9	12.3
From 31% to 40%	6	8.2
From 41% to 50%	6	8.2
From 51% to 60%	12	16.4
From 61% to 70%	8	11.0
From 71% to 80%	10	13.7
More than 80%	22	30.1
TOTAL	73	100.0

TABLE XIII

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO TOOK A COLLEGE
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION COURSE

	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
Yes	47	64.4
No	26	35.6
TOTAL	73	100.0

TABLE XIV

NUMBER OF RESPONDING COMPANIES PROVIDING IN-SERVICE
TRAINING IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Type of Company	Frequency	Percent of Usable Returns
Yes	50	68.5
No	23	31.5
TOTAL	73	100.0

writing business communication, as reflected by a percentage rating of more than 60 percent:

Item I-3: Using correct sentence structure when writing (69,0%).

Item I-4: Using correct punctuation when writing (69.1%).

Item I-6: Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement (the positive or negative aspect of a state-ment, and how it sounds to the reader) (68.1%).

Four items received a score of over 30 percent in the "Very Important" category:

Item I-5: Knowing the correct parts of speech (46.6%)

Item I-7: Recognizing the effect of such factors as sentence length and word size on readability (45.8%).

Item I-13: Keeping in mind the "7 C's of Communication" when writing (correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, con-creteness, consideration, courtesy) (41.7%).

Item I-8: Emphasizing ideas through placement (position) in letters and reports (34%).

Three items received a rating of less than 10 percent in the "Very Important" Likert scale, as follows:

Item I-1: Relating communication theories and models to the written communication problems of business (9.7%).

Item I-2:   Identifying the behavioral concepts of
            different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.)
            concerning the changing nature of people's
            desires and applying them to written
            communication in business (4.2%).

Item I-12: Possessing a large vocabulary (4.1%).

The rating of 9.7 percent on Item #1 seems to indicate
that very few of the respondents felt that relating communi-
cation theories and models to written communication problems
in business was important in the business writing of their
companies.

Only 5 out of 14 items in the section on Communication
Theory contained responses in the "Not Important" category
of the Likert Scale. Of those five items, two received
percentage scores exceeding 10 percent:

Item I-2:   Identifying the behavioral concepts of
            different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.)
            concerning the changing nature of people's
            desires and applying them to written
            communication in business (20.8%).

Item I-1:   Relating communication theories and models
            to the written communication problems in
            business (12.5%).

The 20.8 percent rating received by Item #2 tends to
indicate that the identification of behavioral concepts of
such theorists as Maslow and McGregor are not considered by
the respondents to be particularly relevant in written
business communication.

The responses given to the 10 key items in Sections II through X were not spread very widely in the first three rating categories of Very Important, Important, and Average Importance. Those items considered by 40 percent or more of the respondents in the Very Important category were as follows:

IX-85: Knowing how to write memorandums (42.3%)

VII-65: Knowing how to write formal reports (40.8%)

V-46: Knowing how to write persuasive letters (40.6%)

Item XI-12 concerning the collection letter process received a low response rate from those business people surveyed in this study. Over 50 percent disregarded this particular portion of the questionnaire. This response rate could be an indication that the collection letter series is not a popular one for use in today's businesses and organizations, that perhaps companies use a different process than the standard seven letter collection series cited in many written business communication textbooks to collect payment for goods and/or services rendered. The low rate of response received in this portion of the questionnaire might indicate that class time spent on the collection letter process be minimized.

The two most prevalent types of companies responding to this communication survey were manufacturing companies and gas/oil-related firms. A small majority of the respondents had worked for their particular firm from one to five years, and a larger percentage of the reporting companies employed

more than 100 people in their business or division. Within

these companies, 30.1 percent of the people responding

reported that over 80 percent of their office employees were

involved in writing memorandums, letters, and reports.

More than 60 percent of the surveyed business people

had taken a college written business communication course,

and almost 70 percent of the companies queries for this

study provided in-service training in business communication

for their employees.

Section II - Ranking of Topics by Means

The respondents were asked to rate, on a Likert scale,

the written communication concepts listed in the

Communication Theory portion of the questionnaire in addi-

tion to the ten broad categories which pertained to the most

common forms of business writing. The highest categories

were "Very Important" and "Always"; the lowest categories

were "Not Important" and "Never". The point value assigned

to each category of the Likert scale on the three parts of

the questionnaire is listed below:

Parts I and II: Very Important - 5

Important - 4

Average Importance - 3

Low Importance - 2

Not Important - 1

Part III: Always - 5

Almost Always - 4

Usually - 3

Almost Never - 2

Never - 1

Table XV lists the theoretical concepts described in Section I of the questionnaire. The topics are ranked by means to indicate that perceived importance of each of the concepts included in communication theory in most business communication textbooks.

The most common forms of written communication in business are listed in Table XVI. As the information recorded on this table indicates, the memorandums shows the highest mean, 3.8216, and the lowest standard deviation, .5927. This high mean and low measure of dispersion might well indicate that the majority of respondents perceive this particular knowledge important in the world of business.

Table XVII gives a further breakdown of the theoretical concepts and the most common forms of written communication as perceived by the particular companies and organizations included in this survey. The "other" category (as listed on the demographic page of the questionnaire) is included in the table but is not ranked according to mean.

Section III - Ranking of Topic Importance
in the Six Most Adopted Business
Communication Textbooks

A content analysis and subsequent approximate word count were undertaken on the six most adopted business

TABLE XV

ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTS INCLUDED
IN COMMUNICATION THEORY AS
PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
I-1	2.875	1.174	72
I-2	2.417	1.071	72
I-3	4.676	.501	71
I-4	4.630	.589	73
I-5	4.260	.817	73
I-6	4.639	.564	72
I-7	4.306	.744	72
I-8	4.125	.768	72
I-9	3.694	.816	72
I-10	3.616	.844	73
I-11	3.466	.959	73
I-12	3.219	.821	73
I-13	4.125	.918	72
I-14	3.423	.981	71

TABLE XVI

MEAN RANKING OF TOPIC IMPORTANCE AS
PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS
(CATEGORIES II-XI)

Topic	Rank	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
Memorandums	1	3.8216	.5927	71
Routine/Good News Letters	2	3.7217	.9325	73
Special Letters	3	3.6880	.8766	71
Sales Letters	4	3.6439	.8190	70
Formal Reports	5	3.6130	.8302	71
Persuasive Letters	6	3.5580	.8879	69
Informal Reports	7	3.5380	.6399	70
Application, Letters, and Resumes	8	3.5164	.6489	72
Bad News Letters	9	3.4368	.8279	71
Collection Letters	10	2.7333	.8046	37

TABLE XVII

RANKING OF TOPICS BY COMPANIES (IN ORDER
LISTED ON QUESTIONNAIRE)

Type of Company	Rank	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
I. Communication Theory				
Financial	1	3.8984	.5538	6
Retail	2	3.7382	.4313	17
Manufacturing	3	3.7341	.5878	5
Other	--	3.8538	.5143	45
II. Good News/Routine Letters				
Financial	1	3.9667	.7090	6
Retail	2	3.9600	.6229	5
Manufacturing	3	3.6952	1.0008	45
Other	--	3.6353	.9467	17
III. Bad News Letters				
Financial	1	3.9444	.5911	6
Retail	2	3.4498	.9211	44
Manufacturing	3	3.4222	.4932	5
Other	--	3.2153	.9095	16
IV. Sales Letters				
Retail	1	4.1600	.5937	5
Financial	2	3.9667	.7964	6
Manufacturing	3	3.4498	.9211	44
Other	--	3.2153	.9095	16
V. Persuasive Letters				
Retail	1	3.7333	1.1879	5
Financial	2	3.6318	.7981	43
Manufacturing	3	3.5556	1.2766	6
Other	--	3.2889	.9073	15
VI. Special Letters				
Financial	1	4.1429	.7228	6
Manufacturing	2	3.7820	.9085	45
Retail	3	3.3810	.7611	15
Other	--	3.2286	.8119	5

TABLE XVII (Continued)

Type of Company	Rank	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
VII. Formal Reports				
Financial	1	3.8333	.8573	6
Manufacturing	2	3.6806	.7592	45
Retail	3	3.6152	.8116	15
Other	--	2.7333	1.1864	5
VIII. Informal Reports				
Financial	1	3.8858	.6332	6
Manufacturing	2	3.5751	.6512	43
Retail	3	3.4952	.5016	16
Other	--	2.9385	.7163	5
IX. Memorandums				
Financial	1	4.1667	.6603	6
Manufacturing	2	3.8712	.5922	44
Retail	3	3.6696	.5235	16
Other	--	3.4571	.5838	5
X. Application, Letters, and Resumes				
Financial	1	4.1061	.5059	6
Retail	2	3.6000	.6252	5
Manufacturing	3	3.4525	.6883	44
Other	--	3.4492	.5187	17
XI. Collection Letters				
Retail	1	3.3889	.3368	3
Financial	2	3.1667	.6273	4
Manufacturing	3	2.7590	.7423	24
Other	--	2.0139	.9013	6

communication textbooks to determine the total percentage of space devoted to 11 major topics. The total words for each topic were converted into a percentage to generalize the relative importance of each topic. (See Chapter III for a detailed analysis of this procedure.)

Because the word count was an approximate one rather than an exact count, it is unlikely that two individuals would agree completely on the number of words contained in any of the textbooks cited in Appendix A. Such limitations should be recognized in the interpretation of Table XVIII which expresses the combined percentage of space devoted to 11 major categories of written business communication, in order listed on the questionnaire.

Table XIX ranks each of these topics by percentages, from the highest percentage of space devoted to a topic to the lowest.

A comparison was made of the means of topic importance as perceived by business people and the percentage of space devoted to 11 major topics in six written business communication textbooks. Table XX compares the topics in the order they are listed on the questionnaire.

Table XXI ranks the topics according to the means of topic importance as perceived by the respondents and compares this ranking with the percentage of space devoted to each topic in the six business communication textbooks used for this study.

Table XXII lists the textbook ranking of the

TABLE XVIII

PERCENTAGE OF A TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED TO
11 MAJOR TOPICS IN SIX WRITTEN
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

Topic	Percentage
I. Communication Theory	25.87
II. Routine/Good News Letters	13.10
III. Bad News Letters	7.28
IV. Sales Letters	7.90
V. Persuasive Letters	3.55
VI. Special Letters	4.50
VII. Formal Reports	16.05
VIII. Informal Reports	4.77
IX. Memorandums	.56
X. Application Letters and Resumes	10.75
XI. Collection Letters	5.69
TOTAL	100.01*

*The total does not equal 100.00 percent because of rounding.

TABLE XIX

RANKING OF THE PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED
TO 11 MAJOR TOPICS IN SIX WRITTEN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

Topic	Rank	Percentage
Communication Theory	1	25.87
Formal Reports	2	16.05
Routine/Good News Letters	3	13.10
Application, Letters, and Resumes	4	10.75
Sales Letters	5	7.90
Bad News Letters	6	7.28
Collection Letters	7	5.69
Informal Reports	8	4.77
Special Letters	9	4.50
Persuasive Letters	10	3.55
Memorandums	11	.56
TOTAL		100.02*

*The total does not equal 100.00 percent because of rounding.

TABLE XX

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF TOPIC IMPORTANCE
AS PERCEIVED BY BUSINESS PEOPLE AND THE
PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED TO 11
MAJOR TOPICS IN SIX WRITTEN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS*

| | Respondents | | Textbooks | |
Area	Rank	Mean	Rank	Percentage
Communication Theory	1	3.8223	1	25.87
Routine/Good News Letters	3	3.7217	3	13.10
Bad News Letters	10	3.4368	6	7.28
Sales Letters	5	3.6439	5	7.90
Persuasive Letters	7	3.5580	10	3.55
Special Letters	4	3.6880	9	4.50
Formal Reports	6	3.6130	2	16.05
Informal Reports	8	3.5380	8	4.77
Memorandums	2	3.8216	11	.56
Application Letters and Resumes	9	3.5164	4	10.75
Collection Letters	11	2.7333	7	4.69

*In order listed on questionnaire.

TABLE XXI

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF TOPIC IMPORTANCE
AS PERCEIVED BY BUSINESS PEOPLE AND THE
PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED TO 11
MAJOR TOPICS IN SIX WRITTEN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS*

Area	Respondents		Textbooks	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Percentage
Communication Theory	1	3.8223	1	25.87
Memorandums	2	3.8216	11	.56
Routine/Good News Letters	3	3.7217	3	13.10
Special Letters	4	3.6880	9	4.50
Sales Letters	5	3.6439	5	7.90
Formal Reports	6	3.6130	2	16.05
Persuasive Letters	7	3.5580	10	3.55
Informal Reports	8	3.5380	8	4.77
Application Letters and Resumes	9	3.5164	4	10.75
Bad News Letters	10	3.4368	6	7.28
Collection Letters	11	2.7333	7	5.69

*Ranked according to means of topic importance as
perceived by respondents.

TABLE XXII

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF TOPIC IMPORTANCE
AS PERCEIVED BY BUSINESS PEOPLE AND THE
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SPACE DEVOTED TO 11
MAJOR TOPICS IN SIX WRITTEN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS*

Area	Respondents		Textbooks	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Percentage
Communication Theory	1	3.8223	1	25.87
Formal Reports	6	3.6130	2	16.05
Routine/Good News Letters	3	3.7217	3	13.10
Application Letters and Resumes	9	3.5164	4	10.75
Sales Letters	5	3.6439	5	7.90
Bad News Letters	10	3.4368	6	7.28
Collection Letters	11	2.7333	7	5.69
Informal Reports	8	3.5380	8	4.77
Special Letters	4	3.6880	9	4.50
Persuasive Letters	7	3.5580	10	3.55
Memorandums	2	3.8216	11	.56

*Ranked according to the combined percentage ratio of topics in textbooks.

percentage of space devoted to each major business communication topic and compares these percentages with the means of the topics, as their importance was perceived by business people.

Summary of Section III

An approximate word count was conducted on the six most adopted business communication textbooks (see Appendix A) to determine the percentage of space that was devoted to 11 major topics. These combined percentage ratios were then compared to the answers given by business people surveyed in this study. A mean was derived for each major topic and the topics were ranked accordingly.

The first category in the questionnaire, Communication Theory, was perceived by the respondents to be the most important concept, despite the low rating of two of the 14 items included in this category. Memorandums were perceived by business people to be second in importance, and routine/ good news letters were rated third. The business people rated the collection letter series the lowest in importance, as evidenced by the low means as well as the low response rate.

The six business communication textbooks analyzed for this study devoted the largest percentage of space to Communication Theory. Included in this broad category were items pertaining to communication models, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, placement of ideas, and the

"you viewpoint." The second largest amount of textbook space was devoted to formal reports. Text and exemplary material for memorandums had a combined percentage of .56 percent, the lowest percentage reported. One reason for this low percentage rate, however, could be that the textbook authors did not differentiate memorandums from short, informal reports. Had these two categories been combined into one unit, the percentage of textbook space devoted to memorandums would undoubtedly be much larger.

Section IV - Interpretation of Chi-Squres

Statistics for two-way tables were used to compare selected demographic items in the questionnaire. The chi-square test for significance was computed for each of the comparisons. The following information for each cell in the two-way tables is given: observed frequency, row percent, and column percent. Column and row totals and percentages are also given to the results of the chi-square test and the significance level.

Selected categorical variables were analyzed using the data recorded in the contingency table to determine if the two variables were independent of one another. State differently, a contingency table analysis was conducted to ascertain if there was any difference between the frequency of the different levels of the categorical variables.

None of the chi-square tests computed on selected categorical variables in the demographic portion of the

questionnaire revealed a significant difference. The tables
for each of these chi-squares are included in Appendix E.

Table XXIII (see Appendix D) indicates no significant
difference between the type of company and the estimated
percentage of office employees who write memorandums,
letters, and reports.

Table XXIV (see Appendix D) indicates no significant
difference between the type of company and the number of
respondents who had taken a college business communication
course.

Table XXV (see Appendix D) indicates no significant
difference between the type of company and the number of
companies providing in-service training in business
communication.

Table XXVI (see Appendix E) indicates no significant
difference between the size of the company and the estimated
percentage of office employees who write memorandums,
letters, and reports.

Table XXVII (see Appendix E) indicates no significant
difference between the size of the company and the number of
respondents who had taken a college business communication
course.

Table XXVIII (see Appendix E) indicates no significant
difference between the size of the company and the number of
companies providing in-service training in business
communication.

Table XXIX (see Appendix E) indicates no significant

difference between the number of respondents who had taken a college business communication course and whether the company provides in-service training in business communication.

Table XXX (see Appendix E) indicates no significant difference between the number of respondents who had taken a college business communication course and the number of years employed in the company.

<div align="center">

Section V - Additional Comments Supplied
by Respondents

</div>

The respondents were provided space at the end of each of the three parts of the questionnaire to offer any additional comments relating to the questionnaire or to the items included in each part. In some cases, the respondent signified a strong preference for a particular item by using multiple "X's" in the rating scale rather than the customary single "X." To ensure completeness of this study, the comments as well as the items which received multiple "X's" are included in this section of Chapter IV.

Most of the comments (or multiple "X's") pertained to the application letter/resume portion of the questionnaire. The respondents seem to have strong opinions regarding this topic and were generous with their remarks.

Relating to Application Letters and Resumes

*"I prefer one-page resumes especially from recent college graduates with little work experience."

*"Over the past five months, I have read over 5,000 job applications, many from college students or graduates. A resume or job application is the key to employment, but I have read very few (applications) filled out properly. I am always amazed at how poorly college graduate present themselves on paper."

*"I would credit an applicant a full 40 percent importance rating for application (letters), resumes, and interviews as compared to 60 percent for background and experience-related information."

*"Most students put 'Transcript and references available upon request' on a resume. I feel that these should always be included so that the company doesn't have to go through the hassel of requesting the information."

*"(I) feel names and addresses of references should accompany resume."

*"The number of hours are important only on the first resume after graduation."

*"Listing the number of hours taken in specific major area (is important in) technical disciplines, such as accounting."

*"Including personal information (on a resume) can cause unnecessary pre-judgment."

*"The format used in a resume depends on the amount of information to present."

*"So many of the (application) letters we receive appear "canned." In my position, I am closely involved in the recruiting efforts. It is always refreshing to see an individualized approach to a cover letter. Application letter and resume practice in the classroom would certainly be worthwhile. Just be cautious of training students of only one way to write the letter or resume and result in a (university) "clone." Solid guidance while encouraging individuality is important."

*"Many instructors tell students to write "catchy" attention-getting application letters when they would be much better off to be direct in stating what type of job they are looking for and what skills they possess while leaving out all extra garbage."

*"Most times the first impression is made by the application letter. It is critical to 'stand out' from all the other letters."

Two of the items receiving multiple "X's" were in the Very Important Category and pertained to application letters and resumes. Those items for which the respondents indicated a strong preference are as follows:

X-86: Knowing how to write an application letter that accurately reflects the writer's personality, aptitudes, and skills.

X-88: Keeping a resume at a two-page maximum length.

Relating to Collection Letters

*"Most collections (in our company) are handled by phone."

*"The number of collection problems that we have is fairly small, and we still primarily use the individualized letter."

*"(Knowing how to write collection letters) is very important to the small group of employees who write them."

*"This (collections) is a highly specialized part of the company's activity. I don't know specifically how many (people) have these responsibilities, but the number is not large."

Relating to Communication Theory

*"How to write short, clear--simple language-- action-oriented letters, reports, directions, and communica- tions (are very important)."

*"Possessing a large vocabulary is important, but not talking "over" the reader's head, therefore appearing condescending."

*"Key factors we look at are spelling, grammar, and the ability to complete an idea."

Relating to Communication in General

*"Oral and written communication skills are essential to success."

*"The written communication is not nearly as important as the oral communication for the application in our company."

Relating to Memorandums

Two resondents indicated their strong preference in the Very Important category for Item IX-85, knowing how to write memoranda.

Relating to the Study

*"Your interest in canvassing (company name) is appreciated."

*"Not all the areas discussed (in the questionnaire) apply regularly to our business."

*"We at (company name) applaud your efforts to improve written communication skills for business students."

Summary of Section V

A lengthy comment pertaining to written communication in an actual business setting was made by one respondent. This comment will be used as a summarizing statement for Section V:

> I encourage college students to take as many
> writing courses as possible because, no matter
> what their major, they will be expected to write
> in one form or another. As marketing director, I
> review all proposals and follow up on all that
> goes out of the firm. I also handle much of the
> correspondence directed to prospects or referrals.
> Our professional staff is expected to write for
> the newsletter sent monthly to clients and
> referrals. It is critical that the employee

be able to organize and present material in a
manner that can hold the reader's attention.
Many have difficulty moving from technical to
entertaining yet informative.

Summary - VI

Chapter IV contains a detailed analysis of the data

obtained from a survey of companies and organizations that

sent representatives to conduct interviews on the Oklahoma

State University campus during the Fall, 1984, semester. A

60.3 percent return resulted from the original and the

follow-up mailings.

In addition, a combined percentage was derived from an

estimated word count on the six most widely adopted business

communication textbooks (see Appendix A). These percentages

were compared with the means of the 11 broad categories

included in the questionnaire.

Frequency distributions on 25 key items within the

questionnaire were analyzed and discussed. Chi-square

analyses were conducted on selected demographic information

to test for significance.

Finally, an interpretative summary of comments made by

respondents were included to ensure completeness of this

study.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations are

presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication is a dynamic process. The ability to communicate effectively has been cited as an essential requirement for a successful career because communication is an important element in the daily routine of a company or organization. Written, hard copy documentation of certain business transactions or interactions is necessary for the accurate maintenance of records for future reference; therefore, those employees who can write clearly and concisely are a valuable asset to any business or organization.

Because the ability to communicate in writing is so important to the smooth operation and increased productivity level of a business, executives are demanding a high level of writing proficiency from their employees. Colleges and universities are being criticized by business people for graduating students who cannot communicate in writing. College instructors are understandably concerned with these criticisms and are constantly searching for ways to improve the writing skills of their students. Teachers may be limited, however, in teaching the practical applications of written business communication as business people perceive

them because the textbooks available for adoption may not emphasize the areas most important to business.

Purpose and Design of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of business people concerning the importance of certain written business communication topics and compare these perceptions with the percentage of space devoted to those topics in the six most widely adopted business communication textbooks, as researched and identified by Ober and Wunsch in 1983. This purpose was accomplished through an interpretive analysis of data obtained from a questionnaire mailed to 122 companies and organizations which sent representatives to conduct on-campus interviews at Oklahoma State University during the Fall, 1984, semester.

In addition, an approximate word count was undertaken to determine the percentage of space devoted to 11 major categories in the six business communication textbooks used for this study.

The Questionnaire

To design the survey instrument, which included a four-page questionnaire and a separate demographic page, the following measures were undertaken:

1. A study of the literature relating to written
    communication in business and education

2. A cursory review of the six business communication
    textbooks used for this study

3. A review of numerous studies which utilized the
    survey method to collect data

4. Consultations with various faculty members at
    Oklahoma State University

The survey instrument was then mailed in the Spring,
1985, to 122 companies and organizations that had sent
representatives to recruit new employees from the Oklahoma
State University student population. A total of 73, or 60.3
percent, of the business people contacted responded to the
questionnaire.

Analysis of the Data

As the questionnaires were returned, the data were
coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the
Social Sciences (SPSS-X) software package. Frequency counts
and percentage relationships were used to analyze the
descriptive data. Two-way tables and chi-square tests were
conducted to analyze the comparison of selected demographic
items included with the questionnaire. A non-statistical
comparison was made between the perceptions of business
people and the percentage of space devoted to 11 major
topics in six business communication textbooks.

Review of Related Literature

One requirement of this study was to elicit the opinions of business people concerning the importance of written communication in business. A thorough review of related literature was conducted to ascertain what written communication skills business people and educators have judged to be important for a successful career in business.

Many studies have been conducted and a plethora of articles have been written about the importance of effective communication in business. However, none of the studies reviewed compared the percentage of textbook space devoted to certain business communication topics with the perceptions of business people on these same topics.

Results of the Study

The results of this study are summarized in four sections according to:

1. Frequency distributions that analyze 25 of the key written communication concepts within an actual business environment

2. Ranking by means of topic importance as perceived by the respondents

3. Ranking of topic importance in the six most adopted business communication textbooks, as revealed through an approximate word count converted to a percentage

4. Chi-squares on selected demographic information to test for significance

Frequency Distributions That Analyze
25 Communications Concepts

The majority of respondents perceived the following items of communication theory to be most important:

1. Using correct sentence structure when writing

2. Using correct punctuation when writing

3. Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement (the positive or negative aspect of a statement and how it sounds to the reader)

Sixty percent of the respondents rated these items as Very Important or Important.

Those forms of written communication perceived by business people to be the most relevant are:

1. Memorandums

2. Formal Reports

3. Persuasive Letters

The concepts in communication with the lowest ratings were:

1. Identifying the behavioral concepts of different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.) concerning the changing nature of people's desires and applying them to written communication in business

2. Relating communication theories and models to the written communication problems in business

The category receiving the lowest number of responses was the Collection Letter. More than 50 percent of the respondents disregarded this particular portion of the questionnaire because the collection process was not a standard practice in their company or organization.

Ranking of Topics by Means

When asked to indicate the degree of importance of the 11 broad categories included in the questionnaire, the top three items, ranked by means, were: Communication Theory, Memorandums, and Routine/Good News Letters.

Ranking of Topic Importance in Six
Business Communication Textbooks

The means of the data obtained from the questionnaire were compared to the percentage of space devoted to eleven major areas in the six business communication textbooks used for this study. The area of Communication Theory was ranked first in terms of space devoted to that topic, formal reports second, and routine/good news letters third.

Chi-Square Tests for Significance

None of the chi-square tests computed on selected categorical variables in the demographic portion of the questionnaire revealed a significant difference.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on: (a) the results of the review of literature; (b) the descriptive analysis of responses by business people involved in college recruiting on the Oklahoma State University campus during the Fall, 1984, semester; (c) the approximate percentage of space devoted to certain topics in the six most widely adopted business communication textbooks; and (d) personal comments made by respondents.

The conclusions presented in the following paragraphs are based on the review of related literature in this study.

1. Written communication is perhaps the most important communication form for the everyday operation of a business.

2. Colleges and universities are being criticized for graduating students who lack basic communication ability--especially writing skills.

3. Written communication is perceived by managers to be an important tool for managerial success.

4. Poor communications cost companies billions of dollars every year.

5. The number of in-house training seminars in the written communication area is increasing because business people feel their employees are deficient in that area.

6. The memorandum is the most frequently used form of communication and the most time-consuming.

7. Organization and planning of written correspondence are essential for clear, concise, effective communication.

8. There is continuing disagreement between educators and business people as to the importance of certain topics to be included in a collegiate business communication course.

9. Business communications teachers should spend more "writing time" in class on memorandums and short reports.

The conclusions summarized in the following paragraphs are based on the findings of this present study.

1. A large majority of respondents, over 68 percent, perceived using correct sentence structure and correct punctuation to be very important in business writing.

2. Relating communication theories and models and iden- tifying the behavioral concepts of theorists were perceived to be of low or no importance in relation to business writing.

3. Memorandums and formal reports were perceived by respondents to be the most important forms of communication used in business.

4. The collection letter garnered a low response rate as well as a low mean on the Likert scale. This might well be an indication to business communication teachers that class time spent on the collection letter series be minimized.

5. The frequencies reported in Section I of Chapter IV may be a strong indication that the diverse topics comprising communication theory are important to effective business writing. In addition, the ability to write clear, concise memorandums seems to be a major concern to business people, as revealed by a 42.3 percent response in the Very Important category of the Likert scale.

6. An analysis of the percentage of space devoted to certain topics in six business communication textbooks revealed that communication theory received the most attention from textbook authors.

7. A comparison of the percentage of space devoted to certain topics in six business communication textbooks with the perceptions of business people revealed that there is a concurrence as to the relative importance of communication theory.

8. A comparison of the textbook space devoted to certain topics with the means of the respondents' answers further revealed that there is an agreement between textbooks and business people on the importance of knowing how to write routine/good news letters.

9. Additional comments by respondents indicated that a resume should be limited to two pages.

10. Additional comments by respondents revealed that they prefer a direct, factual application letter rather than a "canned" or "catchy" one.

11. Additional comments by respondents indicated that spelling, grammar, and organization are key factors in written business communication.

Recommendations by the Researcher

1. Based on the findings of the present study, the researcher recommends that the written business communication curriculum should be currently assessed and evaluated

by educators to provide relevant, practical instructions for college students.

2. Inasmuch as comparatively few people have the responsibility of writing collection letters, it would seen that textbook authors might well devote less space to this topic and more space to topics having greater priority.

3. Because of the importance given to memorandums and short reports by both educators and selected business executives, perhaps more in-class "writing time" should be devoted to these topics.

4. Because differences have been noted between the perceptions of business people concerning topic importance and the amount of space devoted to topics in business communication textbooks, the researcher recommends that instructors and textbook authors recognize these differences and make topic adjustments accordingly.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following suggestions for future research are based on the findings of this study and on the review of literature:

1. A study is needed to determine the most effective method for educators to receive information concerning the communication skills and knowledge needed in business.

2. A study similar to the present one should be conducted using a larger population. A comparison

should be made on the responses of the smaller pop-
ulation used in this study and a larger population
with the same study to determine if the results of
such research are relevant and generalizable to a
larger population.

3. A follow-up study is needed to determine the
   percentage of classroom time devoted to the 11
   major areas included in this study.

4. A follow-up study is needed to survey the textbook
   authors of the six most widely adopted business
   communication textbooks to compare the authors'
   perceptions of topic importance with the reported
   perceptions of the respondents in this study.

5. Further research is needed to examine the correla-
   tion between the perceptions of business people
   concerning business communication skills and knowl-
   edg needed by the students and those actually used
   by the students after they are employed.

6. An additional study should be conducted in which
   letters that have been written by students are
   analyzed by business people who are responsible for
   the same or similar types of correspondence.

7. Studies should be conducted to ascertain what type
   of communication skills and knowledge are most
   needed by specific positions within a firm.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AACSB <u>Accreditation</u> <u>Council</u> <u>Policies,</u> <u>Procedures</u> <u>and</u>
    <u>Standards.</u> (AACSB, 1983-84), 26-27.

Adelstein, Michael E. <u>Contemporary</u> <u>Business</u> <u>Writing</u>. New
    York: Random House, Incorporated, 1971.

Adkins, Bertee. "An Analysis of Business Communications
    Sklills and Knowledges as Perceived by Selected
    Businesspersons, Teachers, and Students in Kentucky."
    (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1980.)

Allred, Hilda F. "Guidelines for Teaching Business
    Correspondence." <u>Business</u> <u>Education</u> <u>Forum</u>, Vol. 33
    (February 1979), 24-26.

Allred, Hilda F., and Joseph F. Clark. "Written
    Communication Problems and Priorities." <u>The</u> <u>Journal</u> <u>of</u>
    <u>Business</u> <u>Communication</u>, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1978), 31-35.

Angrist, A. W. "A Study of the Communications of Executives
    in Business and Industry." <u>Speech</u> <u>Monographs</u>, Vol. 20,
    No. 1 (1953), 277-285.

Bartz, Albert E. <u>Basic</u> <u>Statistical</u> <u>Concepts</u>. Minneapolis:
    Burgess Publishing Company, 1981.

Battison, Robbin, and Dixie Goswami. "Clear Writing Today."
    <u>The</u> <u>Journal</u> <u>of</u> <u>Business</u> <u>Communication</u>, Vol. 18, No. 4
    (1981), 5-16.

Becker, Samuel, and Leah Ekdom. "That Forgotten Basic
    Skill." <u>Association</u> <u>for</u> <u>Communication</u> <u>Administration</u>
    <u>Bulletin</u>, No. 33 (1980), 12-25.

Bennett, James C. "The Communication Needs of Business
    Executives." <u>The</u> <u>Journal</u> <u>of</u> <u>Business</u> <u>Communication</u>,
    Vol. 8, No. 3 (1971), 5-11.

Benson, Gary L. "On the Campus: How Well Do Business
    Schools Prepare Graduates for the Business World?"
    <u>Personnel</u>, Vol. 60, No. 4 (July-August 1983), 61-65.

Bowman, Ben. "What Helps or Harms Promotability?" <u>Harvard</u>
    <u>Business</u> <u>Review</u>, Vol. 42 (January-February 1964),
    6-26.

Bowman, Joel P., and Bernadine P. Branchaw. Business Report Writing. Chicago: The Dryden Press, 1984.

Bowman, Joel P., and Bernadine P. Branchaw. Understanding and Using Communication in Business. San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1977.

Branchaw, Bernadine P. "Teaching Business Students All the Communication Skills." Business Education World, Vol. 59, No. 1 (September-October 1978), 10-11.

Brendel, LeRoy A. "Are Classroom Mailability Standards Realistic?" Century 21 Reporter, Fall 1978, 5.

"Broad Education Vital in Business Communication." The Sunday Oklahoman, 28 October 1984, Section C--Business.

"Building Business Students' Communication Skills." AACSB Conference Notebook, Brigham Young University, 1981.

Campbell, Mary Ellen. "Consulting and Readability: The Key to Motivating Clients." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1981), 35-44.

Cole, Wayne H. "The Characteristics of Written Communication and Attitudes Toward Communication in a Selected Corporation with Implications for Improvement in Business Writing Instructions." (Ed.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1969.)

Cost, Doris Lemmers. "The Importance of Written Communication in Business as Viewed by Executives in a Metro Area." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1981.)

Denton, L. W. "In-House Training in Written Communication: A Status Report." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1979), 3-14.

Dillman, Don A. Mail and Telephone Surveys. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978.

Dulek, Ron, and Annette Shelby. "Varying Evaluative Criteria: A Factor in Differential Grading." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1981), 41-50.

Dulek, Ronald, and James Suchan. "Between Language Extremists: Find a Happy Medium for Business Memos." Personnel, Vol. 60, No. 5 (1983), 69-77.

Eaton, John W. "Problems Encountered in Business Writing." (Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1972.)

Edge, Alfred C., and Ronald Greenwood. "How Managers Rank Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Possessed by Business Administration Graduates." AACSB Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 1 (October 1974), 33-34.

Einbecker, Polly Godwin. "Communication Skills for Prospective Secretaries." Business Education Forum, No. 30 (1977), 35-37.

Fielden, John. "What Do You Mean I Can't Write?" Harvard Business Review, (May-June 1964), 144-145.

Fielden, John S., Jean D. Fielden, and Ronald E. Dulek. The Business Writing Style Book. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1984.

Fielden, John S., and Ronald E. Dulek. Bottom-Line Business Writing. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1984.

Flatley, Marie E. "A Comparative Analysis of the Written Communication of Managers at Various Organizational Levels in the Private Business Sector." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1982), 35-49.

Gay, L. R. Educational Research, Competencies for Analysis and Application. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1981.

Gieselman, Robert D. "Research in Business Communication: The State of the Art." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1980), 3-18.

Glassman, Myron, and E. Ann Farley. "AACSB Accredited Schools' Approach to Business Communication Courses." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1979), 41-48.

Good, Carter V. Essentials of Educational Research, Methodology and Design. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1966.

Gros, Ridley J. "The Communication Package in the Business Curriculum, Why?" AACSB Bulletin, Vol. 39, No. 4 (December 1976), 5-8.

Hagaman, John A. "Practice What You Preach: Techniques for Teaching Personalized Business Letters to Established Business Writers." The ABCA Bulletin, Vol. 41, No. 2 (1978), 17-19.

Harty, Kevin J. "Some Guidelines for Saying 'No.'" The ABCA Bulletin, Vol. 44, No. 4 (1980), 23-25.

Halpern, Jeanne W. "What Should We Be Teaching Students in Business Writing?" The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1981), 39-53.

Hildebrandt, H. W., F. A. Bond, E. L. Miller, and A. W. Swinyard. "An Executive Appraisal and Courses Which Best Prepare One for General Management." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1982), 5-15.

Hilkert, Robert D. "Executives Must Write." The ABCA Bulletin (March 1956), 15.

Himstreet, William C., and Wayne Murlin Baty. Business Communications Sixth Edition. Boston: Kent Publishing Company, 1981.

Himstreet, William C., and Wayne Murlin Baty. Business Communications Principles and Methods Seventh Edition. Boston: Kent Publishing Company, 1984.

"How to Teach Students to Improve Their Creativity in a Basic Business Communication Class." Prepared by the 1982 ABCA Teaching Methodology and Concepts Committee, Steven Golen, Chairman. The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1983), 47-57.

Huber, Carol, and Gayle Josso. "Communication Skill Survey." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Association of Teachers of English, 19th, Los Angeles, California, February 18-20, 1977.

Hulbert, Jack E. "Facilitating Intelligent Business Dialogue." Business Education Forum, Vol. 33 (1979), 10-15.

Huston, Harlan D. "The Nature and Characteristics of Business Education and Training Offered by Business and Industry in a Metropolitan Area with Implications for Community Colleges." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1976.)

Hyslop, David J., and Kay Faris. "Integrate Communication Skills Into All Business Classes." Business Education Forum, Vol. 38 (1984), 51-57.

Inman, Thomas A., and Lorraine Krajewski. "A Futuristic View of Business Communication." The ABCA Bulletin, Vol. 41, No. 2 (June 1978), 26-27.

Janis, J. Harold. Writing and Communicating in Business Second Edition. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967.

Janis, J. Harold. _Writing and Communicating in Business_
     Third Edition. New York: The MacMillan Company,
     1978.

Johnson, Carrie Lois. "Business Correspondence Effective-
     ness as Perceived by Selected Members of the National
     Secretaries Association (International)." (Ed.D. dis-
     sertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1980.)

Kay, R. R. "To Manage You Must Communicate." _Iron Age_,
     Vol. 196, No. 1 (1965), 55.

Knapper, Arno F. "Good Writing--A Shared Responsibility."
     The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 15, No. 2
     (1978), 23-27.

Knapper, Arno F. "Written Communication: A Critical Anal-
     ysis of Writings of Business Correspondents." (Ph.D.
     dissertation, Georgia State University, 1970.)

Krey, Isabelle A., and Bernadette V. Metzler. _Principles
     and Techniques of Business Communication_. New York:
     Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Incorporated, 1976.

Lemley, Barbara Wink. "The Relationship Among Perceptions
     of Business Communication Needs Held by Undergraduate
     Students, Their Supervisors, and Faculty at the Univer-
     sity of the District of Columbia." (Ph.D. disserta-
     tion, George WEashington University, 1981.)

Lesikar, Raymond V. _Basic Business Communication_. Home-
     wood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Incorporated, 1979.

Levine, Edward L. "Let's Talk: Tools for Spotting and Cor-
     recting Communication Problems." _Supervisory Manage-
     ment_, Vol. 25, No. 7 (1980), 25-37.

Lewis, Phillip V. "Communication Competency and Collegiate
     Schools of Business." _Collegiate News and Views_, Vol.
     XXIX, No. 2 (Winter 1975-76), 15-16.

Litterst, Judith K., and Bassey Eyo. "Gauging the Effec-
     tiveness of Formal Communication Programs: A Search
     for the Communication-Productivity Link." _The Journal
     of Business Communication_, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1982), 15-
     26.

Madeline, Stephen E. "Eight Corporate Commuinication Chal-
     lenges for the Eighties." _The Journal of Business Com-
     munication_, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1980), 13-22.

Matthiesen, Eric, and Millicent L. Pogge. "A Comparative
    Analysis of Undergraduate Programs in Organizational
    and Business Communications." The Journal of Business
    Communication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1979), 31-43.

Menning, J. H., C. W. Wilkinson, and Peter B. Clarke.
    Communicating Through Letters and Reports Sixth
    Edition. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1976.

Millington, Clayton B. "Former Business Students Evaluate
    Written Communication." Paper presented at the Twelfth
    Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Federation of Admin-
    istrative Disciplines, New Orleans, Louisiana, March
    2-9, 1985.

Murphy, Herta A., and Charles E. Peck. Effective Business
    Communications Second Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill
    Book Company, 1976.

"The Mystery of the Business Graduates Who Can't Write."
    Nation's Business, Vol. 65 (February, 1977), 60-62.

Newburg, Thomas A. "Exercises for Better Management Devel-
    opment." Personnel Journal, Vol. 59, No. 10 (1980),
    850-852.

"1984 Business Letter Cost is $8.10.) The Secretary, Vol.
    44, No. 7 (August/September 1984), 15.

Ober, Scott Alan, and P. Wunsch. "The Status of Business
    Communication Instruction in Postsecondary Institutions
    in the United States." The Journal of Business Com-
    munication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1983), 5-16.

Pederson, Wesley. "Obfuscation Is Out. But Is Communica-
    tion In? It's Time Our Bureaucrats Learned to Write!"
    Publication Relations Quarterly, Vol. 23 (Fall 1978),
    23.

Quible, Zane, Margaret H. Johnson, and Dennis Mott. Intro-
    duction to Business Communication. Englewood Cliffs,
    NJ: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1981.

Radar, Martha H., and Alan P. Wunsch. "A Survey of Communi-
    cation Practices of Business School Graduates by Job
    Category and Undergraduate Major." The Journal of
    Business Communication, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1980), 33-41.

Rhea, Jeanine N. "The Impact of Business Communications on
    Organizational Productivity." NABTE Review, Issue No.
    11 (1984), 5-8.

Robbins, Larry M. The Business of Writing and Speaking.
    New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985.

Rothwell, William. "Developing an In-House Training Curriculum in Written Communication." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1983), 31-45.

Roundy, Nancy, and Charlotte Thralls. "Modeling the Communication Context: A Procedure for Evision and Evaluation in Business Writing." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1983), 27-46.

Sanders, Howard J. H. "Continuing Education: The Intensified Effort to Keep Up to Date." Chemical and Engineering News (May 13, 1974), 18.

Sanders, Wayne. "Chances Are You're Not Communicating." Supervisory Management, Vol. 24, No. 10 (1979), 33-35.

Sigband, Norman B. Communication for Management and Business Third Edition. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1982.

Sigband, Norman, and David N. Bateman. Communicating in Business. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981.

"Skills Businessmen Use Most." Nation's Business, Vol. 48, No. 11 (1960), 88.

Smeltzer, Larry R., Janice Glab, and Steven Golen. "Managerial Communication: The Merging of Business Communication, Organizational Communication, and Management." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1983), 71-78.

Smith, Safrona L. "Is It Relevant in Communication?" The Journal of Business Education, Vol. 44, No. 8 (1969), 318-319.

Sobolik, Gayle A. "A History of Business Letter-Writing Theory as Revealed in an Interpretive Analysis of American Collegiate Business Communication Textbooks." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1970.)

Soutter, Florence. "Analysis of Business Communication Curricula." The ABCA Bulletin, Vol. 41, No. 2 (1978), 24-25.

SPSS-X User's Guide, A Complete Guide to SPSS-X Language and Operations. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983.

Stine, Donna, and Donald Skarzenski. "Priorities for the Business Communication Classroom: A Survey of Business and Academe." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1979), 15-30.

Stoddard, Ted D. "Business Communication as a Competency-Based General Education Course." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1980), 51-60.

Stroback, Stephen K. "Business and Postsecondary Eduction Linkages." Training and Development Journal, Vol. 30 (February, 1976), 8-11.

Swenson, Dan H. "Relative Importance of Business Communication Skills for the Next Ten Years." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1980), 41-49.

"This We Believe About the Teaching of Business Communication." Business Education Forum, Vol. 39 (October 1984), 11.

Thomas, Joe, and Peter J. Sireno. "Assessing Management Competency Needs." Training and Development Journal, Vol. 34 (September 1980), 47-51.

Van DeWeghe, Richard. "Writing Models, Versatile Writers." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1983), 13-23.

Vik, Gretchen N. "What We Need to Teach in a Basic Writing Skills Course." The ABCA Bulletin, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1981), 25-28.

Volard, S. W., and M. R. Davies, "Communication Pattern of Managers." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1982), 41-53.

Weiss, Allen. Write What You Mean. New York: American Management Association, 1977.

West, Edna. "An Analysis of Selected Programs Conducted by Management Correspondence Improvement." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1957).

Wilkinson, C. W., P. B. Clarke, and D. C. M. Wilkinson. Communicating through Letters and Reports Seventh Edition. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Incorporated, 1980.

Wilkinson, C. W., P. B. Clarke, and D. C. M. Wilkinson. Communicating Through Letters and Reports Eighth Edition. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Incorporated, 1983.

Wirtz, Willard. The Boundless Resource. Washington, D.C.:
    New Republic Book Company, Inc., 1975.

Wolf, Morris Phillip, Dale F. Keyser, and Robert R. Aurner.
    Effective Communication in Business Seventh Edition.
    Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1979.

Woodcock, Barry E. "Characteristic Oral and Written Busi-
    ness Communication Problems of Selected Managerial
    Trainees." The Journal of Business Communication, Vol.
    16, No. 4 (1979), 43-48.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE SIX MOST ADOPTED BUSINESS

COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

THE SIX MOST ADOPTED BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS*

OBSER AND WUNSCH, 1983

Basic Business Communication
by Raymond V. Lesikar
Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois
1979

Business Communications: Principles and Methods (Sixth Ed.)
by William C. Himstreet and Wayne Murlin Baty
Kent Publishing Company, Boston
1981

Communicating in Business
by Norman B. Sigband and Davis N. Bateman
Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenwood, Illinois
1981

Communicating Through Letters and Reports (Sixth Ed.)
by J. H. Menning, C. W. Wilkinson, and Peter B. Clarke
Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois
1976

Effective Business Communications (Second Ed.)
by Herta A. Murphy and Charles E. Peck
McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York
1976

Effective Communication in Business (Seventh Ed.)
by Morris Phillip Wolf, Dale F. Keyser, and Robert R. Aurner
South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati
1979

*In alphabetical order.

APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY

Oklahoma State University / STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
(405) 624-5064

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

March 18, 1985

As a prominent business person, your help is needed in completing a
pilot study involving communication training at the university level.

Good communication skills are important in all levels of an organization;
writing letters and reports often comprise a large part of the day for
many business people. Our study will attempt to determine the degree of
importance of various topical elements included in college written
communication courses, as identified in the most widely used business
communication textbooks.

We would appreciate your completing and returning the enclosed
questionnaire to us. (If your firm has a person responsible for
communication--for example, a director of office services or a supervisor
of communications--you might want to direct this questionnaire to that
person.) If you believe changes in the wording of certain items would
add clarity, we will welcome your suggestions. Simply make the changes
on the questionnaire and add any other comments you think might be
helpful. A final draft will then be printed, incorporating your
suggestions and changes, and sent to businesses and organizations
throughout the United States for their responses.

A response is vital to the validity of this pilot study. Please use
the enclosed envelope to return the completed questionnaire by March 29.
Your cooperation in helping us make a professional contribution to
improving business communication courses will be greatly appreciated.

Joan C. Roderick
Graduate Research Associate

Clayton B. Millington, Professor
Administrative Services and
Business Education

Enclosures

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. NAME_____

2. YOUR TITLE_____

3. NAME OF YOUR COMPANY_____

4. TYPE OF COMPANY (PLEASE CHECK BELOW)

　　_____ a.　Manufacturing
　　_____ b.　Wholesale
　　_____ c.　Retail
　　_____ d.　Financial (Bank, Savings & Loan, Investments, etc.)
　　_____ e.　Other (Please describe)

　　_____
　　_____

5. NUMBER OF YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN WITH THIS COMPANY (PLEASE CHECK BELOW)

　　_____ a.　Less than one year
　　_____ b.　1 to 5 years
　　_____ c.　6 to 10 years
　　_____ d.　11 to 20 years
　　_____ e.　More than 20 years

6. NUMBER OF OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN YOUR COMPANY (IF YOURS IS A BRANCH OFFICE, PLEASE INDICATE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN YOUR BRANCH OFFICE RATHER THAN IN THE ENTIRE COMPANY)

　　_____ a.　1 to 25
　　_____ b.　26 to 50
　　_____ c.　51 to 75
　　_____ d.　76 to 100
　　_____ e.　More than 100

7. ESTIMATE THE PERCENTAGE OF THE OFFICE EMPLOYEES WHO WRITE MEMOS, LETTERS & REPORTS.

　　_____ a.　Fewer than 30%
　　_____ b.　From 30% to 40%
　　_____ c.　From 41% to 50%
　　_____ d.　From 51% to 60%
　　_____ e.　From 61% to 70%
　　_____ f.　From 71% to 80%
　　_____ g.　More than 80%

8. DID YOU TAKE A COLLEGE COURSE IN WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION?

　　_____ a.　Yes
　　_____ b.　No

9. DOES YOUR COMPANY PROVIDE IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION (IN-HOUSE SEMINARS, CLASSES OR WORKSHOPS AT OTHER LOCATIONS)?

　　_____ a.　Yes
　　_____ b.　No

PLEASE RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR PERSONNEL WHO HANDLE WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN YOUR COMPANY.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
I. COMMUNICATION THEORY	////	////	////	////	////
1. Relating communication theories and models to the written communication problems of business.					
2. Identifying the behavioral concepts of different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.) concerning the changing nature of people's desires and applying them to written communication in business.					
3. Using correct sentence structure when writing.					
4. Using correct punctuation when writing.					
5. Knowing the correct parts of speech.					
6. Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement (the positive or negative aspect of a statement and how it sounds to the reader).					
7. Recognizing the effect of such factors as sentence length and word size on readability.					
8. Emphasizing ideas through placement (position) in letters/reports.					
9. Emphasizing ideas through repetition of words.					
10. Emphasizing ideas through the space allotted to the idea.					
11. Making an outline before beginning a letter/report.					
12. Possessing a large vocabulary.					
13. Keeping in mind the "7 C's of Communication" when writing (correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, concreteness, consideration, courtesy).					
14. Using a "you" viewpoing when writing (Example: "Your widgets should reach you in three days . . ." rather than "We have sent the widgets . . .").					
II. ROUTINE/GOOD NEWS LETTERS	////	////	////	////	////
15. Granting credit to a customer.					
16. Writing a favorable reply to a claim letter.					
17. Placing/acknowledging orders.					
18. Requesting/supplying information about people, products, services, prices, etc.					
19. Knowing how to write good news/routine letters.					
III. BAD NEWS LETTERS	////	////	////	////	////
20. Refusing an adjustment request.					
21. Denying a credit request.					
22. Expressing the inability to grant a request (Example: the service is no longer offered or the product is not being manufactured).					
23. Deemphasizing refusal through placement in the letter.					
24. Using an apologetic "tone" for action taken (Example: "I'm sorry to have to tell you this but . . . .").					
25. Offering alternative solutions.					
26. Using resale material in a credit or adjustment letter.					

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
27. Stating company policy as the reason for refusal.					
28. Knowing how to write bad news letters.					
IV. SALES LETTERS	/////	/////	/////	/////	/////
29. Knowing your product and how it differs from competitors.					
30. Knowing something about the people to whom letters are (will be) directed.					
31. Stating the specific action you want the reader to take.					
32. Using the unsolicited sales letter approach to selling a product/service.					
33. Using an "attention getter" in the first sentence of the letter.					
34. Citing research to support statements about products/services offered.					
35. Using enclosures to back up information in the letter.					
36. Using testimonials to convince prospective customers.					
37. Offering a guarantee with your product or service.					
38. Stating desired action in specific terms.					
39. Alluding to the psychological reward for taking desired action.					
40. Presenting action as being easy for customer to take.					
41. Providing a stimulus to quick action through word choice (Example: "Just pick up the phone and call 555-5555 to place your order for . . .").					
42. Asking confidently for action.					
43. Knowing how to write sales letters.					
V. PERSUASIVE LETTERS	/////	/////	/////	/////	/////
44. Writing letters asking for special favors.					
45. Asking for adjustments through a claim letter.					
46. Knowing how to write persuasive letters.					
VI. SPECIAL LETTERS	/////	/////	/////	/////	/////
47. Knowing how to write and/or reply to congratulatory letters.					
48. Knowing how to write and/or request letters of recommendation.					
49. Knowing how to write and/or reply to invitations.					
50. Knowing how to write letters of condolence or sympathy.					
51. Knowing how to write thank you letters.					
52. Knowing how to write evaluation letters on an employee's good or bad job performance/conduct.					
53. Knowing how to write special letters.					
VII. FORMAL REPORTS—Generally at least ten pages in length with such inclusions as a title page, an index, a table of contents, an appendix, etc.	/////	/////	/////	/////	/////
54. Writing an analysis of a problem to be solved.					

		VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
	55. Knowing how to "set up" a report (title page, table of contents, paragraph headings, etc.).					
	56. Using Secondary Research method to report information (library research or organizational records)·					
	57. Using the Normative Survey Research method to report information (interviews, questionnaires, etc.).					
	58. Using Observational Research to report information (analysis of one or more sets of data in a carefully prescribed manner).					
	59. Using Experimental Research to report information (involving two samples that have exactly the same ingredient before a variable is added to one sample)					
	60. Using tables and graphs to illustrate data analysis.					
	61. Using technical jargon (words peculiar to particular business/industry).					
	62. Using objectivity when writing information to be presented.					
	63. Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea).					
	64. Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details).					
	65. Knowing how to write formal reports.					
VIII.	INFORMAL REPORTS--Generally less than ten pages	///////	///////	///////	///////	///////
	66. Using a standard format.					
	67. Presenting information within the company in an upward directional flow.					
	68. Presenting information within the company in a downward directional flow.					
	69. Presenting information within the company in a lateral directional flow.					
	70. Using objectivity when writing information to be presented.					
	71. Knowing how to write a justification report.					
	72. Knowing how to write a progress report.					
	73. Knowing how to write a credit report.					
	74. Knowing how to write an annual report.					
	75. Using informal reports to communicate information outside the company.					
	76. Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea).					
	77. Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details).					
	78. Knowing how to write short, informal reports.					
IX.	MEMORANDA	///////	///////	///////	///////	///////
	79. Considering reader reaction to information within memo.					
	80. Using memoranda to communicate information inside the company.					
	81. Using memoranda to communicate information outside the company.					
	82. Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea).					
	83. Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details).					

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
Page 4					
84. Arranging the memorandum in proper format (headings, subheadings, paragraph headings, signature placement, etc.).					
85. Knowing how to write memoranda.					

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART I

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page 5

BECAUSE SOME CLASSROOM TIME IS OFTEN USED TO HELP BUSINESS STUDENTS PREPARE
AND WRITE APPLICATION LETTERS AND RESUMES, PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	LOW IMPORTANCE	NOT IMPORTANT
X. APPLICATION LETTERS AND RESUMES					
86. Knowing how to write an application letter that accurately reflects the writer's personality, aptitudes, and skills.					
87. Using class time to write sample application letter.					
88. Keeping a resume at a two-page maximum length.					
89. Stating an "objective for employment" in the resume.					
90. Listing number of hours taken in specific major areas.					
91. Including personal information in the resume (height, weight, marital status, etc.).					
92. Listing names and addresses of references in the resume.					
93. Using topical or noun phrases to give information in a resume.					
94. Writing information in complete sentences and/or paragraph form in a resume.					
95. Using a combination of topical phrases and complete sentences in a resume.					
96. Using class time to compile a sample resume.					

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART II

PART III

IF YOUR COMPANY USES THE COLLECTION LETTER PROCESS, PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION. IF YOUR COMPANY DOES NOT SEND BILLING NOTICES FOR GOODS AND/OR SERVICES RENDERED, PLEASE DISREGARD THIS SECTION.

	ALWAYS	ALMOST ALWAYS	USUALLY	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER
1. Do you send only reminders (billing statements) rather than letters?					
2. Do you send more than three reminders (billing statements) before writing a letter to the deliquent account?					
3. Do you send more than three letters (not billing statements) to the deliquent account before turning the account over to an attorney or a collection agency?					
4. Do you increase the stringency of the letter content as the collection letter series progresses?					
5. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's pride?					
6. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to custaner's reputation?					
7. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to custaner's cooperation?					
8. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's fear of losing credit privileges?					
9. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to the customer's sense of fair play?					
10. Do you use an ultimatum letter indicating the action to be taken by your company for nonpayment?					
11. Do you use form letters for collection problems?					
12. Do you think it is important to know how to write collection letters?					

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART III

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTERS AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Oklahoma State University / STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
(405) 624-5064

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

April 10, 1985

Dear Business Person:

Because representatives of your company conduct on-campus employment
interviews at Oklahoma State University, you have been selected to participate
in a research study involving written communication training at the university
level. Your participation will aid in the assessment and potential improve-
ment of instruction in business communication courses. Only a few minutes
will be necessary to complete the enclosed questionnaire. (If your firm
has a person who is in charge of written communication--for example, a
director of office services or a supervisor of communication--you might
want to direct this questionnaire to that. person.)

The specific purpose of the study is to identify the written communication
skills and knowledges needed by the business student from a business person's
perspective. Those skills and knowledges will then be compared with the
topics emphasized in the most commonly adopted business communication textbooks.

I would appreciate the enclosed questionnaire being completed and returned by
May 1. By completing the questionnaire, your company can let college instructors
know what written communication skills and knowledges you think a student
should possess in order to be employable upon graduation. Of course, this will
also help to supply you with the kind of employees you desire.

The information collected from the questionnaire will be coded to maintain
confidentiality. No personal identification of any kind will appear in the
written reports or summaries of the research project; no one needs to sign
the questionnaire.

A response is vital to the validity of this research study. If you have any
questions concerning the study, feel free to call me at (405) 624-5045. A
stamped envelope is provided for your convenience in returning the questionnaire.
Your cooperation in making this professional contribution to improve business
communication courses will be significant and greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Joan C. Roderick
Research Associate

Enclosures

If you would like to obtain a copy of the final results and recommendations of
my study, please send me a postcard with your name and address.

Oklahoma State University

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
(405) 624-5064

May 1, 1985

Dear

About three weeks ago, you should have received from us a questionnaire concerning the written communications skills needed by business college graduates. If you have returned your questionnaire, please accept our sincere gratitude and simply discard the copy enclosed with this letter.

If your questionnaire did not reach you, or if it has been misplaced, we would appreciate so much your filling in the enclosed copy and returning it to us so that it can be included in this important survey. Just a few minutes is required to complete the questionnaire. (Should your firm have a person responsible for written communications, you might want to direct the questionnaire to that person.)

The questionnaires are coded to maintain confidentiality. No signature is needed.

Because the questionnaires have been sent to a selected sample of firms, responses are vital to the validity of the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Joan C. Roderick

Clayton B. Millington

Enclosure

<div style="text-align: right;">
_____ _____
Identification Number
</div>

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Your Title _____

2. Name of Your Company (Optional) _____

3. Type of Company (Please check below)

    _____ a. Manufacturing
    _____ b. Wholesale
    _____ c. Retail
    _____ d. Financial (Bank, Savings & Loan, Investments, etc.)
    _____ e. Other (Please describe)

    _____

    _____

4 Number of years you have been with this company (Please check below)

    _____ a. Less than one year
    _____ b. 1 to 5 years
    _____ c. 6 to 10 years
    _____ d. 11 to 20 years
    _____ e. More than 20 years

5. Number of office employees in your company (if yours is a branch office, please indicate the total number of office employees in your branch office rather than in the entire company)

    _____ a. 1 to 25
    _____ b. 26 to 50
    _____ c. 51 to 75
    _____ d. 76 to 100
    _____ e. More than 100

6. Estimate the percentage of the office employees who write memos, letters and reports.

    _____ a. Fewer than 30%
    _____ b. From 31% to 40%
    _____ c. From 41% to 50%
    _____ d. From 51% to 60%
    _____ e. From 61% to 70%
    _____ f. From 71% to 80%
    _____ g. More than 80%

7. Did you take a college course in written business communication?

    _____ a. Yes
    _____ b. No

8. Does your company provide in-service training in business communication (in-house seminars, classes or workshops at other locations?)

    _____ a. Yes
    _____ b. No

PART I

Please rate the importance of each of the following items for personnel who handle written business communication in your company.

		Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	Not Important
I. COMMUNICATION THEORY						
1	Relating communication theories and models to the written communication problems of business.					
2.	Identifying the behavioral concepts of different theorists (Maslow, McGregor, etc.) concerning the changing nature of people's desires and applying them to written communication in business.					
3	Using correct sentence structure when writing.					
4.	Using correct punctuation when writing.					
5	Knowing the correct parts of speech.					
6.	Being cognizant of the "tone" of a statement (the positive or negative aspect of a statement and how it sounds to the reader).					
7	Recognizing the effect of such factors as sentence length and word size on readability.					
8	Emphasizing ideas through placement (position) in letters/reports.					
9.	Emphasizing ideas through repetition of words.					
10.	Emphasizing ideas through the space allotted to the idea.					
11	Making an outline before beginning a letter/report.					
12	Possessing a large vocabulary.					
13	Keeping in mind the "7 C's of Communication" when writing (correctness, conciseness, clarity, completeness, concreteness, consideration, courtesy).					
14	Using a "you viewpoint" when writing (Example: "Your widgets should reach you in three days. " rather than "We have sent the widgets . ").					
II. ROUTINE/GOOD NEWS LETTERS						
15	Granting credit to a customer.					
16.	Writing a favorable reply to a claim letter.					
17.	Placing/acknowledging orders.					
18.	Requesting/supplying information about people, products, services, prices, etc.					
19	Knowing how to write good news/routine letters.					
III. BAD NEWS LETTERS						
20.	Refusing an adjustment request.					
21.	Denying a credit request.					
22.	Expressing the inability to grant a request (Example: the service is no longer offered or the product is not being manufactured).					
23.	Deemphasizing refusal through placement in the letter.					
24.	Using an apologetic "tone" for action taken (Example "I'm sorry to have to tell you this but...").					
25.	Offering alternative solutions.					
26.	Using resale material in a credit or adjustment letter.					
27	Stating company policy as the reason for refusal.					
28.	Knowing how to write bad news letters.					
IV. SALES LETTERS						
29.	Knowing your product and how it differs from competitors.					
30.	Knowing something about the people to whom letters are (will be) directed.					
31.	Stating the specific action you want the reader to take.					
32	Using the unsolicited sales letter approach to selling a product/service.					

142

	Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	not Important

IV. SALES LETTERS (continued)

		Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	not Important
33	Using an "attention getter" in the first sentence of the letter					
34.	Citing research to support statements about products/services offered.					
35.	Using enclosures to back up information in the letter					
36.	Using testimonials to convince prospective customers.					
37	Offering a guarantee with your product or service.					
38.	Stating desired action in specific terms.					
39.	Alluding to the psychological reward for taking desired action.					
40.	Presenting action as being easy for customer to take					
41.	Providing a stimulus to quick action through word choice (Example: "Just pick up the phone and call 555-5555 to place your order for .. ").					
42	Asking confidently for action.					
43	Knowing how to write sales letters.					

V. PERSUASIVE LETTERS

		Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	not Important
44	Writing letters asking for special favors.					
45	Asking for adjustments through a claim letter.					
46	Knowing how to write persuasive letters.					

VI. SPECIAL LETTERS

		Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	not Important
47.	Knowing how to write and/or reply to congratulatory letters.					
48	Knowing how to write and/or request letters of recommendation.					
49	Knowing how to write and/or reply to invitations.					
50.	Knowing how to write letters of condolence or sympathy.					
51.	Knowing how to write thank you letters.					
52	Knowing how to write evaluation letters on an employee's good or bad job performance/conduct.					
53.	Knowing how to write special letters.					

VII. FORMAL REPORTS
(Generally at least ten pages in length with such inclusions as a title page, an index, a table of contents, an appendix)

		Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	not Important
54	Writing an analysis of a problem to be solved.					
55	Knowing how to "set up" a report (such as a title page, table of contents, paragraph headings)					
56	Using Secondary Research method to report information (library research or organizational records)					
57	Using the Normative Survey Research method to report information (interviews, questionnaires, etc).					
58	Using Observational Research to report information (analysis of one or more sets of data in a carefully prescribed manner).					
59	Using Experimental Research to report information (involving two samples that have exactly the same ingredient before a variable is added to one sample).					
60	Using tables and graphs to illustrate data analysis.					
61	Using technical jargon (words peculiar to particular business/industry) when addressing a general audience					
62.	Using objectivity when writing information to be presented.					
63.	Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea)					
64	Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details)					
65	Knowing how to write formal reports.					

	Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	Not Important
VIII. INFORMAL REPORTS (Generally less than ten pages)					
66 Using a standard format					
67 Presenting information within the company in an upward directional flow					
68 Presenting information within the company in a downward directional flow					
69 Presenting information within the company in a lateral directional flow					
70. Using objectivity when writing information to be presented					
71. Knowing how to write a justification report					
72 Knowing how to write a progress report					
73 Knowing how to write a credit report					
74. Knowing how to write an annual report					
75 Using informal reports to communicate information outside the company.					
76. Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea)					
77 Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details).					
78. Knowing how to write short, informal reports.					
IX. MEMORANDA					
79 Considering reader reaction to information within the memorandum.					
80 Using memoranda to communicate information inside the company.					
81. Using memoranda to communicate information outside the company.					
82 Using the inductive approach (presenting details first, followed by main idea).					
83 Using the deductive approach (presenting main idea first, followed by details)					
84. Arranging the memorandum in proper format (such as headings, subheadings, paragraph headings, signature placement).					
85 Knowing how to write memoranda.					
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART I					

PART II

Because some classroom time is often used to help business students prepare and write application letters and resumes, please rate the following items.

X. APPLICATION LETTERS AND RESUMES					
86 Knowing how to write an application letter that accurately reflects the writer's personality, aptitudes, and skills.					
87. Using class time to write sample application letter					
88 Keeping a resume at a two-page maximum length.					
89. Stating an "objective for employment" in the resume.					
90 Listing number of hours taken in specific major areas.					

	Very Important	Important	Average Importance	Low Importance	Not Important
X. APPLICATION LETTERS AND RESUMES (continued)					
91 Including personal information in the resume (height, weight, marital status, etc.)					
92 Listing names and addresses of references in the resume.					
93 Using topical or noun phrases to give information in a resume					
94 Writing information in complete sentences and/or paragraph form in a resume					
95 Using a combination of topical phrases and complete sentences in a resume.					
96 Using class time to compile a sample resume.					

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART II

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART III - COLLECTION LETTERS

If your company uses the collection letter process, please answer the questions in the following section. If your company does not send billing notices for goods and/or services rendered, please disregard this section.

	Always	Almost Always	Usually	Almost Never	Never
1 Do you send only reminders (billing statements) rather than letters?					
2. Do you send more than three reminders (billing statements) before writing a letter to the delinquent account?					
3. Do you send more than three letters (not billing statements) to the delinquent account before turning the account over to an attorney or a collection agency?					
4. Do you increase the stringency of the letter content as the collection letter series progresses?					
5. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's pride?					
6 When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's reputation?					
7. When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's cooperation?					
8 When writing collection letters, do you appeal to customer's fear of losing credit privileges?					
9 When writing collection letters, do you appeal to the customer's sense of fair play?					
10 Do you use an ultimatum letter indicating the action to be taken by your company for nonpayment?					
11 Do you use form letters for collection problems?					
12 Do you think it is important to know how to write collection letters?					

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON PART III

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

TEXTBOOK ANALYSES

TABLE XXIII

THE SIX MOST ADOPTED BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
TEXTBOOKS AVERAGE WORDS PER LINE*

Textbooks	Approximate Words Per Line
Basic Business Communication by Raymond V. Lesikar	12.71
Business Communications: Principles and Methods by William C. Himstreet and Wayne Murlin Baty	11.41
Communicating in Business by Norman B. Sigband and Davis N. Bateman	13.03
Communicating Through Letters and Reports by J. H. Menning, C. W. Wilkinson, and Peter B. Clarke	14.28
Effective Business Communications by Herta A. Murphy and Charles E. Peck	14.07
Effective Communication in Business by Morris Phillip Wolf, Dale F. Keyser, and Robert R. Aurner	11.6

*Based on a "five-stroke average" word count.

TABLE XXIV

THE SIX MOST ADOPTED BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
TEXTBOOKS APPROXIMATE WORDS PER TOPIC
(AS LISTED ON QUESTIONNAIRE)

Topic	Textbooks						
	Himstreet & Baty	Lesikar	Menning, Wilkinson & Clarke	Murphy & Peck	Sigband & Bateman	Wolf, Keyser, & Aurner	Total
Communication Theory	27,556	26,914	32,710	39,880	20,495	35,681	183,236
Routine/Good News Letters	6,391	15,014	24,479	27,225	4,639	15,007	92,755
Bad News Letters	5,990	6,673	13,737	21,344	1,652	2,125	51,521
Sales Letters	7,958	5,672	14,620	11,939	4,701	11,043	55,933
Persuasive Letters	1,482	2,002	5,812	14,794	N/S/D*	1,018	25,108
Special Letters	4,193	N/S/D*	9,157	12,249	1,946	4,338	31,883
Formal Reports	22,507	19,204	29,984	18,804	16,048	7,089	113,636
Informal Reports	1,356	2,669	9,774	14,078	3,008	2,864	33,749
Memorandums	685	1,037	2,113	N/S/D*	127	N/S/D	3,962
Application, Letters, and Resumes	9,841	7,006	18,799	26,423	6,129	7,315	76,113
Collection Letter	3,680	6,526	12,457	7,352	4,660	5,619	40,294
Total	91,639	92,717	173,644	194,088	64,005	92,099	708,192

*No Specific Discussion

TABLE XXV

THE SIX MOST ADOPTED BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS PERCENTAGE OF SPACE
DEVOTED TO 11 MAJOR TOPICS* (AS LISTED ON QUESTIONNAIRE)

Topic	Textbooks					
	Himstreet & Baty	Lesikar	Menning, Wilkinson & Clarke	Murphy & Peck	Sigband & Bateman	Wolf, Keyser, & Aurner
Communication Theory	30.07	29.03	18.84	20.55	32.02	38.74
Routine/Good News Letters	6.97	16.19	14.10	14.03	7.25	16.29
Bad News Letters	6.54	7.20	7.91	11.00	2.58	2.31
Sales Letters	8.68	6.12	8.42	6.15	7.35	11.99
Persuasive Letters	1.61	2.16	3.35	7.62	N/S/D**	1.11
Special Letters	4.58	N/S/D**	5.27	6.31	3.04	4.71
Formal Reports	24.56	20.71	17.27	9.69	25.07	7.70
Informal Reports	1.48	2.88	5.63	7.25	4.7	3.11
Memorandums	0.75	1.12	1.22	N/S/D**	0.20	N/S/D**
Application, Letters, and Resumes	10.74	7.56	10.83	13.61	10.51	7.94
Collection Letter	4.02	7.04	7.18	3.79	7.28	6.10
Total	100.00	100.01	100.02	100.00	100.00	100.00

*An approximate percentage

**No Specific Discussion

APPENDIX E

CHI-SQUARE TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE

150

TABLE XXVI

COMPARISON OF THE TYPE OF COMPANY AND THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES WHO
WRITE MEMORANDUMS, LETTERS, AND REPORTS

| Type of Company | | Percentage of Employees | | | | | | | Row Total |
		Fewer Than 30%	From 31% to 40%	From 41% to 50%	From 51% to 60%	From 61% to 70%	From 71% to 80%	More Than 80%	
Manufacturing	1	2	1		2	2	2	8	17
		11.8	5.9		11.8	11.8	11.8	47.1	23.3
		22.2	16.7		16.7	25.0	20.0	36.4	
		2.7	1.4		2.7	2.7	2.7	11.0	
Retail	3	2			2		1		5
		40.0			40.0		20.0		6.8
		22.2			16.7		10.0		
		2.7			2.7		1.4		
Financial	4			1	2	1	2		6
				16.7	33.3	16.7	33.3		8.2
				16.7	16.7	12.5	20.0		
				1.4	2.7	1.4	2.7		
Other	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	14	45
		11.1	11.1	11.1	13.3	11.1	11.1	31.1	61.6
		55.6	83.3	83.3	50.0	62.5	50.0	63.6	
		6.8	6.8	6.8	8.2	6.8	6.8	19.2	
				6	12	8	10	22	73
				8.2	16.4	11.0	13.7	30.1	100.0

χ^2_{18} = 19.16750, P > .05; Significance = 0.3816.

TABLE XXVII

COMPARISON OF THE TYPE OF COMPANY AND THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD
TAKEN A COLLEGE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE

| | Course in Business Communication | | |
Type of Company	Yes	No	Row Total
Manufacturing	9	8	17
	52.9	47.1	23.3
	19.1	30.8	
	12.3	11.0	
Retail	4	1	5
	80.0	20.0	6.8
	8.5	3.8	
	5.5	1.4	
Financial	4	2	6
	66.7	33.3	8.2
	8.5	7.7	
	5.5	2.7	
Other	30	15	45
	66.7	33.3	61.6
	63.8	57.7	
	41.1	20.5	
Column Total	47	26	73
	64.4	35.6	100.0

χ_3^2 = 1.61832, P > .05; Significance = 0.6552.

TABLE XXVIII

COMPARISON OF THE TYPE OF COMPANY AND WHETHER THE COMPANY PROVIDES
IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

	In-Service Business Communication Training		
Type of Company	Yes	No	Row Total
Manufacturing	15	2	17
	88.2	11.8	23.3
	30.0	8.7	
	20.5	2.7	
Retail	2	3	5
	40.0	60.0	6.8
	4.0	13.0	
	2.7	4.1	
Financial	5	1	6
	83.3	16.7	8.2
	10.0	4.3	
	6.8	1.4	
Other	280	17	45
	62.2	37.8	61.6
	56.0	73.9	
	38.4	23.3	
Column	50	23	73
Total	68.5	31.5	100.0

χ^2_3 = 6.38371, P > .05; Significance = 0.0944.

TABLE XXIX

COMPARISON OF THE SIZE OF COMPANY (OR DIVISION) AND THE
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO WRITE MEMORANDUMS,
LETTERS AND REPORTS

| Number of Employees | Percentage of Employees | | | | | | | Row Total |
	Fewer Than 30%	From 31% to 40%	From 41% to 50%	From 51% to 60%	From 61% to 70%	From 71% to 80%	More Than 80%	
1 to 25	3	1	1	2	1	1	4	13
	23.1	7.7	7.7	15.4	7.7	7.7	30.8	17.8
	33.3	16.7	16.7	16.7	12.5	10.0	18.2	
	4.1	1.4	1.4	2.7	1.4	1.4	5.5	
26 to 50	2	1	1	2	1	2		9
	22.2	11.1	11.1	22.2	11.1	22.2		12.3
	22.2	16.7	16.7	16.7	12.5	20.0		
	2.7	1.4	1.4	2.7	1.4	2.7		
51 to 75		1		1			3	5
		20.0		20.0			60.0	6.8
		16.7		8.3			13.6	
		1.4		1.4			4.1	
76 to 100					1	1	6	8
					12.5	12.5	75.0	11.0
					12.5	10.0	27.3	
					1.4	1.4	8.2	
More than 100	4	3	4	7	5	6	9	38
	10.5	7.9	10.5	18.4	13.2	15.8	23.7	52.1
	44.4	50.0	66.7	58.3	62.5	60.0	40.9	
	5.5	4.1	5.5	9.6	6.8	8.2	12.3	
Column Total		6	6	12	8	10	22	73
		8.2	8.2	16.4	11.0	13.7	30.1	100.0

$\chi^2_{24} = 20.84064$, P > .05; Significance = 0.6481.

TABLE XXX

COMPARISON OF THE SIZE OF COMPANY (OR DIVISION) AND WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS
HAD TAKEN A COLLEGE COURSE IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Course in Business Communication	Number of Employees					Row Total
	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100	More Than 100	
Yes	8	7	2	6	24	47
	17.0	14.9	4.3	12.8	51.1	64.4
	61.5	77.8	40.0	75.0	63.2	
	11.0	9.6	2.7	8.2	32.9	
No	5	2	3	2	14	26
	19.2	7.7	11.5	7.7	53.8	35.6
	38.5	22.2	60.0	25.0	36.8	
	6.8	2.7	4.1	2.7	19.2	
Column Total	13	9	5	8	38	73
	17.8	12.3	6.8	11.0	52.1	100.0

χ_4^2 = 2.46452, P > .05; Significance = 0.6510.

TABLE XXXI

COMPARISON OF THE SIZE OF COMPANY (OR DIVISION) AND
WHETHER THE COMPANY PROVIDES IN-SERVICE TRAINING
IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

| Number of Employees | In Service Business Communication Training | | Row Total |
	Yes	No	
1 to 25	6	7	13
	46.2	53.8	17.8
	12.0	30.4	
	8.2	9.6	
26 to 50	4	5	9
	44.4	55.6	12.3
	8.0	21.7	
	5.5	6.8	
51 to 75	4	1	5
	80.0	20.0	6.8
	8.0	4.3	
	5.5	1.4	
76 to 100	6	2	8
	75.0	25.0	11.0
	12.0	8.7	
	8.2	2.7	
More than 100	30	8	38
	78.9	21.1	52.1
	60.0	34.8	
	41.1	11.0	
Column Total	50	23	73
	68.5	31.5	100.0

χ^2_4 = 7.80649, P > .05; Significance = 0.0989.

TABLE XXXII

COMPARISON OF THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES
WHO WRITE MEMORANDUMS, LETTERS AND REPORTS AND
WHETHER THE COMPANY PROVIDES IN-SERVICE
TRAINING IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Percentage of Employees	Yes	No	Row Total
Fewer than 30%	3 33.3 6.0 4.1	6 66.7 26.1 8.2	9 12.3
From 31% to 40%	3 50.0 6.0 4.1	3 50.0 13.0 4.1	6 8.2
From 41% to 50%	5 83.3 10.0 6.8	1 16.7 4.3 1.4	6 8.2
From 51% to 60%	7 58.3 14.0 9.6	5 41.7 21.7 6.8	12 16.4
From 61% to 70%	5 62.5 10.0 6.8	3 37.5 13.0 4.1	8 11.0
From 71% to 80%	7 70.0 14.0 9.6	3 30.0 13.0 4.1	10 13.7
More than 80%	20 90.9 40.0 27.4	2 9.1 8.7 2.7	22 30.1
Column Total	50 68.5	23 31.5	73 100.0

$\chi^2_6 = 12.55903$, P > .05; Significance = 0.0506.

2

VITA

Joan Chadwick Roderick

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES' PERCEPTIONS
ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS WRITING TOPICS
EMPHASIZED IN THE MOST COMMONLY ADOPTED BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION TEXTBOOKS

Major Field: Business Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Perry, Oklahoma, October 19,
1946, the daughter of John and Annabel Chadwick.

Education: Graduated from Orlando High School,
Orlando, Oklahoma, in May, 1964; received Bachelor
of Science degree in Business Education from
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma,
in May, 1968; received Master of Science degree in
Business Education from Oklahoma State University
in May, 1983; completed requirements for the
Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State
University in December, 1985.

Professional Experience: High School Business Educa-
tion Teacher at Garden City High School, Garden
City, Kansas, 1968-1972; Instructor and Program
Coordinator, Affirmative Action Office, Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1982-84;
Seminar Developer and Presenter, Training and
Development Department, Oklahoma State University,
1983; Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of
Administrative Services and Business Education,
Oklahoma State University, 1983-1985; Coordinator
and Supervisor of Business and Office Teacher Edu-
cation, Department of Administrative Services and
Business Education, Oklahoma State University,
1984-1985; Faculty Advisor to the Oklahoma State
University chapter of Future Secretaries Associa-
tion, 1983-1985.

Professional Organizations: American Business Communi-
     cations Association; Delta Pi Epsilon; Beta Gamma
     Sigma; American Association for Adult and Continu-
     ing Education; Women's Council at Oklahoma State
     University; National Education Association;
     National Business Education Association; Oklahoma
     Education Association.