DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education (AETC)   **1 Mar 18**
Maxwell AFB, AL 36118

AIRMAN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL
STUDENT GUIDE

PART I
COVER SHEETS

LESSON TITLE: SC01, SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION

TIME: 66 Hours

METHOD: Informal Lecture, Guided Discussion, Individual Projects

REFERENCES:

Air Force Handbook (AFH) 33-337. *The Tongue and Quill,* 27 May 2015.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-701, *Operations Security (OPSEC).* 08 June 2011.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2406. *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems,* 8 Nov 2016.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2618. *The Enlisted Force Structure*, 27 February 2009.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2803. The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program, 18 December 2013.

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Air University, Cyberspace, and Information Operations Study Center: Strategic Communication. http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/ (accessed 15 January 2018)

Air University, Style and Author Guide, Air University Press, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, AL.

   http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/style/styleguide.pdf (07 October 2014)

Bates, Jefferson D. *Writing With Precision, How to Write So That You Cannot Possibly Be Misunderstood*. Acropolis Books LTD., Washington DC: 1993.

Burgess, Daniel., Jones, Jeffrey B., Kuehl, Daniel T., and Roche, Russel. *Strategic Communication and the Combatant Commander*. Joint Force Quarterly (Issue 55, fourth quarter 2009).

Department of Defense JP 1-02. *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms: Strategic Communication.*

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Fowler, H. Ramsey and Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Handbook*. 9th Ed. NY: Longman Publishers, 2003.

 Hersey, Paul, Kenneth H. Blanchard, and Dewey E. Johnson. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources.* 8th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2001.

Joint Staff's Joint Integrating Concept for Strategic Communication (SC JIC), Oct 09.

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Klein, S., & U.W. Stout, Chandler, W., U.W. Whitewater (2006). Reflection for Preservice and Inservice Art Teachers.

http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/art/artedportfolios/reflection/   (07 October 2014)

Lord, Kristen M., Public Engagement 101: What Strategic Communication Is, Isn't, and Should Be. Joint Force Quarterly (Issue 56, first quarter 2010). http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/lord_public_engagement_101.pdf (07 October 2014)

Merriam-Webster website. Strategic. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strategic (15 January 2018)

Merriam-Webster website. Communication. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communication   (15 January 2018)

Mullen, Michael G., Admiral and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. From the Chairman: Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics. Joint Force Quarterly (Issue 55, 4th quarter 2009). http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a515171.pdf   (07 October 2014)

STUDENT PREPARATION: Students must read the applicable Main Point(s) in the student Guide and all corresponding *Tongue and Quill,* pages, as well as complete homework exercises/assignments, *prior to each main point*. Additionally, review grammatical reference materials, and read pages 3 and 41-71 in *Speaking Effectively, A Guide for Air Force Speakers.* http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/kline-speak/kline-speaking.pdf

Complete any assigned homework or additional coursework.

Review applicable attachments in SC01HO9, *Supervisory Communication Attachments Handout Packets,* prior to each main point.

Reading assignment is (34,596 words, approx. 5 hours) of reading time.

PART IA

GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOME: Students who graduate from Airman Leadership School are prepared to perform first-level supervisory responsibilities, effectively lead individuals and work center teams as evidenced by their comprehension of Supervisory Communication lesson concepts.

SUPPORTED COMPETENCIES:

The *Supervisory Communication* lesson supports the following Air Force Institutional Competency/Sub-competency:

- AFI 36-2618, The Enlisted Force Structure : Effectively Communicating, Speaking/Writing
- Enterprise Perspective: Strategic Communication
  - Personal AF Narrative
  - Key Air Force Message Briefing

- Supervisory Writing
- Culture of Engagement
  - Proper Media Engagement
  - Use of Social Media

TERMINAL COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE: Comprehend Supervisory Communication concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

TERMINAL COGNITIVE SAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS:

1. Explain Supervisory Communication concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

2. Give examples Supervisory Communication and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

3. Predict the impact of effective communication and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

CRITERION REFERENCED OBJECTIVE:

Given previously learned material, evaluation criteria, time for independent research, and/or applicable handouts/scenarios, students will compose and successfully deliver standard briefings, interpersonal skills sessions, and writing assignments (listed below) as evidenced by earning either a minimum passing score or a "GO" rating on the evaluation instrument.

SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Self/Peer Assessment and Feedback

2. Reflective Thinking Essays (4 essays)

3. Personal Air Force Narrative Briefing

4. Key Air Force Message Briefing

5. AF Form 1206, *Nomination for Award*—Bullet Writing

6. Letter of Counseling—Narrative Writings

7. Decoration Citation—Supervisory Writing

8. Initial Performance Feedback Session—Interpersonal Skills

9. Mid-Term Performance Feedback Session—Interpersonal Skills

10. Personal Leadership Development Plan—Leadership Development/Self-Awareness

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVE: Value Supervisory Communication concepts and their impact on subordinate, NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

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PART IB

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ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN: Topical

ASSOCIATED LESSONS: N/A

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PART IC

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LESSON OUTLINE:

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CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION: Attention, Motivation, Overview

MP 1. COMMUNICATOR SKILLS

    A. The Communication Process
    B. Flow of Communication
    C. Barriers to Communication
    D. Phases of Effective Communication
    E. Common Factors for Writing and Speaking
    F. Tips for Success

MP 2. ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

    A. Overview
    B. Student Preparation
    C. Individual Assignments

MP 3. CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

    A. Strategic Communication
    B. Media Engagement
    C. The New Media

MP 4. BULLET WRITING

    A. Bullet Statements
    B. Writing Bullet Statements
    C. Bullet Writing Small Group Exercise

MP 5. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

    A. Defining Interpersonal Communication
    B. Developing Interpersonal Communication Skills
    C. Interpersonal Communication Exercises
    D. Additional Factors of Interpersonal Skills

MP 6. SUPERVISORY WRITING

    A. Overview
    B. Narrative Writing
    C. Disciplinary Writing
    D. Official Memorandum Format Attributes
    E. Additional Supervisory Writing
    F. Benefits and Impact of Supervisory Writing

MP 7: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a challenge to us all. It must be focused, meaning it addresses an issue directly and completely, using the least amount of words necessary to get the point across. High quality, well-focused communication follows the rules of language and grammar, presents ideas in a logical, systematic manner, does not hide ideas in a jungle of words, and takes the audience's experience, background, and expectations into account. Moreover, effective communication uses logic and credible support to inform, persuade, or entertain an audience.

The purpose of this guide is to set you up for success, but it cannot possibly answer all questions. Therefore, we have also scheduled a flight room discussion to provide clarification. So as you read take notes and be prepared to ask questions during the in class sessions.

Upon conducting a quick review of the objectives and samples of behavior, you will discover none of them addresses grammar, sentence structure, or paragraph development, concepts directly. This is by design. At this level, you should already comprehend basic grammatical communication concepts. However, as evident by the results of your grammar diagnostic, we recognize that some students may require remediation in some areas of grammar/sentence structure and paragraph development. Therefore, we will provide material to assist in the areas identified as needing improvement (see instructor to request programmed text).

MP. 1 COMMUNICATOR SKILLS

STUDENT PREPARATION: In preparation for the Intro to Communication briefing that will be presented on DOT 2 read this MP. The information contained in the MP will also prepare you for MP 2 *Assignment Details.*(8,000 words/70 minutes)

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The Air Force mission is hindered when supervisors fail to communicate effectively. Poor communication not only impedes relationships with subordinates and superiors but can cause the mission to suffer as well. As a service, our members reflect different values, attitudes, and ideas from numerous cultures. Because of such diversity, it vital that we understand several critical elements to ensure effective communication occurs within our work centers. The Basic Communication Process includes four elements: sender, message, receiver, and feedback.

The sender is the originator of the communication process. They are responsible for selecting and arranging (encoding) symbols, words, sounds, or gestures in such a way to create an accurate message in the receiver's mind and/or meet the audience's needs. How the sender encodes the message can have either a positive or a negative impact on the communication process. Additionally, senders (e.g. NCOs) who know their own strengths, weaknesses, and preferences are better prepared to interact with others, which often results in positive, trusting, and honest communication.

The message is the idea, feeling, or information that the sender transfers to his or her audience, and is a critical factor when communicating, since not all terms and phrases mean the same thing to all people. Carefully choose your words to avoid any misunderstandings. Additionally, messages consist of both verbal and nonverbal components. Because it is a combination of both verbal and nonverbal messages, it has the greatest potential for misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and therefore can have a positive or negative impact on interpersonal communication. Here are some things to consider to enhance your communication skills:

- **Vocabulary** - use common terms, do not try to impress someone with million-dollar words. Use concrete terms rather than abstract terms.

- **Language** - English is the standard language in the USAF; leaders at every level are expected to follow the standard conventions of our language. Swearing, as well as the use of exploitive terms, and embarrassing remarks is unprofessional, and never appropriate.

- **Paralanguage**- refers to the way we say things, and is just as important as the actual words we speak. Receivers monitor the following items to gauge emphasis, clarity, and even the sender's emotional state when deciphering the true meaning of the message:

    - *Rate* - the number of words spoken within a specified time. Rates often increase due to stress. Some people have constant rates, while others speak in bursts.

    - *Diction* **-** a combination of articulation (precise use of lips, tongue, and teeth to form sounds), pronunciation (pronouncing words properly), and choice of words.

- *Tone* - can be considered in two dimensions: manner of expression (harsh, aggressive, gentle, passive, etc.) and relative pitch (high, low, varying, monotonous).

- *Rhythm* - recurring patterns of variation in speech like rising and lowering waves of volume, pitch, or rate.

- *Fluency* - using pauses effectively to provide desired flow and effect. Pauses are typically described in three dimensions: length (milliseconds to minutes), filled (vocalized) and unfilled (silent), and location (ending or beginning of a thought).

- *Volume* – loudness

- *Quality* - the commitment or quality of sound

- **Phrases**—other countries and different cultures occasionally use different terms to describe the same thing; be careful to select phrases your receiver understands.

- **Sentence Structure**—use proper English grammar to correctly arrange and express your thoughts in the form of sentences; your audience expects you to follow certain rules in your conversation.

- Sentence Clarity—confusion often occurs when too many items are combined in a single sentence; when modifiers are crossed; and when numbers (singular, plural), perspectives (1st, 2nd, 3rd person), or times (past, present, future) are mixed up.

- **Nonverbal Cues:** When paralanguage and words sharply contradict one another, receivers tend to rely more heavily on paralanguage and other nonverbal cues like body language. Consider the following types of nonverbal behavior associated with communication:

    - *Gestures* - customarily the use of hands to show emphasis, transition, enumeration, etc. Sometimes accompanied by tonal inflections, pauses, or other nonverbal behaviors.

    - *Facial expressions* - fear, surprise, joy, sadness, anger, disgust, etc., are expressed through brow, eye, and mouth configurations.

    - *Eye contact* - when the sender and receiver are both looking into each other's eyes.

    - *Body language* - messages sent through body posture (slouching, sitting erectly, lounging, crossed arms, etc.), and behaviors (stomping a foot, pointing a finger, shaking the head, clicking or tapping a pen, etc.).

    - *Positioning*- proximity or distance between sender and receiver (which may vary as the conversation progresses), and the arrangement of their respective positions (standing, sitting, facing head-on, side-by-side, etc.).

The receiver is the target for the sender's message. Receivers obtain messages through reading, listening, observing, and even touching. They are responsible for deciphering (decoding) the message. How a receiver decodes the message can have a positive or negative effect on communication. To be a good receiver, we should use as many of our senses as possible, practical, and appropriate to make sure the message we get is the one the

sender intended. Understanding the receivers you communicate with is another critical element of effective interpersonal communication. A good receiver, spends time interacting with others to learn about their history, experiences, motives, personality and emotional intelligence (state). As supervisors, the more you know about your subordinates, the more effective your communication will be. People with similar backgrounds use familiar terms to communicate, while dissimilar experiences may require some trial and error before effective communication takes place. Knowing and understanding your subordinates' backgrounds will also help you interpret their nonverbal communication signals.

Feedback is a reaction to the received message. It not only completes the communication process, but also perpetuates a further exchange or dialogue. Senders should continually seek input that verifies the receiver's grasp or understanding of the message communicated. It allows for adjustments, when necessary, to ensure the message is clear and received as planned. Feedback has two forms - verbal and nonverbal. Verbal feedback is the receiver expressing feedback to a certain message with words. Nonverbal feedback is the receiver expressing feedback to a certain message with body language or facial expressions. Both of these forms of feedback give the sender ideas of how well the receiver understood the message. This cycle should occur as many times as necessary to ensure both the sender and the receiver reach a shared meaning.

Flow of Communication

Within Air Force organizations, communication flows in three directions: upward, downward, and laterally. Effective channels of upward, downward, and lateral communication are paramount to accomplishing the mission. In contrast, the ineffective use of these channels of communication can hinder the quality of service we provide to those we serve.

Upward communication is the flow of communication through the chain of command from the lowest organizational position to the highest. Upward communication is important to the survival of any organization. It provides feedback on the effectiveness of downward communication. It's also the avenue for lower levels to communicate facts, opinions, and ideas to higher levels in the organization.

Downward communication normally begins with the organization's upper level of management and filters down through the chain of command. There are many different ways we can communicate information down the chain: memos, letters, meetings, phone calls, etc. The difficulty is determining which channel and how much information to use to converse without causing information overload. Should you communicate via letter, phone, personal meeting, or all three? In addition, how much information should you provide at one time? Should you include one page, ten pages, set an hour meeting, a two-hour meeting, etc.? The originator of the communication at each level determines the answers to these questions. The communicator must determine the most effective means and the amount of information to communicate at one time. This decision is based on who is receiving the information, the type of information, and how the information will be used.

Lateral communication flows neither downward nor upward; instead, it flows across organizational channels. In the Air Force, each organization depends on another to carry out its respective mission. Lateral communication allows for coordination or integration of all diverse functions within and outside an organization between different individuals,

sections, watches, or units on the same organizational level. For instance, people in a small computer technical center depend on people in the civil engineering electrical shop to carry out their mission. It requires communication across the board to make this happen—better known as lateral communication between units. Reading about the communication process in terms of four elements and three directions of communication makes it sound simple, but it is not! When we communicate, we involve our emotions and thoughts. Our values, interests, attitudes, culture, and the people who raised us, influence our emotions and thoughts, and can become a barrier that hinders communication.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

The most common barriers to effective communication you will experience as an Air Force supervisor can be divided into two basic types: organizational barriers and psychological barriers (see the Basic Communication Process figure below).

Organizational Barriers: Relate specifically to work situations or to the working environment. Examples of organizational barriers are duty schedules, floor layouts, jet engine noise, operations tempo, and improper management. The three most common organizational barriers are environmental noise, weak communication policies/norms, and autocratic management.

> Environmental Noise: Originates from many things and the flood of constant sounds can render communication ineffective. People generate some of this noise, while machinery or equipment creates the rest. Even in environments known for peace and tranquility, conducting normal business can make communication difficult.

> Weak Communication Policies: Communication policies are more firmly established in some organizations than they are in others. While some organizations may clearly convey and continually enforce a rigid conformance to upward and downward communication channels and set up informal communication policies, other organizations are not as structured. A lack of such structure can create an environment of miscommunication where personnel are unsure of what to communicate, to whom it should be communicated, when it should be communicated, etc. Therefore, undefined communication policies, whether in a shop, division, or unit can present a difficult barrier to communication.

> Autocratic Management: This is when supervisors and managers do not listen to, or have a receptive attitude towards their subordinate's input or suggestions. Perhaps you've seen supervisors who typically consider suggestions or feedback from their subordinates as worthless or having little merit. In this instance, the supervisor implies both the suggestion, and the individual making it, are not valuable. This barrier is particularly damaging because it creates an adversarial relationship in the minds of the subordinates, who then lose their motivation for increased performance and mission accomplishment.

Psychological Barriers: These are related to the way people think, reason, or feel. You must recognize that those who carry out the organization's mission are human and they

come complete with their own unique personalities, values, and learned use of the English language.

Personality: One of the greatest qualities of America and our Air Force is the diversity of the people who make them up. Unfortunately, the same diversity that gives us strength can also cause difficulty in communication. Some people have developed and display assertive personality traits, while others are more humble and soft-spoken. When personality styles clash, communication suffers.

Values: Just as each person has a unique personality, each person also has a unique set of values. People regard some things as precious, while they hold little value for other things. Because of their values, some people will assume and defend certain positions, while others may take the opposite position based on their different values. When people with very different value systems are combined in a work situation, barriers to effective communication often evolve.

Language: Language barriers are present in both verbal and written communications. We sometimes forget who our audience is and forget about the differences that may exist because of our education levels, experiences, etc. Common language barriers stem from choosing vague or confusing words, and failing to consider dissimilar backgrounds. The following categories show various language barriers.

Abstractions: Without being aware of it, we may use terms that are vague, or that carry more than one meaning. Abstract words are sometimes necessary, but it is better to give examples and illustrations when using them. Concrete words are the opposite of abstract words. Selecting concrete words when communicating with your subordinates and superiors will greatly assist in reaching your desired outcome. Always try to use concrete terms when sending a message. In addition, some may have a tendency to use unfamiliar words that make receivers feel we are speaking over their heads. Remember to put your ideas and information in terms your audience will understand, and if you must use acronyms, be sure you define them.

Ambiguous terms: These words and/or phrases have different meanings to different people. In our language, words sometimes have different meanings and can create confusion. If you aren't careful, the words you choose may not accurately describe the point you're trying to make. All words don't mean the same thing to everyone, so be very selective in your choice of words. Avoid jargon and acronyms; again, use concrete words. Don't assume everyone knows what you mean.

Lack of Common Core of Experience: The lack of common core experience between the sender and receiver is the greatest and most common of all language barriers. Communication is effective when emotional, physical, and mental experiences of the sender and receiver are the same. Ensure your words and symbols are similar to those of your receiver. How can you choose words that span such great differences between people? Spend more energy and time listening. Value the experience of others and make a conscious effort to learn from their experiences. Provide opportunities to gain experience. Share your experiences with others. Do not put people down, discredit them, or lose credibility in them, because they lack experience.

Many other barriers that get in the way of effective communication do not fall exactly within one of the barriers listed above. Here are some things that sometimes become barriers for us:

- Gender

- Age

- Race

- Showing our emotions at the wrong time or overreacting to the words or actions of others

- Environmental distractions like weather or office furniture

- Criticizing (judge, condemn, apply morals) without really understanding others' needs, values, or cultural differences

- Attacking *people* rather than *problems*—blaming, belittling, or ridiculing them.

As you can see, ensuring you communicate effectively will not always be easy, but it is necessary if you want to be successful. Regardless of how you're delivering a message (speaking, writing, conducting a meeting, or having a counseling session), you have to consider the basic elements, the directional flow, and the potential barriers that exist in your message. Failing to plan your communication will cause far more disruption and wasted time than spending the time to get it right the first time.

PHASES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Despite how your message is communicated, there are three broad phases you need to work through to ensure it is effective. First, you must diagnose the communication needs of your audience, then prepare the brief, and lastly, deliver the message.

Diagnosing Communication

This is discovering/determining the general purpose for the communication. It involves selecting and/or narrowing down the topic, or specific objective, by analyzing the audience, and defining the parameters. Most Air Force writing or speaking falls under one of the following purposes: to direct, inform, persuade or inspire. Your task is to think about the message you want to send (the "what") and make some sort of determination on what your purpose is (the "why"). Once you decide the purpose, you will know where to place the emphasis and what the tone of your communication should be.

Preparing & Delivering Communication

Elements of Effective Communication

When preparing a communication brief and delivering the message, all good communication includes three main components: introduction, body, and conclusion. In the next few pages, we examine each component and provide a few tips for success along the way.

Introduction

Good introductions include an Attention Step, Purpose Statement, Motivation/Hook, and Overview. These elements capture the audience's attention and inform them of the

purpose of the communication. A good introduction also provides a roadmap so the audience knows where your communication is headed.

Introductory Statement: The most effective way to begin any briefing is by letting your audience know who you are. Therefore, begin all briefings at ALS with a simple introduction such as, "Good morning my name is…."

Purpose Statement: Your purpose statement must clearly and succinctly address your purpose for communicating. It must be well focused because it provides the underlying theme for the rest of your communication and addresses your reason for communicating.

 A well-developed purpose statement does three things. First, it narrows the subject. Second, it makes an assertion or states a precise opinion about the subject. Third, it lets the reader or audience know your reason for the communication—to inform, to persuade or to motivate – in a smooth, seamless manner. Here again, use a statement such as, "This morning I am going to brief you on…"

Jefferson D. Bates in his book, *Writing with Precision*, provides the following questions to answer while you are developing your purpose statement:

   a. What is the real reason I am writing this?

   b. What is the main idea I want to convey?

   c. What response do I desire to elicit from the reader?[i]

Motivation (Hook): An effective motivation/hook tells **WHY** the audience needs to listen, **HOW** they can use the information, and makes the audience **WANT** to listen.

Overview: A good overview provides a road map for the audience. It gives clues to the structure of the communication (main points), tells the audience where you will begin (main point 1) and end (main point X), and tells how you're going to accomplish your purpose. A good overview not only sets up your audience's expectations about the length and direction of your communication, it smoothly moves your audience forward as you transition to your first main point. The introduction is critical to gaining an audience's attention, but keeping it requires good organization and support. With that in mind, let's explore the next component of basic communication, the Body.

Transitions: Good transitions provide a smooth connection between major thoughts (main points) and link ideas together.

Body

The body is where you deliver your message and achieve your objective (inform, motivate, persuade, etc.). A well-written body systematically guides the audience through your communication using a logical pattern. Types of pattern could include but are not limited to topical, compare/contrast, chronological, spatial/geographical, problem/solution, reasoning/logic, and cause/effect.

The body is made up of an orderly sequence of main ideas (main points) using support data organized in one or more paragraphs or points of discussion. In an oral, as well as written presentation, each paragraph or discussion point has *unity.* That is everything in relates to a single idea. A topic sentence or statement conveys the main idea, and/or central theme, and is normally the first sentence in the paragraph, or the line of a speech. Beginning with

a topic sentence helps the writer stay unified.

The body also has coherence, which means it follows an appropriate pattern, contains effective transitions, and uses nouns, pronouns, and verbs correctly.

Support Material: Source/supporting material is exactly what it means; it provides supporting arguments, sound background data, and facts to authenticate and sustain the validity of the briefing or paper. Source materials can come from personal knowledge, experiences, and common knowledge.

Personal Knowledge and Experiences

When looking for source support, consider your personal knowledge and experience first. With that said, most students immediately ask, "Do I have to acknowledge myself as a source?"

Suppose you met CMSAF (Retired) Rodney J. McKinley and decided to write an article about the experience and then submit it to your base paper. You wrote about your feelings and impression of the chief and you conducted research and find out how many of the other former Chiefs have visited your base.

Given all the information in your article is obvious your own knowledge, experience and research, there is no requirement to formally acknowledge yourself as the source.

Common Knowledge

Common knowledge can be used in the same manner as your own personal knowledge and experiences; there is no need to acknowledge the source. Some examples of common knowledge are:

- Standard Information: Sometimes you know a fact, but you don't know how you know it, where you learned it, or where you could find it to give the source credit. According to The LBH, standard information includes facts commonly known, including historical facts.

For instance on 7 December 1941, Japanese aircraft attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor, on 18 September 1947, the Air Force became an independent service, and on 3 April 1967, Paul W. Airey became the first CMSgt of the Air Force.

How many references do you think acknowledge these facts, dozens, or perhaps hundreds? The LBH says you don't have to acknowledge the source even if you had to look the information up. While standard information can often be found in multiple references, the second area of common knowledge, folk literature, has origins that are more elusive.

Folk Literature

Folk literature can be thought of as folklore, myths, legends and traditions, and as you can imagine the origins of folk literature are almost impossible to trace. Folk literature does not require the author to acknowledge the source. The most obvious reason is that the author generally doesn't know the source. As The LBH notes, folk literature "…is popularly known and cannot be traced to a particular writer."

For example, you could compare former CMSAF Airey's strength to Hercules, his vision to Superman, and his wisdom to Aristotle and you wouldn't need to acknowledge any sources.

Sometimes folk literature just doesn't have the analogy you need.

If you wanted to discuss how former CMSAF have continued to support the Air Force even after retirement, you could say the former CMSAFs "had miles to go before they slept." Do you recognize the phrase? Perhaps you do—it's from Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Even if you slightly modified the well-known sentiment, you used Robert Frost's work and you must acknowledge the source {annotated in the endnote (qtd. in Fowler: 571)}.

Folklore does not require acknowledgement, however, published literature with an author does. Does that mean anything that is published must be acknowledged? The answer is ―not necessarily

<u>Commonsense Observations</u>

It is not necessary to acknowledge commonsense observations. As *The LBH* states, "Commonsense observations is something most people know, such as that inflation is most troublesome for people with low and fixed incomes. An economist's idea about the effects of inflation on Chinese immigrants is not a commonsense observation.[ii]

To continue our example using the former CMSAFs, let's suppose you said to be the first at anything is a great honor, but it also carries a great responsibility. With all the articles and books written about former CMSAF Airey, you're confident you could find a supporting source, but you don't need to—it's commonsense.

Supporting material can be in the form of brief examples, statistics, testimonials, comparisons and/or explanations (definitions).

Brief examples:

- are normally presented in short clusters of two or three.

- are more effective if they are specific instead of general.

- can be used as clarification support, proof support, or to condense a massive amount of narrative information.

Here are three examples:

1. Clarification Support: Defined as making it easier to understand: Air University often looks at critical processes. For example, staff and faculty are currently looking at ways to leverage technology to reduce costs across the university.

2. Proof Support: Defined as establishing something as true and/or factual. Because of inadequate PCS reimbursements, Sergeant Green was not reimbursed for $1,500 in moving expenses. His loss is evidence that a problem exists.

3. Narrative: Defined as an example that provides very effective support. Normally a narrative example involves a specific incident and includes names, dates, and details. An effective narrative example makes the story real and believable.

<u>Statistics:</u> Statistics are primarily used as proof of a particular point or assertion.

They're also used to clarify, to show relationships, and to summarize large collections of data. Let's examine the use of statistics for support:

Rules:

1. Keep statistics simple and easy to understand.

2. Use terms and analogies the audience can understand.

3. Round off when possible.

4. Give complete information—providing all the facts and letting the audience draw its own conclusion adds credibility and reinforces your argument.

5. Keep visual aids in proportion. Emphasizing certain points is okay as long as important points are not obscured.

6. And most important, provide your source.

Ratio examples:

1. She makes three times more a year than I do.

2. Only 1 in 10 people floss their teeth daily.

3. Insurance companies estimate 1 in 10 drivers do not wear their seatbelts consistently.

Raw Numbers examples:

1. Nine Alabamians died on the highways to date.

2. He spent $400 on a new DVD player.

3. She is 39 years old.

Percentages:

1. In 85% of accidents, human error was involved.

2. Ninety percent of the world's population has no health care.

3. The current promotion rate to Chief Master Sergeant is 12 percent.

4. Clarification support: "Seventy five percent of NCOA test failures can be attributed to...."

5. Proof support: "The F-117 flew only 2 percent of all the Desert Storm sorties, but caused 40 percent of the bomb damage."

Comparisons: Comparisons emphasize relational likeness, by making an argument that because objects (event, situations, people, and the like) are comparable in some way, similar actions/results should occur in both situations.

1. Focus on similarities.

2. Make a statement about the relationship between two or more things; stated fully to ensure clarity.

For example, "Auditory learners are distracted by noise more than visual learners are" or "Noise distracts auditory learners more than it distracts visual learners."

3. Always state "what" is being compared.

For example, "The F-22 is faster than the F-16" , "Her paper is better than mine"

4. Comparisons are most frequently used to clarify relationships, but they can also be used effectively to prove a point. There are several types of comparisons:

   a. Metaphor: the fast burner.

   b. Simile: like a tree, we die from the top.

   c. Analogy: a comparison between two essentially unlike things for the purpose of definition or illustration. An analogy explains an unfamiliar or abstract thing with a familiar or concrete thing.

   d. Literal Example: The landing surface of an aircraft carrier is equal to the length of 3.5 football fields.

   e. Figurative Example: He floats like a butterfly; stings like a bee.

   f. Contrast, a form of comparison, is very effective when trying to prove a point: old vs. new, here vs. there, etc.

   g. Comparisons can be used as proof and/or clarification support.

   h. Most importantly, comparisons must be relevant and appropriate.

Explanations/Definition:

   1. Definitions are primarily used to explain or clarify unfamiliar terms, jargon, processes, or to establish a common core of experience.

   2. Use as proof support. For example, they can show that a certain policy or rule existed in a regulation or other document.

   3. Use as clarification support. For example, use a definition to explain unfamiliar jargon in an EPR.

   4. Rules for using definitions.

   a. If your audience knows or understands the term, don't define it.

   b. If your audience does not understand the term or jargon, define the term or jargon in words the audience will understand.

   5. Explanations must be relevant appropriate. There are two types of explanations: analysis and description.

   a. Analysis: break into small parts and provide the who, what, why, where, when and how.

   b. Description: similar to definition but adds more adjectives or adverbs and let the audience see hear of feel the expanded definition.

While understanding the types of support is important, understanding how to evaluate sources is critical and doing it effectively requires you to analyze, interpret, synthesize, and

evaluate your sources.

Analyze: separate the reading into parts or elements. Ask yourself why you are reading the material—what question are you trying to answer?

Interpret: determine the meaning or understand the significance of the elements and how the elements fit into the whole. To interpret means to make assumptions, to form opinions or beliefs.

Synthesize: put different elements together to form a new whole; to draw conclusions about the relationships and implication.

Evaluate: make judgments about the work—to judge a work as it stands and as it seems to you, against your own unique bundle of experiences, observations, and attitudes.[iii]

Evaluating Sources

Sometimes the hardest part of a task is getting started. An online article, "Evaluating Content in the Source" from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) states that when evaluating the content of sources the user should:

1. Read the preface: What does the author want to accomplish?

2. Browse through the table of contents and the index:

   a. Overview the source

   b. Is the topic covered in enough depth

3. Look for related material

4. Determine the intended audience—above or below your level

5. Make a judgment call—is the material factual

   a. Are the facts clear

   b. Is there enough evidence

   c. Is the coverage comprehensive

   d. Is the language free from emotion and opinion

   e. Are broad generalizations avoided

   f. Does the author have a good mix of primary and secondary sources

   g. If the author takes a position, is the position supported

6. Test for accuracy

   a. How timely is the material? Does the copyright date matter? Is the research still valid

   b. Can you crosscheck the information—find it in another source

7. Ensure author is credible

a. If there is no author, how credible is the publisher, the web site, the organization

8. Support generalizations

9. Make sure that both sides of the argument are supported supported[iv]

These evaluating guidelines serve a dual purpose—they help you determine if the source material is relevant and reliable.

While the above guidelines are adequate for determining the relevance and reliability of published works, you must go farther if you are evaluating an on-line source.

Evaluating On-Line Sources

Online sources can range anywhere from academic and government sponsored sites to frauds and personal agendas.

1. Examples:

   a. eBay: (an online auction house);

   b. The Center for Critical Thinking (nationally recognized association);

   c. The NCOA on Air University's web page; and

   d. Bubba's chat room.

2. Fowler and Aaron provide the following advice for evaluating online web sites:

   a. Check the electronic address:

      1. .edu (educational institution);

      2. .gov (government body);

      3. .org (non-profit organization);

      4. .mil (military); and

      5. .com (commercial organization).

   b. Determine the authorship or sponsorship.

   c. Gauge the purpose of the site:

   d. Evaluation of the whole web site.

      1. Design;

      2. Easy to read and understand;

      3. Clear and relevant graphics;

      4. Appraise Links—where do they go? Do they work?[v]

Unity

Unity means all sentences or points discussed support the topic, which, in turn, supports the main point. One of the most effective methods for checking unity is called the *"because test."* Simply place the word "because" at the end of each supporting sentence or

discussion point, to see if it supports the topic sentence. Likewise, place "because" at the end of the topic sentence to see if it supports your purpose.

Read the following paragraph and use the "because test" to determine whether everything in paragraph supports the topic sentence.

> *Texas is a hunter's paradise. Fox, quail, and other small game abound in the piney woods of east Texas. In the high plains of northwest Texas, coyotes, jackrabbits, and prairie dogs challenge the hunter who prefers the wide-open spaces. In south Texas hill country, numerous small lakes, and rivers invite the angler to try his hand at catching bass and trout. In the hills and dry washes of west Texas, the hunter must be constantly alert for desert cats and rattlesnakes as he stalks wild goats and sheep. There is probably no other place in the world in which such a diversity of game is so near at hand as in Texas.*

Did you catch it? The sentence about fishing flunks the "*because test*."

> "In south Texas hill country, numerous small lakes, and rivers invite the angler to try his hand at catching bass and trout **because Texas is a hunter's paradise.**

At this point, the writer should either remove the line about fishing, or revise the topic sentence. What would you do?

> **Important Note**: Although some colleges allow topic sentences to be placed anywhere in a paragraph, here the topic sentence is ALWAYS the first line of paragraphs in the Body of your communication projects. This standardizes the process for grading purposes.

Remember, topic sentences introduce the main idea (theme) of the paragraph or speech, by summarizing the purpose. They provide focus, order, and they tie back to the overview by answering the *why*, *how* or *when* of the purpose statement.

Coherence

Internal transitions help ensure your communication is coherent by tying ideas and sentences together. They can be simple (*and*, *but*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, *or* and *so)* or complex (*however*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *therefore, hence, anyway, furthermore* and *on the other hand*). External transitions are sentences or statements used to provide a link between main points within your communication. Transitions help an audience know where you've been and where you're going and they allow the audience to shift mental gears as you proceed through your communication.

Read the following two paragraphs **_aloud_** for a demonstration of how transitions can make a difference in coherence.

<div align="center">

Why I Like to Fish

(without transitions)

</div>

There are reasons why I like to fish. I enjoy the pull of a three-pound bass at the other end of the line. My enjoyment increases if the fish is out in the open waters of the lake. I don't like him close to shore among the weeds. Fishing prods my spirit of adventure to seek the lesser-known pools and the cool waters beneath some underwater rocky ledge. I like to have a well-oiled and smooth-running motor to drive my boat from spot to spot. I like the

quiet under the open sky away from the weekend campers and two-week vacationers. I think my last reason is best. I fish at several locations.

Why I Like to Fish

(with transitions)

> There are *three* reasons I like to fish. *First*, I enjoy the pull of a three-pound bass at the other end of the line. *Moreover*, my enjoyment increases if the fish is out in the open waters of the lake, *rather than* close to shore among the weeds. *Second*, fishing prods my spirit of adventure to seek the lesser-known pools and the cool waters beneath some underwater ledge. *Still*, I like to have a well-oiled and smooth-running motor to drive my boat from spot to spot. *Finally*, I like the quiet under the open sky away from weekend campers and two-week vacationers. *Of the three*, I think my last reason is the best. *There are several locations I go to fish in order to enjoy the quiet*.

Citing Sources

To use sources appropriately and legally you must document them properly and give credit where credit is due.

Plagiarism--A Bad, Bad Thing

Don't plagiarize. "Using someone else's writing as if it were your own. This serious offense can lead to severe professional and legal consequences. If using another person's material, identify the borrowed passage and credit the author." This statement from *The T&Q* presents plagiarism as a bad thing.[vi] But what makes it bad?

Consider the definition of plagiarism according to *Webster's II New Riverside University* Dictionary. *Webster* says to plagiarize is "to steal and use (the idea or writings of another) as one's own."[vii] Now that you understand plagiarism is really stealing, you need to understand how to avoid it.

To avoid plagiarism you must give credit where credit is due. To determine when credit is due, or in other words, when a source must be acknowledged, you must understand the types of sources. As previously discussed, the acknowledgment of personal knowledge and experiences, or common knowledge source data is not required. However, when using the works, thoughts or ideas of others as a source of information the rules of engagement change.

Work of Others

You must always acknowledge the work of others. Does that mean articles, books, and documents? Yes. How about movies and interviews? Yes. How about? Yes! Yes! Yes! Whether you quote verbatim, paraphrase, or put an author's words into your own words, you must give credit to the author.

According to *The Little, Brown Handbook (The LBH),* put quotes around a writer's exact words making sure you don't make grammatical changes. This applies to single words, short phrases, and even if the writer "used it in a special or central way."[viii] To do otherwise would be considered plagiarism.

The following information explains the requirements for source support documentation in written and spoken projects. For detailed information on how to cite your sources, see the Tongue & Quill.

Written Projects

Integration and citation are the two requirements for source support in written projects.

Integration: This is the inclusion of the source directly into the text. Far too many times the writer depends on a citation page or other attachments to provide support. This is not an effective way to communicate. The document should stand on its own by having the source directly integrated.

Example: *Dr. Green said that stress accounts for over 60% of heart attacks.*

Citation: This is a reference to a book, article, webpage, or other published item with sufficient detail to identify the item uniquely. While there are several ways to cite sources, the most commonly used format in PME is the incorporation of source information into an endnote entry. Endnotes are used to indicate where you got your information.

Example: *Dr. Green said that stress accounts for over 60% of heart attacks.[1]*

In this example, superscript "[1]" (citation) number sends the reader to the endnote entry located at the end of paper where the source of the information resides.

Citation Example:

[1]Edward Shorter, The Health Century (New York: Doubleday, 1987) 22.

Spoken Projects

Integration and qualification are the two requirements for source support in spoken projects.

Integration: This lets the listening audience know where you obtained your information. If you were using Dr. Green's material, you could say:

"Dr. Green said that stress accounts for over 60% of heart attacks."

Qualification: Your audience will not have the benefit of a citation page so qualification is the only way to indicate the validity of your material. Let us look at the best way to qualify Dr. Green's material in a briefing.

Example: *"Dr. Green, a heart specialist at the Mayo Clinic, says stress accounts for over 60% of all heart attacks."*

The qualification of Dr. Green as "a heart specialist at the Mayo Clinic" tells the audience that he is a credible expert on heart attacks.

To be clear, *integrate* and *cite* source support in papers and *integrate* and *qualify* source support in speeches/briefings. Now let us examine what to do when you need to use a source more than once in a project.

The Little, Brown Handbook's **"Checklist for Avoiding Plagiarism"**

Are you using your own independent material, common knowledge, or someone else's independent material? Always acknowledge another author's material

If you are quoting someone else's material:

-- Is the quotation exact?

-- Have you inserted quotation marks around the quoted material?

-- Are graphs, statistics, and other borrowed data identical to the source?

-- Have you shown omissions with ellipses and additions with brackets?

- If you are paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's material, have you:

-- Used your own words and sentence structures?

-- Does your paragraph or summary employ quotation marks where you use the author's exact language?

- Is *each* use of someone else's material acknowledged in your text?

- Are all your sources complete and accurate?

-- Does your list of works cited include all sources used?[ix]

Conclusion

The last element of good communication is the conclusion. Many professional speakers and writers consider the conclusion the most important part of the communication because it's the final thought, and because research shows people remember best, what is said last. A good conclusion lets the audience know where you've been, how they can benefit, and that the communication is over.

All good conclusions include three elements: summary, restatement of purpose and/or re-motivation, and closure.

Summary

A summary is a brief and concise review of <u>all</u> main points and supporting ideas that are critical to achieving your goal. Well-developed summaries show a logical relationship between the main points and the purpose of the communication. In addition, summaries act like brake lights alerting your audience that the presentation is about to end. Finally, summaries must never contain new information.

Restatement of Purpose/Re-motivation

If your purpose was to inform, tell the audience why they should remember or use the information. If your purpose was to persuade, you have two options. 1) Make a recommendation—tell the audience what you want them to do with the information. 2) Restate your position and make a final appeal to the audience. The most effective restatement/re-motivation ties back to the motivation used in the introduction while clearly indicating how the audience can benefit from the information presented.

Closure

An effective closure signals the paper or speech is over. It brings the paper or speech "full circle" by reminding the audience of your introduction. Therefore, you must plan a definite, obvious ending that provides a sense of finality.

Techniques used in the opening can be used to close as well. One of the most effective techniques is to tie closing remarks back to your opening statement. For example, "Let me close by asking a single question. Can we live with the results if this problem isn't fixed? I say no!"

Common Factors for Writing and Speaking

1. Keep OPSEC in mind—no classified information.

2. Primary source for formatting papers is *The Tongue and Quill* (2015).

3. Do not share graded papers and feedback with other students.

4. Return all graded papers to your instructor before graduation.

5. Format:

    a. Use plain bond paper. (If applicable form not assigned)

    b. Font: use Times New Roman, 12 point.

    c. Spacing: Double-space sentences. (Unless otherwise indicated)

    d. Margins: Use 1-inch (approximately) margins (top, bottom, and sides).

    e. Identification Line:

        1. Example: SrA Amazing/Flight A/A16/416-5678/aaa/1May 11

        2. Include/insert as directed by assignment details.

6. Outside Sources (if applicable—see individual projects for details).

    Note: Student Guides, The Tongue & Quill (2015), and other books issued by the ALS may be used as sources, but do not count as outside sources.

    Always obtain permission from ALS speakers BEFORE quoting them.

7. Limit reading to quotes and other information where it is important to be precise.

8. Common Format Errors:

    a. Margins too big/small *(minor adjustments +/- allowed due to differences in computer and printer settings)*.

    b. Font is wrong size/type.

    c. Page numbers missing, incorrectly numbered, and incorrectly justified (e.g. center or right justified--should be left justified).

    d. Spacing incorrect *(minor adjustments +/- allowed due to differences in computer and printer settings)*.

    e. Missing or incorrect identification line.

    f. Actively monitor schedule for all project due dates.

Tips for Success

1. Time Management is the key to success! Use the schedule to plan time for research, writing, and practicing;

2. Use each other's strengths (writing, editing, researching, formatting, speaking etc.).

3. Practice! Practice! Practice! Practice speaking in front of each other and be prepared to give and willing to receive constructive/specific feedback.

   o Note: Giving ambiguous feedback or telling peers they are doing great when they are not is a disservice to them, and more importantly, a disservice to their subordinates.

4. Have others review your work.

5. Share resources (paper, printing, computers, etc.).

6. Edit (NOT rewrite) each other's written work. Changing a word is rewriting, however, indicating the presence of an error is editing. Each student must do his or her own work!

7. A positive attitude is the key to gaining the most from your ALS experience.

8. Challenge yourself to find a "take away" from every lesson, lecture, and activity.

MP 2. ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

STUDENT PREPARATION: In preparation for Supervisory Communicator – Assignment Details Main Point, read this main point and be prepared for the classroom discussions (4900 words/40 minutes)

Supplemental Reading: Information contained in the following documents assist in the preparation of written and spoken projects.

1. Read AFH 33-337, *The Tongue and Quill:*

   Part I: Communication Basics

   Part II: Preparing to Write and Speak

   Part IV: Speaking and Listening

   (To download or view an electronic copy of the Tongue and Quill, visit

   http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/saf_cio_a6/publication/afh33-337/afh33-337.pdf)

2. Read pages 3 and 41-71 from John Kline's *Speaking Effectively, A Guide for Air Force Speakers (To download or view an electronic copy, visit*

   http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil/bookinfo.asp?bid=76

Accomplish all required reading prior to the lesson and be prepared for the classroom discussion.

Self/Peer Assessment and Feedback

This project taps into the notion that leadership begins with self-awareness. Effective leaders are both willing and able to give and receive feedback and during the course, you'll have two formal opportunities to do just that, by rating each of your peers in the following four areas:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
This person accepts feedback, and when necessary uses a combined approach of feedback, coaching, and mentoring to help others improve.	This person helps the flight achieve its goals by contributing to projects, participating in activities, and when necessary, seeking clarification to keep the flight on track	Despite the rigor of the course, this person's energy, initiative, and volunteer spirit contribute to the emotional, physical, spiritual, and social well-being of the flight.	This person exhibits military bearing and leads through ethical, even-tempered, and decisive actions, decisions, and behaviors that are consistent with and that advance the profession of arms.

ACTIVITY STATEMENT: Just prior to the mid-term assessment and then again before the final peer assessment, take a few moments to rate yourself in each category, on a scale of *1 -5 and then compare your ratings to how your peers rate you.

Mid-term	Self-Rating____	Self Rating____	Self Rating____	Self Rating____
Final	Self Rating____	Self Rating____	Self Rating____	Self Rating____

*Rating of 1 = greatest area for improvement; 5 = least area for improvement. For example, a rating of 4 indicates better than average in a category as compared to peers, while acknowledging room for improvement

Approximately 24 hours before the midterm and final peer assessment and feedback sessions, the assessment feature in iGECKO is turned on so students can login and rate their peers. Then, just before the feedback session, the flight instructor provides each student with a copy of his or her scores for each category and the overall score.

> **Note: Flight reports are never shown to students and students are not required to reveal their ratings, but may choose to do so.**

Once logged into the peer assessment feature in iGECKO, you will see the four categories across the top of the screen and a list of your peers in random order down the left side of the screen. (See example below). You assign ratings by clicking on a cell until the rating you want to assign appears. There are three choices: Top Third, Middle Third, and Bottom Third. See example below.

Mid-term Peer Assessment
(Flight 31)

Student ID	Student Name	This person accepts feedback, and when necessary uses a combined approach of feedback, coaching, and mentoring to help others improve.	This person helps the flight achieve its goals by contributing to projects, participating in activities, and when necessary, seeking clarification to keep the flight on track.	Despite the rigor of the course, this person's energy, initiative, and volunteer spirit contribute to the emotional, physical, spiritual, and social well-being of the flight.	This person exhibits military bearing and leads through ethical, even-tempered, and decisive actions, decisions, and behaviors that are consistent with and that advance the profession of arms.
ALS3109	Ken Potts	Green (5)	Green (5)	Red (1)	Green (5)
ALS3104	Fred Dorsey	Red (1)	Yellow (3)	Green (5)	Red (1)
ALS3103	Rich Cobb	Yellow (3)	Red (1)	Yellow (3)	Green (5)
ALS3111	Greg Stephens	Yellow (3)	Red (1)	Green (5)	Yellow (3)
ALS3110	Shawn Showman	Green (5)	Green (5)	Red (1)	Red (1)
ALS3105	Pachari Lutke	Red (1)	Yellow (3)	Green (5)	Yellow (3)
ALS3102	John Anderson	Yellow (3)	Red (1)	Yellow (3)	Green (5)
ALS3108	Sydney Parker	Green (5)	Yellow (3)	Yellow (3)	Red (1)
ALS3112	Troy Dassin	Yellow (3)	Red (1)	Green (5)	Red (1)
ALS3101	Yolanda Barber	Red (1)	Green (5)	Red (1)	Yellow (3)
ALS3106	Tina Martinez	Red (1)	Green (5)	Red (1)	Yellow (3
ALS3107	Mark Totenberg	Green (5)	Yellow (3)	Green (5)	Green (5)

Figure 2. iGecko Simulation

Note 1: Flights that divide into three equal parts have an equal number of students rated in each Third. Flights that do not divide into three equal parts will have more students rated in the middle third. For example, a flight with 16 students will always have 5 students rated Top Third, 5 students rated Bottom Third, and 6 students rated Middle Third.

Likewise, a flight with 14 students will always have 4 students rated Top Third, 4 students rated Bottom Third, and 6 students rated Middle Third.

Note 2: In iGECKO, unrated cells are white, cells rated "5" turn green, cells rated "3" turn yellow, and cells rated "1" turn red. The color code has no meaning. Its purpose is to provide users with a visual picture of rated and unrated cells. We placed the ratings and colors in the cells above for this reading assignment…they won't actually appear in iGECKO.

Note 3: The order of students is random, and changes each time the user re-enters iGECKO. This prevents people (e.g. peeking over a user's shoulder), other than the person entering the information, from determining assigned ratings.

Peer Assessment Point System (*Example only*)

A Top Third rating is worth 5 points, a Middle Third rating is worth 3 points, and a Bottom Third rating is worth 1 point. However, scores are based on the average of all

assigned ratings so scores run from 1.0 to 5.0. Let's look at an example using SrA Amazing who is assigned to a flight with 12 students. *(Note: Students do not assess themselves in iGECKO).*

Mid-Term Assessment *(Example ONLY)*												
Category 1												
Stu 1	Stu 2	Stu 3	Stu 4	Stu 5	Stu 6	Stu 7	Stu 8	Stu 9	Stu 10	Stu 11	Total	Score
1	3	3	5	1	3	5	5	3	1	1	31/11	2.81
Category 2												
3	3	3	5	1	5	3	1	5	3	3	35/11	3.18
Category 3												
1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	5	23/11	2.09
Category 4												
5	5	3	5	3	5	5	3	3	5	5	47/11	4.27
											Total	**12.35**
										Average	**12.35/4** = 3.08	

Let's assume SrA Amazing earns 4.2 points from the final assessment, iGECKO adds the mid-term (3.08) and the final score (4.2) together and then assigns the average of these two scores (3.64) to SrA Amazing's communication grade. A student's overall ratings can earn that student up to 5 points. (See example above)

Peer-to-Peer Feedback Process

1. Flight instructors provide each student with a copy of his/her ratings.
2. Using a round-robin process, students pair up and provide/seek feedback for approximately 3-4 minutes, then move to a different student, repeating this process for several rounds.
3. After the round-robin process, the flight leader uses any remaining time to lead a discussion focused on the need for feedback and the challenge of synthesizing, composing, framing, and adjusting messages when dealing with peers, subordinates, and supervisors. The discussion should also cover tips and techniques NCOs can use to become better at giving and seeking feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors. During this discussion, students are encouraged to share what they have learned from the feedback session and how they intend to use the information.

Reflective Thinking Essays

Overview: For this project, students capture what they think and how they feel about an identified topic, and use their personal or previous week's ALS experience/activities, to compose a reflective thinking essay. In small group sessions, students share and discuss their essays with other flight members. After a brief discussion, each group synthesizes the commonalities and significant differences to compose a short briefing. Next, each group selects one member of the group to brief the rest of the flight. This project occurs four times during the course.

Purpose: Reflective thinking causes deeper and longer lasting learning. It *is not* an 'add-on' to the learning process; rather it is integral to the complex process of becoming an effective leader.

Reflection:

- enables self-awareness.

- enables personal and professional growth.

- helps us realize why our successes were successful and why our failures occurred.

- helps us reformulate personal goals and beliefs.

- helps us make life choices consistent with our beliefs.

Questioning is the essence of reflection. Although the process of reflection can be uncomfortable at first, it is the catalyst for real change and growth. During this process, you will question what you have learned throughout the course as you reflect on the previous week's activities, to include lessons, briefings, discussions, exercises, study groups, and independent work.

Essays

1. Assessment: Summative (counts toward graduation), is rated as a "GO/NO-GO"; "NO-GO" must re-fire.
2. Reflective-Thinking Essay assignments are comprised of three Parts.
    Part 1: Self-directed activity that occurs outside the classroom

    3. Work alone and use the Reflective Thinking Essay Topic list provided at the end of this section to compose a weekly essay.

    4. Essay Requirements/Format:

    a. No longer, than two, typed, double-spaced pages (minimum of one half page)

    b. On plain bond paper, with one-inch margins all around

    c. Use 12-point Times New Roman font.

    d. Include the course prescribed identification line in the footer area of the first page, placed 0.75" (approximately) from bottom of page, and left justified.

    i.e. SrA Amazing/Flight A/A16/416-1542/aaa/1 May 12 includes your Rank Last Name/Flight/Student#/ Telephone#/initials/ Today's Date.

e. See attachment 1 for essay example

The Reflective Thinking Essay assignments are a weekly requirement due on various DOTs as indicated by the class schedule, during the first hour of class, just prior to the start of the first flight room session, unless otherwise indicated (see the course schedule for actual due dates/amendments).

Part 2: Group Discussion/Briefing Composition

Working in groups of three or four depending on class size, you will review and discuss your essays, looking for commonalities and differences; each group will synthesize its discussion (see attachment 2 for essay discussion example), and then develops a 3 to 5 minute briefing.

Part 3: Briefing

A spokesperson from each group delivers his/her group's briefing (see attachment 3 for essay briefing example).

Reflective Thinking Essay Topics

Reflective thinking essays do not need a formal introduction or conclusion. However, all essays must be typed, double spaced, use 12 point Times New Roman font, have one inch margins all around, be no longer than two pages, include an identification line (see example in Attachment 2), and be on plain bond paper.

*Identification Line (e.g. SrA Amazing/Flight A/A16/416-1542/aaa/1 May 12) includes your Rank Last Name/Flight/Student#/Telephone#/initials/Today's Date

Essay One: Your Leadership Manifesto

Answer the following questions:

1. What type of leader am I?

2. What leadership style do I use?

3. What type of NCO am I (want to be)?

4. What are my strengths?

5. What is my essence? (what qualities make you who you are)

Essay Two: Self Evaluation

Is based on a self-evaluation, answer the question:

What was my reaction to the peer assessments?

More significantly…

- Did the peer assessments affect me, i.e. sad, upset, and angry, etc.?
- Was I receptive to the feedback?
- Were what I considered, my strengths and weaknesses different from the way my peers perceived me?
- What did I learn about myself from my peers?
- Did I learn something new about myself?

- Will this affect my future behavior - how I react to, address, and/or handle future situations?

- What I will do differently is, or in the future, I plan to…

- Was myself perception confirmed by the peer assessment?

Essay Three: Noteworthy

Answer the question:

The most significant thing I learned last week was…

More significantly…
- My "aha" moment was…
- What have I learned that is causing me to interact differently?
- What new behaviors do I plan to exhibit and why?
- If I could change one thing about my leadership, it would be…
- The most frustrating part of last week was…
- I contributed to the learning process by…
- My déjà vu moment was…
- What new behaviors am I exhibiting?
- What have I learned from my individual projects?
- What have I learned from group projects?
- What coursework is/was frustrating and why?
- Do I consider alternative perspectives…why or why not?
- How has my problem solving skill changed…why or why not?

Note: Consider the statements and questions above as guides and/or prompts to help you evaluate yourself and compose your essays.

Essay Four : Change

For your final essay, review your first essay and answer the same questions again, but note what, if anything has changed and why.

Note: All assigned reflective thinking essays are shared openly in the flight room. Although not a requirement, students are welcomed and encouraged to maintain a separate "personal" reflective notebook to record their private thoughts and ideas that they do not wish to have shared in a public forum.

BRIEFING ASSIGNMENTS
Personal AF Narrative Briefing

Overview: Develop a 3-5 minute Personal Air Force narrative. The assignment focuses on responding to questions from key audiences that want to know what you do for the Air Force, why you joined, why you are still a member, and so forth.

Purpose: All Airmen must understand the requirement and rationale, to "tell the Air Force Story," and to be able to engage the American public to do so. Therefore, you must be prepared to tell your own positive Air Force story to key audiences. To do this successfully, you must compose a personal narrative that tells your Air Force story while also "staying in your lane," (comments strictly pertain to oneself; keep moving straight ahead and don't veer over into the affairs of others, don't about things you don't understand or know) and without compromising OPSEC. This assignment gives students an opportunity to demonstrate/hone/improve their writing and speaking skills.

Assessment: Instructors assess this briefing on the "GO/NO-GO" grading system, using the categories/weighted scale prescribed in SC01EI1, the Briefing Evaluation Instrument (see attachment 5). To pass this project, briefings must receive a "GO" on 17 or more of the 21 items on the evaluation instrument. As such, briefings delivered in less than the minimum allotted time (3 minutes), and/or not obtaining the minimum required number of "GO" ratings (17) within the grading termination time (5 minutes) will result in an automatic "NO-GO". This is a summative assignment and counts towards graduation.

Note: Students who fail to achieve an overall "GO" rating for this assignment must re-fire the briefing and they become ineligible for awards.

Specific Requirements:

This briefing is informational in nature.

    1. Students compose a positive personal Air Force narrative that is in their lane and that does not compromise OPSEC.

    2. No acronyms.

    3. A key-word outline *is mandatory* (for an example see SC01HO9 and/or reference T&Q). Include identification Line in the footer area of the key-word outline.

    Note: You may use a copy of your outline as a memory jogger. NO manuscript reading, you must be prepared to deliver a briefing with minimal memory aids and very little reading. Limit reading to quotes and information that must be read to be accurate. The key-word outline must be turned in to your instructor prior to the briefing.

    4. Visual aid(s) are prohibited!

    5. Briefing is 3 to 5 minutes.

        a. Briefings delivered in less than 3 minutes and/or not earning the required number of "GO" ratings will result in a "NO-GO" for the assignment.

        b. Grading for this assignment will terminate at the 5-minute mark.

c. Briefings will be stopped after 6 minutes

Note: All categories/content delivered after the 5-minute mark will automatically receive a "NO-GO" rating.

6. If using source other than yourself, fully integrate and qualify each source.

Note: No outside sources required and although sources can add support to your briefing, primary support should come from your own experience.

Key Air Force Message Briefing

Overview: Students develop a 5-7 minute briefing based on a Key Air Force Message *(i.e. Force Management, PME Transformation, Changes to Enlisted Performance Reports, DoD SAPR Prevention Strategy 2014-2016, Rand Study on workplace relations, CSAF Messages, CMSAF Messages, etc.).*

Purpose: NCOs must be prepared to brief Key Air Force Messages to subordinates and other key audiences. To do this successfully, NCOs must be able to conduct research about key messages, and then prepare briefings that capture the essence of the messages. This assignment gives you the opportunity to demonstrate/hone/improve your research, writing, and speaking skills.

Assessment: Instructors assess this briefing on the "GO/NO-GO" grading system, using the categories/weighted scale prescribed in SC01EI1, the Briefing Evaluation Instrument (see attachment 5). To pass this project, briefings must receive a "GO" on 17 or more of the 21 items on the evaluation instrument. As such, briefings delivered in less than the minimum allotted time (5 minutes), and/or not obtaining the minimum required number of "GO" ratings (17) within the grading termination time (7 minutes) will result in an automatic "NO-GO". This is a summative assignment and counts towards graduation.

Note: Students who fail to achieve an overall "GO" rating for this assignment must re-fire the briefing and they become ineligible for awards.

Specific Requirements:

This briefing is informational in nature.

1. Students select a Key Air Force Message about an Air Force initiative *(examples include but are not limited to: Force Management, EPME Transformation, Changes to Enlisted Performance Reports, DoD SAPR Prevention Strategy, Project Air Force Rand Studies, CSAF Messages, CMSAF Messages, etc.).*

Note: No two students may have the same topic unless authorized by instructor.

2. A key-word outline is mandatory (for an example see SC01HO9 and/or reference T&Q). Include identification Line in the footer area of the key-word outline.

Note: You may use a copy of your outline, as a memory jogger. NO manuscript reading, you must be prepared to deliver a briefing with minimal memory aids and very little reading. Limit reading to quotes and information that must be read to be accurate. A key-word outline must be turned in to your instructor prior to the briefing.

3. Visual aid(s) are prohibited (i.e. Power Point, videos, poster boards, handouts, etc.).

4. Briefing is 5 to 7 minutes.

    a. Briefings delivered in less than 7 minutes, and not earning the required number of "GO" ratings will result in an automatic "NO-GO" for the assignment.

    b. Grading for this assignment will terminate at the 7-minute mark.

    c. Briefings will be stopped after 8 minutes

    Note: All categories/content delivered after the 7-minute mark will automatically receive a "NO-GO" rating.

5. One outside source required, must fully integrate, and qualify each source.

6. Sources for Key Air Force Message include but are not limited to:

    a. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

    b. Department of Defense

    c. HAF (SECAF, CSAF and CMSAF)

    d. MAJCOM Commanders or Command Chiefs

    e. Combatant Commanders or Command Chiefs

    f. Direct Reporting Unit Commanders or Command Chiefs

    g. Field Operating Agency Commanders or Command Chiefs

    h. Number Air Force Commanders or Command Chiefs

    i. Air Force Personnel Center

Supervisory/ Narrative Writing Assignments

Overview: There are few things as frustrating as wanting to do a good job, but not having the tools or skills required. In the Air Force, we are constantly confronted with new challenges and responsibilities, and as new supervisors, you will be frequently expected to meet critical administrative requirements, sometimes with little to no notice, and often for the first time. All ALS writing assignments center around, and focus on standard communication tasks associated with supervisory responsibilities, to include the performance evaluation, corrective discipline, and recognition processes.

Purpose: As new supervisors, the supervisory/narrative writing assignments afford the opportunity to employ, become familiar with, and put into practice, some of the more commonly associated supervisory responsibilities, in a safe/controlled environment.

Assessment: To complete all required Supervisory/Narrative writing products students are assigned a subordinate, with all supporting documentation/information. Instructors will assess the supervisory/narrative writing assignments sessions using various designated Evaluation Instruments (see attachments 5 -10).

NOTE: Students should refrain from discarding completed assignments, as several assignments require the review of previous assignments. In addition, students are required to return all completed communication assignments to their instructor before they are

released or graduate. Failure to return completed assignments may result in disciplinary action, which may delay or eliminate graduation.

It is your responsibility to be mindful of all project requirements, evaluation criterion, and due dates!

*SPECIAL NOTE APPLICABLE TO ALL ASSIGNMENTS:

If scenario/handout or accompanying documents do not identify required information use the following:

> Nominee's Telephone(DSN & Commercial): DSN 999-1234/Comm (123) 999-1234
>
> Name of Unit Commander (First, Middle): John D.
>
> Name of Supervisor (First, Middle): Jane D.
>
> Commander Telephone(DSN & Commercial): DSN 999-5678/Comm (123) 999-5678
>
> For Any Date fields requiring the year: Use the current calendar year
>
> If no middle initial has been indicated use "NMI"

Specific Requirements: Using information supplied in the subordinate scenario handout, referenced AFIs, manuals and handbooks, as well as the skills taught in the performance evaluation, bullet writing, and supervisory writing lessons.

Bullet Writing Assignment

Prepare an AF Form 1206, *Nomination for Award*—Quarterly Awards Package for your Subordinate.

a. Using the skills learned during the bullet-writing lesson, bullet-writing student guide, Tongue & Quill, and SC01VA1 - AU Writing and Style Guide, properly draft an AF Form 1206, *Nomination for Award* quarterly awards package for your simulated Airman. Use information from Part 1 of your subordinate scenario to develop nine properly formatted bullet statements for the Award Period 1 Apr – 30 Jun YY.

b. Specific Instructions:

- Fill in all blocks of information on the AF Form 1206.

- Include all appropriate categories, content as required, IAW AFI 36-2805 (section 3.10.6) and an Acronym legend for any uncommon Acronyms used.

- Compose nine (3-Part) bullet statements as outlined in the categories below:

    - five bullets for Leadership and Job Performance in Primary Duty

    - two bullets for Significant Self-Improvement

    - two bullets of Base or Community Involvement

- Insert course prescribed identification line in the bottom most portion of the AF Form 1206 (i.e. SrA Amazing/Flight A/A16/416-1542/aaa/1 May 16)

- Review your completed bullets using the provided Bullet Writing Checklist at SC01HO10 in your student guide.

- For Scoring Criteria: see SC01EI2, 1206/Bullet Statement Evaluation Instrument – attachment 6 of the Supervisory Communication Handout Packet

- Turn in on DOT assigned

Letter of Counseling (LOC)

Based on an infraction committed by your subordinate, write them a Letter of Counseling (LOC)

a. Using information obtained from your subordinate scenario, and using the format, skills, and techniques taught in the standards and discipline, bullet writing, and supervisory writing lessons, on plain bond paper, you are to write a LOC IAW the guidelines prescribed by AFI 36-2907.

b. Use assignment due date as the date of LOC was issued

c. Include an identification Line in the footer area of the document

d. For Scoring Criteria: see SC01EI3 Letter of Counseling Evaluation Instrument – Attachment 8 of the Supervisory Communication Handout Packet

e. Turn in on DOT assigned

Decoration/Medal Citation

Compose a Decoration/Medal Citation for your subordinate

a. Using information supplied in your subordinate scenarios, template provided, AF references, as well as skills taught in the supervisory writing, performance evaluation, and bullet-writing lessons write an Achievement Medal Citation for your subordinate's outstanding performance during the designated period.

b. The decoration/medal information is as follows:

- an Achievement Medal

- for Outstanding Achievement

- issued for the period of: 1 October to 31 December

- achievement narrative must be a minimum of 8 lines/maximum of 12 lines

c. Omit any otherwise prescribed signature blocks

d. Include an identification Line in the footer area of the document

e. For Scoring Criteria: see SC01EI5, Citation Evaluation Instrument - Attachment 9 of the Supervisory Communication Handout Packet

f. Turn in on DOT assigned

Initial and Midterm Feedback Sessions

Overview: For this assignment, you use knowledge, and skills gained from the Supervisory Communication and Performance Evaluation lessons to conduct a summative interpersonal feedback session. Evaluation of this assignment focuses on how well you are able to perform a supervisor to subordinate feedback session, including identifying, addressing and resolving all prominent situations, and emergent leadership issues, presented by the scenario.

Purpose: Supervisors regularly exchange information with peers, subordinates and leaders. Good interpersonal skills play a key role is the success of these exchanges. Poor interpersonal skills can cause others to become confused, frustrated, and even angry. This assignment gives students the formal opportunity to demonstrate mastery of their interpersonal skills.

Assessment: Instructors assess the sessions using SC01EI6, the Interpersonal Feedback Evaluation Instrument (attachment 10). To pass this assignment, students must earn at least 14 out of 20 points on the instrument during the summative evaluation.

Initial Feedback Session

Specific Requirements:

Initial Feedback sessions will consist of the supervisor (student being assessed) and one subordinate (role played by a peer) completing an Initial Feedback session:

a. You will conduct an Initial Performance Feedback session based on your subordinate scenario and the AF Form 931, *Airman Comprehensive Assessment (ACA).*

b. In preparation for delivery of the initial feedback session, you will review sections I – III of the ACA, write out two standards for sections VI – VIII. of the ACA. You will explain these standards to your subordinate during the initial feedback session.

c. You will be evaluated on how well you perform the interpersonal communication skills of: (Opening, Attending, Responding, Resolving, and Closing) while effectively using the Airman Comprehensive Assessment worksheet to have a conversation about your Airman's personal and professional development.

d. You will have 12 minutes to conduct each session (Initial). Grading will stop at 12 minutes and sessions will be terminated at 13 minutes. All grading categories not accomplished in the 12 minute time period will be automatically scored as a "NO-GO")

e. You will be scored on "GO/NO-GO" basis; however, you must receive 14 or more "GO" markings to pass this evaluation.

Midterm Feedback Session

Specific Requirements:

Midterm Feedback sessions will consist of the supervisor (student being assessed) and one

subordinate (role played by a peer) completing a Midterm Feedback session:

    a. You will conduct a Midterm Performance Feedback session based on your subordinate scenario and the AF Form 931, *Airman Comprehensive Assessment (ACA)*.

    b. In preparation for delivery of the Midterm Feedback Session, you will again review sections I – III of the ACA, but this time you will give your subordinate the appropriate markings for sections VI – VIII of the ACA and write in 2 supporting comments for each section.

    c. You will be evaluated on how well you perform the interpersonal communication skills of: (Opening, Attending, Responding, Resolving, and Closing) while effectively using the Airman Comprehensive Assessment worksheet to have a conversation about your Airman's personal and professional development.

    d. You will have 12 minutes to conduct each session (Midterm). Grading will stop at 12 minutes and sessions will be terminated at 13 minutes. All grading categories not accomplished in the 12 minute time period will be automatically scored as a "NO-GO").

    e. You will be scored on "GO/NO-GO" basis; however, you must receive 14 or more GO markings to pass this evaluation.

Personal Leadership Development Plan

Overview: For this assignment, you will develop a Personal Leadership Development Plan (PLDP) and participate in a one-on-one instructor led feedback sessions. Plans take into account, among other things, your reflections over your ALS experience, results from peer assessments, and information gained from any applicable lessons. You will create your plan using the format provided in the Leader Influence lesson.

Purpose: Effective leadership does not just happen; it requires planning and a great deal of effort. Once developed, personal leadership plans require continuous updating to remain effective. This project allows students to develop a PLDP tailored to their professional goals.

Assessment: Instructors assess the PLDP on a "GO/NO-GO" basis on the SA05AI1 PDLP Assessment instrument. This is a summative assignment and counts toward graduation. Of 21 possible categories, 15 or more must be marked "Go" to pass this assessment. Failure to obtain the proper score, complete, and meet the intent of this assignment will result in a "NO-GO" rating, and will require re-fire and render student ineligible for awards.

Specific Requirements: This plan, simply, is a list of some core traits, other qualities and skills on which you intend to focus your personal development efforts, either to sustain strengths that you have or to overcome weaknesses that you have found you have.

Your Plan should be one, which identifies, for each trait, quality or skill listed, some general steps and some specific actions that you will take to further develop your strength in those traits, qualities and skills. It should be a plan, which sets goals and deadlines for taking and completing the actions you intend.

It should be a plan that you maintain in a readily available and visible format so that you can

track your progress.

Independent Research

This is time set aside for students to conduct the research, and/or practice the skills necessary to complete specific communication assignments.

Conclusion

Although we have covered the writing assignments and evaluations instruments, we strongly encourage you to review chapters 1 through 8 of the T&Q for more detailed information, and the tips for success, listed at the end of main point 1. As you develop your assignments, referring back to the assessment/evaluation instruments will help ensure your success. Lack of good communication skills will not only diminish your abilities as NCOs and supervisors, but can be detrimental to your organization's performance. Therefore, you must be concerned with communicating effectively. To do this, you will need to use your understanding of the communication process to ensure the message, whether written or spoken, is received as you intend. Regardless of your current communicative skills, you are bound to improve your abilities if you focus on the basics presented throughout this Supervisory Communication lesson.

MP 3. CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

STUDENT PREPARATION: In preparation for Supervisory Communicator – Culture of Engagement Main Point presentation, read this main point and be prepared for the classroom discussion (6500 words/55 minutes)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shared his thoughts on strategic communication:

Strategic Communication - Applies to Every Airman

"Airmen should be proud of who they are and what they do, and they should be proud to share that with others."

"The whole idea of strategic communications is to use every opportunity to get our messages out there."

"Our strategic communication efforts will build better relationships with key audiences and the support that is critical to operational success, force modernization and the development of our most precious resource: Airmen."

 "First and foremost, we want to educate Airmen so that the information they do have is accurate and appropriate."

 "There is a difference between wanting to inform people or influence them, and there are appropriate ways to do both."

Excerpts from the Air Force News article, "*Strategic Communication Applies to Every Airman*"

"It is time for us to take a harder look at 'strategic communication.' Frankly, I don't care for the term. We get too hung up on that word, strategic. If we've learned nothing else these past 8 years, it should be that the lines between strategic, operational, and tactical are blurred beyond distinction. This is particularly true in the world of communication, where videos and images plastered on the Web—or even the idea of their being so posted—can and often do drive national security decision making.
But beyond the term itself, I believe we have walked away from the original intent.

By organizing to it—creating whole structures around it—we have allowed strategic communication to become a thing instead of a process, an abstract thought instead of a way of thinking. It is now sadly something of a cottage industry. We need to get back to basics, and we can start by not beating ourselves up.

 The problem isn't that we are bad at communicating or being outdone by men in caves. Most of them aren't even in caves. The Taliban and al Qaeda live largely among the people. They intimidate and control and communicate from within, not from the sidelines. And they aren't just out there shooting videos, either. They deliver. Want to know what happens if somebody violates their view of Sharia law? You don't have to look very far or very long. Each beheading, each bombing, and each beating sends a powerful message or, rather, is a powerful message.[x]"

Strategic communication isn't a thing; it's a state of mind. If only our diplomats, public spokesmen, and other message-makers thought as strategic communicators, better yet – as strategic influencers, we would exceed even our own expectations in solving today's diplomatic problems.

Over the last few years, it seemed Strategic Communication belonged mostly to strategic levels of government, business, and industry. However, different uses of the term have led to significant confusion. Therefore, before we begin exploring the culture of engagement, we must first understand what strategic communication is.

What is Strategic Communication?

So what exactly is *strategic communication* and why is it important to you-the noncommissioned officer? A first impression of this term may lead us to believe that it only pertains to leaders at the Air Force's strategic-level. Not exactly, Strategic Communication involves every Airman, at every duty location, regardless of rank or responsibility.

One DOD dictionary defines Strategic Communication as:

> *Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.*[xi]

If the AF is to be successful in accomplishing its mission and pursuing its vision, then every Airman must be aware of and understand the primary purpose of Strategic Communication is to ***influence particular audiences***. At this point you might be thinking. "Strategic communication is way above my pay grade." Think again! As a member of the Profession of Arms, you have an important role in support of the Air Force's Strategic Message. You represent our nation. With this in mind, let's examine your role a little closer.

Airman's Role in Strategic Communication

Department of State
Determines specific policy objective and publishes a message communicating the objective
Policies include: Middle East, North Korea, non-proliferation, economic issues, climate change, etc.

Department of Defense
- ✓ Significant "Doer" for DOS
- ✓ Influences DOS in determining objective
- ✓ Supports DOS decision selecting objective
- ✓ Routes objective/message to AF commanders

Other US Departments, Offices, Agencies and Commissions

SECAF, CSAF, USAF
- ✓ Routes objective/message to MAJCOMS

MAJCOMS
- ✓ Disseminates objective/message to Wings

Wings
- ✓ Commander understands and employs their wing's part of objective
- ✓ Establishes *mission-specific wing priorities* to support DOS objective

Groups
- ✓ Commanders assign/align group activities to support wing priorities

Squadrons
- ✓ Commanders ensure squadron activities support wing priorities

Airmen
Tells their "Air Force Story"
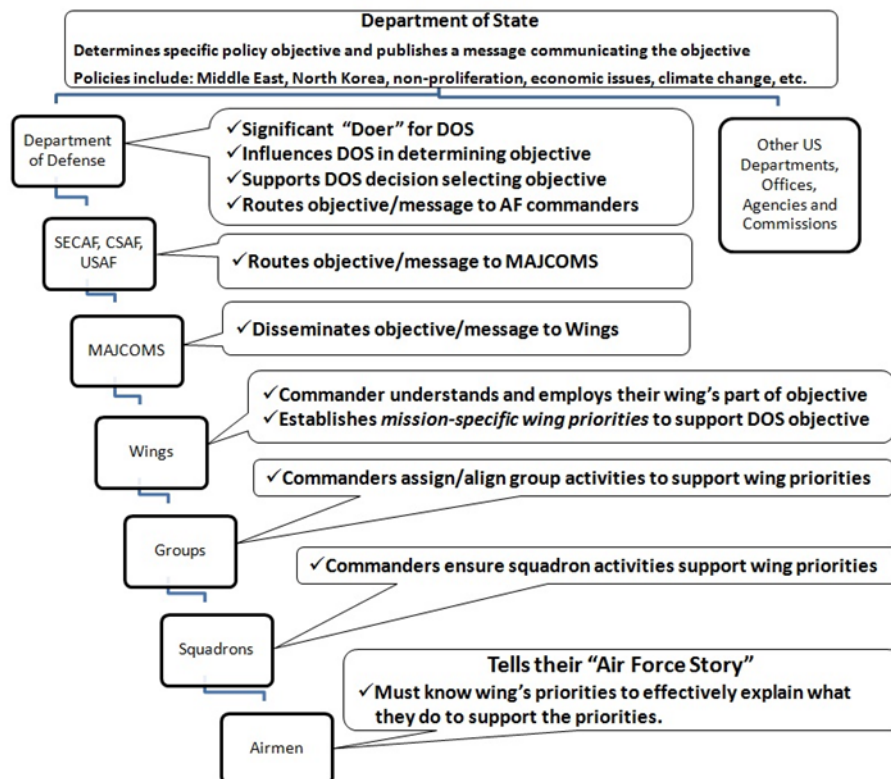- ✓ Must know wing's priorities to effectively explain what they do to support the priorities.

Figure 3. Strategic Communication Basics

The Department of State (DOS), also known as the State Department, advises and leads the nation in foreign policy issues[xii]. The DOS negotiates treaties and agreements with foreign entities, and represents the United States at the United Nations.

The DOS has the ultimate responsibility for monitoring the policies below, for determining specific policy objectives, and for publishing messages to communicate the objective to appropriate audiences.

Afghanistan	Human Rights	Food Security	Iran
Climate Change	Economic Issues	Haiti	Iraq
Counterterrorism	Energy Security	Health	Landmines
Middle East	Muslim Outreach	Narcotics	Nonproliferation
North Korea	Pakistan	Piracy	Sudan
Trafficking in Persons	War Crimes	Women's Issues	Youth

Strategic Communication begins with an integrated and synchronized message that is presented consistently to key audiences to achieve strategic, operational, and tactical effects. Though the Department of Defense (DOD) offers advice and input regarding the objective, the DOS makes the final determination of what the objective (and message) will entail, the audience to communicate to, and the communication medium (teleconference, newspaper, press release, etc.) to use. Once the objective and message are finalized, they are distributed to the appropriate government departments, organizations, offices, agencies, and commissions for dissemination. If the objective involves Air Force participation, the DOD routes the objectives message to strategic-level members of the Air Force.

The Secretary of the Air Force, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and component and combatant commanders either present the message or down-channel it to the next appropriate level. Major command (MAJCOM) leadership acknowledges the objective and message; consistently communicating and/or routing the message to their respective wing's whose mission contributes to the objective.

Wings echo strategic messages prescribed by the DOS to appropriate audience(s) by adding their wing's mission and priorities and how they support the objectives of the DOS message.

It is here, at the wing (tactical) level, where Airmen have the greatest impact in the strategic communication process. Each Airman must know his or her wing's mission and priorities in order to effectively relate their assigned duties and responsibilities to these wing initiatives. Telling their "Air Force Story" is critical to the effectiveness of the strategic communication effort.

With our basic understanding of Strategic Communication, let's see how it relates to media engagement.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Engagement

The goal of engagement is to fulfill our obligation to provide truthful, timely, and accurate information about military activities and personnel. Providing accurate information that is consistent with security guidelines enhances public trust and support for our AF. As such, the AF Core Value of Integrity First ensures your communication will always be truthful, credible and remain within the bounds of *security, accuracy, propriety,* and *policy* (SAPP).

- Security - is the communication violating Operations Security (OPSEC)? OPSEC's desired affect is to influence the adversary's behavior and actions by protecting friendly operations and activities.

- Accuracy - does it tell the right story, does the communication contain facts?

- Propriety - is the communication appropriate to the purpose or circumstances of the media engagement based on established standards? (see *Interviews Do's and Don'ts* later in this Student Guide)

- Policy - is everyone who is engaging the media adhering to Air Force policy (dress and appearance, military bearing, ethical behavior, etc.)?

Remember, the impression you give helps shape public opinion and support for the AF, its mission and its Airmen.

The AF wants every Airman to be a communicator and spokesperson for the AF. This means being proud of who you are and what you do and taking every opportunity to positively share your AF experiences. However, keep in mind, SAPP rules must be followed in all communication settings (e.g., face-to-face communication, speaking on the phone or in writing (letters, text messaging, social networks or email), regardless of whether you are sharing with family, friends, the public or the media.

The AF offers several suggestions to communicate more effectively. Perhaps the best thing you can do is to prepare and practice answers to commonly asked questions (e.g. your personal "story"). Take time to anticipate questions and think about your answers thoroughly in advance. Lastly, having some general items to talk about can really come in handy when others ask you broad questions at the spur of the moment**.**

OPSEC

If you talk about
Where they are going

They may never make
it there

Figure 4. OPSEC

OPSEC is a military capability within Information Operations (IO). IO is the integrated employment of three operational elements: influence operations (IFO), electronic warfare operations, and network warfare operations. IO aims to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human or automated decision-making while protecting our own.

IFO employs core military capabilities of psychological operations (PSYOP), OPSEC, military deception (MILDEC), counterintelligence (CI) operations, public affairs (PA) operations, and counterpropaganda operations to affect behaviors, protect operations, and communicate commander's intent and project accurate information to achieve desired effects across the battle space. OPSEC's desired affect is to influence the adversary's behavior and actions by protecting friendly operations and activities.

> **Purpose**. The purpose of OPSEC is to reduce the vulnerability of Air Force missions from successful adversary collection and exploitation of critical information. OPSEC applies to all activities that prepare, sustain, or employ forces during all phases of operations.[i]

> **Critical Information**. Critical information is specific facts about friendly intentions, capabilities, and activities vitally needed by adversaries for them to plan and act effectively, so as to guarantee failure or unacceptable consequences for friendly mission accomplishment. OPSEC indicators are friendly detectable actions and open-source information that can be collected, interpreted, or pieced together by an adversary to derive critical information. The product of the first step in the OPSEC process is a Critical Information.[ii]

The individuals responsible for the planning and execution of the unit's mission best identify critical information. An OWG or staff planning team can most effectively accomplish this task. Once a CIL is developed, commanders must approve the list and then ensure their critical information is protected and/or controlled.

Critical information and OPSEC indicators will be identified at the earliest stages of planning an operation or activity and continuously updated as necessary to support mission effectiveness.

Threats. A threat is an adversary with the capability and intent to undertake any actions detrimental to the success of program activities or operations. The primary sources to obtain threat information are your local intelligence and counterintelligence organizations. Intelligence organizations analyze the threat through research of intelligence, counterintelligence, and open source information to identify who is likely to disrupt, deny, degrade, or destroy planned operations.

A threat assessment should identify adversaries, their goals, what they already know, their capability to collect OPSEC indicators and derive critical information, and potential courses of action.[xiii]

Vulnerabilities. An OPSEC vulnerability is a condition where friendly actions provide indicators that may be obtained and accurately evaluated by an adversary in time to provide a basis for effective adversary decision-making. The Operations Security Working Group (OWG) or staff planning team must conduct the vulnerability analysis based on operational planning and current operating environment.[xiv]

Risk. An OPSEC risk is a measure of the potential degree to which critical information and indicators are subject to loss through adversary exploitation. The OWG or staff planning team must conduct the OPSEC risk assessment and develop recommended OPSEC measures based on operational planning and current operating environment.[xv] A typical risk assessment will:

Compare vulnerabilities identified with the probability of an adversary being able to exploit it in time to be useful to determine a risk level.

Determine potential OPSEC measures to reduce vulnerabilities with the highest risk. The most desirable OPSEC measures are those that combine the highest possible protection with the least adverse effect on operational effectiveness.

You *cannot* release classified information (information that is not available to the public and would not be released under the Freedom of Information Act), except to authorized individuals with the proper security clearance and a need to know. Before sharing military information or answering questions about the military, ask yourself, "Could what I disclose be harmful to myself or my unit?" If it could be harmful—Do Not disclose it!

Perception

In this technologically advanced era, reality is not what actually exists, but what is *perceived to exist*. Most Americans gain whatever knowledge and appreciation they have of the Air Force, not from direct contact or experience, but from remote observation. Usually, this information is derived through the media.

Much of the public's high opinion of Air Force effectiveness comes from press accounts. News media have covered every major engagement in which we have participated.

We must actively seek to keep the media informed so that our story will be told. At the same time, we also need to respond to legitimate news media requests for information and be prepared to understand that the resulting story may not always be to our liking.

Whether the coverage is good or bad, if we are to effectively represent the Air Force position on an issue, we must understand the communications process. Our positive image represents years of dedication to duty and the personal sacrifice of thousands, some of whom gave their lives. We have a duty to tell their story and the story of our military. If we don't, who will?

Using your Public Affairs Office

Your public affairs office is a valuable resource in dealing with the media. You can rely on them to:

- Advise if the proposed interview is authorized or appropriate

- Research potential interview issues, including questions likely to be asked

- Assist in helping you prepare for the interview, including review of possible questions and answers and conducting one-on one rehearsals

- Make all arrangements for the interview, including ground rules, time and location

- Monitor the interview, if necessary, to provide an in-house record of the interview, as well as follow up on items to be provided later

- Act as a liaison with the news organization and provide follow-up video copies, news clippings, etc., of the resulting story
- Provide after-action review and feedback: did we get our message out and, if so, how effectively

Public affairs personnel have been trained to tell you the bad news as well as the good news. Make it easy for them to be absolutely honest, even critical, with you. The most important role Public Affairs has is to prepare people to deal with reporters. In this era, anyone can be tapped to be the spokesperson with very little warning and the individual selected should not be thrust into the spotlight unprepared. Every commander, civilian executive, senior officer, SNCO and NCO should know and be able to apply the techniques required to deal effectively with the media.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to a successful interview!

- Define you communication objective

- Know the issues

- Build your message

- Anticipate tough questions

- Understand the interview format

- Prepare your answers

- Practice your responses

Interview Formats

There are several types of news media interviews. Circumstances can range from an impromptu or prescheduled encounter on a routine subject to an accident, incident, crisis, or contingency situation. No two situations will be alike. Understanding the format of the interview will help you be prepared to properly engage the media.

Face-to-Face Interview: Normally a one-on-one encounter. Will it be edited or live?

Remote Interview: Speaking to an unseen reporter through an earpiece and microphone.

Press Conference: You may never have to participate in a press conference. However, items to consider are: Will the interview be seated, standing, or a media roundtable.

On-Scene Interview: Usually involves a reporter and "over the shoulder" cameraman

Ambush Interview: The reporter and camera operator just suddenly appear and start asking questions.

Message Development

A message is key bits of information you want your audience to know, in a form the media can use. It is effects based, designed to achieve communication goals, and it is repeatable, and to help cut through the clutter, always tied to a factual message. Don't try to memorize a response. Develop an understanding of the one or two main points, which promote the Air Force side of the issue.

When you are drafting your message, use active, high-energy words and emphasize the positive. Consider word usage, don't use long words when a short one will work and avoid jargon, acronyms, and scientific terms. Use the *inverted pyramid* (Figure 2) to help draft answers.
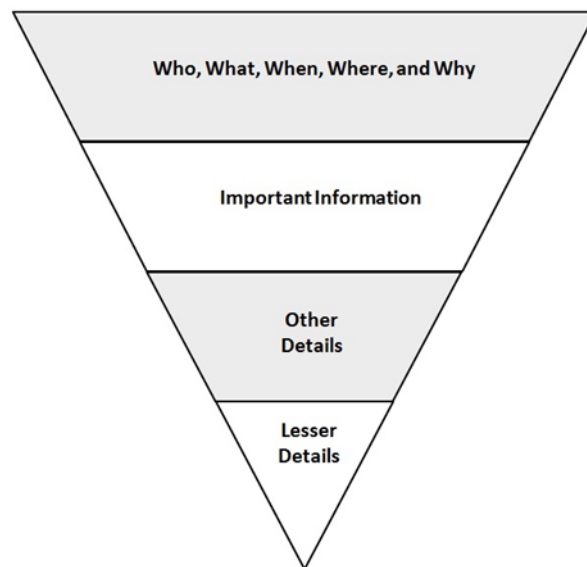

Figure 5. Inverted Pyramid

Types of Interviews

➢ **On-the-Record:** Consider everything you say "on-the-record." Never say anything you don't want to see printed or broadcasted. The quote is attributed to your name.

➢ **Background:** The background interview allows you to provide context to stories, ensure the proper emphasis is placed on key aspects, and stories are accurately reported. The quote is attributed to a generic title.

➢ **Off-the-Record:** Clearly state which portion of the interview is "off-the-record" to ensure there is no chance of confusion. Be advised, there is always a risk that the

reporter will not honor your agreement.

Interview Techniques

Hooking. Taking advantage of opportunities before the interview to get the reporter interested in what you want to talk about. The idea is to entice the interviewer into your agenda. Tell the interviewer what it is that's on your mind. You will be amazed at how receptive an interviewer will be to talking about what *you* wanted to talk about.

Example: *"I know you are interested in talking about personnel moves, but that's only a small part of something much more important to your audience…"*

Bridging. A technique used to move from the reporter's agenda to your message. Also, bridging is a way to smoothly transition from the question asked to your message. A direct question deserves a direct answer. However, after briefly touching upon the answer, bridge to your message and agenda.

Examples:

"The F-22 does cost a lot, but this aircraft delivers ...."

"Fifteen airmen died in combat today, however, they died defending ..."

"This base is not closing, and our mission here will ..."

Flagging. A technique used to emphasize your message. Use verbal clues such as tone of voice and non-verbally with hand gestures or facial expressions to emphasize a point.

Example: "If you remember one thing today, it should be…"

Personal Credibility. You are the expert! Use your personal authority, experience and establish your professional credentials.

Example: "From my 15 years of experience…"

Key Points.

> ➢ Be yourself
> ➢ "No comment" is not an answer
> ➢ Talk headlines not history
> ➢ Know your facts
> ➢ Asking for a restart is okay
> ➢ "I don't know, but my PA will follow up" is okay
> ➢ Stay in your lane
> ➢ Protect and correct the record
> ➢ Repeat and restate
> ➢ Remember, how you say it is as important as what you say

Figure 6. Watch what you say and how you say it

Interviews Do's and Don'ts

Treat the media as you would want others to treat you. If you are distant and hostile with the media, you'll get what you give. The media needs and wants information. Spokespeople who are accessible and sensitive to a reporter's need for information will generate credibility and create a good working relationship.

Do's

> ➢ Make short, simple, and specific statements. If your quotes don't stand on their own, then you failed -not the reporter.

> ➢ Respond to a question then stop. Don't feel you have to keep talking. Make the interviewer keep the interview going.

> ➢ Discuss only matters of which you have direct knowledge. Avoid hypothetical situations. Remember, there is no such thing as a personal opinion when you are speaking for the Air Force

> ➢ You aren't obligated to tell everything you know.

> ➢ If you can't answer the question, give a reason why. There's nothing wrong with "I don't know" or "I can't answer that for security reasons." Be sure to follow-up with a pre-planned message or promise to get the information immediately following the interview (then do it).

> ➢ Take a second or two to think about your answers. Not only do rapid responses appear rehearsed, but also may not represent your best answer.

> ➢ Avoid "no comment." To many reporters and the public, it may falsely suggest you are hiding information, lack concern or don't wish to cooperate.

> ➢ Use personal examples in your responses so those who read, view or listen to the story can relate to you and those your represent as "real people." Further, a reporter can't argue with personal experience.

> ➢ Talk from the perspective of the American public's interest, not from the viewpoint of the military's interest. Tell the audience how the nation benefits, not what the military stands to gain.

> ➢ It's a good idea to encapsulate the question into your response for a taped interview. When the interview is aired or printed, the question may not be identified, and you

need to make sure the subject is established.

  ➢ When given a multiple-part question, answer the one segment that allows you to make a positive point. Ignore the others. If the interviewer wants to return to unanswered questions, he or she will.

  ➢ Avoid repeating or using "color words" that may have a negative connotation. Words such as "massacre," "scandal," "deaths," "corruption," etc., induce overly strong, emotional reactions and may be counterproductive to your objectives.

Don'ts

  ➢ If the interviewer is hostile, don't mirror his or her attitude. Don't get angry or lose your temper. Control the interview: the audience will only see your angry answer, not the question that instigated it.

  ➢ Don't answer with just a simple "yes" or "no." Don't be curt. There is no such thing as a dumb question; treat every question as a chance to state the Air Force position or message.

  ➢ Don't pretend to be perfect. Admitting mistakes from time to time demonstrates candor and the integrity of our organization.

  ➢ Don't use acronyms, technical terms, or jargon. Speak conversationally as you would to a non-military high school friend.

  ➢ Don't begin with gratuitous phrases, such as, "I'm glad you asked that question," or "That's a good question." It wastes time, doesn't convey anything, and implies that all the other questions were stupid.

  ➢ Don't lie or dodge questions. Answer as honestly and completely as you can. The Air Force's reputation and public trust rests on your veracity.

  ➢ Don't use — or repeat — unverified terminology or "facts" given by a reporter, unless you are positive of their accuracy. Politely correct a reporter if you know the real facts. State that you are not aware of the validity of questionable figures or if you have not personally verified the accuracy of the referenced information. By using incorrect information or failing to correct erroneous statements, the public will associate them with you and assume they are true.

After the interview, don't forget to tie up loose ends. Ensure your staff follows through on securing any information that you said you would find out. Inform your interviewer that you are available for additional information or clarification if needed.

Members of the media are a link between the Air Force and the public. They form the conduit of communication that is vital in keeping a flow of accurate and timely information to the American public. This information is the bedrock of the public's perception of the military. It is the responsibility of each Airman, and particularly those who deal directly with the media, to become familiar with the process and feel comfortable in this environment. As a spokesperson for the Air Force, you must keep the conduit free of obstruction by providing honest and accurate information to the public. Remember that your Public Affairs Officer is your local media expert and can provide the best advice before, during, and after your interview. Seek the PA's counsel and take advantage of his or her experience with the

media.

Communication to a larger community (e.g. through social media) is effective as well, but ensure that such engagement remains within the bounds of security, accuracy, propriety and policy (SAPP) and stays "within your lane." Whether you are representing your base at a community function or serving in a contingency operation, all Airmen are front-line ambassadors for the AF. For this very reason, you must always let the AF Core Values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do shine through in every situation.

Social Media

"In this environment, the old adage that "A lie can be halfway around the world before the truth has its boots on" is even more undeniable with today's technologies…"[xvi]

> Former Secretary of
> Defense Donald
> Rumsfeld

Figure 7. Deployed military member using social media

Although this reading covers terms and definitions associated with social media and lists the most popular web sites, the main focus is on social media guidelines, which are presented here as preparatory material for the in-class discussion.

It goes without saying that anytime you engage in social media, you represent your respective service and, therefore should not do anything to discredit yourself or your service. In general, the Armed Forces view personal websites and blogs positively, and it respects the rights of its members to use them as a medium of self-expression.

However, we must abide by certain restrictions to ensure good order and discipline. As military members, we're on duty 24-hours a day, 365-days a year and our actions are subject to the UCMJ. Even if we state we are not representing the Air Force (or another service), other audiences may not interpret the information that way. Following the rules is paramount, especially when it comes to national security.

Most social media web sites have their own policies, and though Air Force policies incorporate and expand upon the web site policies, we must adhere to both because, by the nature of our business, we are always on the record and must always represent our core values, even on the Web.

Terms and Definitions Associated with Emerging Channels of Communication

BLOG(s): Comes from the term web log (also called Weblog). A diary on a web site: usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary intended for public viewing. Most blog-style web sites allow users to reflect, share opinions, and

discuss

various topics in the form of an online journal. Items—called posts—may have keyword tags associated with them, are usually available as feeds. A blog is now considered a powerful marketing and branding tool that has the power to attract new business and a like-minded group of individuals.

Microblogging: A passive broadcast medium in the form of blogging. A microblog differs from a traditional blog in that its content is typically much smaller, in both actual size and aggregate file size. A microblog entry could consist of nothing but a short sentence fragment, or an image or embedded video. Some microblogging services offer features such as privacy settings, which allow users to control who can read their microblogs, or alternative ways of publishing entries besides the web-based interface. These may include text messaging, instant messaging, E-mail, or digital audio.

WEB 2.0: A term coined by O'Reilly Media in 2004 to describe blogs, social networking sites and other Internet-based services that emphasize collaboration and sharing, rather than less interactive publishing (Web 1.0). It is associated with the idea of the Internet as platform.

SOCIAL NETWORKING: A place to share information and interact with the public and with Airmen from all over the world. The official Air Force Facebook fan page is: http://www.facebook.com/USairforce.

Airmen Engage with Social Media

How does Airmen use of social media affect the public perception of the Air Force? Nearly 70 percent of Airmen use YouTube to load their videos and share and nearly 50 percent use Facebook. Fifty percent of Airmen want the Air Force to take a more active role in social media.

Public opinion and institutional standing are evaluated daily through social media postings by Airmen. Now the Air Force is meeting this challenge and engaging online discussions by committing each Airman to act as a communicator to be the voice of the Air Force in the blogosphere and in their social media outlets.

Official Air Force Social Media Sites to include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram and Blog can be found at http://www.af.mil/AFSites/SocialMediaSites.aspx

Popular Social Media Sites

FACEBOOK: A free, social media and networking site, allows commentaries, virtual gifts exchanged between friends, and photos posted with captioning and commentaries. 70% of users are outside the United States.

TWITTER: Twitter is a microblogging site that asks the question, "What are you doing?" and allows short (140 characters) text updates to be published and viewed by the author's followers immediately. Updates can be posted on the Web or via mobile phones. Used for linking to other Web sites and as a simple customer service tool.

YOUTUBE: A site where users can upload, view and share videos. Keywords, tags, drive the search function and it is highly recommended the tag fields of all videos be

populated with useful key wording. The Air Force presence on YouTube is Air Force Blue Tube.

> Instagram: Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

> Snapchat: Snapchat is a mobile application that allows users to send video and pictures to a select group of recipients. The videos and pictures self-destruct after a few seconds.

> Vine: Vine is a micro-video social network that limits each video to six seconds.

Social Media Guidelines

Don't Give Classified Info: Don't divulge classified, FOUO or sensitive materials, photos, or video. OPSEC is crucial to our mission, think before you speak or film—if you're not sure, ask someone! A harmless video of an Airman dancing on the flightline could be sensitive if it's a deployed environment showing bombers on the flightline. Be smart. Security is at the source.

Stay In Your Lane: Discussing issues related to your AFSC or personal experiences is acceptable but do not discuss areas of expertise for which you have no background or knowledge. An aircraft mechanic is well suited to communicate messages about aircraft maintenance, but blogging about legal issues—not a good idea.

Don't Lie: Credibility is critical, without it, no one cares what you have to say…it's also punishable by the UCMJ to give a false statement.

Give Your Opinion: Yes, tell them what YOU think…just make sure you state that this is your opinion and not that of the organization. Also, be sure to identify what is your opinion and what is factual.

Always Identify Yourself: Identification makes your post more credible.

Safety: Videos that get widespread attention, or become "viral," feature death-defying stunts or acts that are considered "extreme" in nature. Don't let the desire to get your message across compromise your consideration for safety.

Be Aware of the Image You Present: If using a visual medium, don't let your message be overshadowed because the viewer's attention is drawn to your improperly worn uniform or something occurring in the background. The image you present will set the tone for your message and determine whether people will listen to or ignore your message.

Your tactical representation could have strategic and international consequences for the Air Force and the nation.

Use Common Sense: This is the bottom line. If you wouldn't say it in front of your mother, you probably shouldn't say it on YouTube. Realize that your words and images will go out to thousands and possibly millions of people around the world instantly and once it's out there, it's out there for good. Your unit Public Affairs shop should always be a source of advice and guidance in this medium. Also, be careful what personal information you divulge, such as address, phone numbers, or any information that could aid identity thieves or

the enemy.

Don't Be Afraid to Take Calculated Risks: Military life often deals in ambiguity: In order to make the best decision, it's recommended to take in as many variables as possible in order to make the most accurate decision.

The Enemy is Engaged: The enemy is engaged in this battlespace and you must engage there as well.

The New Media provides a new toolset that commanders and enlisted leaders can use to achieve military objectives. However, most leaders are just learning to use this new toolset and discovering just how *powerful* and *dangerous* social media can be. Whether its blogs, tweets, Facebook, Instagram or other social media web sites, our Airmen communicate via social media and networking which means, "…all users of this new communication opportunity must be ever mindful of their responsibilities in managing and self-policing the flow of information."[xvii]

Conclusion

Across all of our efforts, effective strategic communications are essential to sustaining global legitimacy and supporting policy aims. Aligning our actions with our words is a shared responsibility that must be fostered by a culture of communication throughout the government. We must also be more effective in our deliberate communication and engagement, and do a better job understanding the attitudes, opinions, grievances, and concerns of peoples -- not just elites -- around the world. Doing so is critical to allow us to convey credible, consistent messages, develop effective plans and to better understand how our actions will be perceived.[xviii]

In this ever more complex and interdependent world, the strategic communication process is increasingly vital for DoD. Without a nuanced understanding of stakeholders and audiences, DoD policy-makers, planners, and field personnel cannot effectively evaluate the likely effects of DoD actions, words, and images. And unless those "perception effects" are taken into account, DoD components cannot effectively develop or implement policy or come up with effective engagement plans, communication plans, or risk mitigation strategies. Integrating issues of audience and stakeholder perception into policy-making, planning, and operations at every level are difficult, as is the effective orchestration of actions, images, and words. Over the past few years, DoD has experimented with a range of mechanisms for ensuring effective strategic communication, and this will continue to be a work in progress. DoD will continually review and revise procedures, doctrine, guidance, and coordinating mechanisms to ensure that the strategic communication process effectively supports national and DoD objectives.

All Airmen help tell the AF story. It0… is an exciting, dynamic, and evolving story that changes every day and there are so many ways to share that story! You can get involved in the community, share information through the public affairs office, and engage family, friends, and the public using traditional and social media. No matter how you share your story, remember to practice the AF Core Values of Integrity First and Service Before Self and follow OPSEC guidance.

In-Class Exercise

Social Media Scenario

Tide 14 is a special ops team that specializes in recon of high value targets. The team members have been serving together for 4 years and usually deploy once a year for at least 6 months. During a recent deployment the team experienced a higher than normal ops tempo with more stressful and dangerous missions. Each member has their own way of dealing with their job and keeping friends and loved ones up to date with their well-being. Bilton updates his Facebook status prior to leaving out on missions by asking that all his friends pray for him. Raff uses his website to blog about his feelings, thoughts, and actions before and after a mission. Dent films the teams' down time and edits with humorous voiceovers and posts on YouTube with links to his Facebook page. Casket takes many photos of the base, its surroundings, and the team posing and uploads them to Facebook. Grinder uses twitter instead of Facebook to keep his family in the loop of what he is doing and usually tweets prior to missions and after missions with a big HUA!

MP 4. BULLET WRITING

STUDENT PREPARATION: To prepare for the Supervisory Communicator—Bullet Writing lesson, read this student guide and supplemental readings and bring your completed homework to class for review and discussion. (approx. 3000 words/15 minutes of reading)

Supplemental Preparation:

1. Read AFH 33-337, *The Tongue and Quill:*

   Chapter 16, Specifically the sections addressing bullet writing, and bullet background papers

   Chapter 19, Writing better bullets

   (To download or view an electronic copy of the Tongue and Quill, visit

   http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/saf_cio_a6/publication/afh33-337/afh33-337.pdf

2. **Homework Assignment:** Draft six, 3-part (Action-Impact-Result) bullet statements. Four of your bullet statements must begin with an action verb, and two of your bullet statements must begin with a modified verb.

Introduction

Bullet Writing is a skill that you first learn through a solid foundation. The Tongue and Quill provides you with the basic rules to follow when writing bullet statements for EPRs, 1206s, or other formal writing where bullet statements are required. The Air Force relies on bullet statements to save time and help the reader quickly understand someone's accomplishments and associated impacts/results. Bullet writing takes time and continual development. You must practice often or you will lose this vital skill. Seek out advice from the great writers in your unit; attend professional writing classes offered at your bases, and work with your leadership to fine-tune your bullet writing abilities.

It is important to note that the Tongue & Quill explains how to prepare an Accomplishment-Impact or 2-part bullet statement. While an Accomplishment-Impact bullet statement is perfectly acceptable to use on EPRs and 1206s, the present trend across the Air Force is to write 3-part bullet statements. There are many variations of the 3-part bullet statement, but here at ALS you will learn how to write Action-Impact-Result bullets; commonly referred to as AIR bullets. What you learn here at ALS will take you beyond the basic Tongue & Quill foundation and give you the tools to effectively draft bullet statements for EPRs, 1206s, and other formal writing. The bullet writing skills you learn at ALS can easily be adapted to your unit, base, or even commander's preference for bullet writing.

You will practice writing 3-part bullets for homework and you will be evaluated on your ability to write 3-part bullets for an AF Form 1206, *nomination for award.* If you have a strong foundational 2-part bullet written, it will be easier to write a 3-part bullet. Let's begin by breaking down the basics you read about in the Tongue and Quill. This will prepare you for your bullet writing assignments at ALS.

WRITING BULLET STATEMENTS

Extract the Facts

Before you can extract the facts for a bullet statement, you must have information. Your information gathering starts the day you begin supervising your Airman. Maintain a running record *(e-mails, excel or word document, Memo for Record, or running 1206 for the year)* detailing your Airman's accomplishments and supporting details. Encourage your Airman to keep a record as well. Keeping a running log of your Airman's accomplishments will make your job easier when it is time to prepare the EPR or a 1206 for an award.

When it comes to writing bullet statements, you can never have enough information. Gather information throughout the year and seek specific information from various sources such as your Airman, supervisor, customers, etc. It is especially important to know the value of the work your Airmen performs. If your Airman performs maintenance on twenty aircraft, you should know how much it costs to maintain those aircraft. Keep track of any awards, recognition your Airman receives. If your Airman receives disciplinary action then write down what happened so you can determine how to develop a bullet statement later if required.

Extract the facts from all the information you've gathered and verify the information before you begin writing your bullet statements. Once verified, you can begin drafting your bullet statements.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITY, Part I.

Take a moment to read Scenario, Part I. What facts can you extract? What Information do you still need from your Airman? Write down your answers on a blank sheet of paper and bring them with you to class.

SCENARIO, Part I.

A1C Mosley processed 122 travel vouchers during the 3rd quarter and reconciled all vouchers before the end of the Fiscal Year. She enabled on-time payment to 122 active duty military members resulting in zero erroneous payments and zero processing errors. The base met its end-of-year financial reporting deadline for the MAJCOM.

Writing Basics/Helpful Tips to Remember

These tips have helped countless supervisors at all levels throughout their careers. Take time to read them and refer back to them as you hone your bullet writing skills.

1. Obtain the current version of your wing's writing style guide (if available). Usually your supervisor, NCOIC, or First Sergeant can locate a copy for you. If your wing does not have a writing style guide available, ask your supervisor and chain of command for the general style and writing rules your organization follows for awards (1206s, and Enlisted Performance Reports).

2. Know the audience you are writing to (i.e. (unit, wing, MAJCOM, AF, different AFSCs, promotion boards, etc.) Strive to write in a way that promotes understanding of your bullet writing across all levels/audiences.

3. Attend local Air Force writing seminars or classes. Private organizations such as the Top-3, First Sergeants Council, or even the Career Assistance Advisor may offer writing classes at your base. These are great opportunities to sharpen your writing skills.

4. When you write bullets for awards (1206s), or Enlisted Performance Reports ensure you ask for feedback from your supervisor (additional rater) before turning in your final draft.

5. Bullets **are not** sentences, do not use end punctuation in bullet statements.

6. Use spell check! Spelling errors can create unnecessary rework to fit bullet statements on one line.

7. Be careful of acronym use and overuse – spell them out the first time they are used, do not overuse them in your bullet statements, and ensure the intended meaning is clearly communicated to all potential audiences (unit, wing, MAJCOM, AF, different AFSCs, promotion boards, etc.)

8. Keep abbreviations to a minimum. If using abbreviations, ensure they are correct and/or approved abbreviations of words. When in doubt, reference the Tongue & Quill pages the writing style guide used at your base/wing.

9. Be aware that writing styles change with time – stay in line with current writing trends.

10. One line bullets are "the norm" in today's Air Force because space is limited.

11. Begin the bullet statement with a strong verb that accurately captures the level and scope of the accomplishment and always end the statement with an impact/result.

12. Practice, Practice, Practice!

Build the Structure

Accomplishment-Impact Bullet Statements (Tongue & Quill)

Building the structure of an EPR bullet begins by developing the accomplishment and impact element of the bullet statement. Use the information you gathered from the "Extract the Facts" step. Building the structure begins with two major components, the accomplishment element, and the impact element. Write down the exact accomplishment and impact before choosing your verbs. If you have a clear idea of the accomplishment and impact, it becomes easier to select the correct verb and/or modifier. Begin the accomplishment (action) element with an action verb (Completed, Led, Processed, Mastered, etc.) or a modifier and an action verb (Expertly finished, Boldly led, etc.) Remember, the accomplishment element will only have one accomplishment (action) captured in this element.

Accomplishment Element

- Mastered six CDC volumes in four months;
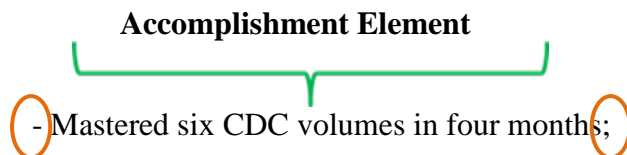
After you have built the accomplishment element, you will build the impact element. Remember, you are simply building the initial structure of the bullet and it will not be perfect the first time you put the structure together. You will fine-tune your bullets during the next

step of the bullet writing process. The impact tells the reader the level of influence resulting from the accomplishment. Remember, the scope of the impact should be consistent with the person's accomplishment. If your Airman mastered six volumes of their CDCs in four months, what was impact? The impact element of a 2-part bullet is the result of your Airman's accomplishment.

Impact Element

Connect bullets with ⟹ ; earned excellent 96% on end-of-course examination
earning excellent 96% on end-of-course examination

Next, connect the two elements of the bullet with a semicolon or a word ending in 'ing'. It is important to note that while the use of an 'ing' word such as "ensuring, securing, enabling, etc. is acceptable per the Tongue & Quill, it is not widely used across the Air Force when writing bullet statements for EPRs and Awards. Whenever possible, use the semicolon to connect the two elements of your Accomplishment-Impact Bullet. Follow these same steps for the accomplishment (action) and impact elements of a 3-part bullet. Below are just a few examples of properly developed Accomplishment-Impact bullet statements.

Streamline the Final Product

In order to streamline your bullets, you must refine them by making them accurate, brief, and specific as prescribed in the Tongue & Quill. Crunch those bullets into strong bullets by checking accuracy, brevity, and specificity. Check those ABS!

Accomplishment-Impact Bullet Statement Examples:

- Mastered six CDC volumes in four months; earned outstanding 96% on end-of-course examination

- Tenaciously processed 122 travel vouchers for base personnel; reconciled $366K in funds with zero errors

- Completed 22 engine fan blade inspections enabling six KC-135Rs to support Operation NOBLE EAGLE

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITY, Part II.

Read the below scenario and check the bullet statement for accuracy. What do you notice? Write down your answers and bring them with you to class.

SCENARIO, Part II.

A1C Mosley processed 122 travel vouchers during the 3rd quarter and reconciled all vouchers before the end of the Fiscal Year. She enabled on-time payment of over $366,000 to 122 active duty military members resulting in zero erroneous payments and zero processing errors. The base met its end-of-year financial reporting deadlines for AETC

Accuracy Check!

- Processed 122 travel vouchers for ~~all~~ base personnel; reconciled ~~$500K~~ with zero accounting errors for ~~AF~~

Brevity should be checked after accuracy. Brevity simply means the bullet is short but clear and concise…no fluff! The Air Force currently uses brief (one-line) bullets for both EPRs and 1206s. During ALS, you will write and be evaluated on one-line bullet statements. Brevity is important because it saves the reader time and gives the bottom line of your Airman's performance. Keeping bullet statement elements brief will also give you additional space to quantify the accomplishment (action), impact and/or result.

Brevity Check!

- Processed ~~over~~ 122 travel vouchers for base personnel; reconciled ~~an amazing~~ $366K with zero ~~accounting~~ errors for MAJCOM

Specificity when you are checking your bullets for specificity, ensure first that they are accurate. Sometimes a bullet can be accurate (truthful) but lacking specific details. Find out the specifics about your Airman's accomplishment and its coordinating impact. Specifics such as who, what, when, where, how much, and how many, etc. Every accomplishment (action) in a bullet statement and impact must be specific. Quantify using numbers, grade, or other measured outcome whenever possible. Look at the below bullet, what specifics are missing? Write these down and be prepared to discuss specificity during class.

Specificity Check!

- Processed 122 travel vouchers for military personnel; reconciled $366K with zero accounting errors for MAJCOM

The 3-Part Bullet (Action-Impact-Result)

3-part bullets or Action-Impact-Result (AIR) bullets are widely used across the Air Force for Enlisted Performance Reports and awards packages. Your instructor will conduct classroom activities on bullet writing and evaluate you on your bullet writing during the course. Remember, the 3-part bullet you learn in ALS may adjust slightly based on your unit, wing or other leadership preference or guidance. There are slight variations of 3-part bullets out there, so be sure to check with your supervisor or chain of command to find out which style your wing prefers for award packages (AF Form 1206s) and EPRs.

Accomplishment (Action) Element The action element of a 3-part bullet is merely your Airman's accomplishment or action. Follow the same steps you would if you were writing a 2-part bullet. Follow the rules of accuracy, brevity, and specificity for the Action Element of a 3-part bullet. Focus on what the Airman did and the level of leadership they displayed. If your Airman volunteered then say volunteered. However, if your Airman actually led a team of two Airmen…then use the word led to begin the bullet statement. Use a single dash to begin the Action element and a semicolon to separate the action from the impact. It is important to note that as you further hone your writing skills you may learn different ways to separate the elements and that is okay.

Action Element

- Led two Airmen through KC-135R pre-flight inspection;

Impact Element The impact element of a 3-part bullet explains how the accomplishment (action) ties to the end result. Connect the Action element of a 3-part bullet to the impact by using a semi-colon. Don't forget to check your impact element for accuracy, brevity and specificity.

<div align="center">

Impact Element

identified damaged tire
</div>

Result Element The result element of a 3-part bullet is tied to the big picture and it must be accurate, brief, and specific. You will use a double dash -- to separate the impact from the result element.

<div align="center">

Result Element

--assured safety of aircrew
</div>

Fully Developed 3-Part (AIR) Bullet

Look at the finished 3-part bullet. The bullet below meets bullet writing mechanics and the rules of accuracy, brevity, and specificity.

- Led two Amn through KC-135R pre-flight inspection; identified damaged tire--assured safety of aircrew

Adverbs

The addition of a modified verb in the front of an A-I-R bullet can be a valuable tool especially when writing yearly award packages, which requires substantially more bullets than quarterly packages. Below is an example of a modified verb, 3-part bullet statement

- Expertly led two Amn through KC-135R pre-flight inspection; identified damaged tire--assured aircrew safety

Additional Tips For Bullet Writing

It is important to know that even though 3-part bullets are widely used today in the Air Force, you may still encounter and use accomplishment-impact bullets on EPRs and 1206s. These bullets are acceptable. Regardless of the type of bullet you use, ensure you follow the rules of bullet writing and…Always use the correct verbs/adverbs to convey your Airman's level of leadership/involvement. Here are a few additional examples of how to choose the perfect action verb.

Instead of…	Say…
Improved…	Revamped, rescued, revitalized, optimized
Started…	Pioneered, initiated, created, forged
Made…	Created, conceived, built, crafted
led…	Steered, honchoed, piloted, spearheaded
Wrote…	Authored, devised, created, crafted
Saved ($)…	Recouped, recaptured, slashed
Received (award…	Captured, garnered, earned, awarded
Spoke…	Articulated, presented, briefed
Ensured…	Assured, guaranteed, delivered

Adverb (modified verbs) --Use only if they honestly add value to the verb…otherwise the accomplishment can turn into fluff.

Enthusiastically briefed…	Independently drafted…
Expertly developed…	Flawlessly executed…
Meticulously crafted…	Skillfully led…

Conclusion

Bullet statements describe a single idea or achievement and its associated impact/result as accurately, briefly and specifically as possible. With space on most Air Force forms being very limited, we must communicate the most important information in as few words as possible. This direct manner helps to avoid generalities and embellishments. Ultimately, bullet statements deliver a clear and honest description of an Airman's performance. Honest and accurate bullet statements are vital when it comes to things such as EPRs, awards packages (AF Form 1206s), and other Air Force writing where bullet statements are used. You will practice writing bullet statements for homework and your instructor will guide you through plenty of practice time during class.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Bullet Statement Writing Homework Exercise (Drafting Bullet Statements)

Instructions

1. Using the "SrA Brian Robinson," Homework Scenario, and the concepts from the Tongue and Quill, this student guide, and the AU Writing Style Guide as a supplemental reference. Draft six unique 3-part bullets (Action-Impact-Result).

   4 Action Verb bullet statements (3-part, Action-Impact-Result)

   2 Modified Verb bullet statements (3-part, Action-Impact-Result)

2. Do not repeat bullet statements by simply modifying them. Create six different bullet statements.

3. Write out your bullet statements using the Bullet Statement Worksheet provided as a hand out and bring your completed bullets with you to class.

4. Use the bullet writing checklist (SC01HO10) provided in class to double check your bullet statements for proper mechanics and accuracy, brevity and specificity.

5. Although you may seek feedback from fellow students, you must prepare and write the bullet statements on your own. For specific details about bullet statement grading criteria, reference SC01EI2, *Bullet Statement Evaluation Instrument (Attachment 6)*

Homework Exercise Scenario
SrA Brian Robinson

Over the course of this 365-day reporting period, SrA Robinson has been very productive. He identified 23 Log Periodic (LP) antenna elements within the Atlantic Gateway Antenna System that were seriously corroded, broken, or missing. He replaced 17 of them within 3 days by using elements from decommissioned antenna parts. The remaining six elements were sanded and painted to be used later. His efforts saved $3,500 per antenna in procurement costs and reduced delivery time to bases in Europe by 4 weeks. Furthermore, his work improved voice transmission clarity for 60 Atlantic Gateway Antenna System operators in USAFE. SrA Robinson also installed an unused patch panel rack and hard-wired it to the High Frequency MARS radio equipment. In-turn providing an interim testing point for the facility. Because this patch quickly isolates circuitry errors from radio equipment malfunctions, it will save 300 man-hours of maintenance annually.

SrA Robinson stepped up to supervise the deployment of three additional technicians (one of which was still in upgrade training) as they performed preventive maintenance on 85 separate pieces of equipment spread over three remote locations in USAFE. The excellent rapport he established with the Airmen paid off later when two of his crewmembers returned to help him with additional antenna repairs. He did not stop there…his acute attention to detail led him to accurately identify 18 quality defects in four Ultra-High Frequency (UHF) radio receivers. His repair of these receivers optimized the sensitivity and selectivity of radios used daily by air traffic controllers. Ultimately, air traffic controllers can contact all aircraft approaching military airspace three nautical miles further from the base.

SrA Robinson's commitment to excellence is also evident in his off-duty life. When he realized he needed two college courses to complete his CCAF Degree in Electronics & Telecommunications, he immediately registered for classes with a local community college. Last month, SrA Robinson received a notification that he made the Dean's list again after he completed both classes with a 4.0 GPA. He will receive his diploma at the spring CCAF graduation ceremony. He is already looking forward to working on his bachelor's degree and a certification related to his career field.

His dedication to efficiency and excellence in the performance of his duties as a 2E153, Ground Radio Communications Journeyman motivated him to improve the unit's training plan for all 2E153 personnel. He spent time grouping rudimentary, intermediate, and advanced tasks together and he changed the training milestones so they would properly match the time needed to learn the tasks. His Unit Training Manager and Commander lauded him for his efforts and his training plan became the unit's standard. His training plan was instrumental in qualifying 12 new 3-skill level trainees. Despite adding tasks for the patch panel he worked on earlier, his functional approach to training reduced the average time to qualify personnel on core work-center tasks from 8 weeks down to 6 weeks. This came at a critical time, since the unit was tasked to support a deployment to Africa in the summer. SrA Robinson is excited and hopes to deploy with his unit. Finally, it was no surprise to you when SrA Robinson won the Air Force Communications-Electronic Systems Outstanding Airman of the Year award.

MP 5. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

STUDENT PREPARATION: In preparation for Supervisory Communicator – Interpersonal Communication Main Point presentation, read this main point and be prepared for the classroom discussion (5500 words/45 minutes).

Effective well-developed interpersonal skills extend beyond personal relationships with family, friends, and assist in the promotion of healthy, productive relationships in the workplace. There is no arguing that most people routinely interact with others on a daily basis. However, that does not mean work is not needed for improving their interpersonal communication skills. In fact, military and civilian organizations are constantly looking to hire and promote people with well-developed interpersonal skills. It should come as no surprise, then, that Air Force supervisors who are willing to build up their interpersonal skills will benefit from their investment of time and energy. As someone preparing for supervisory duty, you should strive to improve your interpersonal communication skills. The stronger your interpersonal skills, the better your working relationships will be with your subordinates, peers, and superiors. Positive working relationships are the building blocks of cohesive teams that ultimately contribute to effective and efficient mission accomplishment.

DEFINING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

As with most studies, we should start by defining a few key terms. Broadly, defined, *interpersonal communication* is the process of exchanging ideas or meaning between people. Fortunately, we can also rely on the works of some noted experts in the human communication field to further clarify with the following definition:

"Interpersonal communication is a face-to-face, one-way, or multi-directional exchange of verbal messages and nonverbal signals between two or more people for the purpose of gaining a shared meaning."

Although our working definition is a valuable starting point, it may create more questions than answers. For example, when you combine the *multi-directional* aspect and the *between two or more people* aspect of this definition, you can begin to see that interpersonal communication can be a very complicated, interwoven network of exchanges.

To explain how complex this concept can become we'll use a baseball analogy, imagine yourself playing a simple game of "catch", but in order for this to work, you must keep the basic elements of communication in mind. Before throwing the ball (the message), you first look to see that your catcher (the receiver) is attentive. Maybe you make eye contact, or whistle to get their attention. When your catcher is ready, you wind up, draw the ball back, and throw it at them. Your catcher holds up their glove in anticipation of catching the ball, depending on where the ball lands, the catcher would give you a smile or nod of approval, or perhaps gives you a frown as a poorly thrown ball goes over their head.

DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The Interpersonal Communication skills process consists of the pre-session, session, and post-session, and the steps/skills that make up those elements. The succeeding diagram and explanations will expound on the process in greater detail. Please note that there will be occasions throughout the process when the outcome of certain skills or steps will influence and/or affect the manner in which other steps are approached or carried out. In the illustration, the looping arrows indicate these instances.
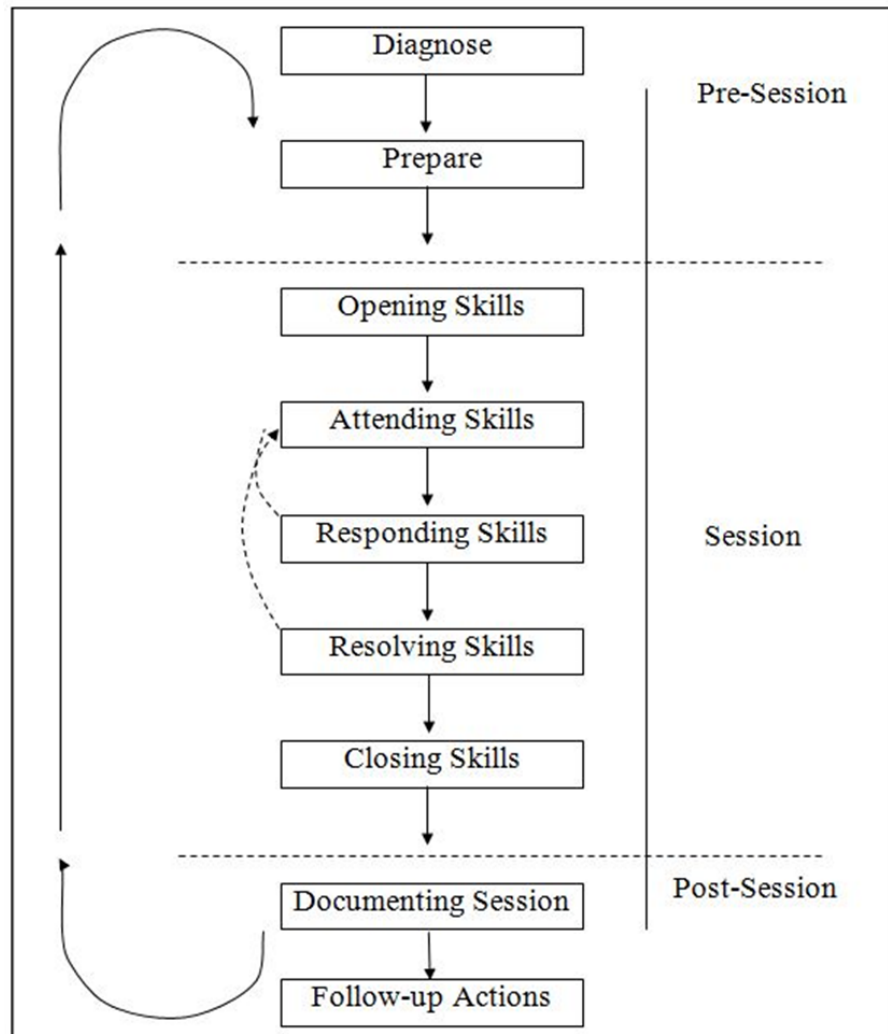

Figure 8. Interpersonal Communication Sessions Model

<u>**Pre-Session Activities**</u>

Diagnose - Before you can conduct an interpersonal session, you must first know why you are conducting this session. Have you noticed an unusual change in behavior for your subordinate? Have you witnessed him/her looking troubled? These are the types of things you can find out by observing your subordinate. On the other hand, maybe your subordinate was the one to approach you with a problem/situation. Whether it was your observations or your subordinate approaching you that prompted the session, you can tailor your interpersonal session to better assist your subordinate.

Prepare - Prior to the session, you will first need to determine the approach you'll use. To determine which approach to use, ask yourself questions like, "Who'll develop the final solution for the problem?" and "Is two-way or one-way communication needed?" Next, you need to plan the interpersonal session. Start the planning process by first determining your purpose and objective. After you've done that, the next step is to analyze your audience, which in this case would be your subordinate. You might need to gather some background information as well to help give you a basic understanding of the problem or decision to be made. The type of information you'll need will depend on the reason for the session. It may also be helpful to develop an outline, either mental or written, or game plan for your session. Regardless of your plan though, you must be sure to remain flexible. After planning the interpersonal session, you can begin to prepare the environment, and that includes both physical and mental preparation. Physical preparation is setting up an appropriate time and a place for your session, and mental preparation is clearing your mind of any distractions that would keep you from focusing on your subordinate. Mental preparation also includes telling your subordinate ahead of time about the session and what the session might entail, that way they show up feeling as relaxed as possible.

- Determine Your Approach

    - Directive: The directive approach is supervisor-centered. Typically, this approach uses one-way communication and the supervisor is responsible for determining the nature of the problem, the best solution, and how to implement the solution. It is normally used when the issue/problem is time sensitive, or when correcting/disciplining subordinates who fall below standards.

    - Nondirective: The nondirective approach is subordinate-centered and uses two-way communication. In this approach, the subordinate has determined a problem exists and developed potential solutions. The supervisor's role consists of using effective questioning techniques to clarify the situation and help the subordinate understand the problem.

    - Combined: The combined approach consists of components of both the directive and nondirective approaches. It requires the supervisor and subordinate to be on the same page and work together to set goals or determine solutions, therefore two-way communication is needed/desired. Typically, the supervisor wants the subordinates to solve the problem themselves but will provide advice or guidance if needed.

- Setting
    - Another factor to consider about interpersonal communication is the setting. The

three most critical factors to consider in selecting and preparing the setting are location, space, and time.

- Location—occasions arise when a location offering the fewest distractions is necessary. Prepare the location to ensure seating, lighting, temperature, etc. are adequate. Arrange seating with or without barriers depending on the type of session being conducted. The situation often dictates the level of privacy needed. Keep information confidential, but only within legal limitations! Supervisors cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality because UCMJ violations must be reported.

- Space—the distance between yourself and the other person will be determined by your relationship; 0 - 18 inches (intimate), 1.5 - 4 feet (personal), 4 - 12 feet (social), and beyond 12 feet (public).

- Time—The most valuable resource, never enough of it! Set enough time aside to plan for the interactions (pre-session), time to spend in the actual session (session), and finally, plan to set time aside to follow up on proposed actions or promises after the session has closed (post-session).

Session Activities (Conducting the Session)

Opening- To open the session you will need to greet the subordinate properly as he/she enters the room. You will also need to establish an appropriate rapport with the subordinate. Then you will need to state clearly the purpose/objective for the session. Subordinates, who clearly understand the purpose/objective of a session, are more likely to open up from the start. If you fail to clearly, establish the purpose/objective than you risk causing confusion for the subordinate. Additionally, an unclear purpose/objective can cause you to conduct an unfocused session that doesn't address the problem and wastes time. Effective opening skills are essential to promoting a helping relationship between you and your subordinate. Finally, if you initiated the interpersonal session remember you must be direct, identify, and/or describe the observed behavior so that you can get to the core of the issue. Conversely, if the subordinate approached you, be sure to remain tactful and use open-ended questions to prompt them to continue the session. Show them that you are willing to help them and ask the subordinate why he/she may need your assistance.

Attending- Attending means being an active participant and focusing your full attention of the subordinate as he/she speaks. It is a combination of watching for nonverbal cues and listening to words. You will need to make a conscious effort to maintain eye contact with the subordinate so you can observe his/her gestures, body posture, and other nonverbal cues. It's imperative that you show, through body posture, gestures, and verbal/nonverbal cues (e.g. appropriate/consistent eye contact, nodding of the head, leaning in to show attentiveness, verbal agreements/acknowledgements), that you're receptive to what the subordinate is saying so that he/she will remain actively involved in the session. Avoid too much eye contact, as it may come off as aggressive. The same goes for too little eye contact, which may come across as having no interest in what your subordinate is saying. Eye contact should be consistent i.e. not too intense or too lengthy.

Additionally, keep in mind that subordinates usually provide only bits and pieces of the whole story. This means you will need to ask several questions to get to the root of the problem, which also means there will be many transactions between you and your

subordinate before the problem is accurately defined. These transactions will require you to switch back and forth between attending and responding—that is why you see the dashed arrow on Figure 8 going back up from *Responding to Attending.*

Responding- Responding skills refer to what you say, how you say it, and how you behave in response to the subordinate's verbal and nonverbal messages. Your responses communicate how you feel about your subordinate and the situation, therefore you must carefully deliver your responses to meet the desired outcome of the session. Avoid responding impulsively, as it can cause you to lose control of the session. Thoughtful, considerate responses, along with open-ended questions, should be utilized to prompt your subordinate to disclose or explore solutions, and open up and share information. In addition to open-ended questions, maintaining an open communication stance and using proper verbal and non-verbal skills can help prompt your subordinate to open up as well. Remember that the qualities of your verbal messages such as word usage, articulation, tone, and volume are important aspects of your overall response. The nonverbal cues you send while responding sometimes speak louder than the actual words you voice. Be aware of your own facial expressions, changes in your body positioning, use of gestures, and your overall demeanor. Also, make sure there is consistency between your verbal/nonverbal messages and that they are well suited to the situation. The four elements of responding are:

> **Questioning**- Involves using open-ended questions that probe and prompt your subordinate to disclose, clarify, and examine the problem, as well as explore solutions. Because open-ended questions require more thought than simple yes/no questions, subordinates tend to open up more and share information with you.

> **Reflecting**- Involves accurately paraphrasing the subordinate's specific content and feelings, and then restating it back to them. Doing this not only lets the subordinate know that you are listening and that you understand what they are saying, but it also allows them to hear what they've said so far and clarify any points.

> **Summarizing**- Involves combining several of the subordinates' thoughts into broader comments, this helps keep the session on track, especially those that may run longer than expected. It also allows both parties to hear what's been said and agreed upon so far, and to clarify or amend points.

> **Silence** - Involves natural pauses that gives the subordinate time to think about an answer. Silence can have a positive or a negative impact during interpersonal communication. Positive silence gives all parties time to think about what has been said, allows subordinates time to formulate answers, and allows supervisors time to formulate follow-up questions. Negative silence (breaking silence too early) can signal that you are not interested in the subordinates input or that you are rushing the session. In addition, it lets subordinates off the hook from actively participating, which eventually leads to them keeping silent and letting you do all the talking.

Resolving- Resolving skills refer to the ability of a supervisor to prompt their subordinate to generate solutions to their problems and reach goals. It's important that subordinates generate the solutions because it shows that they are taking ownership and are willing to fix the problem/situation. These solutions should be jointly agreed upon by both parties,

and must be workable and within the subordinate's ability to accomplish.

Solutions should also be appropriate to the situation, feasible with respect to money, time, ability, and comprehensive enough to address all key issues related to the problem. You can use the following six steps to help in resolving a problem or reaching a goal.

1. Identify the problem
2. Make sure subordinates accept responsibility for their actions
3. Define goals
4. Determine steps needed to reach the goals
5. Establish timelines and milestones
6. Follow through

Closing – Closing out an interpersonal session is the last opportunity you'll have to make sure the session is successful. With this in mind, there are several things you must accomplish, as well as refrain from as you close the session. Be sure to effectively summarize the highlights of the session, and restate/reinforce the solutions both you and your Airman agreed on. When you summarize the session, restate the main topics (or main points) of the discussion, proposed goals or solutions, task assignments, and any timelines or milestones that were established. Better yet, involve your Airmen in the summary to ensure they understand what needs to be done. If you ask your Airmen to summarize key points of the session, this will help to reinforce positive behaviors and/or assist them with taking responsibility for achieving their goals and/or solving problems. When you close an interpersonal session (counseling, feedback, etc.) refrain from introducing new material because you may confuse your Airman. End the session on a positive note so you promote a positive outlook on the future and inspire your Airman.

<u>**Post-Session Activities**</u>

Documenting the Session- Proper documentation is crucial for follow-up and future interpersonal sessions. A good rule of thumb is that if *not* documenting could cause a problem in the future, then write it down. Another consideration is when to complete the documentation. You should begin documenting the session immediately after it ends and the subordinate departs. While making short notes during the session is acceptable, try not to take too many notes since it'll hinder your attending and responding skills. Specific reasons for taking notes during the session may include dealing with complex problems, when you want to remember a key point but do not want to interrupt your subordinate's train of thought, or when you are conducting lengthy sessions involving numerous problems.

However, before taking notes it's always a good practice to ask subordinates if they mind if you take notes and explain why you want to take notes. You can document a session in several ways based on a particular situation. Feedback sessions are often documented using an AF Form 931, *Performance Feedback Worksheet.* You might find the need to document a one-way interpersonal session using an AF Form 174, *Record of Individual Counseling,* or other situations might require only a memorandum for record to show that an interpersonal session occurred. Just remember, however you decide to document, do it

properly. If you fail to document properly or do not document at all…you risk not having valuable information for future reference.

Use these five basic rules for documenting to ensure you're effectively recording what you need:

> Record problems accurately
>
> Record only pertinent facts
>
> Record the cause of the problem
>
> Record actions that are planned or taken
>
> Record follow-up actions as they occur

The Impact of Effective Interpersonal Communication Skills

Merely knowing about effective interpersonal communication skills isn't enough; you'll have to apply these skills to realize cooperative working relationships with coworkers, superiors, and subordinates. There's a big difference between speaking with a person and speaking at someone. When you take time to listen to a subordinate's needs and respond in a way that helps them feel understood, a relationship is naturally established. The simple act of listening communicates, "I value you." With a mutually supportive relationship established, a free-flow of information about job-related issues is a natural result. This opens the door for coworkers to become actively involved in building up the skills and abilities of their fellow workers. This practice is very contagious; coworkers will sense the team spirit and desire to be a part of it. The empathy and effective interpersonal skills you show to your Airmen can help them develop their own interpersonal skills.

Subordinates also benefit from effective interpersonal communication skills. In order to progress in their training, subordinates need to receive feedback on their performance. How you provide this feedback is critical to maintaining their motivation. When supervisors set aside time to genuinely listen to the concerns and suggestions of their workers, subordinates feel valued and become more willing to make personal sacrifices to accomplish the mission.

As a supervisor you are expected to create a cooperative, productive, and cohesive working climate for your subordinates; it's not a challenge you should take lightly. Supervisors who practice effective interpersonal communication skills can expect to see better teamwork, communication, and problem solving amongst the unit. With these improved areas comes more efficient/effective mission accomplishment. Everything you do involves some type of interpersonal interaction with other people; it makes sense to take the time required to master this skill.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Counseling and Feedback Compared

Counseling is more than telling a subordinate how they're doing; that's feedback. When we refer to feedback, we're referring to an active communication process where you're

evaluating or *judging* subordinate performance and responding either to promote a change in behavior, or to reinforce present performance. Most of us would call these responses

counseling; however, subordinates often have negative reactions to the word *counseling*. For many, it creates a negative feeling that gets in the way of the good things the supervisor is trying to do for the subordinate. Unlike feedback, counseling is focused on improvement, in personal and/or professional areas, by providing *guidance* and *recommendations*.

Counseling and feedback mirror each other in many ways, and you're using interpersonal communication skills with both. The feedback process controls effectiveness through evaluations and judgments, whereas counseling works to maintain or improve effectiveness through guidance and recommendations. The difference between the two can be very vague and may be blurred based upon the situation.

Sometimes the evaluation process may reveal issues that require your involvement in another way. When this occurs, you must transition from giving feedback to providing counseling to your subordinates. For example, let's say your subordinate didn't get to work on time. As his supervisor, you judged and evaluated his performance against the standard. According to the standard, he was 20 minutes late. You decide to pull him aside to talk with him about it. This is *feedback*. Once you tell him that he didn't meet the standard, he apologizes and states that, lately he's been feeling depressed and it's starting to get harder and harder for him to get out of bed. This is where, as his supervisor, you would need to switch to **counseling** in order to help him. In this example, the session started with feedback, but after getting more information about the situation, it turned into counseling.

The bottom line is that feedback is directed specifically at a subordinate's performance, in relation to set standards and expectations. Whereas counseling (for our purposes) is directed at helping a subordinate through a tough, personal situation, or to help set professional goals and future plans—much like mentoring.

Types of Counseling Sessions

There are times when you will be *required* to counsel, but effective supervisors realize there are also times when they should *choose* to counsel. Whenever there's a need for focused, two-way communication aimed at subordinate development, counsel your subordinates. Develop qualities that will lead to effective counseling sessions. Respect for subordinates, self- and cultural awareness, credibility, and empathy are all vital qualities for effective communication between you and your people. While developing these skills and attitudes, you must avoid common counseling mistakes. Personal likes and dislikes, biases, and prejudices are potential pitfalls that can interfere with the counseling relationship. In addition, avoid rash judgments, stereotyping, loss of emotional control, inflexible methods or approaches, and improper follow-up. There are two major categories of counseling: **event-oriented counseling** and **performance and professional growth counseling.**

> **Event-oriented counseling** involves a specific event or situation that may be tied to a personal situation as well as superior or substandard duty performance[19]. With some exceptions, these events are usually **reactive** in nature. Some

examples include, financial or marital problems, a death in the family, or referrals to legal services or a chaplain. The earlier example of the late subordinate is also considered event-oriented counseling.

Performance and Professional Growth Counseling includes planning for individual and professional short- and long-term goals. During performance and professional growth counseling, conduct a review of an Airman's duty performance

during a certain period and set standards for the next period[20]. Think of it as **proactive** in nature since it usually occurs in preparation for, or anticipation of, future events. Some examples include planning for upgrade training or continued education, discussing possibilities of force reduction and separation.

Conclusion

As you can see from this reading, interpersonal communication is definitely a complex concept. In an ideal world, nothing would hinder effective interpersonal communication between supervisors and their subordinates. In reality though, many forces prevent or disrupt effective supervisory dialog. Sometimes all it takes to overcome any limitations is to take some sort of corrective action to fix the problem, and sometimes you just have to accept the fact that you're limited. If it's a lack of experience, just be honest; if it's something else you can't control, just explain it the best you can. If you cannot help with the problem at hand, at least know the right referral agency to help your subordinates. You may even consider setting up the initial appointment for them, and always follow up so they will know you care. The bottom line is this though; always seek out opportunities to improve your interpersonal skills. As a future NCO, leader, and supervisor you will be looked at to counsel, mentor, and communicate with your subordinates on a daily basis. Your interpersonal skills will not only have a direct impact on the motivation of the people you lead, but on their performance as well.

During your time at ALS, you will be given the opportunity to practice your interpersonal skills and apply what you have learned. Take these opportunities seriously. This is a safe place to work on getting better. Ask your peers and instructor for feedback and constructive criticism. You will practice counseling and you will also use these skills to deliver your summative initial and midterm feedback sessions.

Counseling Demonstration Scenario

SUPERVISOR: A1C _____, one of your best Airmen, constantly exceeds standards and expectations. Lately though, his/her behavior has radically changed. He/she surfs the internet instead of doing work, and constantly disrespects peers and NCOs alike. As if that wasn't enough, he/she has been late to work 3 days in a row without calling you.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to address his/her behavior and its impact on the work center**.**

SUBORDINATE: You are A1C _____. You have recently found out that your widowed mother has been diagnosed with cancer. This shocking information has kept you up late at night researching her disease, leading to minimal sleep and tardiness to

work. The lack of sleep is also affecting your behavior and patience level.

Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss your change in behavior. Communicate openly and honestly how you feel about your circumstances. Be willing to work with your supervisor to resolve your issues. When asked open-ended questions respond appropriately.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSIONS - SUPERVISOR

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- You have 15 minutes to conduct your session

- Make every attempt to agree to a resolution

- What approach and techniques would you use?

- How will you resolve the situation to the best of your ability?

FOLLOW-ON INSTRUCTIONS:

- Your next role will be as the observer.

- Take a minute to prepare for the session - turn to, read, the observer's duties/responsibilities

- Give the signal to begin the session

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #1:

CDCs

A1C _____ is doing outstanding work in your section; however, he/she is having difficulty completing his/her CDCs. A1C_____ has missed several deadlines and yesterday the training manager told you that A1C_____is failing to progress according to the timelines set for him/her. The training manager told you that unless A1C_____ straightens up soon, he will have to report A1C_____ to the commander.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to address his/her behavior and its impact on his/her career.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #2:

BAD NEWS

A1C _____ is normally an outstanding worker, but recently he/she has arrived late to work two days straight, and his/her personal appearance was unacceptable on both days. Yesterday, you saw A1C_____ yelling at a co-worker because the co-worker was talking too loud.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to address his/her behavior and its impact on the work center.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #3:

THE DEPLOYMENT

SrA _____ is a solid worker that has just been tasked to deploy downrange for a 365-day tour. Even though this is SrA _____'s window to deploy, he/she just doesn't seem ready or overly excited to go. Yesterday, you overhear SrA _____ say to another Airman that he/she doesn't want to leave his/her family and is considering getting a profile for an old injury in order to get out of the deployment.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to address his/her

situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #4:

THE HYGIENE PROBLEM

A1C_____ is hard-working and loves to tackle the difficult jobs that require a lot of physical activity. Lately, other workers have come to you complaining that A1C_____ smells as if he/she doesn't shower regularly. Although he/she looks sharp in uniform, upon closer inspection, you realize they're right. His/her hair is extremely oily, and the smell is rather strong.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to address his/her behavior and its impact on the work center.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #5:

RETRAINING

SrA_____ is one of your best workers and loves his current career field. Due to force reduction his/her name was on the mandatory retrain list. If retraining is declined, they must separate.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to tell him/her the news.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #6:

THE DEVELOPMENTAL SPECIAL DUTY

SrA _____ is the best worker you've ever supervised. His/her work performance is superior in all respects. He/she has completed upgrade training in minimum time and is about to receive an Associate's Degree. His/her recent promotion to SSgt was well deserved. Since SrA _____ is heads and shoulders above his/her peers, when news came down that he/she had been selected to be a Military Training Leader you were ecstatic.

Today you will conduct a counseling session with this Airman to inform him/her of the new assignment.

In-class Exercise

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION - SUBORDINATE

SUBORDINATE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Communicate openly and honestly about how you feel about your circumstances
- Be willing to work with your supervisor to resolve your issues
- When asked open-ended questions respond appropriately.

FOLLOW-ON INSTRUCTIONS:

- Your next role will be as the supervisor.

- Take a minute to prepare for the session - turn to, and read the next supervisor scenario

- Await instructions from the observer

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #1:

CDCs

You are A1C _____. You really enjoy your job, but you are having problems finishing your CDCs. You know you have to complete upgrade training to get your five-level, but you can't see how the "book work" relates to your job. You've been late turning in your volumes but don't think it's that important. You have a feeling your supervisor called you in to chew you out for not completing volumes on time.

Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss the situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #2:

BAD NEWS

You are A1C _____, an outstanding worker who enjoys life in the Air Force. However, the past few days have been saddening for you. You received a call from your family that your grandfather whom you were close to has passed away suddenly. Since hearing this, you have shut yourself off from the world to deal with the sorrow.

Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss the situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #3:

THE DEPLOYMENT

You are SrA _____, a solid worker that puts his/her family above all else. Recently, you found out that you have to deploy downrange for a 365-day tour and you just can't imagine leaving your family behind. This situation has you so stressed that you are considering getting a profile for an old knee injury just so you don't have to go.

Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss your situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #4:
THE HYGIENE PROBLEM

You are A1C_____, a hard worker that loves getting his/her hands dirty while repairing the equipment in the shop. By the end of the day, you're so exhausted that you go back to your room and lie down to watch television. You notice your coworkers avoid contact with you, but you chalk it up to them being jealous of your hard work.
Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss the situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #5:
RETRAINING

You are SrA _____. You are lauded by your peers and supervisor for your superior work ethic and love for the job. You can't imagine doing anything else for the Air Force. Rumors about force shaping have you nervous.
Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss the situation.

INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION #6:
THE DEVELOPMENTAL SPECIAL DUTY

You are SrA_____. You are a hard worker and you really like your job. You are dedicated to the Air Force and you recently earned your promotion to SSgt. You like being involved in off-duty activities, and you're excited that you'll soon complete a CCAF degree…the first one in your family to do so. Your supervisor has asked you to drop by the office to discuss something. You can't imagine what it might be, but you become very uncomfortable when singled out.
Today, your supervisor wants to meet with you to discuss the situation.

In-class Exercise
INTERPERSONAL COUNSELING SESSION - OBSERVER
Observer Instructions:

- You are the timekeeper; you signal when to begin and end the session; approx. 15 minutes should be allowed for the interpersonal session and 5 minutes for your feedback.
- Look for and comment on the following items:
    o How did the supervisor execute the pre-session activities?
        ▪ What were the strengths/weaknesses of the diagnosis?
        ▪ Were the necessary preparations made to ensure the success of the session?
    o How did the supervisor execute the session activities?
        ▪ Did the supervisor establish rapport with the subordinate and state the purpose/objective?
        ▪ Did he/she display appropriate attending skills?
        ▪ Were open-ended/probing questions used? Were reflecting, summarizing, and silence utilized effectively?
        ▪ Were appropriate steps taken/goals set to resolve problem? Were referral agencies mentioned or used?
        ▪ Was the session effectively closed? Did the supervisor refrain from introducing new material and end by motivating/inspiring the subordinate?
    o How did the supervisor execute the post-session activities?
        ▪ Were the proper documenting procedures followed?
        ▪ Were follow-up actions taken or planned?
- When the session is over, share your observations with the supervisor and subordinate in a positive way.

**NOTE: If the session did not appear productive, you may want to begin your feedback by asking the supervisor, "If you could do this again, what would you do differently?" This should help you stay on a positive tone.

Follow-on Instructions:
- Your next role will be as the subordinate.
- Take a minutes to prepare for the session - turn to, and read, the next subordinate scenario
- Await instructions from the observer

Research Exercise
COUNSELING/EMERGENT LEADERSHIP ISSUES REFERRAL AGENCIES

PURPOSE: To familiarize students with referral agencies available at their specific location that can be used to assist subordinates with personal/professional issues and challenges.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Working as a flight, develop a "Referral Agency Quick Reference List" using answers from the following:

    a. What basic services does the agency provide?

    b. What problems/issues can the agency help supervisors address?

    c. Phone number and Point of Contact

2. Here is a list of agencies that ***may or may not*** be available at your particular base. If a certain agency is not available, cross it off the list:

    Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Treatment Program (ADAPT)

    American Red Cross

    Chaplain Services

    Employee Assistance Program

    Family Advocacy

    Family Member Programs

    Life Skills Support Center (LSSC)

    Airman & Family Readiness Center

    Health & Wellness Center

    Mental Health Clinic

    Military Equal Opportunity

    Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

    Victim Witness Assistance Program

    Wingman Support Coordinator

    Organization Consulting

    Special Needs Identification and Assignment Coordination (SNIAC)

    Air Force Survivor Assistance Program

    Base Safety Office

    Base Legal Office

    Patient Advocate Program

3. Select a spokesperson to out brief the checklist to the flight. Briefings will be delivered during the Emergent Leadership Lesson.

4. Ensure each flight member receives a paper copy of the Quick Reference List.

MP 6. SUPERVISORY WRITING

STUDENT PREPARATION: In preparation for this in-class discussion, read this main point and be prepared for the classroom discussion (2800 words/25 minutes)

> **"Good writers define reality; bad ones merely restate it. A good writer turns fact into truth; a bad writer will, more often than not, accomplish the opposite."**
>
> *Edward Albee*

The Air Force requires you to establish a reliable set of communication skills that will serve as a foundation for virtually every supervisory task that you will face. By the very nature of the position, you will routinely communicate the needs of the unit to the workforce to get the mission accomplished. Your unit's mission depends on your success at developing effective writing skills. Supervisors are expected to meet NCO responsibilities through an effective application of writing skills. As universal as writing skills may seem, no other individual so desperately needs this skill more than you do. You will be supervising the youngest and most impressionable members of our force. To reach our goal of helping all enlisted personnel live up to the expectations laid out in the Enlisted Force Structure, you must concentrate diligently on developing your writing skills. This main point is designed to outline some of the prevalent types of writing you will have to accomplish as a supervisor. We will briefly define narrative writing and discuss the importance of the two types of narrative writing that you will compose while attending the ALS, awards citations and Letters of Counseling. Then you will learn how bullet statement writing applies to Enlisted Performance Reports and AF Form 1206, *Nomination for Awards*. The ultimate goal is for you to understand the benefits and impact of supervisory writing.

Narrative Writing

Definition of Narrative Writing

> **Narrative Writing:** relates a clear sequence of events that occurs over time. Both what happens and the order in which the events occur are communicated to the reader. Effective narration requires a writer to give a clear sequence of events (fictional or non-fictional) and to provide elaboration[i].
> Narrative writing focuses on telling a story. This may mean telling a fictional story — one that is made up — or it may mean telling a real-life story. Narrative writing can also take the form of an essay, in which the author will use a personal story to prove a point or state an argument. Also, it helps the author connect with an audience to prove a point, state an argument, or address an important issue.

Types of Narrative Writing

Throughout your Air Force career you will be called on to produce narrative products such as memorandums, Trip Report, decoration citations, official e-mails, Letters of Counseling, Admonition and Reprimand, letter of recommendation, letter of request, etc. (see figure 1 below). For the sake of time, you will only compose a narrative writing product for a decoration citation and Letter of Counseling.

Awards and Recognition Writing

Figure 9. Ribbons

Decoration Citations

Members of the Air Force make many personal and professional sacrifices to ensure the Air Force accomplishes its missions and is a respected part of our society. Acts of valor, heroism, exceptional service, and outstanding achievement deserve special recognition.

The Air Force has a special trophies and awards program that recognize acts of bravery, outstanding achievements, or periods of meritorious service. People or units who receive awards and decorations under this program must clearly demonstrate sustained and superior performance. The Air Force's awards and decorations program assist in fostering morale, incentive, and esprit de corps. (AFI 36-2803, *Awards and Decoration Program*) You are probably asking yourself, "What is my responsibility as it applies to this program?" According to AFI 36-2618, *Enlisted Force Structure*, Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.10, "NCOs must appropriately recognize and reward those individuals whose military conduct and duty performance clearly exceed established standards."

In the Full Range Leadership Development lesson, you learned about three types of rewards that are an integral part to contemporary motivation one being the supervisory rewards, which includes such things as praise, public recognition, time off, bonus pay, promotions, special assignments, greater roles and responsibilities, etc. When the time comes to recognize your subordinate for the outstanding job he or she has consistently done, one way to do so is by submitting him or her for a decoration citation, at the appropriate time. A decoration citation, such as the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, etc., is a short narrative (story) that describes a specific:

1. Service

2. Achievement

3. Meritorious Service

4. Heroism

Nominators must use vPC (Virtual Personnel Center) to initiate the following decorations: Air Force Achievement Medal (AFAM), Air Force Commendation Medal (AFCM), Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), Aerial Achievement Medal (AAM), Combat Readiness Medal (CRM), and the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (MOVSM). For further guidance on processing these awards and decorations within vPC, reference the Total Force Awards and Decorations PSD Guide.

* Some units may require additional justification, in those instances use the AF Form 642 or AF Form 2274 to document Achievement Medal justifications. Use AF Form 642 or bond paper for documenting justification for a Commendation Medal. As a rule of thumb, always seek local guidance, as requirements may vary by organization**.** Below is a list of basic citation rules.

Basic Citation Rules:

1. Citations must be in good taste and of quality that will capture the substance of the decoration with dignity and clarity. The narrative is a short description of the act, achievement, or service. Be specific on facts. Do not include classified information on citation.

2. For the achievement medal use the mandatory opening sentence. Confine the closing to one sentence which will personalize the summation (See paragraph 3.5 in AFI 36-2803 for complete listing)

3. For compound grade titles, such as First Lieutenant, Master Sergeant, Lieutenant Colonel, and so on, spell out the complete grade title in the opening sentence and then use the short title in the balance of the citation. Reflect the title "Chaplain" as "Chaplain, full grade, full name" (Ex: Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Thompson) in the opening sentence. Thereafter, reflect "Chaplain surname" (Ex: Chaplain Thompson).

4. When appropriate, use transitions to enhance flow (During this period, Sergeant Doe…, Additionally …, Furthermore …, Finally …) Use third person, active voice, past tense.

5. The use of commonly identified code names is acceptable in citations (i.e.; Red FLAG, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, etc. Do not use any abbreviations other than Jr., Sr., II, III, and so on, following the member's name.

6. Spell out numbers "zero" through "nine" and numerals in millions/billions (ex: two, three million dollars). Numbers 10 to 999,999 should be expressed in figures (ex: 20, 385, million dollars). Note: use numbers for organizations

7. Use Times New Roman (TMS RMN) 10- to 12-point size.

8. Length of citation should not exceed guidelines in AFI 36-2803 (ex: AFAM citations: 11 or 12 lines maximum).

9. Do not use alphanumeric organizational designators. (ex: SC00)

10. Avoid using titles, terms, and expressions ("Geek-Speak") not easily understood by the general public. Also, avoid using exaggerated superlatives (ex. unequalled / unprecedented).

11. Include quarterly, annual military & PME awards received (individual, team or unit) and base or community leadership involvement.

12. Format Heading and Body IAW AFI 36-2803, The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program. (e.g. double-spacing between sentences, line spacing).

    NOTE: for more detailed instruction/guidance consult AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*, and/or your local awards and decorations program managers.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
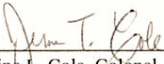
THE AIR FORCE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

HAS BEEN AWARDED TO
SENIOR AIRMAN BILLY D. WILLIAMS

FOR
OUSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
1 OCTOBER 2012 TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Senior Airman Billy D. Williams distinguished himself by outstanding achievement as Computer Programmer, Education Operations and Communications Directorate, Headquarters Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Airman Williams displayed his dedication to excellence with the skillful redesign of 70 Student Management System web pages, thereby drastically reducing software maintenance time. Additionally, Airman Williams meticulously documented 381 discrete access levels across multiple systems, allowing Air University to serve 11,000 users while maintaining 100 percent compliance with Air Force directives. Finally, Airman Williams led the design of 19 new systems capabilities for the Squadron Officer College, maintaining a continuously evolving curriculum serving all Air Force company grade officers. Airman Williams' efforts culminated in the award of Senior Airman "Below the Zone" and Headquarters Air University Airman of the Quarter. Airman Williams' desire to improve the quality of education for Air Force students reflects credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND
29 DECEMBER 2014

Jermaine L. Cole, Colonel, USAF
Commander, Headquarters Air University

AF FORM 2274, 20000101   Special Order: GS-XX   Condition: X   PAS: MG0JFMF2   RDP: XX XXX XX

Figure 10. Medal Citation

Writing a decoration citation is one way that you will have the opportunity "tell your subordinate's story." Another supervisory writing responsibility, good or bad, is a Letter of Counseling.

Disciplinary Writing:

Letters of Counseling, Admonishment and Reprimand

Disciplinary writing is another form of narrative writing where you have to "tell the story" of your subordinate's performance. As you will learn in the Standards and Discipline lesson, it is important to establish, maintain, and enforce standards so your subordinate knows exactly what is expected of them. Moreover, when he or she doesn't meet the standards or exceeds the standards, a Letter of Counseling is a tool that can be used to either correct the conduct or reinforce a particular behavior. According to AFI 36-2907, Unfavorable Information File (UIF) Program, when the letter is written it should state at least the following: what the member did or failed to do, citing specific incidents and their dates, what improvement is expected, that further deviation will result in more severe action, and that the individual has 3 duty days to submit rebuttal documents for consideration by the initiator. See the *Figure 11, Letter of Counseling Guidelines* when drafting a Letter of Counseling, Admonishment, or Reprimand. *Figure 11* should be used as a template/guide when completing your LOC assignment.

Official Memorandum Format Attributes

Although the content of a memorandum will vary, Air Force references provide format and content guidelines you should follow to produce effective Air Force communication. In some situations, your unit may require you to write correspondence differently to satisfy unique local requirements; however, the basic standards for writing Air Force correspondence comes from AFH 33-337, *Tongue & Quill.* Additionally, *The Military Commander and the Law* that can be accessed at www.afjag.af.mil , provides specific requirements for Letters of Counseling (LOCs), Letters of Admonishment (LOAs), and Letters of Reprimand (LORs).

General Rules for Official Memorandum

The following are some general and specific formatting guidelines for creating an official memorandum (see sample memorandum). For more information or further guidance, you should refer to AFH 33-337, *Tongue & Quill* and/or consult your local Military Personnel Flight/Commander Support Staff.

General Requirements:

1. Write correspondence in plain language – clear, concise, direct, and organized.

2. Use printed letterhead, computer-generated letterhead, or plain bond paper.

3. Use 10 to 12 point Times New Roman font for text.

4. Use 1-inch margins on the left, right, and bottom. Use 1.75-inch top margin. (for subsequent pages the margins need no adjustments)

Specific Requirements:

1. Date element: Flush with right margin and 10 line spaces (1.75 inches) from the top of the page. Use format of day, month, and year (1 June 2007 or 1 Jun 07).

2. MEMORANDUM FOR element: RECIPIENT/ORGANIZATION; placed 12 line spaces from top of page or two spaces below date element in UPPERCASE. Place 2 spaces after MEMORANDUM FOR.

3. ATTENTION element (optional): Used to address correspondence to a specific person. Place on next line below MEMORANDUM FOR element and align under address.

4. FROM element: Unit/Your office symbol. Place 2 spaces (1 blank line) below MEMORANDUM FOR element.

5. SUBJECT element: Identifies the issues or topic. Be brief and clear. Place 2 line spaces below the last line of FROM element.

6. Spacing: Begin typing two spaces (1 blank line) below SUBJECT and single-spaced within paragraph.

7. Double-space after punctuation that ends a sentence (periods, question marks, etc.)

8. Signature element: Place 5 line spaces below the last line of text and 4.5 inches from the left edge of the page or 3 line spaces to the right of page center. Consists of 2 lines:

9. First line: Name in UPPERCASE, Rank, Military Service in UPPERCASE.

10. Second line: Duty title (office/organization level optional).

11. If the authority line is used, type the signature element 5 line spaces below the authority line. Do not place the signature element on a continuation page by itself.
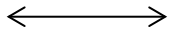
[1.75 inches from top of page; flush with right margin] 1 May 2014
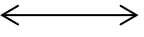
1 inch

MEMORANDUM FOR {RANK FIRST M. LAST}

FROM: ORG/SYMBOL {Issuer's organization and office symbol}

1 inch

SUBJECT: Letter of Counseling

1. Investigation has disclosed that {briefly describe what the member did and/or failed to do, citing the specific incident(s) and date(s)}.

2. You are hereby counseled. {Briefly discuss the impact of what the member did or failed to do and what improvement is expected}. Your conduct is unacceptable and any future misconduct may result in more severe action.

3. The following information required by the Privacy Act is provided for your information. AUTHORITY: 10 U.S.C. § 8013. PURPOSE: To obtain any comments or documents you desire to submit (on a voluntary basis) for consideration concerning this action. ROUTINE USES: Provides you an opportunity to submit comments or documents for consideration. If provided, the comments and documents you submit become a part of the action. DISCLOSURE: Your written acknowledgment of receipt and signature are mandatory. Any other comments or documents you provide are voluntary.

4. You will acknowledge receipt of this letter immediately by signing the acknowledgment below. Within three (3) duty days from the day you received this letter, you will sign the 1st Ind below. Any comments or documents you wish to be considered concerning this letter must be submitted at that time. You will be notified of my final decision regarding any comments submitted by you within three (3) duty days.

MEMBER'S NAME, Rank, USAF
Position or Duty Title of Issuer

NOTE: Double space equals 1 blank line

I acknowledge receipt and understanding of this letter on {date of issuance}. I understand that I have three (3) duty days from the date I received this letter to provide a response and that I must include in my response any comments or documents I wish to be considered concerning this letter.

MEMBER'S NAME, Rank, USAF
Position or Duty Title of Receiver

Figure 11. Letter of Counseling Template

**This document serves as the template to be used for the completion of the
Letter of Counseling (LOC) assignment.
Please note that that this document does not depict subsequent
endorsements that are required for the LOC.**

ADDITIONAL SUPERVISORY WRITING

Although they are not written in a narrative format, the AF Form 1206, *Nomination for Award* and Enlisted Performance Report (EPR) are also part of your supervisory writing responsibility. If you remember from the Airmanship lesson, the use of DDR helps cultivate mature service members through direction toward positive behavior, discipline to curb sub-standard performance, and recognition of stellar behavior. Also in Full Range Leadership lesson, the transactional leader uses a system of contingent rewards to motivate their subordinate's continued compliance and performance. The AF Form 1206, nomination for award is just one of the various contingent reward tools supervisors can use. They are designed to nominate your subordinate for quarterly and yearly awards such as Airman of the Quarter and/or Airman of the Year, etc. (See figure 7, Sample AF Form 1206). For more information, and additional guidance on other types of awards as well as submission criteria refer to AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*, and AFI 36-2805, *Special Awards and Trophies.* Additionally, the EPR is the Air Force's process for providing a documented evaluation of your subordinate's performance at the end of his or her reporting period. You will learn about the Enlisted Evaluation System in the Performance Evaluation Lesson. You can also refer to AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation System*, for additional information and guidance. Both the 1206 and EPR allow you to "tell the story" of your subordinate's performance; however, instead of writing a narrative, you will use bullet statements as the standard written format, a skill and concept which you learned in the Bullet Statement Writing main point.

NOMINATION FOR AWARD		
AWARD Quarterly Award	CATEGORY *(If Applicable)* AMN	AWARD PERIOD 1 Apr 30 Jun 16
RANK/NAME OF NOMINEE *(First, Middle Initial, Last)* A1C/Michael J. Heming	MAJCOM, FOA, OR DRU AETC	
DAFSC/DUTY TITLE 2W051/Munitions Systems Apprentice	NOMINEE'S TELEPHONE *(DSN & Commercial)* 596-7821 & (334)953-7821	
UNIT/OFFICE SYMBOL/STREET ADDRESS/BASE/STATE/ZIP CODE 42d Munitions Squadron/MXWKA/130 W. Maxwell Blvd/Maxwell AFB/AL/36112		
RANK/NAME OF UNIT COMMANDER *(First, Middle Initial, Last)*/COMMANDER'S TELEPHONE *(DSN & Commercial)* Col/Jefferson D. Hogg/596-9376 & (334)953-9376		

SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS *(Use single-spaced, bullet format)*

LEADERSHIP AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY DUTY:
- Compose Five Bullet Statements of the Appropriate Type for this Section
-
-
-
-

SIGNIFICANT SELF-IMPROVEMENT:
- Compose Two Bullet Statements of the Appropriate Type for this Section
-

BASE OR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:
- Compose Two Bullet Statements of the Appropriate Type for this Section
-

ACRONYMS:

AF FORM 1206, 20120926   PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE   FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY *(When filled in)*

Figure 12. 1206

MP 7. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Supervisory Writing and Supervisor's Effectiveness

Producing effective written communication can be very challenging at times, but if you commit to developing and improving your writing skills, you will see significant benefits for you, your work center, and the Air Force mission. When you produce effective written communication, you provide your audience with a clear message, improving communication up and down the chain of command, resulting in a better understanding of policies and procedures, awards and decorations, and counseling. Consider the effect if you fail to effectively communicate in your writing. Subordinates and supervisors may view your supervisory effectiveness negatively if your writing is unclear. Failure to adequately convey your message can also impact your subordinates' professional develop and career, thus lowering morale and reducing your credibility.

Summary

As a supervisor, you want to be viewed as a credible NCO who is capable of making sound decisions to meet the Air Force mission. However, if you neglect to learn and understand your responsibility as it applies to supervisory writing, your credibility may suffer as a result. What will you do if your subordinate asks you to write them a letter of recommendation? Will you feel confident you know how? How will you react if when your boss informs you that you have to write a citation for you subordinate who is PCSing? People count on your expertise. Don't let them down! Although these responsibilities maybe overwhelming at first, if you put effort into improving your writing skills, your confidence will grow and so will your credibility. You will earn the respect of your supervisor, peers, and subordinate when you apply effective writing skills to produce Air Force writing.

CONCLUSION

The process of communication is simple, but yet can be so very complex, as it includes not just the message intend, but the message actually sent; how the message was interpreted; how the receiver responds; and how the sender reacts to the receiver's response. Effective communication helps us better understand people and situations, enables us to resolve differences, and build the trust and respect required to foster learning and accomplish goals. Written, oral and nonverbal skills are important tools for sharing ideas, feelings and commitments. The Air Force is made up of people who share a common interest and commitment, and yet perhaps see things from a variety of perspectives. Through effective communication, this diverse group of people is able to process, categorize, and comprehend the information and issues required to make decisions that impact their NCO, unit and mission effectiveness.

[i] Bates, Jefferson D. (1993) Writing With Precision, How to Write So That You Cannot Possibly Be Misunderstood. Acropolis Books LTD., Washington DC: pp 203.

[ii] Ibid., 688.

[iii] Fowler, H. Ramsey and Jane E. Aaron, *The Little, Brown Handbook*. 9th Ed. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., New York: 2003, 120.

[iv] http://owl.english.purdue.edu

[v] Ibid., 670-671.

[vi] *The Tongue & Quill*. (AFH 33-337) Maxwell AFB AL: Air Command and Staff College, 01 August 2004, 269.

[vii] *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary*. 898.

[viii] Ibid., 689.

[ix] Ibid., 687-689.

[x] Mullen, Michael G., *From the Chairman: Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics.* Joint Force Quarterly *(Issue 55, 4ᵗʰ quarter 2009). http://www.jcs.mil/newsarticle.aspx?ID=142*

[xi] Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (November 2010)*

[xii] http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/department-of-state.shtml
[xiii] Ibid.

[xiv] Ibid.

[xv] Ibid.

[xvi] Air University, Cyberspace and Information Operations Study Center: Strategic Communication. http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/

[xvii] Colonel Robyn A. Chumley, Director of Public Affairs for AETC stated in her June 2010 memo

[xviii] White House Strategic Communication Report to Congress: *National Framework for Strategic Communication.*

[19] Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241 pg. 235 (1October 2013)
[20] Ibid