Boeke


Die toename in die belangrikheid van organisasiekommunikasie as teoretiese en toegepaste studieveld binne die kommunikasiewetenskappe blyk uit die groot hoeveelheid handboeke en artikels wat in die afgelope aantal jare hieroor verskyn het. "n Leemte sover dit meeste van hierdie publikasies aanbied, is dat die bruikbaarheid van hierdie publikasies op 'n akademiese vlak dikwels beperk word omdat hulle onvolledige of gefragmenteerde beskouings van organisasiekommunikasie bied. Met sy boek "Organizational Communication" poog Kreps om 'n breër voorstelling van organisasiekommunikasie se kennisveld te maak, deurdat 'n groter spektrum van teoretiese perspektiewe oor interne asook eksterne organisasiekommunikasiefunksies en toepassings gebied word.

Hierdeur spreek Kreps 'n belangrike behoefte aan omdat meeste ander handboeke op interne funksies van organisasiekommunikasie fokus ten koste van die eksterne skakelings-funksies. Daar bestaan ook feitlik nie handboeke wat interne sowel as eksterne organisasiekommunikasie bied. Met sy boek "Organizational Communication" poog Kreps om 'n bredere voorstelling van organisasiekommunikasie te gee, deurdat 'n groter spektrum van teoretiese perspektiewe oor interne en eksterne organisasiekommunikasiefunksies en toepassings gebied word.

Die hantering en aanbieding van ander onderwerpe wat bespreek word, is logies en bied aan die leser 'n geïntegreerde oorsig oor die veld van organisasiekommunikasie soos dit in terne sowel as eksterne aspekte aanbied.

Die boek is in vier dele verdeel. Die eerste gedeelte van die boek bied 'n inleiding tot organisasie en kommunikasie, terwyl Deel Twee 'n omvattende oorsig oor die vyf belangrikste teoretiese perspektiewe van organisasiegedrag en -kommunikasie bied. Die bespreking van sowel die sosiale systeembenadering as Weick se model van organisering ondervang huidige navorsings en teoretiese benaderings goed en bied die nodige uitbreiding op die drie traditionele primêre historiese perspektiewe wat gewoonlik in handboeke van hierdie aard bespreek word.

Deel Drie ondersoek die gebruik van kommunikasiekanale in organisering. Interpersoonlike, groeps- en omgewingskommunikasie, asook die administratiewe funksies van interne kommunikasie word vanuit 'n oopsisteemperspektief bespreek. Hierdeur poog die outeur om huidige kennis oor organisasiekommunikasie op 'n duidelike en teoreties geldig wyse te integreer. Die probleem is egter dat omvattendheid in die hantering van onderwerpe noodwendig tot onvolledig en is aanleiding gee. Hoewel mens dus bly is oor die insluiting van konsepte soos kommunikasie-klimaat en organisasiekultuur,
bevredig die bespreking wat daaroor handel, nie sover dit omvang of peil aanbetrif nie. Dit is veral dan ook die nuwe byvoeging oor groepskommunikasie wat opvallend oppervlakkig hanteer word deur hierdie outeur.

In die laaste gedeelte van die boek word die etiese beperkings op interne en eksterne kommunikasie in die organisasie bespreek. Specifieke etiese vraagstukke en probleemgebiede soos politiek, vooroordele, eerlikheid, inligtingsbeheer, afwykings, stres en eksterne verantwoordbaarheid word ondersoek. Die boek sluit af met 'n bespreking oor organisasie-effektiviteit en hoe dit gevestig en onderhou kan word deur die toepaslike gebruik van inligting.

Om lesers te help om die konsepte wat in hierdie boek bespreek word toe te pas en te ontleed, bevat elke hoofstuk verskeie gevallestudies. Dit is 'n bruikbare insluiting omdat dit studente, veral op voorgraadse vlak, kan help om die inhoud van elke hoofstuk toe te pas en so hulle begrip van teoretiese beginsels te toets.

Die tweede uitgawe van Organizational Communication is dus hersien en gewysig om die nuutste navorsing en teoriee in te sluit. Twee nuwe hoofstukke, een oor groepskommunikasie en een oor die etiese aspekte van organisasiekommunikasie, is bygevoeg. Die gedeelte oor organisasieteorie is uitgebrei om die nuutste teoretiese benaderings in te sluit.

As 'n oorsigsteks is hierdie boek 'n welkome toevoeging tot die veld van organisasiekommunikasie. Wat veral verbly dend is, is dat die outeur poog om vanuit 'n geïntegreerde perspektief 'n omvattende teoretiese, dog pragmatiese, benadering tot organisasiekommunikasie daar te stel. Dit maak hierdie boek ook 'n bruikbare teks vir voorgraads organisasiekomunikasiekursusse. Vir die kennis hierdie teks egter beperkte nut en kan dit nie in dieselfde lig as ander gesaghebbende organisasie-kommunikasiehandboeke beskou word nie.

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The birth in February 1991 of this journal indicates something larger than the expansion of academic discourse in the communications field. As Craig points out, its appearance marks the coming of age of the discipline. Here at last is a publication which is devoted to the development of the theory of communication as an original body of knowledge, acknowledging that the field has grown beyond its origins as a poorly defined meeting-place of a variety of disciplines.

However, this development should be greeted with cautious optimism. While a significant amount of original work has spurred the theoretical growth of the communications field, the scope of communication theory as well as its proper forms and functions have become increasingly uncertain and controversial. “The fragmentation of communication theory across disciplines and subsidiariness challenges those who would proclaim communication and emergent discipline” (Craig 1991:1).

But even though questions are still raised concerning the field’s mission and scientific status, COMMUNICATION THEORY has at least provided us with a forum in which these essential questions can be examined.

The journal contains three sections: Articles, Book Reviews and Forum. While the first two fulfil conventional
functions, the Forum section promises some excitement. According to Craig in his introduction to the first issue, this section will provide opportunity for theoretical dialogue, as well as for presentation of theory in experimental forms and styles. "Interviews and conversations, debates, narratives, self-reflexive texts, parodies, epistolaries, lyrics, visual displays, or other forms may prove especially well suited to the presentation of certain concepts and arguments (1991:2).

It is fitting that a young field should explore new avenues, and considering the current debate concerning the nature of rationality and the increasing incredulity toward scientific and theoretical metanarratives discussed by such philosophers as Macintyre, Rorty and Lyotard, this section of the journal should keep the communication field in the forefront of interdisciplinary theoretical debate.

Indeed, the initial Forum establishes a precedent in this regard, with essays by Majid Tehranian and Brenda Dervin exploring the nature of comparative communication theory. Tehranian argues that it is possible, albeit difficult, to develop comparative theory as an alternative to either universalist or contextualist theories of communication. The problems facing comparative theory are the dilemmas that bedevil both the liberal-pluralist and the Marxist-critical traditions in this regard: the conflict between value-free and value-bound social science, between micro and macro perspectives, and between consensus and conflict social science models. Tehranian suggests three ground rules that might aid efforts to solve these dilemmas. Firstly, that all human communication is culture bound, or local. Secondly, despite this, that some common features are shared by all local communication systems, and thirdly, that as a result, universal aspects of communication might be found across time, space, structure and function.

To be successful, a comparative theory would need to, among other things, integrate theories on different levels (structural, micropersonal, macrohistorical and macroeconomic) as well as "identify those perennial social processes in which communication plays a central part" (Tehranian, 1992:51). Tehranian lists these as: signification, socialisation, legitimation and accumulation. These would then be examined on the dimensions of time, space, structures and functions. Tehranian argues for a communitarian perspective that will resolve the binary oppositions that have been characteristic of past of past comparative theories. This perspective "would argue for an interdependency of the material and ideal aspects of social life. All reality is thus viewed as socially negotiated and constructed through the media of cultural expression to communicate and control society's dominant values" (1991:52).

Finally, Tehranian argues, a comparative theory will have to develop operational methods for research into these abstract concepts.

Dervin's article focuses more specifically on comparison of entities such as cultures and subcultures. She names the central problem in the search for comparative strength as the use of inappropriate conceptualisations of communication phenomena - at base the emphasis on states or entities rather than dynamic or process.

Dervin points out a schizophrenia in communication theorising, where process ideas are talked about but seldom implemented. In the comparison between cultures, a dynamic or process approach would attend "more to verbs (e.g., how culture is created, maintained, contested, destroyed, allowed to decay) than nouns (e.g., what traits or situations distinguish cultures). This would mean, for example, focusing on meaning making as well as meanings
made, on the struggling to achieve order or destroy it as well as on order achieved or destroyed” (Dervin, 1991:61-62).

In the interests of developing a process view, Dervin proposes a “gap perspective” in which discontinuities rather than continuities are examined. Communication is conceived of as ‘gap bridging’ - something all entities are involved in: “There are gaps between reality and human sensors, between human sensors and mind, between mind and tongue, between tongue and message created, between message created and channel, between human at time one and human at time two, between human one at time one and human two at time one, between human and culture/society/nation, between human and institution, between institution and institution, between nation and nation, and so on” (1991:62).

Five areas are examined in which the communication field still retains inappropriate metaphors, which the gap idea can work to alter: The transmission metaphor which often confuses the process of communication with the product: the assumption that communication structures “have lives of their own”; the division of the discipline into levels of analysis, from interpersonal to societal, which ignores connections between levels and obscures the fact that all are part of a whole; the division of the field into contexts where the fundamental nature of political communication is seen to differ from that of health communication, for example, “simply because these contexts are assumed by observers to be organizing tools for categorizing situations relevant to actors” (1991:64) and finally the explanation of communicative behaviour through use of static time-space concepts rather than dynamic time-space bound concepts. “Looking for such state regularities, we end up missing everything that is changeable or creative about the behavior of human entities, collective or individual” (1991:61).

Moving out of these limiting assumptions, the gap idea seeks ultimately to provide a more powerful tool for comparison, by allowing dynamic patterns to emerge. “This contrasts with our current analytics - implicit and explicit - which look at the entity and the entity’s inputs and outputs and not how the entity got from here to there” (1991:68).

These two articles seem to be important contributions to the theoretical debate over communication, currently marked by many divisions and a belief that universal theory is both unachievable and undesirable. Dervin’s theory of ‘gappiness’ might also be useful in developing a productive approach to intercultural communication in the South African context (something that seemed to elude most delegates at the recent SACOMM congress).

Fortunately, the debate on comparative theory begun here, is set to continue in subsequent issues of the journal, along with symposia on such topics as theory and history and visual argument. Judging from these initial articles in particular, and the first issue in general, COMMUNICATION THEORY promises to be a journal indispensable to those who wish to participate in the philosophical and theoretical development of our field, and indeed marks the beginning of an exciting new phase in the growth of the discipline.

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Here, at last, is a useful and very practical undergraduate textbook on adver-
tising that moves beyond the agency
perspectives and places advertising and
promotions clearly within the wider
context of the marketing planning and
management process.

The brothers Belch, both from San Di­ego State University, clearly state that
this text takes a broad view in examin­ing the field of advertising and promo­tion and the world of marketing com­munications. They adhere to the as­sumption that to fully understand ad­vertising and its role in contemporary
marketing, attention must be given to
other promotional areas such as sales
promotion, public relations, and personal
selling. While it is stated clearly that an
understanding of the overall marketing
process, consumer behaviour and com­munications theory is needed to effec­tively plan, implement and evaluate
advertising and promotions, the focus
is essentially on advertising.

From the student's viewpoint, the au­thors have mercifully remembered that
professors were also, of course, once
students themselves. At the other end,
so to speak, instructors are provided
with a comprehensive array of support
material, such a complete teaching re­source that includes learning objectives,
chapter and lecture outlines, answers
to discussion questions, teaching notes
for transparency acetates, an additional
references. A computerised test bank
included more than 1 200 questions,
including multiple choice, true-false and
essay questions for each chapter. Us­ers also receive a set of 70 full-colour
high quality acetate transparencies, and
although this material is exclusively
American stuff, it does provide a more
than useful core of practical illustrations
which are so absolutely essential for
the effective teaching of advertising.

Each chapter contains a number of
unique features that enhance the learn­
ing experience and greatly contributes
to making things easier for the instruc­tor:
• Chapter objectives are provided at
the beginning of each chapter to
identify the main goals and indicate
what should be learned from each
chapter.

• Opening vignettes provide a practi­
cal example or application or dis­
cuss an interesting issue that is rel­
evant to the chapter.

• Several boxed promotional per­spectives featuring in-depth discus­
sions of interesting issues related
to the chapter coverage are included
in each chapter.

• Chapter summaries are written in
detail to provide a synopsis and
serve as a quick review of impor­tant topics covered.

• Discussion questions are provided
at the end of each chapter to give
students an opportunity to test their
understanding of the material and
to apply it. These can also be used
for class discussions.

• Full-colour visuals of print advertise­
ments, storyboards and other mate­
rial appear in many sections of the
text.

The particular strength of this book is
the integration of the various concepts,
ideas and theories with practical appli­cation. After having used this text book
during the past year, I can fully recom­mend it for any undergraduate course
in advertising and promotions manag­ement.

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