A proposed course of instruction in resources for communications for Saint Ambrose College

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A proposed course of instruction in resources for communications for Saint Ambrose College

Abstract
To effectively convey a message can present a difficult task. Communicating means more than merely getting a message from a sender to a receiver. To be effective, the message must be understood by the receiver on the sender’s terms. The instrument used to convey the message is the medium, and the medium is often as important as the content of the message. Today, someone with a message to convey can select from a wide variety of media to aid in the effective delivery of their particular message. Media have been employed as communications aids since the time of Moses. When the Lord summoned Moses to Mount Sinai, Moses saw Him as a fiery cloud and lightening and heard His voice amid mighty peals of thunder. His message was the Ten Commandments. This is the earliest recorded use of audio-visual technique to get a message across, understood by the receiver on the sender’s terms. In the author’s opinion, professionals in business, industry, religion and education must be aware of the availability of communications resources and must possess skill in using any number of those resources to meet their communications needs.
A PROPOSED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION
IN
RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATIONS
FOR
SAINT AMBROSE COLLEGE

A Research Paper
Submitted to
The Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Communications Media

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

To effectively convey a message can present a difficult task. Communicating means more than merely getting a message from a sender to a receiver. To be effective, the message must be understood by the receiver on the sender's terms. The instrument used to convey the message is the medium, and the medium is often as important as the content of the message. Today, someone with a message to convey can select from a wide variety of media to aid in the effective delivery of their particular message.

Media have been employed as communications aids since the time of Moses. When the Lord summoned Moses to Mount Sinai, Moses saw Him as a fiery cloud and lightening and heard His voice amid mighty peals of thunder. His message was the Ten Commandments. This is the earliest recorded use of audio-visual technique to get a message across, understood by the receiver on the sender's terms.

In the author's opinion, professionals in business, industry, religion and education must be aware of the availability of communications resources and must possess skill in using any number of those resources to meet their communications needs.

Statement of the Problem

This project is a proposal for a three-credit Resources for Communications course at Saint Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa. The proposed course includes: An Introduction to Media Communications, Designing for Media, Visual Literacy, and The Creation of a Media
Presentation. The course would be an additional requirement in the Mass Communications, Business Administration, Art and Education curricula.

Mass Communications at Saint Ambrose College is comprised of seven sequences. The Resources for Communications course is directly related to three of the seven sequences: advertising, public relations, and television. Since the overall purpose of each of these fields is to communicate some message to an identified audience, this course would provide essential knowledge about the many media resources available and the application of those resources in each field.

Because business professionals must be able to make many types of presentations within a company or to any of the company's publics, business administration students would reap the reward of being a step ahead of other graduates without a media background.

Art students, especially those looking toward a career in commercial art, must know how to apply design techniques to a number of media.

Generally, this course will enable a student to learn practical uses of media for most any situation. Within the course, an individual would acquire skills in media planning, design and production. In addition, the students will acquire critical knowledge to correctly evaluate and make legitimate decisions about the most effective media for particular audiences.

This paper will review each course component including the course syllabus (Appendix A) which will detail class requirements and final evaluation criteria.
In the 1980s, opportunities are being identified for innovative uses of media to solve communications problems in a number of industries.

In fashion merchandising, Bobbi Brooks, Inc., a leading designer and manufacturer of women's apparel, markets its products to department stores and fashion boutiques. To reduce the cost of introducing new lines to buyers, Bobbi Brooks decided to build its presentations around a desk-top audio-visual unit. The company produced a presentation that sells. (Kodak, 1982, p.31)

When Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company planned to initiate major policy improvements for 1983, company officials elected to announce the changes to all sales representatives from its national headquarters via the company's first teleconference. On November 4, 1982, 4,500 agents at 109 locations participated in a one-way video, two-way audio teleconference. (Persch, 1983, p.22)

Johari/USA, Inc. sought to introduce its new racquetball-on-a-string game to American consumers. Johari was faced with the problem of showing potential buyers across the country just how wonderful this new game could be. A live demonstration would require a large playing field and two expert players. Johari met the challenge by producing a film demonstrating the simplicity and appeal of the game. Compact tabletop viewers were installed in major retail outlets. The company provided program instructions and selling tips to salespeople so that they became effective elements in the point-of-purchase displays. (Kodak, 1982, p.34)

Yellow Cat Productions in Washington, D.C. went to Bonaire in the West Indies to shoot film for three programs to promote tourism on the
Hanson Industries of Boulder, Colorado introduced a new line of ski boots using sales clinics and workshops. The company's objectives were two-fold: to demonstrate the advantages of the new boots, and to motivate sales clerks in sporting goods stores to be excited about selling ski equipment, particularly Hanson boots. The company achieved its goals by combining lectures and sound/slide presentations during one-day workshops. (Kodak, 1982, p.44)

At the DuPont Clinical Instrument Division training center, DuPont customers' hospital and laboratory employees participate in individualized training sessions in private study carrels utilizing video tapes, sound/slide sets, filmstrips, or a computer-based educational system. Covering the use of DuPont instruments, the programs have received rave reviews from the training administrators and the participants. (Audio-Visual Communications, 1983, p.22)

In cities all over the world, multi-media and multi-image productions have become substitutes for guided tour buses. For example, the Great Toronto Adventure attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. It takes audiences on a one-hour "tour" of Toronto's neighborhoods. (Kodak, 1982, p.47)

With the escalating costs of personal sales calls, audio-visual displays and exhibits at trade shows have become more frequent attractions as industrial manufacturers grapple with tight budgets. These displays have proven to be cost-effective elements of corporate marketing efforts, and their use will continue to grow. (Audio-Visual Communications, 1983, p.38)

Company officials who need to distribute original materials to a wide audience often find the costs of mass dissemination prohibitive or the procedure impractical. Photocopies are expensive, and creating slides is costly and time consuming. Projecting images from the original using
opaque projectors at large group meetings has emerged as a feasible, economical and effective alternative. (Audio-Visual Communications, 1983, p. 70)

A 1981 study conducted by the 3M Company revealed that among business professionals overhead projection significantly affected an audience's perception of the presenter. The findings suggest that visual aids can improve the productivity of business meetings. (AV Guide, 1982, p. 1)

Noted for its imaginative and innovative approach to merchandising, Dayton's Department Store, a division of Dayton-Hudson Corporation, one of the nation's giants in the retail industry, knows how to make shopping an exciting experience. Recognizing the potential of multi-imagery as a powerful communications medium, the stores inform shoppers about new lines with an attention-getting multi-image show which repeats one hundred times during the day. (Multi Images, 1983, p. 34)

The cited examples demonstrate the effective use of media in a number of creative applications. These examples substantiate the author's belief that today's students in almost any field must have more than just a "book" knowledge of media as effective communications tools.
Chapter III
IMPLEMENTATION

A student should have a basic grasp of media concepts before attempting hands-on experience. The course will begin with defining media, developing skills in visualization, and acquainting the student with the "tools of the trade."

**Introduction to Media**
*as a Communications Resource*

This area covers defining a medium as: anything that transfers information between a sender and a receiver. The class will learn the various types of media from elementary overhead projectors and audio tapes to sophisticated multi-image film and television. The media user and potential media users, that is, the people behind the medium will be examined as integral considerations in the introductory section of the course. At the outset, the class will address the fundamental question: Why use media at all? They will examine the responses to the question based on the premise that visual perception enhances aural perception and increases understanding and retention of a message. (Kemp, 1980, p.6)

**Visual Literacy**

Seeing pictures with the mind's eye or visual literacy is defined as: the ability to create and interpret accurate visual messages. (Heinich, 1982, p.62) The ability to translate words into images is also essential in the visual literacy phase of developing media-based messages. There will be exercises using advertising applications to help the class develop skill in translating ideas to concrete messages.

The practical application of the visual literacy concept may be most significant when selecting a medium for a specific audience. For example,
age, cultural orientation and educational attainment may dictate how a media user's visual literacy affects the selection of a medium. Through demonstrations, the class will examine the effects of this phenomenon and how it applies to the learning process.

**Self Presentation**

The third level of the introductory segment will include the use of visuals in presentations to large audiences. Discussion will center on criteria for conferences, workshops, seminars, conventions and exhibits. The class will explore the advantages and disadvantages of particular media in certain situations. (Kodak, 1982, p.29; Heinich, 1982, p.264)

**Equipment Operation**

Up to this point, the course focuses on concepts and theory. It is now appropriate for the students to become familiar with and develop skill in the operation of media equipment. Here, the focus will center on learning to operate: 16 mm projector

- overhead projector
- slide projector
- filmstrip projector
- audio cassette tape
- reel-to-reel tape

The significance of learning equipment operations at this point lies in the subsequent application of the conceptual knowledge with the experiential skill acquired thus far. The students will be required to pass a competency test on equipment operations, and equipment will be provided for practice and testing. (Heinich, 1982, p.240; Sleeman, 1979, p.258; Brown, 1973, p.463)
Lettering

Lettering is an integral part of design. When applying design principles to visuals, the fundamental criterion is READABILITY. Lettering will be addressed separately for this reason. We will examine different type styles, methods of lettering, and spacing for readability for projected materials. This section of the course is designed to give the students confidence in lettering and design, and projects will be assigned.

Additionally, the class will be introduced to commercial lettering systems with an overview of photo typesetting and computer typesetting. This knowledge is important for situations where professional quality, rather than hand-lettering, may be required as in brochures, flyers and newsletters. (Bramen, 1983, p.17; Minor, 1977, p.107)

Computer Graphics

A broad overview of computer applications in graphics will be introduced at this point. Computerized graphics are no longer a future phenomenon. Current uses of computer graphics include slide and television graphics and overhead transparencies. This overview is through lecture rather than hands-on experience, but it is nonetheless important. Rapid advances in technology continue to make computer graphics feasible alternatives in some situations. Students as professionals must be aware of the options in the field.

Transparencies

Students will produce their own transparencies using one or more of the techniques that will be demonstrated. If the students learn
nothing else about the use of transparencies, they will know the message conveyed must be SIMPLE, BOLD, and CLEAR. The student will learn how to achieve the right effects using color, lettering, transfer methods and overlays. (Bramen, 1983, p. 81; Kemp, 1980, p. 198)

**Slide/Tape and Multi-Image**

Many questions surround the use of slide/tape and multi-image. This section will try to answer the question: What are appropriate applications of slides with live narration, audio tape and multiple projectors? Examples of each method will be presented to demonstrate effective uses of each medium. Students will be instructed in production planning, titling, graphics and copying. (Kemp, 1980, p. 274; Kenny, 1981, p. 6)

**Mounting/Laminating**

The use of visual aids in a presentation should enhance, not detract from the presentation. Any person making a presentation and using visual aids must know how to avoid dissonance and create harmony with attractive visuals.

There are a number of mounting techniques which will be covered in this part of the course. Also, various laminating methods to enhance the appearance of the visual and some novel approaches to laminating will be explored. (Minor, 1977, p. 159; Kemp, 1980, p. 131)

**Photography**

Photographs alone can be effectively used in displays and exhibits. It is necessary for the student to understand the basics of photographic composition in still photography, film and television.

The class will study different methods of photographic production to achieve special effects. Projects may include: photo sketching, high
contrast, and black and white photographs. How to use photographs as transparencies will be discussed, also. (Heinich, 1982, p.84; Bramen, 1983, p.35)

Reproduction

Because reproducing an original by photocopying may be the most widely-used medium in presentations, the students must become familiar with the entire range of duplicating methods and the underlying reasons for choosing one method over another. While one method may offer cost efficiency, but rather poor quality, another method may offer high quality and high cost. Convenience may be another factor. The class will look at spirit duplicating, mimeograph and offset printing methods. So that students have an idea of how these processes occur, each method will be demonstrated and the final results evaluated using the above criteria. Demonstrations will include appropriate presentation of printed materials through simple binding procedure instruction. (International, 1979, p.26)

Simulation and Games

It is easier for some people to learn through games. Active instead of passive involvement in a presentation keeps interest and attention in certain situations. This section of the course will employ different games and abstractions of real-life situations (simulations) to demonstrate this method of conveying a message.

Students will participate and gain experience in creating an optimum learning environment in which these methods can be used. We will stress entertainment while achieving our defined communications goals. (Brown, 1973, p.349; Heinich, 1982, p.288; Wittich, 1979, p.288)
Computers

This area of instruction will include an introduction to computers as a medium for instruction or training. Many computer software packages exist which can be purchased for academic and business purposes. The class will discuss how to purchase computer packages for particular applications, and they will receive elementary programming instruction. (Wittich, 1979, p.279; Heinich, 1982, p.308)

Television

Television is becoming easily accessible to educators, business professionals and the community at large. This part of the course will investigate the use of television for training and demonstrations.

Students will be involved in production planning, visuals, formats and titling projects. A tour of the Saint Ambrose television studios will be included to better acquaint students with the educational and broadcast facilities. (Kemp, 1980, p.262; Heinich, 1982, p.212)

Copyright

Students must be aware of the legal limitations imposed on their use of copyrighted materials. However, the law applies differently to academic uses, and the differences between academic and other uses of copyrighted materials will be the focus of lectures in this section of the course. The lectures will be supplemented by handouts and other resource materials pertinent to copyright inquiries.

Evaluation, Utilization, and Selection of Media

Is a media package good or bad? Near the end of the course, students will begin to define the criteria on which to base decisions about the appropriateness of a media package for various uses. By this time, the students have gained sufficient knowledge, skill and insight to be able
to investigate the decision-making that goes into the evaluation process.

Utilization of media will also be covered so that students gain an understanding of how to integrate media and prepare themselves as presenters for their audiences. (Brown, 1973, p.23)

Selection of media will be the last part of this segment of the course. The class will learn where to rent software, how to identify opportunities to incorporate media into a communications task, and the importance of previewing materials prior to use. (Erickson, 1972, p.162; Sleeman, 1979, p.88; Heinich, 1982, p.32)

How to Organize, Catalogue, and Store AV Materials

After the show is over, what does a media user do with his film, transparencies or video tape? The class will learn organizational procedures to set up files for production materials as well as final products. They will learn how to catalogue materials to keep them readily accessible for reference or re-use.

Looking Ahead

What lies in the future? Miniaturized hardware could have a great impact on the future of media resources. This final segment of the course will look at possibilities for the future in electronic delivery systems, technologies in education, new devices and techniques.

It will cover where to find state-of-the-art information through professional organizations and periodicals. (Heinich, 1982, p1326; Brown, 1973, p.431)
Chapter IV
CONCLUSION

It is a well-known fact that the fear of speaking in front of a group is one of the greatest fears of Americans. The use of media aids to enhance a speaker's presentation and provide a solid base from which he can operate is proving its worth in terms of speaker confidence, audience receptivity to the speaker, and more importantly, audience retention of the information presented.

The experience the students would gain from a Resources for Communications course would put them at a distinct advantage in the job market. Saint Ambrose College would benefit from having another program which sets the pace for others to follow: formal preparation of future professionals equipped to cope with and overcome one of our greatest fears.

Whether committee meetings, product promotions, training or any one of the myriad reasons for someone to speak in front of a group or in any communications task, the bottom line must be an effective presentation and presenter who has a clear, concise message that is understood on the speaker's terms.

This course is designed to familiarize students with and provide experience in media resources for these reasons. The classroom experiences and assignments will reflect the students' individual interests, and each one will gain knowledge applicable to his field. The benefits for the students will remain for a lifetime.
SYLLABUS

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATIONS

The Course

Resources for Communications is a basic course dealing with various aspects of instructional technology and its application in a variety of settings, including industrial, academic and business.

The coursework includes:

1. Producing simple graphic materials
2. Planning for presentations using media
3. Operating audio-visual equipment
4. Designing messages for presentation
5. Procedures for selection and utilization of media materials

Course Requirements


2. Each student will be required to pass competency examinations on certain audio-visual equipment operating procedures.

3. Graphics projects. Each student will be required to complete projects including, but not limited to: lettering, transparencies, mounting and an integration of the above in some type of media presentation.

4. Design. Each student will be required to complete a design project.

5. Examinations. Each student will be required to pass a mid-term and a final examination.

6. Critiques. The class will conduct required critiques of works. This is an objective critique by your peers to benefit each student as the producer and evaluator of legitimate media products.

7. Readings. Articles from relevant periodicals in the field will be required reading. Each student will review and report on two such articles during the semester.

8. Attendance. Since the material covered involves substantial hands-on activity, attendance is important. Periodically, there will be an unannounced roll call. One point for each absence beyond two will be deducted from your final grade.

9. Grades. Grades will be based on the accumulation of points awarded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Audio visual equipment operation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics projects: media project</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lettering/mounting/transparencies</td>
<td>15</td>
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### Course Requirements (con't)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examinations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>mid-term</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiques</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned readings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All projects are due during the class period on the date assigned. Late projects will lose 1/2 point for each day late passed the class period.
REFERENCES


