



1973

A Model To Elicit Optimum Internal Communications In Unified School Districts

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A MODEL TO ELICIT OPTIMUM INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS IN UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Harry Weinberg

May 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
	Statement of the Problem	
	Rationale for the Study	
	Purpose of the Study	
	Hypotheses and Assumptions	
	Limitations and Definitions of Terms	
	Summary	
II.	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
	Introduction	
	Concepts and Characteristics of Communication	
	Organizational Communication	
	Desirable Elements of Internal Communication	
	Nature and Functions of Models	
	Summary	
III.	PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY	56
	Review of the Related Literature	
	Construction of the Interview Instrument	
	Validation of the Interview Instrument	
	Selection of the Sample	
	The Administration of the Interview	
	Tabulation and Treatment of the Data	
	The Creation of the Model	
	Summary	
IV.	FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	66
	Analysis of Sample Information	
	Analyses of Desirable Elements of Internal Communication	
	Testing the Assumptions	
	Reporting the Unstructured Responses	
	Summary of the Findings	

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY 85

A Model to Elicit Optimum Internal
Communications in Unified School Districts
Summary of the Study
Recommendations for Further Study

APPENDIX A 105

APPENDIX B 111

APPENDIX C 117

BIBLIOGRAPHY 132

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. The Specification of Networks at the Four Levels of Communication	20
2. Desirable Elements of Internal Communication in Unified School Districts	48
3. Summary of Sample Information for Six Selected Unified School Districts as Obtained by the Interview Instrument	67
4. Validations of Desirable Elements of Internal Communication	68
5. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Five Groups Perceptions of Desirable Elements of Horizontal Communication	70
6. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Five Groups Perceptions of Desirable Elements of Upwards Communication	71
7. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Five Groups Perceptions of Desirable Elements of Downwards Communication	71
8. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Five Groups Perceptions of Desirable Elements of Decision Making in Unified School Districts	72
9. Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance of Five Groups Perceptions of Desirable Elements of Feedback in Communication	72
10. Five Groups Ratings of Internal Communication within Their Unified School Districts	74
11. Five Groups Ratings of Their Feelings when Incidents of Poor Internal Communication Occurs in Selected School Districts	75
12. Major Input Components and Combination Interactions for an Optimum Internal Communication Model	86

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. The Circular Process of Communication	15
2. The Linear Process of Communication	17
3. The Organizational Pyramid	22
4. Organizational Pyramid for Public School Administration	23
5. Barriers to Successful Communication	43
6. A Helical Spiral as a Representation of Human Communication	51
7. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Superintendent and Central Office Administrator	88
8. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Superintendent and Building Level Administrator	89
9. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Superintendent and Certificated Staff	90
10. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Superintendent and Classified Staff	91
11. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Central Office and Building Level Administrators	92
12. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Central Office Administra- tors and Certificated Staff	93
13. Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Com- munication Model---Central Office Administra- tors and Classified Personnel	94

14.	Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Communication Model---Building Level Administrator and Certificated Staff	95
15.	Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Communication Model---Building Level Administrator and Classified Staff	96
16.	Two-way Combinational Optimum Internal Communication Model---Certificated and Classified Staff	97
17.	Bypass Channels for Internal Communication in Unified School Districts	98
18.	A Model to Elicit Optimum Internal Communication in Unified School Districts	99

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Van Miller states, "Administration is first and foremost communication."¹ If an organization is to accomplish its aims and objectives, it must communicate effectively. Knezevich points out, "The many working parts of an organization necessitate establishment of a means of interchanging thoughts and coordinating efforts."²

Technology has provided us with numerous sophisticated devices designed to transmit written and verbal messages and to help us communicate, but many organizations are still plagued by internal communication problems. Knezevich writes, "Relatively little has been accomplished to enhance better understanding between individuals and groups, particularly within organizations."³ Internal communication is an area concerned educational administrators must investigate further.

Statement of the Problem

Often, it is the case unified school districts do not

¹Van Miller, The Public Administration of American School Systems (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 475.

²Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 65. (Hereinafter referred to as Knezevich, Public Education.)

³Ibid.

have optimum internal communications. "Today school personnel, including administrators, often 'confound' their own language by failing to communicate adequately and effectively or by communicating unintentionally in a manner that is detrimental to them and the schools with which they are associated."⁴

Each district has its own unique instruments and channels by which internal communications take place. Knezevich states, "Communications is one of the least understood areas in administration."⁵ This study provides information about successful communication techniques and presents a viable model that should have positive practical implications for unified school districts.

Rationale for the Study

All too often the need for better communications within a school district is unrecognized. If the educational leaders of the district are adept at the process of human relations, communications may be good; but if these leaders lack this important skill, it is likely that a 'communications disaster' may occur. Harris states that if leaders lack skill in communication, "There is no real focus or movement in a definite direction."⁶

⁴William F. Savage, Interpersonal and Group Relations in Educational Administration (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968), p. 300.

⁵Knezevich, Public Education, p. 67.

⁶Ben M. Harris, Supervisory Behavior in Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 357.

When internal communications fail in a unified school district, the results can be extremely detrimental to the quality of education. Benjamin Sachs writes, "Lack of communications interferes not only with decision making, but with the professional preceptions of the entire staff."⁷

St. John concurs with Sachs and states, "It is important for all personnel of an organization, and especially administrators and executives, to note that successful communication, high morale, and competent job performance are all closely interrelated."⁸

Research reveals numerous studies concerning communications within school districts. A review of doctoral dissertations from 1938 through 1969 in Dissertation Abstracts International reveals over twenty-five studies dealing with communications within school districts.⁹ The vast majority of these studies are concerned with evaluating and analyzing internal communications, but only one study suggests a model, and this is for the purpose of communicating with the public. In his dissertation, Communications Within School Districts, Elwin Clemer states there is a need for further study, "of the best means of facilitating communications within school

⁷Benjamin Sachs, Educational Administration -- A Behavioral Approach (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1966), p. 88.

⁸Walter D. St. John, A Guide to Effective Communications (Nashville: Dr. Walter St. John's Enterprises, 1970), p. 3. (Hereinafter referred to as St. John, Communications.)

⁹Xerox, Dissertation Abstracts International: Retrospective Index Education (Vol. II, Part 1), 1970, 703.

districts."¹⁰ Knezevich states, "Only a limited amount of research is available that focuses on the interlocking networks of communications within school systems."¹¹

Developing optimum internal communications in unified school districts is not an easy task. Mayer states, "Effective staff communications are not easily attained. Developing effective internal communications is one of the most difficult school assignments. No stone can be left unturned in the search for better communications."¹² Mayer's statement suggests that a practical model of internal communications will be a significant and meaningful contribution to the field of educational administration.

Further support can be found in St. John's statement that, "Planning and organizing for effective communication should be given a top priority in both the time and effort of administrators."¹³

Knezevich writes of the importance of model building. He states, "Inaccurate models are better than none, for the effort states a concern for creating a conceptual framework and progressing beyond empiricism. Models are essential in doctoral-level research."¹⁴

¹⁰Elwin Faye Clemer, "Communications Within School Districts" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1966).

¹¹Knezevich, Public Education, p. 65.

¹²Frank C. Mayer, "Internal Communications," The Clearing House, Vol. 44, No. 5 (January, 1970), 290.

¹³St. John, Communications, p. 12.

¹⁴Knezevich, Public Education, p. 53⁷.

Purpose of the Study

Walter St. John, Coordinator of the University of Tennessee's School of Educational Administration, poses ten questions which serve as a basis for this study.¹⁵

1. What are our specific communications needs and goals?
2. What are our most severe problems and their causes?
3. Are our goals and expectations realistic and attainable?
4. Are attitudes of key personnel consistent with the communications needs, goals and policies?
5. How can the communications channels and organizational structure be revised to enhance communicating?
6. What information needs to go to whom, when, why, how, and by what means?
7. How prevalent is rumor and why?
8. How can the problems of specialized roles and differentiated status be overcome to facilitate improved communication?
9. Is there undue reliance on certain communications media? (For example, the written word.)
10. How can we assure better feedback and effectively evaluate the communications program?

The purpose of this study is to seek answers to questions of this nature in order to facilitate development of a viable model for internal communications. This model is expected to encourage optimum communications which are necessary if a unified school district is to function in an effective manner.

¹⁵St. John, Communications, p. 12.

Hypotheses and Assumptions

Descriptive studies do not lend themselves to the formulation of hypotheses that can be tested empirically; hence many descriptive studies do not contain hypotheses.

"Descriptive studies simply portray the facts---they describe what exists but do not account for why the present state of affairs has occurred."¹⁶ Van Dalen in discussing the formulation of hypotheses in descriptive studies, accurately captures the goal of this study when he states, "Descriptive studies that obtain accurate facts about existing conditions or detect significant relationships about current phenomena and interpret the meaning of the data provide educators with practical and immediately useful information."¹⁷

This study is based on several assumptions, which are:

1. Internal communications in unified school districts are generally poor.
2. Personnel and programs within a unified school district are often frustrated because of poor internal communications.
3. Good internal communications do not just happen, they must be planned.
4. When internal communications in a unified school district are poor, there is usually the absence of a communication model or system.
5. The superintendent is the individual primarily responsible for the quality of internal communications in a unified school district.

¹⁶Debold B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 235. (Hereinafter referred to as Van Dalen, Research.)

¹⁷Ibid.

Limitations and Definitions of Terms

Limitations of the study

This study is limited to discussing internal communications on a broad basis rather than to technically analyzing each specific aspect of internal communications that may occur within school districts, e.g., board-teacher salary negotiations. Classified employees, with the exception of department heads and secretaries, are not considered part of this study. Boards of education are also excluded from this study in a specific sense; however, much effort is devoted to researching the communication role of their agent, the superintendent.

This research is further limited to include unified school districts which range in size from 1,200 average daily attendance to 12,000 average daily attendance. This sample is in the range that includes the majority of California's 257 unified school districts.¹⁸

Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

Building Level Administrator---principals, vice-principals and other administrative personnel assigned to specific buildings which house students.

Central Office Administrator---specialized assistants, responsible to the superintendent, who are charged with responsibilities that are district-wide in scope.

¹⁸ California Teachers Association, Research Bulletin---
Class Size in California School Districts 1971-1972. Bulletin No. 265, May, 1972.

Certificated Staff--classroom teachers and other supporting professionals who work directly with students and carry out the instructional program.

Communications--the imparting or exchanging of attitudes, ideas, and information by use of human abilities or technological media.¹⁹

Internal Communication--the sharing of ideas, information and attitudes by personnel within organizations.

Model---a structure that enables one to present constructs in such a way that their formal connection is evident. A model allows researchers to present concepts in a manner that useful insights into their phenomena may be obtained.²⁰

Optimum Internal Communications---the efficient and most favorable exchange of attitudes, ideas, and information within an organization, leading to a maximum level of effectiveness.

Poor Internal Communications---the failure to accurately and efficiently exchange ideas, attitudes, and information within an organization.

Secretaries---those classified clerical personnel who are directly responsible to district level or building level administrators.

Superintendent---the primary executive officer of the district who administers and implements the policies of the school board.

Symbolic-diagrammatic Model---a model which consists of lines and shapes on a piece of paper reflecting a specific process.

Unified School District---a public school district which contains grades kindergarten through twelve and which is served by a common administration and school board.

Summary

In Chapter One, the problem has been stated and a rationale and purpose for the study presented. Limitations of the

¹⁹Knezevich, Public Education, p. 65.

²⁰Van Dalen, Research, p. 492.

research and definitions of terms conclude this portion of the study.

Chapter II reviews the literature in depth and ultimately concentrates on identifying desirable elements of internal communication with the goal of incorporating these elements into a model.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Carleton Scofield, chancellor of the University of Missouri, stated "Our knowledge about communication, in all its aspects, is very great. It is, however, a patchwork of knowledge, without order, and often it is uncommunicated."¹ Thayer concurs with Scofield's lament when he writes, "Though astonishingly popular as an object of research, the field of human communications has not established any sharply defined boundaries or domains."² The plethora of research concerning communication which has come forth during the last decade has accomplished little to refine and clarify the subject. Thayer notes that one review "contains the use of twenty-five different conceptions of communications,"³ while Minter points out that "investigators have yet to establish a completely

¹Lee Thayer, Communication: Theory and Research (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1967), p. 3. (Hereinafter referred to as Thayer, Communication.)

²Kenneth K. Sereno and David C. Mortensen, Foundations of Communication Theory (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 2. (Hereinafter referred to as Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory.)

³Ibid.

acceptable definition of communication."⁴

Scholars concerned about the quality and organization of research in the field of human communication have much in common with serious students and practitioners in the important field of educational administration. Griffiths,⁵ Knezevich, Walton, and others have expressed concern regarding the development of sound theoretical practices in the field of educational administration. Walton, writing in 1955, states, "The subject matter of educational administration lacks a well defined, highly organized body of knowledge."⁶ Knezevich, writing fourteen years later, concludes, "Dissatisfaction with the piecemeal approach, the lack of consistency, and the overemphasis on skills in educational administration eventually stimulated long-overdue concern for a theory of administration in education."⁷

The foregoing similarities between research in communication and educational administration illustrate the necessity for structuring this review of the literature to combine the best information available in both disciplines which are

⁴Robert Minter, "A Denotative and Connotative Study of Communication," Journal of Communication, Vol. 18, No. 3 (March, 1968), 26-36.

⁵Daniel Griffiths, Administrative Theory (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959), pp. 1-3. (Hereinafter referred to as Griffiths, Administrative Theory.)

⁶John Walton, "The Theoretical Study of Educational Administration," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 25 (Summer, 1955), p. 169.

⁷Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 65. (Hereinafter referred to as Knezevich, Public Education.)

related to the subject. Accordingly, this chapter is organized into four major sections to consider the research relevant to internal communications in unified school districts. The first part deals with particular characteristics and concepts of communication which are germane to this study. The second section relates to organizational communications in general, with a specific emphasis on research relevant to educational organizations. The third portion of this chapter is devoted to the researching and identification of desirable elements of internal communications, while part four discusses the nature and functions of models.

Concepts and Characteristics of Communication

It is appropriate to begin a discussion of the concepts and characteristics of communication by reiterating the implications presented in the introduction to this chapter, i.e., that the characteristics of communication are varied and often difficult to precisely define. Dance notes that "Communication is something that changes even while one is in the act of examining it."⁸ Barker and Kibler add, "One of the problems inherent in the study of communication is that we actually know little about it for certain."⁹ It is possible,

⁸Frank Dance, Human Communication Theory (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston and Company, 1967), p. 293. (Hereinafter referred to as Dance, Human Communication.)

⁹Larry L. Barker and Robert J. Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 2. (Hereinafter referred to as Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior.)

however, to identify certain concepts and characteristics of communication that appear consistently in the literature. A discussion and explanation of these common characteristics follow.

Communication is complex

Dance observes that "Whatever else human communication may turn out to be, it is most certainly complex."¹⁰ Because communication involves human behavior, it is by nature difficult and complicated. Savage points out that, "Communication is an exceedingly complex process in which people, behavior, and objects transmit information, ideas, and attitudes."¹¹ In attempting to explain the complexity of communication Sayles writes,

The human sensory apparatus does not transmit an exact duplicate of reality from the outside world into the mind of the observer. Our needs and experiences tend to color what we see and hear. Messages we don't want to accept are repressed.¹²

Barnlund neatly summarizes the problem of the complexity of communication when he writes,

If any doubt remains (about the complexity of human communication) consider the continuous, interdependent, irreversible, and sometimes elusive functions of encoding

¹⁰Dance, Human Communication, p. 293.

¹¹William F. Savage, Interpersonal and Group Relations in Educational Administration (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968), p. 300. (Hereinafter referred to as Savage, Relations in Educational Administration.)

¹²Leonard Sayles and George Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 238. (Hereinafter referred to as Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations.)

and decoding, one has only to add the vast array of communicative purposes, social settings, and message forms, at the disposal of any communicant.¹³

Communication is a process

A second point of major agreement among researchers in the field of human communication is that communication is a process. Berlo defines communication as "a process that is on-going, dynamic, without starting and stopping points."¹⁴

Smith adds that, "Behavioral communication theory must reflect the point of view that communication is a process. We cannot identify beginnings or ends of communication."¹⁵ It is important to note that the literature reveals the communication process as a continuous one. Barnlund reports, "The process has no beginning, nor end, even in sleep or under conditions of sensory deprivation, for man is a menostatic rather than a static mechanism."¹⁶ Since the process of communication has no definitive boundaries, its shape is circular in nature.¹⁷ Wilbur Schramm¹⁸ illustrates the circular properties of the communication process via a well-known diagram which is reproduced in Figure 1 on page 15.

¹³ Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 93.

¹⁴ David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960) p. 106.

¹⁵ Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, p. 20.

¹⁶ Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 89.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁸ Wilbur Schramm, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 8.

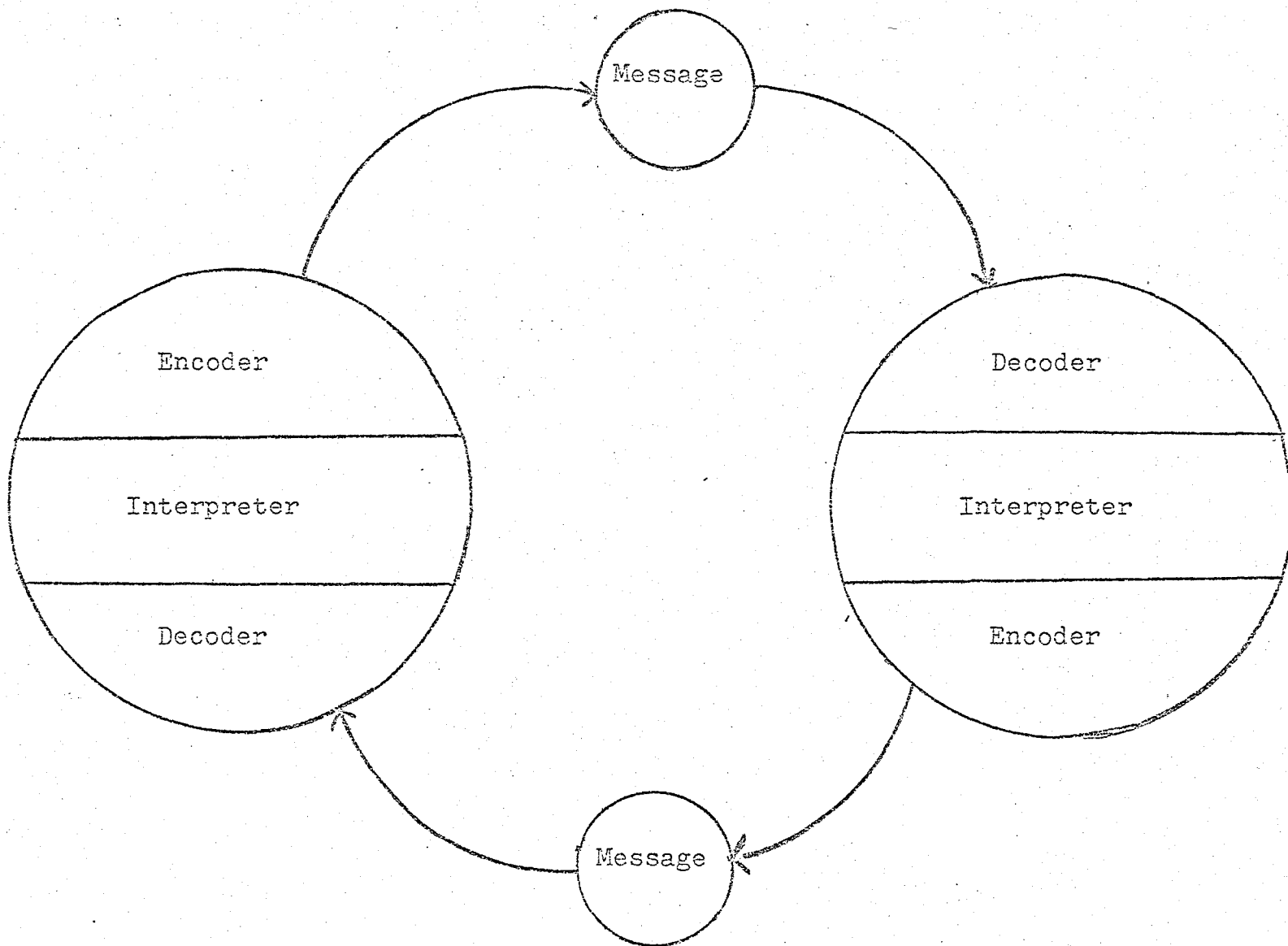


Fig. 1.--The circular process of communication (from Wilbur Schramm, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication)

Knezevich argues that "Communication is not necessarily a two-way activity."¹⁹ He contends that the fact that a message has been sent in no way guarantees that it will be received in whole or part. However, Knezevich concurs that communication is a process and his interpretation of the process appears in Figure 2 on page 17.

Implicit in the literature is the concept that optimum communication involves some form of feedback and therefore is a circular process.

Communication is verbal and nonverbal

Human beings utilize many means of communication. These various methods of transmitting ideas, attitudes and information can be classified under two broad headings, verbal and nonverbal communication.

Verbal communication.---This aspect of communication is what makes human beings such unusual and complex animals. Dance states, "Speech communication is a uniquely human capacity."²⁰

Smith defines verbal communication as, "message behavior in which words are used as symbols to represent objects and ideas."²¹ Dance states that verbal communication has three functions which are:

¹⁹Knezevich, Public Education, p. 66.

²⁰Dance, Human Communications, p. 304.

²¹Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, p. 21.

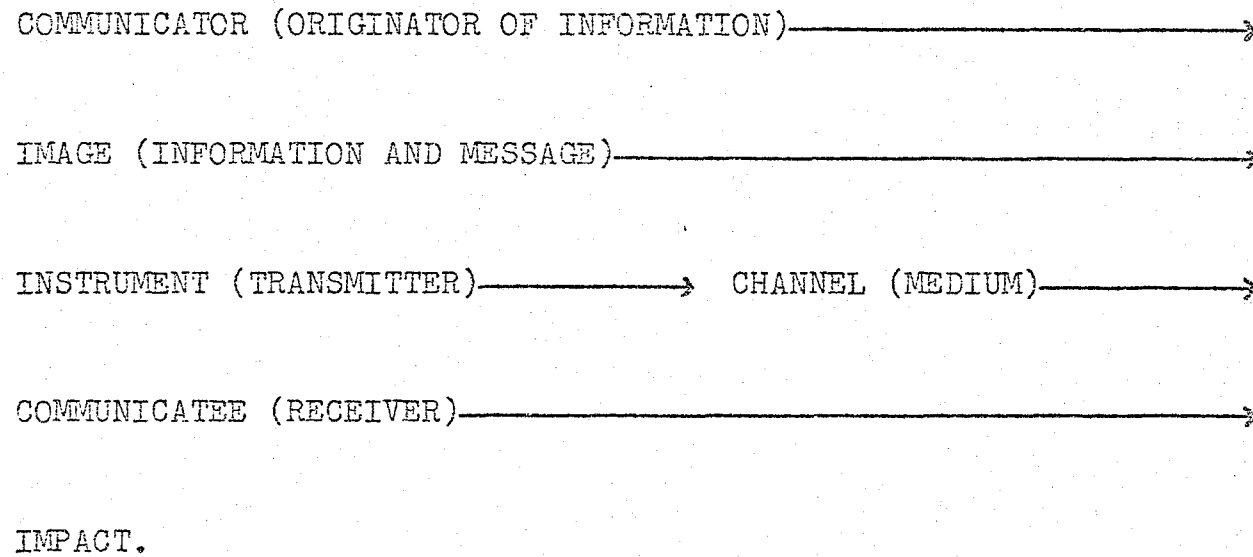


Fig. 2.--The linear process of communication (from Sephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education)

1. The integration of the individual with his milieu;
2. The development of mental processes;
3. The regulation of behavior.²²

Norbert Weiner sums up his discussion of verbal communication by observing, "Speech is the greatest interest and most distinctive achievement of man."²³

Nonverbal communication.---Smith states that nonverbal communication, "includes all other forms of message behavior, such as: (1) sign language; (2) action language; (3) object language; (4) space; and (5) time."²⁴ Shannon and Weaver point out that communication "involves not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theater, the ballet, and in fact all human behavior."²⁵

The written word is the most commonly referred to aspect of nonverbal communication, but one should also consider facial expressions, gestures, body movements and even silence as other modes of nonverbal communication.

Baty and Himstreet point out that a person's speech does not always reveal his true intentions. They state,

²²Dance, Human Communications, p. 304.

²³Norbert Weiner, The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 74.

²⁴Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, p. 21.

²⁵C. E. Shannon and W. Weaver, The Mathematical Theory of Communication (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 95.

"Nonverbal elements and their implications, along with roles and status, serve as secondary methods or instructions to assist the receiver in understanding the message."²⁶

Smith summarizes the research in nonverbal communications by his simple and powerful statement, "Nonverbal messages are critical, and often actions do speak louder than words."²⁷

Communication is multi-level and multi-dimensional in nature

Any serious study of communication rapidly reaches the point when the researcher realizes that not only is communication a complex process, but that this process occurs on many different levels in several different forms.

For example, one may study external or internal communications; informal or formal communications; intrapersonal or interpersonal communication; and unintentional or intentional communication. Smith states, "When we discuss communication, it is important to identify the level of system we have in mind."²⁸

Reusch and Bateson²⁹ illustrate the many dimensions and levels of communication in Table 1 on page 20.

²⁶Wayne Baty and William Himstreet, Business Communication (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), p. 10.

²⁷Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, p. 24.

²⁸Ibid., p. 21.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 22-23.

TABLE 1

THE SPECIFICATION OF NETWORKS AT THE FOUR LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Origin of Message</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Channels</i>	<i>Receiver</i>	<i>Destination of Message</i>
I. Intrapersonal "within one"	Sensory end organ or Communication center.		Neural, humoral pathways and con- tiguous pathways.	Communication center or the effector organs.	
II. Interpersonal "one to one"	Communication center of person sending message.	Effector organ of sending person.	Sound, light, heat, odor, vibrations traveling across space on the one hand, chemical or mechanical contact with material or person on the other hand.	Sensory end organs of receiving person.	Communication center of person receiving message.
III. A. Group "One to many" (centrifugal messages)	Communication center of group: head man or committee.	Person specializing in being a mouth- piece or executive for the communica- tion center.	Multiplication of message through press, radio, loud- speaker system, movies, circulars, etc.	Persons engaged in receiving and inter- preting incoming messages for the group—readers, listeners, theater spectators, critics.	Many persons who are members of a group. Identity of persons is unspeci- fied by name: they are known by role. Group is specified.
B. Group "Many to one" (centripetal messages)	Many persons who are members of a group. Identity of persons is unspeci- fied by name; they are known by role. Group is specified.	Spokesman who ex- presses the voice of the people, the family, or other small groups at the periphery.	Mail, word of mouth, or other instrumental ac- tions of people.	Professional spe- cialists who engage in receiving mes- sages: news ana- lysts, intelligence service, government agencies. Conden- sation and abstrac- tion of incoming messages.	Communication center of group— executive, commit- tee, or head man.
IV. A. Cultural "Space binding" messages of "many to many"	Many groups un- specified by name, known by role, which express moral, aesthetic, or religious views— e.g., the clergy, children.	Groups specializing in the formulation of standards of liv- ing: legislators.	Script, written and unwritten regula- tions and laws. Customs transmit- ted by personal contact often im- plicit in action. Persons become channel.	Groups engaging in the reception and interpretation of cultural messages such as judges, lawyers, scientists, ministers.	Many groups com- posed of living people, unspecified by name, known by role.
B. Cultural "Time binding" messages of "many to many"	Many unspecified groups the mem- bers of which are older than the re- ceivers or already dead.	The voice of the past, frequently a mythological or historical figure.	Script, material cul- ture such as objects, architectural struc- tures, etc., and personal contact from generation to generation often implicit in action.	Group specializing in the reception and interpretation of the messages of the past—archaeolo- gists, historians, clergy.	Many unspecified groups the mem- bers of which are younger than the originators of the message.

This review has identified four characteristics and concepts of communication that are universally common to the act of communication. These characteristics and concepts are (1) communication is complex; (2) communication is a process; (3) communication is verbal and nonverbal; and (4) communication is multi-dimensional and multi-level in nature.

The next section of this chapter reviews the relevant literature in the field of organizational communication.

Organizational Communication

Communication is vital to the survival of an organization. An organization may be visualized as a set of individuals, many with different responsibilities, all working for a common purpose and goal. Knezevich writes,

The many working parts of an organization necessitate establishment of a means of interchanging thoughts and coordinating efforts. Some writers contend that an organization cannot survive unless a means of communication is developed among various operating levels.³⁰

Most organizations and unified school districts in California have a multi-level, vertical structure. Sayles and Strauss observe, "For coordinating the activities of large numbers of people, some form of pyramidal organization is inevitable, simply because there will always be fewer people with very high status than with moderate or low status."³¹ Figure 3 on page 22 illustrates a familiar organizational pyramid for business,³² while Figure 4 on page 23

³⁰Knezevich, Public Education, p. 65.

³¹Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 348.

³²Ibid., p. 349.

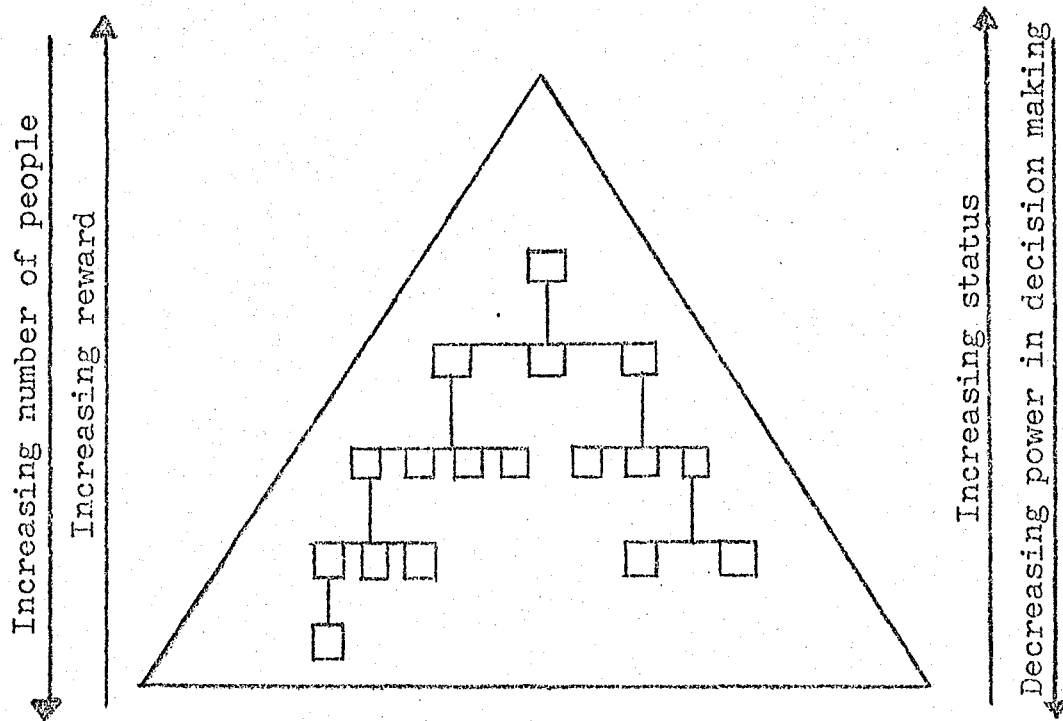


Fig. 3.--The organizational pyramid (from Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations)

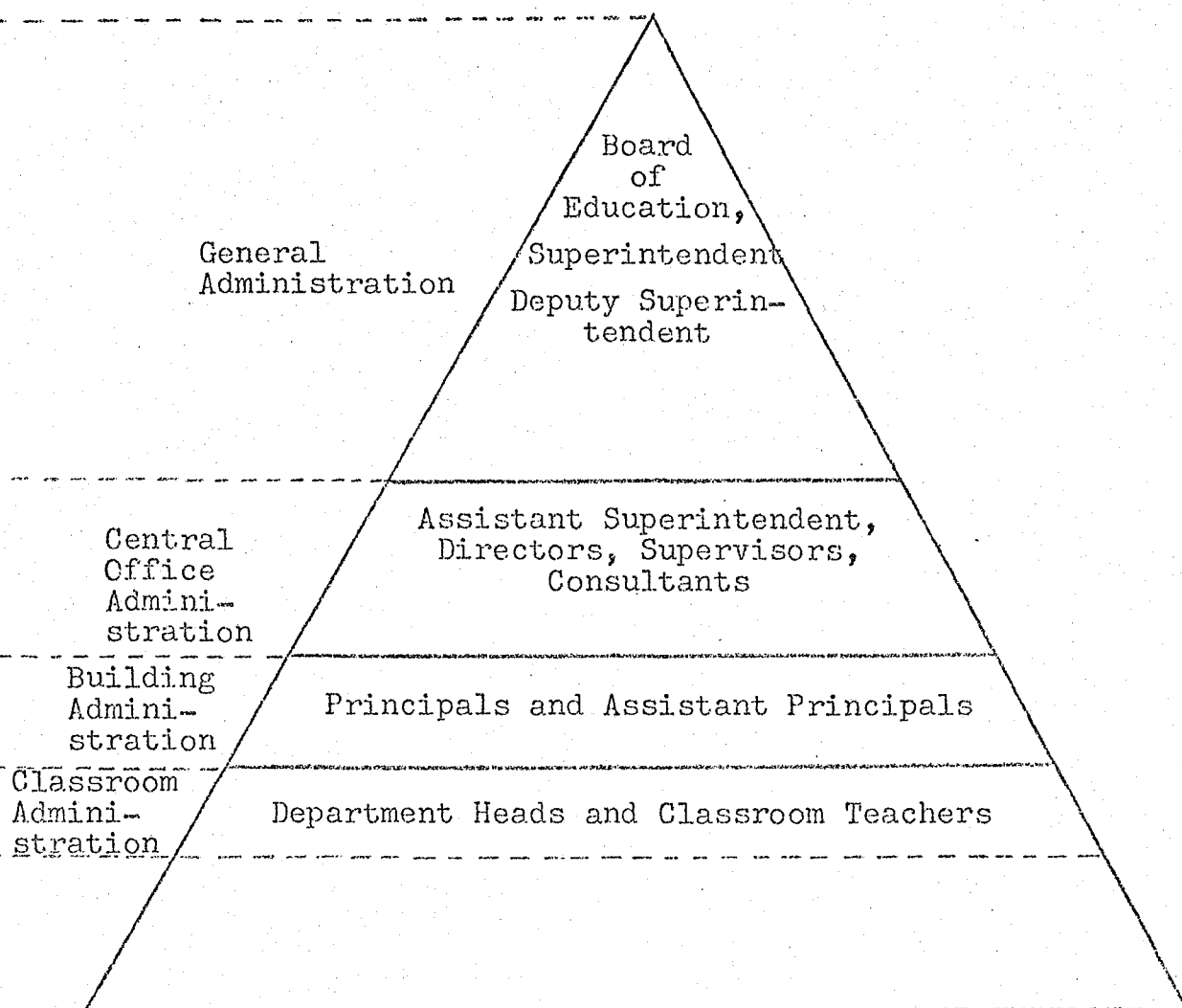


Fig. 4.--Organizational pyramid for public school administration (from Knezevich, Public Education)

shows a typical unified school district's organization.³³

This section will review the relevant literature concerning communication in the business world, as well as educational organizations, in order to accomplish a consummate overview of internal communications. This major area will be divided into six sub-sections which are: (1) decision making; (2) upwards communication; (3) downwards communication; (4) horizontal communication; (5) feedback; and (6) barriers to communication.

Decision making

Voss writes, "One of the most important functions of communication is to provide a basis for valid decisions."³⁴ Decision making, like communication, is a process. Griffiths reports, "Decision making is becoming generally recognized as the heart of organization and the process of administration."³⁵ There are numerous theories which pertain to the decision making process. Implementation of each of these theories in a school district is dependent on the existence of optimum communication. Griffiths advances a well-known set of steps for the decision making process:

1. Recognize, define, and limit the problem.
2. Analyze and evaluate the problem.

³³Knezevich, Public Education, p. 65.

³⁴Henry Voss, Organizational Communications: A Bibliography (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), p. 2. (Hereinafter referred to as Voss, Organizational Communications.)

³⁵Griffiths, Administrative Theory, p. 75.

3. Establish criteria or standards by which solution will be evaluated or judged as acceptable and adequate to the need.
4. Collect data.
5. Formulate and select the preferred solution or solutions. Test them in advance.
6. Put into effect the preferred solution.
 - a. Program the solution.
 - b. Control the activities in the program.
 - c. Evaluate the results and the process.³⁶

However, we must consider that decision making in organizations is not based solely on a mechanical or rigid system. George Gerbner, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Communication, states, "Human communication really contributes to decision making above and beyond a mechanical system."³⁷

Decision making through group processes.---Good administrative theory dictates that organizational decisions be reached through the group process with the possible exception of emergencies or personnel matters. The rationale for group involvement in decision making is simple, i.e., the decision will be implemented more effectively if the group has a stake in it. Glass reports,

It is impossible to solve problems, make decisions, or to implement these decisions unless unimpeded communications channels exist. In order to facilitate communication and obtain optimum awareness...vertically

³⁶Ibid., p. 241.

³⁷Thayer, Communication, p. 243.

integrated conference workshop groups are used.³⁸

Wilson cites the trend of involving more people in the decision making process and observes "This trend relieves the administrator of nearly all the steps in making decisions except the responsibility for seeing that they are made."³⁹ Griffiths emphasizes that "Decision making in an organization is not a personal matter, and the effectiveness of decisions is not a product of the quality of decisions of any one person."⁴⁰

Programmed and non-programmed decisions.---Simon⁴¹
suggests that there are two types of decisions made within organizations; programmed decisions and non-programmed decisions. Knezevich states,

Programmed decisions are used in basically routine and repetitive activities, that is when definite procedures can be worked out. Non-programmed decision-making situations are those for which no specific procedures have been created to deal with choices that present themselves.⁴²

Communicating the decision.---Making decisions is a vital process that occurs within every school district and

³⁸Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 93.

³⁹Robert E. Wilson, Educational Administration (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966), p. 5.

⁴⁰Griffiths, Administrative Theory, p. 113.

⁴¹Herbert A. Simon, The New Science of Management Decisions (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 5-26.

⁴²Knezevich, Public Education, p. 62.

organization. Communicating the decision is equally important. Maier writes,

In order to facilitate accurate communication of a decision, it is essential that the leader carefully summarize the decision--preferably by writing the details in abbreviated form...⁴³

Follow-up is also necessary after the decision has been communicated. Maier states, "Every group decision should be re-examined after it has been put into effect in order to determine whether it is yielding the satisfactions anticipated..."⁴⁴

If an organization is to meet its goals, decisions must be made and communicated to all the members of the organization concerned. Cherry captures the importance of interlocking the decision making processes with optimum communication when he writes,

It is clear that, if decisions are to be made and put into operation, there must be cooperation and coordination of the activities of many people. Communication is the process by which cooperation and coordination takes place.⁴⁵

Upward communication

Any employee in a unified school district should have ready access to a channel that enables him to communicate effectively with those people above him in the hierarchy.

⁴³Norman R. F. Maier, Problem Solving Discussions and Conferences: Leadership Methods and Skills (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 154.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁵Colin Cherry, On Human Communication (New York: Published Jointly by Wiley and Sons, Inc. and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1957), p. 6.

Sayles and Strauss concur with the preceding statement when they write,

Effective upward communication is essential both to organizational efficiency and individual job satisfaction. Top management needs to know what is happening on lower levels, and subordinates feel helpless unless they have some opportunity to talk freely to their own bosses and to make direct contact with decision makers at higher levels.⁴⁶

William Scholz suggests five functions of upward communication. They are:

1. Provide decision-making information.
2. Relieve employees' pressures and frustrations to work situations.
3. Enhances employees' sense of participation.
4. Serves as a measure of effectiveness of downward communication.
5. Suggest more rewarding use of downward communication in the future.⁴⁷

One phenomena that is usually present in upwards communication is called the "filtering" process. Savage states this process refers to "the elimination or deletion of relevant or important information. Communication of accomplishments and personal successes flows upwards far more rapidly than do reports of problems and failures."⁴⁸ Due to this filtering process, many messages which travel upward in an organization are often distorted and diffused by the time

⁴⁶Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 340.

⁴⁷Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 4.

⁴⁸Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 313.

they reach the receiver.⁴⁹

In a discussion of school district's organization, Savage discusses upward communication and states it is often inadequate in quality because:

1. Frequently no conscious effort is made by administrators to encourage it;
2. Administrative behavior indicates that ideas, reactions, and criticisms are not welcome; and
3. Communication is affected often by a "filtering" process.⁵⁰

Savage concludes that upward communication can be encouraged by an administrator through:

1. Urging his subordinates to talk with him;
2. Participating in social affairs that bring him in contact with subordinates;
3. Welcoming even more formal communication such as letters and memoranda from persons below him in the administrative hierarchy; and
4. Demonstrating that he really means what he says with respect to needing and wanting the ideas, reactions, and criticisms of staff members.⁵¹

Successful upwards communication is dependent on the superior being sincerely interested in receiving the message and having the ability to listen.⁵²

⁴⁹Downs takes important notice of this filtering process and lists some causes in Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 204.

⁵⁰Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 313.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Scholz states the average administrator has a lack of proficiency in listening. William Scholz, "Communication for Control," Advanced Management, Vol. 24, No. 11, Dec. 1959, 13-15.

To summarize the relevant literature, optimum upwards communication is necessary in unified school districts to:

1. Facilitate knowledge of personnel and programs;
2. Apprise those at the top of the hierarchy of how well received were their past communications;
3. Enable administrator to receive valuable suggestions; and
4. Build employee morale and self-respect.

Downward communication

Optimum downward internal communication in school districts is often confused with the task of disseminating information from the top levels of an organization downward. Some administrators refer to newsletters, bulletins, memoranda, etc. as tools of downward communication. True, the above items can be employed in downward internal communication, but sole reliance on these types of devices may result in the communication disaster referred to in Chapter One of this study. Sayles and Strauss point out that it "would be incorrect to assume that dissemination is the same process as communication."⁵³

As ideas, attitudes, and information are passed downward within an organization, distortions often occur. The primary cause of this distortion is people and their interpretation of the messages they receive. The two most common types of distortion according to Sayles and Strauss are

⁵³Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 361.

"exaggeration" and the "playing down" of directives.⁵⁴ The former method of distortion occurs when employees try to guess what will please the boss, while the latter takes place when lower echelons drag their feet in implementing policies.

The slow process of downward communication may cause frustration within an organization and tempt an employee to "bypass" or "short circuit" the chain of command to expedite a particular task. Homons cautions against this technique. He states that people who are left out "are understandably resentful of such violations of the chain of command and feel their leadership position threatened."⁵⁵ Although "bypassing" at the time may seem facilitatory in nature, sticking to formal channels has the advantage of informing everyone who may be concerned.

One appropriate axiom of downward communication should be: you can't write it all. Busnell and Wood state,

Communication of policy downward using memos, news-letters, etc. is not satisfactory. A communication package made up of written material and also verbal discussions down the line is more satisfactory. Oral explanations are more flexible and creative.⁵⁶

Optimum downward communication can help a school district achieve its goals. Work done by Indik and his

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 363.

⁵⁵George Homons, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1950), p. 430.

⁵⁶David S. Busnell and William R. Wood, "Are You Getting Across to Employees?" Nations Business, Vol. 53, No. 7 (July, 1965), 74-77.

associates indicates the openness of downward word communication channels tends to be positively associated with high level performance.⁵⁷

On rare occasions downward communication must be limited. This may have to be done in order to prevent traumatic situations from occurring within a school district. For example, in a sensitive personnel matter, such as the firing of a principal, top level administrators may want to close off downward communication channels to protect the employee and his family. However, Savage argues in these cases the staff "must be aware of the fact that there are adequate reasons for lack of downward communication."⁵⁸

The foregoing review of the relevant literature indicates the need for optimum downward communication to:

1. Provide employees with a feeling of belonging.
2. Coordinate the district's activities.
3. Improve employee attitude and morale.
4. Advise employees of policy and procedures.
5. Enlist the cooperation and support of the employees necessary to enable the unified district to make the improvements it requires to grow and to serve efficiently.

Horizontal communication

A review of the literature in the area of horizontal

⁵⁷B. P. Indik, B. S. Georgopoulos and S. E. Seashore, "Superior-Subordinate Relationships and Performance," Personnel Psychology, Vol. 14 (1961), 357-74.

⁵⁸Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 315.

communication reveals that communication between peers within an organization is a prime cause of organizational problems. Didler simply states, "Horizontal communications are difficult because of rivalries, jealousies, etc."⁵⁹ Becker ventures a step further when he observes,

An individual will choose to communicate with a similar other if the situation does not compel the individual to persuade the other.⁶⁰

In essence, Becker is stating that horizontal communications are trouble free if the peers agree with each other, but communication can become difficult when disagreement occurs.

Most communication within an organization is horizontal in nature. Jackson supports this when he writes, "People will communicate most to those geographically closest to them and more to members of their own subgroup."⁶¹ Landsberger notes, "Organizational problems...determine to a large extent the frequency of horizontal interactions (which are, indeed, frequent)."⁶²

Information is exchanged horizontally through face to face communications, by telephone, and by circulating memoranda and letters via a route slip. Optimum horizontal

⁵⁹Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 27.

⁶⁰S. W. Becker, "Personality and Effective Communication in the Organization," Personnel Administration, Vol. 27, No. 4 (April, 1964), 28.

⁶¹J. M. Jackson, "The Organization and Its Communication Problem," Advanced Management, Vol. 24, No. 2 (February, 1961), 17.

⁶²H. A. Landsberger, "The Horizontal Dimension in Bureaucracy," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 6, (September, 1961), 299.

communications is dependent on the existence of good interpersonal relationship at the group level within an organization.

The review of the literature relevant to horizontal communication reveals:

1. Poor horizontal communication is a major cause of organizational dysfunctions in school districts.
2. The bulk of internal communication takes place at the horizontal level within an organization.
3. Horizontal communication is primarily face to face and dependent on good interpersonal relationship techniques.

The next subsection of this discussion of internal communications deals with feedback.

Feedback

Gardiner reports that "Communication researchers in the past two decades have begun to place more emphasis on feedback as a variable in the communication process."⁶³ Indeed, optimum feedback is essential if an organization or school district is to function efficiently. The term "feedback"⁶⁴ is adapted from engineering and refers to a system's or organization's ability to check on their own performance.

⁶³James C. Gardiner, "A Synthesis of Experimental Studies of Speech Communication Feedback," The Journal of Communication, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (March, 1971), 17-35. (Hereinafter referred to as Gardiner, "Synthesis of Experimental Studies of Speech Communication Feedback.")

⁶⁴For a sophisticated technical discussion of feedback as it relates to systems see Johnson and Klare, "Feedback: Principles and Analogies," Journal of Communication, Vol. XII, No. 3 (Sept., 1962), 150-159, and Shannon and Weaver, Mathematical Theory of Communication.

Sayles and Strauss refer to feedback as, "perhaps the single most important method of improving communication."⁶⁵ Feedback occurs whether one views the communication process as linear or circular in nature. However, Dance states the introduction of the concept of feedback, "greatly supports the notion of the circularity of the communication process."⁶⁶ Ignoring the importance of feedback can be serious. Peter Nokes observes, "that where feedback is inadequate, or ignored, the end result for both individuals and institutions is failure..."⁶⁷ Dowling concurs by simply stating, "Without feedback, communication fails."⁶⁸

Principles of feedback.—Since it is obvious that feedback is vital to optimum internal communications, it is imperative that this study lists the following relevant principles regarding feedback which appear in the literature:

1. Feedback provides the sender with information concerning his success in accomplishing his objective. By doing this it exerts control over future messages he transmits.⁶⁹

⁶⁵Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 247.

⁶⁶Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 164.

⁶⁷Peter Nokes, "Feedback as an Exploratory Device in the Study of Certain Interpersonal and Institutional Processes," Human Relations, Vol. 14, No. 4 (November, 1961), 381-7.

⁶⁸Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 70.

⁶⁹James H. Campbell and Hal W. Hepler, Dimensions in Communications: Readings (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1968), p. 230. (Hereinafter referred to as Campbell and Hepler, Dimensions in Communications.)

2. When a source receives feedback that is rewarding, he continues to produce the same kind of message. When he gets nonrewarding feedback, he will eventually change his message.⁷⁰
3. Clearly, person to person communication permits maximum feedback. Sayles states, "Face to face communication is a prime weapon in feedback, since you get not only verbal, but nonverbal feedback."⁷¹
4. "Accuracy of communication is increased by feedback."⁷²
5. Problem solving is made easier by optimum feedback since group communication will be enhanced.⁷³
6. Feedback is affected by how the receiver feels about the source and the topic.⁷⁴
7. "From studies investigating feedback and group behavior, it can be concluded that positive feedback reduces group hostility...increases group task efficiency, while negative feedback produces the opposite effect."⁷⁵

Nowhere in the literature was it implied or stated that feedback was unnecessary to good communication. Therefore, it may be assumed that feedback is, as Sayles and

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Lenard Sayles, "Employee Communication: It's Easier When You Know How," Supervisory Management, Vol. 7, No. 8 (August, 1962), 12-15.

⁷²L. E. Schlesinger, "Meeting the Risks Involved in Two-Way Communications," Personnel Administration, Vol. 25, No. 6 (June, 1962), 24-30.

⁷³The positive effect of feedback on group conflicts is noted by Wolfe and Snolk in "A Study of Tension and Adjustment Under Role Conflict," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 18, No. 3 (July, 1962), 102-21.

⁷⁴Gardiner, "Synthesis of Experimental Studies of Speech Communication Feedback," p. 31.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 32.

Strauss state, "the single most important method of improving communication."⁷⁶

Barriers to communication

The more complex and intricate a machine is, the greater the probability is that it will dysfunction. The foregoing axiom can legitimately be applied to the complex process of human communication. Sayles and Strauss emphasize the complexities that may cause barriers in communication when they state,

The human sensory apparatus does not transmit an exact duplicate of reality from the outside world into the mind of the observer. Our needs and experiences tend to color what we see and hear. Messages we don't want to accept are repressed. Others are magnified... others are hideously distorted from their original reality.⁷⁷

Unanticipated communication barriers often interfere with the effectiveness of an organization reaching its objective. Culbertson contends that communication barriers can be best described and explained by classifying them into three categories: "those related to words, those relating to the communicator who sends the message, and those relating to the communicatee(s) who receive the message."⁷⁸ For the purpose of reviewing the literature relevant to communication barriers, this study adopts Culbertson's classifications.

⁷⁶ Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 247.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

⁷⁸ Ben M. Harris, Supervisory Behavior in Education (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963), p. 263. (Hereinafter referred to as Harris, Behavior in Education.)

Barriers related to words.---Words are symbols and mean different things to different people. The meaning of a word might not only be the dictionary definition, but Culbertson states meaning is influenced by the "unique experience which communicatees have had with the thing the word symbolizes."⁷⁹ A word or phrase may have a symbolic meaning that others might overlook, and hence unintentionally a communication barrier is raised. Employees in a unified school district communicate internally with people who possess wide differences in educational background. For example, a principal within a short time span may converse with a custodian, a school psychologist, and a secretary. Savage states because of this wide difference of educational background, "The administrator must know how or when to use a limited or simple vocabulary."⁸⁰

Perhaps the clearest way to illustrate the manner in which words can establish communication barriers is to cite the following humorous anecdote by Stuart Chase:

A foreign-born plumber in New York wrote the Bureau of Standards that he found hydrochloric acid fine for cleaning drains, and did they agree? Washington replied: "The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but the chlorine residue is incompatible with metallic permanence."

The plumber wrote back that he was mighty glad the Bureau agreed with him.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 338.

Considerably alarmed, the Bureau replied a second time: "We cannot assume responsibility for the production of toxic and noxious residues with hydrochloric acid, and suggest that you use an alternate procedure." The plumber was happy to learn that the Bureau still agreed with him.

Whereupon Washington wrote: "Don't use hydrochloric acid; it eats hell out of the pipes."⁸¹

Barriers relative to the communicator.---The position of the communicator in the pyramidal hierarchy of a unified school district greatly influences how his messages are received by others. Many times employees develop mental sets or images of certain other employees within an organization. Therefore, when an employee receives a message from someone they have already prejudged, the employee may "jump to conclusions" prematurely. Rogers and Roethlisberger state, "The tendency to pre-judge motives is one of the greatest barriers to communication."⁸²

Because of the legal nature of their position, administrators in unified school districts may send messages which are received incorrectly by employees below them in the hierarchy. Culbertson discusses this type of communication when he writes of the administrator:

As a person in a position, he has legal powers which in the eyes of personnel can be used for or against them. Thus, he can bestow or not bestow tenure, transfer...

⁸¹Stuart Chase, Roads to Agreement (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 206.

⁸²Carl Rogers and F. J. Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication," Harvard Business Review, XXX (July, August, 1952), 47. (Hereinafter referred to as Rogers and Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication.")

the threat to personnel which derives from such power causes distortion and interruption in the flow of communication to the administrator.⁸³

High level administrators also are vulnerable to sending messages which may be received in a distorted state because of the different levels it must pass through on its way downward.

Other communication barriers, less subtle than those previously discussed, are the physical and emotional circumstances under which communication takes place. If the communication is constantly interrupted by the telephone calls, noise, or other people, serious communication barriers are erected. Savage states that the receiver will "feel that you view him as truly unimportant if you...engage in any other activity while he attempts to talk with you."⁸⁴

Carl Rogers addresses himself to the erection of emotional communication barriers and stresses the importance of being non-judgmental when initially listening to another person. He writes:

The tendency to react to any emotionally meaningful statement by forming an evaluation of it from our point of view is, I repeat, the major barrier to interpersonal communication.⁸⁵

The communicator may contribute to poor communication behavior by simply not listening. Although this is a relatively simple principle, poor listening techniques constitute

⁸³Harris, Behavior in Education, p. 264.

⁸⁴Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 376.

⁸⁵Rogers and Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication," p. 29.

a major communication barrier. Nichols and Stevens point out, "We listen at approximately a twenty-five percent level of efficiency."⁸⁶

A final communication barrier common to many communicators is their preoccupation with administrative or personal problems. The receiver will usually sense this preoccupation and may, therefore, feel he is infringing on the communicator's time. Savage suggests "One should postpone important interviews until...he can direct himself to the purpose of the interview."⁸⁷

Barriers relating to communicatees.---Communicatees are affected and subject to many of the same barriers that concern communicators. Culbertson refers to "status anxiety" as a common cause of communicatees' misinterpreting messages. He cites the following example:

If a principal asks a teacher who is greatly concerned about her tenure to drop by the office for a conference, without specifying the purpose, she may imagine very negative things about the proposed conference.⁸⁸

As in the case of the communicator, the mental and physical attitude of the communicatee affects the quality of communication. If a teacher is tired at the end of a day, for example, she may not be receptive to a new idea at a faculty meeting.

⁸⁶ Ralph G. Nichols and Leonard A. Stevens, Are You Listening? (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1957), p. ix.

⁸⁷ Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 383.

⁸⁸ Harris, Behavior in Education, p. 266.

Wisely cites numerous barriers to communication which involve the communicatee. Barriers are created when the communicatee is "unwilling to speak freely and honestly; when he places himself on a pedestal; when he identifies with his group too strongly; acts inconsistently with promises; and interprets silence as agreement."⁸⁹

Sayles and Strauss summarize their findings regarding communication barriers with a diagram which appears in Figure 5 on page 43.⁹⁰

This section of the study has concerned itself with identifying barriers to optimum internal communication. However, mere identification of communication barriers is not sufficient. Culbertson states, "An administrator's understanding of communication barriers is very important, but understanding is not enough."⁹¹ The next section of this chapter concentrates on identifying desirable elements of internal communication that may be incorporated into a viable model.

Desirable Elements of Internal Communication

This section of the study is concerned with the identification and listing of desirable elements of internal communication. This portion of the study is not concerned with

⁸⁹Voss, Organizational Communications, p. 230.

⁹⁰Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 256.

⁹¹Harris, Behavior in Education, p. 266.

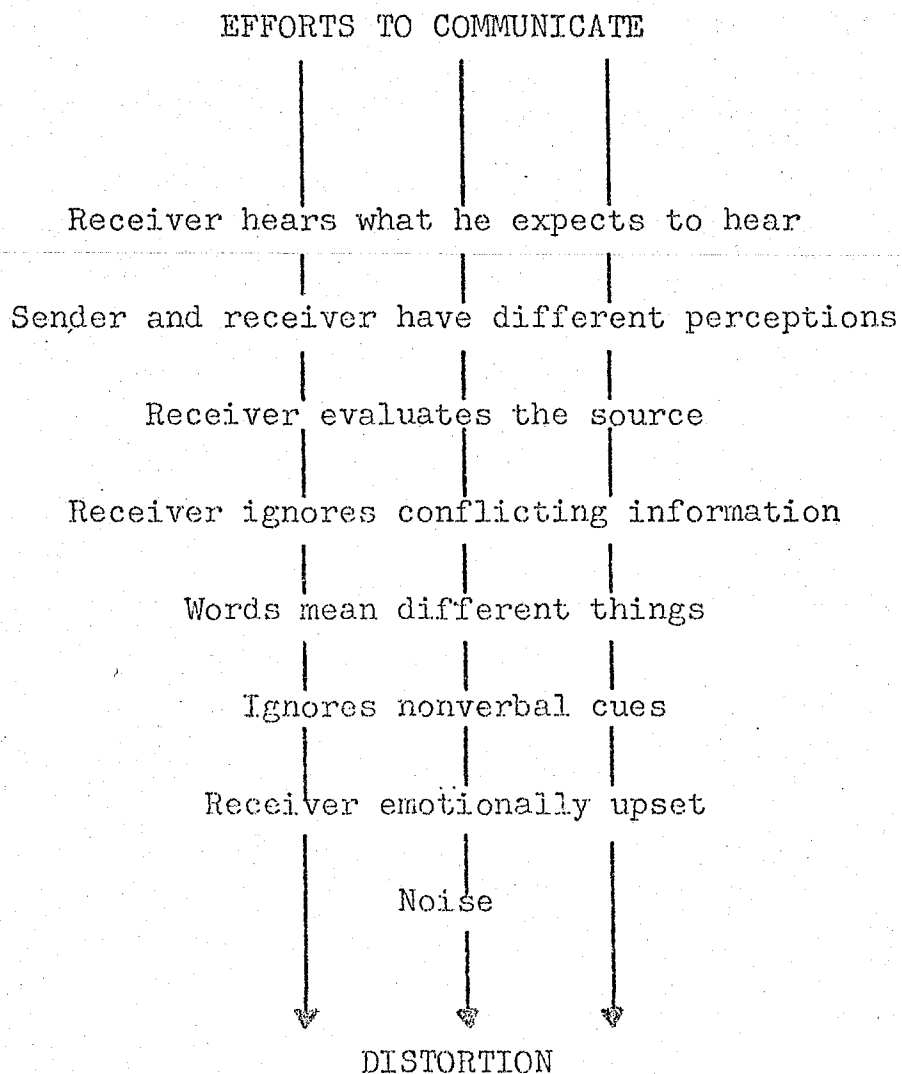


Fig. 5--Barriers to successful communication (from Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations)

the establishing of priorities or determining the relative importance of each element identified.

The elements identified will be organized into five categories which coincide with the previous review of the research. The categories are:

1. Desirable elements of decision making
2. Desirable elements of upward communication
3. Desirable elements of downward communication
4. Desirable elements of horizontal communication
5. Desirable elements of feedback

In cases where the item was previously discussed or identified in this study, footnotes will not be used; any new elements introduced will be formally documented.

Desirable elements of communication in decision making

1. Since decision making is a process, communication channels must be established through which this process may occur.
2. Before a decision can be made, the organization must recognize, define, and limit the problem.
3. It is desirable to include all personnel who are to be affected in the decision making process.
4. The decisions reached should be subject to continuous evaluation.
5. Channels and procedures should be established for making decisions in times of emergencies and in delicate personnel matters. All personnel within a school district should be aware that these channels exist.

Desirable elements of upward communication

1. All employees in a unified school district must have access to, and be aware of, formal channels which permit them to communicate with their superiors.

2. Top level administrators should participate in social affairs that bring them into contact with subordinates.
3. People at the higher levels of a school district's hierarchy should actively solicit and encourage communication from lower echelons.
4. When administrators receive communications directed upward, it is desirable that they be acknowledged and dealt with promptly.
5. It is desirable that channels be developed for upwards communication that occasionally "bypass"⁹² the normal and most frequently used channels. (Savage warns this should be done infrequently.)⁹³
6. Administrators should be able to receive upward communications with a non-judgmental attitude initially.
7. Formal face-to-face communication between administrator and subordinate should be uninterrupted and free of distractions.

Desirable elements of downward communication

1. Newsletters, bulletins, and memoranda should be frequently supplemented with face-to-face individual and group meetings and personal contacts.
2. A plan to deal with rumor and distortion in downward communication is desirable.⁹⁴
3. Administrators should follow up on their written communications personally to prevent distortions.
4. Downward communication should be used to commend, support, and boost the morale of employees.
5. Optimum downward communication advises employees what is expected and required of them.

⁹²Sayles and Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 366.

⁹³Savage, Relations in Educational Administration, p. 314.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 317.

6. When communicating downward, it is best to use language appropriate to the group receiving the message.
7. When communicating downward, it is desirable that the administrator be aware of anxiety that his status may produce.

Desirable elements of horizontal communication

1. When horizontal communications break down, it is sometimes desirable to appoint an impartial qualified party to unravel internal communication.⁹⁵
2. Face-to-face communication is the most desirable form of horizontal communication.
3. It is desirable that employees develop loyalties to their own group (horizontal), but also accurately perceive their place in the total organization.
4. Because of the close working conditions that employees experience at the horizontal level, it is desirable that inservice programs occasionally deal with improving interpersonal relationship techniques.

Desirable elements of feedback

1. It is desirable that employees receive positive feedback when a job is done well. This will encourage further good performance.
2. When feedback is necessary, it is best to attempt to get it at a face-to-face level within an organization. This is the most desirable type of feedback.
3. Feedback is vital to school district success. Therefore it is important that each employee is "programmed" into some type of accurate feedback
4. Formal and informal evaluation is a desirable and professional means of employees obtaining feedback in school districts.

The preceding list of desirable elements of internal communication which are particularly relevant to unified

⁹⁵ Monroe K. Rowland presents a formula to cut red tape and unravel communication in the American School Board Journal, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August, 1968).

school districts appears in a condensed version in Table 2 on page 48.

The next section of this chapter deals with the nature and uses of a model which will eventually incorporate many of the desirable elements identified.

Nature and Functions of Models

Earlier in this chapter the lack of development of concise theories in the fields of educational administration and human communications was pointed out. However, the research has revealed that the last two decades have seen a rise in theory development in both communication and educational administration. Previous to the development of these theoretical bases, both administration and communication were dependent on purely practical approaches to problem solving. Now that theoretical frameworks have begun to emerge in the two disciplines, it is important that serious students begin to understand and work with models. Knezevich states,

Models are a bridge between the purely abstract and the practical..Model building represents one way of spanning the differences that presently exist between the theoretical orientation of professors of educational administration and the everyday concerns of practicing administrators.⁹⁶

Nature of models

Numerous attempts have been made to classify communication models, but Smith states, "There are no universally

⁹⁶Knezevich, Public Education, p. 540.

TABLE 2:

DESIRABLE ELEMENTS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Category				
Decision Making	Upwards Communication	Downwards Communication	Horizontal Communication	Feedback
1. Establish channels for process.	1. Publicize available upward channels to all employees.	1. Sole reliance shouldn't be on written communications--supplement with face to face conferences and meetings.	1. Use impartial third party to mediate group disputes.	1. Recognize good employee performance.
2. Recognize, define, and limit the problem.	2. Administrator should show he is a "human being"--attend social functions.	2. Develop a plan to deal with rumor and distortion.	2. Face to face communication is most desirable at this level.	2. Attempt to get feedback at a face to face level.
3. Include all personnel affected in the decision making process.	3. Administrators should actively solicit communication from the staff.	3. Follow up written communication personally.	3. Employer should develop group loyalty.	3. Each employee should receive feedback on his performance.
4. Evaluate the decision continually.	4. Acknowledge and act on a communication received promptly.	4. Praise and encourage employees through downward communication.	4. Employee should see his role in relation to the total district.	4. Formal and informal evaluation is a desirable form of feedback.
5. Establish channels for emergency and some personnel decisions.	5. Develop "bypass" channels (only for rare use).	5. Inform each employee what is expected and required.	5. Inservice workshops on interpersonal relations.	
6. Communicate the decision in writing.	6. Administrators should be non-judgmental when receiving initial ideas from subordinates.	6. Use appropriate words.		
	7. Face to face communication should be free of interruptions and distractions.	7. Administrator must be aware of "status anxiety."		

accepted categories."⁹⁷ He groups models into four classes: (1) information processing model; (2) intrapersonal communication model; (3) interprersonal communication model; and (4) group or mass communication model. Bross suggests models may be classified as "physical, verbal, symbolic, and mathematical."⁹⁸

This study presents a symbolic-diagrammatic model and the review of the literature concentrates on this task. Barnlund supports the use of a symbolic model when dealing with the complex subject of human communication. He writes,

It may become possible for future investigators to create mathematical models of human communication rivaling those of the physical scientists, but in the absence of sufficiently discrete variables and with current complications in measurement of these variables, this hope seems premature. The diagrammatic model seems best suited to accommodating our current level of knowledge about communication and, at the same time, providing an improved mode of conceptualizing over that secured through verbal statements alone.⁹⁹

Examples of five diagrammatic symbolic communication models appear in Appendix A of this study.

Shapes of models

What shape should a communication model take? This question is widely discussed in the literature. Earlier in this chapter Schramm's model was used to illustrate (Fig. 1) the circular nature of the communication process, while

⁹⁷Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior, p. 30.

⁹⁸Irwin Bross, Design for Decision (New York: McMillan and Company, 1953), pp. 161-182.

⁹⁹Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 85.

Knezevich (Fig. 2) suggests the process is linear in nature. Frank E. X. Dance, former president of the National Society for the Study of Communication, advances another viewpoint concerning the shape of communication models. Dance begins by stating, "Most people, if given the choice between describing the communication process as linear or as circular, would opt in favor of circularity."¹⁰⁰ However, he points out the weakness of the circular model when he writes,

The main shortcoming of this circular model is that if accurately understood, it also suggests that communication comes back, full circle, to exactly the same point from which it started. This part of the circular analogy is manifestly erroneous and could be damaging in increasing our understanding of the communication process and in predicting our constraints for the communicative event.¹⁰¹

In turning his attention to the linear model, Dance states, "The linear image betrays reality in not providing for a modification of communicative behavior in the future based upon communicative success or shortcomings in the past."¹⁰²

What form may then be used by model builders in the area of human communication? Dance suggests a helix, a spiral that looks like a coiled ladder, be used to depict the communication process. Figure 6 on page 51 illustrates a helical model. Dance defends the use of this geometric form by stating,

¹⁰⁰Dance, Human Communications, p. 294.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

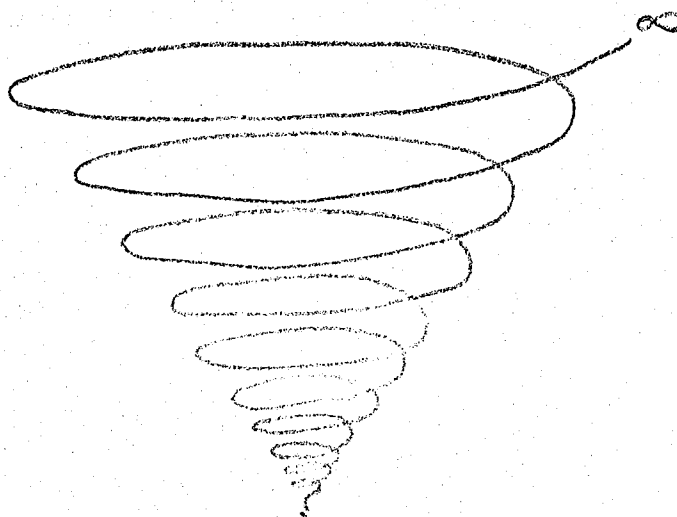


Fig. 6--A helical spiral as a representation of human communication (from Dance, Human Communication)

The helix combines the desirable features of the straight line and of the circle while avoiding the weakness of either. In addition, the helix presents a rather fascinating variety of possibilities for representing pathologies of communication...at any and all times, the helix gives geometrical testimony to the concept that communication while moving forward is at the same moment coming back on itself by its past behavior, for the coming curve of the helix is fundamentally affected from which it emerges...the communication process, like the helix is constantly moving forward and yet is always to some degree dependent on the past...the helical communication model offers a flexible and useful geometric image for considering the communication process.¹⁰³

In essence Dance is arguing that because communication is a complex process, it should have a similarly complex geometric form as its structure in a model.

Simplicity of models

The preceding passage may suggest that if a communication model is to be effective, it must be complex, and therefore difficult to understand. This study contends that if a model is to be viable, it must be easily understood. Knezevich states, "A model is a representation of reality, that is, a simplified version of the real world containing only those aspects which are important to better understanding or controlling it."¹⁰⁴ He adds, "It is imperative that models be understood by others."¹⁰⁵ Baunol further supports the idea that a model should be simple when he writes, "The model should be a sufficiently simple version of the facts

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 295-96.

¹⁰⁴Knezevich, Public Education, p. 525.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 535.

to permit systematic manipulation and analysis."¹⁰⁶ A model then is a reproduction of some part of the real world, which only needs to contain the features essential to control or understand this particular facet of reality.

Advantages of models

Bross¹⁰⁷ summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of models. The advantages follow:

1. Models provide a frame of reference for consideration of a problem.
2. Science has used models successfully to develop successful predicting systems.
3. Models bring into the open the problem of abstraction.
4. Models presented in symbolic language have the advantage of the manipulative faculty of that language.

Barnlund adds another advantage of a model, "the ease with which it handles a multitude of variables and relates their effects on each in highly complicated ways."¹⁰⁸

Disadvantages of models

Bross¹⁰⁹ also discusses the drawbacks of models. He points out the following disadvantages:

¹⁰⁶William J. Baumol, Economic Theory and Operations Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 393.

¹⁰⁷Campbell and Helper, Dimensions in Communications, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁸Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 86.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

1. The model is subject to the usual dangers inherent in abstraction.
2. There is no guarantee that the time and effort in constructing the model will pay dividends.¹¹⁰
3. The symbolic language is also subject to limitations.
4. There is the danger that a scientist may become so devoted to a model, he may insist that his model is the real world.

Functions of models

Models have various functions. They may be used to describe, to predict, to control, or to understand a process or an event. Deutsch indicates that models have four functions which they can serve. These functions are (1) organizing, (2) heuristic, (3) predictive, and (4) measuring functions.¹¹¹

Knezevich states that the function of a model in educational administration is to "strip away the minutiae and 'administrivia'...to facilitate a better understanding."¹¹² No one model will accomplish the previous objective, but we need a variety of different types of models.

Communication models, according to Knezevich, should function to "stress how an organization secures information, how the communication (formal and informal) reaches various

¹¹⁰ Knezevich disagrees with Bross and states that "poor and inaccurate models are better than none, for a field lacking in models is still dependent on disconnected and purely empirical observations," (Public Education, p. 529).

¹¹¹ Knezevich, Public Education, p. 528.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 529.

parts, or what is done with the data."¹¹³

Sereno and Mortensen capture the function of a model in concise terms when they write, models "are capable of reducing a complex event to a more manageable, abstract, and symbolic form."¹¹⁴

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature in the area of internal communication as it relates to organizations in general and school districts in particular. Desirable elements of internal communication were identified and the nature and functions of models explored. Chapter III deals with the procedures used in the creation of a model to elicit optimum internal communications in unified school districts.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 534.

¹¹⁴ Sereno and Mortensen, Communication Theory, p. 56.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The procedures employed in conducting this study are presented in detail in this chapter. These procedural steps follow: (1) a review of the relevant literature to identify desirable elements of internal communication; (2) the construction of an interview instrument to ascertain if employees of unified school districts perceive the communication elements identified in the literature as desirable, and to test the assumptions of this study; (3) the selection of the sample; (4) the administration of the interview; (5) the tabulation and treatment of the data; and (6) the creation of a model to elicit optimum internal communication in unified school districts.

Review of the Related Literature

A review of the related literature was made to determine what has been written about internal communication in business and educational organizations. Characteristics of communication were discussed and a special section was devoted to communications within organizations. Desirable elements of internal communication in unified school districts were identified and presented in tabular form (Table No. 2). These data are presented in Chapter II.

Construction of the Interview Instrument

The interview was the principal instrument used for collecting data for this study. Kerlinger states that the structured interview is a "powerful tool of behavioral research."¹ He goes on to point out,

The self-administered questionnaire has been used too much, especially in educational research, and the structured interview too little. The success of the interview in sociology and psychology should encourage educational researchers to master its intricacies and to use it where it is clearly appropriate.²

Van Dalen agrees with Kerlinger when he states, "Many people are more willing to communicate orally than in writing and, therefore, will provide data more readily and fully in an interview than on a questionnaire."³

The interview instrument which can be found in Appendix B is divided into five parts. Part one explains the purpose of the interview, and part two gathers relevant demographic data about the subject. The third part of the instrument concentrates on having school district employees validate desirable elements of internal communication that are identified in the literature. Part four is concerned with testing the assumptions of this study made in Chapter I. Part five solicits an unstructured response regarding internal communication in unified school districts. The next five sub-sections

¹Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 476.

²Ibid.

³Debald B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 306.

explain in detail the structure of the interview instrument.

Explanation of the purpose.---The interview instrument used is primarily a structured one and therefore it is important that the explanation of its purpose to interviewees be standardized. Gordon states, "The purpose of the interview should be explained in terms the respondent can understand and in a manner which will account for all the types of questions which are going to be asked."⁴

Demographic information.---This is information that is needed to describe the sample. An adequate description of the sample is necessary if proper inferences are to be drawn from the study, and demographic information is an important concern if the study is to have external validity.

Validation of desirable elements.---These questions are vital to the study for they are asking the respondents if they concur with elements of internal communication that the literature identified as desirable. Each desirable element is presented to the respondent and he is asked to make a judgment and to place each element into one of four possible responses. The categories are (1) essential; (2) desirable; (3) no opinion; and (4) unimportant.

Validation of assumptions.---This part of the interview instrument enables the researcher to test the assumptions made on page six of this study.

⁴Raymond L. Gordon, Interviewing, Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1969), p. 167.

Unstructured response.--This section of the interview takes advantage of one of the major strong points of the interview as a research tool, i.e. its ability to solicit from the respondents their thoughts in a creative and random manner. It is desirable to have this part appear at the end of the interview instrument so that the subject may consider and apply any information he might have acquired in the previous sections.

Validation of the Interview Instrument

This writer's dissertation committee which consisted of two former superintendents of school districts, a pupil personnel services director of a unified district, an expert in communication, and an expert in linguistics served as a jury to insure that the instrument had adequate content validity. Aspects considered included the clarity, relevance, and phrasing of the questions.

Selection of the Sample

The primary purpose of this study was to develop an optimum model for internal communications in unified school districts. The model presented in this dissertation is based on a comprehensive study of relevant literature. The findings of the literature were incorporated into an interview instrument and presented to a sample of 41 employees in six unified school districts in Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties in California. The size and scope of the sample population need not be as great in model development as in other descriptive

studies because this model is not intended to describe what is, but rather what should be.

Selection of the districts.---Unified school districts selected for this study range in size from 1,200 average daily attendance to 12,000 average daily attendance. The rationale for using districts of this size is that the majority of California's 257 unified school districts fall into this range.⁵ A list of the districts used in the study appears in Appendix C.

Selection of the subjects.---The distribution of the 41 subjects interviewed follows: (1) six superintendents, (2) five central office administrators, (3) twelve building level administrators, (4) twelve members of the certificated staff, and (5) six secretaries.

All of the subjects, with the exception of the superintendents, were selected on a random basis. The superintendent, one central office administrator, two building level administrators, two teachers, and one secretary were selected from each district. One district did not have a central office administrator and in that district six instead of seven interviews were administered.

The Administration of the Interview

Prior to beginning the actual interviews, the researcher

⁵For a detailed tabulation of unified school districts by size see California Teachers Association, Research Bulletin---Class Size in California School Districts, 1971-1972. Bulletin No. 265, May, 1972.

pilot tested the instrument by interviewing five subjects. The subjects selected for this trial included both administrators, teachers, and secretaries.

Six area superintendents were contacted via letter (see Appendix C). The letter discussed the nature of the study and requested the superintendent's cooperation and participation in the study. Each superintendent contacted agreed to participate and also pledged his support in allowing six of his district's employees to be randomly selected and to be interviewed. The interviewer was introduced to the subject via a memo which was prepared by the researcher and signed by the superintendent. Appendix C contains a copy of this introductory memo.

All employees selected for interviewing readily cooperated and the forty-one interviews were completed in twenty-eight days. At the conclusion of the interviews each superintendent was sent a letter of appreciation (see Appendix C) thanking him for his excellent cooperation.

Tabulation and Treatment of the Data

The findings of this study appear in Chapter IV. This section deals with the procedures used to analyze and treat the data gathered by employing the interview instrument. The sub-sections which follow are (1) treatment of sample information; (2) validation of desirable elements of internal communication; (3) testing of the assumptions; and (4) reporting the unstructured responses.

Treatment of demographic information.---This information

is presented in tabular form in Chapter IV. Responses are analyzed in narrative form when data that may be considered unusual is included.

Validation of desirable elements of internal communication.---This section is critical to the study, for it will help insure that the elements included in the final model are recognized as desirable by both researchers and practitioners of internal communication.

The data gathered from part III of the interview schedule, Validation of Desirable Elements of Internal Communication, were treated in two ways; percentage tables and a one-way analysis of variance.

Percentage tables.---Table 4 in Chapter IV includes a percentage analysis of each of the questions asked in part III of the interview schedule. The percentages of response to each question (essential, desirable, no opinion, and unimportant) are recorded in this table. An element that receives 75% of its responses in the essential and/or desirable category will be considered for possible inclusion into the final model.

One-way analysis of variance.---The data gathered from part III of the interview schedule were also subjected to a one-way analysis of variance. The rationale for using this statistical technique is that its application reveals if there are significant differences between the ways the five groups interviewed perceived the desirable elements of internal

communication. Such information is vital to the researcher who plans to construct a model. For example, if a significant number of the teachers identify face-to-face communication as essential, while the superintendents feel this element is not significant, the model builder must consider this information if his product is to be viable.

The following statistical procedure was used to determine if significant differences existed between the groups:

1. Null Hypothesis: H_0 : There is no significant difference in the way superintendents, central office administrators, building level administrators, teachers and secretaries classify elements of internal communication.
2. Alternate Hypothesis: H_1 : There is a significant difference in the way the five groups classify elements of internal communication.
3. Statistical Test: Since five independent groups are under study, a test for K independent samples is called for. Since the scores may be ranked to represent ordinal measurement, the Kruskal-Wallis test⁶ is appropriate.
4. Significance Level: $\text{ALPHA} = .05$.
5. Sampling Distribution: $K=5$, unequal N's of 6, 5 and 12. (2 groups with N's of 12, 2 groups with N's of 6, and 1 group with an N of 5.) In ranking group means are used.
6. $Df = K-1 = 4$.
7. Rejection Region: (The statistic used in the Kruskal-Wallis test and defined by formula below.) The region of rejection consists of all values of H which are so large that the probability associated with their occurrence under H_0 is equal to or less than .05. $H \geq (9.49)$

⁶For a detailed explanation of Kruskal-Wallis test see Sidney Seigel, Non-Parametric Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), pp. 184-194.

The formula for the Kruskal-Wallis test is:

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{R_j^2}{n_j} - 3(N+1)$$

Where K = number of samples

n_j = number of cases in j th sample

$N = \sum n_j$; the number of cases in all samples combined

R_j = sum of ranks in j th sample

$\sum_{j=1}^k$ directs one to sum over the k samples

The results of this analysis appear in Chapter IV.

Testing the assumptions.---The assumptions which are stated on pages six and seven of this study are the concern of part IV of the interview schedule. The validation of these assumptions are not critical to this study, since they do not pertain directly to the model. However, it is in the interest of sound research design that these assumptions be tested in an effort to lend additional support to the importance of building a model to elicit optimum internal communications. The responses to questions one through three in part IV were analyzed with separate percentage tables which indicate the percentage of responses made by each of the five groups interviewed. When the total percentage was 50% or more, the assumption was considered valid since a majority of the respondents concurred with the assumptions.

The original intent was to table the data gathered from question number four in part IV. Since the responses lack diversity, there is no point in tabling, and the results are

simply reported in narrative form.

Reporting the unstructured responses.---Relevant non-structured responses are presented in Chapter IV. This section proved to be a most valuable part of the study as it allowed the researcher to explore the subject of internal communication in depth with employees in unified school districts.

The Creation of the Model

The previous sub-sections of this chapter have related the procedures used to determine desirable elements of internal communications which may be included in a model. The result of these procedures are reported in Chapter IV. The model, along with a detailed explanation of its properties, is presented in Chapter V.

Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail the procedures used in this study. The major steps in this procedure were: (1) a review of the relevant literature to identify desirable elements of internal communication; (2) the construction of an interview instrument to ascertain if employees of unified school districts perceive the communication elements identified in the literature as desirable, and to test the assumptions of this study; (3) the selection of the sample; (4) the administration of the interview; (5) the tabulation and treatment of the data; and (6) the creation of a model to elicit optimum internal communications in unified school districts.

Chapter IV will report the findings of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the investigation that were gathered through the interview instrument are presented in this chapter. The chapter is organized into five sections: (1) analysis of sample information; (2) analysis of desirable elements of internal communication; (3) testing the assumptions; (4) reporting the unstructured responses; and (5) a summary of the findings.

Analysis of Sample Information

Part I of the interview instrument consisted of a standardized explanation of the purpose of the study and did not solicit any responses from the subject. The information gathered from part II of the interview instrument is presented in Table 3. The purpose of this section was to describe the sample of people who were interviewed for the study.

The analysis of the data reveals that the mean number of years each employee group interviewed worked in their present school district is 5.23. The implication of this finding is that the observations and assessments of internal communication made by the employees interviewed are based on a considerable amount of professional experience.

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE INFORMATION FOR SIX
SELECTED UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS AS
OBTAINED BY THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Position	Number Interviewed	Mean No. of Years in Position	Mean No. of Years in District
Superintendent	6	4.17	4.17
Central Office Administrator	5	5.10	5.10
Building Level	12	4.35	6.92
Certificated Staff (Teachers)	12	3.13	3.46
Secretaries	6	5.00	6.50
Total	41	21.75	26.15
Mean	-	4.35	5.23

Average Daily Attendance of Districts:

Range --- 1,250-11,800

Mean --- 6,575

Total Number of Employees of Districts:

Range --- 86-857

Mean --- 453

Also reported in Table 3 is the average daily attendance of pupils in the districts which were selected indicating that the sample falls into the same range as the majority of California's 257 unified school districts. Therefore, the model developed in this study may have implications for the majority of California's unified school districts.

Analyses of Desirable Elements of Internal Communication

The data gathered from part III of the interview instrument were analyzed in two ways; percentage tables and a one-way analysis of variance.

Percentage tables.---The number and percentage of interviewees and their categorization of each item in part III of the instrument are indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 4.

VALIDATIONS OF DESIRABLE ELEMENTS
OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

PERCENTAGE* ANALYSIS OF ITEMS IN PART III
OF THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT (N=41)

Item	Essential		Desirable		No Opinion		Unimportant	
	No. Re- sponding	% Re- sponding	No.	% Re- sponding	No.	% Re- sponding	No.	% Re- sponding
A1	12	.29	21	.51	3	.07	5	.12
2	30	.73	10	.25	0	0	1	.02
3	23	.56	18	.44	0	0	0	0
4	34	.83	6	.15	1	.02	0	0
5	6	.15	29	.71	2	.05	4	.09
B1	28	.68	12	.29	1	.02	0	0
2	13	.32	23	.56	1	.02	4	.09
3	28	.68	13	.32	0	0	0	0
4	25	.61	16	.39	0	0	0	0
5	9	.22	24	.59	3	.07	5	.12
6	11	.27	27	.66	2	.05	1	.02
7	20	.49	20	.49	0	0	1	.02
C1	19	.46	18	.44	2	.05	2	.05
2	20	.49	18	.44	1	.02	2	.05
3	10	.25	28	.68	0	0	3	.07
4	26	.63	15	.37	0	0	0	0
5	37	.90	4	.09	0	0	0	0
6	20	.49	21	.51	0	0	0	0
7	28	.68	13	.32	0	0	0	0
D1	35	.85	6	.15	0	0	0	0
2	30	.73	10	.25	1	.02	0	0
3	22	.53	17	.42	1	.02	1	.02
4	32	.78	7	.17	1	.02	1	.02
5	15	.37	26	.63	0	0	0	0
6	24	.59	17	.42	0	0	0	0
E1	24	.59	17	.42	0	0	0	0
2	19	.46	22	.53	0	0	0	0
3	28	.68	13	.32	0	0	0	0
4	22	.53	19	.46	0	0	0	0

*Percentages are rounded to two decimal places. This accounts for the failure of some items to total 100%.

Prior to conducting the interviews, it was established

that an item would have to be placed in the essential or desirable category by 75 per cent of the respondents to be considered for possible inclusion in the final model. All items received the necessary 75 per cent in these categories. Item A1 questioned using an impartial third party in horizontal level disputes and received the lowest percentage (80 per cent) in the categories essential and desirable. Fourteen items received a full 100 per cent in the essential and desirable categories. Of these, item C5, which asked about the importance of informing each employee of what is required and expected of him, was considered the most essential, with 37 out of 41 respondents, or 90 per cent, placing this in the first category. The summary of the data presented in Table 4 indicates that practitioners in unified school districts from five groups (1) superintendents; (2) central office administrators; (3) building level administrators; (4) certificated staff; and (5) secretaries agreed with the findings of the review of the literature which were presented in Chapter II. These desirable elements of internal communication which were originally identified by experts in the fields of communication and school administration are now also confirmed as desirable by employees randomly chosen in selected unified school districts. The results of the one-way analysis of variance will be discussed in the next section.

One-way analysis of variance.---In Tables 5 through 9 are presented the results of the Kruskal-Wallis one-way

analysis of variance which was performed on the data gathered in part III of the interview instrument. The purpose of this procedure was to determine if the five groups interviewed differed significantly in their perceptions of the desirable elements of communication.

TABLE 5

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OF FIVE GROUPS PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE
ELEMENTS OF HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION

Items from Interview Instrument	Ranks				
	Superin- tendents	Central Office Admins.	Build. Level Admins.	Certi- ficated Staff	Secre- taries
A1	8.5	1	10.5	10.5	5.5
A2	16	24.5	21	17.5	8.5
A3	13	15	17.5	21	7
A4	21	21	21	21	5.5
A5	4	4	13	13	3
Sum of Ranks	62.5	65.5	83	83	29.5

$$\text{Critical Region} = H \geq (9.49)$$

$$H = 4.86$$

A critical region of 9.49^1 was established and any value of H , the statistic used in the Kruskal-Wallis test, which was equal to or greater than 9.49 would be considered to be significant. For computation purposes each of the five areas (horizontal, downward, upward, decision making and feedback) of communication listed in part III of the interview instrument were subjected, independent of each other, to the one-way analysis of variance.

¹Sidney Seigel, *Non-Parametric Statistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), p. 249.

TABLE 6

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OF FIVE GROUPS PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE
ELEMENTS OF UPWARDS COMMUNICATION

Items from Interview Instrument	Rank				
	Superin- tendents	Central Office Admins.	Build. Level Admins.	Certi- ficated Staff	Secre- taries
B1	27	17.5	30	27	32
B2	11	5.5	7.5	15	2
B3	34	34	34	19.5	11
B4	27	24	22	22	27
B5	11	14	3	7.5	1
B6	16	17.5	4	5.5	11
B7	19.5	31	22	27	11
Sum of Ranks	145.5	143.5	122.5	123.5	95

$$\text{Critical Region} = H \geq (9.49)$$

$$H = 3.80$$

TABLE 7

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OF FIVE GROUPS PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE
ELEMENTS OF DOWNWARDS COMMUNICATION

Items from Interview Instrument	Rank				
	Superin- tendents	Central Office Admins.	Build. Level Admins.	Certi- ficated Staff	Secre- taries
C1	13	16.5	22.5	1	3.5
C2	30	22.5	10.5	10.5	13
C3	3.5	9	6.5	6.5	3.5
C4	22.5	16.5	33.5	22.5	13
C5	30	16.5	35	33.5	30
C6	8	27	22.5	3.5	22.5
C7	22.5	16.5	30	22.5	30
Sum of Ranks	129.5	124.5	160.5	100	115.5

$$\text{Critical Region} = H \geq (9.49)$$

$$H = 3.39$$

TABLE 8

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OF FIVE GROUPS PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE
ELEMENTS OF DECISION MAKING
IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Items from Interview Instrument	Rank				
	Superin- tendents	Central Office Admins.	Build. Level Admins.	Certi- ficated Staff	Secre- taries
D1	23.5	8.5	28	23.5	23.5
D2	23.5	14	18.5	6	23.5
D3	6	29.5	15	16	1.5
D4	23.5	29.5	23.5	18.5	3
D5	4	11.5	11.5	6	1.5
D6	17	8.5	11.5	23.5	11.5
Sum of Ranks	97.5	101.5	108	93.5	64.5

Critical Region = $H_{.05}^{(5, 10)} (9.49)$
 $H = 2.40$

TABLE 9

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OF FIVE GROUPS PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE
ELEMENTS OF FEEDBACK IN COMMUNICATION

Items from Interview Instrument	Rank				
	Superin- tendents	Central Office Admins.	Build. Level Admins.	Certi- ficated Staff	Secre- taries
E1	14.5	17.5	2	7	14.5
E2	4	12	9.5	9.5	1
E3	19.5	17.5	19.5	9.5	4
E4	14.5	6	14.5	9.5	4
Sum of Ranks	52.5	53	45.5	35.5	23.5

Critical Region = $H_{.05}^{(4, 10)} (9.49)$
 $H = 4.55$

The results of this statistical procedure revealed that the five groups interviewed did not differ significantly, at the .05 level, in their perceptions of the desirable elements of internal communication. Applying the implications of this finding to the construction of a model indicates that all elements which are included in the final model may be assigned approximately equal weight in the model design.

Testing the Assumptions

The assumptions stated in Chapter I were tested in part IV of the interview instrument. Testing these assumptions is not critical to the task of developing a model, but they are important in that they may lend additional information and support to the final model. The size of the sample interviewed was selected primarily to validate desirable elements of internal communication for possible inclusion into a model. A much larger random sample would be necessary if any of the conclusions relative to the assumptions were to have external validity. The next four sub-sections report the results of this portion of the investigation.

District employees' rating of internal communication.---

The results of testing the first assumption "that internal communications in unified school districts are generally poor" are presented in Table 10. The findings indicate that 24 per cent of the employees interviewed felt that internal communications in their district were weak or poor. This falls short of the previously established 50 per cent level.

which was considered necessary to validate the assumption. Fifteen per cent of the employees interviewed thought internal communications were excellent. The majority of the districts' employees, 61 per cent, reported they perceived internal communications as adequate.

TABLE 10

FIVE GROUPS RATINGS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
WITHIN THEIR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS (N=41)

Rating	Groups											
	Superin- tendents		Central Office Admins.		Build. Level Admins.		Certi- ficated Staff		Secre- taries		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Excellent	2	.05	1	.02	1	.02	1	.02	1	.02	6	.15
Adequate	4	.10	4	.10	7	.17	6	.14	4	.10	25	.61
Weak	0	0	0	0	2	.05	0	0	1	.02	3	.07
Poor	0	0	0	0	2	.05	5	.12	0	0	7	.17

Employee feelings when poor communications occur.---The second assumption was "that employees in unified school districts are often frustrated when poor internal communication occurs." This assumption was tested by question three in part IV of the interview instrument. The results appear in Table 11.

Seventy-nine per cent of the employees interviewed felt frustrated when incidents of poor internal communication occurred. These results support the second assumption since 50 per cent was the predetermined level needed for validation. The implication of this finding would support the need for school personnel to strive for improved internal communication.

TABLE 11

FIVE GROUPS RATINGS OF THEIR FEELINGS WHEN INCIDENTS
OF POOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION OCCURS
IN SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS (N=41)

Response	Groups											
	Superin- tendents		Central Office Admins.		Build. Level Admins.		ficated Staff		Secre- taries		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under- standing	1	.02	3	.07	2	.05	2	.05	1	.02	9	.21
Don't Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frus- trated	5	.12	2	.05	10	.25	10	.25	5	.12	32	.79

The existence of a communication plan.---The third assumption was that "good internal communication does not just happen, but must be planned." Implicit in this assumption is that when communication is rated as poor, there is usually the absence of such a plan. Questions one and two in part IV of the interview instrument were designed to test this assumption on the sample chosen. The data gathered from this portion of the instrument are reported in narrative form:

1. Five, or 50 per cent, of the employees who rated communication as poor or weak also reported the absence of a system or plan for communication within their districts.
2. Five, or 50 per cent, of the employees who rated communication poor or weak stated there was a plan for communicating within their school districts.
3. Five per cent of the total sample, reported that although there was no plan for communication, they rated internal communication as adequate.

The findings indicate, for the sample interviewed, poor communication usually indicates the lack of the existence of

a plan for internal communication. Therefore, assumptions three and four may be considered valid since they received the predetermined 50 per cent level of support. However, it is important to restate that these results should not be generalized to a population other than the sample interviewed.

Assignment of primary responsibility for establishing channels for internal communication.---The final assumption to be tested by the interview instrument was "that the superintendent is primarily responsible for the quality of internal communication in a unified school district." The results of this question supported the assumption by naming the superintendent in 32, or 78 per cent, of the responses. Other responses listed by number and percentage answering were as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Principals | --- 3 or 7% |
| 2. Assistant Superintendent | --- 2 or 5% |
| 3. No Opinion | --- 2 or 5% |
| 4. Local C. T. A. | --- 1 or 2% |
| 5. Superintendent's Secretary | --- 1 or 2% |

The implication of this finding indicates that any model or plan for internal communication that is developed should be the superintendent's responsibility and should be monitored by his office.

Reporting the Unstructured Responses

Part V of the interview instrument solicited unstructured responses from the interviewee regarding unique approaches

to internal communications and asked for suggestions to improve communication within their school districts. This section added considerably to the base of knowledge of the investigator and was a valuable part of the study. The findings of this portion of the instrument are organized into five sub-sections. Each sub-section lists the relevant observations of the groups interviewed. Responses which are preceded by an asterisk may be considered unique in that only one respondent reported using this approach.

Superintendent's unstructured responses.---Each superintendent interviewed expressed concern for the quality of internal communications in his district. What follows is a list of their attempts to communicate within their district, which may have relevance to model development in this area.

1. Regular meetings with the administrative staff which includes all building level and central office district administrators. These meetings are held on a monthly or semi-monthly basis.
2. Faculty-advisory committees which are elected by school facilities and meet with the superintendent approximately three times per year or when a crisis develops.
3. Superintendent's newsletter which is disseminated to all district employees on a regular, usually weekly, basis.
- *4. Principals are required to send the superintendent a "Look what's happening sheet" on a semi-monthly basis. This is a confidential professional memo to the superintendent which advises him of (1) progress toward district goals and objectives; (2) challenging situations; (3) special events coming up; and (4) professional and community service.

- *5. Teacher communication council which is composed of a teacher from each school and meets monthly with the superintendent. Agenda items are presented by anyone on the council. The group is chaired by the council member who placed the item on the agenda. Items are phoned in to the superintendent's secretary who makes up the agenda independently of the superintendent.
- 6. Superintendent's visibility which is a planned program of fact-to-face communication whereby the superintendent spends several days per month visiting the district schools.
- 7. Superintendent's monthly meeting with representatives of the district's classified employees.
- 8. Superintendent teaches 8 to 10 days per year to maintain contact with classroom and demonstrate his interest in education and students.

This section has reported what superintendents state they are doing in the area of internal school district communication. The eight points presented are not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather should be considered to be an accurate representation of relevant statements made in part V of the interview instrument. The observations of central office administrators are reported in the next subsection.

Central office administrators' unstructured responses.

The responses of central office administrators who were randomly selected for the study to part V of the interview instrument follow:

- 1. Central office administrator sends memoranda to employees recognizing their good performance.
- *2. Maintenance advisory committee which is composed of one teacher from each building and which recommends how priorities be assigned to district maintenance requests.

3. Central office administrator lunches at each school on a systematic basis to enhance face-to-face communication.
4. Central office administrators share all memoranda received and sent. These are numbered and placed in a binder for future reference.
5. Cafeteria employees meet three times a year with appropriate central office administrator.
6. Central office administrator responsible for instruction visits each classroom in the district at least twice a year.
7. Central office distributes to each employee semi-annually the following information via computer print-out: (1) salary placement; (2) accumulated sick leave; (3) total number of units; and (4) other miscellaneous personnel information.
8. Central office publishes, posts, and circulates information regarding new positions to each district employee.

Presented in this section has been a summary of the relevant unstructured responses of central office administrators when they were asked to identify what they feel their district does that may be unique in the area of internal communication. Reported in the next sub-section are the responses of building level administrators.

Building level administrators' unstructured responses.

The random sample of building level administrators interviewed included ten principals and two vice-principals. Following is a summary of their unstructured responses which have relevance to the building of an internal communications model.

1. Building level administrator opens his office one hour before classes begin to encourage communication with teachers.

2. Faculty meetings are all held before school begins to eliminate teacher absenteeism which normally occurred when meetings were held in the afternoon.
- *3. Building level administrator organized a poker group of the other district principals which meets monthly. Prior to the social activity, the group holds a brief business meeting to encourage horizontal communication.
4. Building level administrator records and distributes minutes of all faculty meetings.
- *5. Building level administrator maintains a faculty council with representatives chosen annually by the faculty. The function of this council is to bring problems from the staff to the administrator.
6. Building level administrator attempts to talk, face to face, with every staff member each day.
- *7. New building level administrators are formally assigned a "big brother" to help them adjust to their new assignment.
8. Every administrator in the district attends an administrative retreat at a rural camp for two to three days. District programs are explained and discussed.
- *9. Building level administrators' wives meet with the district superintendent who explains to the spouses the demands of their husband's job and answers the wives' questions.

The preceding section listed a summary of the unstructured responses of building level administrators. The next sub-section reports the responses of the certificated staff.

Certificated staff's unstructured responses.---Twelve classroom teachers made up the random sample of the certificated staff which was interviewed. The majority of the respondents dealt with the second part of the unstructured question which asked, "What would you like the district to do to improve internal communication?" (See interview instrument,

Appendix B.) This concentration on the latter portion of the unstructured question by the certificated staff may be explained by the fact that since teachers do not have administrative responsibilities, they are more apt to identify areas where improvement of internal communication is needed.

A list of their relevant responses follows:

1. Minimum school day for teacher discussions should be held monthly.
- *2. The school secretary should be present at faculty meetings. This would help internal communication.
3. Certificated staff members should have more faculty meetings to re-evaluate district program.
4. Certificated staff members in large schools suggested more inter-departmental meetings to encourage internal communication.
5. Certificated staff members would like more teacher visitation of other classrooms in the district so ideas could be exchanged.
- *6. Teacher suggested that the principal should systematically (perhaps on the teacher's birthday) sit down and "rap" with the teacher. This should be an informal, non-evaluative session.
7. Teacher complained of principal not putting important communication in writing such as policy or procedural changes.
- *8. Teacher reported the principal should place a note informing the faculty of what's happening that day at the sign-in sheet.
9. Certificated staff would like to see more of the central office administrators at the schools and in the classrooms.

In the final sub-section, dealing with the unstructured responses of district employees, are reported the observations of secretaries.

Secretaries' unstructured responses.---Six secretaries were randomly selected for the study. The responses to the unstructured question were brief. Two secretaries reported they couldn't think of anything that the district did that was unique or that needed to be improved in the area of internal communications. The brevity and lack of depth of the secretaries' responses may be explained by the nature of their position. Loyalty and confidentiality are constantly stressed to most secretaries; therefore, they may have been reluctant to reveal their thoughts to an unknown interviewer.

One secretary did suggest an area where her district could improve internal communication. She recommended that one secretary at the central office be responsible for calling all teacher substitutes each morning, rather than having each school secretary responsible for this task. The current procedure was not working smoothly because three secretaries may call the same substitute, thus causing confusion and wasting time.

The unstructured responses of the employees interviewed have been presented in the preceding five sub-sections. Six district superintendents and thirty-five randomly selected district employees were interviewed. The findings gathered through the interview instrument are summarized in the next section.

Summary of the Findings

Presented in this chapter have been the findings of

investigation. Demographic data from the interview instrument were analyzed, and it was determined that the subjects interviewed had considerable professional experience on which to base their opinions. It is further suggested that the study may have implications for the majority of California unified school districts because of the size of the districts sampled.

The desirable elements of internal communication that were identified through a review of the literature were further validated as desirable by a random sample of unified district employees interviewed in six selected school districts. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance determined that the five groups interviewed did not differ significantly in their perceptions of the desirable elements of internal communication.

The assumptions that were stated in Chapter I were tested by the interview instrument. The first assumption "that internal communications in unified school districts are generally poor" was not supported. The second, third, fourth, and fifth were supported by the data gathered through the interview.

The final section of Chapter IV reported the unstructured responses of the forty-one employees interviewed. Each group's responses were presented in narrative form and only those responses which were relevant to the development of a model were reported.

A model to elicit optimum internal communications in

unified school districts is presented in Chapter V. Also included in Chapter V are the summary and conclusions of the study and implications for further research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

This chapter is organized into three sections. The model which has been developed to elicit optimum internal communications in unified school districts is presented in the first section. Incorporated in this model are the conclusions of the study. In the second section of this chapter the study is summarized, and in the final section recommendations for further study are offered.

A Model to Elicit Optimum Internal Communications in Unified School Districts

Van Dalen emphasizes the importance of models in educational research and urges that models which are developed should include all the possible combinational interactions which they are designed to portray. He reinforces his concern for accurate model development by stating,

The failure of educational research to contribute large, consistent bodies of knowledge has been due, in part, to the lack of a model that conceptualizes all the major input elements and the combinational interaction of them that effect the major output elements of the educational process.¹

Table 12 was developed to ensure the inclusion of all possible combinational interactions in a model be satisfied.

¹Debald B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research: An Introduction (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 454.

TABLE 12

MAJOR INPUT COMPONENTS AND COMBINATION
INTERACTIONS FOR AN OPTIMUM INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS MODEL

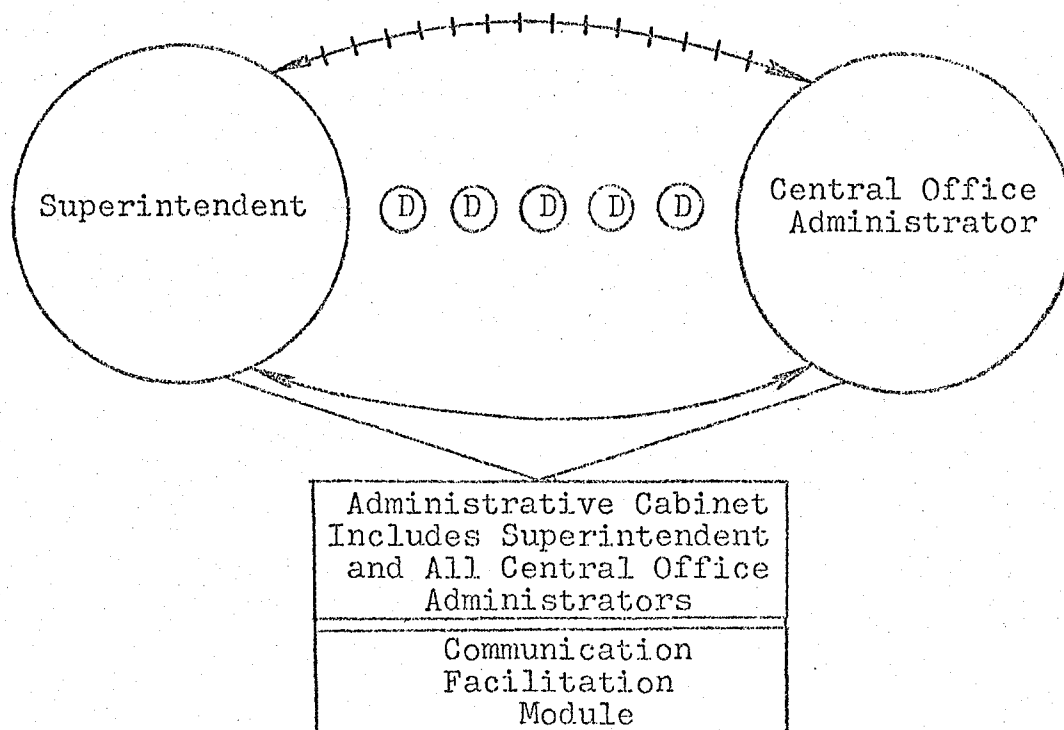
Major Components:

1. Superintendents (S)
2. Central Office Administrators (C)
3. Building Level Administrators (B)
4. Certificated Staff (T)
5. Secretaries (O)

List of Combinational Interactions:

Way:

2	3	4	5
SC	SCB	SCBT	SCBTO
SB	SCT	SCBO	
ST	SCO	SBTO	
SO	STO	SCTO	
CB	STB	CBTO	
CT	SBO		
CO	CBT		
BT	CBO		
BO	BTO		
TO	OTC		



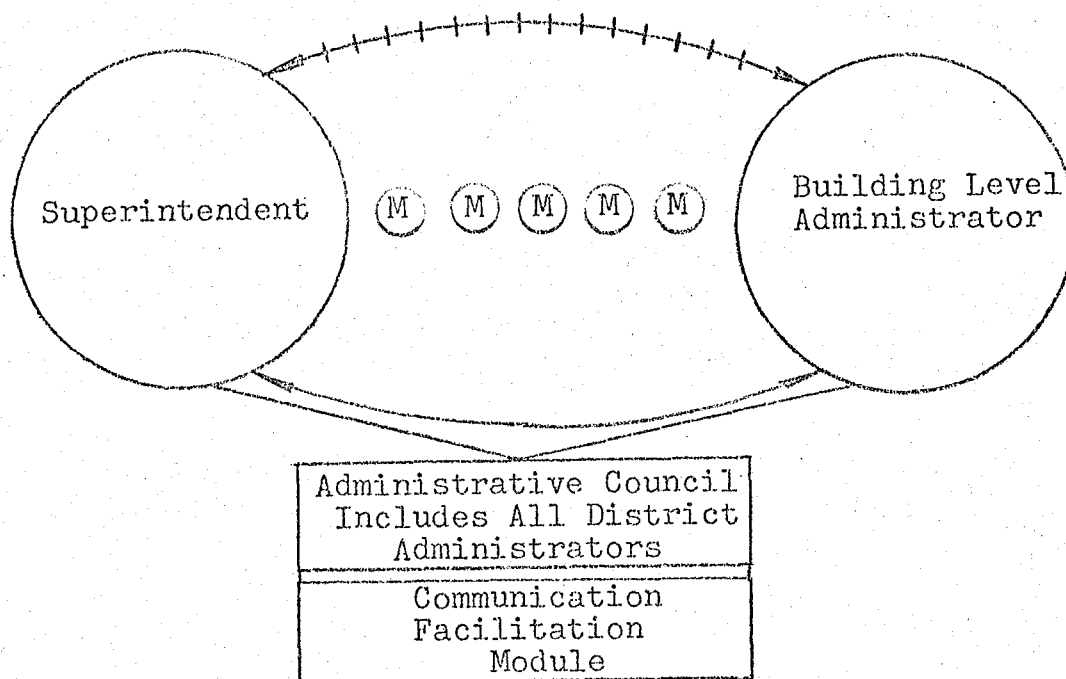
LEGEND

- (D) (D) (D) Daily face-to-face communication
 -+-+ Telephone
 ——— Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Administrative cabinet meets weekly. Their primary tasks should be influenced by the desirable elements of decision making in Table 2.
2. Written communication between the superintendent and central office administrators should be numbered and kept in binders. This eliminates duplications and contradictions in internal communication.
3. Central office administrators and superintendent should engage in uninterrupted face-to-face feedback and evaluation at least once yearly.

Fig. 7---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---superintendent and central office administrator.



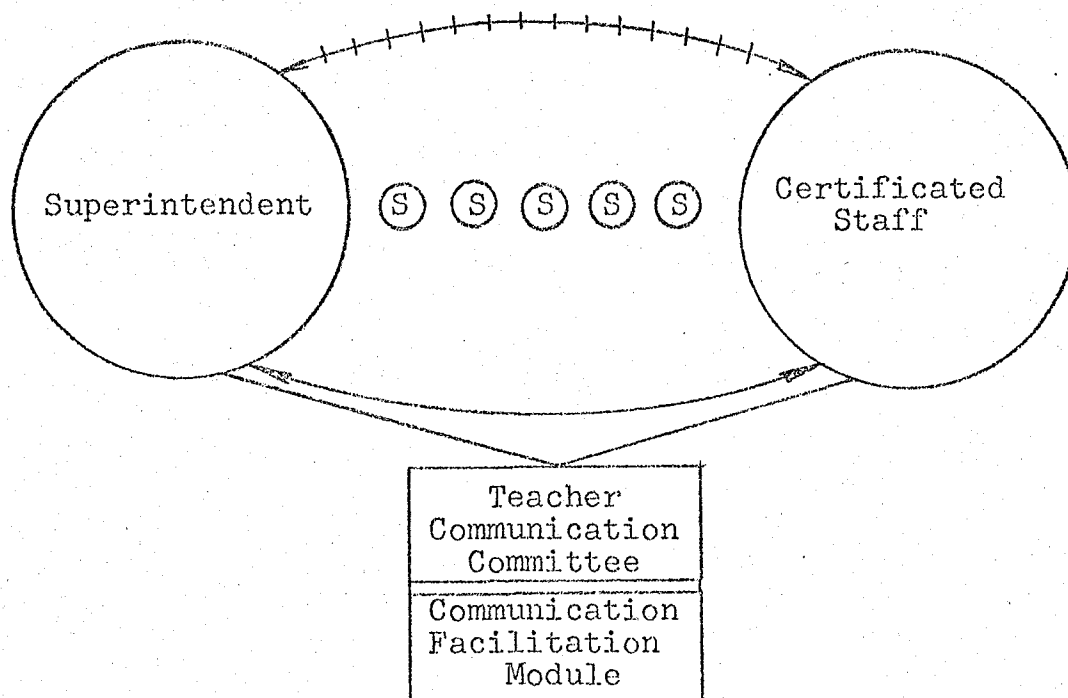
LEGEND

- (M) (M) (M) Monthly or semi-monthly face-to-face communication
- ++++ Telephone
- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Administrative council meets monthly or semi-monthly. Their primary tasks should be influenced by the desirable elements of communication in Table 2.
2. Combination should have face-to-face communication at administrative council meeting and during superintendent's building visits.
3. Written communications should include a superintendent's newsletter to building principal, and the building principal should send the superintendent a "what's happening" memorandum on a monthly basis.
4. Superintendent should meet annually, uninterrupted and face to face with each building level administrator for purposes of feedback and evaluation.
5. All district administrators should attend an annual administrative "retreat" where various items of district-wide concern are explored. Inservice workshop on interpersonal relations may occur at this time.

Fig. 8---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---superintendent and building level administrator.



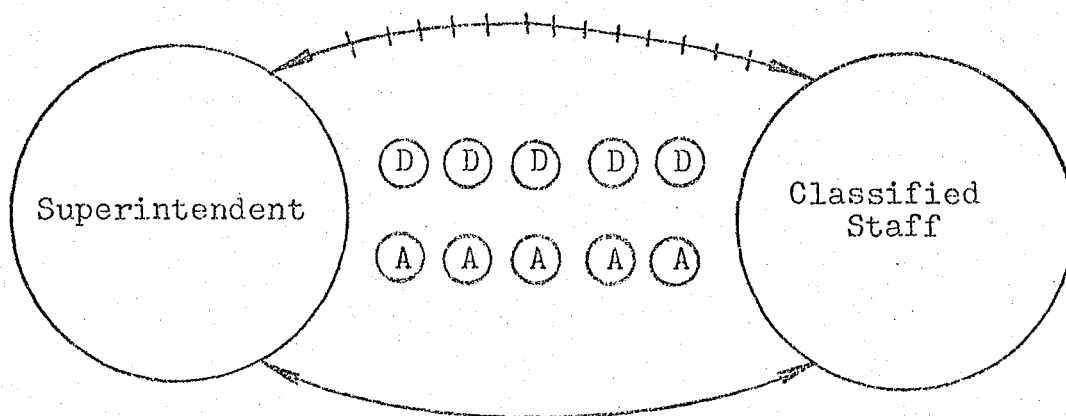
LEGEND

- (S) (S) (S) Semi-annual face-to-face communication
- Direct telephone communication after prior discussion with building level administrator
- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Teacher communication committee includes one elected teacher from each faculty. Meets monthly with the superintendent and any member can place items on the agenda. Faculties should be aware that this representative is their communication link with the superintendent.
2. Desirable elements of upwards and downwards communication (Table 2) should be considered in the function of this model.
3. Certificated staff should receive a newsletter or bulletin on a regular basis from the superintendent.
4. Superintendent should be visible by making periodic school visits and appearing at functions that involve large numbers of the certificated staff.

Fig. 9---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---superintendent and certificated staff.



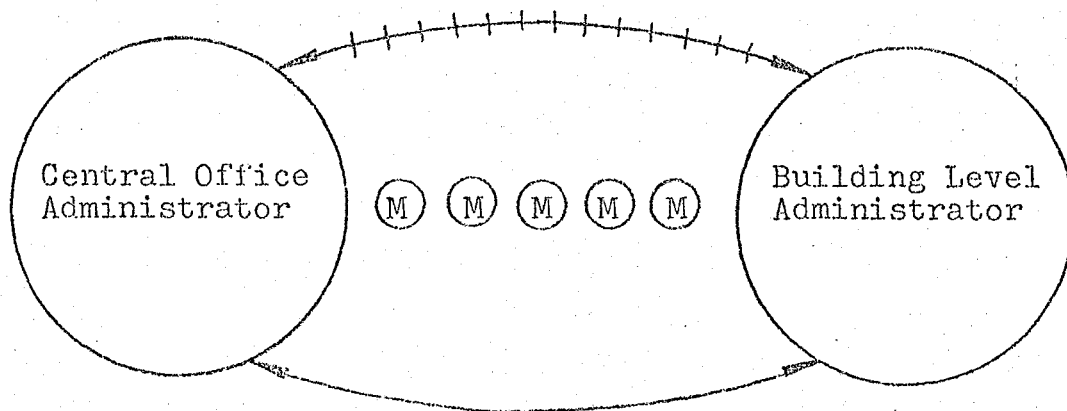
LEGEND

- Ⓐ Ⓐ Ⓐ Annual face-to-face communication with the majority of the classified staff
- Ⓓ Ⓓ Ⓓ Daily face-to-face communication with superintendent's secretary and key classified personnel such as business manager
- +--+ Direct telephone communication after prior discussion with intermediate supervisors
- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Superintendent should be visible to classified staff on a periodic basis.
2. Classified staff should receive superintendent's newsletter or bulletin.
3. Superintendent should solicit communications from the classified staff via intermediate supervisors.

Fig. 10---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---superintendent and classified staff.



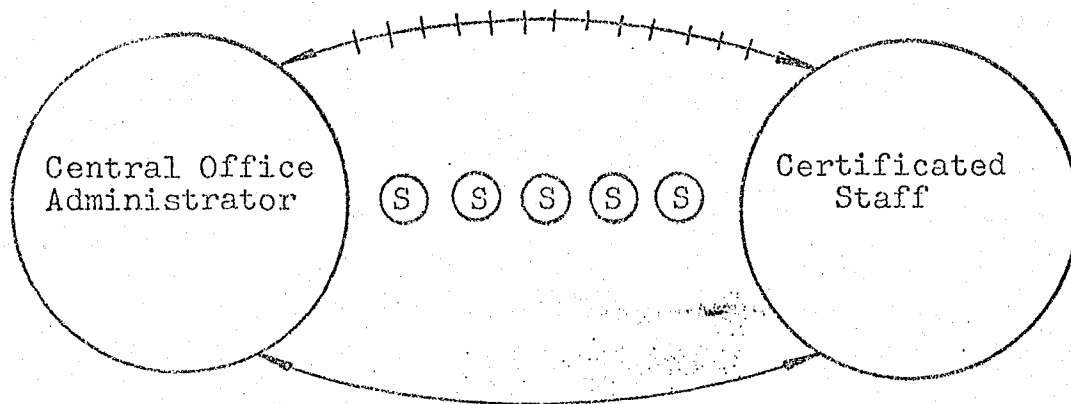
LEGEND

- (M) (M) (M) Monthly or semi-monthly face-to-face communication
 +--+--+--+ Direct telephone communication
 ----- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Central office administrator should be visible at schools for lunches, meetings, and classroom visits when appropriate.
2. Written communication should be acknowledged and acted on promptly.
3. Central office administrator and building level administrator should have one uninterrupted feedback and evaluation session annually.
4. Central office administrator should recognize good building level administrative performance, preferably in writing.

Fig. 11---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---central office and building level administrators.



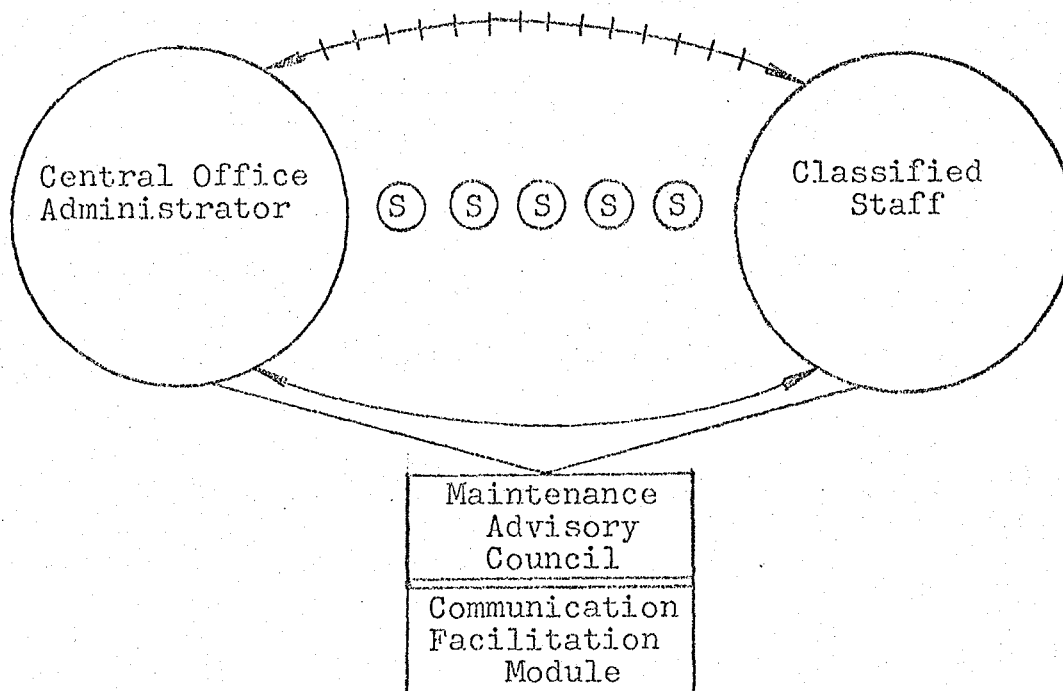
LEGEND

- (S) (S) (S) Semi-annual face-to-face communication
 +++++ Telephone communication after prior discussion with building level administrators
 ----- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Written communication from central office administrators to certificated staff should include personnel information such as district job openings, salary, and sick leave status.
2. Central office administrator should visit classrooms and be visible at schools on a periodic basis. During these visits he should be aware of anxiety his status might cause.
3. Central office administrator and building level principal should coordinate their communication with the certificated staff.

Fig. 12---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---central office administrators and certificated staff.



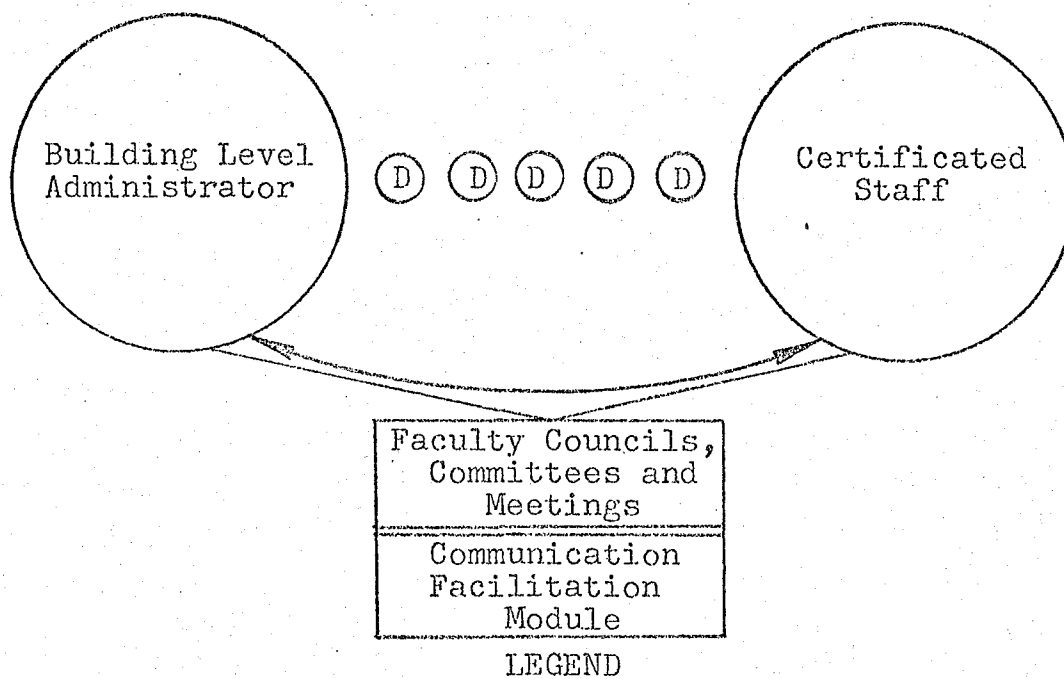
LEGEND

- (S) (S) (S) Semi-annual face-to-face communication
- ++++ Telephone communication after prior discussion with building level administrators
- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Written communication from central office administrators to classified staff should include personnel information such as district job openings, salary, and sick leave status.
2. Maintenance advisory council membership consists of certificated staff from each building, key classified personnel, and designated central office administrator. Their task is to establish priorities for district maintenance requests. This council is based on the principle calling for the inclusion of all personnel affected in the decision making process.
3. Classified staff heads (e.g. the transportation supervisor) meet annually with appropriate central office administrator for the purpose of uninterrupted feedback and evaluation.
4. Central office administrator should use appropriate words and language when communicating with the classified staff.

Fig. 13---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---central office administrators and classified personnel.



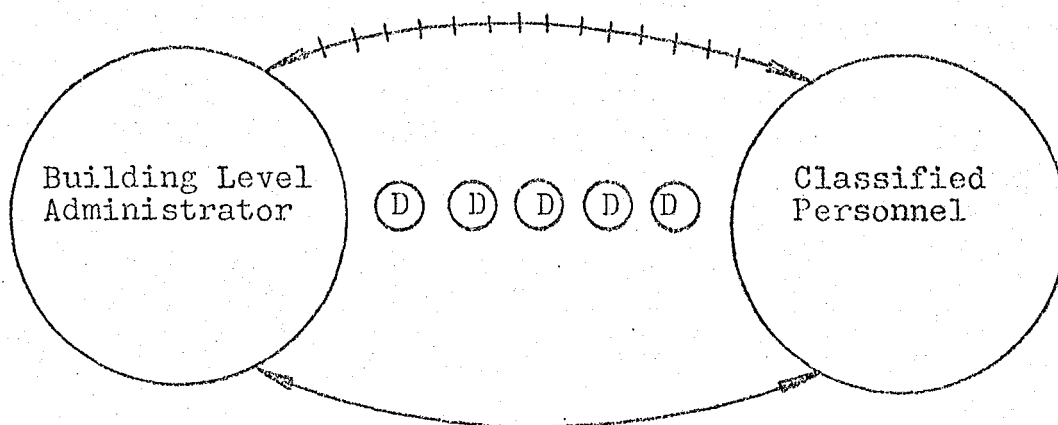
(D) (D) (D) Daily face-to-face communications with building's certificated personnel

----- Written communications

MODEL NOTES

1. Building level administrator should distribute minutes of all faculty meetings to all involved.
2. Faculty meetings should take place periodically (usually every two weeks).
3. Major decisions made at meeting should be reaffirmed in writing and involve all those affected in the decision making process.
4. Written communication should be followed up personally.
5. Each building should have a verbal or written plan to deal with rumor or distortion.
6. Building level administrator and each member of the certificated staff should have a minimum of three uninterrupted conferences each year for the purpose of evaluation and feedback.
7. The building administrator should attend faculty social functions when invited.

Fig. 14---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---building level administrator and certificated staff.



LEGEND

ⓓ ⓓ ⓓ Daily face-to-face communication with building's classified personnel

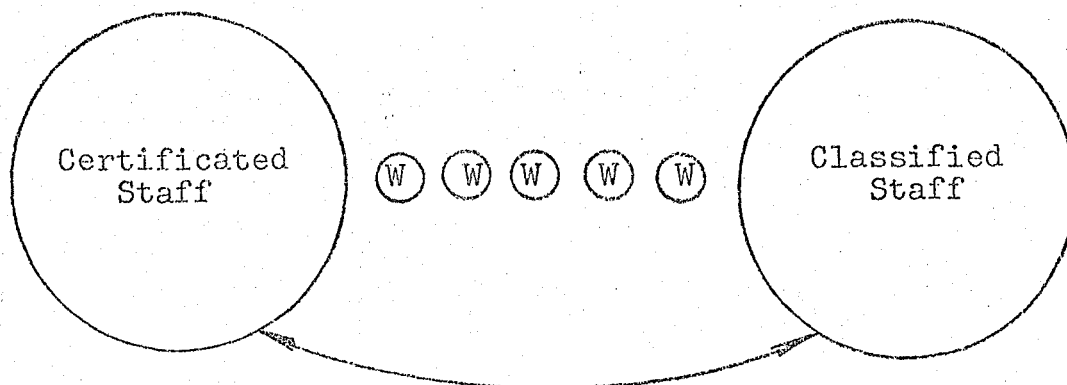
++++ Telephone communication

----- Written communication

MODEL NOTES

1. Building secretary should be invited to attend any faculty meetings which may have implications for her job.
2. Written communication should be followed up personally.
3. All classified personnel affected by a decision should be involved in the decision making process.
4. Building administrator should hold periodic informal meetings with groups of classified employees, e.g. cafeteria workers, custodians, etc.
5. Building administrator should have a minimum of one uninterrupted face-to-face conference with each classified employee for the purpose of evaluation and feedback.
6. Building administrator should recognize good employee performance, preferably in writing.

Fig. 15---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---building level administrator and classified staff.



LEGEND

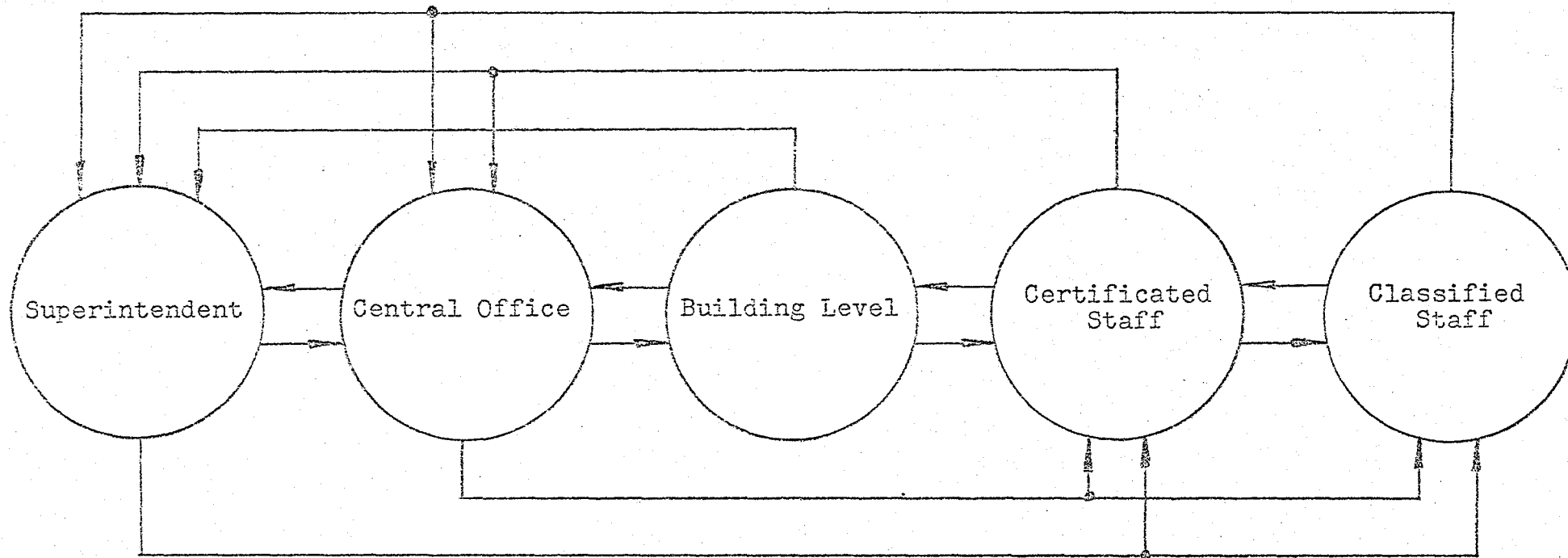
⊙ ⊙ ⊙ Weekly face-to-face communication

— Written communication

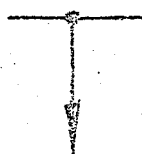
MODEL NOTES

1. The building administrator is responsible for coordinating the work of the classified staff; therefore, the certificated staff should first make their needs and requests known to him.
2. Written communication should be limited to thank you notes and occasional minor requests.
3. The duties of the building secretary should be clearly defined to the certificated staff.

Fig. 16---Two-way combinational optimum internal communication model---certificated and classified staff.



LEGEND

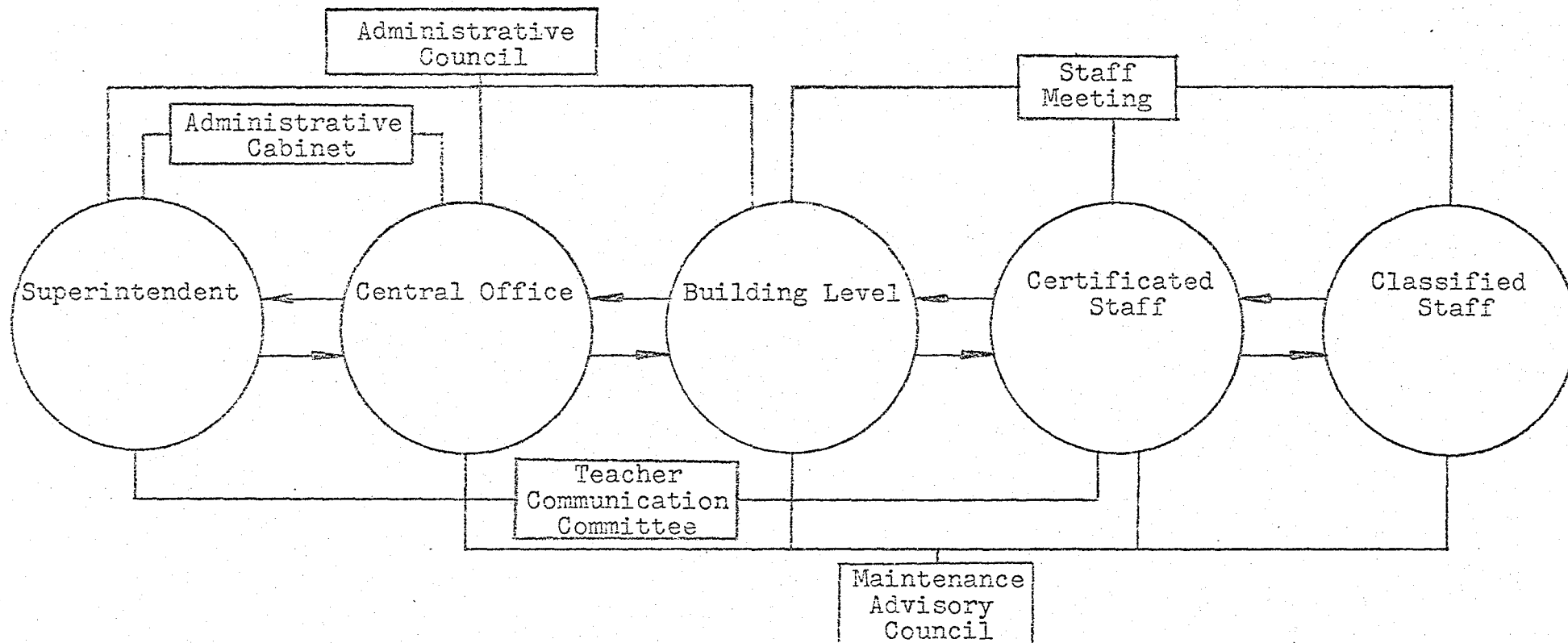


Bypass channel

MODEL NOTES

1. Bypass channel should seldom be used and only after use of regular channel has been attempted.
2. For regular channels see Figs. 7 through 16.

Fig. 17--Bypass channels for internal communication in unified school districts.



LEGEND

- Five groups involved in internal communication system
- Communication facilitation module
- ↔ Communication channel (see two-way combinational interaction models for details).

MODEL NOTES

1. Figs. 7-16 should be consulted for specific channel which should exist between the groups.

Fig. 18--A model to elicit optimum internal communication in unified school districts

The term classified employees replaced secretaries in the final model to assure the inclusion of all district employees in the model. The change is minor and had no significant effect in the model's development. Figure 17, which illustrates bypass loops, was necessary since both the literature and interviews indicated the necessity for such a channel. Figure 18 illustrates the combinational interactions from column five in Table 12. Figures 17 and 18 illustrate a communication network and should not be considered as a chart which indicates a particular hierarchical order. Communication facilitation modules is the name assigned to the various district organizational committees which facilitate optimum communication within the school district.

The model is designed so that each figure is self-explanatory. This technique will allow the model to be used quickly and practically. For example, a superintendent may want to suggest ways of improving communication between building level administrators and the certificated staff. The superintendent may refer to Figure 14 to assess if all the communication channels to elicit optimum internal communication are being used. He then may look to the model notes for seven suggestions to improve communications between the two groups.

A diagrammatic symbolic model has been presented to elicit optimum internal communication in unified school districts. The next section summarizes the procedures which were followed to develop this model.

Summary of the Study

Chapter I presented the problem that often it is the

case unified school districts do not have optimum internal communication. The importance of good communication and the need for developing a conceptual framework or model for school district internal communication was documented. The study was limited to unified school districts in California with an average daily attendance of 1,000 to 12,000 students. Assumptions were stated and terms to be used in the study were defined and may be found in Chapter I.

Chapter II presented an indepth review of the literature relevant to the study. Research from the disciplines of communication and school administration were reported in four major sections of this chapter. The four sections were: (1) concepts and characteristics of communication; (2) organizational communication; (3) desirable elements of internal communication; and (4) nature and function of models. This indepth review was necessary to provide the investigator with a sound theoretical framework from which a practical model could evolve.

Chapter III presented the procedures of the research. The interview was the principle instrument used for collecting data for this study. An interview instrument was developed to ascertain if the desirable elements of internal communication that were identified in Chapter II were perceived as desirable by employees in unified school districts. The interview instrument also included a section soliciting unstructured responses from the interviewees. The primary objective of these unstructured responses was to identify techniques and

practices that were unique in internal school district communication.

Five groups were in the sample interviewed. These groups were: (1) Superintendents; (2) Central Office Administrators; (3) Building Level Administrators; (4) Certificated Staff; and (5) Secretaries. A total of forty-one employees from six selected school districts were interviewed. All employees, with the exception of the superintendent, were selected randomly. The sample was also asked to validate the five assumptions that were stated in Chapter I.

The data gathered from the interview instrument were treated in three ways. Percentage tables were used to analyze the data and a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was utilized. The purpose of the analysis of variance was to determine if the five groups significantly differed in their perceptions of the desirable elements of internal communications. The third method of analysis was to present in narrative form the results of particular sections of the interview instrument.

The findings of the study were reported in Chapter IV. An analysis of sample information indicated the sample interviewed worked an average of 5.23 years in their school district. A percentage analysis of the desirable elements of internal communication resulted in all twenty-nine elements receiving the 75 per cent necessary for validation and possible inclusion in the final model. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance indicated that the five groups interviewed did

not differ significantly in their perceptions of desirable elements of communication. Four of the five assumptions stated in Chapter I were deemed valid by 50 per cent of the sample interviewed. Chapter IV was concluded with a report of the unstructured responses in narrative form. An analysis of these unstructured responses revealed a number of unique and interesting practices in school district internal communications.

Chapter V presented a model to elicit optimum internal communications in unified school districts. The final section of this study offers recommendations for further study.

Recommendations for Further Study

Five recommendations for further study are presented in this section.

1. It is recommended the model developed in this study be tested in a unified school district. One briefly outlined suggested procedure for testing the model follows:
 - (1) Assess the quality of a district's internal communication with a carefully designed instrument such as Clemer's Communication Appraisal Instrument.²
 - (2) Introduce the communication model to the school district employees via inservice workshops or district meetings. Monitor the implementation of the model.
 - (3) After a period of time, re-assess internal communication with the same instrument that was used in step number one and report the results.

²Elwin Faye Clemer, "Communications within School Districts" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1966).

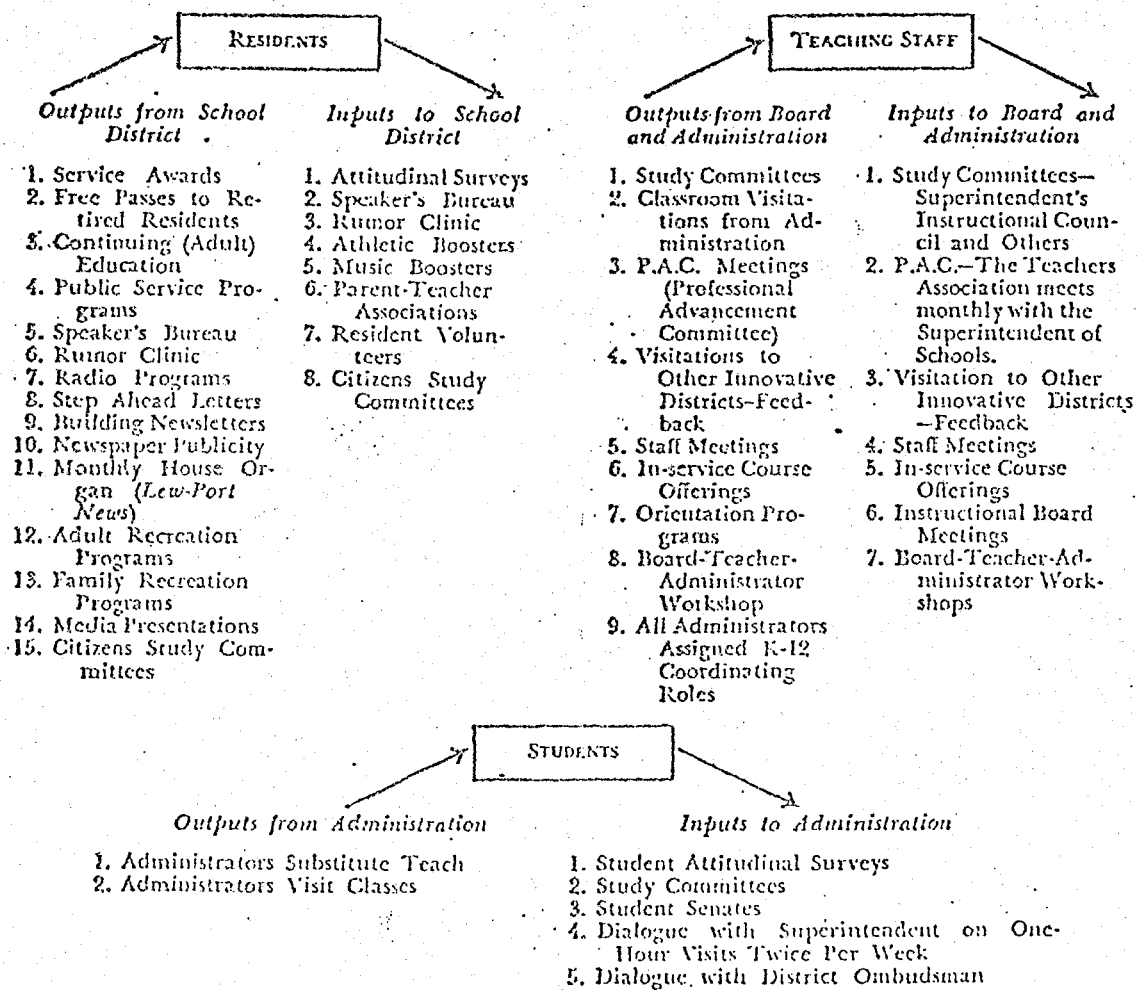
2. It is recommended the model be modified and altered as it is put into use. Knezevich states, "Useful and accurate models of any aspect of educational administration will take many years to evolve as an imperfect model is modified or merged with others to describe and explain or predict the same thing."³
3. It is recommended further models be developed to illustrate the functions of the communication facilitation modules developed in this study.
4. It is recommended that a model for internal communication be developed for large urban districts; those with an average daily attendance of over 20,000 pupils.
5. It is recommended that new, creative, and entirely different communication models for school districts be developed. Optimum communication is vital if good education is to occur. Bross concurs with this recommendation when he writes, "Few scientists are so fortunate or so clever as to devise a useful model on the first attempt."⁴

³Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 529.

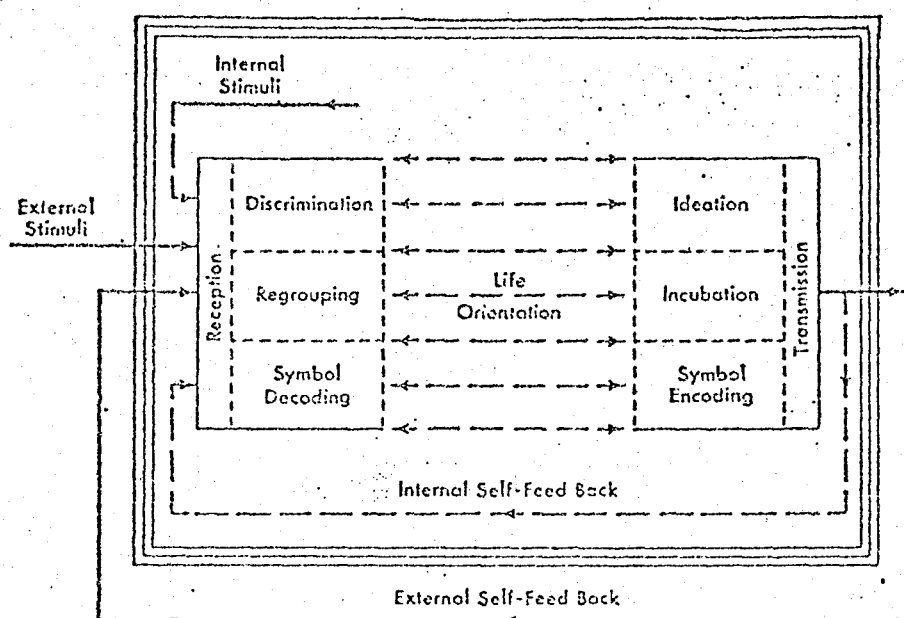
⁴Irwin Bross, Design for Decision (New York: McMillan and Company, 1953), p. 182.

APPENDIX A

MAXIMIZATION OF COMMUNICATIONS MODEL

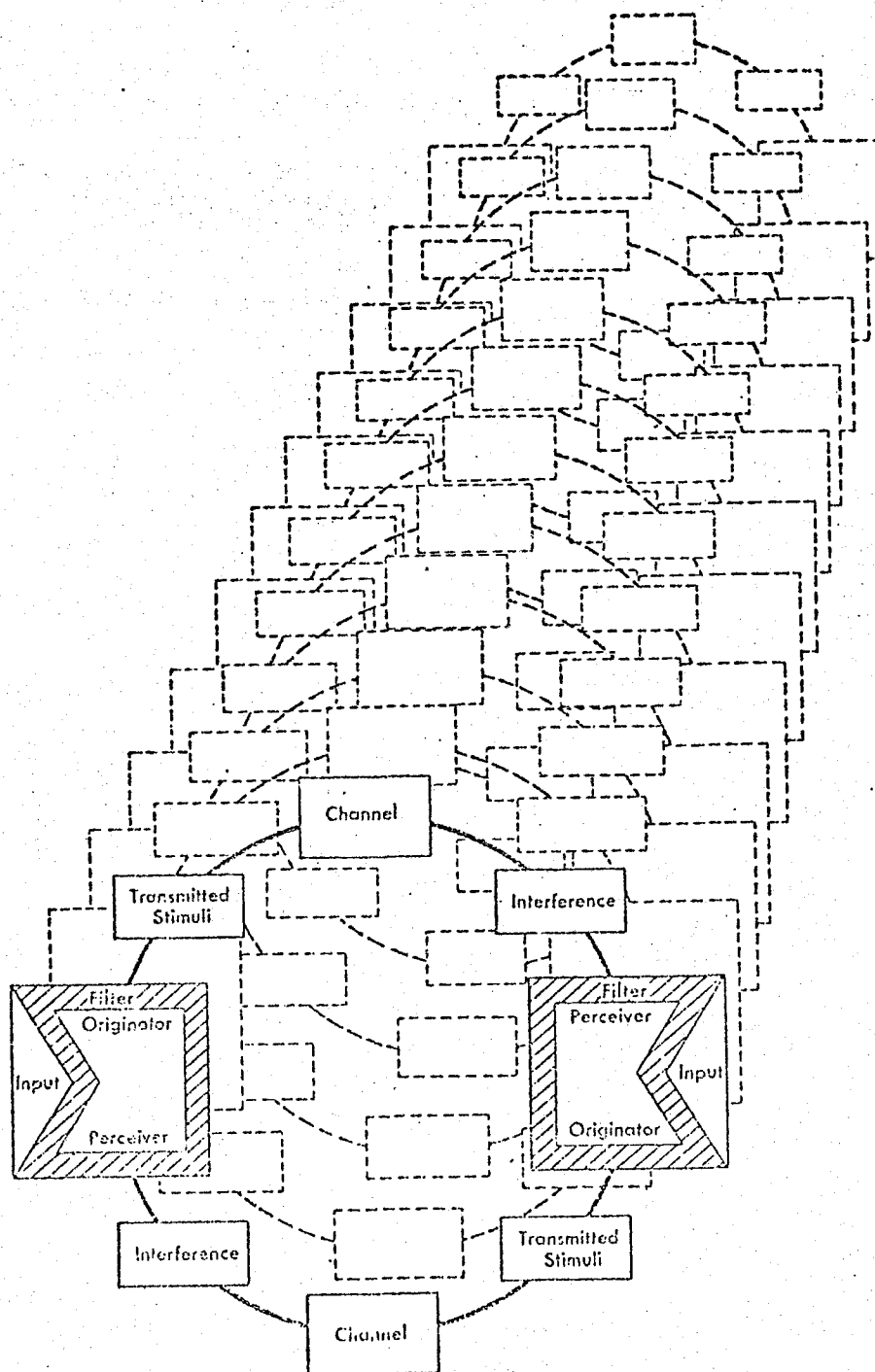


AN INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL



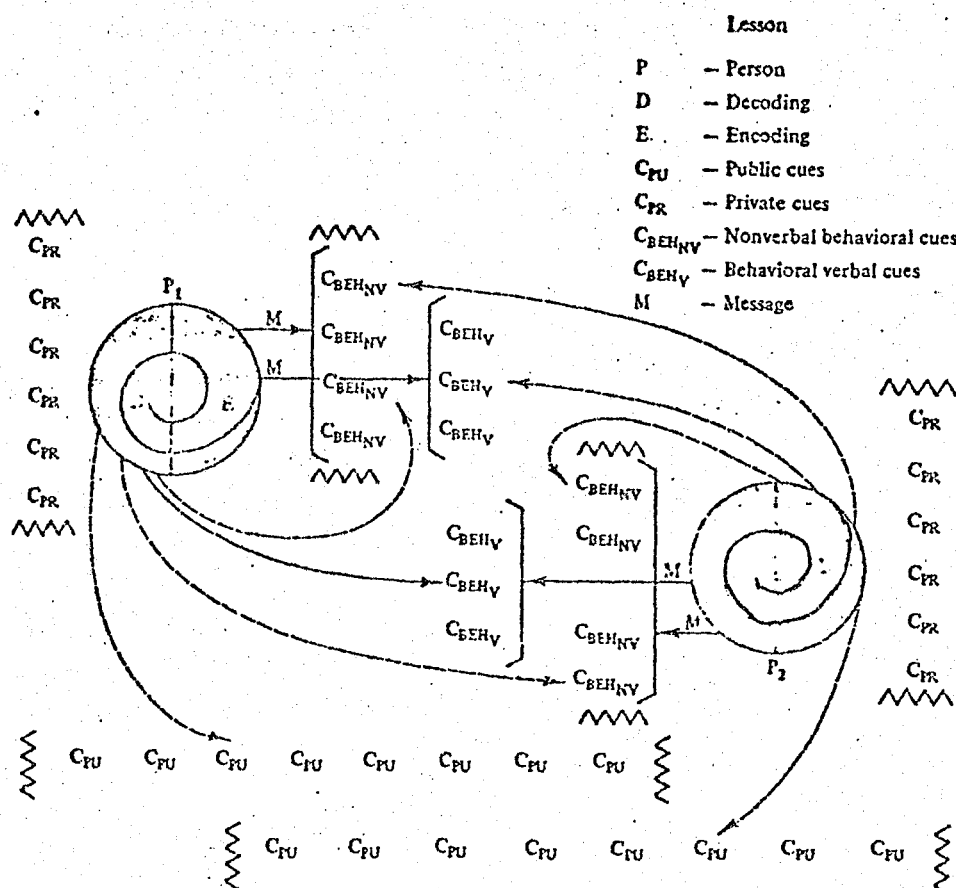
From Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior.

TUBB'S INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL



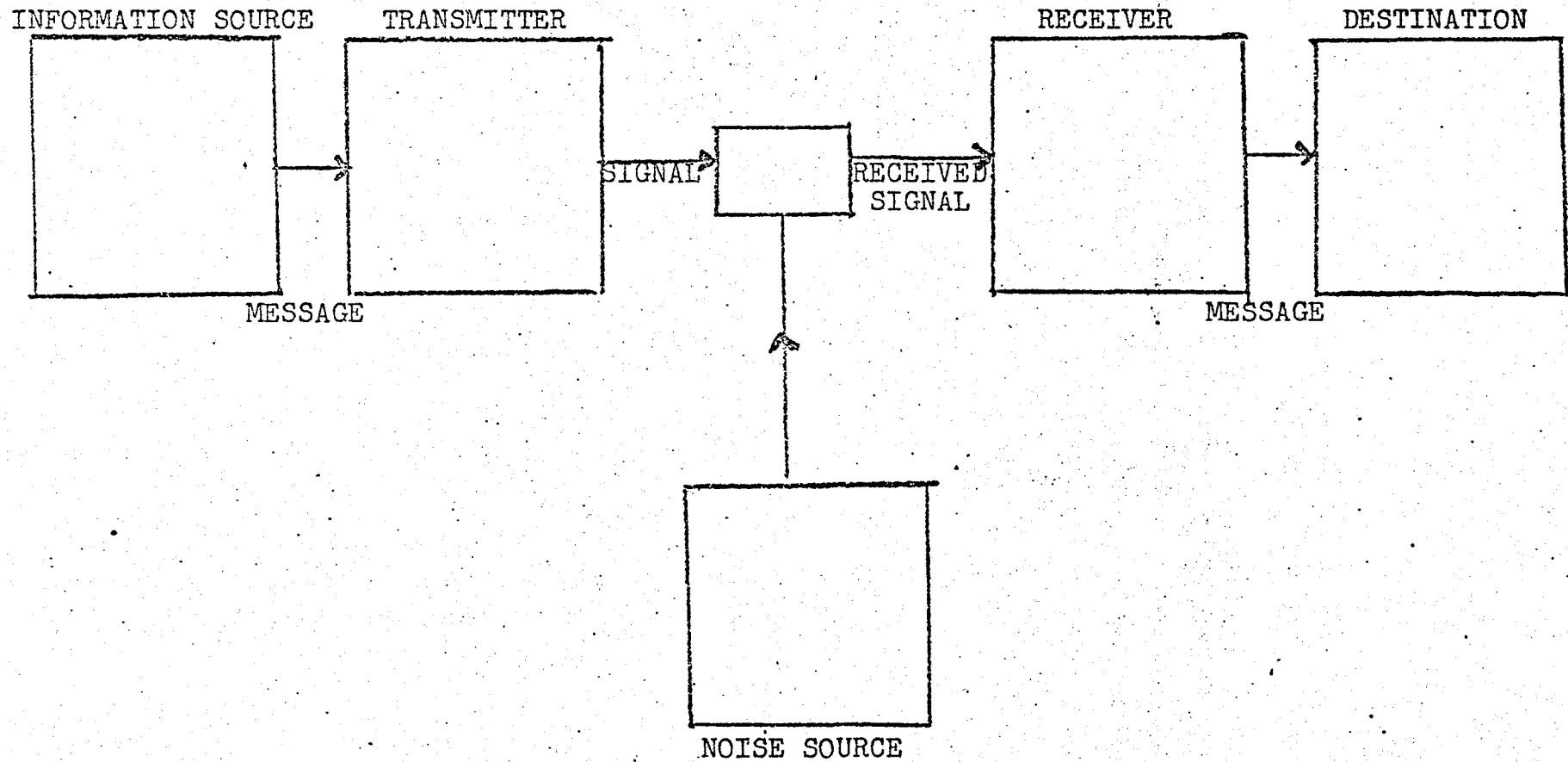
From Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior.

BARNLUND'S INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL



From Sereno and Mortensen, Foundations of Communications Theory.

SHANNON AND WEAVER'S INFORMATION-PROCESSING MODEL



From Barker and Kibler, Speech Communication Behavior.

APPENDIX B

PART I --- EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE
INTERVIEW TO THE RESPONDENT

The following explanation will be related to all subjects in the sample:

I am working on a doctoral dissertation at the University of the Pacific. The ultimate goal of my research is to develop a model for internal communication in unified school districts.

For the purpose of this study I have grouped questions concerning internal communications into five areas. These areas are: decision making, upward communication, downward communication, horizontal communication, and feedback. During the course of the interview, please don't hesitate to ask questions, especially if you need clarification of any of the terms used.

The last section of the interview will ask a few questions regarding the status of communication within your district. Please be assured that your replies will be held in strict confidence. The quality of this study is dependent on the honesty of the responses received from the people interviewed.

Do you have any questions?

PART II --- SAMPLE INFORMATION

1. Name: _____
2. Date of interview: _____
3. How long in present position: _____
4. How long with unified district: _____
5. Name of unified district: _____
6. A.D.A. of district: _____
7. No. employed by district: _____

OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Horizontal Communication (Communication between employees at the same level within an organization. Give examples.)

	<u>Essen- tial</u> <u>1</u>	<u>Desir- able</u> <u>2</u>	<u>No Opinion</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Unim- portant</u> <u>4</u>
1. If a serious disagreement occurs at the horizontal level, do you feel the use of an impartial third party to mediate is	1	2	3	4
2. At the horizontal level, face to face communication is	1	2	3	4
3. Loyalty within a horizontal group is	1	2	3	4
4. Each employee at the horizontal level should see his role in relation to the total school district. For good internal communication this is	1	2	3	4
5. Periodic inservice workshops on improving interpersonal relations are	1	2	3	4

B. Upwards Communication (Communication with employees above you in the unified school district structure. Give examples.)

	<u>Essen- tial</u> <u>1</u>	<u>Desir- able</u> <u>2</u>	<u>No Opinion</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Unim- portant</u> <u>4</u>
1. For all employees to be aware of channels and proper methods of communicating with individuals above them in the hierarchy is	1	2	3	4
2. The attendance of the administrator at social functions to show he is a "human being" is	1	2	3	4
3. Administrators seeking advice from staff members is	1	2	3	4
4. For individuals above you in the organization to act promptly and acknowledge communications received from you is	1	2	3	4
5. Developing methods whereby the "chain of command" may be by-passed is	1	2	3	4

	<u>Essen- tial</u> <u>1</u>	<u>Desir- able</u> <u>2</u>	<u>No</u> <u>Opinion</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Unim- portant</u> <u>4</u>
6. Non-judgmental action by administrators when first receiving an idea from an employee is	1	2	3	4
7. Uninterrupted and face to face upward communication free from distractions is	1	2	3	4

C. Downwards Communication (Communication that comes from higher echelons in the district and travels down through the organization.)

1. Supplementing written communication with face to face conferences and meetings is	1	2	3	4
2. Developing a plan to deal with rumors and distortion is	1	2	3	4
3. Following up written communication personally is	1	2	3	4
4. Praising and encouraging employees through downward communication is	1	2	3	4
5. Informing each employee of what is expected and required is	1	2	3	4
6. Using appreciative words and language in communicating with employees is	1	2	3	4
7. For the administrator to be aware of the anxiety that his status may cause is	1	2	3	4

D. Decision Making (The process by which the school district adopts various policies or procedures.)

1. Establishing channels and procedures for decision making is	1	2	3	4
2. Recognizing, defining, and limiting problems is	1	2	3	4
3. The continuous evaluation of decisions is	1	2	3	4
4. Establishing special communication channels for emergencies and delicate personnel matters is	1	2	3	4

	<u>Essen- tial</u> <u>1</u>	<u>Desir- able</u> <u>2</u>	<u>No</u> <u>Opinion</u> <u>3</u>	<u>Unim- portant</u> <u>4</u>
5. Communicating decisions in writing after they are made is	1	2	3	4
6. Inclusion of all personnel affected by a decision in the decision making process is	1	2	3	4
E. Feedback (The process of checking one's own effectiveness by receiving messages from other employees within the district.)				
1. Formally recognizing good employee performance is	1	2	3	4
2. Providing feedback at a face to face level is	1	2	3	4
3. For each employee to receive feedback on his performance is	1	2	3	4
4. Feedback received in the manner of formal and informal evaluation is	1	2	3	4

The next section deals with your feelings regarding communications within your school district.

PART IV -- VALIDATION OF ASSUMPTIONS

1. How would you rate internal communications within your school district?

Excellent

Adequate

Poor

Weak

2. Do you have a system or plan, either verbal or written, for communicating within your organization?

Yes

No

3. If incidents of poor internal communication occur, how do you feel?

Understanding

Don't Care

Frustrated

4. What individual in your school district should have the primary responsibility for establishing channels for internal communication?

As you can see, I am attempting to identify desirable elements of internal communications in unified school districts. What do you feel that your district does in this area that is unique, or what would you like the district to do to improve internal communication.

1

APPENDIX C

LIST OF SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, California 95624

Lincoln Unified School District
1956 Stanton Way
Stockton, California 95207

Linden Unified School District
P. O. Box 538
Linden, California 95236

Lodi Unified School District
815 West Lockeford Street
Lodi, California 95240

Manteca Unified School District
P. O. Box 32
Manteca, California 95336

Ripon Unified School District
301 North Acacia Avenue
Ripon, California 95366

January 7, 1973

Glenn R. Houde, Superintendent
Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, California 95624

Dear Mr. Houde:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

If you are unable to participate in this study, please call me at the School of Education 946-2580 or at home (209) 369-4024. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

January 7, 1973

Willard T. Hancock, Superintendent
Lincoln Unified School District
1956 Stanton Way
Stockton, California 95207

Dear Mr. Hancock:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

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Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

January 7, 1973

Jack L. Molini, Superintendent
Linden Unified School District
P. O. Box 538
Linden, California 95236

Dear Mr. Molini:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

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Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

January 7, 1973

Raymond M. Jansen, Superintendent
Lodi Unified School District
815 West Lockeford Street
Lodi, California 95240

Dear Mr. Jansen:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

If you are unable to participate in this study, please call me at the School of Education 946-2580 or at home 369-4024. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

January 8, 1973

Richard J. Cherry, Superintendent
Manteca Unified School District
Post Office Box 32
Manteca, California 95336

Dear Mr. Cherry:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

If you are unable to participate in this study, please call me at the School of Education 946-2580 or at home (209) 369-4024. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

January 7, 1973

Joseph C. O'Leary, Superintendent
Ripon Unified School District
301 North Acacia Avenue
Ripon, California 95366

Dear Mr. O'Leary:

I am a doctoral candidate, on leave from administrative duties in Lodi Unified School District, at the University of the Pacific. Dr. Roger Reimer, in the Department of Educational Administration, is my major advisor and chairman of my dissertation committee.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop a model for internal communications in unified school districts, and I would like to interview you regarding this subject. The interview shouldn't extend beyond one hour. Within the next two weeks, I plan to call your office to arrange for an appointment.

If you are unable to participate in this study, please call me at the School of Education 946-2580 or at home (209) 369-4024. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg

February 13, 1973

Dr. Glenn Houde
Superintendent
Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove Boulevard
Elk Grove, California 95624

Dear Dr. Houde:

This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your excellent cooperation and also for the many insights I gained in the time we spent together. Also appreciated was the cooperation of your staff. Every employee with whom I spoke was most gracious and receptive to my project.

My visit with Dr. Smith of the Personnel Office was enlightening, and the many efforts his office makes to keep District employees informed is commendable.

At the conclusion of my study, I plan to send you an abstract of the reports findings. Thank you again for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg
School of Education

HW
mb

February 13, 1973

Mr. Tod A. Anton
District Superintendent
Lincoln Unified School District
1956 Stanton Way
Stockton, California 95207

Dear Mr. Anton:

This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your excellent cooperation and also for the many insights I gained in the time we spent together. Also appreciated was the cooperation of your staff. Every employee with whom I spoke was most gracious and receptive to my project.

At the conclusion of my study, I plan to send you an abstract of the reports findings. Thank you again for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg
School of Education

HW
mb

February 13, 1973

Mr. Jack L. Molini
Superintendent
Linden Unified School District
P. O. Box 538
Linden, California 95236

Dear Mr. Molini:

This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your excellent cooperation and also for the many insights I gained in the time we spent together. Also appreciated was the cooperation of your staff. Every employee with whom I spoke was most gracious and receptive to my project.

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Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg
School of Education

HW
mb

February 13, 1973

Mr. Ray M. Jansen
Superintendent
Lodi Unified School District
815 West Lockeford Street
Lodi, California 95240

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This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

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February 13, 1973

Mr. Richard J. Cherry
District Superintendent
Manteca Unified School District
P. O. Box 32
Manteca, California 95336

Dear Mr. Cherry:

This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your excellent cooperation and also for the many insights I gained in the time we spent together. Also appreciated was the cooperation of your staff. Every employee with whom I spoke was most gracious and receptive to my project.

Especially interesting were my visits with you and Mr. Hughes. Your excellent presentation of the Manteca Unified system of internal communication was most informative, and your Teacher Communication Committee is a unique and positive innovation for which you should be commended. Mr. Hughes' ability to apply humanistic principles to school finance practice was also very impressive.

At the conclusion of my study, I plan to send you an abstract of the reports findings. Thank you again for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg
School of Education

HW
mb

February 13, 1973

Mr. Joseph C. O'Leary
Superintendent
Ripon Unified School District
301 North Acacia
Ripon, California 95366

Dear Mr. O'Leary:

This is to inform you that I have finished interviewing six employees in your District regarding my study of internal communications.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your excellent cooperation and also for the many insights I gained in the time we spent together. Also appreciated was the cooperation of your staff. Every employee with whom I spoke was most gracious and receptive to my project.

Please thank Mr. Laird for his help in arranging appointments for me. His cooperation made it possible for me to complete all interviews in Ripon in just two days.

At the conclusion of my study, I plan to send you an abstract of the reports findings. Thank you again for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harry Weinberg
School of Education

HW
mb

TO: Selected Staff Members

FROM: _____

SUBJECT: Introducing Mr. Harry Weinberg

This note will introduce Mr. Harry Weinberg who is working on his doctoral disseration at the University of the Pacific.

Mr. Weinberg wishes to interview a small random sample of our distict's personnel. Mr. Weinberg has the permission of this office to conduct these interviews. Participation in the project is voluntary and appointments will be made at your convenience.

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