**ACTIVITIES**

**Communication Skills and Employment**

Go to [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com). Enter “communication” in the keyword input box and the location of a city where you would like to work. Click the find jobs button. Note the number of positions containing the word “communication” listed at the top of the page. Some of the results will be for communications jobs and for the communication industry, but most will likely list communication as one of the desired skills.

How many total jobs did your search reveal? How many different job categories did your search list? Describe the range of communication skills desired in a sample of the jobs listed.

**Statements about Communication**

Interview a friend or family member about their thoughts on the following statements. Do not tell your interviewee whether these are myths or facts about communication. Record his or her beliefs on each assertion, and discuss whether you agree or disagree with these views.

* Communication always requires understanding.
* Communication will not solve all problems.
* Meanings are in people, not words.
* Communication is not simple.
* More communication is always better.

**Barriers to Effective Communication**

Watch the short animated video “A Failure to Communicate” and identify the barriers to successful communication in play here. Employ any applicable key terms from the text in your descriptions, and indicate how these characters work to prevent a total failure of communication**.**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ox5LhIJSBE&spfreload=5

**Communicating with Social Media**

Watch the video <http://youtu.be/QFbzBhFsTCg>, and list all the problems interviewees encountered when texting or on Facebook. Describe similar issues that have arisen with you on social media and what you learned from these experiences.

**Self-Monitoring and Communication Competence**

Take the test <http://www.outofservice.com/self-monitor-censor-test/> to discover if you are generally a low or high self-monitor.

What did you discover about your ability to self-monitor? Are you a higher or lower self-monitor in different situations or in different groups? What might be a problem for low self-monitors when self-reporting behaviors on the test? Does high or low self-monitoring solely determine whether you are a competent communicator?

**Communicating at Work**

After visiting the following website, identify the five main causes of miscommunication in the workplace. Provide examples of each from your professional life or cases in the media. Which problem do you believe is most prevalent? Which of the insights offered did you find most helpful?

"Five Common Causes of Miscommunication in the Workplace and How to Avoid Them." Workplace Insights: A North Carolina Employer's Handbook. (n.d.). <http://blog.capital.org/five-common-causes-of-miscommunication-in-the-workplace-and-how-to-avoid-them/>

**Analyzing Your Communication Behavior**

Prove that communication is both frequent and important by observing your interactions for a one-day period. Record your every act of communication as defined in the text. Then answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of your waking day is involved in communication?
2. How much of this communication involves technology and social media?
3. What percentage of time do you spend communicating in the following contexts: intrapersonal, dyadic, small group, and public?
4. What percentage of your communication is devoted to satisfying each of the following types of needs: physical, identity, social, and practical? (Note that you might try to satisfy more than one type at a time.)

Based on your analysis, describe five to ten ways you would like to communicate more effectively. For each item on your list of goals, describe who is involved (e.g., "my boss," "people I meet at parties") and how you would like to communicate differently (e.g., "act less defensively when criticized," "speak up more instead of waiting for them to approach me"). Use this list to focus your studies as you read the textbook.

**FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

**TED Talk**

Stefana Broadbent: “How the Internet Enables Intimacy”

<http://www.ted.com/talks/stefana_broadbent_how_the_internet_enables_intimacy.html?source=email#.Uby2UX2hXK9.email>

**Films**

(For further discussion of these and other films that illustrate communication concepts, see *Now Playing*.)

*Inside Out* (2015, Rated PG)

Communication Concepts: intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, emotional expression, communication competence, conflict

*Noah* (2013, Rated R, 18-minute Canadian short film)

Communication Concepts: social media, computer-mediated communication, conflict, communication competence

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012, Rated PG-13)

Communication Concepts: communication competence, emotional expression, honesty, self-disclosure, relational dialectics

**Books**

Peters, John Durham (1999).*Speaking into the Air*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

A historical and philosophical investigation of the concept of communication—eloquently defined by the author as “the name for those practices that compensate for the fact that we can never be each other”—this text explores the singular and integral role communication plays in our individual lives and larger cultures, particularly those of the Western tradition.

**Journal Articles**

Wang, S., Hu, Q., & Dong, B. (2015). Managing personal networks: An examination of how high self-monitors achieve better job performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 91*, 180–188.

**Abstract:** Structural holes are important network structures that have positive implications for individuals' job performance. Although the emergence of structural holes is closely related to self-monitoring, little is known about how chameleon-like high self-monitors manage to occupy brokerage positions. We posited that leader–member exchange (LMX) quality and network diversity might serve as two important mediating paths through which self-monitoring links to structural holes and sequential job performance. Using structural equation modeling to analyze 10 department networks, we found that high self-monitors were more likely to build high-quality LMX relationships and diversified co-worker networks, which helped to enhance structural holes and job performance. Theoretical contributions and managerial implications are discussed.

Jones, K. (2014). At-risk students and communication skill deficiencies: A preliminary study. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 3*, 1–8.

**Abstract:** Early research has explored the relationship between at-risk students and communication apprehension. At-risk students have been found to have high levels of apprehension in a variety of communication settings. However, little attention has been given to exploring at- risk students’ perceptions of their communication skills and other areas of communication competency beyond general communication apprehension or fear of speaking. This study explores the relationship between at-risk students; self reported levels of communication competence, communication apprehension, and additional areas of communication skills such as self-monitoring and verbal aggressiveness. The results of this study show that at-risk students tend to report having high communication competency levels, while testing very low on communication skill tests. Study implications and suggested areas for future research and curriculum development for teachers are explored.

Leonardi, P. M., Treem, J. W., & Jackson, M. H. (2009). The connectivity paradox: Using technology to both decrease and increase perceptions of distance in distributed work arrangements. *Journal of Applied Communication Research,* *38*, 85-–105.

**Abstract:** Distributed work arrangements are gaining in popularity across all manner of organizations. But managers are still often worried that the “teleworkers” who opt for them will be too perceptually distant from the office to work effectively. To remedy this problem, managers often insist that teleworkers adopt Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) that enable perpetual connectivity with coworkers. In this study, we show that that teleworkers who use advance ICTs sometimes feel too connected to the office and, consequently, are unable to achieve the flexibility and focus they seek by working out of it. To combat this problem, teleworkers sometimes use their ICTs strategically to decrease, rather than increase, the distance they feel from colleagues. Moreover, the findings show these strategic uses of ICTs to increase distance are often covert, such that teleworkers can appear to colleagues as if they are working in a manner similar to how they would at an office while, at the same time, reaping the benefits of not being in a central location. We discuss how the subversive nature of their practices, though an effective means to manage perceptions of distance, might prevent meaningful organizational change that would improve distributed work arrangements.