AN INVESTIGATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A FIELD STUDY

by

Patricia Ann Gould

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APPROVED;

Wayne M. Worner, Chairman

James H. McMillan

Kenneth E. Underwood

Robert R. Richards

Blue F. Wooldridge

Blacksburg, Virginia

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. : God's special gift to me.

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As in all of life's ventures, we are never solely responsible for the completion of any task. It is through God's grace that we live, move and have our being. Also, in imparting His grace to us, He works through other people. Realizing this, I take this opportunity to thank God and the many people responsible for my completing this study.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

> Communication is the lifeblood of an organization; if we could somehow remove communication flows from an organization, we would not have an organization. Communication pervades all activities in an organization, represents an important work tool through which individuals understand their organizational role, and integrates organizational subunits. From an open system perspective, an organization is an elaborate set of interconnected communication channels designed to import, sort, and analyze information from the environment and export processed messages back to the environment. Communication provides a means for making and executing decisions, obtaining feedback, and correcting organizational objectives and procedures as the situation demands.[1]

In this age of accountability, schools are being scrutinized to determine how they can be more effective. Each school, however, continues to be a distinct and unique organization. Because communication permeates every aspect of school life, an assessment of the organizational design of the communication system is essential to any process development.[2] The nature of communication in organizations such as public schools, however, remains an unexplored topic in the area of research. As stated by Koehler et al.:

> Perhaps there is no other feature in which contemporary and traditional views contrast more sharply than in their assessment of the role and significance of communication in determining organizational structure, activity, and effectiveness. Early

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[1] Everett M. Rogers and Reka Agaruala-Rogers, Communication in Organizations (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1976), p. 7.

[2] Wayne K. Hoy and Cecil G. Miskel, Educational Administration: Theory,Research, and Practice (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 238.

> studies offer a sound basis for discerning the processes that shape human relationships and organizational operations. It is not an exaggeration to say that understanding is indispensable to effective participation in organizations at any level.[3]

The literature supports the fact that schools are social organizations with distinct systems of interpersonal relationships. These various interpersonal relationships affect the ways in which individuals function and ultimately the task achievement of the organization.[4] As social organizations, schools are composed of subsystems which interact with each other and which are composed of interacting systems.[5] Organizational communication, the method by which these subsystems interact, is most vital. Baird supports this idea as follows:

> The success of an organization is determined by how well its members perform and the success of organizational communication is a function of how effectively organizational members communicate. The ways in which individuals receive, interpret, and transmit individuals' motivations are,therefore, the factors central to organizational communication.[6]

Lawler, Hall, and Oldham suggested that the communication pattern used by the organization has an immediate impact upon the individual's life within that same organization, and may be a vital, yet currently unexplored, aspect of organizational climate.[7] While there is a growing interest in the role of communication in organizations, little attention has been given to the question of how the pattern of organizational communication affects the behavior and group relationships of the organizational members. Lewis makes the following observations:

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[3] Jerry W. Koehler, Karl W.E. Anatol, and Robert L. Applbaum, Organizational Communication: Behavioral Perspectives (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), p. 1.

[4] William W. Savage, Interpersonal and Group Relations in Educational Administration (University of South Carolina: Scott, Foresman and Company,1978), p.5.

[5] Ronald G. Corwin and Roy A. Edelfelt, Perspectives on Organizations (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education: Washington D.C., 1977).

[6] John E. Baird, Jr., The Dynamics of Organizational Communication (University of Michigan: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), p.33.

> An organizations's communication patterns and activities are crucially dependent upon its goals, managerial style, and climate. Organizational communication is like driftwood on a sea of conflicting currents; the amount of communication depends on the motivational forces at work within the organization. The job of any manager is to build a community of communication with employees, a climate for the sharing of messages, ideas, or attitudes.[8]

Therefore, it is apparent that communication is a vital component of organizations and may affect other facets of the organization.

Little attention also has been given to the patterns and nature of communication in educational settings. However, the following propositions concerning organizational communication in other settings are cited in the literature as follows:

1. Communication is purposive.
2. The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.

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[7] Ronald L. Applbaum, "An Examination of the Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Organizational Norms, and Communication Climate Among Employees in an Organization." Paper presented at the Communication Association of the Pacific Conference (Honolulu, Hawaii, July 30-August 1, 1979), p. 4.

[8] Phillip V. Lewis, Organizational Communication: The Essence of Effective Management (Columbus, Ohio: Grid Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), p. 59.

3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.

4. Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.

5. The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable.

6. Horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical flows.

7. Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward flows.

8. The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.[9]

In summary, organizational communication remains a widely unexplored area in educational research. Although communication permeates every aspect of school life, little is understood about the nature of communication in schools. While the literature offers some basic propositions concerning organizational communication, these propositions have not been confirmed with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools. In an effort to provide pertinent information which will foster a better understanding of organizational communication in educational settings, an investigation of the organizational communication patterns of elementary schools was undertaken.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. In addition, this study was designed to describe the organizational communication patterns found in the selected elementary schools, compare the organizational communication patterns of these schools, and compare these patterns with organizational communication in other settings.

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[9] William V. Haney, Communication and Organizational Behavior (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1967), pp. 141-144.

Fore-shadowed Questions

This study was designed to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. In order to put the study into some perspective, a list of fore-shadowed questions were developed. Fore-shadowed questions as opposed to hypotheses were used because to to enter a setting with a set of specific hypotheses is to impose preconceptions and perhaps misconceptions on the setting.[10]

This research was limited to one broad, general question: What is the nature of communication in the selected elementary schools? Other questions relative to this study are:

1. What are the channels of communication in the selected elementary schools?
2. What is the flow of communication in the selected elementary schools?
3. What is the frequency of communication in the selected elementary schools?
4. What is the basis of communication in the selected elementary schools?
5. Who are the actors in the communication process?
6. What is the mode of communicative behavior in the selected elementary schools?

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[10] Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 27.

Signifance of the Study

This study was intended to provide additional information concerning organizational communication in elementary schools. The consideration of communication as an important variable in organizations is a relatively new occurance.[11]

In the management literature, one of the earliest indications of the importance of communication in organizations comes from Chester Barnard in his book, Functions of the Executive. Barnard identified communication as the most essential characteristic of both the formal and informal aspects of organizations.[12] Later Elton Mayo and his research team at Harvard University conducted the famous Hawthorne studies which alluded to communication as an important element in organizational settings.[13] However, it was not until the emergence of the systems school of organizational behavior that communication was viewed as the key to analyzing and understanding organizations as social systems. Katz and Kahn,[14] and Likert[15] concluded that communication is a prime factor in the attainment of high levels of organizational effectiveness. Robert Carter[16] in his book Communication in Organizations offers a comprehensive review of the empirical research and general literature concerning organizational communication in business. Redding[17] and Tompkins[18] also provide indepth information on the research pertaining to organizational communication.

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[11] James L. Owen, Paul A. Page, and Gordon I. Zimmerman, Communication in Organizations (New York: West Publishing Company, 1976), p. 290.

[12] Chester Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press., 1938).

[13] Owen, Page, and Zimmerman, p. 290.

[14] Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966).

[15] Renis Likert, The Human Organization (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967).

[16] Robert M. Carter, Communication in Organizations (Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, 1972).

Despite the recent interest in the function of communication in organizations and the growing awareness of communication as a vital element in organizations, little is known about organizational communication as a dependent variable. The paucity of empirical data regarding communication in educational organizations becomes quickly apparent in reviewing the literature.[19] This study was intended to provide additional information concerning organizational communication in educational settings. By investigating the communication patterns of schools with regard to the existing propositions concerning organizational communication, the resulting research may be useful for further clarifying the concept of organizational communication and reinforcing the idea that communication is a vital element in organizations. These data also may provide the impetus for additional research on organizational communication in schools.

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[17] Charles Redding, Communication Within the Organization (New York: Industrial Communication Council, 1972).

[18] Phillip K. Tompkins, "Organizational Communication: A State of the Art Review." Conference on Organizational Communication (Huntsville, Alabama: George Marshall Space and Flight Center, National Aeoronautics and Space Administration, 1967), pp. 4-26.

[19] Hoy and Miskel, p. 248.

This study took a more practical perspective in the investigation of organizational communication in schools. The general trend in research on organizational communication behavior has been toward greater quantification which reduces human behavior to variables that can assume numerical values.[20] This study, in which the field study approach is employed, proposed that the organizational communication patterns of the selected schools be described and analyzed with regard to existing propositions. This study investigated organizational communication in its natural setting, an approach which appears to be more satisfactory for studying communication in organizations.

> Survey research methods are not entirely satisfactory for studying communication in organizations. One reason is that interviews or questionaires tend to isolate the respondent as an atomistic entity, at least in a heuristic research sense, while the very nature of organizational communication is rational, holistic, and structured.[21]

In summary, communication is vital to every organization. There are still questions as to the actual role of communication in organizations. Within educational organizations, organizational communication is a new and relatively unexplored concept. The few studies which have been done have focused on the use of quantitative data which tends to isolate its elements. This study took an indepth look at communication within the total setting of selected elementary schools. The data provided by this study enhances the understanding of organizational communication within elementary schools and serves as a basis for additional research.

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[20] Rogers, p. 24.

[21] Rogers, p. 25.

Definition of terms

Certain terms used in this study are defined for clarity. These terms and definitions are as follows:

1. Elementary School. A public educational institution enrolling boys and girls in grades kindergarten through six, employing a full time, non-teaching principal, and having a minimum of ten teaching staff members. Specifically, the term elementary school will be used when referring to Jones Elementary School or Smith Elementary School.
2. Organizational Communication. The process of passing information and understanding among the members of an organization. A broader, more philosophic definition is that offered by Ruesh and Bateson:

   > . . .all those processes by which people influence one another. . .this definition is based on the premise that all actions and events have communicative aspects, as soon as they are perceived by a human being. . .that such perception changes the information which an individual possesses and therefore influences him.[22]

   a. Channels of Communication. This refers to the manner in which communication takes place; the vehicle through which information is transmitted and shared within the organization. Some aspects to be explored are:

      (1) Public address system

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[22] J. Ruesh, and G. Bateson, Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychology (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.,1951), p. 6.

(2) Face-to-face conversation

(3) Memos, bulletins, pamplets, etc.

(4) Policy and procedure manuals

(5) Staff meetings

(6) Grapevine

b. Flow of Communication. This refers to the direction in which information is transmitted and shared within the organization. Some of the flows to be examined are:

(1) Downward communication

(2) Upward communication

(3) Horizontal communication

c. Basis of Communication. This refers to the rationale behind communication within the organization; or, why people communicate with one another. Some aspects to be explored are:

(1) Information

(2) Evaluation

(3) Instruction

(4) Influence

(5) Socialization

d. Frequency of Communication. This refers to the frequency which organizational members communicate with one another. Areas to be explored are:

(1) What groups or individuals communicate with one another?

(2) How often does communication take place?

(3) When (time of day) does communication take place?

(4) Where (location in school) does communication take place?

e. Actors in the Communication Process. This refers to those persons within the organization who take part in the communication process. For the purpose of this study, the following actors and their communicative roles were explored:

(1) Principals

(2) Teachers

(3) Other non-certified personnel

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to two schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Both schools were elementary schools housing grades kindergarten through six. The selected schools were renamed Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School to maintain anonymity.

Also, this study was limited to the field study methodology which included participant observation, formal and informal interviews and the analysis of school documents. Further, this study was limited to the fore-mentioned definition of organizational communication and guided by the five broad areas of: 1) channels of communication; 2) flow of communication; 3) basis of communication; 4) frequency of communication; and 5) actors in the communication process. Finally, this study was limited to communication within the school building during school activities. Also, this study was limited to communication between fellow teachers and other staff in the building and between the principal and all staff persons.

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in seven chapters. The introduction and the purpose of the study were discussed in chapter I. In addition, this chapter presented fore-shadowed questions, the importance of the study, definition of terms, limitations of the study, and the organization of the study.

A review of related literature and research is presented in Chapter II. Chapter III describes, in detail, the methodology of the study including the selection of the schools, definition of the role of the fieldworker, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapters IV, V, and VI present the data relative to the study. Chapter IV is designed to describe each school; its social structure and the role of the organizational members. Each school is described and comparisons made between the schools. Chapter V describes the organizational communication patterns found in the selected elementary schools and compares the organizational communication patterns between the two schools.

An analysis of the organizational communication in the selected schools with regard to existing propositions concerning organizational communication in other settings is presented in Chapter VI. Chapter VII presents a summary of the study with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational communication in elmentary schools. In order to provide a general background of pertinent information, this chapter is presented in four parts: 1) Organizational Communication: An Historical Perspective; 2) Organizational Communication: A Review of the Related Literature; 3) Organizational Communication in Educational Settings; and 4) Summary

Organizational Communication: An Historical Perspective

Three basic schools of organizational theory which have had an effect on communication (Scientific Management, 1910-1929; Human Relations, 1939-1959; and Systems, 1960-present) are cited in the literature. It is understood that organizational analysis could be traced back to ancient civilization. However, this study is primarily concerned with this century's contribution to the development of the concept of organizational communication.

The Scientific Management School of organizational behavior marked the introduction of scientific methods into the management of organizations. Overall, those associated with the Scientific Management School did not accord a very significant role to communication, and conceived of communication as limited to command and control through vertical formal channels.[23]

Frederick Taylor, one of the scientific management theorists, emphasized organizational structure and individual behavior. In his book, Scientific Management, he alluded to the fact that communication was to be formal, hierachical, and planned; its purpose was to get the work done, to increase productivity and efficiency.[24] In essence, Taylor viewed communication as downward only. It was assumed that those at the top possessed all the relevant information and the function of communication was to disseminate their knowledge.

Henry Fayol most clearly described the role of communication flows in organizations and the restrictions placed on communication by the organizational structure. Fayol illustrated this problem of restricted communication flows and suggested a solution:

> If communication is required between individuals L and M, who are at the same hierachical level but in two different departments, they can formally contact each other only by sending a message up and down the ladder of command. It would be much more sensible, and much quicker, for L and M to communicate directly, even though this action bypasses their superiors. Fayol argued that such direct, horizontal communication ought to be allowed in an organization, at least in crisis situations when rapid action is essential. His special-purpose by-passing device today bears the name of "Fayol's Bridge", it represents recognition by the Scientific Management School that the formal structure may unduly impede useful communication flows, and that special exceptions ought to be allowed.[25]

While the Scientific Management School recognized that communication problems occurred in organizations, such problems were generally attributed to a failure to follow management principles. It was felt that if the span of control became too wide, it would be difficult for the manager to communicate effectively with subordinates.[26] The Scientific Management School, in essence, saw communication as a useful tool for the dissemination of information and the instructions from the top to those employees in subordinate positions.

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[23] Frederick Taylor, Scientific Management, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1911), p. 33.

[24] Taylor, p. 29.

[25] Rogers, p. 34.

Communication performs many functions in an organization. With the advent of the Human Relations School, this fact came to be more fully realized. While the Scientific Management School focused on one-way vertical communication, the Human Relations School gave attention to both formal and informal communication in organizations. Two of the founders of the Human Relations School were Chester Barnard, who had been president of New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, and Elton Mayo, a professor of industrial research in the Harvard University Graduate School of Business. Chester Barnard, in his book, Functions of the Executive, was not satisfied with the traditional definition of an organization; he gave considerable attention to both the formal and informal aspects of the organization. "Informal organizations," he wrote, "are necessary to the operations of formal organizations"[27]. Informal groups establish attitudes, norms, and individual codes of conduct within the formal system. Barnard's book gave credence to the importance of communication in organizations.

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[26] Luther Gulick, and Lyndall F. Urwick, Papers on the Science of Administration (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1937), p. 126.

[27] Barnard, p. 123.

"The first executive function," he wrote," is to develop and maintain system of communication."[28] Barnard's conception of communication was limited, with the focus on its use by authority. To Barnard, communication was mainly one-way and formal.[29]

Mayo headed a series of research activities by Harvard professors in the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company that revolutionized conceptions of human behavior and motivation in organizations. In their review of the literature, Katz and Lazarsfeld identified the Hawthorne studies as important empirical investigations leading to the belated recognition of the importance of informal interpersonal relationships in situations formerly conceptualized as strictly formal and atomistic.[30]

The Scanlon Plan was a famous participation and incentive system which grew out of the human relations movement. It was introduced by Joseph N. Scanlon, a union leader in a steel mill. The basis of this plan was a joint, work-management productivity plan to meet the immediate financial crisis of the company.[31] At the heart of the Scanlon Plan were two essential elements: 1) that all members of the organization participate in improving productivity by offering suggestions; and 2) that all members be rewarded equitably for improving productivity.[32] The basic importance of the Scanlon Plan was that it focused on bottom-up communication flow in the form of suggestions about how to improve organizational performance, and it utilized a bonus system that encouraged cooperative activities by groups of workers and managers.

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[28] Barnard, p. 226.

[29] Barnard, p. 226.

[30] Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication (New York: Free Press, 1955), p.34.

[31] Fred G. Lesieur, The Scanlon Plan: A Frontier in Labor Management Relations (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1958).

Other contributors to the Human Relations School were Douglas McGregor of MIT, Renis Likert of the University of Michigan, and Chris Argyris formerly of Yale, and now at Harvard University. McGregor contrasted Theory X, the classical notion of rational economic man, with Theory Y, a view of man as independent, responsible, and growth-oriented.[33] Likert argued for a participatory style of organizational management in which the workers are involved in the decision-making processes.[34] He claimed that the employees' struggle for need satisfaction within the organizational structure often led to a conflict between the goals of the organization and those of the individual member.[35] The primary difference between the Scientific Management School and the Human Relations School is that the Human Relations School perceived of organizational communication, not just as a tool by which management could talk to workers but a means by which management could listen to what the workers were saying. In essence, the Human Relations School focused attention on communication between superior and subordinate and on informal communication among peers in an organization.[36]

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[32] Carl F. Fost and others, The Scanlon Plan for Organization Development: Identity, Participation, and Equity (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1974), p. 5.

[33] Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1960).

[34] Likert, The Human Organization.

[35] Likert, The Human Organization.

The primary focus of the Systems School of management is upon the interdependency of the subsystem components of the system.[37] Theorists of this school conceived of a system or organization as a set of interdependent parts.[38] One essential element of an organization is communication, which links the parts or subsystems so as to facilitate their interdependence. As the Systems School recognizes the need to study interactions of the subsystems in an organization, it focuses on communication as the key to analyzing and understanding organizations as social systems. Consequently, it can be gleaned from the literature that communication and information theory were central in the development of systems theory.[39] The Systems School views communication as a vital part of organizations and as a process facilitating the interdependence of the parts of the total organization. As stated by Leavitt and others:

> Organizations draw their nourishment from information. They depend for their life on networks and systems of communication that make it possible for many people to work in concert. It is this flow of information that binds an organization together

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[36] Rogers, p. 46.

[37] Rogers, p. 53.

[38] Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "General Systems Theory: A Critical Review," General System, (Vol. 7, 1962), pp. 1-20.

[39] Norbert Wiener, The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Publishers,1950).

into a single, coherent unit.[40]

In summary, information processing is seen by the Systems School as the main function performed by all organizations; organizational systems are essentially communication systems. While the Systems School has led to a reorientation of organizational communication research, the intellectual potential of systems theory has not been realized in the operations of organizational research, especially as it relates to organizational communication.

Organizational Communication: A Review of the Literature and Research

This section of the review of related literature is divided into three parts: 1) the importance of communication in organizations; 2) the nature of organizational communication; and 3) organizational communication propositions. This section is divided in this manner in an effort to focus on information pertinent to this study.

Almost everyone belongs to one or more organizations and most people would agree that it is communication that gives life to an organizational structure.[41] Chester Barnard was one of the earliest management theorists to recognize the importance of communication in organizations. He contended that "in any exhaustive theory of organization, communication would occupy a central place, because the structure, extensiveness, and scope of organizations are almost entirely determined by communication technique.[42]

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[40] Harold J. Leavitt and others, The Organizational World (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1973), p. 57.

[41] Rogers, p.6.

[42] Barnard, p. 8.

Barnard pointed out that the conditions for an organization coming into existence were that there are persons who: 1) are able to communicate with each other; 2) are willing to contribute action; and 3) are willing to accomplish a common purpose.[43] The importance of communication is stated by Bavelas and Barret in their classical article on organizational communication:

> It is entirely possible to review an organization as an elaborate system for gathering, recombining, and disseminating information. It is not surprising, in these terms, that the effectiveness of an organization with respect to the achievement of its goals should be so closely related to its effectiveness in handling information.
>
> . . .communication is not a secondary or derived aspect of organization- a "helper" of the other presumably more basic functions. It is rather the essence of organized activity and is the basic process out of which all other functions derive.[44]

Thayer, in his book Administrative Communication, contended that "communication plays the central role in all administration; administration is communication."[45] Herbert Simon probably stated it most sweepingly: "The question to be asked of any administrative process is: How does it influence the decisions of the individuals? Without communication, the answer must always be: It does not influence them at all."[46] More recently, Katz and Kahn noted that communication is the very essence of an organization and the social process of broadest relevance in the functioning of an organization.[47] The very nature of organizations adds to the credibility of communication as one of its most vital elements. Communication holds the interdependent parts of an organization together. As Hicks states: "When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist."[48] Not only is communication vital in the internal functioning of the organization, it is also vital in the exchange of information within its environment. The communication system serves as the vehicle by which organizations are embedded in the environments.[49] Although there has been a growth of automation and computerization in the last decade, Redding concluded that the logic of supporting the assertion that administration is communication is difficult to refute.[50] Hampton et. al. discussed why communication is still important even with the growth of technology:

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[43] Barnard, p. 82.

[44] Alex Bavelas, and Dermot Barret, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel (Vol. 27, 1951), p. 368.

[45] Lee O. Thayer, Administrative Communication (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin Press,1961), p.76.

[46] Herbert Simon, Models of Man (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1956), p. 109.

> Effective interpersonal relations are central to political and organizational leadership. Even in highly automated plants where technology eliminates subordinates, the number of persons with whom managers must maintain relations does not necessarily decrease. Those workers who are no longer required are replaced by systems engineers, computer programers, executive assistants and staff specialists. Relations with the latter may be more

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[47] Katz and Kahn, p. 223.

[48] H. G. Hicks, The Management of Organizations (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1967), p. 130.

[49] Harold Guetzkow, "Communication In Organizations," in James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally Inc., 1965), p. 534.

[50] Charles W. Redding, "The Organizational Communicator," Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

> subtle and stressful than relatively clear-cut boss-subordinate confrontations. Accordingly, interpersonal relations remain central to managerial careers and to organizational effectiveness.[51]

The importance of communication is almost a given in any discussion of organizations. Indeed, communication is as vital to organizations today as it was in ancient civilizations. Attempts to determine how much time is spent communicating in organizations reveal that from 60 to 100 percent of the working day may be spent sending and receiving messages.[52]

The nature of communication is of growing interest in the research on organizational communication. It is important that the characteristics of communication in organizations be examined. For the purpose of this study, organizational communication is defined as the process of passing information and understanding among the members of the organization. In looking at the literature on organizational communication, the review will follow the five broad areas outlined in Chapter I: 1) channels of communication; 2) flow of communication; 3) basis of communication; 4) frequency of communication; and 5) actors in the communication process.

In the communication process, messages are carried by communication channels or media. Within each organization, a wide variety of channels are used. The channel through which the message is transmitted gives the receiver cues concerning the attitudes toward the receiver and toward the message, and thus affects the message.[53] Mehrabian contended that "immediacy behaviors involve an increase in the number of message cues available to the receiver. In terms of this concept, communication channels were placed in rank-order from most to least immediate:

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[51] David Hampton, Charles E. Summer, and Ross A. Webber, Organizational Behavior and the Practice of Management (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), p. xiii.

[52] Raymond V. Lesikar, Business Communication-Theory and Application (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1972).

1. face-to-face communication
2. picture-phone
3. telephone
4. telegram
5. letter
6. direct intermediary
7. leaked rumor through an intermediary[54]

The methods or channels of communication have been investigated in an effort to explain how information is communicated and to determine which channels used are deemed most appropriate and effective. Given the effects of the channels chosen for communication, the literature has examined communication channels in various organizations. Thomas Dahle conducted three experimental studies with college students, business workers, and industrial workers, respectively.[55] The purpose of the studies was to identify which one of five channels of communication, namely: oral only, written only, oral and written, bulletin boards, and the grapevine, was most effective within the organization. Of the five channels, Dahle found the oral and written methods of communication combined to be more effective. This channel was followed in turn by oral only, written only, posting on a bulletin board, and transmitting through the grapevine. Dale Level, who partially replicated the Dahle studies, found only partial support for the study. Level found that the channel of communication deemed most effective is determined by the situation.[56] The results of Level's study showed that the oral channel was most effective for managers to use when reprimandng subordinates and when handling disputes, and the written channel worked best for transmitting general information to workers in organizations. Lull, Funk and Persol surveyed presidents of the 100 largest firms in the United States and found that important messages were sent orally, or by combined oral and written channels, while less important messages usually were transmitted in writing.[57] While personal contact represents the most desirable channel because it allows the face-to-face exchange of ideas, the situation dictates the communication channel to be used. Because all channels have specific characteristics relevant to communication, six key elements should be be considered when choosing the channel: 1) speed; 2) selectivity 3) feedback; 4)acceptance; 5) monetary costs; and 6) accountability.[58]

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[53] Baird, p. 258.

[54] Albert Mehrabian, Silent Messages (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishers, 1971), p.3.

[55] Thomas Dahle, "An Objective and Comparative Study of Five Methods of Transmitting Information to Business and Industrial Employees" Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Purdue University, 1953.

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[56] Dale A. Level, "Communication Effectiveness: Method and Situations," The Journal of Business Communication, (Vol. 10, 1973), pp. 19-25.

[57] P. Lull, F. Funk, and D. Piersol, Business and Industrial Communication From the Viewpoint of the Corporation President (Purdue University Department of Speech, 1954).

[58] Arlyn J. Melcher and Ronald Beller, "Toward a Theory of Organizational Communication: Consideration in Channel Selection," Journal of the Academy of Management (March, 1967), p. 41.

Another important aspect of communication is direction of flow. The literature supports the fact that communication flows in three directions; 1) downward; 2) upward; and 3) horizontal. In the early history of management theory, primary emphasis was placed on the downward flow of information. Downward communication was used to send orders, directives, goals, policies, and memorandum to employees at lower levels of the organization.[59] Messages of this type were important to organizational functioning because it provided the information necessary for subordinates to get the job done. The literature cites some clear findings regarding downward communication in organizations. Stephen Habbe surveyed two similar plants and observed that the employees of the plant which provided the most downward communication desired more information than did workers in the plant which communicated relatively little.[60] It was found that messages tend not to filter down. In a survey of workers, foremen, and general foremen, Likert discovered that at each level the superiors overestimated both the amount of information their subordinated knew and the degree to which they understood their subordinates' problems.[61] Katz and Kahn's research led them to conclude that "feedback to the individual about how well he is doing in his job is often neglected or poorly handled. The frequent complaint by the individual is that he does not know where he stands with his superiors.[62] While employees want information, the the literature points out the fact that often they do not receive it.

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[59] Lewis, p. 60.

[60] Stephen Habbe, Communicating With Employees. Student Personnel Policy (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1952), p. 181.

[61] Renis Likert, "Motivational Approach to Management Development," Harvard Business Review (37, 1959), pp. 75-82.

Gerald Goldhaber in Baird suggests several factors that inhibit downward messages: 1) many organizations rely heavily upon mechanical and written communication media and neglect oral, face-to-face transmission; 2) employees may become saturated with downward directed messages and ultimately ignore all messages; and 3) the timing of messages may cause employees to ignore all messages.[63] Keith Davis in Burns calls the overflow of memoranda, notes, letters, announcements, and house publications within the organization as overpublication.[64] In many instances, downward communication does not reach the levels of the organization for which it is intended. It has been suggested that the filtering of downward messages occurs because of the lack of trust between employees, perceptible differences among communicators, and the number of links in the communication chain.[65] Davis has suggested several prerequisites for effective downward communication:

1. Being informed, for we cannot communicate what we don't know.
2. Developing a positive communication attitude by demonstrating to employees the importance of sharing relevant information.
3. Planning for communication by developing policies and procedures by which people will expect to be informed and the effectiveness of downward communication can be monitored.

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[62] Katz and Kahn, p. 239.

[63] Baird, p. 269.

[64] T. Burns, "The Direction of Activity and Communication in a Department Executive Group," Human Relations (7, 1954), pp. 73-97.

[65] Burns, pp. 82-85.

4. Gaining subordinate confidence in superiors, and vice versa, so that messages will flow freely between organization levels.[66]

In summary, downward communication is one direction of communication flow within the organization. In most instances, it is used to transmit information essential to getting the work done. While downward communication is susceptible to filtering and overpublication, if used effectively, it has great potential within an organization.

Upward communication consists of messages flowing from subordinates to superiors through the organization hierarchy. Upward communication provides necessary functions for both subordinates and superiors because: 1) subordinates gain a sense of personal worth and a feeling of belonging to the organization; and 2) superiors can measure the receptiveness to downward communication and gain assistance in the decision-making process.[67] Scholz recorded that communication was indispensable for planning, decision-making, and motivation.[68] William Read investigated the upward flow of information, a procedure which received little support in early management history and found that upward communication was related to interpersonal trust, influence, and mobility.[69] Roberts and O'Reilly, likewise, found evidence of a correlation between effective upward communication and the subordinates trust in the superior.[70] Upward communication is often viewed as essential to every organization. This position is supported by Berkowitz and Bennis who found that communication with superiors is perceived by organization members to be the most important and the most satisfying type of communication behavior. Also, they found that upward communication is the type in which employees find it most difficult to participate.[71] Jackson discovered that people tend to direct communication more toward those perceived to have higher status and to avoid those having low status.[72]

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[66] Burns, p. 89.

[67] Baird, p. 264.

[68] W. Scholz, "Communication for Control," Advanced Management (24,2959), pp. 13-15.

[69] William H. Read, "Upward Communication in Industrial Hierarchies," Human Relations, (15,1962), pp. 3-15.

Many factors affect upward communication in an organization. In many instances, these factors are related to the needs of the organizational members. Cohen found upward communication useful in achieving increases in status by promoting actural movement upward in the organization hierachy.[73] John Anthanassiades[74] found upward distortion to be affected by the communicator's personal needs for achievement and security. It also has been found that upward communication reduces the psychological distance between superiors and subordinates. Mulder found that subordinates wish to be closer to or identify with their superiors and upward communication helps them to achieve that aim.[75]

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[70] K. H. Roberts and C. A. O'Reilly,III, "Failure in Upward Communication of Organizations: Three Possible Culprits," Academy of Management Journal (17,1974), pp. 205-215.

[71] L. Berkowitz, and Warren Bennis, "Interpersonal Patterns in Formal Service Oriented Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly (5,1961), p.49.

[72] J. Jackson, "Analysis of Interpersonal Relations in Formal Organizations," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1973.

[73] H. Cohen, "Upward Communication in Experimentally Created Hierachies," Human Relations, (11, 1958), pp. 41-53.

[74] J. Athanassiades, "The Distorting of Upward Communication in Hierarchical Organizations," Academy of Management Journal (16,1973), pp. 207-226.

Many organizations have developed techniques to improve upward communication. Among these techniques are: suggestion systems; grievance systems; counseling; informational interviews; opinion surveys; meetings; social gatherings; solicitation of letters from employees; and open-door policies.[76] Davis in Burns suggests that employees keep their superiors informed in several areas:

1. Any matters in which the superior may be held accountable by those above him.
2. Any matters in dispute or likely to cause controversy between or within the units of the organization.
3. Any matters requiring advice from the superior or his coordination with other persons or units.
4. Any matters involving recommendations for changes in or variance from established policies.
5. Any other matters which will enable higher management to improve economic and social performance.[77]

In summary, upward communication is communication flow from subordinates to superiors through the organization hierarchy. This type of communication has usefulness for both the subordinate and the superior. Upward communication helps subordinates meet many of their personal goals and satisfy personal needs. For the superior, upward communication helps the measurement of the receptiveness toward downward communication and helps gain information necessary for effective decision-making in the organization. The primary importance of upward communication appears to be its ability to decrease the psychological distance between the superior and the subordinate in an organization.

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[75] M. Mulder, "Power and Satisfaction in Task Oriented Groups," Acta Psychologia (16,1959), pp. 178-225.

[76] Baird, p. 267.

[77] Burns, pp. 73-97.

Horizontal communication consists of communication between members of the same hierarchical level. Fayol was one of the earliest management theorists to recognize the importance of horizontal communication. This is evident in the concept of "Fayol's Bridge".[78] In 1961, Landsberger looked at the direction of communication flow. He found that 31 percent of all communication in an organization was by this time taking place between managers on the same step of the organizational ladder. He favored horizontal communication for its speed in disseminating information within the organization.[79]

Several functions of horizontal communication within the organization have been found: 1) it allows coordination between departments and allows for a coordination of efforts to maximize productivity; 2) it allows problem solving; 3) it allows the sharing of information among departments which contributes to the task effectiveness of the departments involved; 4) it is useful for solving intradepartment or interdepartment conflict without executive intervention; 5) it allows interaction among organization peers and furnishes social and emotional support to the worker; and 6) it may serve as a substitute for upward or downward communication. It has generally been shown that as an organization increases in size, the amount of horizontal communication increases. Hage, Aiken, and Marett found that, in organizations as authority becomes less centralized and more shared throughout the organization, horizontal communication increases.[80] Also, it was found that in organizations characterized by unrestricted horizontal communication there were frequent instances of conflict and misunderstanding.[81] While there is generally a lack of downward and upward communication in organizations, horizontal communication is quite prevalent in organizations. As shown by the Hawthorne studies, organizational personnel, even at the lowest level, talk to one another and sometimes achieve levels of understanding and coordination that challenge the organization's formal authority.[82]

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[78] Rogers, p. 34.

[79] H. A. Landsberger, "Interaction Process Analysis of Professional Behavior," American Sociological Review (20,1955), pp. 566-575.

Within all organizations, individuals communicate at an informal level in what is called the informal system or grapevine. Davis reports that this term was first used during the Civil War, when intelligence telegraph lines were strung on tree branches in a manner resembling a grapevine.[83] The informal communication system complements the formal communication system. Barnard saw the informal system as essential to communication in formal organizations and further suggested that executives maintain the informal executive organization as an essential means of communication. Newstron et. al. studied the influence and value of the informal communication system within the organization and found: 1) 53 percent of the respondents viewed the grapevine as a negative factor; 2) the value of the grapevine was viewed as positive by 27 percent; 3) the value of the grapevine was viewed as neutral by 20 percent; and 4) 38 percent viewed its strength as neutral.[84] The grapevine, overall, was viewed negatively by the managers and white collar workers; however, it is ever present in all organizations. Davis[85] in Burns reports that the most important and significant characteristics of grapevine communication were: 1) speed of transmission; 2) degree of selectivity; 3) locale of operation; and 4) relation of formal organization. Most studies of the grapevine also show that the information it carries is reasonably accurate, although in many cases it is somewhat distorted. Often, it is the thread of truth on which grapevine news is based that gives it credibility.[86] The grapevine is important because it gives management insights into employee attitudes, provides a safety valve for employee emotions, and helps spread useful information.[87]

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[80] J. Hage, M. Aiken and C. Marett, "Organizational Structure and Communication," American Sociological Review (36,1971), pp.860-871.

[81] H. Horan, "A Communication Systems Analysis of KOB-TV," Paper presented at the convention of the International Communication Association, Atlanta, 1972.

[82] Barnard, The Functions of the Executive.

[83] Burns, pp. 87-93.

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[84] John W. Newstrom, Robert E. Monczka, and William E. Reif, "Perceptions of the Grapevine: Its Value and Influence," The Journal of Business Communication (11,1974), pp.12-20.

[85] Burns, p. 95.

[86] Roberts et al., " Failure in Upward Communication of Organizations".

The basis of communication refers to the reasons why persons in the organization communicate. Katz and Kahn classify the rationale for communication into five types:

1. Specific task directives/instructions concerning job performance.
2. Information designed to produce understanding of the task and its relation to other organization tasks-essentially a coordinating function.
3. Information about organization procedures and practices, including policies, rules, and regulations.
4. Feedback to the subordinate concerning his or her performance.
5. Propaganda messages designed to motivate employees by giving them a sense of mission or making them feel a commitment to organizational goals.[88]

Kirchner and Belenkner found that workers desired instruction concerning their work, information regarding things affecting them directly, and news rather than stale confirmation of known facts.[89] It has been reported by Haney that the prominent flow of information takes place within, rather than between, groups.[90] The earlier review of the literature alluded to the fact that communication also takes place because members wish to achieve goals, satisfy personal needs, or improve their immediate situation.

It is apparent from the literature that organizations could not exist without communication. The majority of time spent within some organizations is devoted to communication. Seventy-five percent of this time is spent in individual face-to-face communication.[91] The frequency of communication is related to the channels of communication and the flow of communication.[92]

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[87] Lewis, p. 69.

[88] Katz and Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, p. 31.

[89] W. Kirchner and J. Belenkner, "What Employees Want to Know," Personnel (32,1955), p. 379.

[90] Haney, Communication and Organizational Behavior, p. 135.

The actors in the communication process are vital to its effectiveness. All individuals in an organization are not equivalent in their communication behavior. Within the organization there are many communication roles: 1) gatekeepers keep the organization's gate on message flow; 2) liaisons are located in a crucial position so as to connect the canvas of cliques in the organization; 3) opinion leaders are dominantly influential in an informal way; and 4) cosmopolites have a relatively high degree of communication with the system's environment.[93] Kurt Lewin coined the term "gatekeeper" in his studies of how housewives controlled the flow of new foods, such as sweetbreads, to their families.[94] So the first gatekeepers to be studied functioned in informal communication structures. Breed in Allen studied this concept in newspaper editors and reporters as they gathered and selected the news.[95] It was found that newspapers absorb large amounts of information from their environments each day, process these data on the basis of some criteria as to what is "news", and then output this information to the public on the printed page. The process of gatekeeping occurs in all organizations because the organization is made up of cliques whose primary function is the control of information flows. Professor Thomas J. Allen and his associates at the Sloan School of Management at MIT have conducted a comprehensive series of studies of scientific gatekeepers in research-and-development laboratories.[96] These gatekeepers controlled the flow of technical and scientific knowledge among scientists.

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[91] Haney, p. 141.

[92] Haney, pp. 140-144.

[93] Rogers, pp. 132-133.

[94] Kurt Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," in Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley, eds., Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958).

[95] Thomas J. Allen et al., " The International Technological Gatekeeper," Technology Review (73, 1971), pp.36-43.

Liaisons are important to organizational communication because they get communication messages from one subsystem to another within an organization. A study by Jacobson and Seashore was one of the first to focus on liaisons. While their study was not looking for liaisons, they found that there were liaisons who linked the various cliques in the total network.[97] Research has found that from 5 to 10 percent of an organization's members are liaisons. Edwin Ammend argued that every individual acts as a liaison to some extent.[98] As indicated earlier, the needs of the individual in the organization have a great effect on the process of communication among the organizational members.[99]

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[96] Allen, et al. pp. 36-43.

[97] Eugene Jacobson and Stanely Seashore, "Communication Patterns in Complex Organizations," Journal of Social Issues (7, 1950), pp. 28-40.

[98] Edwin H. Ammend, Liaison Communication Roles of Professionals in a Research Dissemination Organization Ph.D. Thesis, East Lansing, Mich., Michigan State University, 1971.

In reviewing the literature on organizational communication, several propositions have surfaced. Among these are: 1) communication is purposive; 2) the channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message; 3) the message sent is not necessarily the message received; 4) feedback is essential for high levels of understanding; 5) the formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable; 6) horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical flows; 7) downward communication flows are more frequent than upward communication flows; and 8) the content of upward communication is more likely to be positive than negative.

The literature supports the fact that all communication has a purpose. It is initiated to accomplish one or more purposes. Thayer lists four functions of administrative communication: informing someone; instructing or directing someone; evaluating someone or something; and influencing another's thoughts and behavior.[101] Katz and Kahn, likewise, listed several functions of communication and contebded that all communication could be identified with one or more of these functions. Cal Downs et al. gave additional insight into this proposition by his contention that the lack of communication also is purposive.[102]

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[99] Koehler, et al., p. 1.

[100] Haney, Communication and Organizational Behavior, pp. 141-144.

[101] Thayer, Administrative Communication, p. 187.

The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message. People have a tendency to associate meanings with the type of communication channel. Dahle[103] found that oral communication was preferred to written communication. Also, Lull, Funk, and Piersol found that the importance of the communication determined which channel would be used.[104] Level found that the oral method of communication was most effective for managers to use when reprimanding subordinates and when handling disputes, and the written method of communication worked best for transmitting general information. Marshall McLuhan in Downs makes the point that "the channel is the message".[105]

The message sent is not necessarily the message received. This is due in part to the concept of abstracting. As stated by Downs:

> Abstracting is the process of focusing on some aspects of the message, event, or person while neglecting other characteristics of the same message, event or person.. The reason, then, that people may give different interpretations to the same message or event is that they may be focusing on different aspects.. The selected stimuli are then filtered through a mental screen made up of the individual's past experiences, language facility, habits of thinking, priorities, purposes, knowledge, attitudes, and communication skills.[106]

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[102] Downs, Cal W., Wil Linkugel, and David M. Berg, The Organizational Communicator (York: Harper and Row, Publishers), 1977,

[103] Dahle,"Study of Five Methods of Transmitting Information".

[104] Lull and Piersol, Business and Industrial Communication: From the Viewpoint of the Executive President.

[105] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 42.

[106] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 39.

Therefore, difficulties in communication between individuals can arise because no two people see or hear exactly the same thing. Warr and Knapper conceive these differences in terms of three components of perception: 1) attributive; 2) expectancy; and 3) affective.[107] Several studies indicate that all perceptions have emotional qualities.[108] The importance of feedback in the organization is supported in the literature. It is felt that feedback in organizational groups generally increases both the time spent in discussion and the group's productivity.[109] Brown contends that feedback is crucial to the successful functioning of any large organization.[110]

The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable. This proposition has been outlined under the discussion on channels of communication.

There was support for the proposition that horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical flows. Cal Downs[111] found that men are more prone to speak freely and openly to their equals than to their superiors. Also, this idea was part of the concept of "Fayol's Bridge". Wickesberg observed that two-thirds of his subjects' communications were horizontally directed while only one-third of their behaviors involved vertical interactions.[112]

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[107] Peter B. Warr, and Chris Knapper, The Perception of People and Events (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), pp. 7-16.

[108] Warr and Knapper, pp. 7-16.

[109] Redding, p. 40.

[110] D.S. Brown, "Some Feedback on Feedback," Adult Leadership (January, 1967), pp. 226-228).

[111] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 116.

Communication in the organization is more often downward than upward. Herbert Simon and his associates found that communication from the superior to the subordinate takes place more easily than communication from the subordinate to the superior.[113] There is, in fact, relatively little upward communication in an organization. A study of assembly-line workers found that 70 percent initiated communication contact with a superior less than once per month.[114] Individuals do not tend to communicate frequently with individuals at higher levels in the organization.

Downs found that when upward communication takes place, superiors generally receive messages that tell them exactly what they want to hear.[115] Upward mobiles are especially likely to send positive messages to the superior. When rewards for good performance are based on positive feedback, negative feedback in the organization is discouraged.[116] This system of distorting information so as to elicit rewards is also cited by Miller.[117]

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[112] A.K. Wickesberg, "Communication Networks in the Business Organizational Structure," Academy of Management Journal (11, 1968), pp. 253-262.

[113] Herbert Simon and others, Public Administration (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1950), p. 236.

[114] Charles T. Walker, and Robert H. Guest, The Man on the Assembly Line (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 93.

[115] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 118.

[116] James Thompson, Organizations in Action (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 125.

Organizational Communication in Educational Setings

There has been a limited amount of research dealing with organizational communication in educational settings. Charters conducted a study which investigated the communication networks in a laboratory high school and five elementary schools. He found a gross difference between the amount of communication in the high school as compared to the five elementary schools. There was considerably more communication in the elementary schools than in the high school. There was evidence that the amount of communication was related to the staff size.[118] Carl Helwig looked at organizational climate and the frequency of principal-teacher communications. He suggested that in times of conflict principals and teachers would communicate more.[119] Thomas Huddleston[120] investigated occupational climate, principal's ledership behavior and reciprocal communication. The reciprocal communication was measured by how efficiently the principals and teachers could verbally resolve a definite communication task. He did not find a significant correlation between the principal's perceived leadership behavior and reciprocal communication between teachers and principals; nor did he find a positive relationship between occupational climate and the reciprocal communication between teachers and principals.

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[117] James G. Miller, "Living Systems: The Organization," Behavioral Science (17, 1972), pp. 1-182.

[118] W.W. Charters, Jr., "Stability and Change in the Communication Structure of School Faculties," Educational Administration Quarterly (5,1969), pp.15-38.

[119] Carl Helwig, "Organizational Climate and Frequencies of Principal-Teacher Communication in Selected Ohio Elementary Schools," The Journal of Experimental Education (39,1971), pp. 52-55.

[120] Thomas Joe Huddleston, "The Relationship Between Organizational Climate, Leadership Behavior, and Recipricol Communication in Selected Missouri Elementary Schools," Dissertation Abstracts International, 36:3289-06A, Saint Louis University, 1975.

Ann Staton-Spicer and Ronald Bassett support the fact that teachers have concerns about communication. They conducted a study to identify these concerns and to determine differences in the concerns of three groups: prospective teachers, student teachers, and inservice teachers. The components of communication that they looked at were concerns related to self, task, and impact of communicating on others. Inservice teachers expressed more concerns about how they communicated than did prospective and student teachers. The responses fell into three categories: 1) concerns about self as a communicator; 2) concerns about the task of communicating; and 3) concerns about their problems in communicating with others.[121]

Summary

There is considerable evidence to support the belief that communication is a vital element in all organizations. The literature has shown that the concern with organizational communication has been present since ancient civilization. In any investigation of organizational communication, a number of factors must be taken into consideration. The literature review has given insight into the nature of communication in organizations and given direction as to the many facets of communication that can be explored in any type of research. It is apparent that the research dealing with organizational communication in educational settings is scarce; however, an attempt has been made to offer research which relates to the study of organizational communication as outlined in this study. This review of related literature gives a perspective with which to view this study on organizational communication.

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[121] Ann Q. Staton-Spicer, and Ronald E. Bassett, " Communication Concerns of Preservice and Inservice Elementary School Teachers," Human Communications Research (5, 1979), pp. 138-146.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. This chapter includes the methodology of the study including the rationale for the use of the field study method, the selection of the schools, securing formal administrative permission for the study, gaining entry into the schools, defining the role of the fieldworker, data collection, standards of authenticity, and data analysis.

Rationale for Use of the Field Study Method

Organizational communication is a very complex term. Because of its complexity, finding valid methods of research has been difficult. As Rogers observes, there have been three important conceptual and methodological biases in past communication research:

1. the lack of a process orientation
2. associated with this, an ignoring of mutual causality among the elements in the communication process
3. a psychological orientation, leading to the shortchanging of structure in the communication process.[122]

Most of the research on organizational communication has been quantitative in nature, which does not allow for communication to be viewed as a process involving the total organization. The systems point of view in research on communication assumes that communication is a process, that there is no simple cause-and-effect, and that organizational structure affects communication behavior and vice versa.[123] If communication is to be viewed as a process, trends in the research on organizational communication should reflect this idea. The literature supports this position:

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[122] Rogers, p. 18.

> . . .Unfortunately, we define communication as a process, but then proceed to treat it, in communication research, as a one shot affair. Most communication research designs allow for only cross-sectional data analysis; such designs cannot tell us very much about the process of communication over time.
>
> Future research ought to emphasize such improved methods as field experiments and panel studies which, by their research designs, are better able to take "moving pictures" of the communication process as it occurs over time.[124]

This study has investigated organizational communication in elementary schools. In order to avoid past conceptual and methodological biases and to provide additional information regarding organizational communication within the educational setting, the field study method of research was used.

Selection of the Schools

In October 1981, two elementary schools were selected for the field study. The two schools, Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School, are located in a city in the Commonwealth of Virginia and house grades kindergarten through six. In selecting

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[123] Rogers, p.22.

[124] Rogers, p. 19.

Jones and Smith as the participating schools in the study, the following criteria were used:

1. The schools would be located in a large, urban school division.
2. The schools would be located in the same school division.
3. The schools would be elementary schools.
4. The schools would house grades kindergarten through six.
5. The schools would have a history of stability over a three year period in regard to staff.

An effort was made to secure elementary schools which were similar with regard to pupil enrollment and percentage of low income families in the attendance area. These and other demographic characteristics are displayed in Table 1 (pp. 91-92).

Securing Formal Administrative Permission for the Study

In October 1981, using criteria set by the researcher, two elementary schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia were selected as the participating schools. In order to secure formal administrative permission for the study, several steps were taken.

An informal meeting was held with the Director of Special Programs for the school division. During this meeting, the general strategy for the study was discussed. Having a strong interest in and positive orientation toward the proposed study from the outset, the Director of Special Programs set up a conference between the researcher and the Division Superintendent.

A meeting was held with the Superintendent of Schools which explored such issues as the amount of time required to carry out data collection procedures, the type of cooperation needed from the school staffs, and the value of the study for the school system. In addition, the meeting allowed the researcher to obtain preliminary information about the participating schools.

The following set of tentative agreements were reached between the administration and the researcher: 1) in order to minimize disruption of school activities, only one researcher would be used in each of the schools; 2) the researcher would be allowed to remain at the schools for as long as deemed necessary to obtain the data required to complete the study; 3) the researcher would not begin the collection of data until January 1982; 4) the researcher would be allowed to use whatever data collection methods felt to be appropriate provided they not interfer with the operation of the schools; 5) the role of the fieldworker would not include that of an advisor or evaluator; 6) the results of the study would be shared with the school division; and 7) the final report would be written in such a manner as to assure the anonymity of the schools and their personnel.

Following this meeting, a letter formalizing these agreements was sent to the Superintendent of Schools.

Gaining Entry Into the Schools

The month of December, 1981 was used to gain entry into the schools. Following the official approval of the project, conferences were set up with the administrator of each participating school. During these conferences, the nature of the study was discussed, The conferences also were used to explore alternatives for entry into the school and procedures for meeting the staff of each school.

During the month of December, 1981, each administrator informed the staff of the nature of the study and the fact that the researcher would be present at the school site for extended periods of time. During the first week in December, the researcher was formally introduced to the staff of each participating school. After this initial introduction, the researcher did not return to the site until January, at which time the data collection process officially began.

Defining the Role of the Fieldworker

In order that this study be put into some perspective, the role of the fieldworker was defined. For this study, the fieldworker was a participant-observer. The phrase participant observation is defined as follows:

> It is used here to refer to research characterized by a period of intense social interactions between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter. During this period, data are unobtrusively and systematically collected.[125]

In order to minimize the effects of the fieldworker on the operation of the schools, the fieldworker made special efforts to participate in inoffensive interaction. While taking a part in all facets of the school, the fieldworker refrained from becoming involved in areas related to educational procedures, teaching, and standardized testing. The fieldworker did not act as an advisor or evaluator.

The role of the fieldworker was clearly explained to the administrator of each participating school. During the first days in the field, the role of the fieldworker was clarified in an inoffensive manner to staff members as the need arose.

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[125] Bogdan and Taylor, p.5.

Data Collection

This study was a field study utilizing participant observation, formal and informal interviews, and the analysis of school documents. The collection of data commenced on January 4, 1982 and terminated on May 14, 1982. A minimum of three days per week was spent in the field

Observations included regular teaching days, inservice days, and parent-conference days. Also, observations were made during formal and informal meetings, classroom activities, lunch, recess, and informal lounge breaks. Observations were made of both formal and informal interactions between and among the teachers and principal within the school building during school activities. The documents which were examined included school handbooks, school annual plans, school committee meeting minutes, pamphlets, memos, bulletins, and and the division policy and procedures manuals.

There were a series of interviews held. Informal interviews were held with the central office administration, principals, teachers, and related school staff members. Formal interviews were limited to the primary participants, the teachers, principals and other related school personnel. All conversation was regarded as a form of interview. The setting was limited to the school building and data were limited to observation notes, interview notes and relevant school documents.

The design of the study necessitated three phases of fieldwork activities, each with a primary focus on obtaining different types of data. The first phase was concerned with obtaining data describing the culture of each school, its social structure, policies and procedures, and the role of the organization's members. The second phase was designed to obtain data which would describe, in detail, all facets of organizational communication in each of the participating schools. The descriptions in phase two were based on the definition of organizational communication outlined in Chapter I and were guided by the five broad areas of organizational communication. The third phase was concerned with obtaining data which could be subjected to analysis of organizational communication in the elementary schools studied with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication.

Standards of Authenticity

One of the problems associated with research which depends upon the observation of human behavior is that different people may interpret things differently or may focus their attention on different aspects of given situations. Taking this into consideration, several steps were taken to strengthen the authenticity of this study.

The authenticity of this study was insured by the use of several sources of data: observations; formal and informal interviews; and analysis of school documents. Also, because the collection of data spanned over five months and involved three days per week, sufficient time was allowed for the kinds of observations and interviews needed to confirm the findings.

The study included a series of formal and informal interviews which established structural corroboration through such techniques as triangulation and cross-examination. Credibility checks were made against what was said by various groups within the school and the actual communicative behavior displayed. The wide range of participants gave the opportunity to cross check attitudes and positions.

It was realized that the researcher in the school might affect the authenticity of the data. However, openness on the part of the observer during the earlier stages of the study was intended to generate feelings of trust from the school staffs. Once this was done, the presence of the observer did not appear to affect the behavior of the participants.

The data were carefully documented by making observation and interview notes as soon as possible after the event occured. These notes were dated, duplicated, coded and filed according to coded topic categories. Representative quotes and descriptions were selected to substantiate general trends of thought.

These procedures strengthened the authenticity of the study and represent standard research procedures in field study methodology.

Data Analysis

The data were compiled and carefully coded to insure the protection of the identity of the participants. The data were reviewed to determine the categories or classes of events and the properties which characterized them. The data were then analyzed to determine linkage. In this study, the researcher looked for reoccurring patterns of organizational communication within the school setting. Also, the researcher assessed the data to determine confirmation of actions and attitudes expressed by the participants. Since this study involved observations and interviews, it was important to discover the linkage between what was stated by the participant and the actual communicative behavior of of the participant. Finally, the data were analyzed for perceptions of the organizational communication within the school by all major participating groups.

Through a careful review of the data, a detailed description of organizational communication within the two elementary schools was presented. Also, the descriptions of each school's communication pattern were compared for similarities and differences. The data were then analyzed with regard to the following eight propositions concerning organizational communication in other settings:

1. Communication is purposive.
2. The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.
3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.
4. Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.
5. The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable.
6. Horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical communication flows.
7. Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward communication flows.
8. The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.[126]

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[126] Haney, pp. 141-144.

Chapter IV

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. In addition, this study was designed to describe the organizational communication patterns found in the selected elementary schools, compare the organizational communication patterns between these schools, and analyze the patterns of organizational communication with regard to existing propositions concerning organizational communication in other settings.

This chapter reports phase one of the study which is a description of each school, its social structure, policies and procedures, and the role of the organization's members. Each school will be described and comparisons are made between the two schools.

Jones Elementary School

Historical Data and Demographic Characteristics

Jones Elementary School is a large, modern, open-space structure which houses grades kindergarten through six. It was constructed to alleviate the overcrowding at two other schools in the district. Built at a cost of over one million dollars, it rests on 20.3 acres of land. It was officially opened in November, 1970, and became the first open-space school in the city.

Jones Elementary School is named for a local black educator, lawyer, and citizen of the city who taught for twenty-five years in the school system before retiring to pursue his law practice. In 1895, another school in the community was named for Mr. Jones but that school was closed in 1927. In response to requests from a number of citizens Jones Elementary School was named for this community leader in 1970.

Jones Elementary School is located in a small residential area on the outskirts of the inner city. Single family dwellings in the community surrounding the school are one-story, brick or brick-frame structures. One large multi-family housing complex is located approximately one-half mile from the school. The homes give the appearance of family stability and middle-income living. A larger number of more expensive homes as well as newer and more substantial apartments are found in the outlying area of the community.

Jones Elementary School is also located west of a light commercial district. Within walking distance of the school are a small shopping center, a small motel, and several small commercial businesses. These commercial businesses are located along a busy thoroughfare near the school. The school is located off this busy thoroughfare in a quiet residential area.

Other features of the school community include several museums, a church, a nursery school, a beach, and a park. However, there are no parks or recreation facilities located in the immediate community surrounding the school. The school yard is used for community recreational activities:

> The school is located on a very large lot. . . The lot appears to be used by the neighborhood because large patches of grass are missing and the grounds seemed to be worn as if baseball or softball are played there. (Fieldnotes 11/10/81)*

Jones Elementary School serves approximately 280 families and 443 students. The school also serves three outlying areas, a mileage span of four to five miles. Because of the mileage span of the attendance area, 67 percent of the students are bused to and from school.

The demographic information on the families served by Jones School reveals several important facts. Family size varies from two members per family to ten or more members per family. However, the median family size is three. Eighty-seven percent of all families are two-parent families. Fifteen percent of the families have incomes of over $15,000, and 54 percent are low income families. Of the 54 percent low income families, 12 percent receive welfare assistance.

The most common place of employment for family members is the local shipyard and the local airforce base. Twenty-eight percent work at the shipyard and 12 percent work at the air force base.

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*This represents an excerpt from the fieldnotes. Subsequent excerpts from the fieldnotes and interviews will be reported using this format.

Twenty-nine percent of the female family members are housewives. The occupations represented by the families in the community include professional, semi-professional, armed forces, technical and trade related, laborer, housewife, and government related. Nineteen percent are employed in technical areas and 20 percent are laborers.

The School Building

Jones Elementary School is a large, one-story brick building with few windows. Located on a large lot with many acres of land surrounding the building, it has its own access road. There is a very large parking area with signs indicating a one-way route to and from the school. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes describes my first impression of the site:

> After parking in the visitor parking area, I passed a covered playground area which was paved and marked for games such as four-square, shuffleboard, circle games, hopscotch and basketball. This area is in the front of the building and leads to the entrance. The entrance to the building consists of six large panels of glass which extend from the ceiling to the floor.
>
> As I entered the building, it was very quiet except for soft music playing in the background. There were no students or teachers in the halls when I entered. The foyer area contained many plants, a long bench, a child's set of table and chairs, and a display case. There were several signs and mottos on the walls:

- You are a child of the universe: you have a right to be here.
- Education is atmosphere as well as instruction.
- I am somebody 'cause God don't make no junk.

> - May you think of your visit as a pleasant one, rewarding us with your return.
>
> I noticed a portrait of a black man on the wall next to the display case. Upon inspection, I noted that it was a portrait of Mr. Jones, the man for whom the school is named. One interesting item which caught my eye was a desk in the hall to the right of the entrance door. There was a stand on the desk which contained a large, open Bible.
>
> The office area is enclosed with glass except for the wooden entrance door. The only person in the office was the secretary. She was seated behind the desk typing. (Fieldnotes 11/10/81)

The administrative offices are located near the main entrance in an attractive, glass-enclosed area. This area also contains the school office, the principal's office, the clinic, and a workroom. To the rear of the main office are the teachers' lounge and several small offices which house the speech resource teachers. The administrative complex is very large and modern. (see Figure I).

The teachers' lounge, which is located beside the principal's office, is quite large and has its own restroom. It contains two work tables, a small sitting area, a soda machine, and a small refrigerator. There is a full-length mirror and a magazine rack on one wall of the lounge. The bulletin board was very attractively decorated and contained notices of professional as well as personal interest to the staff.

The school is designed with the media center as a central core. (See Figure II). The two main halls of the building run along the the side of the media center. All instructional areas flow into one of these two main halls. These two main halls span the length of the building, from the main office area in the front to the cafeteria

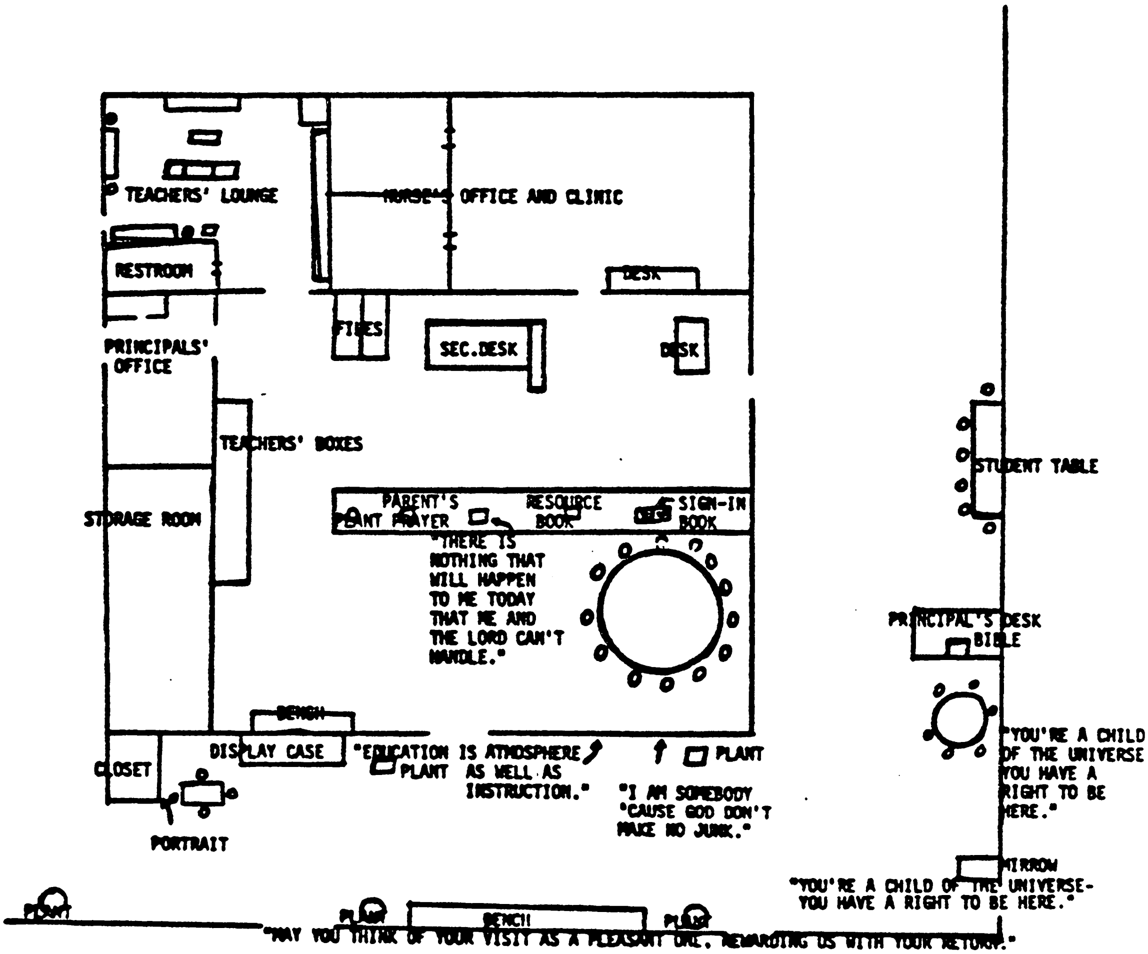
TEACHERS' LOUNGE
NURSE'S OFFICE AND CLINIC
RESTROOM
DESK
FILES
SEC. DESK
DESK
PRINCIPALS' OFFICE
TEACHERS' BOXES
STUDENT TABLE
STORAGE ROOM
PARENT'S PLANT PRAYER
RESOURCE BOOK
SIGN-IN BOOK
"THERE IS NOTHING THAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME TODAY THAT ME AND THE LORD CAN'T HANDLE."
PRINCIPAL'S DESK
BIBLE
BENCH
CLOSET
DISPLAY CASE
"EDUCATION IS ATMOSPHERE AS WELL AS INSTRUCTION."
PLANT
PLANT
"YOU'RE A CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HERE."
"I AM SOMEBODY 'CAUSE GOD DON'T MAKE NO JUNK."
PORTRAIT
MIRROW
"YOU'RE A CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE- YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HERE."
PLANT
PLANT
BENCH
PLANT
"MAY YOU THINK OF YOUR VISIT AS A PLEASANT ONE, REWARDING US WITH YOUR RETURN."

Figure I

Office Area
Jones Elementary School

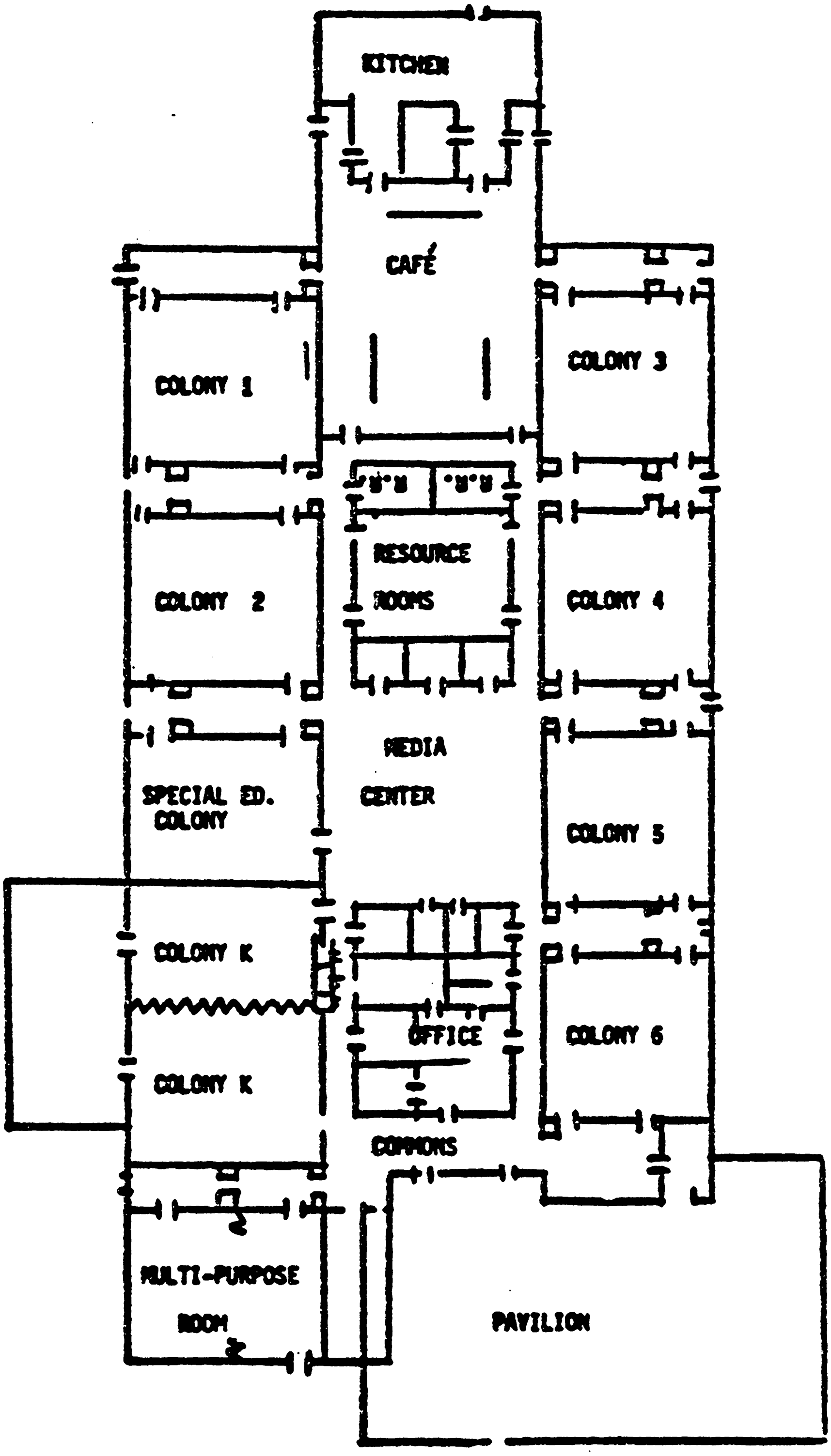
KITCHEN
CAFÉ
COLONY 1
COLONY 3
R.R.
R.R.
RESOURCE
ROOMS
COLONY 2
COLONY 4
MEDIA
CENTER
SPECIAL ED.
COLONY
COLONY 5
COLONY K
OFFICE
COLONY 6
COLONY K
COMMONS
MULTI-PURPOSE
ROOM
PAVILION

Figure II

Building Floor Plan
Jones Elementary School

in the rear. The media center is well equipped with ample space for all types of media activities. The center contains a study area at one end, many small informal reading areas, and a listening center. Located near the librarian's desk is an area arranged for large group presentations. This area contains 25 small rocking chairs and several large beanbags. A large overhead movie screen is in front of this area. At the back of the media center there are several shelves that contain puppets and dolls representing many storybook and television characters. There also are numerous bookshelves on both sides of the media center which serve to define the boundaries of the center. Beautiful pieces of sculpture are on the tops of each row of shelves. In the back of the media center there is a storage room for audio-visual equipment, a teacher's workroom, and the librarian's office.

Jones Elementary School is an open-space school which has several large instructional areas. These areas are called "colonies". At Jones School, there are seven colonies housing grades kindergarten through six with two to three teachers and approximately 65 students in each. Each colony contains moveable furniture, a carpeted floor, and various modern instructional materials and equipment. All of the colonies contain colorful bulletin boards and every available space is used to display students' work, instructional information, or to post classroom rules. In each colony, instructional areas are indicated by the arrangement of student desks. There are no physical barriers to separate the instructional areas and it is possible to observe all instructional areas from any place in the colony. Arranged in a loosely formed square, the teachers' desks are in the center of the colony.

In each of the two kindergarten colonies, there is only one class. Because the area was designed for four instructional groups, the kindergarten colonies are very spacious and contain many student centers and stations. They contain their own restrooms and have a "wet area" with a sink and cabinet.

Each colony has the capability of housing four separate instructional groups. However, none of the colonies are full. The unused portion of each colony is set up for instructional activities.

> The unused area of the colony is set up as a learning station with bulletin boards, student materials, and tables and chairs arranged for study. Each colony appears to have planned how the area would be used. The areas are set up as centers for social studies, science, reading, health, or math. (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

The colonies are aligned on both sides of the building. Grades three through six are housed in the colonies on the right side of the building and grades kindergarten through two are housed on the left. The kindergarten and six grades are at the front of the building. The alignment of the colonies makes it possible to walk the length of the building without entering the main hall.

There are two areas which have been partitioned to allow for self-contained instructional areas. These house the special education classes and the Title I reading and math programs. One such area is located behind the media center and the other is beside the kindergarten colonies.

The multi-purpose room is located to the left of the main entrance hall. It has a separate access hall. It is a very large carpeted space which is divided by a sliding partition. One side is used for music and the other is used for indoor physical education activities. Each room has material throughout the room and bulletin boards indicating the subject area.

The "cafe" is located at the far end of the building. (see Figure III). It also is used as an auditorium. The walls are lined with student work, displays, pictures, mottos, the student pledge, and the names of "outstanding" citizens from each grade. The tables are arranged into nine squares containing four tables. These squares are arranged in the cafe to form three rows and three columns with walking space between each square. The stage is located at one end of the room and the serving lines at the other end. While there are two serving lines, one on each side of the cafe, only one is used. The return tray area is hidden by a permanent wall in front of the kitchen.

In addition to the covered playground area at the front of the building, there is a paved playground area outside the kindergarten colonies. Outside, there are acres of grassy areas which are suitable for all types of physical activities. While there is ample outdoor space, there are few trees or covered playground areas. During inclement or extremely hot weather, students use the indoor physical education area or the paved playground area in the front of the building.

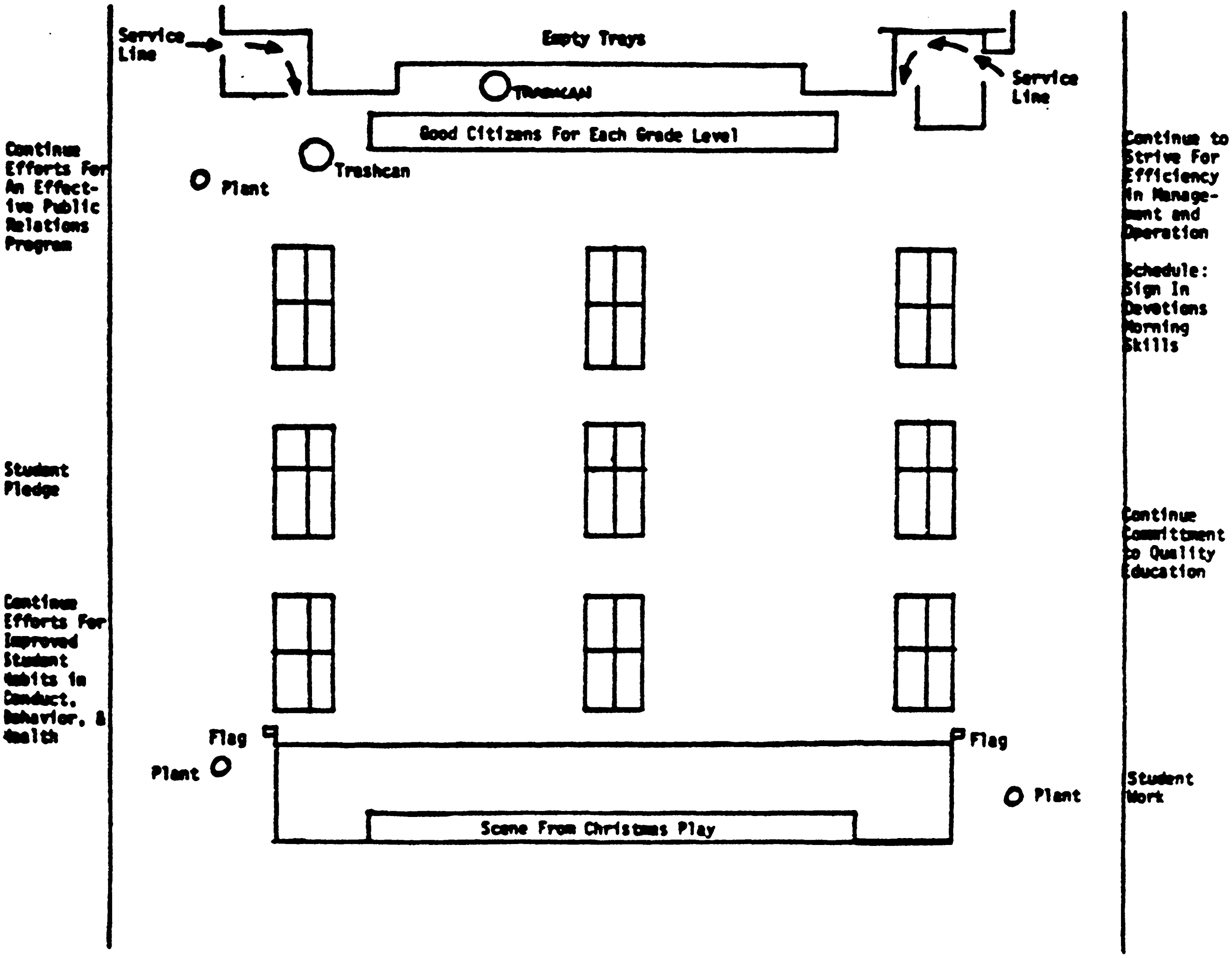
Service Line
Empty Trays
TRASHCAN
Service Line
Good Citizens For Each Grade Level
Trashcan
Plant
Continue Efforts For An Effective Public Relations Program
Continue to Strive For Efficiency in Management and Operation
Schedule:
Sign In
Devotions
Morning Skills
Student Pledge
Continue Committment to Quality Education
Continue Efforts For Improved Student Habits in Conduct, Behavior, & Health
Flag
Flag
Plant
Plant
Student Work
Scene From Christmas Play

Figure III

Cafeteria
Jones Elementary School

Organizational Structure

Jones Elementary School has only one administrator, the principal. Due to a change in the organizational structure of the school division, there are no assistant principals in elementary schools. The school principal has two office staff members - the secretary and the administrative aide. Both of these persons are supervised directly by the principal.

At Jones Elementary School, there are nineteen full-time teachers, six aides, three itinerant teachers, three cafeteria workers, one custodian, one maid, one librarian, one secretary, one office aide and one principal. The school is organized into seven colonies which span grades kindergarten through six. Each colony acts as a teaching team with students assigned to a homebase teacher, but working with other teachers in the colony. At Jones Elementary School, there are two kindergarten teachers with two aides, two first grade teachers with one aide, three second grade teachers, two third grade teachers, two fourth grade teachers, two fifth grade teachers, and two sixth grade teachers. Each of the colonies has a team leader or a "grade chairman". The team leader acts as a liaison between the principal and other team members. In addition to teaching duties, duties, every teacher is assigned to a school committee and acts as a liason person between the staff and the committee.

Several other teachers work with special students. These include two self-contained special education classroom teachers with one special education classroom aide. Also, there is one Title I reading teacher and aide, and one Title I math teacher and aide. Other staff members who do not have homeroom students include the librarian, the speech therapist, and the school nurse. In addition, there are several itinerant teachers: a reading specialist, music teacher, and physical education teacher. These teachers are only present at the school on certain days or during alternate weeks.

There are five other members of the staff. Three of these persons are on the cafeteria staff - two cafeteria workers and one cafeteria manager. The custodial staff consists of one maid and one custodian.

Daily Routine

At Jones Elementary School, the teachers routinely arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 in the morning. By 8:05, all of the teachers have usually arrived. The students begin arriving around 8:00 and start their instructional day at 8:15:

> We arrive around 8:05 and he lets the students in around 8:10. They don't go to the classrooms, however, until 8:15, when we start. We have bus duty and the students stay outside - if it's cold outside, we sit in the hall and line them up in the hall. They don't come to the colonies until 8:15. (Interview 1/4/82)

Upon arrival, the teachers sign-in using the book on the counter in the office, check their mailboxes, and report to their colonies to begin the day. If not serving bus duty, the time prior to 8:15 is used to prepare for the instructional activities of the day.

A morning skills activity period takes place from 8:15 to approximately 8:30. The skill activities consist of boardwork related to a skill that has been taught by the teacher. The teachers place these activities on the board the evening before and, therefore, when the students arrive in the morning, they take their seats and begin working. There is no talking during this period. While most of the teacher planning is done the day before, many teachers use this period to complete any unfinished planning:

> As I entered the colony, one teacher was seated at her desk working with several yellow lesson plan sheets. She greeted me with a smile and inquired about how my Christmas had been. When I commented on the fact that all teachers had lesson plans on their desks, she replied - "Yes, he likes for us to have our plans visible at all times. Although he likes them done daily, I do mine weekly. I don't know what has happened to me lately, though." (Fieldnotes 1/4/82)

A devotional period officially starts the day. This period generally consists of the Pledge to the United States Flag and a selected song or poem. This excerpt describes a typical devotional period:

> At 8:25, the colonies began their devotional period. Colony 4 devotions consisted of the pledge, a song, and a poem. Two students were in charge of the devotions. I noticed that both the teachers and students stood during devotions. I could observe the 5th grade colony from where I was standing. Their devotional period followed the same format.
>
> As I passed through the 6th grade colony, they were just beginning their devotional period. One child took charge. She had the class recite the pledge, sing the Star Spangled Banner, and then she read a poem. The poem was entitled God Cares. She used the book marked Morning Devotions - Grade 6. As I observed the 6th grade devotional period, the principal stood in the entrance to the colony. He appeared to be observing. (Fieldnotes 2/17/82)

From 8:15 until 9:15, the students continue their morning skills activities. During this time, the teachers check attendance, collect monies, and complete daily school reports. After the completion of reports, the teachers confer with individual students or work with small and large groups to check their understanding of the assigned skills.

Reading instruction begins at 9:15. The students at Jones Elementary School are grouped for reading. The Holt Placement Test along with the Basic Learning Skills (BLS) state testing program and teacher-made tests are used to place students in reading levels. Each teacher, therefore, is responsible for different ability groups. The time block for reading varies with physical education, music, and library schedules. After reading instruction, students return to their home-base group.

Math instruction begins at approximately 10:30. The Holt Placement Test and teacher-made tests are used to place students in math levels. Each teacher also is responsible for different math ability groups.

Within the colony, the team-teaching approach is used. Each teacher works with a high group in one subject area and a low group in another area. The groups are flexible and students move as they show mastery of skills.

The lunch period begins at 11:40 and continues until approximately 12:15. The serving line closes at 12:30. The teachers escort their students to the lunchroom and maintain strict discipline:

> In the cafeteria, each teacher escorted his/her class into the room. The students took their seats and each teacher sat with the class. The students and teachers generally did not talk or either talked very quietly. (Fieldnotes 1/4/82)

> The cafeteria was very quiet. A group of boys sitting near me were talking quietly about trading an ice cream sandwhich for a carton of chocolate milk. The male teacher called over to the group of boys, "John, bye." Immediately, one of the boys stood up, took his tray, and went to sit alone at an empty table at the far end of the cafeteria. The other boys immediately stopped talking. (Fieldnotes 1/13/82)

> It was very quiet in the cafeteria. As I observed the students closely, it dawned on me that they were not talking at all; not even whispers were heard. They motioned to each other if they wanted to share food or to get someone's attention. However, this was not done a lot. One student who was whispering was told by his teacher to move to another table. He got his tray and moved to an empty table in the center of the cafeteria. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

After lunch, the students are instructed in the special areas such as health, science, social studies, and art. The afternoon schedule varies with the physical education, music, and library schedules of the individual classes. The team-teaching approach is used. Each teacher is assigned to a special area and during the afternoon is responsible for instruction of the whole group. Because the colony area is large and students remain seated in their home-base area, the teacher sits on a large, high stool in the center of the colony. As a rule, the other team members remain in the colony and assist with discipline. These afternoon whole-group instructional sessions vary among the colonies:

> The students in the colony were involved in a whole-group activity. One teacher was working from the center of the room. She was working with the students on their autobiographies. The students were giving their reports. The other colony teacher was working at a table grading papers.

> As I listened to the student reports, I could hear yelling coming from the next colony. The teacher in the next colony was yelling at the students, asking them to "shut up and listen". The facial expressions of the teachers led me to believe that they also could hear the noise coming from the next colony. The students glanced in that direction but were very attentive to the reports. They applauded at the end of each report. The teacher verbally gave each student a grade the end of each report.
>
> I went to the next colony. As I approached, I could still hear the teacher yelling and fussing with the students. The students were involved in a whole group activity. They each had a social studies book opened on their desk. The teacher was sitting in a high chair in the center of the colony. She was instructing them as they read and answered questions from the book. She constantly reprimanded the students for not paying attention. The other teacher from the colony was working at a table with one student. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

At 2:30, students in grades one through three leave school. The teachers in these grades use this time to plan for the next day. During this planning time, teachers secure instructional materials and equipment, complete school reports, meet with colony team members, confer with parents, and/or place the morning skills activities on the board. As a rule, teachers remain in the colonies during this planning time.

Upper grade students end their instructional day at 3:10. The time from 3:15 until the end of the school day is used for planning by the upper grade teachers. Most of the upper grade teachers stay past the 3:30 dismissal time in order to complete their planning for the next day.

The kindergarten schedule consists of opening activities, language, math, music, and physical education. Most of the instruction is done by the teacher. There are periods when the small group approach is used. During these periods, the teacher and her aide use the team-teaching approach. There is no team-teaching between the kindergarten colonies. Kindergarten students attend music classes and the library. The kindergarten schedule varies according to the music and library schedules. The morning kindergarten group leaves at 12:00 and the afternoon kindergarten group leaves at 3:10. Kindergarten students do not eat lunch but have a snack in their classrooms during the day.

The itinerant teachers, the music teacher and physical education teacher, pull small groups of students from the classroom or work with a whole class. While these teachers work with students throughout the day, a short planning period is built into their schedules. They use this planning period to confer with teachers and to prepare for the next instructional group. While the resource teachers' schedules follow this same format, they do not work with a whole class but only with those students having special needs.

The Staff

The staff of Jones Elementary School consists of nineteen full-time teachers, six aides, three itinerant teachers, three cafeteria workers, one custodian, one maid, one librarian, one secretary, one administrative aide, and one principal. Of the staff, twenty-seven are black and thirty-four are female. There are two male teachers at Jones Elementary School.

According to age, the instructional staff (30) is fairly evenly distributed. There are only two persons under the age of twenty-six and only one is over fifty-five years of age. The other age groups are evenly distributed. Nine are between 26-35 years old, nine are between 36-45 years old, and nine are between 46-55 years old.

Most of the instructional staff at Jones Elementary School have tenure. Six have between 4-9 years experience, seven have between 10-14 years experience, nine have between 15-19 years of experience, and four have between 20-24 years experience. While four have less than four years of experience, only one is a first-year teacher.

Most of the full-time teachers at Jones Elementary School have been there for less than a year (six) or have been there from 4-9 years (six). Only two teachers have been there since the school opened in 1970. Five of the teachers have been at Jones School from one to three years. The following excerpt from an informal interview indicates that the staff fluctuates:

> "Over 50 percent left the first year that he came. But he has a large turn-over every year." She listed the new teachers for this year - there were six. "There are about seven of us that have been here since he's come. (Interview 2/17/82).

Many of the teachers came to Jones when other schools in the district were closed. Others were recruited by the principal when he took over three years ago.

Other demographic characteristics of the instructional staff indicate that twenty-one teachers live in the school attendance area, sixteen have a bachelor's degree and sixteen are education majors.

Three have a master's degree and one has a master's degree plus additional graduate work. Eleven are married.

The principal is a black male between 56-60 years old. He has been an elementary principal for more than twenty-five years and the principal of Jones Elementary School for three years. He taught for more than fifteen years, lives in the school district, and was promoted to the principalship while working in the system. He holds a bachelor's degree in education and science and has just recently received a doctor of philosophy degree. The following excerpt describes my first meeting with the principal:

> Dr. Brown is a middle-aged man. He is very tall and slim and he has a beard. He was dressed in a modern dark blue suit with a yellow shirt and printed tie. He had a handkerchief in the breast pocket of his suit. He walks very rapidly.
>
> As I went into his office, he was attempting to clear the top of his desk which was full of papers and books. He cleared a spot in front of his chair and indicated that I could sit in his chair at the desk. He took a seat to my left.
>
> The office had two chairs, a desk, two bookcases, and a telephone. I was immediately struck by the fact that there were numerous plaques, pictures, and framed letters on all walls. I also saw a large stack of framed pictures and papers in a corner of the office. The walls, where there was space left, had hangers on them to indicate that this stack of pictures and papers had been on the walls at one time. Had the stack on the floor been on the walls, they would have been almost covered.
>
> Dr. Brown asked if I had eaten. When I said that I had not, he went out and told the secretary to have our lunches brought up. The secretary returned in a few minutes with the lunches. Before eating, Dr. Brown gave the Blessing over the food.
>
> As we ate, he began to talk about the many tasks and responsibilities of a principal. He received a phone call. He talked for a few minutes and after hanging up, he indicated that there were numerous reports required of principals.

I explained the study to the principal. As I talked, the principal frowned and folded his hands together and rested his chin on his hands. He watched me very closely. After I had finished, he asked to see the proposal. He read each page.

As he read the study, he took notes and asked for a copy to read at his leisure. He indicated that if he was at Madison - his former school - where he knew all the parents, teachers, and students, he would feel better about having the study done. He told me he had been at Madison for 25 years and was moved due to an administration policy which rotated all principals. He indicated that the parents and community of Madison had sent letters downtown requesting that he not be switched.

He looked at me very intensely and talked very slowly and deliberately. He stated, "The teachers here at Jones are very professional and not a social group - they are apprehensive, not scared about people and what they might be looking for."

He expressed concern for the Title I teachers and told me that he did not want them to feel uncomfortable. In a slow, hesitant voice, he gave his approval for the study.

He was in agreement to my meeting the staff before January. He stated that he had staff meetings on Monday evenings. He said that he would let me know when the next staff meeting would be held.

While the secretary got a packet of information ready for me, Dr. Brown went to his outer office to speak to a lady and three boys. He came back to say good-bye. I gave him my card. As I left, he was talking to the group in the outer office. (Fieldnotes 11/10/81)

Smith Elementary School

Historical Data and Demographic Characteristics

In September, 1974, Smith Elementary School officially opened. It has the same architectual design as Jones Elementary School and also houses grades kindergarten through six. It was the third open-space facility in the district. Smith Elementary School was constructed at a cost of 1.4 million dollars on 26.11 acres of land.

Smith Elementary School is named for a local black educator who served as a member of the School Board and served as Vice-Chairman in the 1960's. He was also known for his civic work throughout the city and was employed at several of the area colleges during his education career.

Smith Elementary School is located in a newly developing residential and commercial area of the city. Single-family dwellings in the immediate community are primarily one and two-story, brick or brick frame structures. There are also several split-level homes and two multi-family housing complexes located in the immediate community. The area and the appearance of the apartments and houses indicate upper middle-class living. The area contains wide streets, large amounts of yard space, and many trees.

Smith School is located north of one of the city's many business districts where numerous automobile and restaurant businesses are located. Two major shopping centers are located in this business district. These shopping centers are very large and contain hundreds of businesses. Two large hotels are also located in this business district. In addition, there are numerous private commercial businesses located along the boulevard which is the main street in this busy commercial area.

There are several other features of this school community. Several places of worship are located in the community. Also found in the community are several other institutions of learning. These institutions include several nursery schools, a dance school, a learning center, and a school of modeling. For cultural enrichment, there are two parks, a museum, and three movie theatres located in the school community.

Smith Elementary School serves approximately 315 families and 482 students. A transient quality is seen in the school population represented by a high number of apartment dwellers, and those whose parents are in the military. Students who live in the immediate community walk to and from school while those who live farther away ride school buses.

The demographic information on the families served by Smith School reveals several facts. Family size varies from two members per family to ten members per family. The median family size is four and 55 percent of all families are two-parent families. Also, the total family income levels vary. Seven percent of the families have incomes of over $25,000, and 55 percent are low income families. Of this 55 percent, 22 percent receive welfare assistance.

The most common places of employment for family members include the local air force base and the local shipyard. Thirty percent work at the air force base and 28 percent work at the shipyard. The occupations represented by the families in the community are armed forces and government related, technical and trade related, semi-professional, sales related, and professional. Thirty percent are employed in the armed forces or government related occupations and 28 percent are employed in technical and trade related occupations.

The School Building

Smith Elementary School has the same architectual design as Jones Elementary School. It is located on a spacious well-landscaped site of 26.11 acres of land. It has its own access road and a very large parking area with signs indicating a one-way route to and from the school. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes describes my first impression of the site:

> After parking in the visitor parking area, Ihad to pass a covered playground area which was paved and p marked for games such as four square, shuffleboard, circle games, hopscotch, and basketball. This area was in front of and led to the entrance of the school.
>
> As I approached the front door, I noticed that a truck was backed up to the door and one of the glass plates in the front door was being replaced. The entrance to the building consisted of six large, glass panels which stretch from the ceiling to the floor. One of these panels was being replaced.
>
> As I entered the building, I saw a portrait on the wall leading into the office. This portrait was of a black man and, upon inspection, I noted that it was a portrait of Mr. Smith, the man for whom the school is named. The halls were very quiet and there were no students or teachers in the halls. The foyer area contained several plants, two large floor mats bearing the school mascot and numerous examples of student work on the walls surrounding the office.
>
> The office was enclosed with glass except for the wooden entrance door. Therefore, I could see the principal standing behind the counter in the office. (Fieldnote 11/10/81)

The administrative offices in Smith Elemenary School are also located near the main entrance in an attractive, glass-enclosed area. This area contains the school office, the principal's office, the clinic, and a workroom. To the back of the main office are the teachers' lounge and several small offices which house the speech therapists. The only differences in the office area at Smith School are that there is no side exit, and there is a small office to the right, behind the counter. (see Figure IV).

The teachers' lounge at Smith School is not as large and spacious as the one at Jones School. It contains several large lounge chairs placed around the room, end tables, and a large square table in the center of the room. A refrigerator and drink machine take up one wall of the room. On a table are coffee machine, paper cups, nabs, chips, candy, hot chocolate, and tea. A cup and signs on the table indicate that these items are for sale and that the money is to be placed in the cup on the table. The bulletin board was very attractively decorated and contained notices of professional as well as personal interest to the staff. A large calendar of school events was on a wall to the right of the bulletin board. Due to the size of the lounge, the restroom is located next door.

The school is designed with the media center as a central core. (see Figure V). The media center at Smith Elementary School is well equipped with ample space for all types of media activities. The center contains a study area at one end, many small informal reading

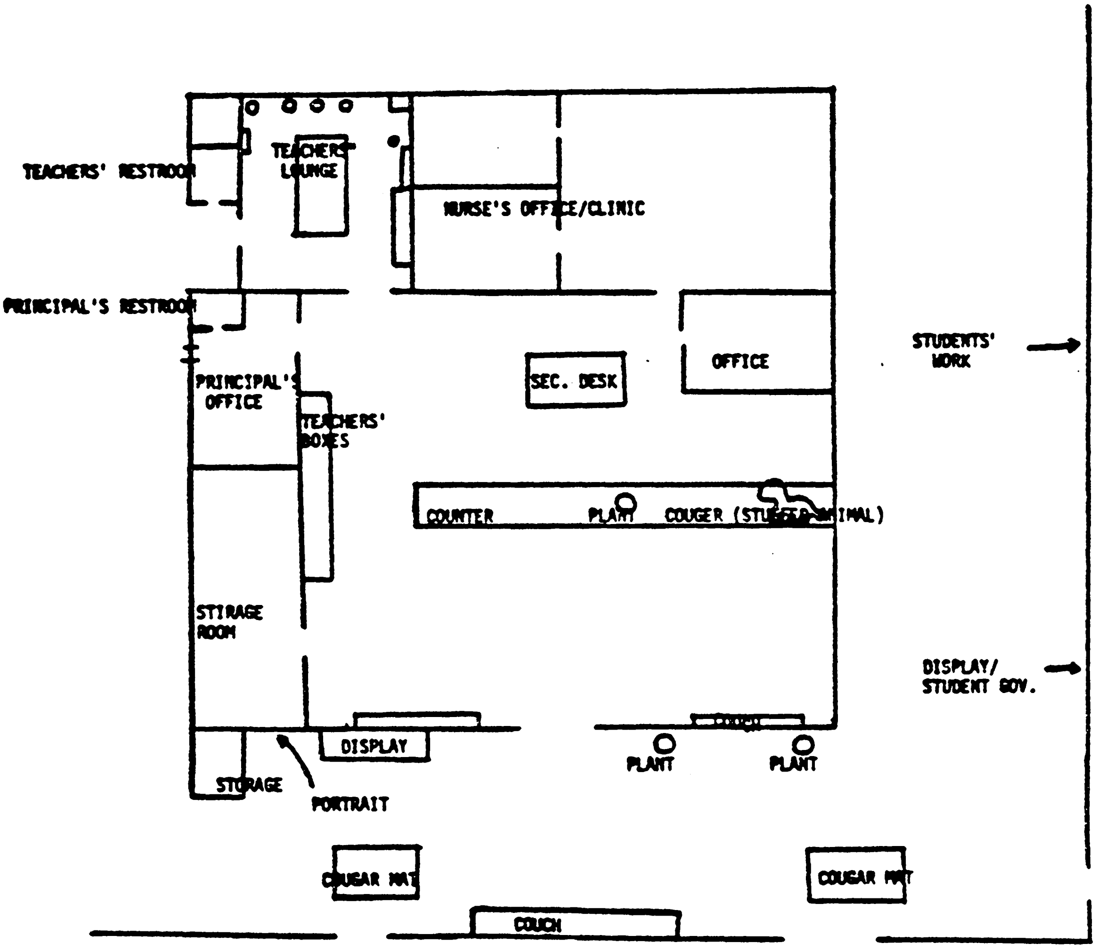
TEACHERS' RESTROOM
TEACHERS' LOUNGE
NURSE'S OFFICE/CLINIC
PRINCIPAL'S RESTROOM
SEC. DESK
OFFICE
STUDENTS' WORK
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE
TEACHERS' BOXES
COUNTER
PLANT
COUGER (STUFFED ANIMAL)
STIRAGE ROOM
DISPLAY/ STUDENT GOV.
COUCH
DISPLAY
PLANT
PLANT
STORAGE
PORTRAIT
COUGAR MAT
COUGAR MAT
COUCH

Figure IV

Office Area
Smith Elementary School

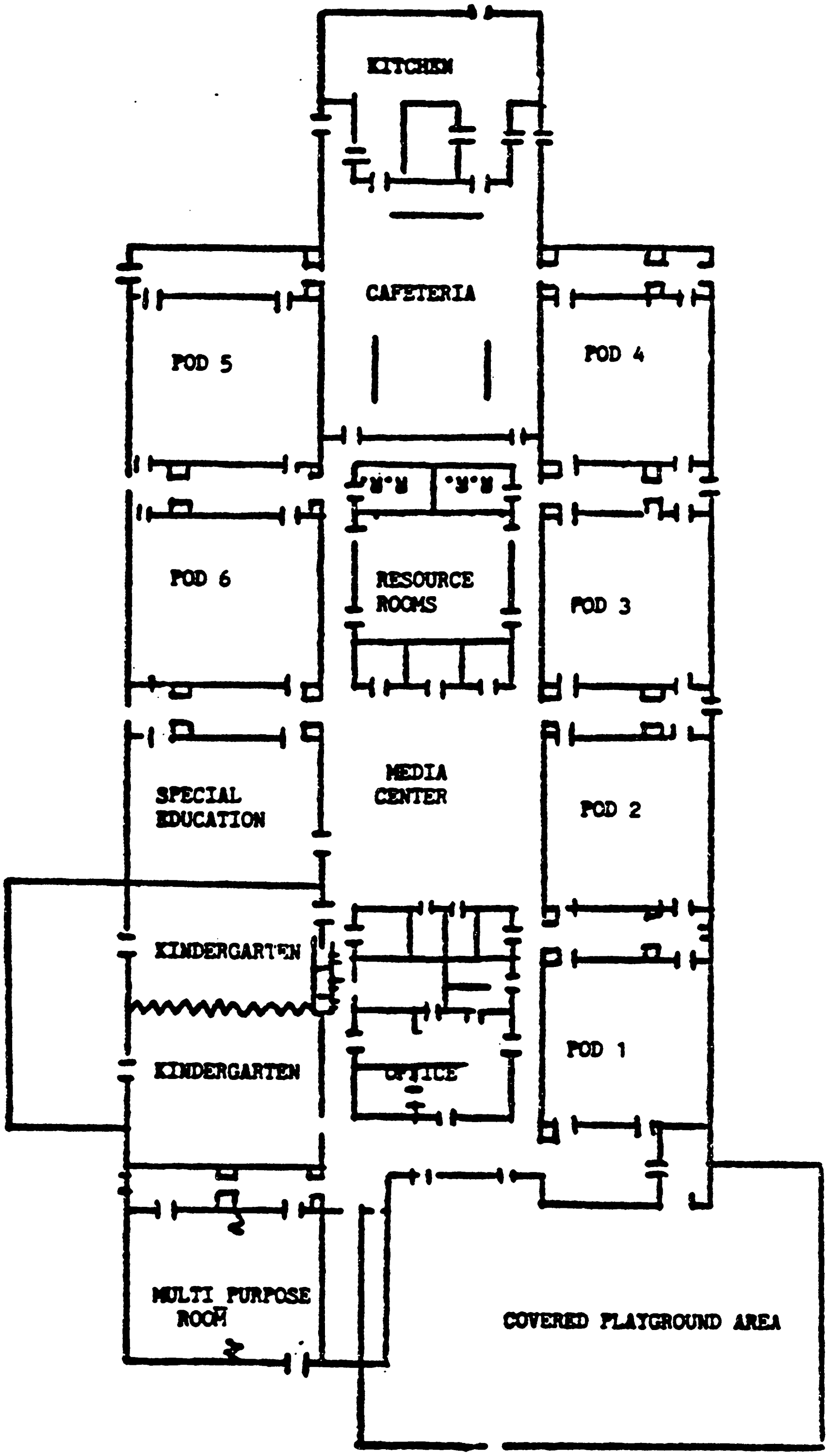
KITCHEN
CAFETERIA
POD 5
POD 4
R.R.
R.R.
POD 6
RESOURCE ROOMS
POD 3
MEDIA CENTER
SPECIAL EDUCATION
POD 2
KINDERGARTEN
KINDERGARTEN
OFFICE
POD 1
MULTI PURPOSE ROOM
COVERED PLAYGROUND AREA

Figure V

Building Floor Plan
Smith Elementary School

areas, and a listening center. Located near the librarian's desk is an area arranged for large group presentations. This area contains 25 small rocking chairs and a large overhead movie screen is in front of this area. Beautiful pieces of sculpture are on the tops of the bookshelves. Most of these pieces of sculpture are identical to those on display in the media center at Jones Elementary School. In the back of the media center, there is a storage room for audio-visual equipment, a teacher's workroom, and the librarian's office.

Smith Elementary School is an open-space school which also has several large instructional areas. At Smith School, these areas are called "pods." There are seven pods housing grades kindergarten through six with two to three teachers and approximately 70 students in each. Each pod contains moveable furniture, a carpeted floor, and various modern instructional materials and equipment. All of the pods contain colorful bulletin boards and there are displays of the students' work. At Smith Elementary School, instructional areas in the pods are indicated by the arrangement of furniture:

> I visited each pod. While they were designed to hold four classes, none of the pods were full. Most pods had only three classes and some, housed only two classes. As I went from pod to pod, I noticed a common practice. Within each pod, classes were sectioned off by the use of bookcases and coatracks. There was a distinction between the classes and it appeared as if property lines had been drawn. In each pod, the unused section or area was used to store audio-visual equipment, books, TV's, etc. The area is not generally equipped with chairs or set up for any type of instruction. There were few exceptions to this common practice. (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

The teachers' desks are generally arranged in a square in the center of the pod. This arrangement allows the teacher to observe almost all of the pod area.

At Smith Elementary School there is also only one class in each of the two kindergarten pods. Because the area was designed for four instructional groups, the kindergarten colonies are very spacious. In addition to many student centers, the kindergarten classes at Smith School contain an indoor play area containing many types of climbing equipment. These classes also contain their own restrooms and a "wet area" with a sink and cabinet.

The pods are aligned on both sides of the building. Grades one through four are housed in the pods on the right side of the building and grades kindergarten, five and six are housed on the left. The kindergarten and first grades are at the front of the building. The alignment of the pods makes it possible to walk the length of the building without entering the main hall.

The multi-purpose room, which is located to the left of the entrance hall, is a very large carpeted space which is divided by a sliding partition. One side is used for music classes and the other side is used for indoor physical education. Each side is decorated and has ample equipment to support the subject area.

The cafeteria at Smith Elementary School is located at the far end of the building and also serves as an auditorium. (see Figure VI). The walls are lined with a display, mottos, a list of PTA officers, and the rules for behavior. The tables are arranged in a

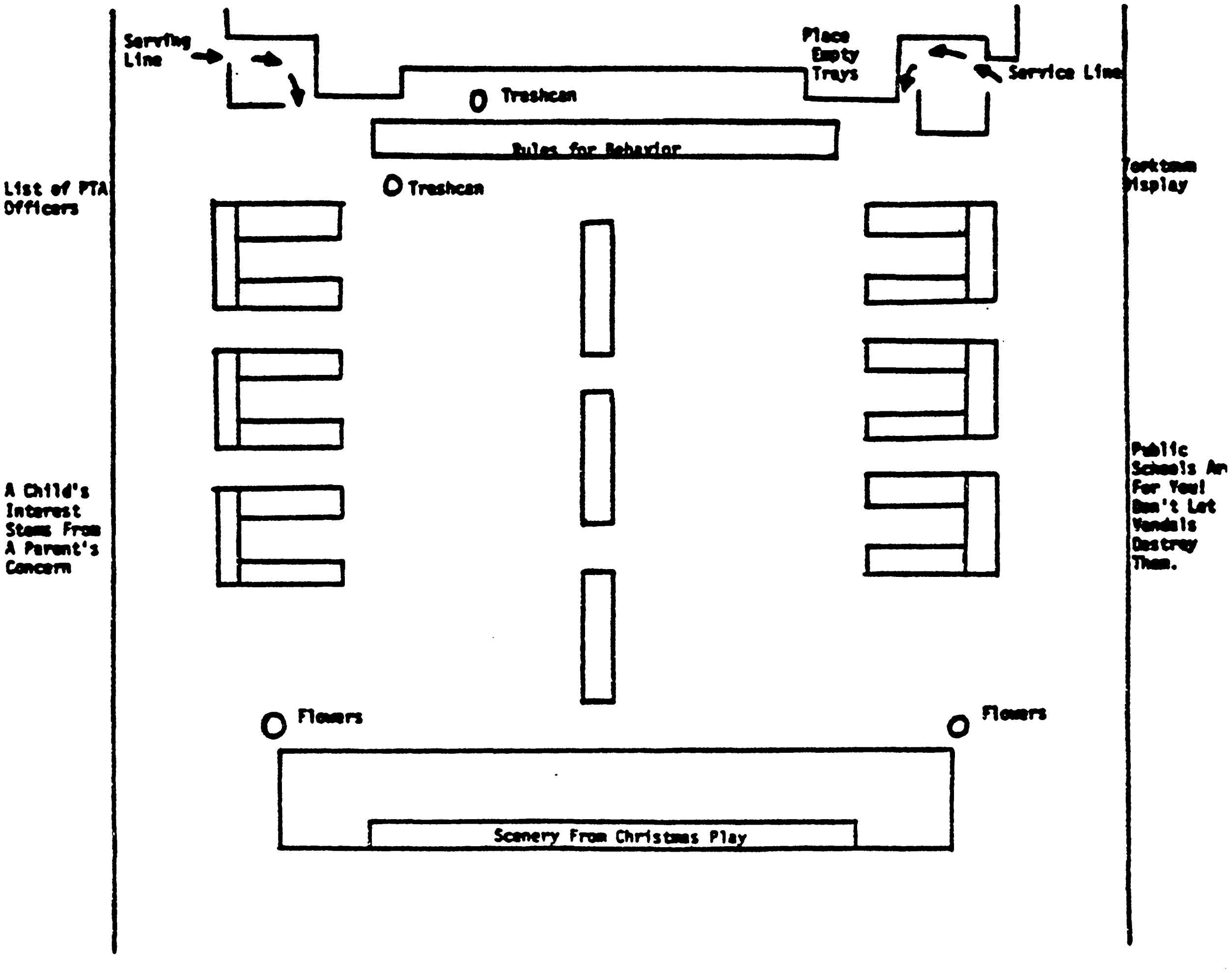
Serving Line
Place Empty Trays
Service Line
Trashcan
Rules for Behavior
Trashcan
List of PTA Officers
Yorktown Display
A Child's Interest Stems From A Parent's Concern
Public Schools Are For You! Don't Let Vandals Destroy Them.
Flowers
Flowers
Scenery From Christmas Play

Figure VI

Cafeteria
Smith Elementary School

"U" shape. These arrangements are made by placing three tables together. There are six of these U-shape arrangements, three on each side of the cafeteria. In the center of the cafeteria, there are several long tables. The stage is located at one end of the room and the serving lines at the other. While there are two serving lines, one on each side of the cafeteria, only one line is used. The return-tray area is hidden by a permanent wall in front of the kitchen.

In addition to the covered playground area at the front of the building, Smith School also has a paved playground area outside the kindergarten pods. While there is ample outdoor space, these are the only two paved playground areas. Students use the covered playground area in front during inclement or extremely hot weather.

Organizational Structure

Smith Elementary School, like Jones Elementary School, has only one administrator, the principal. The school principal has two office staff members - the secretary and the administrative aide. Both of these persons are supervised by the principal.

The school is organized into seven pods which span grades kindergarten through six. Each pod houses a teaching team with students assigned to a home-base teacher but working with other teachers in the pod. At Smith Elementary School, there are two kindergarten teachers, three first grade teachers, three fifth grade teachers, two third grade teachers, three fourth grade teachers, three fifth grade teachers, and three six grade teachers. Each of the pods has a team leader or a "grade chairman." The team leader acts as a liaison between the principal and the other team members. In addition to teaching duties, every teacher is assigned to a school committee and acts as a liaison person between the staff and the committee.

Several other teachers work with special students. These include one self-contained special education teacher with one special education aide. Also, Smith Elementary School also has two Title I reading teachers with two aides, and one Title I math teacher with one aide. Other staff members who do not have homeroom students include the librarian, the speech therapist, and the school nurse. In addition, there are two itinerant teachers - a music teacher and a physical education teacher. These teachers are only present at the school on certain days or during alternate weeks.

There are five other members of the staff. Three of these persons are on the cafeteria staff - two cafeteria workers and one cafeteria manager. The custodial staff consists of one maid and one custodian.

Daily Routine

At Smith Elementary School, the teachers routinely arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 in the morning. By 8:30, all of the teachers have arrived. The students begin arriving around 8:00, but do not begin their instructional day until 8:30. Upon arrival, they stay outside until 8:30 and are supervised by those teachers having bus duty.

Upon arrival, the teachers check their mailboxes and go to their pods to get settled. If not serving bus duty, the time prior to 8:30 is used to prepare for the instructional activities of the day. Many teachers also use this period to visit the lounge for coffee and for socializing with other staff persons.

The daily routine is more varied at Smith School due to the fact that the open concept is modified. There is more of a self-contained type of instructional program according to one of the teachers:

> We are more self-contained. We've modified the open concept. We have to take into consideration the fact that our students come from _____ (a housing division). They are not prepared for the open concept. However, we do some cross-pod work and lots of group activities. If a child is advanced, we give him him an opportunity to work with other grade levels. (Interview 1/25/82)

The time from 8:30 to approximately 9:00 is used for opening activities which consist of the pledge and a song. Also, this time is used by the teachers to check attendance, collect monies, and complete daily school reports.

Reading instruction begins at 9:15. The students at Smith Elementary School are also grouped for reading. The Holt Placement Test along with the BLS state testing program and teacher-made tests are used to place students in reading levels. Each teacher is responsible, therefore, for different ability groups. The time block for reading varies with physical education, music, and library schedules. At Smith, the teachers tend to work with all of the ability groups in their homeroom. The teachers work with one group while the other groups work independently. Students rotate until all groups have received instruction from the teacher. There is a limited amount of cross-pod grouping and the team-teaching approach is not used very often.

Math instruction generally follows reading and the same approach is used. The Holt Placement Test and teacher-made tests are used to place students in math levels.

Lunch period begins at 11:20 and continues until approximately 1:30. The teachers escort their students to the lunchroom and remain there with them during this period. This period appears to be a relaxed social time for the students as well as the teachers:

> I noticed that all teachers did not eat with their students but rather sat at the tables in the center of the cafeteria. The teachers chatted with one another during the lunch period, as did the students. While the cafeteria was not noisy, there was was a hum of conversation and activity. (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)
>
> When I got to the cafeteria, the 1-2 unit was eating. Some of the teachers ate with their students and some of them ate at the tables in the center of the cafeteria. The custodian was talking and laughing with a group of students. I went to sit with the group of teachers and Mrs. Johnson, the principal, ate with a group of students. She talked with the students as they ate their lunches. The group of teachers also talked quietly as they ate. (Fieldnotes 1/6/82)

After lunch, the students are instructed in the special areas such as health, science, social studies, and art. The afternoon schedule varies with the physical education, music, and library schedules of the individual classes. Generally, instruction in these areas is done by the home-base teacher in large group settings.

Although, the total pod may be brought together to view a film or television program, total pod instruction does not often take place.

At 2:30, students in grades one through three leave school. The teachers in these grades use this time to plan for the next day. Teachers also use this time to secure instructional materials and equipment, confer with parents, and plan with aides. They also use this period to visit the lounge briefly and socialize with the other staff persons.

Upper grade students end their instructional day at 3:10. This time from 3:15 until the end of the day is used by the upper grade teachers in the same manner as the lower grade teachers.

The kindergarten classes at Smith School are very similar to those at Jones School. The schedule consists of opening activities, language, math, music, and physical education. While most of the instruction is done by the teacher, the teacher and aide use the team-teaching approach more than at Jones Elementary School. At Smith School, the aide instructs a group, the teacher instructs a group, and one group works independently in a learning center. The groups rotate until all students have been through all sessions. While team-teaching is done within the pods, there is no team-teaching between the two kindergarten pods. The kindergarten schedule varies according to the music and library schedules. The morning kindergarten group leaves at 12:00 and the afternoon kindergarten group leaves at 3:10. The kindergarten students at Smith School eat lunch in the cafeteria.

The itinerant teachers function in the same manner as those at Jones Elementary School. However, the do tend to have more contact with the regular classsroom teachers and use their planning periods to visit and chat with other staff persons in the building, in addition to preparing for the next instructional group.

The Staff

The staff of Smith Elementary School consists of twent-three full-time teachers, seven aides, two itinerant teachers, three cafeteria workers, one custodian, one maid, one librarian, one secretary, one administrative aide, and one principal. The staff is almosy racially balanced. Sixteen are black and twenty-two are white. Because there are no male teachers, the staff is almost entirely female. The custodian is the only male staff member.

According to age, the instructional staff (34) is relatively young. Ten of the staff are between 26 and 35. There is only one person under the age of 26 and only one person is over the age of 55.

Most of the full-time teachers at Smith Elementary School have tenure. Ten have from 4-9 years of experience, nine have from 10-14 years of experience, and nine have from 15-19 years of experience. While two have less than four years of experience, there are no first year teachers.

At Smith School, most of the full-time teachers have been there from 4-9 years (10). Two of the teachers have been there from 1-3 years and only one teacher has been at Smith since it was built in 1974. Most of the teachers were transferred to Smith when other schools in the division were closed.

Other demographic characteristics of the instructional staff indicate that nine of the staff live in the school attendance area. Thirty have a Bachelor's degree and twenty-one are education majors. Eight have a Master's degree; however, three have a Master's degree not in education. Three have a Master's degree plus additional graduate work and twenty-one are married.

The principal is a white female between 36-45 years of age. She has been a principal for more than four years and the principal of Smith Elementary School for three years. She has taught more than fifteen years, lives in the school district, and was promoted to the principalship while working in the system. She holds a Bachelor's degree in education and has a Master's degree plus additional graduate work. The following excerpt describes my first meeting with the principal:

> Mrs. Johnson was standing behind the counter in the office. As I opened the door and entered the office area, she greeted me with a smile and inquired how my trip had been. Mrs. Johnson is a middle-aged, white female with mixed grey hair. She wears glasses. She was dressed neatly in a skirt, blouse, and jacket which appeared to be coordinated. She wore a pair of low-heeled shoes. She was the only person in the office.
>
> She led the way to ther office which was located behind the counter and to the left. She unlocked the door and we went in. Her office was very large. There was a desk, three bookcases, and many plants. Her desk contained pictures of her family and stacks of paperwork which had been pushed to one side. There

were pieces of children's work on the walls, as well as several notices and schedules.

After taking my coat, she asked if I would like a cup of hot chocolate. When I indicated that I would, she said that she would join me. We went next door to the teachers' lounge to get the chocolate and she suggested that we remain there for the conference.

She went to the door leading to the office and asked the secretary to "see if the buns in the cafeteria are ready yet." As we sat in the lounge, the secretary returned carrying a large coffee cake. She placed it on the table in the center. When she left, Mrs. Johnson cut the cake and gave me a piece and took a piece for herself.

Mrs. Johnson and I talked casually for a few minutes. She explained that she was not originally for the open concept but was very much for it now. When I asked about the glass being replaced, she commented that the school had had a lot of vandalism. She talked about going back to school for her advanced degree and stated that she should get moving on it.

After chatting for a few minutes, I explained the study. As I talked, she observed me closely, shook her head to indicate agreement to something I said, and occasionally asked a question for clarification. When I asked if she would be willing to participate in the study, she responded, "yes." She said that she was very much interested in the topic and wanted to help in any way that she could. She stated that she would like to know the "strengths and weaknesses" of the school as I found them. She quickly added that she understood that I would not be there for that purpose but that she would be interested in my opinion of the school.

She suggested that I come to the next staff meeting which would be held on November 16. She said that she would give me a building map, handbook, and policy manual when I came again. She offered me more hot chocolate and told me to take something with me for later on during the day.

She told me that she looked forward to working with me and to call her if I needed anything before I returned. We returned to her office. She unlocked the door so that I could get my pocketbook. She walked with me to the door. (Fieldnotes 11/10/82)

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the two schools, Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School. Although the two schools are quite similar in design, the demographic information on these schools reveals several distinct differences (see Table 1). Therefore, in order to analyze the organizational communication patterns of the two schools, it was necessary first to evoke a sense of what it was like to be in each school. To do this, it became necessary to describe the historical background, the physical setting, the daily routine, and the key individuals of each school. These descriptions are germane to the analysis of any other aspects of these two school environments, especially the organizational communication.

Table 1

A Comparison of Demographic Information on Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School

Schools	Physical Plant	Historical Data	Students Served	Families					
				Number of Families	Median Family Size	Employment		Income	
						Shipyard	Air Force	Low Income	Welfare Assistance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Jones	Same design	Built in 1970	443	280	3	28%	12%	54%	12%
Smith	Same design	Built in 1974	482	315	4	28%	30%	55%	22%

Schools	Staff					Instructional Staff									
	Size	Race		Sex		Years of Experience					Educational Background				
		B	W	M	F	0-3	4-9	10-14	15-19	20+	Bachelors' Degree	Masters' Degree	Masters' Degree in Education	Masters' Degree plus	Resident of District
	(10)	(11)		(12)		(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)
Jones	37	73%	27%	8%	92%	33%	20%	23%	30%	13%	70%	13%	13%	4%	64%
Smith	41	42%	58%	3%	97%	7%	33%	30%	30%	0	68%	18%	7%	7%	25%

Table 1 (Continued)

Schools	Instructional Staff					Administrative Staff				
	Principal					Age				
	Sex (23)	Age (24)	Race (25)	Years of Experience (26)	Degree Held (27)	0-25 (28)	26-35 (29)	36-45 (30)	46-55 (31)	55+ (32)
Smith	M	56-60	B	25+	Doctorate	7%	30%	30%	30%	3%
Jones	F	36-45	W	4+	Masters +	3%	33%	27%	30%	7%

CHAPTER V

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

Organizational communication is the process of passing information and understanding among the members of an organization. A broader, more philosophic definition is that offered by Ruesch and Bateson:

> . . . all those processes by which people influence one another . . . this definition is based on the premise that all actions and events have communicative aspects, as soon as they are perceived by a human being . . . that such perception changes the information which an individual posesesses and therefore influences him.[127]

The second phase of this study, a description of the organizational patterns of the selected schools, is presented in this chapter. These descriptions are guided by the five broad areas of organizational communication outlined in Chapter I: 1) the channels of communication; 2) the flow of communication; 3) the basis of communication; 4) the frequency of communication; and 5) the actors in the communication process.

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[127] Ruesch and Bateson, Communication: The Matrix of Psychology, p. 6.

JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Channels of Communication

Public Address System

At Jones Elementary School, the public address system is not used very frequently. There is no set pattern for its use and no period of announcements. The primary functions of the public address system at Jones School are to transmit emergency information and to page staff members. The types of emergency information transmitted over the public address system include notices of early school dismissals due to inclement weather, changes in the school schedule due to the absence of an itinerant teacher, and special information to be sent home to parents. Although the public address system is used to page staff persons, it is rarely used to page teachers. Primarily it is used to page the principal and other office staff:

> Dr. Brown, office, please. (Fieldnote 1/21/82)
> Mrs. Taylor, office, please. (Fieldnote 1/27/82)

The public address system is also used to announce staff meetings. While Monday afternoons are reserved for staff meetings, the staff is informed via the public address system each Monday afternoon whether there will in fact be a staff meeting. On rare occasions, the public address system also is used to compliment or "reprimand" the staff:

> Anytime a child or a student does something he likes, he will say, "Thank you, we're proud of you." He may mention that he went through the colonies and he saw something going on that he liked.
>
> On rare occasions he might mention something he doesn't like.

> On one occasion, he saw some students in the hall for no apparent reason and he commented on it. Once he commented that he had gone through the colonies and everyone was not on task. He said that if someone were to have visited the building and observed, he would have been upset.

Although most of the information transmitted over the public address system is relevant primarily to the teachers, there are some announcements made which involve the students. These announcements usually relate to the Student Government Association. On some occasions, the students take part in the announcements and present a short program. On these special days or holidays, the program consists of an explanation of the significance of the occasion, the reading of a poem, and information on planned classroom events.

The public address system is used primarily by two people, the principal and the secretary. It is used infrequently and for the primary purpose of making emergency announcements. When used, the messages are usually short.

Face-to-Face Conversation

At Jones Elementary School, face-to-face conversation is not a primary vehicle for transmitting information within the organization. This channel of communication is used as a follow-up to information discussed at staff meetings or transmitted through memos. Teachers use face-to-face conversation to clarify instructions and to exchange ideas on special problems. Also, most of the information transmitted through this channel deals with instructional matters such as schedules, student discipline, and teaching duties.

Most face-to-face conversations are school related and take place among the teachers and aides. While there is a limited amount of face-to-face communication between the principal and individual staff members, this channel of communication is often used by the principal for clarifying specific problems and issuing individual directives:

> He'll give me instructions for the day or later on. Usually, he'll explain things that need to be done other than in the routine of the day. Sometimes things come up, i.e. "Would you go and keep Mrs. Smith's class?"
>
> Sometimes he'll (principal) want additional information about a special student. (Interview 5/5/82)

Memos, Bulletins, and Pamphlets

Most of the communication at Jones School is written and in the form of a memo or bulletin. Most memos and bulletins originate from the principal's office and are official in nature. Staff members are expected to keep these bulletins in a notebook where they can serve as an easy reference during the school year.

All types of school related information are transmitted through bulletins. The agenda for staff meetings is transmitted through a bulletin and a follow-up bulletin reemphasizing vital information is generally issued after each staff meeting. Also, bulletins transmit information regarding teaching assignments, schedules, school policy, directives from "downtown", and due dates for paper work. Bulletins that transmit information designed to help staff members perform their jobs better are called "administrative bulletins" and are generally numbered consecutively during the course of the school year. These bulletins usually consist of directives from the principal:

> They usually tell us what he wants us to do, how he wants reports prepared, and new rules about corporal punishment. (Interview 5/7/82)

Bulletins are also used to transmit compliments or "reprimands" to groups of staff members:

> Sometimes the bulletins may have notes of appreciation to staff members. (Interview 5/12/82)
>
> Sometimes bulletins are used to reprimand groups of staff members. (Interview 4/19/82)

On some occasions, bulletins transmit personal information about staff members such as illnesses and deaths of family members:

> ... the Title I teacher handed me a bulletin. "Here, you're a part of the staff." I saw that it contained information concerning the death of Dr. Brown's brother. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

Memos are used to transmit information immediately throughout the school:

> Memos are sent around to the classrooms at all times of the day. (Interview 4/21/82)

The type of information transmitted by memo may include changes in schedules, notification of visitors to the building, information on specific students, and special classroom procedures. Not only is it used to transmit information immediately, but also relates to a specific situation. These memos are carried to the staff members by student messengers and must be signed by each staff member to indicate receipt:

> The sixth graders come around all day with memos and you have to stop and sign them. It's aggravating. (Interview 4/21/82)

Policy and Procedures Manuals

At the beginning of the school year, the staff at Jones Elementary School receives several manuals which articulate various district-wide and school policies and procedures. These manuals include several curriculum guides, the district policy manual, and the faculty handbook. The staff is expected to read each of the policy manuals and keep them as references throughout the year. During staff meetings, specific policies and procedures are further clarified. Staff members are held accountable for all information contained in district-wide and school policy manuals.

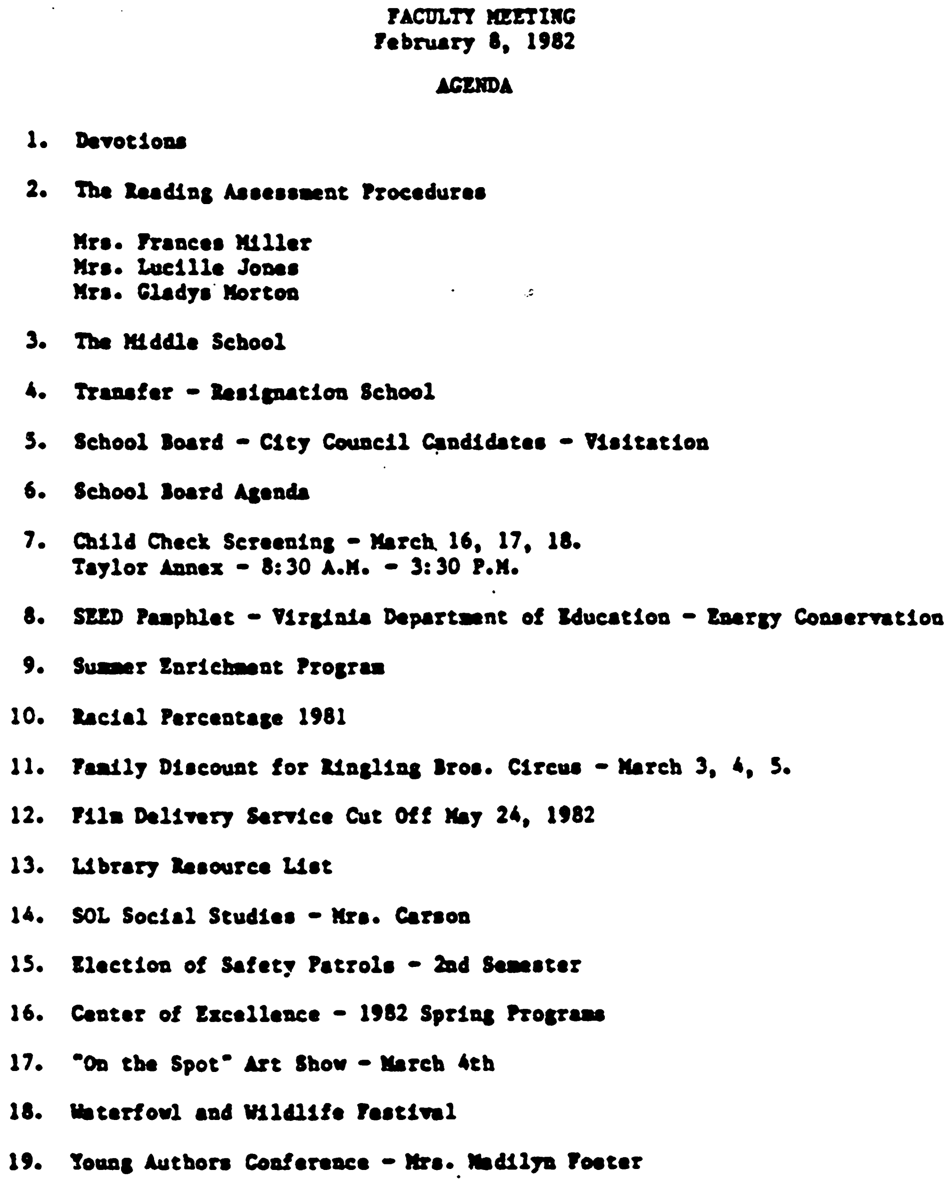
Staff meetings

Staff meetings are generally held on Monday afternoons. They are attended by teachers, aides, and the principal. At other schools in the district, aides do not attend staff meetings:

> I didn't go to staff meetings before. It makes me feel a part of the group. (Interview 5/12/82).

On rare occasions, the total staff meets together. Staff meetings begin at 3:15 and are held in the multi-purpose room. Staff meetings usually last until 4:30.

At Jones School, staff meetings are formally organized and an agenda is distributed at the beginning of each meeting. (see Figure VII) These meetings are another primary source of



FACULTY MEETING
February 8, 1982

AGENDA

1. Devotions
2. The Reading Assessment Procedures

   Mrs. Frances Miller
   Mrs. Lucille Jones
   Mrs. Gladys Morton
3. The Middle School
4. Transfer - Resignation School
5. School Board - City Council Candidates - Visitation
6. School Board Agenda
7. Child Check Screening - March 16, 17, 18.
   Taylor Annex - 8:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.
8. SEED Pamphlet - Virginia Department of Education - Energy Conservation
9. Summer Enrichment Program
10. Racial Percentage 1981
11. Family Discount for Ringling Bros. Circus - March 3, 4, 5.
12. Film Delivery Service Cut Off May 24, 1982
13. Library Resource List
14. SOL Social Studies - Mrs. Carson
15. Election of Safety Patrols - 2nd Semester
16. Center of Excellence - 1982 Spring Programs
17. "On the Spot" Art Show - March 4th
18. Waterfowl and Wildlife Festival
19. Young Authors Conference - Mrs. Madilyn Foster

Figure VII

Faculty Meeting Agenda
Jones Elementary School

transmitting information vital to the organization. Most of the information relates to the school curriculum and district-wide policies and procedures.

> Dr. Brown was clarifying instructions on various district-wide and school policies. As he talked, he stopped at intervals to hold up an example of documents that the teachers were suppose to have in their possession. He reminded them of this. He held up copies of the district policy manual, BLS manual, faculty handbook, and the reading and math curriculum guides.
>
> When he finished talking about the policy manuals, he began to talk about the papers on the bookcases and tables. He briefly summarized each sheet and then passed a copy out to each teacher. He talked as he passed the sheets out; usually it was a continuation of information about the sheet. During the time that the sheets were passed out, it remained quiet in the room. The teachers read over each sheet that they were given and put them in their notebooks. By the end of the meeting, quite a number of sheets had been passed out. The sheets pertained to such things as lesson plans, discipline, reading goals, and math goals. (Fieldnotes 12/16/81)

Staff meetings are also used for the exchange of information between the staff and various committee chairpersons. Usually these chairpersons are asked to give a report at staff meetings and sometimes solicit feedback from the staff:

> Mrs. Miller then explained the "locomotive incentive program for reading". She asked for input from the staff on the number of books that students should be required to read. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

In addition, staff meetings are used for inservice and to provide the staff with vital information that may be of personal interest to them:

> The Title I teacher called the meeting to order. She introduced Mrs. Wilson and explained to the staff that Mrs. Wilson wanted to talk with them about IRA accounts.

> Mrs. Wilson's presentation was on Individual Retirement Accounts. She gave a slide presentation. After the presentation, she asked the staff if they had any questions. There were none. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

Grapevine

Although the grapevine is viewed negatively by both teachers and the principal, there is a very active grapevine at Jones School and many types of information are passed through it. The information passed through the grapevine is both school related and personal in nature.

Regarding school matters, the grapevine is used to inform staff members if someone is absent, if important visitors are coming, and about important meetings to be held in the school. Because staff meetings are not officially announced until Monday afternoons, the grapevine is used to inform the staff beforehand:

> There's not going to be a staff meeting. He hasn't told us yet. (Interview 2/16/82)

Information on the status of vacant positions and new appointees is passed through the grapevine:

> Last week, they were saying that Dr. Sampson would be the new superintendent. This week, I understand it's going to be someone from out of town. (Interview 5/12/82)

Also, the grapevine is used to register complaints concerning working conditions and, in many instances, teachers are informed of habits which displease the principal through the grapevine:

> A lot of times we talk about the fact that we have too much work and why it's necessary. (Interview 5/5/82)

> If something is done or said that he doesn't approve of, you may get a hint to stop through the grapevine. (Interview 5/6/82)

Personal information about the staff also is transmitted through the grapevine. This includes information on illnesses, births, honors, marriages, and deaths in the family. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes indicates grapevine information:

> The secretary told me that Dr. Brown was not in because his brother had died. The other two teachers started a conversation concerning the details of what had happened. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

Grapevine information at Jones School does not tend to be negative or extremely personal in nature. It is used as an additional source of obtaining school related information.

Flow of Communication

Downward Communication

At Jones Elementary School there is a great deal of downward communication. Most of this communication is written. At the beginning of and throughout the year, the staff receives numerous bulletins which pertain to all aspects of the school program. Any instructions necessary for the staff to perform their specific duties are put in the form of an administrative bulletin. Also, bulletins transmit information from central administration and keep the staff abreast of activities throughout the school district.

Staff meetings are another primary source of downward communication. Much of the information that the principal transmits to and shares with the staff comes through these meetings. The information shared during staff meetings is, however, generally followed up by a bulletin.

Most downward communication comes from the principal to the total staff. On a one-to-one basis, downward communication is limited. Written downward communication consists of a note being placed in the staff person's box or a memo delivered by a student. The principal communicates verbally on a one-to-one basis with the staff infrequently, with the exception of the secretary, office aide, custodian, and a few select teachers.

Downward communication is generally school related and deals with specific concerns. Information shared is related to specific students, discipline problems, special requests by the principal, and clarification of staff duties. Verbal downward communication has a more personal note and is more frequent with those staff persons who have been at Jones School longer or with whom the principal has developed a personal friendship.

Upward Communication

There is little upward communication at Jones Elementary School. Because there are grade chairpersons who filter information and carry concerns to the principal, few teachers communicate directly with the principal. Most upward communication consists of asking for clarification on a specific duty that must be performed by the staff person. Also, it consists of informing the principal of specific problems. With the exception of greetings, upward communication is not of a personal nature. It is more frequent with those staff persons who have been at the school longer or with whom the principal has developed a personal friendship. One teacher made the following statement:

> I've never had any trouble seeing him or talking to him. (Interview 5/14/82)

Most upward communication is verbal. Also while most of this communication takes place in the office area, it may occur throughout the school building. On those occasions when staff persons cannot make verbal contact with the principal, upward communication takes place in the form of a memo placed in his box or the message may be sent through the secretary.

Horizontal Communication

The level of horizontal communication at Jones Elementary School is affected by what appears to be an unwritten administrative rule which prohibits fraternization. Several informal interviews with staff persons reflect their perceptions of this unwritten rule:

> We're not as close as we used to be. He doesn't like for us to fraternize. (Interview 2/17/82)
>
> Yes, it's always this quiet - no talking is allowed. I'm breaking the rules by sitting in here now. We can't talk to each other. (Interview 1/21/82)
>
> He'll tell you if you're talking to each other too much. But I can understand that. He makes sure that we do our job... He doesn't like for us to socialize too much. (Interview 2/9/82)

Because the staff feels that the principal disapproves of too much talking, horizontal communication is limited:

> Heavens no! We don't talk in small groups. (Interview 5/14/82)

While the staff is friendly with one another, it is a rare sight to see groups of staff members standing and talking together:

> As I entered the lounge, two teachers came in. One took down the Christmas decorations from the bulletin board and then left. The other went to the restroom and left immediately afterward. There was no exchange of conversation between the two. (Fieldnotes 1/4/82)

Most horizontal communication takes place in passing - while serving bus duty together, passing in the halls, going to and from the cafeteria, or entering and leaving the school building.

Horizontal communication at Jones Elementary School is verbal and deals primarily with school matters. Because the team-teaching approach to instruction is practiced, most of the horizontal communication concerns instructional matters. The teachers in each "colony" meet on a regular basis throughout the school year to plan together and a great deal of horizontal communication takes place during these meetings:

> If we don't have a faculty meeting, he tells us to meet among ourselves. We talk about special programs and plan together. (Interview 5/5/82)

Although most of the horizontal communication is school related, light social conversation takes place throughout the day:

> Two teachers were in the lounge. They were discussing being a principal. "But I'm so used to time off and they only have two weeks. They may be cutting back next year and if you're new, you may be one of the first to go." They talked about how well the students were behaving. "They must be tired, they're not usually this good. It could be because Joe, Sue, and John are absent. - Oh, you have four absent." (Fieldnotes 1/4/82)

Usually these conversations are between no more than two staff members. Sometimes, larger groups engage in horizontal communication on Monday afternoons immediately before staff meetings. As noted in the fieldnotes:

> When I arrived, seven teachers were already present. They were generally seated along grade level lines. They chatted quietly. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

These conversations consist of information about families, friends, news events, and social activities throughout the city.

The Basis of Communication

Information

The rationale for most of the communication at Jones School is to transmit and share information within the organization. Throughout the school day, information is constantly passed within the school organization. This information is essential to assisting the staff members in performing their job responsibilities. While this informative communication may be written or verbal, it usually takes the form of written bulletins and memos.

Most information at Jones School originates from the principal's office and he initiates a large amount of the informative communication which takes place. However, because of the organizational structure of the school, a great deal of information is passed among the staff as they relate to one another in the performance of their duties. Without information as a basis, there would be a great void in the communication system at Jones School. Communication for other reasons is very limited.

Evaluation

Communication for the purpose of evaluation varies at Jones Elementary School. All staff persons have a yearly conference with the principal which is designed to evaluate their overall job perfomance. However, throughout the year, evaluation communication usually focuses on specific incidents.

Staff members receive communication which evaluates them as a group as well as individually. Group evaluation communication is given through staff meetings, administrative bulletins, and, sometimes, the public address system. Usually this type of communication is complimentary, but, on occasions, it may represent a light reprimand:

> We agreed as a staff that we would share bus duty in the mornings. Perhaps we do need to fry eggs a little earlier. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

Individually, the staff also receives communication of an evaluation nature in various forms. Staff members may receive a note in their boxes. Sometimes the principal requests a short conference and indicates this with a note beside the staff person's name in the sign-in book or by sending a memo to the staff person by a student messenger. Most negative evaluation communciation takes place face-to-face:

> One morning before 8:30, I was standing in the office area waiting to use the ditto machine. There were several people waiting. He told me, "You don't need to be standing in line waiting. You can be with you students. Do that." (Interview 5/6/82)

However, on some occasions, the principal relays the message through the grade chairperson:

> He came through one day around 3:00 and my students had their coats on. He felt I had stopped my instruction early. Instead of saying something to me, he told the grade chairman to speak to me about it. (Interview 4/21/82)

Instruction

Communication which is designed to instruct is written. The primary sources of this type of communication are the administrative bulletins and the various school district manuals. Most of the communication designed to instruct comes at the beginning of the school year. At this time, many curriculum guides and district policy manuals are given to all staff members. The staff receives information through these written materials, which instructs them on all facets of their job performance.

Throughout the school year, instructional communication takes place at staff meetings, workshops, and conferences. Although the principal communicates most instructional information, sometimes consultants and specialists are sometimes brought to the school to assist the staff.

Influence

At Jones Elementary School, the principal has the greatest influence on staff behavior and much of the communication from him is designed for this purpose. Administrative bulletins are issued on a regular basis to remind the staff of acceptable and non-acceptable behavior in the areas of classroom management, instruction, and planning. The reminders given during staff meetings also are designed to influence the staff.

Often verbal and non-verbal communication are used by the principal to influence behavior. Usually, the verbal communication is in the form of a short question or statement:

> One morning I wasn't busy, so I was helping another teacher arrange chairs in her area. Dr. Brown came through the area, stared at us, and then said, "Is this your area?" (Interview 5/6/82)

> A couple of us were in the hall talking just now. He said, "I assume you have completed your lesson plans." (Interview 1/6/82)

The principal also uses non-verbal communication to influence behavior. Although this non-verbal communication is viewed negatively by the staff, they respond immediately:

> He comes through the colonies and he'll just stare at you. If we're talking to one another, he stares as if we're socializing - when we may be talking about a student or doing some quick planning. We just stop talking when we see him. (Interview 4/21/82)

> The cafeteria was more noisy than usual. Dr. Brown came in and went over to talk to the custodian for a few minutes. As he left, he turned the cafeteria lights out. The cafeteria immediately got silent. (Fieldnotes 2/25/82)

To a limited degree, other staff persons also influence the behavior of the staff. These persons include the teachers who have been at Jones the longest and those who are grade level chairmen. Because grade level chairmen are appointed by the principal. They are looked upon as representatives of the principal and, therefore, have an influence on the staff. In addition to being able to influence the staff, those persons who have been at Jones School longest have a degree of influence upon the principal. These staff persons are able to approach the principal and discuss staff concerns with him. They often call him at home and feel free to have short conferences with him during the school day.

Socialization

There is a limited amount of communication for socialization at Jones Elementary School. The staff is expected to be on task throughout the school day and there are few breaks in the schedule. Also, there appears to be an unwritten administrative rule which prohibits fraternization.

Although the staff is friendly toward one another, they do not socialize a great deal. They rarely have staff "get togethers." However, on holidays the staff has a special social function. Because they do not ordinarily communicate socially, these affairs are awkward for some members of the staff:

> We had a party for Christmas in Colony 2. We sat around in a circle like we were going to play musical chairs. (Interview 2/23/82)

> For Christmas, we brought goodies for each day and put them in the lounge. I went in and got some, but I took mine back to my room. I never feel comfortable - like I should be sitting in the lounge. (Interview 4/21/82)

Some light social conversations do take place throughout the day. These conversations usually are between persons in the same colony or on the same grade level. Socially, the staff communicates about families, friends, and social activities throughout the city.

Frequency of Communication

What Groups or Individuals Communicate With One Another?

The staff at Jones Elementary School communicates most frequently with those persons with whom they work directly. Teachers communicate most with the other teachers and aides in the same colony:

> I communicate most frequently with my co-workers. It's mandatory in an open-space environment. (Interview 4/2/82)

Because the team-teaching approach is used, frequent communication is necessary to coordinate schedules and plan the daily curriculum. Also, the openness of the colonies allows co-workers to pass freely from one instructional area to another without leaving any students unattended. Within the colonies, the teachers and aides move about freely and are able to communicate with one another as they perform their instructional duties.

The staff also communicates with those persons who have the same or similar job responsibilities. Teachers communicate with other teachers on the same grade level more than with teachers in other grades. The secretary and the office aide communicate with each other more than with other staff persons. Resource teachers communicate more with other resource teachers than with other teachers. Aides, however, communicate more with their supervising teacher than with other aides or teachers. Aides exhibit a special companionship toward their supervising teacher.

Another factor which influences the frequency of communication between staff members is physical proximity. Staff persons communicate most frequently with those who are closest to them. The teachers communicate more with the teachers on the same side of the building as opposed to those on the other side of the building:

> I don't communicate that often with the people outside my colony because of the school design. We're on one side of the building, they're on the other side. There are differences in schedules. (Interview 5/14/82)

Communication increases between teachers as the closeness of the working areas increases. Also, teachers do not communicate as much with the itinerant teachers because they are not in the building on a regular basis.

Non-instructional staff persons communicate most frequently with their immediate supervisor. The custodian, maid, secretary, and the office aide communicate most frequently with the principal. The cafeteria workers communicate most frequently with the cafeteria manager. With the exception of the secretary and office aide, these non-instructional staff persons have limited communication with other staff members and tend to stay to themselves. The principal communicates with all staff persons.

How Often Does Communication Take Place?

Communication takes place throughout the school day. Within the colonies, teachers communicate daily and constantly throughout the day. However, outside the colonies, communication does not take place as often. Although greetings are exchanged upon arrival, it is not uncommon for teachers not to communicate at all during the day with teachers outside their work area. Communication with persons on the opposite side of the building is infrequent and many teachers do not know each other by first names until the end of the first year at Jones School:

> Last year I didn't know the names of teachers on the other side until the end of the year. (Interview 2/8/82)

While communication outside the colonies is infrequent, the staff communicates with each other at least weekly.

Verbal communication with the principal varies among the staff. Most teachers indicate that they communicate with the principal infrequently. The principal is perceived as very busy and "difficult to catch up with". However, the principal communicates daily with the administrative office staff, the maid, and the custodian. Also, many teachers who have a long tenure at Jones School communicate with the principal in school daily and call him at his home after school hours. As stated by one teacher:

> I can call him at night and we'll start with one subject and go on to another. (Interview 5/14/82)

Non-instructional staff members communicate on a daily basis with almost all of the rest of the staff. The nature of their jobs gives them the freedom to move throughout the building. This freedom allows them to communicate more frequently than other staff members. They communicate most frequently with the principal and the secretary.

When Does Communication Take Place?

Most of the communication among the staff takes place after the students leave. Students in grades kindergarten through three leave at 2:30, and students in grades four through six leave at 3:10. The period after the students leave until the end of the school day is used for planning and there is an increase in communication among the staff.

The period on Monday afternoons immediatley before staff meetings also is a period of high communication among the staff. At this time teachers and other staff members get a chance to speak to those persons whom they haven't seen during the day and to engage in light social conversations.

During lunchtime and upon arrival in the mornings are two other times when groups of staff members have an opportunity to communicate with one another. At lunch, staff members see one another while eating or as they enter and leave the cafeteria. In the mornings, upon arrival, the staff communicates with one another to a limited degree until the students enter the building.

Where Does Communication Take Place?

Most of the communication among the staff at Jones School takes place in the colonies. Because teachers do not leave their work stations during the day, they communicate most frequently within the colony with the other persons who share the space.

The office area is another place where the staff communicates frequently with one another. Staff members pass through this area constantly during the day as they pick up information and secure materials. It is a very busy place and much communication takes place as staff members see one another.

Other places where staff members are likely to communicate frequently with one another are the cafeteria and the teachers' lounge. At Jones School, communication in the cafeteria and in the lounge is limited. The teachers eat with their students and the lunch period is not very long. However, occasionally, teachers do walk over to one another and engage in light conversations with other staff members. The lounge at Jones School is usually empty. Some teachers work in the lounge while their students are with the music teacher or the physical education teacher. Although the schedule usually does not allow for two teachers to have a break at the same time, occasionally this will happen and a small group of teachers will sit in the lounge and communicate with one another for a few minutes.

Actors in the Communication Process

The Principal

At Jones Elementary School, the principal sets the tone for communication. The staff feels that the principal disapproves of communication between staff members:

> He doesn't like for you to talk; he likes for things to go (snap), (snap), (snap). I guess that's good. (Interview 2/9/82)

> One of the strict rules is that you don't stand in the hall and talk. (Interview 4/5/82)

> We can't talk on a personal basis. He doesn't know what it's about; he just says, "no talking and no visiting the colonies". (Interview 5/12/82)

Because horizontal communication is limited, most of the communication at the school originates with the principal and is in written form. The principal keeps the staff well informed through the administrative bulletins and through memos. Also, staff meetings are designed to communicate job information to the staff.

The principal communicates verbally on an individual basis with the staff. However, this communication is infrequent and usually concerns a special school-related problem. With the exception of a select few, the principal rarely communicates socially with the staff. Although the principal communicates with staff members throughout the day, most communication takes place in the mornings before the students arrive.

The principal is visible throughout the school building and operates an "open-door" policy. Although he moves constantly through the building throughout the day, little communication takes place between him and the staff. As he moves through the building, he primarily observes. On occasions the principal gets involved in classroom activities:

> As I entered the sixth grade colony, the two groups were combined. Dr. Brown was leading the discussion. The teacher was standing at the front and a substitute was sitting in a chair in the rear of the group. Dr. Brown was telling the students about his experiences.

> "At Madison I went to school at 6:30 and cooked breakfast at school. I got the students from two sections of the city." He called the names of several students whose parents were at Madison at that time. He talked about the fact that his mother had been a principal and they had walked to school each day and made the fire in the pot belly stoves in four of the rooms of the school. They had to stay in the evenings until the fires went out. He talked about his concern for them and stated that he wanted them to take advantage of the "opportunity for learning" that they have now. The teacher commented, "I'm so glad that you told them that Dr. Brown. I've told them that before, but when I tell them, they look at me with unbelief. I'm so glad that you reinforced what I've been telling them." The substitute made a statement to the students. He said that he was young and had not had the experiences that Dr. Brown and Mrs. Rooks were talking about, but he hoped that they would listen and take their advice about studying hard.
>
> Dr. Brown had a clipboard in his hand. The students were very quiet as he talked. They looked directly at him and sat up in their seats. They shook their heads or answered in unison when he directed questions to them. Dr. Brown said that he had not meant to disrupt the discussion. He thanked the students and teacher for allowing him to share in the discussion. He talked a few more minutes. He called each student by name. He singled out one child. He said, "Tony can tell you about what's here at Jones. He was at another school that he didn't like so much. It makes me feel good to pass through and see the smile on his face now. His mother tells me that he's a happy child now." As he talked, he placed his hand on the child's head and gently rubbed his head and patted his shoulder. He then talked about the substitute. "This young man is a Christian. He works with his father. He was at church last night until 2:30." He thanked the group again. As he left, he glanced at the clock and mouthed, "Oh, dear". (Fieldnotes 2/23/82)

The principal's office door generally is open when he is in the building. Sometimes the principal works in his office with the overhead lights out. A small lamp on his desk provides the only light for the room. When in his office, the principal is always seated behind his desk working or talking on the telephone. Although the principal operates an "open-door" policy, he is often inaccessible to the staff:

> I wanted to see him and I went through long periods of waiting for him and trying to schedule appointments. I finally just went into his office. He was on the phone. I stood there until he finished and then I closed the door behind me and started talking. (Interview 4/21/82)

> I was scheduled for an afternoon conference with the principal. I waited and waited. I left a note in his mailbox and told the secretary that it was necessary for me to leave after waiting for thirty-five minutes. I went through this for three days and finally gave up. (Interview 5/7/82)

The Staff

The teachers, as a whole, communicate very little and most do not initiate communication on a regular basis. However, several teachers have special communicative roles at Jones Elementary School. These roles include those of gatekeeper and liaison:

> Within the organization there are many communication roles: 1) gatekeepers keep the organization's gate on message flow; 2) liaisons are located in a crucial position so as to connect the canvas of cliques in the organization. . .[128]

At Jones School, there are several persons who have close working relationships with the principal and the office staff:

> The ones who have been here the longest have special types of relationships with the office. (Interview 4/21/82)

These persons function within the school as gatekeepers. The staff members perceived by the staff as being gatekeepers at Jones School are the grade chairmen, the secretary, certain resource teachers, and those teachers who have the longest tenure at the school. Many times their duties allow them to receive information before it is given to the total staff. As perceived by a staff member:

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[128] Rogers, p. 132.

> Certain people get the information before others. (Interview 5/7/82)

These gatekeepers also function as liaisons within the school. Most group communication which does not originate with the principal, originates with gatekeepers and liaisons. As stated by one staff member:

> There are several cliques. They get some of the information before the total group. They usually keep it to themselves. They get it in bits and pieces at first, but it eventually comes out. (Interview 5/5/82)

Although the grade chairmen and the secretary are sometimes forced into these roles because of the nature of their jobs, the other staff members who function in these roles do so voluntarily. Because of their closeness to the principal, both gatekeepers and liaisons at Jones School are viewed as representatives of the principal:

> They carry on when he's absent. (Interview 5/7/82)

SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Channels of Communication

Public Address System

The public address system is used frequently at Smith Elementary School. While it is not used daily, there is a morning announcement period two to three times a week. The function of the public address system at Smith School is to transmit all types of information to staff members. The types of information transmitted include notices of meetings and assemblies, special guests to the building, and clarification of due dates for reports and forms. Also, the public address system is used to announce emergency information such as early school closings due to inclement weather, changes in the school schedule due to the absence of an itinerant teacher, and special information to go home to parents. The public address system is rarely used to page teachers; usually, the secretary goes to get them. It may be used to page the custodian or the maid.

At Smith School the public address system is used to motivate both the students and the teachers. Announcements are given on student achievement and staff birthdays. Compliments are given to both the students and the staff over the public address system. On rare occasions, the public address system is used to issue light reprimands and warnings to the students regarding their behavior and study habits:

> The public address system is sometimes used for correcting behavior. The students were hyper before the holidays and she said something about it over the P.A. system. (Interview 4/8/82)

All of the announcement periods contain information that is relevant for the students. The students are recognized for achievements and bus behavior. Mrs. Johnson, the principal, periodically directs the students in a time test on math skills over the public address system. On some special occasions, the students take part in the announcements by reading a poem or giving information on planned classroom activities. However, the public address system is used primarily by two people, the principal and the secretary. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes describes a morning announcement period:

> At 9:45, Mrs. Johnson came over the PA system. She greeted the students and the teachers. She proceeded to tell them that three buses were being recognized for their behavior this morning. "Bus 6, bus 118, and bus 9." She commented that she was proud of them and that she hoped that all buses would be so recognized during the school year. She then went through a sort of ritual; "Bus 6, there goes your marble (sound of a marble being dropped into a container), Bus 118, there goes your marble; and Bus 9, there goes your marble".
>
> She made announcements relative to changes in the schedule; "Mrs. Davis will not be here - please do not report to her today". She then asked that those students who wanted to be timed on their math facts get ready and she would time them. "Let's get ready, (lapse of approximately three minutes) 1, 2, go". During time intervals she would announce, "three minutes", "five minutes", "six minutes". At the six minute point, she said, "Well, I hope all of you made it this morning."
>
> Mrs. Johnson then announced that there were many books waiting for the students in the library and that Mrs. Crews, the librarian, would like for them to come in and use the library more. She reminded them that they were to have their parents read to them at home. She closed this period by reminding them to be attentive to their math and reading skills. (Fieldnotes 1/6/82)

Face-to-Face Conversation

At Smith Elementary School, face-to-face conversation is a primary vehicle for transmitting information within the organization. It is used as a follow-up to information received over the public address system, at staff meetings, and through memos.

Teachers use face-to-face conversation to clarify instructions and to exchange ideas on special problems. Face-to-face conversations deal with such things as schedules, student discipline, and teaching duties.

While face-to-face conversations deal with school-related matters, there is a large amount of social conversation. The staff communicates with one another concerning families, friends, news events, clothes, and social activities throughout the city. Most face-to-face conversations are between groups of staff members; especially teachers and aides. The following excerpt describes a group conversation:

> I went into the lounge. There were about eight teachers and aides in the lounge talking among themselves. They were discussing a lady who they all seemed to know. They were discussing how good she looked although she was over eighty years old. As the conversation continued, I found out that she used to be a principal in the school system. They talked about how supportive she was of her teachers. They discussed several incidents in which this lady had supported teachers in the face of parent anger. One teacher commented, "I really liked her. I didn't stay with her but one year. She was good. She didn't take anything off those parents. And they can get right mean sometimes." They talked about the fact that she was very talkative. One teacher suggested that her ability to control the parents resulted from the fact that she talked them to death. They all laughed. They talked about the weather. One teacher told about her trip during the weekend to a funeral. One of the aides brought up the name of a student who had attended Smith. The teachers cited several instances of problems that teachers had had with the former student. Another teacher came into the lounge. She asked about a student- she was talking to the resource teacher. "How did Susie do today on the words?" The aide answered, "Not too well." Several of the other teachers who seemed to know the student chimed in, "Well, you know Susie". The teacher commented that the child was such a pretty little girl. The teachers agreed that it was good that she is pretty. They laughed. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

The principal communicates face-to-face with all members of the staff. While there is a limited amount of face-to-face communication between the principal and individual staff members, this channel of communication is used by the principal for solving specific problems and issuing individual directives. Also, the principal makes a special effort to communicate socially with all staff members that she comes in contact with during the school day. These conversations usually consist of a short "exchange of niceties":

> Sometimes she will ask or make a comment about what I'm wearing, family illnesses and other home situations. (Interview 4/9/82)

Memos, Bulletins, and Pamphlets

Memos, bulletins, and pamphlets are used infrequently at Smith Elementary School. Most memos and bulletins originate from the principal's office and contain general information of interest to the staff. Faculty meetings are announced through memos. Also, memos transmit information regarding schedules, directives from downtown, inservice activities, and due dates for paper work. Sometimes the memos tell staff members if they've "done something that she likes or doesn't like":

> Sometimes we get individual personal notes - "thanks for coming to the PTA." (Interview 4/9/82)

Memos announce special events, committee meetings, and activities within the school district. Memos are used as reminders and are a follow-up to announcements made over the public address system and during staff meetings. Most memos are given out at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the school year, there are few memos given out:

> We don't get many memos. Usually they contain information from downtown. (Interview 4/26/82)

Policy and Procedures Manuals

At Smith School, the staff receives several manuals which clarify various district-wide and school policies and procedures. These manuals are given out at the beginning of the school year and the staff is expected to read them and keep them as references throughout the year. These manuals include several curriculum guides, the district policy manual, and the faculty handbook.

Staff Meetings

Although Monday afternoons are set aside for staff meetings,few staff meetings are held:

> She doesn't call staff meetings unless she has something to say. We know we're to reserve Mondays, but there's no meeting unless it's important. (Interview 4/8/82)

However, there is at least one staff meeting held monthly. Staff meetings are attended by the teachers and the principal; aides and other staff members do not attend these meetings:

> I don't attend, I go only at Christmas and the end of the year. (Interview 4/8/82)

On special occasions such as Christmas and the end of the year, the total staff meets together. Staff meetings begin at 3:00 and are held in the media center. Staff meetings usually last until 3:30.

At Smith School, staff meetings are very informal and there is no written agenda. Most of the information transmitted during staff meetings concerns directives from central administration and curriculum-related matters. Also, staff meetings are used for the exchange of information between the staff and, on some occasions, the staff decides on procedures for non-instructional tasks such as bus duty and holiday parties. Occasionally, special guests attend staff meetings to explain a special program or service being offered to the school. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes describes a staff meeting at Smith School:

> Mrs. Johnson began the meeting by commenting on the coldness of the building. She assured the teachers that it would be warmer on the next day but advised them to "dress warmly". She stated that she had checked everyone's thermostat.
>
> She told them that they had a guest who would speak to them this afternoon. The guest was from the city Arts and Humanities Center. The guest explained the program to the staff. After the presentation, several of the teachers asked her questions concerning the program.
>
> After Mrs. Parker made her presentation, she left. Mrs. Johnson stated that she would like a large number of Smith students to be involved in the program. She asked the teachers to let her know if there were students who might need financial assistance.
>
> Mrs. Johnson stated that there was a course being offered on middle school curriculum and, if interested, the teachers are to sign up. She cited several other educational opportunities that were posted on the bulletin board in the lounge. She told them that additional information could be found about the courses by reading the bulletin board.
>
> The teachers were told to keep up with their Basic Learning Skills activities. Mrs. Johnson stated that she would test a group of first graders. One teacher raised her hand, and after being recognized, asked why her students were being excluded. She said that her students had finished

a level but had not been tested. Mrs. Johnson stated that it was an oversight but that they would be tested.

Mrs. Johnson discussed teacher goals and the need to begin evaluating those goals. She indicated that Mrs. Bradley was responsible for the school-wide goals. Mrs. Bradley quickly stated that she was not on that committee. Mrs. Johnson tried to assure her that she was indeed on the committee and its chairman. The teacher, on the other hand, tried to tell Mrs. Johnson that she was not. After a few minutes of going back and forth, Mrs. Johnson said, "We'll talk about that later". The teacher then indicated that although she was not aware that she was on the committee, she would be glad to work on the committee. Mrs. Johnson replied, "I knew you would".

Mrs. Johnson told the teachers to encourage the students to do quality work. She asked the education association representative if she would like to say anything to the staff. The representative had nothing to say or hand out. She then asked if any other teachers would like to make comments or statements. The librarian made an appeal for the return of sharing sheets with the parents signatures. Mrs. Johnson stated that this was a voluntary program and that teachers are not to pressure the students. The librarian also stated that ahe had a supplementary reading list for the Holt Reading Series.

Mrs. Johnson commended the teachers for the motivational reading and math programs. She stated that the librarian had the widest circulation of any librarian in the district. She then told the teachers that they were doing a "terrific job". She said, "I may not always tell you, but I think you're doing a great job." After saying this, she asked, "Are there any questions?" When there wre no indications of questions, she said, "That's all".

Grapevine

The grapevine is very active at Smith Elemntary School. Because the staff exhibits a close relationship, most grapevine communication pertains to the staff members. Grapevine communication includes information on illnesses, births, honors, marriages, and deaths in the family:

> The conversation was concerning Mrs. Johnson's husband. They stated that she had been out on Tuesday and had gone with her husband to the hospital to have minor surgery on his leg. One teacher commented that Mrs. Johnson had been very upset on Wednesday. The teacher commented that Mrs. Johnson had said, "It was quite an ordeal for both of us. (Fieldnotes 1/14/82)

Also, grapevine information includes information on such things as the mood of the principal, disturbances between parents and teachers, and whether or not a "pod" is getting along. The grapevine also transmits information on what has been said in the lounge during the day, teacher problems and transfers, and staff frustrations. Information on staff parties and "get togethers" is passed through the grapevine:

> . . . Someone mentioned that they thought an affair was being planned for February 10. The secretary came into the lounge. She informed the group that they were having a dinner get-together on February 10. "It's $7.50 per person and that's not bad for the meal you get." The group expressed their pleasure and talked about how they had enjoyed themselves when they went out as a group. (Fieldnotes 5/5/82)

Grapevine communication at Smith School does not tend to be negative and almost everyone in the school participates in the grapevine to some extent. At Smith School, the grapevine is used as a source of better understanding and relating to co-workers. The grapevine appears to foster good working relationships at Smith School.

Flow of Communication

Downward Communication

There is a great deal of downward communication at Smith

Elementary School and most of this communication is verbal. The public address system and staff meetings are used most frequently to transmit information to the staff. These two channels of communication transmit general information designed to assist the staff in the performance of their duties. Also they inform the staff of activities throughout the school. Most of the information that the principal transmits to and shares with the staff comes through these two channels.

Written downward communication is limited. Memos are used as reminders and are follow-up to information recieved through the public address system and staff meetings. However, with the exception of the beginning of the school year, there are very few memos at Smith School.

Most downward communication comes from the principal to the total staff. On a one-to-one basis, however, downward communication is limited. Written downward communication on a one-to-one basis consists of a note being placed in the staff member's mailbox:

> Occasionally, she may drop a note in my box. Usually it concerns things that involve other people. (Interview 4/9/82)

The principal communicates verbally on a one-to-one basis with the staff daily. She makes a special effort to do this on her visits through the building during the day:

> She comes around about five times during the day. She'll exchange greetings and talk about matters pertaining to professional problems. (Interview 5/10/82)

The principal also communicates with the secretary and the office aide daily and throughout the school day.

While most downward communication comes from the principal, there are other key staff members who communicate downward:

> Most often, the office clerks relay any messages necessary. A teacher close to the principal also relays messages. (Interview 5/10/82)

The secretary and office aide transmit a great deal of information throughout the school. Usually, this information is sent to the staff under the principal's direction. Also, one of the sixth grade teachers acts as an assistant to the principal and sometimes transmits information to the staff on behalf of the principal:

> Mrs. Johnson knows I want to be an administrator. She allows me to act as an assistant to her. Therefore, I get to see everyone because people come to me for information. (Interview 2/24/82)

Mrs. Lawrence, a school volunteer, works closely with the office staff and communicates information down through the school. Downward communication is both school-related and social in nature. Information shared is related to specific students, discipline problems, special requests by the principal, and clarification of staff duties:

> Mr. Williams, could you get the big coffee pot and put it in the multi-purpose room, please. (Fieldnotes 2/24/82)

Many times, downward communication has a personal tone and deals with general information concerning families and friends. Although the principal communicates with all staff members on a regular basis, she communicates most frequently with those staff members who are personal friends. As one staff member revealed:

> She communicates with me almost everyday. There are not many days when she doesn't communicate with me, if no more than a

> greeting. We talk about our problem - we both suffer from the same illness. We talk about people that we know. We share articles on our illness - we're interested in one another. (Interview 4/8/82)

Upward Communication

Upward communication is frequent at Smith School. Although there are grade level chairmen who filter information and carry concerns to the principal, most staff members communicate directly with the principal. Most upward communication consists of asking for clarification on a specific duty and informing the principal of specific problems. Many times the teachers ask for advice from the principal in dealing with difficult parents:

> I talk to Mrs. Johnson if I'm having problems getting parents in. We talk about suggestions I have for getting them to come. (Interview 5/3/82)

Occasionally, upward communication is personal in nature. Teachers and other staff members ask about the principal's health, family, and friends. Upward communication of a personal nature is more frequent with those staff members who are personal friends of the principal.

Most upward communication is verbal and takes place in the office area:

> One of the teachers was seated in a chair in the office area . . . As Mrs. Johnson came out of her office,the teacher asked, "I don't know if this a good time, but may I see you for a few minutes?" Mrs. Johnson indicated that it was "okay" and she and the teacher went into her office. (Fieldnotes 2/25/82)

Upward communication also takes place throughout the building as staff members come in contact with the principal. On those occasions when staff members cannot make verbal contact with the principal, upward communication takes place in the form of a memo placed in the principal's mailbox:

> Sometimes I'll write a note and put it in her box. (Interview 5/6/82)

Upward communication also comes to other key staff members. While most staff members feel comfortable communicating with the principal, they also go to others for information:

> Everyone feels comfortable going to Mrs. Johnson but Mrs. Ward (the secretary) has all of the information. If I wanted to know something, I'd go to the following people in the following rank order: (1) Mrs. Johnson (principal); (2) Mrs. Lawrence (volunteer); (3) Mrs. Ward (secretary); and (4) Mrs. Kelly (office aide). We go to Mrs. Kelly mostly for supplies. We usually call Mrs. Ward if we're going to be out. The teachers like Mrs. Ward and she is the focus of most communication. Teachers use her as a testing ground as to whether information should go to Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Lawrence has a lot of influence. She has worked with Mrs. Johnson at other schools. She has a lot of information. (Interview 2/24/82)

Horizontal Communication

The level of horizontal communication at Smith Elementary School is very high. Communication throughout the school is relatively free and open. Because the office staff encourages communication, horizontal communication takes place constantly throughout the school day. Staff members are friendly with one another and it is a common sight to see groups of staff members talking together through the building.

Horizontal communication at Smith School is verbal and while it deals with school-related matters, it is primarily social. The teachers in the "pod" meet on a regular basis throughout the year to plan together and communicate each evening with "pod" co-workers. Although much of the horizontal communication is school-related, social conversation takes place throughout the day. Usually these conversations are among groups and consists of information about families, friends, news events, and social activities throughout the city. The following excerpts describe the flow of horizontal communication at Smith Elementary School:

> I went into the lounge (12:00). There were three teachers preparing to eat their bag lunches. They freely chatted concerning their children and husbands. They were joined by two other teachers. These two teachers were involved in a conversation concerning an upcoming debutante ball for one of their daughters. They discussed what they were going to wear. "I'm thinking about a light burgundy. What do you think?" Advice was given on the color of the dress and the type of shoes to be worn. Another teacher came in. She was greeted by the group. They were joined by one of the aides. The aide inquired of one of the teachers, "How did the baby enjoy her first Christmas?" The aide then informed me that "her baby got pearl earrings for Christmas." The teacher informed the group that her family had taken numerous pictures of the baby during the holidays. The group shared food. "Oh, is that tuna? May I have a little?" (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

The Basis of Communication

Information

A great deal of information is transmitted and shared at Smith School. Throughout the day, information is passed among the members and is essential to assisting the staff members in performing their job responsibilities. While this informative communication may be written or verbal, it is usually verbal.

Most communication for information comes through the public address system or staff meetings. However, the staff passes information througout the day on an individual and small-group basis. The organizational structure and freeness of movement cause a great deal of information to be passed.

Evaluation

All staff members have a yearly conference with the principal, which is designed to evaluate their overall performance. However, throughout the year, evaluation communication focuses on specific incidents and situations. At Smith School, communication for the purpose of evaluation is limited.

Group evaluations are transmitted through staff meetings, the public address system, and memos. Usually the communication is complimentary but, on occasions, it may represent a light reprimand:

> We were told to watch the amount of sick days we were taking. She more or less told us to come to school sick. (Interview 2/17/82)

Individually, staff members receive evaluation information in various forms. Sometimes they receive a note in their mailbox but the principal usually goes to the room to talk with them. Most individual evaluation communication takes place face-to-face:

> I usually go by the room and tell the teacher that I want to see her in my office after school. If she's not in her room, I put a note in her mailbox. (Interview 5/10/82)

On occasions, negative evaluation communication is given to the total group during staff meetings instead of dealing with the individuals involved. The staff has negative feelings about this type of evaluation communication:

> There's one thing I don't like - dealing with specific personal problems at staff meetings. After the meeting, all of the teachers want to know, "is it you?" (Interview 2/24/82)

Instruction

Communication which is designed to instruct usually is written. Memos and manuals are the primary source of communication to instruct. Most of this type of communication comes at the beginning of the year during inservice days. At this time, the various curriculum guides and manuals are given to the staff. The staff receives information through these written materials which instructs them on all facets of their job performance.

Throughout the year, instructional communication takes place at staff meetings, workshops, and conferences. Although the principal communicates most instructional information, consultants and specialists are sometimes brought to the school to assist the staff.

Influence

At Smith School many people communicate for the purpose of influencing the behavior of the staff members. These persons include the principal, the secretary, a school volunteer, and cliques among the staff.

The principal issues memos to remind the staff of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the areas of classroom management, instruction, and planning. Reminders are given during staff meetings and are designed to influence behavior.

Although the principal influences the staff, there are several other persons who communicate in order to influnece the staff. The secretary communicates a great deal with the staff. Most of her communication is designed to clarify the principal's directives and to influence the staff positively toward adhering to those directives:

> Teachers feel very positive toward her. Teachers use her as a testing ground as to whether information should go to Mrs. Johnson. (Interview 2/24/82)

Also, many cliques within the school communicate for the purpose of influencing. These teachers have the ability to influence the staff positively or negatively toward events that take place in the schools. A staff member revealed her opinion about one such influential person:

> She seems to put herself in a position to get information and impart it to you. I question whether it's something she wants or whether it comes from Mrs. Johnson. (Interview 4/9/82)

In addition, these cliques have a degree of influence upon the principal. Many times, they are given information before it is officially announced:

> They seem to be around the office all the time and know everything. (Interview 4/9/82)

Socialization

There is a large degree of communication for socialization at Smith School. Communication throughout the school is relatively free and open. Staff members are very friendly with one another and it is a common sight to see groups of staff members talking together throughout the building.

Although there are no scheduled breaks throughout the day, teachers are allowed to take breaks when their students are with the music teacher, physical education teacher, or librarian. During these periods the teachers are free to visit other pods or sit in the lounge:

> Mrs. Johnson doesn't mind us going to the lounge when our students are with the music or physical education teacher. We can have a break anytime during the day as long as the students are supervised. (Interview 2/4/82)

Sometimes the teachers take a break during the day. When this occurs, other co-workers in the "pod" are asked to watch their students until they return.

The staff is very friendly toward one another and socializes a great deal. They constantly communicate socially with one another about families, clothes, diets, friends, and social activities throughout the city. These social conversations are very relaxed and personal information is shared freely among the staff:

> I went into the lounge. There were five teachers there. They were drinking coffee and chatting. Two of the teachers were discussing the illness of one's husband. "The bill from the specialist is over $8,000. The brain surgery is probably going to be over $20,000." Another teacher, hearing the conversation, asked if Blue Cross would cover it. "Some, not all. They wouldn't pay for having the heart doctor present during the operation." They chatted on, with others giving advice.
>
> The fourth grade teacher announced that she had found the skirt to go with the blazer she bought last week. She also chatted about the fact that her father who had retired in early December was "worrying her mother to death". She explained, "He's found

> a job and I'm glad. They had almost come to blows. They were referring to each other as 'your mother' and 'your father'. It was terrible." They chatted cheerfully; laughing and joking with one another. The fourth grade teacher announced, "The students are going down the hall, ladies." They all prepared to leave. (Fieldnotes 2/6/82)

In addition to communicating socially at school, there are many social functions that involve the entire staff and throughout the school year, the staff goes out periodically for dinner and drinks. The social affairs usually are attended by fifty percent or more of the staff and include both teachers and non-instructional staff members. They seem to be gala affairs and give the staff an opportunity to "let their hair down":

> As I went into the lounge, there was a group of eight teachers and aides. They were talking about the staff get-together which was held Wednesday night at a restaurant. They chatted and joked with one another about the events of the night. "And Mrs. Anderson was smoking and danced on the table." The group laughed. They commented on the fact that they didn't know she smoked because she doesn't smoke at school. One teacher indicated, "I missed that, it must have happened after I switched tables." Another said, "I don't remember going into the place." They all laughed. They talked about how good the food was and what a good time they had. (Fieldnotes 1/16/82)

Frequency of Communication

What Groups or Individuals Communicate With One Another?

The staff at Smith School communicates most frequently with those persons with whom they work directly. Teachers and aides communicate most with the other teachers and aides in the same pod:

> We talk more because of availability. We have things in common - the same students, the same parents, the same classwork. (Interview 4/26/82)

They communicate with those persons daily and throughout the day. Because of the openness of the pods, the teachers and aides move about freely and are able to communicate with one another as they perform their instructional duties. They also communicate more with co-workers because of their personal relationships with one another:

> We've been together so long, we're friends. (Interview 4/9/82)

The staff also communicates with those persons who have the same or similar job responsibilities. Teachers communicate with other teachers on the same grade more than with teachers in other grades. The secretary, office aide, and principal communicate with each other more than with other staff persons. Although resource teachers communicate frequently with other staff persons, they communicate more with fellow resource teachers than with other teachers. Aides, however, communicate more with their supervising teacher than with other aides or teachers. Aides exhibit a special companionship toward their supervising teacher:

> We're friends. We've worked together for eight years. (Interview 4/8/82)

Another factor which influences the frequency of communication between staff members is physical proximity. Staff members communicate most frequently with those who are closest to them:

> I talk to them most, I guess, because I'm in close proximity to them. I'm a friendly person but not a visiting person. (Interview 4/9/82)

Also, teachers do not communicate as much with the itinerant teachers because they are not in the building on a regular basis.

Non-instructional staff persons communicate most frequently with their immediate supervisor. The custodian, maid, secretary, and the office aide communicate most frequently with the principal. The cafeteria workers communicate most frequently with the cafeteria manager. However, non-instructional staff members communicate frequently with the instructional staff:

> Mr. Williams was in the cafeteria. He was joking with one of teachers concerning the fact that she was eating lunch although she was supposed to be on a diet. (Fieldnotes 1/14/82)

> I went to the cafeteria . . . the custodian was involved in a conversation with one of the cafeteria workers. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

> I went into the lounge. One of the resource teachers, two aides, the custodian and the nurse were in the lounge talking. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

Also, non-instructional staff members are included in school-wide social functions:

> The maid had attended the affair on Wednesday. She indicated that it was "very nice". (Fieldnotes 2/16/82)

How Often Does Communication Take Place?

Communication takes place throughout the school day. Within the pods, teachers communicate daily and constantly throughout the day. Although communication outside the pods is not as frequent, it is not uncommon for teachers to communicate during the day with teachers in other work areas. Communication with persons on the opposite side of the building is infrequent:

> I communicate with the people on the other side infrequently. They're across the hall and we don't go there much. We're physically cut off. (Interview 4/5/82)

Although communication outside the pods is infrequent, the staff communicates with each other at least weekly.

Verbal communication with the principal varies among the staff. Most teachers indicate that they communciate with the principal at least weekly. The principal makes daily rounds and most of the staff gets to exchange greetings with her at that time. The principal communicates daily with the administrative office staff, the custodian, the maid, and the cafeteria workers. Also, the principal communictes frequently with those persons with whom she has developed a personal friendship:

> I talk to her about three times a day. I feel very comfortable communicating with her on a personal basis. We've worked together for five years. (Interview 5/10/82)

Non-instructional staff members communicate on a daily basis with almost all of the rest of the staff. The nature of their jobs gives them the freedom to move througout the building and communicate with fellow staff members.

When Does Communication Take Place?

Communication at Smith School takes place throughout the day. Most communication among groups, however, takes place before the instructional day begins, during lunchtime, and after the students leave for the day.

The period in the morning when staff persons arrive is a period of heavy communication. Usually, staff persons use this time to get coffee and chat informally with one another:

> After getting settled, I returned to the lounge. There were five teachers there. They were drinking coffee and chatting. Others came in. (Fieldnotes 1/6/82)

During lunchtime, staff members see one another while eating or as they enter and leave the cafeteria:

> . . . as I stood in line, the custodian came in to joke with the cafeteria wokers and one of the teachers. He had been absent the day before. They kidded him about the fact that no one missed him. (Fieldnotes 2/17/82)

They also visit the lounge to chat briefly with fellow staff persons:

> I returned to the lounge to get a cup of hot chocolate. The custodian, resource teacher, office aide, and resource aide were present. They were chatting about the weather. (Fieldnotes 1/27/82)

Much of the communication among the staff takes place after the students leave. Students in grades kindergarten through three leave at 2:30, and students in grades four through six leave at 3:10. The period after the students leave until the end of the school day is used for planning and there is an increase in communication among the staff:

> One teacher explained that after the students leave they first "giggle", then they "keep Susan (fellow pod member) from doing her work", and finally "we all get to work". (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

Where does Communication Take Place?

Most of the communication among the staff at Smith School takes place in the teachers' lounge. Because teachers are able to take breaks as long as their students are supervised, most teachers and other staff persons come to the lounge at sometime during the day:

> One of the teachers was bringing her students to music. After dropping them off at music, she went to the lounge. (Fieldnotes 2/4/82)

Also, the lounge contains a snack area and staff members get snacks from the lounge to take back to their work areas. As staff members meet one another in the lounge, conversation takes place:

> The aide got a cup of coffee and, after chatting for a few minutes, left the lounge. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

The lounge is especially busy in the morning before the students arrive, during lunchtime, and the last period of the day before the students leave. Those instructional staff persons who do not have a homeroom eat in the lounge each day:

> The regular lounge group came in to eat their lunches. They talked among themselves. The conversation included students, husbands, and food. They shared food with one another. they talked freely and everyone appeared to be a part of the conversation. (Fieldnotes 2/3/82)

A great deal of communication takes place in the pods. Because teachers do not frequently leave their work stations during the day they communicate within the pod with the other persons who share the space. After the students leave, the communication among pod members increases. The following excerpt describes an afternoon conversation in one of the pods:

> They talked about what to put on their bulletin boards. One offered to give the other "Jimmy the Cricket" to put on the board. They explained that they were expected to have the students work on display in the pods. They talked about the fact that Mrs. Johnson would "fall out" when she saw that they had changed their bulletin boards. They talked about their children. "I'm going to bring Lisa to see you again. She pedals her bike backwards, so if you see a little girl pedaling backwards, that's Lisa." One of the teachers commented, "Oh, I saw a blazer for $60, but I couldn't find a skirt. They're

> holding it for me." They appeared to be comfortable with one another. (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

The office area is another place where the staff communicates frequently with one another. Staff members pass through this area constantly during the day as they pick up information and secure materials. It is a very busy place and much communication takes place as staff members see one another:

> When I arrived, there were four persons in the office. The custodian and the maid were at the secretary's desk chatting . . . There were two teachers working on the display cabinet. They were putting up a display for Black History Month. (Fieldnotes 2/1/82)

> One of the teachers came in the office from the paved playground area. Since the door leading to the office was open, I could see her and hear her conversation. She and another teacher who entered the office about the same time were discussing an upcoming talent show which would occur at the school. (Fieldnotes 1/6/82)

Another place where staff members communicate frequently with one another is the cafeteria. The teachers at Smith School have the option of eating with their students or eating with their fellow teachers at tables in the center of the cafeteria:

> I went into the cafeteria. The second and third grade students were eating lunch. Several of the teachers were seated at the tables in the center of the cafeteria . . . The custodian was talking with one of the ladies who works in the cafeteria. (Fieldnotes 1/25/82)

Actors In the Communication Process

The Principal

The principal sets the tone for communication at Smith Elementary School. She encourages communication among the staff and makes an effort to take part in group conversations:

> In the media center, a teacher was putting up a display outside the kindergarten unit. There were five teachers instructing her as to where the word "follow" should be placed: one teacher came up, laughing - "Oh, no, don't tell me there are six people out here helping you." The teacher laughed and talked about the fact that she was getting sick from being on the step ladder. Mrs. Johnson came up and the group asked her opinion as to where the word should be placed. She laughed with them and gave her opinion. "Straighten it out a little." Her suggestion was followed. (Fieldnotes 1/5/82)

Horizontal communication is frequent and most of the communication originates with the secretary:

> Mrs. Ward is the focus of communication. (Interview 2/24/82)

However, the principal keeps the staff well informed through the public address system, memos, and staff meetings. The staff feels very comfortable with the amount of information they receive:

> I'm always kept aware of the information that I need to know. (Interview 4/26/82)

The principal communicates verbally on an individual basis with the staff throughout the day. She moves constantly through the building and communicates frequently with the staff. With the exception of greetings and light social conversation, this communication usually concerns a special school-related problem:

> The teacher talked to Mrs. Johnson concerning a conference she was having at 9:00 with a parent. Mrs. Johnson told her that she would be in the library and that she would see her after the conference. (Fieldnotes 2/8/82)

The principal operates an "open-door" policy and the staff approaches her constantly during the day for clarification of and direction on school-related matters:

> I saw Mrs. Johnson in the cafeteria. I stopped to chat with her for a few minutes. As I left, one of the teachers said to Mrs. Johnson, "I never did finish my conversation with you." I

> could hear the beginning of the conversation, "Now what should we do . . ." (Fieldnotes 1/6/82)

The principal is very much interested in keeping the morale of the staff high. She encourages horizontal communication among the staff and gives the staff a degree of privacy to carry on horizontal communication:

> I'm not in the lounge a lot. I feel that's a time for teachers to be alone. I don't need to be there. (Interview 5/10/82)

She makes a special effort to initiate activities that she feels will keep staff morale high. She constantly seeks new activities to initiate:

> Mrs. Johnson asked me if I knew of anything that would boost morale - "not that it's needed". She listed the things that had been done already to boost morale - "there's a snack area in the lounge, the teachers are allowed to leave early on some days, there are social affairs away from school, I gave them apples for National Teacher Week, I remember their birthdays." She commented that she was running out of ideas. "The teachers get down when its time for salary negotiations." I suggested secret pals. Mrs. Johnson commented, "I like that. I'm trying to think of a way I can start it now and end with a pot luck dinner at the end of school. (Fieldnotes 2/3/82)

Although the principal initiates many activities designed to keep staff morale high, some staff persons feel pressured to attend staff social affairs:

> You don't have everyone wanting to go. Sometimes the principal sets up social affairs without asking if the staff is interested. So you go to not look like a bad guy. (Interview 4/5/82)

Also, the principal makes an effort to speak with all staff persons during the course of the day and to engage in group conversations. However, the staff does not perceive the principal as being very open:

> Mrs. Johnson is a very private person. When she laughs and jokes with you, you don't know how to take it - there are some things you don't dare say or do around her. (Interview 4/5/82)

The Staff

The staff at Smith School communicates frequently. All staff members, both instructional and non-instructional, are involved in the communication system:

> . . . there seem to be a few people who are in the know . . . they seem to be around the office all the time and know everything. Whether they assumed this role themselves or she (the principal) gave it to them, we don't know. (Interview 4/9/82)

The staff members perceived as being gatekeepers at Smith School are two teachers, the secretary, and the office aide. Often, their duties allow them to receive information before it is given to the total staff. These gatekeepers also function as liaisons withing the school. According to the school secretary:

> It's sort of a clearing house up here to a certain extent. I act as both a gatekeeper and a liaison. I think when there was an assistant principal, he served that purpose. After he left, I got into that more. (Interview 5/6/82)

Most group communication which does not originate with the principal, orginates with gatekeepers and liaisons. Sometimes the secretary and grade chairman are forced into these roles because of the nature of their jobs. The principal encourages certain staff members to act as gatekeepers and liaisons:

> I may tell the secretary something and tell her not to tell anyone. (Interview 5/10/82)
>
> The grade chairmen pass on information for me sometimes. I depend on them to get certain information to others on their grade level. (Interview 5/10/82)

Because of their closeness to the principal, both gatekeepers and liaisions at Smith School are viewed as representatives of the principal:

> We call her (upper grade teacher) the assistant principal. (Interview 4/9/82)

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the organizational communication pattern of the two schools, Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School. The descriptions were guided by five broad areas of organizational communication: 1) the channels of communication; 2) the flow of communication; 3) the basis of communication; 4) the frequency of communcation; and 5) the actors in the communcation process.

A summary of the data reveals that there are similarities and differences in the organizational communication patterns of the two schools (see Table 2). These differences illustrate a distinct organizational communication pattern for each of the two schools.

There is a distinction in the manner in which communication takes place at the two schools. At Jones Elementary School, the most frequently used channels of communication are bulletins and memos, staff meetings, and the grapevine. At Smith Elementary School, the most frequently used channels of communication are face-to-face and the grapevine. At both schools, manuals are used infrequently as a channel of communication.

In regard to the flow of communication, there were distinct differences between the two schools. At Jones Elementary School.

Table 2

A Comparison of the Organizational Communication Pattern of Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School

Schools	Channels of Communicaiton					Flow of Communication			
	Public Address System (1)	Face-to-Face (2)	Bulletins/ Memos (3)	Manuals (4)	Staff Meetings (5)	Grapevine (6)	Downward (7)	Upward (8)	Horizontal (9)
Jones	infrequent	infrequent	frequent	infrequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	infrequent	infrequent
Smith	frequent	frequent	infrequent	infrequent	infrequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent

Schools	Basis of Communication			
	Information (10)	Evaluation (15)	Influence (14)	Socialization (13)
Jones	frequent	infrequent	frequent	infrequent
Smith	frequent	infrequent	frequent	frequent

Schools	Frequency of Communication						
	Groups and Individuals			How Often			
	Sharing Work Space (14)	Similar Job Responsiblities (15)	Between Instructional and Non-instructional Staff (16)	Within work area (17)	Outside work area (18)	Principal (19)	Between Instructional and Non-Instructional Staff (20)
Jones	frequent	frequent	infrequent	daily throughout day	weekly	weekly	daily
Smith	frequent	frequent	frequent	daily throughout day	weekly	daily	daily throughout day

Table 2 (Continued)

Schools	Frequency of Communication	
	When (21)	Where (22)
Jones	1) After school 2) Before staff meeting 3) Lunchtime 4) Before school	1) Colonies 2) Office Area 3) Cafeteria 4) Lounge
Smith	1) After school 2) Lunchtime 3) Before school 4) During Breaks	1) Lounge 2) Office area 3) Cafeteria 4) Pods

Schools	Actors in the Communication Process				
	Principal			Staff	
	Attitude (23)	Visisbility (24)	Accesibility (25)	Gatekeepers (26)	Liaisons (27)
Jones	discouraging	high	low	secretary grade level chairmen resource teacher teachers with longest tenure	secretary grade level chairmen resoure teacher teachers with longest tenure
Smith	encouraging	low	high	secretary upper grade teacher office aide lower grade teacher	secretary grade chairmen upper level teacher lower level teacher

upward communication and horizontal communication occur infrequently. At Smith Elementary School, one the other hand, downward communication, upward communication, and horizontal communication are frequent. At both schools, however downward communication is frequent.

The rationale behind communication within the two schools is very similar. In both schools, the most frequent purposes for communication are to transmit information and to influence the behavior of others. Also, in both schools, communication for the purpose of evaluation occurs infrequently. At Jones Elementary School, communication for the purpose of socialization occurs infrequently. In comparison, communication at Smith Elementary School for the purpose of socialization occurs frequently.

In examining the frequency with which organizational members communicate with one another, data were presented for each school which described communication between groups and individuals, how often communication takes place, when communication takes place, and where communcation takes place. The data revealed both similarities and differences between the two schools.

In both schools, the staff communicates most frequently with those persons with whom they work directly and with those who share the same work space. Also, the staff of each school communicates frequently with those persons who have the same or similar job responsibilities. At both schools, physical proximity influences the frequency of communication between staff members. At Jones

Elementary School, the non-instructional staff persons communicate most frequently with their immediate supervisor and have limited communication with other staff persons. In comparison, at Smith Elementary School, non-instructional and instructional staff persons communicate more frequently with one another.

At both schools, teachers sharing the same work space communicate daily and constantly throughout the day. Also, at both schools, communication with persons outside the work area occurs at least weekly. Other than morning greetings, verbal communication with the principal occurs at least weekly at both schools. At Jones Elementary School, non-instructional staff members communicate daily with other staff persons. At Smith Elementary School, they communicate daily and throughout the day. This indicates that communication between instructional and non-instructional staff is more frequent at Smith School than at Jones School.

The time of day when most communcation occurs in both schools is the period after the students leave. There are differences between the schools, however, in the remaining rank order of time periods for high frequencies of communication among staff. At Jones Elementary School, the remaining periods for high frequencies of communication are before staff meetings, during lunchtime, and before school. In comparison, at Smith Elementary School, the remaining periods for high frequencies of communication are during lunchtime, before school, and during breaks.

The rank order for the places within the building where high frequencies of communication occur differs between the two schools. At Jones Elementary School, communication occurs most often in: 1) the colonies; 2) the office area; 3) the cafeteria; and 4) the lounge. In comparison, at Smith Elementary School, communication occurs most often in: 1) the lounge; 2) the office area; 3) the cafeteria and 4) the pods.

The primary actors in the communication system at each school are the principal, the teachers, and the office staff. At both schools, the principal sets the tone for communication. At Jones School, the principal is perceived as discouraging communication among staff members. In comparison, the the principal at Smith School is perceived as encouraging communication among staff members. At both schools, the principal is highly visible throughout the school building. However, the principal at Jones School is perceived by the staff to be inaccesible. Both schools have persons who function as gate-keepers and liaisons. The secretary at both schools function as a gatekeeper and the grade level chairmen at both schools functions as liaisons. In addition, each school has specific staff persons who act as gatekeepers and liaisons. The persons who act as gatekeepers and liaisons are viewed as representatives of the principal by the staff of each school.

The data have been used to present descriptions of the organizational communication pattern of each school. Also, the descriptions of each school's communication pattern have been compared for similarities and differences. These descriptions are essential to further analysis of the data with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication.

Chapter VI

AN ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS WITH REGARD TO EXISTING PROPOSITIONS IN THE FIELD OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The third phase of this study, an analysis of organizational communication in the selected schools with regard to existing propostions in the field of organizational communication, is presented in this chapter. The data are analyzed with regard to the following eight propositions in the field of organizational communication:

1. Communication is purposive.
2. The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.
3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.
4. Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.
5. The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable.
6. Horizontal communication flows in an organization a
7. Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward flows.
8. The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.[129]

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[129] Haney, pp. 141-144.

As stated in Chapter IV, this study utilized three methods of data collection: participant observation; formal and informal interviews; and the analysis of school documents. To accomplish the objectives of this chapter, an analysis of organizational communication in the selected schools with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication, a structured interview was developed (see Appendix B). The interview questions were designed primarily to gather information pertaining to the eight communication propositions outlined in the proposal (see Table 3). In the selected schools, the following persons were interviewed: principals, secretaries, office aides, classroom teachers, aides, librarians, resource teachers, itinerant teachers, custodians, and maids. A total of sixty-nine persons were interviewed (see Table 4). Based on the data collected through these interviewe, an analysis of organizational communication in the selected schools with regard to existing propositions is analyzed and reported in this chapter.

Proposition 1. Communication is Purposive

In order to investigate this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools, two questions were asked to determine the purpose of communication in the selected schools. The questions asked were: 1) With those persons whom you communicate frequently, what is the nature of your communication? and 2) With those persons whom you communicate infrequently, what is

Table 3

The Relationship Between the Interview Questions and the Eight Organizational Communication Propositions

	Proposition	Interview Question
1.	Communication is purposive.	8, 12
2.	The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.	14 - 22
3.	The message sent is not necessarily the message recieved.	23 - 26
4.	Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.	23, 29,
5.	Horizontal communication flows in an organization are usually complimentary and substitutable.	38
6.	Horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward communication.	6, 7, 30
7.	Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward communication.	30, 34
8.	The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.	40, 41, 43, 44
	Communication Satisfaction	45

Table 4

A Comparison of the Number of Interviews for Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School

Participant	Jones Elementary School	Smith Elementary School	Total
Principal	1	1	2
Secretary	1	1	2
Office Aide	1	1	2
Classroom Teacher	17	18	35
Librarian	1	1	2
Resource Teacher	3	4	7
Teacher Aide	6	7	13
Custodial Staff	2	2	4
Itinerant Teacher	1	1	2
TOTAL	33	36	69

the nature of your communication? These questions were numbered eight and twelve in the interview. Frequencies and percentages were obtained for the responses from these two questions (see Table 5) and these frequencies and percentages were used to interpret the data.

At Jones Elementary School, the responses to Question 8 indicated that the largest number of staff persons communicated with one another for the purpose of planning. Narrative responses recorded during the interviews indicated that staff persons plan on a daily basis and most communication occurs during these daily planning sessions. Also, the staff indicated that communication takes place for the purpose of exchanging information. The information which is exchanged is useful for the completion of assigned tasks.

The next largest number of staff persons indicated that communication takes place for both social and professional reasons. The narrative data revealed that staff persons communicate socially with one another as they plan together for daily activities. As stated by one staff member:

> Sometimes there's a light quip. It's not all to the grindstone. Although we maintain a very professional relationship with one another, we exchange pleasantries during the day. (Interview (5/5/82)

At Smith Elementary School, the response to Question 8 indicated that the largest number of staff persons communicated with one another both socially and professionally. The narrative responses indicated that staff members plan together and communicate school-related information. However, the staff at Smith School communicates equally for the purpose of socialization:

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Questions Testing Proposition 1:

Communication is Purposive

Interview Question	School	Social		Students		Planning		Social and Professional		Job Dissatisfaction		Receiving Directives		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 8														
With these person whom you communicate frequently, what is the nature of your communication?	Jones	2	(6)	3	(9)	19	(58)	7	(21)	0	(0)	2	(6)	33
	Smith	1	(3)	7	(19)	12	(33)	16	(44)	0	(0)	0	(0)	36
	Both	3	(4)	10	(14)	31	(45)	23	(33)	0	(0)	2	(3)	69
Item 12														
With these persons whom you communicate infrequently, what is the nature of your conversation?	Jones	18	(54)	8	(24)	4	(12)	1	(3)	1	(3)	1	(3)	33
	Smith	20	(55)	6	(17)	4	(11)	2	(6)	3	(8)	1	(3)	36
	Both	38	(55)	14	(20)	8	(12)	3	(4)	4	(6)	2	(3)	69

> We discuss the needs of the students - our plans for them. We talk about our family lives. We have a relationship that goes beyond the classroom. (Interview 4/9/82)

The next largest number of staff persons indicated that communication takes place for the purpose of planning. The narrative data revealed that communication takes place for the purpose of planning for the students:

> Usually we discuss what we will do with the students. We do long range planning. (Interview 4/8/82)

According to the responses of the staff of Jones School, the nature of communication is different for those persons whom they communicate infrequently. The responses to Question 12 indicated that the largest number of staff persons communicate socially. The narrative responses indicated that communication generally consists of greetings and light, short conversations about families and friends:

> There really is not general subject of communication - just "hello", "good-morning", etc. (Interview 4/21/82)

The next largest number of staff persons indicated that students were the primary reason for communication. The narrative responses indicated that staff members communicate with one another for the purpose of gathering information concerning student needs:

> If I talk with them, it would concern the students - their weaknesses and strengths. If they had the students before, I would go to them to find out what I need to stress. (Interview 5/7/82)

The responses of the staff of Smith School, like those of the staff at Jones School, indicated that the nature of communication is different for those persons with whom they communicate infrequently.

The response to Question 12 indicated that the largest number of staff persons communicate socially. However, the narrative response indicated that communication consists of greetings and conversations about families, friends, and daily events within the school and community:

> We talk about the weather, our children and people we know. Sometimes we may talk about a cute incident that happened with one of the students. (Interview 4/8/82)

The next largest number of staff persons indicated that planning was the primary reason for communication. The narrative responses indicated that this communication deals with the exchange of school-related information:

> We communicate information about how or what needs to be done to accomplish our duties or goals. (Interview 5/10/82)

A summary of responses for both schools to Question 8 indicated that most communication in schools is done for the purpose of planning daily activities for the students. The second largest number of staff persons indicated that communication takes place for both social and professional reasons.

A summary of responses for both schools to Question 12 indicated that that most communication in schools is done for socialization. The second largest number of staff persons indicated that communication takes place for the purpose of transmitting information concerning the students.

Proposition 2. The Channel of Communication Influences the Interpretation of the Message.

In order to investigate this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools, data were first gathered regarding the channels of communication used frequently and infreqently in the selected schools (see Table 6). Frequencies and percentages were obtained for the responses to these questions and the resulting frequencies and percentages were used in analyzing the data.

Table 6 illustrates that, memos and bulletins are used most frequently at Jones Elementary School. The next largest percentages indicated that the public address system and staff meetings are used frequently to transmit information. In comparison, the public address system is used most frequently at Smith Elementary School.

According to the responses to Question 15, the grapevine is used least frequently at Jones School. Also, the next largest percentage indicated that face-to-face conversation is used infrequently to transmit information. In comparison, memos and bulletins are used infrequently at Smith School.

The responses to Questions 14 for both schools indicated that public address system is used most frequently. The second largest percentage of responses indicated that memos and bulletins are used frequently to transmit information within the schools.

The responses to Question 15 for both schools indicated that the grapevine is used least frequently as a channel of communication. Also, the next largest percentages indicated that memos and face-to-face conversations are used infrequently.

The next step taken in the analysis of Proposition 2 was to

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Questions Testing Proposition 2:

The Channel of Communication Influences the Interpretation of the Message

Interview Question	School	Public Address System		Face-to-Face Conversation		Memos/ Bulletins		Manuals		Staff Meetings		Grapevine		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
14 What is the most frequent channel of communication?	Jones	6	(18)	3	(9)	18	(55)	0	(0)	5	(15)	1	(3)	33
	Smith	26	(72)	5	(14)	2	(6)	0	(0)	2	(6)	1	(3)	36
	Both	32	(46)	8	(11)	20	(28)	0	(0)	7	(10)	2	(2)	69
15 What is the most infrequent channel of communication?	Jones	3	(9)	10	(30)	2	(6)	1	(3)	1	(3)	16	(48)	33
	Smith	0	(0)	4	(11)	16	(44)	5	(14)	2	(5)	9	(25)	36
	Both	3	(4)	14	(20)	18	(26)	6	(8)	3	(4)	25	(36)	69

collect data regarding the type of information preferred through specific channels of communication. Data were collected through the structured interview. Two interview questions were used to collect the data. Frequencies and percentages were computed from the responses to the questions and were used to analyze the data see Table 6).

According to the responses to Question 16, the staff of Jones School would prefer to receive information on the evaluation of performance or on job expectations through face-to-face conversations. Also, the responses indicated that the staff would prefer to receive personal information face-to-face. The type of personal information that the staff preferred to receive face-to-face involved information about specific students and classroom situations.

In comparison, the responses of the staff at Smith School indicated that they would prefer to receive information regarding job expectations face-to-face. The second largest percentage of responses indicated that the staff would prefer to receive personal information regarding their students face-to-face.

The responses to Question 17 indicated that the staff of Jones School would prefer to receive instructions through memos and bulletins. The frequencies indicated that this response was almost unanimous. Only one person indicated another preference. This person indicated that they would prefer to receive personal information face-to-face.

According to the responses to Question 17, the staff of Smith

Table 6 (Continued)

Interview Question	School	Evaluation of Performance		Instructions		Personal		Job Expectations		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 16										
What type of information do you prefer to receive face-to-face?	Jones	14	(42)	0	(0)	5	(15)	14	(42)	33
	Smith	8	(22)	0	(0)	11	(31)	17	(47)	36
	Both	22	(31)	0	(0)	16	(23)	31	(44)	69
Item 17										
What type of of information do your prefer to receive in a memo?	Jones	0	(0)	32	(97)	1	(3)	0	(0)	33
	Smith	0	(0)	34	(94)	2	(5)	0	(0)	36
	Both	0	(0)	66	(95)	3	(4)	0	(0)	69

School would also prefer to receive instructions through memos and bulletins. Only two persons gave a different response. These two persons indicated that they would prefer to receive personal information in a memo or bulletin.

The response of both schools indicated that the staffs would prefer to receive information regarding job expectations face-to-face. The second largest percentage indicated that the staff prefers to receive information regarding the evaluation of performance face-to-face. In addition, the responses for both schools indicated that staff would prefer to receive instructions in memos or bulletins.

After gathering information regarding the channels of communication used most frequently and infrequently in each school and staff preference on the use of specific channels of communication to transmit different types of information, data were collected to determine the value attached to each channel of communication (see Table 6).

The responses of the staff at Jones School indicated that information received through the public address system is both valuable and very valuable. Because of the infrequency of receiving information through this channel, the information received is interpreted as being very important:

> Normally information that comes over the P.A. system is important - that is immediate. It needs an immediate response. (Interview 5/5/82)
>
> I always listen because he rarely talks over the P.A. system unless it's urgent or very important. (Interview 5/7/82)

Table 6 (Continued)

Interview Questions	School	Very Valuable		Valuable		Not Very Valuable		Of No Value		No. of Cases
What value do you attach to each channel of communication?		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
18 Public Address System	Jones	13	(39)	13	(39)	4	(12)	3	(9)	33
	Smith	3	(8)	18	(50)	12	(33)	3	(8)	36
	Both	16	(23)	31	(44)	16	(23)	6	(8)	69
19 Face-to-Face Conversation	Jones	12	(36)	18	(55)	2	(6)	1	(4)	33
	Smith	20	(56)	13	(36)	2	(5)	1	(3)	36
	Both	32	(46)	31	(44)	4	(5)	2	(2)	69
20 Memos and Bulletins	Jones	7	(21)	19	(58)	4	(12)	3	(9)	33
	Smith	8	(22)	17	(47)	11	(31)	0	(0)	36
	Both	15	(21)	36	(52)	15	(22)	3	(4)	69

Table 6 (Continued)

Interview Questions	School	Very Valuable		Valuable		Not Very Valuable		Of No Value		No. of Cases
What value do you attach to each channel of communication?		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
21 Staff Meetings	Jones	7	(21)	16	(48)	5	(15)	5	(15)	33
	Smith	2	(5)	13	(36)	11	(31)	18	(28)	36
	Both	8	(11)	29	(42)	16	(23)	15	(22)	69
22 Grapevine	Jones	0	(0)	2	(67)	9	(27)	22	(67)	33
	Smith	4	(11)	4	(11)	9	(25)	19	(53)	36
	Both	5	(5)	6	(8)	18	(26)	41	(59)	69

Likewise, the responses of the staff at Smith School indicated that information received through the public address system is valuable. However, the next largest percentages indicated that information received through this channel is not very valuable to the staff. Because this channel of communication is used frequently and generally is related to information for the students, some of the staff does not interpret the message as being important:

> Ours (announcements) get lengthy and involved. I don't listen that much. (Interview 4/8/82)
>
> I don't listen that much. Generally they're student directed. It (P.A. system) comes on when I'm getting lunch money and I don't really have time to listen. (Interview 5/6/82)

According to the responses to Question 18, most of the staff at both schools interpret information transmitted through the public address system as being valuable and worthy of a response. However, the responses indicated that a larger percentage of the staff at Smith School find the public address system to be a valuable channel of communication.

The staffs of both schools independently attached great value to face-to-face conversations. However, the responses to Question 18 indicated that the staff of Smith School attaches more value to face-to-face conversation than the staff of Jones School. Also, there appears to be a correlation between how frequently a channel is used and the value attached to information transmitted through that particular channel. At Jones School, face-to-face conversations are used infrequently as a channel of communication. Although the staff values information received face-to-face, they do not always value the information as being accurate:

> It may be misinterpreted. I prefer to have important information typed so I can see if it's correct. (Interview 5/7/82)
>
> It's good but it's better on paper. Sometimes in face-to-face conversations, you misunderstand the message. (Interview 4/5/82)

At Smith School, face-to-face conversations are used frequently as a channel of communication. The staff interprets information received through this channel as being more personal and clear:

> It (face-to-face conversation) has more meaning. If someone says it to me directly, it shows an interest. (Interview 4/5/82)
>
> It's the best way for me to get information. I'm able to clarify any doubts or questions immediately. (Interview 5/10/82)

The responses to Questions 20 indicated that the staff of Jones School views memos and bulletins as a very valuable channel of communication. The narrative responses indicated that they are interpreted as valuable because of their frequent use and the type of information transmitted through them:

> They're important because this is the most frequently used form of communication between the staff and the principal. (Interview 5/7/82)
>
> I use them as a reference. I will do things much faster than when someone tells me. I am sure to look at the bulletins. (Interview 4/8/82)

The responses to Question 20 indicated that the largest percentage of the staff values information received through memos and bulletins. However, the second largest percentage indicated that the staff does not value memos and bulletins. The narrative responses indicated that the frequency with which memos are used to transmit information has a relationship to the value attached to them:

> Because memos are used so infrequently, I give a high degree of importance to them. Usually they are important. (Interview 5/10/81)
>
> They're good reminders. (Interview 4/5/82)
>
> They're often pushed to the side and never read. Sometimes, I'll skim for contents. (Interview 5/10/82)

The response of both schools indicated that the staffs value the information received through memos. The information is interpreted as a reminder of tasks that must be completed. The second largest percentage of responses indicated that information received through this channel is very valuable.

At Jones School, the responses to Question 21 indicated that staff meetings transmit valuable information. The narrative responses indicated that the information received through staff meetings is vital:

> . . . most are very important. We have special workshops and speakers. They're usually centered around important issues. (Interview 5/7/82)
>
> They're very important. We get information first hand and we can ask questions for clarification. (Interview 4/28/82)
>
> They're very important because you wouldn't know certain information from downtown unless Dr. Brown tells you. (Interview 5/7/82)

According to the responses to Question 21, the staff of Smith School values the information received through staff meetings. However, the second largest percentage of responses indicated that staff meetings do not transmit valuable information:

> They're boring. The information is not valuable. it could be placed on a bulletin. It takes up an hour of my time. (Interview 5/6/82)

The responses from both schools indicated that the information received at staff meetings is valuable. However, the next largest percentage indicated that staff meetings are of no value for transmitting useful information.

For both schools, the responses to Question 22 indicated that the staffs place little value on information received through the grapevine. Information received through this channel is interpreted as being inaccurate:

> I don't place much importance on this form of communication. It may not be reliable. (Interview 5/7/82)

In summary, according to the combined responses of the staffs of both schools, face-to-face conversations are valued most. The information received through this channel of communication is perceived as accurate and worthy of response. Grapevine information is interpreted as being of limited value by the staffs of both schools. Also, grapevine information is perceived as being inaccurate.

Proposition 3. The Message Sent is not Necessarily the Message Received.

In order to analyze this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools, data were collected regarding the frequency of message misinterpretation. Also, data were collected which described specific instances of message misinterpretation. Interview questions were the primary source of data collection. Frequencies and percentages were obtained for the responses to the interview questions (see Table 7) and these frequencies and percentages were used to interpret the data.

At Jones Elementary School, the percentages of positive and negative responses to Question 23 were almost equal. However, the responses indicated that the largest percentage of staff persons had misinterpreted a message that was sent to them. In comparison, the majority of staff persons at Smith Elementary School indicated that they had never misinterpreted a message sent to them. Also, the responses for both schools indicated that generally messages are not misinterpreted.

The largest percentage of misinterpreted messages was at Jones School. The responses indicated that the largest percentage of instances of misinterpretated messages occurred when the message was delivered by a third person:

> Dr. Brown sent a child to pick up another child from my room. The child was being tested and I didn't send the child. The child's father was calling long distance - that wasn't a part of the message. (Interview 5/14/82)
>
> Dr. Brown sent a message to me - "Mrs. Oliver, please come to the office." I was working with the students so I didn't go right away. He sent the child a second time - Mrs. Oliver, come to the office,please." When I got there, it was an emergency phone call from my daughter - but it wasn't stated in the message he sent by the child. (Interview 5/12/82)
>
> Last week, Dr. Brown sent a message by a student asking for something. I sent him what he asked for - it was the wrong thing. (Interview 5/12/82)

In comparison, the responses at Smith School indicated that no third parties are involved in the few instances of message misinterpretation. The responses indicated that both verbal and written

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Questions
Proposition 3:

The Message Sent is not Necessarily the Message Received

Interview Question	School	Yes		No		Don't Send Messages/ No Instance		Message Written		Message Verbal		Message Written and delivered/sent by a student		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
23 Can you relate an instance of misunderstanding a message sent by someone to you?	Jones	18	(55)	15	(45)									33
	Smith	10	(28)	26	(52)									36
	Both	28	(40)	41	(69)									69
24 How was the message delivered?	Jones					15	(45)	7	(21)	3	(9)	8	(24)	33
	Smith					27	(75)	2	(6)	6	(17)	1	(3)	36
	Both					42	(61)	9	(13)	9	(13)	9	(13)	69

Table 7 (Continued)

Interview Question	School	Yes		No		Don't Send Messages/ No Instance		Message Written		Message Verbal		Message Written and delivered/sent by a student		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 25 Can you relate an instance of someone mis-understanding a message you sent?	Jones	7	(21)	26	(79)									33
	Smith	9	(25)	27	(56)									36
	Both	16	(23)	53	(76)									69
Item 26 How was the message delivered?	Jones					26	(79)	3	(9)	2	(6)	2	(6)	33
	Smith					29	(81)	1	(3)	3	(8)	3	(8)	36
	Both					55	(80)	4	(5)	5	(7)	5	(7)	69

messages were misinterpreted:

> I misinterpreted the memo about the change in the lunch schedule. We went to lunch at our regular time. (Interview 5/12/82)

> Last year, the aide wanted to change bus duty with me so that she and another aide could have bus duty at the same time. I said, "It's okay with me if Mrs. Johnson says okay". When we switched, Mrs. Johnson came to me to ask who had given permission for the change. I explained to her that I thought she had given her approval. (Interview 4/8/82)

The responses to Question 25 indicated that the largest percentages of staff persons at Jones School and Smith School did not recall having a message that they sent misinterpreted. Also, the combined responses of both schools indicated that the largest percentage of persons have never had their messages misinterpreted. The narrative responses indicated that if staff messages have been misinterpreted, they have never been made aware of it:

> No, I can't really say that anyone has misunderstood me. At least, no one has ever told me. (Interview 5/5/82)

According to the responses to Question 26, the largest percentages of staff persons at both Jones School and Smith School had not experienced an instance when a message they had sent had been misinterpreted. For those staff persons who could relate an instance, the responses indicated that the largest number of misinterpretated messages were verbal.

Proposition 4. Feedback is Essential for High Levels of Understanding.

In order to analyze this proposition, an investigation was made to clarify unclear messages. Interview Questions 23 and 29 provided pertinent data for this investigation (see Table 9 and 10). As cited earlier in this chapter, the responses to Question 23 indicated that the largest percentage of the staff at both schools had never misinterpreted a message sent to them. However, the responses for Jones School indicated that the largest percentage of staff members responses indicated that the primary reason for misinterpreting the messages was the lack of an opportunity to receive feedback:

> Most frequently, messages are sent by upper grade students. If a question arises, the students usually can't answer the question. The message may be confusing. (Interview 4/21/82)

Table 11 contains a summary of data regarding the methods used to clarify unclear messages. The responses indicated that the largest percentage of staff persons clarified unclear messages by going to the sender and giving feedback on the clarity of the message. This procedure allowed the sender to clarify the message. This procedure was explained by one teacher:

> I would go to the person and say that I don't understand. I'd ask them to repeat or clarify the message. If it's important enough and I have to act on it, I usually go to the source. If not, I ask someone else. (Interview 4/26/82)

Although the largest percentage of staff persons at both Jones School and Smith School indicated that they would clarify unclear messages by going to the source, the next largest percentages of staff persons indicated that they would clarify messages by asking co-workers and by asking the principal.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Question Testing Proposition 4:

Feedback is Essential for High Levels of Understanding

Interview Question	School	Ask Source		Ask Worker		Ask Principal		Ask Office Staff		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 29										
If you do not understand a message, what do you do?	Jones	22	(67)	4	(12)	4	(12)	3	(9)	33
	Smith	23	(63)	8	(22)	3	(8)	2	(5)	36
	Both	45	(65)	12	(17)	7	(10)	5	(7)	69

Proposition 5. Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are Usually Complimentary and Substitutable.

This proposition was analyzed using data collected from interview questions and field notes. Question 38 of the interview provided pertinent information in regard to analyzing this proposition. Frequencies and percentages were computed for the responses to this question (see Table 9).

The responses to Question 38 revealed that the largest percentage of staff persons at Jones Elementary School discuss school-related matters in small groups at school. The narrative responses further revealed that this horizontal communication is usually complimentary and may substitute for the formal communication system:

> Occasionally we discuss procedural things and school work that needs to be turned in at a certain time; i.e. reports. (Interview 5/7/82)
>
> We talk about school news and things that are going on in the school. Mostly, we talk about different things that have to be done. (Interview 5/14/82)
>
> We may talk about something that went on in the meeting or something about a memo or bulletin. (Interview 5/12/82)

In addition, horizontal communication is used to inform staff members if someone is absent, if important visitors are coming, and about important meetings to be held in the school. The narrative responses indicated that horizontal communication at Jones School does not tend to be negative but rather is used as an additional source of obtaining school-related information.

Table 9

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Question Proposition 5:

Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are Usually Supplementary and Substitutable

Interview Question	School	Social		Professional and Social		School Related		Job Satisfaction		Don't Get in Groups		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 38												
What types of things do you discuss in small groups at school?	Jones	6	(18)	2	(6)	17	(52)	3	(9)	5	(15)	33
	Smith	13	(36)	13	(36)	10	(27)	0	(0)	0	(0)	36
	Both	19	(21)	15	(21)	27	(39)	3	(4)	5	(7)	69

In comparison, the responses of the staff at Smith School revealed that horizontal communication is both social and professional. However, horizontal communication at the school complements the formal communication system:

> We talk about what's going on in the school - PTA meetings, special education meetings, staff meetings. We verify facts already received in case someone is wondering if what they heard is correct. (Interview 4/8/82)

The responses to Question 38 for both schools indicated that school-related matters are the primary content of horizontal communication. The second largest percentage of staff persons indicated that small group conversations are primarily social.

Proposition 6. Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent Than Upward Communication.

In order to analyze this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools, an investigation was made of who staff members communicated with most frequently and how often in the course of a week they communicated with those persons. Also, data were gathered regarding the frequency of staff initiated communication with the principal. Questions 6, 7, and 30 on the interview were used to collect this data. Tables 10 contain the frequencies and percentages for the responses to these questions.

Table 10 illustrates that staff persons at both schools communicate most frequently with their co-workers who share the same

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Questions Testing Proposition 6:

Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent Than Upward Communication Flows

Interview Question	School	Co-worker in Same Space		Principal		Office Staff		Those With Same Respon-bilities/Grade		Resource Teachers		Those With Longest Tenure		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 6														
What Person or persons do you communicate with most frequently?	Jones	21	(63)	3	(9)	2	(6)	4	(12)	2	(6)	1	(3)	33
	Smith	26	(72)	2	(5)	3	(8)	2	(5)	2	(5)	1	(3)	36
	Both	47	(68)	5	(7)	5	(7)	6	(3)	4	(6)	2	(3)	69

Interview Question	School	Once a Week		Twice a Week		3-4 Times a Week		Daily		Daily Through-out the day		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 7												
How frequently do you communi-cate with them?	Jones	2	(6)	17	(52)	0	(0)	0	(0)	14	(42)	33
	Smith	1	(3)	14	(38)	0	(0)	0	(0)	21	(58)	36
	Both	3	(4)	31	(44)	0	(0)	0	(0)	35	(50)	69

Table 10 (Contined)

Interview Question	School	Once a Week		Twice a Week		3-4 Times a Week		Daily		Daily Through-out the day		Less than once a week		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 30														
How often do you initiate communication with your principal?	Jones	7	(22)	5	(16)	5	(16)	3	(9)	1	(3)	11	(34)	32
	Smith	7	(20)	3	(9)	6	(17)	14	(40)	3	(9)	2	(6)	35
	Both	14	(21)	8	(12)	11	(16)	17	(25)	4	(6)	13	(19)	67

space. At Jones School, the second largest percentage of staff persons communicate most frequently with those on the same grade level or those who have the same job responsibilities. In comparison, the largest percentage of staff persons at Smith School communicate most frequently with those co-workers in the same space. The second largest percentage of staff persons communicate most frequently with the office staff.

The responses to Question 7 indicated that most staff persons at Jones School communicate twice a week with those persons whom they communicate with most frequently. In comparison, the staff of Smith School communicates daily and throughout the day. As noted in Chapter V, horizontal communication at Jones School is infrequent, however, horizontal communication at Smith School is frequent. For both schools, the responses indicated that staff persons communicate daily and throughout the day.

Table 10 contains responses to the question of how frequently staff persons initiate communication with the principal. According to the responses to Question 30, the largest percentage of staff persons at Jones School initiate communication with the principal once a week. In comparison, the responses for Smith School indicated that the largest percentage of staff persons initiate communication with the principal daily. The combined responses to Question 30 for both schools indicated that staff persons initiate communication daily with the principal. However, the second largest percentage of staff persons indicated that they initiate communication with the principal only once a week.

A comparison of the responses to Questions 7 and 30 support the proposition that horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward communication. At Jones School, the resonses indicated that staff persons communicate at least twice a week with one another. However, the responses indicated that they initiate communicaiton with the principal only once a week. Likewise, horizontal communication at Smith Schools is more frequent than upward communicatin. At Smith School, the responses indicated that staff persons communicate with one another daily throughout the day. However, the responses indicated that they initiate communication with the principal only once a day. For both schools, communication with each other takes place daily throughout the day; whereas, staff persons initiate communication with the principal only once a day.

Proposition 7. Downward Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Upward Communication.

In analyzing this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary schools, the responses to Question 30 and 34 were compared. Tables 10 and 11 contain the frequencies and percentages for the responses. These frequencies and percentages were used in analysis of the proposition.

As cited earlier, the largest percentage of the staff at Jones School initiates communication with the principal only once a week

Table 11

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Question Testing Proposition 7:

Downward Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Upward Communication

Interview Question	School	Once a Week		Twice a Week		3-4 Times a Week		Daily		Daily Through-out the day		Less than! once a week		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 34														
How often in the course of a week does your principal initiate communication with you individually?	Jones	9	(27)	5	(15)	4	(12)	2	(6)	2	(6)	11	(33)	33
	Smith	8	(22)	5	(13)	11	(30)	10	(3)	1	(3)	1	(3)	36
	Both	17	(24)	10	(14)	15	(21)	3	(4)	3	(4)	12	(17)	69

and the largest percentage of the staff at Smith School initiates communication with the principal daily. Combined responses for both schools indicate that communicaton on an individual basis occurs daily.

The responses to Question 34 indicated that the largest percentage of staff persons receive communication on an individual basis from the principal less than once a week. The staff at Smith School, however, indicated that they receive communication from the principal on an individual basis three times a week. At both schools, downward communication takes place less frequently than upward communication. According to the responses of both schools, downward communication on an individual basis occurs on the average only once a week.

Proposition 8. The Content of Upward Communication is More Likely to Contain Positive Rather Than Negative Feedback.

The investigation of this proposition involved collecting data regarding the instances of positve upward communication. To gather this data, two questions were asked: 1) Have you ever complimented your principal? and 2) Have you ever disagreed with or conveyed some type of negative feedback to your principal? Interview Questions 40 and 43 provided the primary data for the analysis of this proposition with regard to organizational communication in elementary Schools (see Table 12).

According to the responses to Question 40, the largest percentage of staff persons indicated that they had conveyed some

Table 12

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Questions Testing Proposition 8:

The Content of Upward Communication is More Likely to Contain Positive Rather than Negative Feedback

Interview Question	School	Yes		No		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	
Item 40 Have you ever complimented your principal?	Jones	27	(84)	5	(15)	32
	Smith	29	(83)	6	(17)	35
	Both	56	(84)	11	(16)	67
Item 43 Have you ever disagreed with or conveyed some type of negative feedback to your principal?	Jones	19	(59)	13	(41)	32
	Smith	17	(49)	18	(51)	35
	Both	36	(54)	31	(46)	67

type of negative feedback to the principal. In comparison, the staff of Smith School showed only slight difference between the percentage who conveyed negative feedback and the percentage who had not conveyed negative feedback. However, the percentage of staff persons for both schools independently and combined was larger for those who had complimented the principal than for those who had conveyed negative feedback. Therefore, the data tends to support the proposition that upward communication is more likely to be positive rather than negative.

The investigation further revealed that most positive upward communication contained compliments on the physical appearance of the principal (see Table 12). Although this was true for both the independent and combined responses for both schools, there was a slight difference in the responses at Jones School. The second largest percentage of staff persons at Jones School indicated that upward positive communication with the principal contained compliments on his accomplishments and honors:

> I complimented him yesterday. He's up for the Man of the Year Award. I told him that he deserved it. (Interview 4/28/82)
>
> Yes, I complimented him when he received his doctorate. I told him congratulations. (Interview 4/8/82)

Also, most of the compliments about the principal's physical appearance dealt with his clothes. Compliments on the principal's clothes were cited most often:

> Yes, I've told him how nice he looked. (Interview 5/14/82)
>
> I compliment him quite often. I think he's a beautiful dresser. (Interview 5/14/82)

Table 12 (Continued)

Interview Question	School	No Instance		Physical Appearance		Discipline of Students		Special Accomplishments/ Honors		School Program		Special Favor		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 41														
What type of compliment have you given your principal?	Jones	4	(13)	9	(28)	5	(16)	8	(25)	3	(9)	3	(9)	32
	Smith	6	(17)	16	(46)	0	(0)	2	(6)	5	(14)	6	(17)	35
	Both	10	(15)	25	(37)	5	(7)	10	(15)	8	(12)	9	(13)	67

Interview Question	School	Work Responsibilities		Job Dissatisfaction		Special Request		No Instance		No. of Cases
Item 44		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
What type of negative compliment have you given your principal?	Jones	10	(31)	9	(28)	0	(0)	13	(41)	32
	Smith	10	(29)	7	(20)	0	(0)	18	(51)	35
	Both	21	(31)	16	(24)	0	(0)	30	(45)	67

At Smith School, most of the compliments to the principal dealt with physical appearance:

> Yes, I complement her on the rings and earrings that she wears. (Interview 4/9/82)
>
> This morning I complimented her on the beautiful dress she's wearing. (Interview 5/23/82)

The second largest percentage of staff members at Smith School inidcated that there was no instance of a compliment being made or they had complimented the principal for a special favor done for them. The responses for both schools indicated that the staffs communicated compliments about physical appearance to their principals.

In regard to negative feedback, the responses to Question 44 indicated that the largest percentage of the staff at Jones School had communicated no negative feedback to the principal. The second largest percentage of staff persons had communicated negative feedback to the principal regarding their responsibilities. As stated by members of the staff:

> I've gone to my principal about my negative feelings concerning open space and the stress I feel from his demands. I have been honest. (Interview 4/21/82)
>
> Yes, I do this very often. We have an excessive amount of paperwork and, jokingly, I can tell him. (Interview 5/14/82)

Likewise, the largest percentage of staff persons at Smith School have never communicated negative feedback to the principal. The second largest percentage of staff members had communicated negative feedback to the principal regarding work responsibilities:

> Yes, I had a problem with her assignment of bus duty. (Interview 5/3/82)

> I wanted to start classes at a certain time - I needed more time. I talked with her about my concern. (Interview 4/9/82)

This pattern was also true for the combined staffs of the two schools. The majority of staff persons could relate an instance of communicating positive feedback to the principal. According to the questionnaire responses, the content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative information.

Communication Satisfaction

Data were gathered through the structured interview which revealed staff satisfaction with the communication at the selected schools. The data collected are presented in Table 13. This table contains a summary of responses to the question: Do you find the communication in your school to be satisfactory? The responses indicated that the staff at Jones School was almost evenly split regarding the level of communication satisfaction. However, the largest percentage of staff persons indicated that communication at the school is satisfactory:

> I enjoy it. I'm satisfied with the amount. Too much talking is not good. (Interview 5/14/82)

> Yes, it's satisfactory because of the assistance we get. We can appreciate what he stands for. He's a structured person and some people can't deal with that . . . (Interview 5/7/82)

> Yes, I think the communication is good. I think it's a very professional atmosphere. (Interview 5/12/82)

> Yes, I think it's satisfactory. Although we don't get a chance to see each other daily, everyone is friendly and everyone gets along. There may be problems with it, but I don't have any. (Interview 5/5/82)

Table 13

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Interview Question Testing Communication Satisfaction

Interview Question	School	Very Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		No. of Cases
		f	%	f	%	f	%	
Item 45	Jones	2	(6)	16	(48)	15	(45)	33
Do you find the communication in your school to be satisfactory?	Smith	1	(3)	32	(88)	3	(8)	36
	Both	3	(4)	48	(69)	18	(26)	69

The second largest percentage of staff persons indicated that communication at the school is unsatisfactory. The responses cited the negative feelings of the principal toward horizontal communication as a primary reason for communication dissatisfaction. The following comments are illustrative:

> No, it's unsatisfactory. We don't communicate. We can't talk on a personal basis . . . (Interview 5/12/82)

> I don't feel that there is enough time for much person-to-person contact. Teachers are expected to always be on task; that is, spending all you time teaching the children or doing secretarial work. There also seems to be an underlying fear of being caught communicating with one another. (Interview 5/14/82)

> There is no communication. I want to feel that if I wanted to say a few words to a co-worker, I could and it wouldn't be frowned upon. (Interview 5/14/82)

> Communication is very poor. People are afraid to communicate. You have to talk to get things resolved. I don't see how it could improved . . . (Interview 4/8/82)

> Communication is frequently misunderstood because what is being communicated is not clear. Different staff members appear to be interpreting the communication differently. We get blamed for not understanding. There is so little communication that it is definitely unsatisfactory. (Interview 4/21/82)

In contrast, a much higher percentage of the staff at Smith School found the level of communication at the school to be satisfactory. Also, the narrative responses indicated that sufficient amounts of information were shared among the staff. The following comments were made:

> It's to my satisfaction. There are no communication breakdowns or gaps. I think we get sufficient amounts of information that we need. (Interview 5/3/82)

> Everyone is friendly and I feel comfortable talking to everyone. Mrs. Johnson gives us the information that we need. (Interview 5/3/82)

> I feel free to communicate with everyone. I get sufficient amounts of information to do my job. (Interview 4/26/82)
>
> Yes, it's satisfactory. I think I find out the necessary things that we, as teachers, are supposed to know. (Interview 5/10/82)
>
> Yes, I feel the communication is satisfactory. I would like to see more of it. It's pleasant when it occurs - I wish there was more communication. I'm happy here and I guess that's good. If the communication wasn't good, you wouldn't be happy. (Interview 4/8/82)

Regarding levels of communication satisfaction, the combined responses of staff persons from both schools indicated that the communication at the schools is satisfactory. This was true for staff members in all positions. Even in the school where a large percentage of staff members were dissatisfied with the communication, the majority of the staff members in the school found the communication to be satisfactory.

In an attempt to assess the strength of the tenure - communication satisfaction relationship responses to Question 3 and Question 45 were compared using the Pearson's R. It was found that there was a significant positive correlation between years of tenure at the school and communication satisfaction (see Table 14). This is interpreted to mean that as the years of tenure increase, the level of communication satisfaction also increases. When years of tenure are low, the level of communication satisfaction tends to be lower. Accordingly, staff members with high years of tenure also had a high level of communication satisfaction. It must be noted, however, that while there was a high correlation between years of tenure and communication satisfaction for Jones School, this correlation was not

Table 14

Correlation Coefficient for Tenure In School
and Communication Satisfaction

School	N	Mean (Tenure)	Mean (Satisfaction)	r	Significance
Jones	33	2.21	1.61	0.37	>.05
Smith	36	2.64	1.94	-0.09	Not Significant
Combined	69	2.43	1.78	0.30	>.05

significant for Smith School. At Smith School there was no distribution and no predictability. For both schools combined, there was a high positive correlation between years of tenure in the school and levels of communication satisfaction.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to analyze organizational communication in the selected schools with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication:

Proposition 1. Communication is Purposive.

In the participating schools it was found that most communication could be identified with the function of informing. Staff members communicated primarily for the purpose of transmitting information as they planned for daily instructional activities and daily job responsiblities. Because the team-teaching approach necessitates the frequent sharing of information, it was found that staff members communicated most frequently with co-workers sharing the same space. Communication with other staff members outside their immediate work area was found to be infrequent. The purpose for communication differed according to how frequently staff persons communicated with one another. When staff members communicated often with one another, they were found to communicate primarily for the purpose of transmitting information. Generally, this information was related to instructional activities, daily procedures, students and special assignments. In comparison, when staff members communicated infrequently with one another, the communication was primarily social in nature. These conversations were incidental and not planned. They primarily consisted of inquiries about family and friends, greetings, and light comments about the weather, health problems and students. Also, communication consisted of the transmission of information about the social lives of teachers, the foibles and failures of students, and the unfortunate demands of the job. Overall, communication in the participating schools was purposive in that it could be identified with one or more of the functions of communication. When staff members communicated with one another, it fulfilled a specific purpose for them.

Proposition 2. The Channel of Communication Influences the Interpretation of the Message.

It was found that staff members in the participating schools matched specific channels of communication with the transmission of specific types of information. Further, messages received through the public address system, face-to-face conversation, memos and bulletins, and staff meetings were interpreted as being valuable and worthy of a response. Dahle found that oral communication was preferred to written communication. In the selected schools, it was found that staff members had a preference regarding the use of specific channels of communication. It was found that the staffs preferred the use of face-to-face conversations to transmit information regarding job expectations and the evaluation of job performance. Also, the staff member's preference regarding the use of specific channels of communication had an effect on interpretation of the message. If a staff member preferred to receive information through a particular channel of communication, information received through that channel of communication was interpreted as being valuable. Also, it was found that the frequency of the use of a particular channel of communication had an effect on the interpretation of the message. While the frequent use of a particular channel of communication generally lead the staff to interpret all information transmitted through that channel as being valuable, in some instances it had an adverse effect. Some staff members had a tendency to disregard the information transmitted through a frequent channel of communication. Of all channels of communication, messages received through face-to-face conversations were interpreted as requiring special attention and containing extremely valuable information. In comparison, messages received through the grapevine were interpreted as being of less value. Staff members, especially principals and teachers, perceived the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system. Also, grapevine information was perceived by staff members as being inaccurate. Accordingly, there was a negative attitude toward the grapevine as a viable channel of communication.

Proposition 3. The Message Sent is not Necessarily the Message Received.

In the participating schools, it was found that although a large percentage of staff members had never misinterpreted a message, there were instances of messages being misinterpreted in the schools. A rationale for the large percentage of staff members who had never misinterpreted a message can be found in the fact that, generally, staff members did not send messages. Also, it was found that when messages were misinterpreted, they were written messages. In addition, a large percentage of staff members could not relate an instance of someone misinterpreting a message they had sent. This was due partially to the fact that staff members did not alert one another when a message was not understood. For those staff persons who could relate an instance of someone misinterpreting a message they had sent, the misinterpreted messages were verbal.

Proposition 4. Feedback is Essential for High Levels of Understanding.

It was found that when messages were misunderstood, feedback took place between the sender and the receiver in order to clarify the message. Generally, face-to-face conversations were used to clarify misunderstood messages by going to the sender and giving feedback on the clarity of the message. In all cases, it was indicated that messages were clarified through this type of feedback. In addition to asking the sender for clarification, staff members asked co-workers, the principal, and the office staff. The importance of the message determined which sources were used to clarify unclear messages. It was found that staff members asked others for clarification if the message was of little importance to them. In comparison, if the message was of great importance to them personally, staff members tended to go directly to the sender for clarification.

Proposition 5. The Formal and Informal Communication Channels in an Organization are Usually Complentary and Substitutable.

In small, informal groups within the schools, staff members generally discussed school-related matters. Much of the same information that was transmitted through formal, written communication channels was transmitted through small-group face-to-face conversations. These conversations involved school news, school procedures and information or job responsibilities. Informal communication channels were used to inform staff members of who was absent, if important visitors were coming to the school building, and about important meetings to be held in the school. In addition, informal communication channels were used to clarify information transmitted through staff meetings or memos.

Although the informal communication system or grapevine was used to help transmit useful information, the grapevine was viewed negatively by both principals and teachers. Staff members, especially principals and teachers, tended to perceive the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system. Most staff members were quick to disassociate themselves from the grapevine within the school setting. Although observations indicated that elementary schools have active grapevines, the staff members were reluctant to admit that they were participants in the grapevine. Also, grapevine information was dismissed as being of little value. In summary, it appears that the same information that was transmitted through the formal communication system was also transmitted through informal communication flows.

Proposition 6. Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Vertical Flows.

In participating schools, it was found that most communication occurred among co-workers. Staff members communicated with co-workers daily and throughout the day. Horizontal communcation occurred frequently as staff members planned and performed their daily job responsibilities. In comparison, upward communication occurred only on a daily basis. This would tend to suggest that staff members initiated communication at least once a day with the principal. Also, there appeared to be a positive correlation between the frequency of horizontal communication and the frequency of upward communication. If horizontal communication was frequent in the school, upward communication was also frequent.

Proposition 7. Downward Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Upward Communication Flows.

In the participating schools, upward communication occurred daily; whereas, downward communication occurred only once a week. Although downward communication to the entire staff was more frequent, downward communication on an individual basis occurred only once a week. Therefore, it appears that upward communication is more frequent than downward communication in the schools studied. One reason for this difference may be that teachers and other staff members tend to view the principal as the most knowledgeable technical assistant in the organization. Because the principal is viewed as technically competent, staff members constantly seek the advice and direction of the principal. This was generally the nature of upward communication. Also, downward communication in the schools is primarily limited to the transmission of information. After this information is transmitted, staff members are viewed as having the expertise to use the information as deemed necessary in the completion of assigned responsibilities.

Proposition 8. The Content of Upward Communication is More Likely to Contain Positive Rather than Negative Feedback.

In the participating schools, a very large percentage of staff persons had complimented the principal at one time or another. Further, it was found most compliments the principal at one time or another. Further it was found that most compliments were in relation to the physical appearance of the principal. Usually there were light comments concerning hair, clothes, or jewelry. Few compliments were made which related to the principal's job responsibilities. In comparison, the largest percentage of staff members had not conveyed any type of negative feedback to the principal. However, when negative feedback was given, it was primarily related to job responsibilities. However, it is noted that the difference between those who had conveyed negative feedback and those who had not conveyed negative feedback was not very great. A rationale for this may be found in the fact that several staff members indicated that they have a "standard rule" which does not allow them to convey negative feedback to the principal. In summary, there was a larger percentage of staff members who had complimented the principal than the percentage of those who had conveyed negative feedback tot he principal.

Communication Satisfaction

Regarding levels of communication satisfaction, the combined responses of staff persons from both schools indicated that the communication at their school is satisfactory. This was true for staff members in all positions. Even in the school where a large percentage (%) of staff members were dissatisfied with the communication, the majority of the staff members in the school found the communication to be satisfactory. Also, there was a significant positive correlation between years of tenure at the school and communication satisfaction (see Table 14). This is interpreted to mean that as the years of tenure increase, the level of communication satisfaction will also increase. If years of tenure were low, the level of communication satisfaction was also low. Accordingly, staff members with high years of tenure also had a high level of communication satisfaction. It must be noted, however, that while there was a high correlation between years of tenure and communication satisfaction for Jones School, this correlation was not significant for Smith School. At Smith School there was no distribution and no predictability. For both schools combined, there was a high positive correlation between years of tenure in the school and levels of communication satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section one provides a review of the purpose and significance of the study. A summary of the related literature is presented in section two. Section three includes a summary of the research methods and procedures used in the study. In section four, a summary of the findings is presented. The conclusions based on the findings are presented in section five, and section six includes the recommendations for further study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. In addition, this study was designed to describe the organizational communication patterns found in the selected elementary schools, compare the organizational communication patterns of these schools, and compare these patterns with organizational communication in other settings.

The patterns of organizational communication were analyzed with regard to the following eight propositions in the field of organizational communication:

1. Communication is purposive.
2. The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.

3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.
4. Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.
5. The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable.
6. Horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical flows.
7. Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward flows.
8. The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.[130]

Significance of the Study

Communication is vital to every organization. There are still questions as to the actual role of communication in organizations. Within educational organizations, organizational communication is a new and relatively unexplored concept. The few studies which have been done have focused on the use of quantitative data which tends to isolate its elements. This study took an indepth look at communication within elementary schools. The data provided by this study enchance the understanding of organizational communication within elementary schools and serve as a basis for additional research.

Summary of Related Literature

The review of the literature provided background information regarding communication in organizations. Throughout the literature, there was considerable evidence to support the belief that communication is a vital element in organizations. The literature has shown that the concern with organizational communication has been present since ancient civilization. Also, the literature reviewed the nature of communication in organizations and suggested direction as to the many facets of communication which might be explored in any type of research.

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[130] Haney, Communication and Organization Behavior.

It was apparent from the review, that research dealing with organizational communication in educational settings is scarce; however, an attempt was made to identify research relative to the research proposed for this study. The literature review did provide a framework for this study on organizational communication in schools.

Summary of the Methods and Procedures

This study has investigated organizational communication in elementary schools. Most of the research on organizational communication has been quantitative in nature, which does not allow for communication to be viewed as a process involving the total organization. In order to avoid past conceptual and methodological biases and to provide additional information regarding organizational communication within an educational setting, a field study method was selected.

Two schools were selected for the study. The two schools, Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary School, are located in a city in the Commonwealth of Virginia and house grades kindergarten through six. An effort was made to secure elementary schools which were similar with regard to specified demographic characteristics. The primary participants within the schools were principals and teachers.

For the purpose of this study, the fieldworker was a participant-observer. Also, while taking a part in all facets of the school, the fieldworker refrained from becoming involved in areas related to educational procedures, teaching and standardized testing. The role of the fieldworker was clearly explained to the administrator of each participating school and did not include that of advisor or evaluator.

This study utilized participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, and the analysis of school documents. The collection of data commenced on January 4, 1982 and terminated on May 14, 1982. A minimum of three days per week was spent in the schools.

The design of the study necessitated three phases of fieldwork activities, each with a primary focus on obtaining different types of data. The first phase was concerned with obtaining data describing the environment and culture of each school, its social structure, policies and procedures, as well as the role of the organizational members. The second phase was designed to obtain data which would describe, in detail, all facets of organizational communication in each of the participating schools. The third phase included obtaining which would offer some analysis of organizational communication in elementary schools with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication.

The authenticity of this study was insured by the use of several sources of data: observations and formal and informal interviews. Also, because the collection of data spanned five months and involved three days per week, sufficient time was allowed for the kinds of observations and interviews needed to confirm the results.

The data collected during this study included fieldnotes, interview notes, and samples of school documents. These data were compiled and carefully coded to insure the protection of the identity of the participants. Further, the data were analyzed to determine the categories or classes of events and the properties which characterized them. The data were then analyzed to determine linkage. In addition, the formal interview responses were coded and frequencies and percentages obtained for each response.

Through review of the data, a detailed description of organizational communication within the two elementary schools was prepared. Also, the descriptions of each school's communication pattern were compared for similarities and differences. The data were then analyzed with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication.

Summary of Findings

This study was an investigation of organizational communication in elementary schools. There were two participating schools and the findings are based on the data gathered from these two schools.

Phase one of the study involved describing the demographic characteristics of the participating schools. It was found that both schools were similar in design. However, there were differences in historical background, physical setting, daily routine, and staff members.

The second phase of the study involved gathering data to describe organizational communication in elementary schools. This description was guided by five broad areas of organizational communication: 1) the channels of communication; 2) the flow of communication; 3) the basis of communication; 4) the frequency of communication; and 5) the actors in the communication process.

In regard to the channels of communication, it was found that six channels of communication were used in elementary schools: 1) the public address system; 2) face-to-face conversation; 3) bulletins and memos; 4) manuals; 5) staff meetings; and 6) the grapevine. Of these six channels, the public address system and bulletins were used most frequently. The manuals were used least frequently.

The findings indicated that horizontal communication was more frequent than either upward or downward communication. Also, although downward communication was frequent in elementary schools, it was less frequent than upward communication. It was found that downward communication was group oriented; whereas, upward communication took place on an individual basis.

The most frequent purposes for communication were to transmit information and to influence the behavior of others. Communication for the purpose of evaluation occurred least frequently. The findings indicated that the rationale behind communication differed according to the frequency with which staff members communicated with one another. If staff members communicated frequently with one another, the basis of communication was to transmit information. This information was transmitted as staff members planned daily activities for the students. Also, when staff communicated frequently, the rationale was both social and professional. When staff members communicated infrequently with one another, the basis was socialization.

In examining the frequency of communication in elementary schools, data were presented which described communication between groups and individuals, how often communication took place, when communication took place, and where communication took place. It was found that the staff communicated most frequently with co-workers sharing the same space and those persons who have the same or similar responsibilities. Also, physical proximity influenced the frequency of communication between staff members.

Teachers sharing the same work space communicated daily and constantly throughout the day. In comparison, communication with persons outside the work area occurred at least weekly. Other than morning greetings, verbal communication with the principal occurred weekly.

It was found that most communication occurred in the period after the students leave the school building for the day. Also, periods for high frequencies of communication were during lunchtime and before school.

It was found that most of the communication took place in the work areas, the office area, the cafeteria, and the teachers' lounge. The office area and the cafeteria served as a general meeting place during specific periods of the day. Also, these two areas were visited by all staff members at least once a day. In comparison, the work areas and the teachers' lounge were used by select groups of staff members and the communication within these areas was limited to a small group of people.

Within elementary schools, the primary actors in the communication process were the principal, the teachers, and the office staff. The findings indicated that the principal is highly visible and sets the tone for communication. Also, staff members formed perceptions of the attitude of the principal toward communication among staff members in the school. Based on these perceptions, communication among staff members is either restricted or limited. Further, it was found that certain staff members functioned as gatekeepers and the grade level chairmen functioned as liaisons. In addition, other specific staff members acted as gatekeepers and liaisions. Generally, these persons were older members of the staff with longer tenure or persons with whom the principal had a close friendship.

The third phase of the study was an analysis of organizational communication in elementary schools with regard to existing propositions in the field of organizational communication. The following eight propostions were analyzed:

1. Communication is purposive.
2. The channel of communication influences the interpretation of the message.
3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.
4. Feedback is essential for high levels of understanding.
5. The formal and informal communication channels in an organization are usually complementary and substitutable.
6. Horizontal communication flows in an organization are more frequent than vertical flows.
7. Downward communication flows in an organization are more frequent than upward flows.
8. The content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback.[131]

The findings for the third phase of this study are summarized and organized to coincide with the propositions appropriate for this study.

Proposition 1. Communication is Purposive.

The literature in the field of organizational communication supports the fact that all communication is purposive. Communication is initiated to accomplish one or more purposes. Downs, Linkugel and

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[131] Haney, pp. 141-144.

Berg list several functions of communication; this list includes: 1) to persuade; 2) to inform; 3) to encourage; 4) to entertain; and 5) to reprimand.[132] They also contend that all communication could be identified with one or more of these functions. In the participating schools it was found that most communication could be identified with the function of informing. Staff members communicated primarily for the purpose of transmitting information as they planned for daily instructional activities and daily job responsiblities. Because the team-teaching approach necessitates the frequent sharing of information, it was found that staff members communicated most frequently with co-workers sharing the same space. Communication with other staff members outside their immediate work area was found to be infrequent. The purpose for communication differed according to how frequently staff members communicated with one another. When staff members communicated with one another, they were found to communicate primarily for the purpose of transmitting information. Generally, this information was related to instructional activities, daily procedures, students and special assignments. In comparison, when staff members communicated infrequently with one another, the communication was primarily social in nature. These conversations were incidental and not planned. They primarily consisted of inquiries about family and friends, greetings, and light comments about the weather, health problems and students. Also, communication consisted of the transmission of information about the social lives of teachers, the foibles and failures of students, and the unfortunate demands of the job. Overall, communication in the participating schools was purposive in that it could be identified with one or more of the functions of communication. When staff members communicated with one another, it fulfilled a specific purpose for them.

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[132] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 37.

Proposition 2. The Channel of Communication Influences the Interpretation of the Message.

People have a tendency to associate meanings with the type of communication channel.[133] It was found that staff members in the participating schools matched specific channels of communication with the transmission of specific types of information. Further, messages received through the public address system, face-to-face conversation, memos and bulletins, and staff meetings were interpreted as being valuable and worthy of a response. Dahle found that oral communication was preferred to written communication. In the selected schools, it was found that staff members had a preference regarding the use of specific channels of communication. It was found that the staffs preferred the use of face-to-face conversations to transmit information regarding job expectations and the evaluation of job performance. Also, the staff member's preference regarding the use of specific channels of communication had an effect on his interpretation of the message. If a staff member preferred to receive information through a particular channel of communication, information received through that channel of communicatin was interpreted as being valuable. Also, it was found that the frequency of the use of a particular channel of communication had an effect on the interpretation of the message. While the frequent use of a particular channel of communication generally lead the staff to interpret all informatin transmitted through that channel as being valuable, in some instances it had an adverse effect. Some staff members had a tendency to disregard the information transmitted through a frequent channel of communicaiton. Of all channels of communication, messages received through face-to-face conversations were interpreted as requiring special attention and containing extremely valuable information. In comparison, messages received through the grapevine were interpreted as being of little or not value. Staff members, especially principals and teachers, perceived the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system. Also, grapevine information was perceived by staff members as being inaccurate. Accordingly, there was a negative attitude toward the grapevine as a viable channel of communication.

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[133] Dahle, "Study of Five Methods of Transmitting Information."

Proposition 3. The Message Sent is not Necessarily the Message Received.

Difficulties in communication between individuals can arise because no two people see or hear exactly the same thing. This is due in part to the concept of abstracting. As stated by Downs et al.:

Berg list several functions of communication; this list includes: 1) to persuade; 2) to inform; 3) to encourage; 4) to entertain; and 5) to reprimand.[132] They also contend that all communication could be identified with one or more of these functions. In the participating schools it was found that most communication could be identified with the function of informing. Staff members communicated primarily for the purpose of transmitting information as they planned for daily instructional activities and daily job responsibilities. Because the team-teaching approach necessitates the frequent sharing of information, it was found that staff members communicated most frequently with co-workers sharing the same space. Communication with other staff members outside theri immediate work area was found to be infrequent. The purpose for communication differed according to how frequently staff members communicated with one another. When staff members communicated with one another, they were found to communicate primarily for the purpose of tramsmitting information. Generaly, this information was related to instructional activities, daily procedures, students and special assignments. In comparison, when staff members communicated infrequently with one another, the communication was primarily social in nature. These conversations were incidental and not planned. They primarily consisted of inquiries about family and friends, greetings, and light comments about the weather, health problems and students. Also communication generally increases both the time spent in discussion and the group's producitivty.[135] Also, Brown contends that feedback is crucial to the successful functioning of any large organization.[136] It was found that when messages were misunderstood, feedback took place between the sender and the receiver in order to clarify the message. Generally, face-to-face conversations were used to clarify misunderstood messages by going to the sender and giving feedback on the clarity of the message. In all cases, it was indicated that messages were clarified through this type of feedback. In addition to asking the sender for clarification, staff members asked co-workers, the principal, and the office staff. The importance of the message determined which sources were used to clarify unclear messages. It was found that staff members asked others for clarification if the message was of little importance to them. In comparison, if the message was of great importance to them personally, staff members tended to go directly to the sender for clarification.

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[132] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 37.

Proposition 5. The Formal and Informal Communication Channels in an Organization are Usually Complentary and Substitutable.

The informal communication system is essential to communication in formal organizations. Some of the significant characteristics of the informal communication system were: 1) speed of transmission;

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[135] Redding, p. 40.

[136] Brown, pp. 226-228.

2) degree of selectivity; 3) locale of operation; and 4) relation to formal organizations.[137] The informal communcation system is important because it helps spread useful information.[138] In small, informal groups within the schools, staff members generally discussed school-related matters. Much of the same information that was transmitted through formal, written communication channels was transmitted through small-group face-to-face conversations. These conversations involved school news, school procedures and information or job responsibilities. Informal communicatoin channels were used to inform staff members of who was absent, if important visitors were coming to the school building, and about important meetings to be held in the school. In addition, informal communication channels were used to clarify information transmitted through staff meetings or memos.

Although the informal communication system or grapevine was used to help transmit useful information, the grapevine was viewed negatively by both principals and teachers, staff members, especially principals and teachers, tended to perceive the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system. Most staff members were quick to disassociate themselves from the grapevine within the school setting. Although observations indicated that elementary schools have active grapevines, the staff members were reluctant to admit that they were participants in the grapevine. Also, grapevine information was dismissed as being of little value. However, most studies of the grapevine show that the information it carries is reasonably accurate.[139] In summary, it appears that the same information that was transmitted through the formal communication system was also transmitted through informal communication flows.

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[137] Burns, p. 95.

[138] Lewis, p. 69.

Proposition 6. Horizontal Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Vertical Flows.

Several functions of horizontal communication within the organization have been found: 1) it allows coordination between departments and allows for a coordination of efforts to maximize productivity; 2) it allows problem solving; 3) it allows the sharing information among departments which contributes to the task effectiveness of the departments involved; 4) it is useful for solving intradepartment and interdepartment conflict without executive intervention; 5) it allows interaction among organization peers and furnishes social and emotional support to the worker; and 6) it may serve as a substitute for upward or downward communication.[140] Because of the many functions of horizontal communication within the organization, it occurs quite frequently. While there is generally a lack of downward and upward communication in organizations, horizontal communication is quite prevelent in organizations.

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[139] Roberts et al., "Failure in Upward Communication."

[140] Landsberger, pp. 566-575.

Downs et al. found that men are more prone to speak freely and openly to their equals than to their superiors.[141] Also, Wickesberg observed that two-thirds of his subjects' communications were horizontally directed while only one-third of their behaviors involved vertical interactions.[142]

In participating schools, it was found that most communication occurred among co-workers. Staff members communicated with co-workers daily and throughout the day. Horizontal communcation occurred frequently as staff members planned and performed their daily job responsibilities. In comparison, upward communication occurred only on a daily basis. This would tend to suggest that staff members initiated communication at least once a day with the principal. Also, there appeared to be a positive correlation between the frequency of horizontal communication and the frequency of upward communication. If horizontal communication was frequent in the school, upward communication was also frequent.

Proposition 7. Downward Communication Flows in an Organization are More Frequent than Upward Communication Flows.

Simon and his associates found that communication from the superior to the subordinate takes place more easily than communication from the subordinate to the superior.[143] The literature supports the fact that relatively little upward communication takes place in organizations. A study of assembly-line workers found that 70 percent initiated communication contact with a superior less than once a month.[144] It was found that individuals do not tend to communicate frequently with individuals at higher levels in the organizations. However, in the participating schools, upward communication occurred daily; whereas, downward communication occurred only once a week. Although downward communication to the entire staff was more frequent, downward communication on an individual basis occurred only once a week. Therefore, it appears that upward communication is more frequent than downward communication. One reason for this difference may be that teachers and other staff members tend to view the principal as the most knowledgeable technical assistant in the organization. Because the principal is viewed as a technical assistant, staff members constantly seek the advice and direction of the principal. This was generally the nature of upward communication. Also, downward communication in the schools is primarily limited to the transmission of information. After this information is transmitted, staff members are viewed as having the expertise to use the information as deemed necessary in the completion of assigned responsibilities.

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[141] Down, Linkuge, and Berg, p. 116.

[142] Wickesberg, pp. 253-262.

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[143] Simon et. al., Public Administration.

[144] Walker and Guest, The Man on the Assembly Line.

Proposition 8. The Content of Upward Communication is More Likely to Contain Positive Rather than Negative Feedback.

It was found in the literature that then upward communication takes place, superiors generally receive messages that tell them exactly what they want to hear.[145] Therefore, the content of upward communication is more likely to contain positive rather than negative feedback. In the participating schools, a very large percentage of staff persons had complimented the principal at one time or another. Further, it was found most compliments were in relation to the physical appearance of the principal. Usually there were light comments concerning hair, clothes, or jewelry. Few compliments were made which related to the principal's job responsibilities. In comparison, the largest percentage of staff members had not conveyed any type of negative feedback to the principal. However, when negative feedback was given, it was primarily related to job responsibilities. However, it is noted that the difference between those who had conveyed negative feedback and thos who had not conveyed negative feedback was not very great. A rational for this may be found in that fact that several staff members indicated that they have a "standard rule" which does not allow them to convey negative feedback to the principal. In summary, there was a larger percentage of staff members who had complimented the principal than the percentage of those who had conveyed negative feedback to the principal.

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[145] Downs, Linkugel, and Berg, p. 118.

Communication Satisfaction

The literature supports the proposition that communication satisfaction is related to job satisfaction.[146] Regarding levels of communication satisfaction, the combined responses of staff persons from both schools indicated that the communication at their school is satisfactory. This was true for staff members in all positions. Even in the school where a large percentage of staff members were dissatisfied with the communication, the majority of the staff members in the school found the communication to be satisfactory. Also, there was a significant positive correlation between years of tenure at the school and communication satisfaction (see Table 14). This is interpreted to mean that as the years of tenure increase, the level of communication satisfaction will also increase. If years of tenure were low, the level of communication satisfaction was also low. Accordingly, staff members with high years of tenure also had a high level of communication satisfaction. It must be noted, however, that while there was a high correlation between years of tenure and communication satisfaction for one of the schools, this correlation was not significant for the other school in the study. At this school, there was no distribution and no predictability.

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[146] Applebaum, "Relationship Between Job Satisfaction, Organizational Norms, and Communication Climate."

Conclusions

This study was undertaken with the assumption that communication was a vital component of organizations and had the ability to affect other facets of the organization. Because little attention had been given to the patterns and nature of communication in educational settings, this study was designed to describe communication in elementary schools. Also, this study was designed to include a comparison of organizational communication in educational settings and organizational communication in business settings.

On the basis of this study, the following thoughts and ideas are worthy of mention:

Although communication in elementary schools is similar to communication in other settings, the nature of communication in elementary schools is distinct. One major difference was the fact that upward communication is more frequent than downward communication in school settings. One reason for this difference may be that teachers and other staff members tend to view the principal as the most knowledgeable technical expert in the organization. Because the principal is viewed as a technical advisor, staff members constantly seek the advice and direction of the principal. Also, downward communication in schools is primarily limited to the transmission of information. After this information is transmitted, staff members are viewed as having the expertise to use the information as having the expertise to use the information as deemed necessary in the completion of assigned responsibilities.

Communication between staff members is related to the degree to which staff members normally come in contact with one another during the day. This is due primarily to the fact that school personnel do not have the same degree of flexibility of movement that persons in other occupations have. In elementary schools, if staff members do not normally come in contact with one another, they have a limited amount of communication with one another. Staff members do not generally reach beyond their immediate contacts for the purpose of communication.

In elementary schools, the pattern of communication is determined by the behavior the principal displays toward communication. In fact, the posture the principal takes in his communication style is usually used as the pattern in the communication style of the staff members. It was the tendency of staff members to communicate freely if the principal did so. If the principal was encouraging toward communication and displayed this type of behavior to staff members, the communication pattern of the school involved more frequent communication among all segments of the staff. If the principal was discouraging toward communication in his behavior, it tended to create an atmosphere of fear regarding communication with one another. Also, communication among the staff was limited.

When staff members have specific communication roles, these roles are perceived by others in the organization. Staff members tend to be aware of those persons among them who have access to certain information. In fact, they go to them to seek the information. They perceive thse persons as "pets" of the principal. Also, those staff members who have specific communication roles are aware of their roles, as well as, how they are perceived by the other staff members.

The communication needs of the individual are related to the level of communication satisfaction. In essence, if an individual had a need for frequent, individual downward communication and downward communication of this type was limited, that individual would have a high degree of communication dissatisfaction. This indicates that it would be very difficult to determine a pattern of communication which would be totally satisfactory to all members of the staff in an elementary school. The amount of information needed to function independently, the attitude toward particular channels of communication, the social orientation, and the preconceived "notions" of satisfactory communication influence each individual's level of communication satisfaction. Also, there may be a type of "self-selection" process which occurs in determining if an individual will remain in a particular environment. If the individual accepts the communication pattern and it meets his communication needs, he may choose to stay in it.

The grapevine is considered taboo by the principal and teachers. Staff members, especially principals and teachers, tend to perceive the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system. Most staff members were quick to disassociate themselves from the grapevine within the school setting. Although observations indicated that elementary schools have an active grapevine, the staff members were reluctant to admit that they were participating in the grapevine. Also, grapevine information was dismissed as being of little value. As a whole, the staff considered participation in the grapevine as taboo.

Communication satisfaction appears to be related to overall job satisfaction. If staff members were satisfied with the communication, they were also satisfied with the job as a whole. The reverse also appeared to be true. In fact, many staff members felt that communication satisfaction leads to job satisfaction. Although this study was not designed to investigate the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction, it appears that the two are related.

Finally, although this study provided information relative to organizational communication in educational settings, each school is distinct with regard to its communication system. Being a participant-observer in the selected schools has led me to conclude that each school has its own sanctions regarding communication. Also, each school has its set of interactions that are encouraged, discouraged, or met with some degree of indifference. Therefore, it is conceivable that every school would have a distinct communication system based on its sanctions and mores. Also, the individual personalities and needs of staff members contribute to the differences between schools with regard to organizational communication. Of the many factors involved, it is very difficult, if not impossible to determine a pattern of communication which could be generalized to all educational settings, especially elementary schools.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, there are several recommendations that can be made. The conclusions of this study suggest several implications for education systems, future research in the area of organizational communication, and replication of this study.

The findings of this study indicate it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine a pattern of communication which could be applied to all education settings, especially elementary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that education systems examine the organizational design of their communication systems. In making this examination, it is further recommended that education systems: 1) describe what exists; 2) describe the effectiveness of that communication system; 3) determine the communication satisfaction for both the administration and the staff; and 4) determine what, if anything should be done. After investigating its organizational communication pattern, the education system can determine if that pattern is desirable. If the pattern is not desirable, the education system can determine how to reach the desirable communication pattern. The potential usefulness of the informatiom provided by this study is that it offers an option to education systems. Using the information provided, it is possible to match the communication needs of the individual with the complementary communication environments. This may make a difference in staff communication satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. In addition, it may prove to be more cost effective to school systems faced with large rates of staff turn-over.

The completion of this study has lead to the belief that more studies designed to describe organizational communication in elementary schools may not provide any significant information. Based on the conclusion that each school has its own communication pattern, each study of this nature would provide information relative to the particular schools being investigated. In light of this observation, perhaps a more direct approach to organizational communication in elementary schools is needed.

This study has led to the conclusion that each school possesses specific sanctions and mores with regard to organizational communication. Many of these sanctions and mores develop because of the individual needs and communication roles of staff members. Also, it appears that the individual personalities and needs of staff members contribute to each school's distinct communication system. However, it has not been practice to match personality and communication needs to communication environments. Generally, the communication needs of the individual and the communication pattern of the school are not considered in the placement of staff members in schools. If communication satisfaction is related to job satisfaction, this area is in need of further research. Some questions to be answered are:

Is there a relationship between the individual needs and communication satisfaction of staff members in elementary schools?

Is there a relationship between individual needs and communication roles of staff members in elementary schools?

This study found that the primary function of school communication systems was the transmission of information. Therefore, it is assumed that frequent communication contributed to staff members' knowledge, skill, or satisfaction. However, few studies have explored the role that communication plays in increasing teacher professionalism. Also, the role of communication in-service and training activities has not been explored. Future studies might further explore the communication channels and communication roles in elementary schools. Some questions to be answered are:

What is the role of the grapevine in school settings?

Are there discrepancies between the actual and perceived communication roles of staff members in elementary schools?

What is the communication role of the elementary school principal?

What are the communication roles on non-instructional staff members in elementary schools?

What role does communication play in the initiation of innovative programs in elementary schools?

This study has led to the belief that it is very difficult, if not impossible to develop a model organizational communication pattern. Although this study used a small sample of elementary schools, it was found that different people find different communication patterns to be appropriate and acceptable. School systems still have to decide if they believe there are standards of acceptable and appropriate communication pattrens. This determines if they will attempt to change or modify their communication system. Future studies might explore this aspect of organizational communication. Some questions to be answered are:

What is appropriate and acceptable communication in educational settings?

What patterns of communication are appropriate for given situations?

What determines communication effectiveness within educational settings?

This study involved two participating schools. To further describe organizational communication in elementary schools, this study may be replicated. The following recommendations are made in the event this study is replicated:

1) Increase the number of participating schools.
2) Extend the length of time in the field to nine months.
3) Use teams of participant observers with one team in each school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT

Richmond, Virginia 23222
November 15, 1981

Dear Sir:

I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and I am conducting a study of selected elementary schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This study is concerned with investigating organizational communication in elementary schools. This study will serve as the basis for my dissertation.

The purpose of this letter is to request your approval to permit the principal and full-time teaching staff of Jones Elementary School and Smith Elementary Elementary School to participate in the study. Please be assured that all responses will remain anonymous and every effort will be made to reframe from disrupting the regular operation of these two schools. A copy of the research proposal is available upon request.

I sincerely hope you will respond favorably to this request. Should you have questions, you may contact me at . I will call you in the near future for your response.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Respectfully,

Patricia A. Gould

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. At what school do you work?

2. What is your position?

3. How long have you been at Jones/Smith?

4. At what other schools have you worked?

5. How would you describe the communication in this school?

6. What person or persons do you communicate with most frequently?

7. How frequently do you communicate with them in the course of a week?

8. Generally, what is the nature of your communication with them?

9. Is there any particular reason why you communicate with them more frequently than with others in the building?

10. What person or persons do you communicate with infrequently?

11. How often do you communicate with them?

12. Generally, what is the nature of your communication with them?

13. Is there any particular reason why you communicate with them infrequently?

The public address system, face-to-face conversation, memos, manuels, staff meetings, and the grapevine are all channels of communication.

14. Which one is used most frequently in this school?

15. Which one is used most infrequently?

What type of information is usually received from each channel of communication?

A) Public address system

B) Memos, bulletins, etc.

C) Face-to-face conversation

D) Staff meetings

E) Grapevine

16. What type of information do you prefer to receive face-to-face?

17. In a memo?

What value do you attach to each channel of communication?

18. Public address system-

19. Face-to-face conversation-

20. Memos, etc.-

21. Staff meetings-

22. Grapevine-

23. Can you relate an instance of your misunderstanding a message sent by someone to you?

24. Relate the instance.

25. Of someone misunderstanding a message you sent?

26. Relate the instance.

27. Where does most of the communication occur in this school?

28. When does most of the communication occur in this school?

29. If you do not understand a message, what do you do?

30. How often do you initiate communication with your principal in the course of a week?

31. What is the nature of this communication?

32. On those occasions that you initiate communication with your principal, what channel of communication do you use?

33. Do you go through another person?

34. How often in the course of a week does your principal initiate communication with you individually?

35. Generally, what is the nature of this communication

36. On those occasions that your principal initiates communication with you individually, what channel is used?

37. Does he/she go through another person?

38. What types of things do you discuss in small groups at school?

39. If you wanted to compliment your principal, how would you go about communicating your compliment?

40. Have you done this in the past?

41. Explain

42. If you wanted to disagree or convey some type of negative feedback to your principal, how would you go about communicating this disagreement or negative feedback?

43. Have you done this in the past?

44. Explain.

45. Do you find the communication in your school to be satisfactory? Explain why or why not.

gatekeeper -

liaison -

PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW

1. At what school do you work?

2. What is your position?

3. How long have you been at Jones/Smith?

4. At what other schools have you worked?

5. How would you describe the communication in this school?

6. What person or persons do you communicate with most frequently?

7. How frequently do you communicate with them in the course of a week?

8. Generally, what is the nature of your communication with them?

9. Is there any particular reason why you communicate with them more frequently than with others in the building?

10. What person or persons do you communicate with infrequently?

11. How often do you communicate with them?

12. Generally, what is the nature of your communication with them?

13. Is there any particular reason why you communicate with them infrequently?

The public address system, face-to-face conversation, memos, manuels, staff meetings, and the grapevine are all channels of communication.

14. Which one is used most frequently in this school?

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C) Face-to-face conversation

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E) Grapevine

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What value do you attach to each channel of communication?

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20. Memos, etc.-

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22. Grapevine-

23. Can you relate an instance of your misunderstanding a message sent by someone to you?

24. Relate the instance.

25. Of someone misunderstanding a message you sent?

26. Relate the instance.

27. Where does most of the communication occur in this school?

28. When does most of the communication occur in this school?

29. If you do not understand a message, what do you do?

30. How often do you initiate communication with your staff on an individual basis in the course of a week?

31. What is the nature of this communication?

32. On those occasions that you initiate communication with your staff individuall, what channel of communication do you use?

33. Do you go through another person?

34. How often in the course of a week does your staff initiate communication with you individually?

35. Generally, what is the nature of this communication

36. On those occasions that your staff initiates communication with you individually, what channel is used.?

37. Does he/she go through another person?

38. What types of things do you discuss in small groups at school?

39. If you wanted to compliment a member of your staff, how would you go about comunicating your compliment?

40. Have you done this in the past?

41. Explain.

42. If you wanted to disagree or convey some type of negative feedback to staff members, how would you go about communicating this disagreement or negative feedback?

43. Have you done this in the past?

44. Explain.

45. Do you find the communication in your school to be satisfactory? Explain.

gatekeeper-

liaison-

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AN INVESTIGATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ELEMNTARY SCHOOLS: A FIELD STUDY

by

Patricia Ann Gould

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to investigate organizational communication in elementary schools. In addition, this study was designed to describe the organizational communication patterns found in the selected elementary schools, compare the organizational communication patterns of the schools, and compare these patterns with organizational communication in other settings.

This study was conducted in two elementary schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Both schools housed grades Kindergarten through six. This study used the field study methodology which included participant observation, formal and informal interviews, and the analysis of school documents. The study was guided by five broad areas: 1) channels of communication; 2) flow of communication; 3) basis of communication; 4) frequency of communication; and 5) actors in the communication process. Also, the study was limited to communication between the teachers and other staff members in the building and the principal and all staff members. The study only involved communication which occurred within the school building during school activities.

Based on the data, the following thoughts and conclusions were

drawn from this study: 1) the nature of communication in elementary schools is distinct from communication in other organizations; 2) upward communication is more frequent than downward communication in elementary school settings; 3) the communication needs of the individual appear to be related to the level of communication satisfaction; 4) both teachers and principals tend to perceive the grapevine as a negative aspect of the communication system; 5) communication satisfaction appears to be related to overall job satisfaction; and 6) each school has its own sanctions and mores regarding organizational communication.

Because each school is distinct with regard to organizational communication, it is concluded that additional studies designed to describe organizational communication in elementary schools may not provide any significant information. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies be done which will explore the relationship between organizational communication patterns and individual needs; and the relationship between communication channels, communication roles, and inservice activities in schools.