Communication in leadership

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Communication in Leadership

by

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Senior Project
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond
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Communication

in

Leadership

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Communication in Leadership

Outline

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In approaching the culmination of my education at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, I have thought at great length about potential ways to improve the program, which I have had the honor of participating in. I have reflected upon the positive and the negative aspects, and I have attempted to create solutions for the shortcomings. At the top of my list sits the lack of organized and specific communication education. It is my belief that in order for the Jepson School to educate for and about leadership, they must teach specifically about communication and its role in the leadership process. It was this belief that lead me to create the course which I feel would strengthen the Jepson curriculum, and that course is entitled "Communication in Leadership."

To give some background, Speech Communication is my second major here at the University of Richmond. I have taken in the upwards of ten courses through the speech department, and I feel that I have gained some invaluable information and insight into communication and leadership. Through my leadership studies I have found that the one common link between virtually all great leaders has been the comprehension and mastery of the art of communication. From those who were powerful and influential orators, to those who lead through the written word, to others who found alternate means such as non-verbal (i.e., setting examples) methods, each recognized and utilized the process of communication.
So, it would only seem natural that at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies we would teach about communication and its role in the leadership process. I personally have found that my two majors played very well off of one another. But realizing that not every leadership major will follow my path I have attempted to take, what I feel are the essential elements of the speech communication major, and put them together into one class. In defense of the Jepson program, it is evident that the majority of the senior leadership majors have developed above average communication skills. Yet, these students developed their skills almost solely through trial and error. And I believe that the most effective way to teach, and to learn, is through a combination of theory and practice.

Therefore, a communication course as a requirement would give a theoretical foundation for the majors. Through taking the positive aspects of the speech courses we are following the Jepson tradition of multi-disciplinary education. The difference lying in that instead of including communication as a goal within each of the courses, we would now recognize its importance and educate about the necessary communication skills. There are five speech courses which I plan to address in the course and with each show their relationship to leadership. They are: Interpersonal Communication, Rhetoric, Advanced Public Speaking, Persuasion, and Argumentation and Debate.
II)
A) The structural foundation for this course emerged from an article by J. Kevin Barge (Baylor University) and Randy Y. Hirokawa (University of Iowa) entitled "Toward a Communication Competency Model of Group Leadership." The article argues that surprisingly little attention has been paid to the key issue of whether or not a leader's behaviors make a difference in group performance outcomes. And that scholars seem to generally neglect to explore and explicate the assumed relationship between leader performance and group performance.

"The fundamental barrier to increasing our understanding of the relationship between leader performance and group performance lies in our conceptualization of leadership. A proper understanding that relationship necessitates that we 'rediscover the leadership phenomenon without being bound by the conceptual constraints of the past.' That we need a new perspective which provides a departure from the traditional ways of thinking of leadership in terms of traits, styles, functions and situations." (Pg. 168)

The article argues that through a new perspective, a better theoretical foundation will be provided, from which to investigate this relationship between leadership and group performance, as well as create a better framework from which to understand and explain the complex nature of leadership.
The first section of the article presents a "Critique of Traditional Approaches" addressing the: trait theory, style theory, situational theory and the functional approach. In the critique the authors summarize each approach and discuss the problems which exist, both individually and collectively. The second section explains the "Communication Competency Approach." This section is anchored by three general assumptions about the nature of leadership:

"(1) Leadership involves action that assist a group in overcoming existing barriers to goal achievement,
(2) The exercise of leadership occurs through the process of interaction and communication,
(3) Communication skills (or competencies) represent the principal means by which individuals exercise leadership in groups." (Pg. 171)

The third section is entitled "Theoretical Propositions" and these propositions, according to the authors, represent a set of "heuristic hypotheses" that link communicative competencies, conversational topics, and group situations. The propositions are guided by three underlying premises:

"(1) Group situations pose various obstacles and problems that may be overcome by the performance of certain types of communication competencies."
2) Group goals influence the context for interpreting which communication competencies are viewed as appropriate or effective.

(3) The successful performance of communication competencies during the exercise of leadership mediates the group situation in such a manner that group goals can be achieved." (Pg. 179)

In summary, the article points out that the benefits of such a model of leadership (communication competency) are realized in its ability to explain and predict what types of communicative skills are required to manage the complexity of group situations. And further, that unlike the other traditional approaches, a communication approach recognizes that as group situations evolve and change, the performance of a particular skill at an earlier time in group development may be inappropriate at a later point, and vice versa.

I have included these facts to give what I feel are some of the main points of the article and to give some further explanation for this course. I plan to use the article as an introduction to the course, both giving information as to the role of communication in leadership and as a starting point over which to debate and discuss communications role in the leadership process.

B) The next step was to hit the books. I began with a trip through my personal library and actually found that there was a
plethora of usable books and information. In looking through the material I had a number of criteria in mind. The first was whether the material dealt with communication relevant to my speech course work. The second was whether it related to leadership. And the third was whether I found it informative, straightforward and fun. I found relative success within my personal library due to the course work I have completed, and beyond that I ventured to: the bookstore, some colleagues rooms, faculty members offices and finally the library. It was trying to find materials which covered all three of the criteria listed above, but I have narrowed to book list to about 15, and I think that they present quality and informative information. I am going to take the next few pages and go through each of the books I plan to use, a brief explanation of the relative information, and what my general opinion is of each.

C) I have chosen three full texts for the course, which students will purchase. The first is Leadership - A Communication Perspective by Michael Z. Hackman and Craig E. Johnson. When I came across this text I was ecstatic, because it outlines perfectly my views on communication and its role in leadership. The book is divided much like the Jepson curriculum -- chapters one through five cover competencies -- and chapters six through nine cover contexts. The book addresses many of the topics covered throughout the major -- yet, approaches them all from a different angle -- a communication angle. In chapter one the authors
summarize the present definitions of leadership and go on to offer their own communication-based definition of leadership:

"Leadership is human (symbolic) communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet group goals and needs." (LDSP Pg. 11)

I agree with this definition and I feel that it states what is often implied. That is, communication plays a role in all action.

In the first chapter there is a research highlight from an article "National preferences in business and communication education" which asked the American Society of Personnel Administrators, "What factors/skills were most important in helping college graduates get their first job?" Of 17 listings, the top four factors/skills needed were communication related, with oral (speaking) communication coming in at number one. While factors like work experience, type of degree accreditation of program, recommendations and school attended were listed at the bottom. The survey also asked, "What factors/skills were important for successful job performance?" And once again oral and written communication abilities were at the top (number one and two). Whereas resume, grade point average and letters or recommendation came in at the end.

Chapter two goes through the different leadership communication styles, explaining each and discussing the positive and negative aspects of each. Chapter three addresses the major
I then went to Dr. Thomas, the chair of the speech Department, to get his input. He recommended a book which I had used in one of his classes, *The Rhetorical Act*, by Karlyn Campbell. And after going back and looking at this book a second time I realized that it would be a perfect text to round off the other two. This text is, much like *Speech Communication*, straightforward. Yet, it offers some opinion along with the information. The book addresses "What is Rhetoric?" discussing rhetorical acts versus rhetorical purposes -- the elements of rhetorical action -- argumentation (claims, warrants, intervention) and the dimensions of rhetorical action -- audience (obstacles) -- subject and purpose -- source credibility and the non-verbal elements of rhetoric. I feel that together these three texts will offer a plethora of information while serving as excellent resources.

D) Once having selected my main texts I searched further for other texts which contained usable information for reserve articles, a possible kinkos packet, in-class exercises or out of class assignments. I will go through and mention each text while offering some information about why I feel it is useful. The first four books are leadership texts, some of which I have already come across through the Jepson school. I have selected them because I think that it is important to discuss communication and its role, from a leadership scholars perspective. The first text is *On Leadership*, by John W. Gardner. This is a book we first encountered in foundations, but I felt that it was never fully
utilized. John discusses communication throughout the book, but in-particular he discusses charismatic leadership and the leaders who were most noted for it. He also discusses communication and motivational skills as vital to leadership. This is a good basic approach to leadership, and within that approach is the role of communication.

The second is Leadership, by James MacGregor Burns. In this text I did not come across any sections solely dealing with communication, but Burns' transformational leadership theory is contingent on communication. The third text is The Essence of Leadership, by Edwin A. Locke. This book also implies the importance of communication throughout, but also addresses it directly. One chapter discusses interpersonal skills, including: listening, oral communication, expressiveness, network-building, conflict-management, and delegation (trust building). Locke says, "Leaders are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate." (Pg. 57) There is also a section on charisma and how charisma is conveyed through communication.

The fourth text is Great Leaders by John Adair. One chapter addresses the ability to give direction and there is an excellent case study on Jesus Christ which I feel could be very useful. There is a second chapter solely on the art of inspiring and I think it is very applicable. Finally, there is a section on charisma which compliments the other two books because it is not as technical or dry.
Next I moved on to communication texts. The first one I found which I liked was *The Art of Public Speaking*, by Stephen E. Lucas. This is a great book. It is laid out very clearly and in a sensical order. There were six chapters in particular that I felt could be useful. Chapter one, speaking in public, which addressed nervousness and confidence, and the actual process including the speaker, message, channel, listener, feedback, interference and situation. Chapter two discusses listening, the process, four causes for poor listening, and how to become a better one. Chapter four analyzed the audience, the demographics and factors such as age, gender, religion, race and affiliation. Chapter ten is on the use of language and logic, chapter eleven discussed delivery and chapter twelve addressed speaking to persuade.

The second communication text is *Interpersonal Communication* by Treholm and Johnson. It discussed, "What is Communication?", situational versus developmental, non-verbal, intimate, with colleagues, with strangers, and with members of other cultures. It in many ways compliments the previous texts but wasn't enough to stand on its own. I would probably select one or two of the chapters which discussed a topic more clearly than the others and use it as a class reading.

The next text is *Contemporary perspectives on Rhetoric*, by Foss, Foss and Trapp. This is one of the best books out on rhetoric and rhetorical theory. Its only problem is that it is very theoretical and technical. I considered using it as one of the three main texts, but decided that it would be better to use it for its major rhetorical
theories and let the other rhetoric book cover the rest. It explains very sufficiently Burke's Rhetorical Pentad and his Pollution-Purification-Redemption theory -- Toulmin's Rhetorical Argumentation and Reasoning Models (standards for assessing the worth of ideas) -- Perelman's Argumentation Theory -- and the Fantasy-Theme (communication creates reality theory. The only theories it leaves out are Fisher's Real-World and Narrative Paradigms. But after searching I found it in Human Communication as Narration, by Walter Fisher.

I wanted to move away from just communication into some of the more specialized courses so I searched through some of the speech course books and I found two I would like to use. The first is Persuasion and Influence in American Life by Woodward and Denton. I selected four chapters from this text which I feel could be used: chapter five which discusses persuasion and reasoning (critical thinking and logic) -- chapter six addresses the psychology of persuasion (attitudes, beliefs and values) -- chapter seven discussing credibility and authority -- and chapter twelve, constructing and presenting persuasive messages. The second text is Argumentation and Debate by Austin J. Freeley. This book is the one used for the Argumentation and Debate class in the Speech department, and it is excellent. In particular for my course, it addresses: applied and academic debate -- controversy (stating, analyzing, exploring) -- evidence (tests) -- reasoning (structure, types and obstacles) -- the affirmative and negative cases (building and presenting) -- and evaluating.
In completing this text search I skimmed through my two Negotiation books and found that there was some very applicable information in them. In the hard cover text Negotiation by Lewicki and Litterer, there is an entire chapter on the communication process. It discusses a model of communication, the role of perception and barriers. Although I recognize that Dr. Coulee uses this text, I think that the chapter in the hard cover and particularly in the soft cover book could be very useful (if she doesn't mind).

Finally, I wanted to include the book The One Minute Manager by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. This is a book which I read recreationally this past Christmas and I loved it. I realize that it is very seen by many as basic, but I feel that it makes points that are often overlooked by leaders. It tells the story of a young manager who is on a quest for a great manager. He finds him and proceeds to learn about this managers one minute: goals, praisings and reprimands. The key to the whole system which this manager has implemented is communication and I think it would facilitate excellent class discussions.

In doing this search I found that there is a great deal of material out there, but it is scattered in various books on various topics. I feel that the three texts I have chosen for the course will be more than sufficient and that the other bits and pieces will implement quite well into the class. Upon further consideration I would like to put together a kinkos package with specific chapters from the texts I have cited along with the article, "Toward a
am going to do everything I can (consult with Rich Volp) to make students want to come to class and learn. I think that if students feel that they can be themselves and let down their barriers, then they will enjoy themselves, and if they enjoy themselves then they will hopefully come to class. (fun + enjoyment = attendance)

B) After deciding on some of the structural issues I moved on to the purpose of the course. It goes like this:

In studying leadership and the great leaders in history there is one common skill that links each of them to one another - communication. From the great orators, to the famous philosophers, to the role models, each leader utilized and recognized the importance of communication. Communication is a curricular goal here at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, and a skill which is inevitably developed through our program.

Through this course students will learn the elements of effective communication and have the opportunity to practice these very skills while being evaluated and critiqued. There are many people in the world who posses some of the skills and traits necessary to assume a leadership role in society. Yet, without the ability to communicate, many of these skills are not utilized. The purpose of this course is to
allow the students to better utilize each and every one of their skills.

C) Next are the goals and objectives of the course. They are:

- To understand the importance of communication for and in leadership
- To examine the relationship between communication and leadership
- To provide students direct experience with public speaking (presentation, argumentation, debate)
- To allow students to critically analyze the communication abilities of themselves and others
- To develop the ability to speak, write and listen critically
- To comprehend the basic theories, concepts and findings of communication research
- To incorporate the Jepson School of Leadership Studies curricular goals
- To learn to have fun and Laugh At Ourselves

D) Next is the course description.

In this course we will learn about leadership by studying communication. We will study the theories and concepts of communication and put those to work in and out of the classroom. The course will require that you make
presentations - evaluate and critique your own speeches -
critique and evaluate the presentations of your peers -
participate in a mock debate - write critical papers -
participate in class - and have fun doing it. This course will
increase your knowledge of communication, improve your
oratory performance and give you a greater understanding
for and about leadership.

E) Finally, I want to discuss some of the readings and
assignments the class will be completing. If you return to section II
letter C of this paper I discuss the information I came across in my
text search and which information I plan to incorporate into the
class, other than the three main texts. Beyond the completion of
these readings, I will ask the class to complete a number of other
requirements.

First, each student will conduct a campaign throughout the
semester. They will make three speeches on a topic they feel is
relevant to their generation (i.e. - AIDS, abortion, homelessness,
unemployment, etc.) The purpose of the first speech is to "create a
virtual experience and alter the perception" of the audience. The
second speech is to "explain and interpret your ideas about the
topic". And the third speech "is to initiate action or maintain
action" by the audience. Each speech will be prepared using the
Strategy Report Format outlined in the text, The Rhetorical Act,
and each strategy report will be due the day of the students speech.
Also, each student will be required to purchase a VCR tape, on
which each of their presentations will be recorded. The first two speeches will be 5-7 minutes and the third will be 6-8 minutes. And each student will be responsible for taking the tape home, filling out an evaluation report, and returning it to the instructor by the next class period.

Second, each student will complete a 6-10 page paper, on their campaign topic, in two phases. The first phase is 3-5 pages, and is an analysis of their issue, "Where we are know?", describing it from three points of analysis: structural factors, cultural factors, and personal factors. The second phase (including the first phase), will be 6-10 pages, and will address "Where are we going?" Discussing the future of the issue, how it needs to be addressed, and where you feel it is headed. The underlying theme is leadership and its role in either its creation and or solution.

Third, the class will participate in a mock debate, on an issue decided by the class. It will follow the structure described by the text Argumentation and Debate, and it will be taped and reviewed by the class in class. Fourth, as I noted earlier, each student will be asked to complete specific readings either on reserve or in a kinkos packet, and different groups of students will be responsible for leading a class discussion on those readings. And the final requirement will be class participation, which will hold a substantial grade weight.

F) If you will turn the page there is a completed copy of the syllabus for "Communication in Leadership":

Communication in Leadership
LDSP 000, Spring 1994
Mr. George C. Ruotolo III

Office: Apt. 207
Phone: 281 - 7972
Hours: By Appointment

Thursday 3:30 - 6:15
Jepson Hall room 107

Purpose

In studying leadership and the great leaders in history there is one common skill that links each of them to one another - communication. From the great orators, to the famous philosophers, to the role models, each leader utilized and recognized the importance of communication. Communication is a curricular goal here at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, and a skill which is inevitably developed through our program.

through this course students will learn the elements of effective communication and have the opportunity to practice these very skills while being evaluated and critiqued. There are many people in the world who posses some of the vital skills and traits necessary to assume a leadership role in society. Yet, without the ability to communicate, many of these skills are not utilized. The purpose of this course is to allow the students to better comprehend and utilize each and every one of their skills.

Goals and Objectives

To understand the importance of communication for and in leadership
To examine the relationship between communication and leadership
To provide students direct experience with public speaking (presentation, argumentation, debate)
To allow students to critically analyze the communication abilities of themselves and others
To develop the ability to speak, write and listen critically
To comprehend the basic theories, concepts and findings of communication research
To incorporate the Jepson School of Leadership Studies curricular goals
To learn to have fun and Laugh At Ourselves
Course Description

In this course we will learn about leadership by studying communication. We will study the theories and concepts of communication and put those to work in and out of the classroom. The course will require that you make presentations - evaluate and critique your own speeches - critique and evaluate the presentations of your peers - participate in a mock debate - write critical papers - participate in class - and have fun doing it. This course will increase your knowledge of communication, improve your oratory performance and give you a greater understanding for and about leadership.

Required Texts


Requirements & Grading

- Speech Campaign (3) 30% (10% each)
  Personal Speech Evaluations 15% (5% each)
- Campaign Paper (6-10 pgs) 30% (15% each)
  * Two Phases
    Mock Debate 5%
    Article Presentations 5%
    Class Participation 15%

Class Schedule

Week 1 Jan. 13  Introduction / explanation of course and distribution of syllabus.

Week 2 Jan. 20  Great Leadership module. Class will view videos of great orators/leaders and discuss the role of communication in those people’s leadership.
  - Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 3 Jan. 27  Interpersonal Communication Module. Review theories: communication perspectives, listening, non-verbal, audience analysis, delivery, etc. And perform in class exercises.
  - Complete assigned reading from text.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 5 Feb. 10  Advanced Public Speaking Module. Review public speaking theories, and discuss relevance to students campaigns. Also view videos of speeches similar to students campaigns.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 6 Feb. 17  Students give the first of three campaign speeches.

Week 7 Feb. 24  Phase I of the campaign paper is due and the class will be spent discussing the papers.
@ Personal speech evaluation #1 is due.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 8 Mar. 3  Persuasion Module. Review of theories of persuasion and class will complete persuasive exercises from Negotiation workbook.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 9 Mar. 10  Students give the second of three campaign speeches.

Week 10  Spring Break

Week 11 Mar. 24  Argumentation and debate module. Class will participate in mock debate and then view it on video.
@ Personal speech evaluation #2 is due.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 12 Mar. 31  1/2 class spent on discussion of The One Minute Manager -- 1/2 used as Work Day for campaigns.

Week 13 Apr. 7  Students give the third of three campaign speeches.

Week 14 Apr. 14  Phase II of the campaign paper is due and the class will be spent discussing the papers.
@ Personal speech evaluation #2 is due.
- Complete assigned reading from text.

Week 15 Apr. 21  Wrap up discussion of Communication in Leadership and party at the Prof's apartment.
Assignments

- SPEECH CAMPAIGN - each student will conduct a campaign throughout the semester. They will make three speeches on a topic they feel is relevant to their generation (i.e., AIDS, abortion, homelessness, unemployment, etc.). The purpose of the first speech is to "create a virtual experience and alter the perception" of the audience. The second speech is to "explain and interpret your ideas about the topic". And the third speech "is to initiate action or maintain action" by the audience. Each speech will be prepared using the Strategy Report Format outlined in the text, The Rhetorical Act, and each strategy report will be due the day of each student's speech. Also, each student will be required to purchase a VCR tape on which each of their presentations will be recorded. The first two speeches will be 5-7 minutes and the third will be 6-8 minutes.

- PERSONAL SPEECH EVALUATIONS - each student will be responsible for taking their tape home, filling out an evaluation report, and returning it to the instructor by the next class period.

- CAMPAIGN PAPER - each student will complete a 6-10 page paper on their campaign topic, in two phases. The first phase is 3-5 pages, and is an analysis of their issue, "Where we are now?", describing it from three points of analysis: structural factors, cultural factors, and personal factors. The second phase (including the first, will be 6-10 pages, and will address "Where are we going?" Discussing the future of the issue, how it needs to be addressed, and where you feel it is headed. The underlying theme is leadership and its role in either its creation and or solution.

- MOCK DEBATE - each class member will participate in a mock debate, on an issue decided by the class. It will follow the structure described by the text Argumentation and Debate, and it will be taped and reviewed by the class in class.

- ARTICLE PRESENTATION - for fifteen minutes at the beginning of each class, students will be asked to complete specific readings either on reserve or in a kinkos packet (selected from the readings in section II letter B, earlier in the paper—see bibliography). The readings will be apropos for the day's topic, and different groups of students will be responsible for leading a class discussion on those readings.

Readings for Communication in Leadership
(in order of appearance)

Articles
Books
The Essence of Leadership, by Edwin A. Locke (New York: 1991)
Human Communication as Narration, by Walter R. Fisher (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989)
Negotiation (workbook), Lewicki & Litterer (Illinois: Irwin Publishing, 1985)
The One Minute Manager, by Blanchard & Johnson (New Jersey: Berkley Books, 1983)
IV)

Through my leadership studies I have found that the one common link between virtually all great leaders has been the comprehension and mastery of the art of communication. From those who were powerful and influential orators, to those who lead through the written word, to others who found alternate means such as non-verbal (i.e. setting examples) methods, each recognized and utilized the process and importance of communication. It was this finding that has lead me to believe that at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies we should teach about communication and its role in the leadership process.

Hence, I created the course "Communication in Leadership". Although the syllabus is still rough, I believe that I have created a very real and workable format for this course. I have presented the need, feasibility, and benefits of this course, now all that remains is for the Jepson School of Leadership Studies to make a small donation to me, for the rights to the course. I would like to leave you with a quote by Edwin A. Locke, the author of The Essence of Leadership: "Leaders are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate." Remember that.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


The Essence of Leadership, by Edwin A. Locke (New York: 1991)


Human Communication as Narration, by Walter R. Fisher (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989)


Negotiation (workbook), Lewicki & Litterer (Illinois: Irwin Publishing, 1985)

The One Minute Manager, by Blanchard & Johnson (New Jersey: Berkley Books, 1983)

Articles