

# TALK TO ME!! EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION

Janet L. Lear  
Kay A. Hodge  
Steven A. Schulz

## Abstract

**Problem:** Employers', university faculty members', and students' perceptions of the importance of communication skills in a business environment may vary. **Research Questions:** What differences, if any, exist in the perceptions of employers, university faculty, and students about the importance of communication skills? If differences in perceptions exist, in what communication areas—written communication, oral communication, nonverbal communication, and listening—do significant differences exist in the perceptions among the groups of employers, university faculty, and students? If any differences in perceptions exist, why do they matter? **Research Method:** A quantitative research survey was conducted. The participants were faculty members from a Midwestern university, students from the university, and business persons located in the area. **Data Collection Procedures and Analysis:** The survey results were collected and analyzed using SPSS. Data were statistically analyzed to determine the differences and similarities regarding the importance of oral, written, and nonverbal communication, and listening skills. **Findings:** Employers' list of skills in order of importance—listening, nonverbal, writing, and oral skills—differed from faculty members' and students' reported order of importance—listening, oral, writing, and nonverbal skills. Business persons stressed that interdepartmental communication was vital to organizational success. **Conclusions / Recommendations:** For students to be adequately prepared for future employment, differences between perceptions held by industry stakeholders and university stakeholders should be addressed. For students to become effective contributors for their future employers, they need to have those communication skills that employers value. Outcomes of this study can be used to suggest improvements to postsecondary education to better prepare students for success in the workplace.

## Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century was just beginning when various groups began investigating the skills that would be needed by employees. In 2006, a consortium, under the research direction of Linda Barrington, produced a report that concluded that new workers were lacking basic literacy skills. This report, which caught the attention of the nation, rated a significant portion of two-year and four-year college

---

Dr. Janet L. Lear, Associate Professor of Economics/Business Teacher Education, University of Nebraska Kearney, Kearney, NE 68849, learj@unk.edu.

Dr. Kay A. Hodge, Professor, Department of Management, University of Nebraska at Kearney, hodgek@unk.edu.

Dr. Steven A. Schulz, Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, University of Nebraska at Omaha, sschulz@unomaha.edu.

graduates as “deficient” in both oral and written communication skills (Barrington, 2006, p. 11). Since then, a number of national studies have addressed the issue of skills needed for today’s workplace (American Management Association, 2010; National Association of College and Employers, 2013; Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2008). At a time when communication is rated as one of the top skills needed for employment, these findings seem to indicate that the educational process needs to emphasize communication skills at all levels.

Today’s workplace employees communicate using a variety of tools and skills. Traditional forms of communication—written communication (memos, letters, and reports), oral communication (face-to-face and presentations), listening, and nonverbal communication—have existed for many years and are still used; however, individuals also communicate using a host of newer electronic technologies like e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and social media including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, which have blogs, wikis, and other new resource tools that define the new digital electronic age. A recent phenomenon in distance education includes the development of massive open online courses (MOOCs) where an interactive forum has been developed for communication among faculty and students. With all these various modes of communication, best practices for efficient, effective communication will be crucial for success in communicating messages that are understood with the same meaning for both the sender and the receiver.

In addition to the variety of formats for communication in organizations, Bovee and Thill (2012) emphasized that, while communication today is more “conversational and interactive” than in the past, the key to success is still transferring the correct meaning of the idea or thought to create knowledge (p. 3). As George Bernard Shaw so eloquently pointed out, “The problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished,” (as cited in Kranacher, 2007). If businesses are to be productive, employees must strive to communicate effectively and efficiently with diverse recipients who have differing experiences and with different media appropriate for the situation in the evolving technology-related business environment. Effective, efficient communication also means possessing a skill set whereby the thought or idea will be communicated in such a way as to have meaning and that the intended meaning is understood by the recipient.

The importance of communication skills is well documented, and good oral and written communication are considered vital when searching for a job and being successful on the job. Both the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills advocacy group’s survey (2008) and the American Management Association’s survey (2010) identified communication as one of the four most important skills people needed for successful employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Likewise, the latest *Job Outlook 2014* report by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) (NACE, 2013) listed communication as one of the most important skills for employment today with 76.6% of employers seeking good written communication skills. While

these surveys also mentioned other skills such as critical thinking, innovation, and management, generally these other skills are impacted by communication skills as employers and employees relate their thoughts and ideas to others.

The consensus among employers nationwide appeared to be that communication skills are important; however, this study goes a step further and adds a new dimension to the conversation by focusing on the differences in perceptions among three groups—business persons, university faculty members, and university students. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine if any differences existed in perceptions of the importance of communication among business persons, university business faculty members, and university business students.

### **Research Questions**

This research study was guided by the following research questions:

What differences, if any, exist in the perceptions of employers, university faculty, and students about the importance of communication skills? For this study, communication skills were defined as written communication, oral communication, nonverbal communication, and listening.

If differences in perceptions exist, in what communication areas—written communication, oral communication, nonverbal communication, and listening—do significant differences exist in the perceptions among the groups of employers, university faculty, and students?

If any differences in perceptions exist, why do they matter?

### **Literature Review**

Why are communication skills so important for businesses? According to Harshman and Harshman (1999), communication is the one common factor that impacts how well an organization performs. These researchers explained that poor communication is a significant problem because it leads to a variety of issues including inaccurate or suppressed information, rumors, misused information, inaccurate interpretation, and lack of feedback. Another study by Byrne and Lemay (2006) linked effective, high-quality communication to increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment. Since so much rides on good communication, the fact that the national *Job Outlook 2014* survey of businesses included a question regarding communication skills is not surprising (NACE, 2013).

### **Communication Overview**

Because communication is a complex process where many variables must be considered, ensuring that the message conceived, encoded, and sent by the author is the same message that is decoded and understood by the recipient represents a key

component in the communication process. Given the impact that clear, complete communication has on the business world, the way that individuals exchange ideas and information, the content of the messages, and the interpretations of the messages are all important.

An abundance of communication research includes many established theories—all of which have a common theme: Human beings seek to be understood by the recipients of their communications (Bolton, 2005). Therefore, in the communication process, the sender must first consider his/her audience (the message recipient(s). For recipients to get the message, the sender must first carefully determine how the message is going to be sent. If using words, the words must be clear and precise; and since the audience is likely to have differing backgrounds, misunderstanding is a possibility.

### **Communication Skill Areas**

While employers nationally indicate they believe communication skills are important, one has to identify exactly what constitutes a communication skill. Bovee and Thill (2012) listed a variety of skills, which matched several textbook listings, including written communication, oral communication, nonverbal communication (touch, space, gestures, and voice tone), and listening.

Written communication skills (memos, letters, text-messaging, instant messaging, social media, and reports) matter! According to Victor Urback, management consultant, “Communicating clearly and effectively has NEVER been more important than it is today” (as cited in Guffey & Loewy, 2015, p. 5). Stevens (2005, p. 42) went a step further and pointed out that writing skills become important as “technology intensifies the significant role of messages in the workplace.” According to Stevens (2005), employers noted that poor language skills were a barrier to hiring some applicants because of clients’ negative perceptions of people with poor language skills. These same employers also mentioned that “kid stuff” (p. 7, e.g. emoticons such as smiley faces or slang) should be avoided when writing professional correspondence.

Oral communication skills (presentations and face-to-face conversations, group or individual) occupy an important position in a successful career. Oral skills are part of almost every job description because we all have to convey information to other people or to sell an idea (Guffey & Loewy, 2015, p. 501). Stevens (2005) reported that newly-hired college graduates needed stronger public speaking skills, stronger interpersonal skills, and more self-confidence.

Listening was listed as an important skill since approximately 80% of top executives said employees needed to be good listeners to understand and accomplish necessary tasks (Bovee & Thill, 2012). Whetton and Cameron (2002) pointed out that often just having someone listen to problems or suggestions is a key component in problem solving. Additionally, Drollinger and Comer (2009) demonstrated the importance of active, empathetic listening skills, which

correlated with higher levels of trust when sales representatives interacted with their customers.

Nonverbal communication (expressions, gestures, posture, vocal characteristics, appearance, touch, and time and space) signals additional information that enhances understanding of the message. Nonverbal communication is also important because it points to the credibility of the message. If nonverbal and verbal communication are congruent, the message is more believable (Bovee & Thill, 2012; Whetten & Cameron, 2002).

Along with understanding all the components of good communication comes the expectation that the person communicating will utilize these skills effectively in the workplace. Whetten and Cameron (2002) reported that “supportive communication . . . communication that seeks to preserve a positive relationship between the communicators. . . [is] a proven competitive advantage for both managers and organizations” (pp. 220-221).

A key point to consider for all stakeholders in higher education is determining the types of communication skills that are valued most by employers, faculty, and students. This study explored the consistencies and gaps in perceptions of communication skills among these three stakeholder groups.

## Methodology

For this quantitative research study, the researchers investigated the importance of communication skills—written communication skills, oral communication skills, listening skills, and nonverbal cues—that the survey participants perceived to be the most important for post-graduate entry-level employment. Business persons from the Midwestern region of the United States; students majoring in business including accounting, agribusiness, economics, finance, industrial distribution, management, management information systems, and marketing at a public Midwestern university; and faculty teaching in the College of Business and Technology at a public Midwestern university (institution enrollment over 6,000 undergraduates) were asked to rate the importance of these four communications skills using *not at all important* (1), *somewhat unimportant* (2), *not important or unimportant* (3), *somewhat important* (4), and *very important* (5).

Using a list of stratified random numbers, business participants were selected from a list of businesses the researchers received from the local Business Development Center. The participants were sent a letter containing the Internet address for an online survey and a paper copy of the survey with a return envelope. Business participants had the option to take the survey online or to return the completed survey. The response rate was 14.3% for this group (130 returned usable surveys out of 909 sent through postal service).

All faculty members in the business division of the College of Business & Technology were asked to participate with 39 of the online surveys completed out of 51 surveys distributed (response rate – 76.5%). Junior and senior students in

a variety of business classes were asked to complete the survey. Students were selected by the class they attended. The researchers contacted instructors of junior- and senior-level business classes requesting permission to survey students. If permission was granted, one of the researchers went to the class and explained that the responses to the survey were going to be used in research being performed and that their answers would be appreciated. However, if the students did not want to participate, they were told to put the blank survey into an envelope left in the classroom. The researcher then left the room, and when the students were finished with their responses and had inserted their surveys into the envelope, one student returned the envelope to one researcher's office. No remuneration or reward was offered for completing the survey. A total of 258 out of 595 business students (43.4%) completed the survey. After surveys were completed, the results were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS.

## Results

First, the researchers examined perceptions of employers, faculty members, and students regarding four communications components identified in the literature—listening, writing, speaking, and nonverbal cues. Collected data were analyzed to determine differences within groups and differences with the national surveys from the literature. Table 1 details data from employers, students, and faculty about specific communication skills.

**Table 1**  
***Within-Group Results for Communication Skills***

Group	Communication Skills	Mean	Std.	Skill Comparisons		Mean Difference	p value
Employers	Listening	4.67	.761	Listening	Writing	0.74	.000*
	Writing	3.93	.828	Listening	Oral	0.79	.000*
	Oral	3.88	1.024	Listening	Nonverbal	0.73	.000*
	Nonverbal	3.94	.842	Writing	Oral	0.05	.595
				Writing	Nonverbal	-00.01	.929
			Oral	Nonverbal	-00.06	.543	
Faculty	Listening	4.70	.618	Listening	Writing	0.13	.201
	Writing	4.57	.689	Listening	Oral	0.11	.457
	Oral	4.59	.644	Listening	Nonverbal	0.59	.000*
	Nonverbal	4.11	.458	Writing	Oral	-0.02	.831
				Writing	Nonverbal	0.46	.000*
			Oral	Nonverbal	0.48	.000*	

**Table 1**  
(Continued)

Group	Communication Skills	Mean	Std.	Skill Comparisons		Mean Difference	p value
Students	Listening	4.75	.523	Listening	Writing	0.43	.000*
	Writing	4.32	.713	Listening	Oral	0.26	.000*
	Oral	4.49	.620	Listening	Nonverbal	0.45	.000*
	Nonverbal	4.30	.735	Writing	Oral	-00.17	.000*
				Writing	Nonverbal	0.02	.721
			Oral	Nonverbal	0.19	.000*	

\*Based on a rating scale where 5 = *very important* and 1 = *not important*  
\*p = .001 or less

Students and faculty members rated the four components in the same order of importance—listening, oral communication, written communication, and nonverbal communication. Employers, on the other hand, rated the order of importance beginning with listening as most important followed by nonverbal communication, written communication, and oral communication. The difference between nonverbal communication (3.94/5.00) and writing (3.93/5.00) for employers was slight.

T-test procedures in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to analyze the data within each group. Employers provided statistically significant higher scores for listening skills relative to writing, oral, and nonverbal communication skills. Employers did not report statistically significant differences among writing, oral, and nonverbal communication skills. Faculty reported statistically significant lower scores for nonverbal skills relative to listening, writing, and oral communication skills. Faculty did not report statistically significant differences among listening, writing, and nonverbal communication skills. Students reported statistically significant higher scores for listening skills relative to writing, oral, and nonverbal communication skills. Students also reported statistically significant higher scores for oral communication skills relative to writing and nonverbal communication skills. Students did not report statistically significant differences between writing and nonverbal communication skills.

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for ratings for each of the communication skills included in this study. The results can be seen in Table 2. Ratings were not significantly different for ratings of listening skills among the three groups [ $F(2, 419) = .822, p = .440$ ]. There were, however, statistically significant differences among the three groups for ratings of writing skills [ $F(2, 419) = 15.866, p = .000$ ]; oral communication skills [ $F(2, 419) = .29.705, p = .000$ ]; and nonverbal communication skills [ $F(2, 419) = 10.005, p = .000$ ].

**Table 2**  
***Between-Group Results for Communication Skills***

		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Listening	Between Groups	.620	2	.310	.822	.440
	Within Groups	157.942	419	.377		
	Total	158.562	421			
Writing	Between Groups	17.776	2	8.888	15.866	.000*
	Within Groups	234.729	419	.560		
	Total	252.505	421			
Oral	Between Groups	35.154	2	17.577	29.705	.000*
	Within Groups	247.929	419	.592		
	Total	283.083	421			
Nonverbal	Between Groups	11.291	2	5.646	10.005	.000*
	Within Groups	236.424	419	.564		
	Total	247.716	421			

\*p = .001 or less

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean scores for listening skills among employers, faculty, and students were not significantly different. However, for writing and oral skills, employers reported significantly lower ratings than faculty or students. In addition, employers reported significantly lower scores than students for nonverbal skills. A summary of the results can be seen in Table 3. The Post Hoc Tukey analysis provides additional granularity to the analysis of the data by identifying significant differences within groups for written, oral, and nonverbal communications skills that were not clearly defined in the ANOVA analysis.

**Table 3**  
*Post Hoc Analysis Utilizing the Tukey HSD Test*

Communication Skills	Group Comparisons		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Listening	Employers	Faculty	-.033	.114	.954
	Employers	Students	-.084	.066	.416
	Faculty	Students	-.050	.108	.888
Writing	Employers	Faculty	-.637*	.139	.000*
	Employers	Students	-.387*	.081	.000*
	Faculty	Students	.250	.132	.140
Oral	Employers	Faculty	-.710*	.143	.000*
	Employers	Students	-.610*	.083	.000*
	Faculty	Students	.100	.135	.738
Nonverbal	Employers	Faculty	-.170	.140	.447
	Employers	Students	-.360*	.081	.000*
	Faculty	Students	-.190	.132	.323

\*p = .001 or less

## Discussion

The literature indicates that communication is at the top of the list of most necessary skills for entry-level employment. Our three participant groups rated the four communication skills as defined in the literature.

### Perception Differences among Participant Groups

When considering communications, faculty members in an earlier study perceived communication as more important for entry-level job seekers than did students (Hodge & Lear, 2011). Table 1 details the statistically significant differences within the group compared to writing, speaking, listening, and nonverbal skills. As can be seen in Table 3, the difference is statistically significant for oral and written communication with two exceptions, the faculty/students writing and faculty/students oral. Midwest employers ranked both writing and oral communication skills lower than did faculty members and students. The employers in this survey valued listening skills as most important of the four communication skills.

The national studies reviewed for this study focused more on written and oral communication skills. Barrington's report stated that a significant portion of two-year and four-year college graduates are "deficient" in English skills and written communication. Data from the *AMA Critical Skills* survey (2010) reported

that over 80% of surveyed employers would begin testing for these skills when hiring employees. The trend continues with the most recent *Job Outlook 2014* survey (NACE, 2013) reporting that employers will evaluate written and verbal communication skills.

Testing is one way to make sure the employees who are hired are able to communicate, but what action can be taken to bring more students up to standard? Faculty members must take a hard look at what employers in their immediate employment area value and be proactive in preparing students to be good communicators. Apparently, what faculty members value also is recognized by students because the faculty/student analysis (Table 3) showed no statistical differences between faculty members and students for the four communication skills. Therefore, faculty members must determine employers' needs and then communicate those needs to students. Listening is the area with no statistical difference between groups (Table 2) and no group comparison with statistically significant differences (Table 3).

Differences are noted for the other three skills. Table 3 indicates that the faculty and the students were closely grouped while the employers' ratings were more distant from both the faculty and students, especially with regard to written and oral communication skills. The only statistically significant difference for nonverbal communication was between employers and students (as noted in Table 3).

A highly-skilled workforce can become a competitive advantage for companies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and new graduates need to be aware of this as they enter the workforce. The alignment of individual skills with occupational requirements can become a critical component of success. In addition to advances in higher education, employers may need to consider professional development in communications as part of the ongoing process for new employees and for career advancement of current employees. In a professional setting tailored to meet the needs of a specific organization, trainers can place appropriate amounts of emphasis on each type of communication. However, for example, technical writing skills for engineers may need to be developed in a manner that is different than the oral communication skills or listening skills for sales people. The advantage of professional development will be the ability to identify the idiosyncratic fit of communication needs and training or development.

### **Why Does Knowing These Communication Differences Matter?**

In the end, the overall question is how to create the best path of development of communication skills for students as they work toward the genesis of their career path. In addition, each company has its own set of needs in terms of communication. How can students begin to understand the communication process of prospective employers? One method for addressing these concerns may be addressed through experiential learning opportunities for students.

An internship can offer students the opportunity to enhance their confidence and ability in various areas of communication in a professional environment. For

example, Bandura (1997) found that people will try harder and give more effort to tasks where they have higher self-efficacy or confidence than those where they have little or no confidence. Self-efficacy in communication skills can be improved through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and positive feedback.

Other methods of increasing the confidence and ability of students with respect to communication skills could include case studies, presentations in the classroom, interactive communication projects, and mock meeting management exercises. Moreover, because listening is valued by all three participant groups and is such an important part of the workplace, faculty members cannot ignore this important skill. Teaching effective listening techniques would be an important addition to a business classroom.

The relationship between higher education and industry stakeholders will need to evolve as workforce skill requirements change in the dynamic business environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Faculty will need to monitor changes in resource requirements of industry in order to update and upgrade classroom activities and assignments. The key for success in higher education will be to build an appropriate foundation of skills for students that can be augmented with professional development provided for new graduates. The integration of education and professional development will be a requirement for achieving the optimal workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Conclusions**

The results of this study demonstrate significant differences in the perceived importance of oral, written, and nonverbal communications between employers and university faculty. Student perceptions mirrored faculty perceptions for the importance of each of these skills. Faculty and students ranked the perceived importance of communication skills in the following order from highest to lowest: listening, oral communication, written communication, and nonverbal communication. Employers, on the other hand, rated the order of importance beginning with listening as most important followed by nonverbal communication, written communication, and oral communication.

Differences between perceptions held by industry and university stakeholders will need to be addressed in order to develop the communication skills necessary for students to become effective contributors for their future employers. Since the results of this study also show that student perceptions are a direct reflection of faculty perceptions related to communication skills, faculty are the key to addressing the pedagogical alignment of instructional materials, activities, and outcomes.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Having industry stakeholders address students on the importance of excellent communication skills, including all four components, would be one way to highlight the importance of communication. Business managers and educators need to develop partnerships to increase awareness of communication as an essential skill for today's workers. Communicating effectively with all stakeholders and recognizing the differences that may exist in the exchange of information will go a long way toward improving relationships and workplace productivity. To improve the relationships with both secondary and post-secondary schools in the community, business leaders could be invited to serve on advisory boards and to speak to various business classes about the importance of communication. Likewise, post-secondary educators should take an active role in the local business community.

The problem for education goes deeper than just the post-secondary level. Many students join the workforce right out of high school. Creating an advisory board with representatives from the business community, secondary education, and post-secondary education might be one way for all three groups to highlight the importance of improving communication skills for all stakeholders. By establishing a feedback loop, educators can discover what areas need improvement and be proactive in implementing improved learning strategies for all future employees.

As students and faculty members become more in tune with the various aspects of communication among co-workers, employees, and upper-level management, more effective, efficient communication may result in a message that is clear and understood by all parties. However, recognizing the importance placed on communication nationally is equally important because some students will move to other regions in the United States.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Given the importance that business executives attach to communications skills, future research should be done to assess the impact of communication skills on the final decision to accept or reject an innovative idea that was presented in the classroom or in the workplace. Trust in the communicator and the credibility of a presented idea as well as mutual understanding of the thought may be impacted by poor communication skills.

Studies need to be conducted on regional differences, employer differences by industry, and employee differences by position to determine if the differences are statistically significant. The relationship of trust and credibility to communication and to position and industry differences could be explored when examining

regional differences. If needed communication skills differ by industry or position and impact trust and credibility, then students should recognize the importance and be more focused in their learning.

While this study did not measure the impact of technology skill level on effective, efficient communication, the evolution of technology and social media may influence the need for different communication skills in the future. Assessing communication skill development and implementing continuous improvement to prepare future employees is the inexorable challenge in the evolving business environment.

## References

- American Management Association. (2010). *AMA 2010 critical skills survey: Executives say the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires more skilled workers*. Retrieved from <http://www.p21.org/documents/Critical%20Skills%20Survey%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Barrington, L. (2006). *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. workforce*. Consortium Report Partners—The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, & Society for Human Resource Management.
- Bolton, R. (2005). *Habermas's theory of communicative action and the theory of social capital*. Retrieved from <http://www.williams.edu/Economics/papers/Habermas.pdf>
- Bovee, C. L., & Thill, J. V. (2012). *Business communication today* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Publishing.
- Byrne, Z. S., & Lemay, E. (Winter 2006). Different media for organizational communication: Perceptions of quality and satisfaction. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 21(2), 149-173.
- Drollinger, T., & Comer, L. B. (2009). Salesperson's listening ability as an antecedent to relationship selling. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 28(1), 50-59.
- Guffey, M. E., & Loewy, D. (2015). *Business communication: Process & product* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.
- Harshman, E. F., & Harshman, C. L. (1999). Communicating with employees: Building on an ethical foundation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 19, 3-19.
- Hodge, K. A., & Lear, J. L. (2011). Employment skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace: The gap between faculty and student perceptions. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 26(2), 28-41.
- Kranacher, M. J. (2007). The problem with communication . . . Editorial. *The CPA Journal*, 77(7), 80.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). (2012, November). *Job Outlook 2013*. Retrieved from <http://www.uwsuper.edu/career/students/upload/Job-Outlook-2013-Member-Version.pdf>
- Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. (2008). *21<sup>st</sup> century skills, education & competitiveness: A resource and policy guide*. Tucson, AZ: Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. Retrieved from [http://www.p21.org/documents/21<sup>st</sup>\\_century\\_skills\\_education\\_and\\_competitiveness\\_guide.pdf](http://www.p21.org/documents/21st_century_skills_education_and_competitiveness_guide.pdf)
- Stevens, B. (2005, March). What communication skills do employers want? Silicon Valley recruiters respond. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 42, 2-9.
- Whetten, D. A., & Cameron, K. S. (2002). *Developing management skills* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.