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A Communication Channel: Its Existence and Its Use

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A Communication Channel:

Its Existence and Its Use
(TITLE)

BY

Michael Lee Klipp

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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CHAPTER I

I. THE PROBLEM

Campus unrest has been the point of many faculty/student communication problems. This study will investigate whether one formal channel of communication required by the organization Eastern Illinois University actually exists and to what extent that channel is used. The usage of faculty posted office hours will be explored and the availability of faculty members during those hours will be measured. Such office hours are required of each faculty member at Eastern Illinois University.

II. SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION

In Gerald M. Goldhaber's article, Communication at the University, he observes that, "In the last decade, failures to communicate have often been cited as cause for unrest on campuses; these failures result in recommendations from all levels to 'open up the channels' and begin 'meaningful dialogue'."¹ This study will demonstrate whether the "channels" of communication required by the university policy are actually open at Eastern Illinois University. The level of availability that is called for in that policy will be com-

¹Gerald M. Goldhaber, "Communication at the University", Western Speech, (Summer, 1972), p. 169.

pared to the availability which actually exists during faculty posted hours.

Barker defines communication channels as "the pathways on which messages travel."² In determining the availability and use of a channel, the "pathways" existence is established. Goetzinger and Valentine call for descriptive studies in the area of channel, medium, and direction in their article, Communication Channels, Media, Directional Flow and Attitudes in an Academic Community, when they state that, "If the study of human communication behavior is to approach the most useful levels of prediction, quantifiable descriptions of various communication situations must be obtained."³ In the observation of the student/faculty communication process, the senders and receivers, and often times the messages are readily observable. It is the channel's existence and use which determines whether the message arrives. David Berlo views the channel as, "a medium, a carrier of messages."⁴ He goes on to say, "Channels couple the source and the receiver, enabling them to communicate."⁵ This study will investigate the existence of a channel and determine the use made of the channel by the senders and receivers, (the faculty and students during posted office hours). Because communication breakdown have been shown to exist at other universities

²Larry L. Barker, Listening Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 21.

³Charles Goetzinger and Milton Valentine, "Communication Channels, Media, Directional Flow and Attitudes in an Academic Community", The Journal of Communication, XII (March, 1962), p. 23.

⁴David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication, (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 31.

⁵Ibid., p. 67.

(e.g., University of New Mexico⁶ and Kent State University⁷), and because problems grow out of these breakdowns, a study of this nature is appropriate to attempt to avoid similar problems at Eastern Illinois University.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The volume of literature pointing to campus unrest and lack of communication is great, but material specifically relating to faculty/student communication availability is quite limited. The content of those sources found will be discussed in the following pages.

College and University Reports, an extra edition covering the "Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest", (The Scranton Report) is an excellent reference. This volume is a study done to determine causes and solutions to campus problems. The study calls upon the university to keep communication channels open. "To create such a climate, the university will have to demonstrate, both to the students and to the larger society, that its values are worthy of support, and that its policies and programs reflect an authentic commitment to those values."⁸

In his book, Bureaucracy in Higher Education, Stroup presents an in-depth study of the organization of the "typical" university com-

⁶Goldhaber, op. cit., pp. 170-172.

⁷Phillip K. Tompkins and Elaine Vanden Bout Anderson, Communication Crisis at Kent State, (New York: Gordon and Breach, Science Publishers, 1971), p. 7.

⁸Commission on Campus Unrest, Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, College and University Reports, (Chicago: Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1970), p. 6/3.

munity. Stroup feels that studies of individual institutions are representative of the entire realm of high education. He points out that, "Colleges have a particular organization, each having its own distinctive features. Like fingerprints, no two are alike, yet in their more basic organizational aspects, they bear a strikingly common relationship to each other".⁹ Thus, a study of a select number of university's channels can be used to draw generalizations for the field of higher education. For the most part, the volume takes an in-depth look into the problems of communication found to exist on a college campus without a direct study of any formal channels. A description of what Stroup views as typical parts of an university's bureaucracy is presented, giving the reader a general overview of the existing organizational problems of an institution of higher learning.

University Authority and the Student, written by Otten, is a study of the student and his role in the university community, done at the University of California at Berkely. If we accept Stroup's premise that university studies will, in most cases, arrive at similar conclusions, then Otten's work represents an excellent historical perspective for the study of university communications. Otten presents a history of the University of California at Berkeley, from its earliest days in 1869 to 1969, when the book was released. The changing roles of each level within the university is studied and a number of proposals are made. The first issue that Otten points to is that if the university system is going to fulfill its potential, it must be able to stand judgment

⁹Herbert Stroup, Bureaucracy in Higher Education, (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 8-9.

"in light of their own consistency with stated principles."¹⁰ Just as in the Scranton Report, Otten judges the university by how well it adheres to its own policy or whether the members of the university community violate that policy, and if an effect is registered within those who communicate with that party. In this case, the faculty's adherence to policy primarily affects the student.

One of the more famous studies of communication problems on campus was done by Tompkins and Anderson, when they studied the problem at Kent State University in Ohio. Their work, entitled Communication Crisis at Kent State, deals directly with communication failure and its causes as revealed at the university. They discovered that most faculty members are employed due to their reading and writing skills, rather than for their oral skills. Because of this, some of their potential oral abilities are never developed.¹¹ While studying the ability of faculty and students to identify university channels of communication, Tompkins and Anderson arrived at the following conclusion: "When the faculty and students don't know about channels, they don't exist -- and therefore, they don't know how to cope."¹² The Kent State study discovered, "that the students were largely uninformed about the structure of the university and its official channels."¹³

Another work of primary importance is Goldhaber's essay, Communication at the University. It is from this article that the main concept

¹⁰C. Michael Otten, University Authority and the Student, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 198.

¹¹Tompkins and Anderson, Communication Crisis at Kent State, p. 83.

¹²Ibid., p. 90.

¹³Ibid., p. 111.

of this thesis was drawn. Goldhaber's study evaluates "three selected student-administration and student-faculty channels of communication."¹⁴ The study was conducted at the University of New Mexico, and it pinpoints certain "channel" problems in that university's system. Goldhaber found the students complaining "about the lack of availability of professors."¹⁵ Goldhaber determined that the channels which he was studying were not the positive tools that their users (here, users being faculty and administration) claimed or hoped they would be.¹⁶ This same conclusion will be either affirmed or denied by this study of Eastern Illinois University.

The proposal Goldhaber makes is that, "Faculty members should re-examine their commitment to maintaining office hours."¹⁷ The university policy of establishing office hours for faculty members should be followed to insure the positive observance by the student of the values held by the university community.

A number of the sources cited by Dr. Goldhaber will not be readily available for this study, due to their unpublished nature. However, for the most part, these sources and those which have been located are useful in establishing the problem. Other acceptable sources have been found. To insure in-depth coverage, the following speech journals were reviewed: Speech Today, Speech Monographs, The Quarterly Journal of Speech, The Central States Speech Journal, Southern

¹⁴Goldhaber, "Communication at the University", p. 171.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 176.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 180.

Speech, Speech Teacher, and Western Speech. This survey provided two applicable articles. The first, found in The Quarterly Journal of Speech, is Giffin's "Social Alienation by Communication Denial." Giffin here discusses the types and levels of alienation that can be created by a breakdown in the channels of communication, both in society and on campus. The article is cited by the authors of the Communication Crisis at Kent State in establishing that a subtle or even nonverbal discourtesy can cause considerable alienation within students.¹⁸ It is Dr. Giffin's contention that, "when a person functionally accepts the conclusion that he cannot communicate with another person or persons --- that it is pointless to try further, social alienation has occurred."¹⁹ If a student attempts time and time again to reach a faculty member via his office hours and the professor is never there, an attitude of social alienation can bring out an apathetic or even hostile attitude and closes the policy-established channel for that student.

The second article is a very short editorial found in The Quarterly Journal of Speech by James W. Gibson, entitled "Campus Crisis: A Criticism". This article is a charge to speech faculty to study further the problem of communication on campus because, as he says, "we ought to be able to act effectively as mediating instruments when communication difficulties threaten the very lives of our institutions."²⁰

¹⁸Tompkins and Anderson, Communication Crisis at Kent State, p. 101.

¹⁹Kim Giffin, "Social Alienation by Communication Denial", The Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVI, (December, 1970), p. 348.

²⁰James Gibson, "Campus Crisis", The Central States Speech Journal, XXI, (Summer, 1970), p. 69.

The Public Administration Review, also provided two articles found in a symposium on University Administration. The primary one, cited by Goldhaber,²¹ is Ferrel Heady's "The Role of the President Today." Heady points out that for the most part, the studies of organization carried out by universities are of organizations outside the academic community. He says, "Students of large scale organizations, even though they are usually faculty members in institutions of higher learning, have preferred to analyze other organizational types."²² The thrust of this article is to present the reader a view of problems that the university president must face in his quest to communicate with those other groups which affect his office. Because his study included a purely administrative section, Dr. Goldhaber made greater use of this study in presenting the problem area to his readers than will be necessary here.

The same series of articles in The Public Administration Review included Wingfield's article, "Campus Conflict and Institutional Maintenance: An Agenda for Public Administration."²³ This article is really an overview of what the current on-campus situation is and how it could be studied and perhaps changed. The role of the student, the faculty member and the administrator are discussed in the article with emphasis given the role of each within the university organization. Wingfield reiterated Heady's earlier comment when he noted that "Serious

²¹Goldhaber, "Communication at the University", p. 165.

²²Ferrel Heady, "The Role of the President Today", Public Administration Review, XXX (March/April, 1970), p. 117.

²³Clyde J. Wingfield, "Campus Conflict and Institutional Maintenance: An Agenda for Public Administration." Public Administration Review, XXX (March/April, 1970), p. 99.

students of organization have ignored the administration and politics of higher education."²⁴ Wingfield further suggested that "Studies of university personnel practices would be useful."²⁵ The study to be presented within this paper will directly determine the use and existence of an organizational channel of communication and examine university personnel practices within the prescribed channel.

A review of Speech Abstracts revealed an abstract of a study done by Dedmon entitled, "A Comparison of University and Business Communication Practices." The body of the study is published in The Journal of Communications. Dedmon's study applies three rules of communication to the university and the industrial community. The three rules are, "First, both must communicate with the general public. Second, they must also communicate successfully with potential consumers of their products. Third, both must deal with the communicative needs of their own personnel."²⁶ It is with the third area and its presentation of university communication that we are concerned. Dedmon says, "Most universities appear little concerned about the communication needs within the university."²⁷ It appears the consensus of many publications that the channels of communication on campus need to be studied.

A final related study done at Ohio State University by Dunham, deals with two general attitudes of individuals at levels within the

²⁴Ibid., p. 100.

²⁵Ibid., p. 100.

²⁶Donald N. Dedmon "A Comparison of University and Business Communication Practices," The Journal of Communication, XX (September, 1970), p. 316.

²⁷Ibid., p. 318.

university "and also evaluates the administrative communication and communication channels."²⁸ This study used questionnaires to determine what the attitudes of students and their parents were when evaluating administrative communication. It was found that only the students desired a higher level of communication.²⁹

This review of literature reveals a number of things. First of all, it points out that faculty-student communication on the campus is a definite problem and because this problem exists, studies describing the problem and its parts are needed. Another factor revealed in the review of literature was that the failure of university personnel to follow the policies which that university outlines can undermine the established channels of communication. This can even result in the existing channels becoming ineffective. Finally, a need becomes apparent to find out how each side involved within a communication views the channel involved: the types of communication involved.

The channel to be the subject of this study is officially established by the Eastern Illinois University Internal Governing Policies:

"Each faculty member shall set aside a regular schedule of office hours during which he will be available for conference with his students. The hours should be at times convenient to students; they should be advertised by posting on or near the instructor's door."³⁰

The investigation of that channel can be easily accomplished:

(1) Checking faculty office doors to see if faculty hours are posted,

²⁸Robert Eugene Dunham, "Some Evaluation of Administrative Communications of Institutions of Higher Learning." Speech Monographs, XXVI (March, 1960), p. 82.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 92-93.

³⁰"International Governing Policies," Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, September 1, 1970, p. 77.

(2)Checking faculty offices to see if faculty actually maintain their office hours, (3)Asking students if they know and utilize the office hours of their instructors, and (4)Interviewing both faculty members and students about their respective attitudes toward the "office hour" channel of communication.

The exact procedure for executing this general plan is given in Chapter II.

The most significant questions to be answered by this study are: (1)Are faculty members available to students at the hours posted?, (2) Is the channel used according to faculty members?, and (3)Is the channel used according to students? These questions deal with the study's main concept of whether an effective channel exists. It needs to be noted however, that a series of lesser inquiries were also answered. Some of the more important of these questions are as follows. At which hours of the day are most faculty members hours listed and what are the peak daily hours? Also, of the 98 faculty members in the Phase I sample, how many are actually violating university policy by either posting no hours or posting by appointment only? The students responses revealed the number of students attempting to see instructors by answering the questions: have students ever tried to see faculty members and what were the results of those attempts? These lesser questions should reveal to the reader and author what roles each participant in the communication channel is playing. It was these major and minor questions which aided the author in the analysis of results and the drawing of conclusions.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

The purpose of Chapter Two is to describe in detail the procedure which was employed in the gathering of material to be presented in the following chapters. As was pointed out in Chapter One, the methodology employed is descriptive, involving the observation of a communication channel in its natural process.

The first steps taken in the procedure to be described involved the gathering of a set of materials which would insure the author that the study he was about to undertake could actually be completed. A complete list of faculty members had to be procured from the university to enable a random sample from the entire faculty to be selected. This list, The Departmental Faculty List, Eastern Illinois University, 1972-73, was used because it is the official faculty roster and it includes all the faculty serving the university and their situation at the time the study was conducted. The list insured that those faculty members on leave of any nature would not be part of the sample. The list provided the names of 494 full-time faculty actually teaching classes at the time of the study. From this list, every fifth name was selected to be a part of the Phase I portion of the study. The first five names on the faculty roster were placed face down and a party not associated with the study drew one of the names. From this name, through the 494th, every fifth name was selected and a primary sample of 98 faculty members was chosen

for the initial phase of the study.

Each of these sample faculty member's offices was visited to discover whether that faculty member did in fact have his or her office hours posted. As was pointed out in the first chapter, the term 'office hours', which is used in this study was operationally defined as those hours set aside and posted by faculty members for the expressed purpose of being available to students. At the time of the first visit to each faculty office, those faculty members who had no hours posted were eliminated from further study and those with hours were, with a few exceptions, to become the Phase II portion of the study --- those actually observed for attendance at their posted office hours. From those with posted hours, 35 faculty were selected for study. Of this sample of 35, only 33 were finally used. This was the result of further study which indicated two of the faculty members taught only in the graduate school and the undergraduate lists of students did not pertain to their class scheduling.

Samples of each faculty member and students were selected to provide one set of opinion-oriented observations found in the channel as it exists. With the aid of the office of the College of Arts and Sciences, the author acquired the official class rosters for each of the 33 faculty members to be observed. The faculty members' class rosters were then used to identify students for the student-questioning phase of the study in the following way. After alphabetizing the faculty members, the first member's class rosters were looked up. These rosters are organized from lowest to highest class number. The 100-level courses of each faculty member are listed first, 200's second, etc. To provide a set of randomly selected students from the first faculty member's list for class one, (that being that first 100-level class listed) the first and tenth names of enrolled students were selected. From his second class, the second

and eleventh names were chosen. The procedure was followed through each faculty member's rosters until the first student being selected from any given class was within ten names of the last student in the class being used. Then the process was repeated with the first and tenth names selected.

This random sample of student names finally totalled 157. The sample included students at all undergraduate levels and covered all faculty members. The Faculty-Staff-Student Directory 1972-1973 was then consulted to provide the author with the phone number and address of as many of the students as possible. It was found that 90 of the students provided by the class rosters were readily available for contact. The remaining 67 were found to be unavailable. The 90 students were sufficient to provide the researcher with representatives of the sample faculty members.

With the knowledge that this material was available to the author, the field work was begun. The observation of faculty office hours was undertaken over a period of four weeks. Three hundred thirty individual observations of offices at times which varied according to number and office hours were made. The visits were made on a regular schedule, allowing each faculty member the time to be available at a time not always consistent within his set of hours. The researcher noted the presence or absence of each faculty member on a note card which included the time of the member's listed hours, his location, and the result of previous visits. This procedure was followed until ten visits had been made to each instructor's office. The actual amount of time involved in each visit varied for obvious reasons. Those instructors found in their offices required no other time beyond

the trip to locate them. The faculty members whose offices were empty required extra time to (1)check with departmental secretaries to determine if the member was present in the immediate area, and (2)allow for the arrival of the faculty member. Most visits involved ten to twenty minutes of the author's time.

As the observation of faculty offices was completed, each faculty and student member was personally interviewed. This interview consisted of the actual questioning of the faculty member and student to collect and study their views of the communication channel as they play a part in it.

For the faculty portion of the opinion gathering, a simple and short series of questions to each faculty member was developed. The author saw or phoned each of those included in the study. The questions were geared to discover three very basic things in comparing the results of the faculty response to the empirical observed findings and student results. Those three factors were purpose, effectiveness, and use. Quite simply, purpose is operationally defined as the reason each of the interviewed parties felt the channel existed. Effectiveness called for a value judgment as to whether the interviewed party felt the channel as it exists is a working and valuable tool for university communication. Finally, use must be defined as the basic employment of the channel by students and faculty members who employ that system which is inherent in the policy of their university. Questions to provide answers to these three areas of interest were worded in the following manner. (1)What do you feel is the purpose of the posted office hours? (2)Do you feel the faculty office hour requirement at Eastern Illinois University is currently effective? (3)How many students do you see during an

average week during your posted office hours? For the purpose of this third question, the term 'average' was defined as the mean for student attendance at each member's office on a weekly basis when an entire quarter is used as the period of time when the visits are made by the students. This enabled the faculty member to average the high and low weeks of the quarter. These three questions received a number of responses varying from the positive to the negative, plus several proposals either to make the system at Eastern Illinois University better or to advocate a new system. These responses are found in the appendix to this work.

The questions to be posed to the students had to be a bit more detailed since their activity was not directly observed. Another series of three questions with an added group of sub-questions was used to garner the information for providing a clear view of the student-held opinion of office hours. The questions which were addressed to the students were as follows: (1) Did you ever attempt to see Dr. _____ in his office during your time in his class for personal help? (Yes or No) If the student answered "No", he was merely thanked for his time and his response was noted. If the student answered "Yes", two further inquiries were made: (2) What was the result of that attempt to see that faculty member? Was he there? Was it during his office hours? (3) Have you or did you ever see the instructor outside of class excluding office hours? In the hall? From the responses to these questions, the researcher could determine the amount of use actually made of the office hours which were posted at the university and what the result of any attempted visit during those hours was as viewed by the student.

The data gathered was then compared with the results of the Goldhaber study in order to determine whether the results of the two studies lead to the same conclusion.

The procedure outlined in the last few pages provided the author sufficient data to provide a good sample for comparing and contrasting the two studies of the office hour channel. Chapter Three will present the data collected using this procedure and Chapter Four will follow with those conclusions and will take each point of view noted and study it as it relates to the other factors studied and in light of the results presented by Goldhaber.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Chapter III of this thesis will be divided basically into three major sections, those sections closely paralleling sections in Chapter II. The first material to be presented will be that derived from the empirical observation of the communication channel. This material will be presented in a section headed by the title "Observed Results." The second section of the chapter will be a presentation of the responses from the faculty as they were questioned as to their view of the channel and it will be titled "Faculty Responses." The third data presenting section will include the results from student interviews and will be referred to as "Student Responses." Each of these divisions will include the graphic illustrations of material pertaining to that phase of the study's written remarks.

A. Observed Results

During the 330 visits to faculty offices made by the observer, a full record of observed data, including the name of the faculty member, his office hours, any changes made in those hours during the study, his office location, and the results of the ten visits made to his office was kept.

The first results to be presented will be those results which were found by listing all the faculty office hours in relation to day and hour in order to discover the levels of frequency of which were to be found within the faculty group. The breakdown of these results can be found on Tables 3-A-1, 3-A-2, 3-A-3, and 3-A-4. The first table includes the number of faculty who listed office hours at that time. Totals for week and day are provided. An illustration of this would be Wednesday at 2 p.m. By locating the 2 p.m. hour in the appropriate row and the day in the appropriate column, a total of eight faculty members have office hours listed. This means eight of the thirty-three possible faculty members in the sample listed office hours at 2 o'clock. Also to be noted on this presentation of data are the two asterisks on the 3-A-1 chart. At the 10 o'clock hour for each week that period, 79 had separate office hours listed out of a possible 371 hours, which were listed by the thirty-three faculty members. This total of 79 office hours listed for a single period was the highest total recorded. In the box listing Monday at 10 o'clock is the second asterisk denoting the hour at which the most faculty members had office hours listed. This is to say that 19 of the 33 observed cases listed hours at 10 a.m. on Monday. These 19 cases are more than any other time slot was found to have. The total results in the right hand column show 10 o'clock as easily leading all other time slots as the most frequently listed by faculty members. The total of 79 is a full 19 total listings higher than the next highest hour total, which was 60 at 9 o'clock. Also by noting its total figures at the bottom row, Table 3-A-1 shows Monday as the most popular day for faculty hours. Tuesday and Thursday followed close behind with Friday as the low day with only thirteen hours

less in total. As can be noted on Table 3-A-2, only a scant four percentage points separate the high from the low.

TABLE 3-A-1

CLASS HOUR	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	TOTAL
8 AM	4	5	4	4	5	22
9 AM	12	13	10	12	13	60
10 AM	19**	17	14	13	16	79*
11 AM	12	12	11	14	10	59
12 Noon	8	7	9	9	7	40
1 PM	9	7	7	9	9	41
2 PM	8	10	8	8	6	40
3 PM	6	3	5	4	2	20
4 PM	2	2	1	2	-	7
5 PM	-	-	-	-	-	0
6 PM	1	1	1	-	-	3
Evening	-	-	-	-	-	0
TOTAL	81	77	70	75	68	371

*Highest total recorded

**Most frequently listed hour

Table 3-A-2 represents the percentage breakdown of hours listed and days the same as Table 3-A-1. The things to be found here are similar to the first table, but in a different form. This table (3-A-2) illustrates that the 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, and 11 o'clock hours total 53 percent of the 371 total hours listed, or a total of 198 of the hours. By adding the two other morning hours which were listed as 8 o'clock and 12 o'clock, the total reaches 69 percent of the total hour listing, or 260 of the total hours listed. As compared with the 29% listed between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. and the only 1 percent of 3 actually listed hours found in the evening. Table 3-A-3 reflects the morning hour's dominance over those later in the day as for those times at which most of the faculty prefer to hold time aside for conference and work.

TABLE 3-A-2

CLASS HOUR	%	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8 AM*	.056	.010	.013	.010	.010	.013
9 AM*+	.160	.032	.035	.026	.032	.035
10 AM*+	.211	.051	.045	.037	.035	.043
11 AM*+	.156	.032	.032	.029	.037	.026
12 Noon*	.105	.021	.018	.024	.024	.018
1 PM	.108	.024	.018	.018	.024	.024

*8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Represent 69% Daily Total (.688)
 *+9, 10, 11 Represent 53% Daily Total (.527)

TABLE 3-A-2--Continued

CLASS HOUR	%	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 PM	.105	.021	.026	.021	.021	.016
3 PM	.052	.016	.008	.013	.010	.005
4 PM	.017	.005	.005	.002	.005	.000
5 PM	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
6 PM	.006	.002	.002	.002	.000	.000
Evening	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
TOTAL	%	22	21	19	20	18

The fourth table in this section, Table 3-A-3 shows how the float hours fit into the overall picture. It should be noted that through the summer of 1973, Eastern Illinois University had a 2-hour-a-day span of hours known as "floats", at which time the majority of 4-hour classes did not meet. This was a time when both a large number of faculty and students should be free for such things as study, free activities, or perhaps counseling sessions. The hours total 10 per week, varying at the following rate: Monday, 12 and 1 p.m., Tuesday, 2 and 3 p.m., Wednesday, 8 and 9 a.m., Thursday, 10 and 11 a.m., and Friday, 4 and 5 p.m. As the Table 3-A-3 points out, the float periods totalled 21% of the total time for which hours could have been listed. Within this 21% of the total available scheduling time, a total of 19% of the posted office hours were listed. The float schedule then showed no effect upon the manner in which hours were listed and did at only one given point lead a day in listings. That day

was Thursday, where the 10 and 11 o'clock hours were listed, reflecting the popularity of that time. As far as the hour listings go, this entire section of data must be observed as the response of the faculty as to when they intend to be in their offices.

TABLE 3-A-3

FLOAT HOUR PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
12 Noon	2 PM	8 AM	10 AM	4 PM
8%	10%	4%	13%	0%
1 PM	3 PM	9 AM	11 AM	5 PM
9%	3%	10%	14%	0%

The 10 o'clock hour represents 21% of total daily time.

Nineteen percent of total hours are listed here.

Seventy-one of the 371 available hours.

This brings us to the presentation of data which was gathered in the actual performance of the faculty duties. Are the faculty members in at the listed hours? Tables 3-A-4 and 3-A-5 present the information gathered by the author as he visited the faculty offices at the hours which were presented in Tables 3-A-1 and 3-A-2. The first of these tables, 3-A-4, is a member by member, numbers 1 through 33, list of the results of visits to each individual faculty office at the hours listed for that faculty member's presence there. A quick scan of this table discloses the number of times the individual faculty member was found to be "In" or "Out" and also the figures for total availability and the percentage which the faculty representatives received as a group.

A total of 330 visits were made, which breaks down to the established ten per cent faculty participant in Phase II. The availability percentages were figured on these totals. The nearest a faculty member could come to the resulting total would be seven yes and three no. The breakdown for the 330 visits was 225 positive attendance and 105 negative attendance. This comes to a percentile basis of 68% positive and 32% negative. In the next chapter, this ratio of availability will be discussed in relation to the ratio presented by the Goldhaber study and the projected expectation the university desires under its contracts and goals.

TABLE 3-A-4

FACULTY MEMBER #	IN	OUT	FACULTY MEMBER #	IN	OUT
1	8	2	18	2	8
2	6	4	19	6	4
3	7	3	20	10	0
4	5	5	21	3	7
5	6	4	22	8	2
6	10	0	23	7	3
7	5	5	24	8	2
8	9	1	25	4	6
9	9	1	26	5	5
10	3	7	27	9	1
11	8	2	28	10	0
12	8	2	29	6	4
13	8	2	30	9	1
14	8	2	31	6	4
15	5	5	32	3	7
16	10	0	33	4	6
17	10	0			
NUMERICAL TOTAL	225	105			
PERCENTAGES	.68	.32			

Table 3-A-5 is an illustration of the possibilities of results of ten visits made and the resulting appearance of each of those possibilities. For example, the result 6-4 represents six positive responses and four negative responses. Table 3-A-5 reveals that this ratio was found five times in the 33 possible ratios available from all faculty members. This level then represents 15% of the total possible responses for the 33 faculty members observed. This table also presents the most frequently appearing ratio at eight positive (are ins) and two negative (are outs.) This was the result of visits to seven faculty members' offices. 6-4 and 10-0 were the next most frequently appearing scores with five faculty members being recorded at each of those levels. These levels of availability represent 17 of the possible 33 respondents or 51% of the total study. It is interesting to note also on Table 3-A-5 that 10-0, 9-1 were recorded a total of nine times, whereas 1-9, 0-10 were not recorded at all. Only 3-7 on the negative side of the ledger received its percentage share of the total visits at one per eleven, or three faculty members. This represents only 9% of the total study.

TABLE 3-A-5

POSSIBLE RATIOS	FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
10-0	5	15%
9-1	4	12%
8-2	7	21%
7-3	2	6%
6-4	5	15%
5-5	4	12%
4-6	2	6%
3-7	3	9%
2-8	1	3%
1-9	0	0%
0-10	0	0%
MODE 8-2		99%

Therefore, the five tables found in the observed results section of this chapter represent the material gathered by the author through empirical observation of the channel as it exists on the campus of Eastern Illinois University. The next two sections will present the material which was gathered by the author through the process of interview as described in this paper's second chapter.

B. Faculty Responses

In this section the data collected through the contact of the 33 selected faculty members will be related. It should be noted that all 33 of the Phase II sample were contacted. The reason for the study was explained and the questions which were to be discussed (as listed in Chapter II) were asked. The reader will note however that the tables and information presented will be based on a total of only 29 faculty members of the original sample of 33. For the most part, the members of the faculty sample were more than glad to share their time and aid in collecting the data the author was seeking. This was not always the case however; there were four faculty members who refused to answer questions. Those four responses were as follows: 'not interested', 'no comment', and two 'no time to discuss.' These four represented 12% of the Phase II portion of this study. The remaining 88% did respond and it is those responses which will now be presented and recalculated on a 100% basis.

As explained in Chapter II, the first question asked of the faculty was concerned with a faculty opinion about posting office hours. The question was; "What do you feel is the purpose of the faculty posting office hours?" The response to this question varied, but by far the most frequent response to the question was that it was to the benefit of the student to know where and when a faculty member could be reached. This response was received from 85% of the total respondents. The other 17% of the responses fell to job responsibility, tutoring and better understanding. The final breakdown of these answers can be seen on Table 3-B-1. There were other responses given supplementally to the faculty

member's basic response and two of those are worthy of note here.

Those two were for counselling sessions and research.

With the faculty opinion of the purpose of office hours gathered, it was the author's next step to learn whether the faculty views this communication channel as being effective. The question was: "Do you feel the office hour policy at Eastern Illinois University is currently effective?" As Table 3-B-2 points out, most of the faculty members at the university feel the channel is effective. That is not to say however, that it does not need to be improved in a number of ways. Some of the types of positive and negative responses are to be found in the following paragraph.

Administrative pressure was one of the frequently mentioned ways of making office hours more effective. That reason, plus a need for making the hour compulsory for contract fulfillment led the way in methods of making the faculty more aware of their hours and the need for those hours to be kept. Many of the faculty respondents felt that more hours were needed than those requested by the university and that faculty misuse of the hours led to student apathy toward noting the hours. A number felt that even though none of the faculty members listed in Phase II were using this method, listing office hours "by appointment only" would be more effective than the current system. These five responses were the most notable as proposals to change the system. For the most part however, they came supplementally to a positive response to the effectiveness of the currently employed system.

The usage question posed to the faculty members in phase II received a wide range of responses and some very interesting totals as the number of students taking advantage of the office hours was deter-

mine^d. To determine the faculty's view of the channel's usage, a third question was asked and the results of that polling are found on Table 3-B-3. The third question asked the faculty was as follows: "How many students do you see during an average week during your posted office hours?" This question received a very wide range of answers. The least reported number of students for an average week was 0, whereas 45 students for an average week was the highest. As was pointed out in Chapter II, the term average was defined as the number of students seen weekly when an entire term was considered using the high and low weeks to arrive at a figure representing the mean for student attendance at the listed hours.

As can be noted on 3-B-3, the most frequently appearing average totals were 3, 5, and 6, three which appear five times. Five and six each appear four times. Interestingly, each of these is below the average weekly attendance for the total group. This occurred due to the two high scores, both more than twenty larger than their nearest score of 32 and 45. Without these two scores, the average would have been 6.21, or very near to 6, one of the more frequent scores. The average of all the scores was 7.75, with only 8 scores appearing above that average and 21 appearing below. The two high scores suggest that some areas such as foreign language, political sciences require a much greater level of personal aid to the student.

The material collected through the gathering of faculty responses has just been presented. These responses represent the material gathered from the faculty members in phase II of the study. The conclusions which may be drawn from this portion of the study will be presented in Chapter IV as they relate to the material which was gathered by observation and

from students.

TABLE 3-B-1

QUESTION #1: What do you feel is the purpose of the faculty posting office hours?

	TOTAL	PERCENT
Student Knowledge	24	83
Job Responsibility	2	7
Tutoring	2	7
Understanding	1	3

TABLE 3-B-2

QUESTION #2: Do you feel the office hour policy at Eastern Illinois University is effective?

	TOTAL	PERCENT
Yes	21	72.4
No	7	24.1
Not Certain	1	3.5

TABLE 3-B-3

QUESTION #3: How many students do you see during an average week during your posted office hours?

<u>FACULTY MEMBERS</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>	<u>FACULTY MEMBERS</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
1	2	16	11
2	0	17	3
3	9	18	12
4	5	19	6
5	2	20	3
6	3	21	3
7	1	22	6
8	10	23	32
9	4	24	45
10	7	25	6
11	7	26	4
12	10	27	6
13	5	28	5
14	10	29	5
15	3		

TABLE 3-B-3--Continued

Low	-	0
High	-	45
Average	-	7.75
Above Average	-	8
Below Average	-	21

C. Phase III

A total of 90 students were polled in this third portion of the study and the results can be found in the Tables 3-C-1, 3-C-2, and 3-C-3. Each of the tables presents the responses to one of the three questions which were asked the members of the student sample.

The first question posed to the students concerned the individual student and his attempts, if any, to see a certain faculty member during his posted set of office hours. The initial question to the students was: "Did you ever attempt to see Dr. _____ in his office during your time in his class for personal help?" The yes or no nature of this question resulted in the responses found in Table 3-C-1. Of the 90 respondents to this first question, 18 said that they had in fact attempted to see a given professor at his office. The 18 would be questioned further to determine the results and timing of these visits. The other 72 respondents said that in their case, no attempt was made to see the instructor. The percentages shown indicate only 20% of those students polled had made any attempt to visit or otherwise contact any of the 33 involved faculty members. It is the success or failure of these 18 students which now becomes the issue.

TABLE 3-C-1

QUESTION #1: Did you ever attempt to see Dr. _____ in his office during your time in his class for personal help?

POSITIVE RESPONSE	NEGATIVE RESPONSE
18	72
20%	80%

The second question posed to those students whose positive responses are found on Table 3-C-2 was then asked. Question 2 was "What was the result of that attempt?" "Was the faculty member there?" "Was the attempt during his posted office hours?" The answers varied as to wording, but 16 of the positive respondents said that the faculty member was in his office when they went to see him. The number breakdown and percentages can be noted in Table 3-C-2, where it is indicated that 88.8% of the attempts were successful.

TABLE 3-C-2

QUESTION #2: "What was the result of the attempt?" "Was the faculty member there?" "Was the attempt during his posted office hours?"

FACULTY IN	FACULTY OUT
16	2
88.8%	11.2%

The final piece of information to be drawn from the student sample involved asking whether the student had ever initiated contact with the faculty member at any time outside of office hours and class time. The actual question asked was, "Have you ever seen the instructor outside of class excluding office hours?" To this question, the figures found on Table 3-C-3 were the result. Only four of the initial 90 respondents of

the student sample had made any attempt either socially or academically to contact a faculty member outside of the established faculty/student communication channel provided by the university. The four responses represent 22.5% of the positive student respondents but only .04% of the initial 90 students.

TABLE 3-C-3

QUESTION #3: Have you ever seen the instructor outside of class excluding office hours?

YES	NO
4 22.5%	14 77.5%

The responses found in Tables 3-C-1, 3-C-2, and 3-C-3 indicate a ratio of 80:20, being fairly consistent throughout the sample. Some conclusions may be drawn on this ratio in Chapter IV. Within this third chapter has been presented the data which was collected during the employment of the designated procedure. There has been no attempt herein to draw from this data any generalizations or conclusions. The fourth and final chapter of this treatise will be used to draw some conclusions from the data and present a final statement on the study.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

When this thesis was undertaken, it was focused on two main hypotheses: (1) to see if the results of this study would be consistent with the results Goldhaber found in his study at the University of New Mexico and (2) to see what conclusions beyond those sighted by Goldhaber could be drawn from the data collected for this study. The author feels that there is a very significant collection of material to be found in this thesis and it is that significance which will be reported upon in this final chapter.

Goldhaber said, "The purpose of the present study is to evaluate three selected student-administration and student-faculty channels of communication and to make recommendations wherever appropriate."¹ Utilizing the student-faculty results which Goldhaber studied a number of comparisons have been drawn.

The comparable information stems from questions posed to faculty and students in each of the studies. In the Goldhaber report, he presents his questions and justification for them in this manner; "Investigation of the overall question of effectiveness of this channel was divided into two parts: Is the faculty accessible to students during posted office hours? And, if the faculty is accessible, do students

¹Gerald M. Goldhaber, "Communication At The University", Western Speech, (Summer, 1972), p. 171.

take advantage of this channel to communicate with faculty members?"²

The question posed in this thesis are basically the same in these areas; the difference lies in what the author defined as faculty availability. For Goldhaber, "Availability was defined operationally as 50 per cent success in locating a professor by phone or visit during his posted hours."³ This study used 100 per cent for availability as required in university policy and sought results pointing to compliance or lack of compliance by the studied faculty. The amount of availability is not affected by definition but by the findings. Goldhaber found 59.3% of his faculty to be available using his definition.⁴ Using the definition this study employed, a total of 68% of the faculty at a given time was found to be available as noted on graph 3-A-4. Using Goldhaber's 50 per cent level of availability, an 81.8 per cent level of availability was found at Eastern Illinois University. This means that 81.8% of the faculty at Eastern is available during their office hours 50% or more of the time. This represents a great deal more attendance at one's office than was found to be the case at the University of New Mexico, a difference of 12.5%. This 81.8%, plus the total average attendance overall of 68 per cent, indicates a fairly high rate of attendance by faculty members during their office hours at Eastern Illinois University.

This author found that the most frequently appearing levels of availability found during the ten visits to each faculty member were at the 8 in - 2 out level which was found seven times, the 6 in - 4 out and 10 in - 0 out levels, each appearing 5 times on table 3-A-4. The

²Ibid., p. 176

³Ibid., p. 177

⁴Ibid., p. 177

cases 1 in - 9 out and 0 in - 10 out did not appear at all, which is a position statement for even those whose attendance was low; at least it was not non-existent.

The other material found in this study to be compared to Goldhaber's study involved the results of student contact and the student view and use of the channel. The results of Goldhaber's student survey were based on 76 returned questionnaires sent to students.⁵ This report's data is based on 90 responses from students; therefore, the basic results could be quite similar. 64% of the Goldhaber respondents said, "They had not met with the professor whose name appeared on their questionnaire."⁶ This 64% is less than the 80% of the students questioned at Eastern who had not made any attempt to see the individual instructor about whom they were questioned. Goldhaber says, "Most of the 36 per cent of the students who had met at least once with their professor did so to discuss either grades or an examination."⁷

Goldhaber ran a follow-up to determine an average of the number of students who visited a faculty member during his posted office hours. "This averaged out to be four or five students per week."⁸ At Eastern Illinois University, the average was 7.75 students per week, but it should be noted here, as it is on table 3-B-3, two of the 29 faculty members fell below this average. The foreign languages and political sciences had higher averages than most and their weight in the survey resulted in the final average.

⁵Ibid., p. 179

⁶Ibid., p. 179

⁷Ibid., p. 179

⁸Ibid., p. 179

Based on his findings, Goldhaber states, "The office hour does not appear to be an effective channel of communication between students and faculty members at U. N. M."⁹ Before this author agrees or disagrees with this conclusion, a number of other significant pieces of data emerging from this study will be discussed.

When this thesis began, a series of steps were taken to insure that enough faculty and students would be available using the outlined tools to complete a valid and usable body of information. The author felt this goal was accomplished, however, a few items came to light in the research which, if they persist, could hamper future studies. First, one of the keys to any study involving the observation and recording of information about people in a controlled community is that the community, or university in this case, be aware of each person's location and current schedule of activities. This is not the awareness the author found at the university. Of the 157 students drawn for questioning, 67 or 40% were not to be found at the location listed in the university's own directory, even after checks with the university telephone operators, and other attempts. That 23.5 per cent of the faculty appears to ignore university requirements for office hours and seems unaware that their actions violates the very policy which they have endorsed when they are employed. It is fortunate that most of the faculty have and use their office hours with some sense of responsibility.

The faculty listing office hours revealed a number of factors which will now be discussed. Morning appears to be the time most instructors prefer to be in their office for consultation and work. 68.8% of the office hours listed by the surveyed faculty fell between 8 a.m. and

⁹Ibid., p. 179

noon on the weekday mornings. 52.7% of the hours fell between 9 a.m. and the 11 o'clock class hours. This would indicate a 70:30 ratio of the faculty preferring to work in the morning. Another factor was that of float hours, which apparently would be considered opportune times for office hours, since most students and faculty are free at these times. However, they were shown to have no noticeable affect at all on the occurrence of posted hours. The office hours listed were scheduled by the faculty without any special note paid to these times.

After the observational portion of the study was completed, the author received a negative response from four (or 12%) of the responding faculty. These faculty members refused, during their office hours, to respond to the questions posed in the faculty response portion of the study. If a faculty member has no time during his office hours to talk to students engaged in research for coursework at the university, then he is failing in his duties and should be reprimanded. It is realized that 12% is not a large number for this type of thing to occur, but it is also felt that any faculty member with this unresponsive attitude toward student work is not a dedicated educator in the true sense of the word. The author does want to stress, however, that the other members of the faculty study group were more than generous with their time and their comments.

As stated before, Goldhaber felt his results showed that the office hour channel of communication at the University of New Mexico is ineffective. It has been this author's finding that at Eastern Illinois University, which is a small midwestern school, the exact opposite is true. For any channel to be effective, there must be a recognized need by one part to be able to reach another part in order to establish an

effective channel of communication. At the university, it was found that when a student needed to reach a faculty member, 88.8% of the time, he was able to do so at his office during the posted office hours.

This entire thesis seems to follow an 80:20 ratio of success. Across the board, the faculty was available 68% of the time; using the Goldhaber definition of availability, this grew to 81.8%. The students showed a general disinterest in contacting faculty members for the most part, with 80% responding that they had never even attempted to see the instructor whose class roll they were on. Of the remaining 20% however, the results were excellent. Sixteen of the 18 students who had felt a need to contact a faculty member during his office hours had been successful. This 88.8% exceeds the 81.8%, but definitely indicates that the channel works well when the two parties involved in the communication process both meet their obligations. The fact that only 20% of the students made any attempt to see a faculty member coincides with the Goldhaber observation that "Students appear most anxious to see a professor to discuss grades or exams and usually don't see a professor due to schedule conflicts or lack of perceived need to communicate with him."¹⁰ The key to this theory is that final comment on lack of perceived need, which is not the fault of the channel as it exists. Any system will fail to some extent if one of the elements in the system sees no need to function.

Finally, that 77.5% of those students who attempted to see a professor had never seen the professor at any time outside the posted office hour. Here again that 80:20 ratio appears. This final factor indicates

¹⁰Ibid., p. 179.

that four students (or 22.5%) of the 18 attempted to see faculty members on their own. Those four students, who represent .04% of the original 90 students are the only ones who, without the office hour system as it exists, would have been able to see the faculty member whom they sought. This indicates a very definite need to view the communication channel as it exists at Eastern Illinois University as successful.

The essence of the chapter lies within the faculty and student "ends" of the channel. At the faculty end of the channel, an 80% efficiency is found, based on Goldhaber's 50% definition of availability. It is also significant that a full 80% of the students do not attempt to see their instructors, and that due to inaccurate university records of student addresses and phone numbers, 40% of the students are not available to the faculty through the channels provided by the university.

At the student end of the channel, we find the faculty available 80% of the time, but only 20% of the students making any attempt to see them. Therefore, only about 16% of all the students actually use the channel with 100% efficiency. Goldhaber's study says: 59.3% of the faculty is available during office hours when 36% of the students attempt to see them; therefore, about 20% of all students use the channel as he relates it with 100% efficiency.

The first conclusion which can be drawn from this study is that the percentage of use of the studied channel is about the same at the University of New Mexico and at Eastern Illinois University. The less-than-100% usage at the University of New Mexico however, is mostly due to a malaise on the part of the faculty. At Eastern Illinois University, the lower level of use is mostly due to student disuse of the channel. Moreover, the actual average number of student-faculty meetings is greater

at Eastern Illinois University than at the University of New Mexico.

The second conclusion drawn here is that the channel is used more efficiently at Eastern Illinois University than at the University of New Mexico. At Eastern Illinois University, 16 of 18 students who attempted to use the channel were 88.8% effective. The weakness then found in the channel at Eastern Illinois University is primarily due to non-use by students. To increase this 88% efficiency, it would be mathematically more productive to encourage more students to use the channel rather than demand a more "perfect" faculty attendance during office hours.

Finally, 88% effectiveness is an extremely high rate. If the television media (providing specific programs when the viewer wished to view those programs), the telephone (making sure the party being called was present when the call was placed, etc.), and other communication channels were 88% efficient, they would boast of their success.

APPENDIX A

Example of faculty observation note card:

FRONT

Faculty Members Name
Office Number
Location
Office Hours
M-F
Home & Office Phone

BACK

Visit Results
In -
Out -
Done

APPENDIX B-1

FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you feel is the purpose of the faculty posting office hours?
2. Do you feel the office hour policy at Eastern Illinois University is currently effective?
3. How many students do you see during an average week during your posted office hours?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

APPENDIX B-2

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did you ever attempt to see Dr. _____ in his office during your time in his class for personal help?

2. What was the result of that attempt? Was the faculty member there? Was the attempt during his posted office hours?

3. Have you ever seen the instructor outside of class excluding office hours?

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