ELEVENTH EDITION

Communicating in Small Groups

Principles and Practices

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Dedicated to
Sue and Nancy
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From our first edition to this, our eleventh edition, our goal in writing this book has remained the same: to write a book students find interesting and practical, and instructors find clear and comprehensive. We are pleased that the previous ten editions continue to be praised and widely used by both teachers and students.

We have written the eleventh edition of *Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices* to serve as the primary text for a college-level course that focuses on group communication. We continue to seek a balanced approach to presenting the latest small group principles, while also identifying practical practices that bring the principles to life.

**New to the Eleventh Edition**

In this new edition we have thoroughly updated the research that anchors the principles and skills we present, incorporated new pedagogical features to enhance student learning, and added new applications of technology to enhance collaborate. Here’s an overview of what’s new.

**Expanded Emphasis on Virtual Groups and Teams.** From the first page of Chapter 1 through the final appendix, we have included additional research-based information about the role technology plays in facilitating collaboration in contemporary society. Students who have used technological tools all of their lives are increasingly becoming more sophisticated about the use of technology. We have revised our coverage of technology and the use of new media to reflect student’s existing knowledge while also building on it.

**Increased Application of Group Skills.** Students take a course in group communication not only to improve their knowledge but also to become more skilled communicators. How to develop a discussion plan, create an agenda, facilitate a meeting, manage conflict, make efficient and effective decisions, lead others, and collaboratively solve problems are just a few of the skill sets that are presented. To help students bolster their communication competence, we have expanded our application of specific group communication skills throughout the book. Our “Theory into Practice” feature has been re-titled “Putting Principles into Practice,” and we’ve added new material and applications to ensure students can increase their group communication skill.

**Linking Chapter Objectives with Chapters Headings.** To help students learn, review, and master chapter content, each learning objective that appears at the beginning of a chapter corresponds to a specific major heading. Students can easily confirm their mastery of each section of the material by reviewing the chapter objectives.

**New Chapter-End Study Guide.** We have completely revised our chapter-end material to help students assess their understanding of chapter content. Our new Study Guide features the revised chapter objectives to organize their study. We review information linked to each objective and help them clinch chapter content; we identify key terms and page numbers where students can review their understanding of the term. Finally, we present activities and assessment measures—including several new assessment measures—linked with each objective in the book.
Revised Ethics Feature. To help students explore their own values and ethics when collaborating with others, we have revised several of the “Collaborating Ethically: What Would You Do?” features. These mini case studies can be used for student journal entries or spark insightful class discussions.

Crisp Presentation of Chapter Content. Sometimes less is more. To help students quickly grasp ideas and information, we have looked for ways to structure the text’s content using bullets, new subheads, and streamlined prose to assist student’s mastery of the material.

New Inclusion of Contemporary Group Communication Research. As we have for 30 years, we’ve done our best to find the latest research about small group communication and add it to our already comprehensive digest of small group communication research applications. Each chapter includes new and updated references to the latest applications and insights into communicating in small groups.

New Diversity Material Integrated into Every Chapter. As we have in previous editions, we continue to integrate research and application of diversity throughout the text. For example, in Chapter 8 we offer new, practical strategies for addressing conflict in diverse groups looking at both surface and deep diversity. Thanks to an increased use of technology as well as an increasingly diverse society, we ensure students can adapt and respond to others from different backgrounds and cultures. Rather than relegating culture and diversity topics to a boxed feature, we carefully integrate our discussion of culture and diversity into every chapter.

And Much, Much More. Each chapter includes new examples, illustrations, cartoons, and updated pedagogy to make Communicating in Small Groups: Principles and Practices the best learning tool possible. We’ve made a special effort to streamline our coverage of content to make room for new research and additional pedagogical features so as not to add to the overall length of the book.

Chapter-by-Chapter Revision Overview

Here’s a brief summary highlighting several specific changes we’ve made to the eleventh edition:

Chapter One: Introducing Group Principles and Practices
- New material about the importance of virtual groups and teams.
- Extensively revised discussion of communicating in virtual groups and teams.
- New research about best practices for virtual group and team collaboration.

Chapter Two: Understanding Small Group Communication Theory
- Updated, more contemporary case study.
- New research on gender and culture.
- New application and assessment chapter-end materials to help students grasp the theories presented.

Chapter Three: Facilitating Group Development
- More streamlined discussion of individual and group goals and motivators.
- Enhanced treatment of formation in virtual teams.
- New discussion of homogeneity and diversity in groups.
Chapter Four: Preparing to Collaborate
- Revised discussion on how to develop a discussion plan including a new review box that lays out specific suggested steps and actions.
- Updated information about how to ensure that all group members share what they know.
- New assessment activity to help students review their understanding of types of reasoning.

Chapter Five: Relating to Others in Groups
- Expanded treatment of gender and culture.
- New discussion of structuration and formation of group norms.
- Enhanced focus on status and power in groups.

Chapter Six: Improving Group Climate
- New research on the costs and benefits of diversity.
- Updated material on the relationship of group size to group climate.
- New research-based recommendations about building cohesiveness in virtual teams.
- New assessment of group cohesiveness.

Chapter Seven: Enhancing Communication Skills in Groups
- Updated practical nonverbal skills section.
- New nonverbal virtual communication feature.
- New review section on word barriers and how to avoid them.
- New section on backchannel communication.

Chapter Eight: Managing Conflict
- New discussion about the causes of conflict.
- New information about how group members often respond when trust is violated.
- Revised and streamlined discussion of pseudo, simple, and ego conflict.
- New research inclusion about conflict in virtual groups and teams.
- New assessment activity of pseudo, simple, or ego conflict.
- New assessment activity about identifying advantages of different conflict styles.

Chapter Nine: Leading Groups
- Updated, more contemporary examples.
- Expanded coverage of transformational leadership.
- New research on shared leadership in teams.
- Additional research on leadership and gender.
- New material on traits of “servant leaders.”

Chapter Ten: Making Decisions and Solving Problems
- New discussion of the elements of effective and ineffective group decision making.
- Streamlined description of group problem solving.
- New research conclusions about virtual groups and problem solving.

Chapter Eleven: Using Problem-Solving Techniques
- New discussion of how to conduct a SWOT analysis.
- Streamlined discussion of group problem analysis techniques.
- New applications of problem-solving techniques in virtual groups.
- New material about when to trust “gut instincts” in groups.
Chapter Twelve: Enhancing Creativity in Groups and Teams

- New revised discussion of principles of group and team productivity.
- New research on how to enhance team creativity.
- New references to the value of introverts in solving problems creatively.

Balanced Coverage: Principles and Practices

We provide a carefully crafted integration of both principles and practices that provide a strong theoretical scaffolding for the “how to” practical skills needed for communicating in small groups. Theory without application can leave students understanding group principles but not knowing how to enhance their performance. On the other hand, presenting lists of techniques without providing an understanding of the principles that inform their skill would result in a laundry list of do’s and don’ts without insight as to when to apply the skills. The balanced tension between theory and application, structure and interaction, as well as task and process is especially evident in all communication study, but especially in the dynamic context of a small group. We believe that emphasizing theory without helping students apply principles can result in highly informed yet under-skilled group members. And while it’s true that our students often clamor for techniques to enhance their skills, such approaches alone do not give students the underlying principles they need to inform their newfound applications.

When we summarize research conclusions, we hear our students’ voices echoing in our heads, asking, “So what?” In response to those, we ask ourselves how the research conclusions we cite can enhance the quality of collaboration. We seek to provide principles and practices of small group communication that make a difference in our students’ lives.

We both abhor boring meetings that are adrift. Consequently we draw upon our almost 75 years of combined university administrative and teaching experience as we sift through classic and contemporary group communication research to keep our focus on application while anchoring our prescriptions in principled theory. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive yet laser-focused compendium of the latest thinking about group and team communication.

Popular Features We’ve Retained

A hallmark of this book, according to educators and students, is our get-to-the-point writing style coupled with our comprehensive distillation of contemporary and classic group communication research. We continue to receive praise for the clear applications of the research we describe. We’ve done our best to keep the features instructors and students like best about our book: a lively, engaging writing style, references to the most recent research, and not overwhelming readers with unnecessary rambling narratives. As we have in previous editions, we’ve revised and updated all of our pedagogical features, including chapter objectives, discussion questions, and end-of-chapter activities.

Supplemental Resources for Instructors

An Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank (0133809323) accompanies Small Group Communication. The Instructor’s Manual portion of the IM/TB includes the following resources: Sample syllabi for structuring the course, an outline and summary for each chapter which includes the major ideas covered, chapter objectives, discussion questions and experiential activities. The Test Bank portion of the IM/TB contains approximately 300 multiple-choice, true/false, and essay
questions, all of which are organized by chapter. This supplement is available for downloading at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc (access code required).

MyTest online test generating software (ISBN 0133809218) is available at www.pearsonmytest.com (access code required).

The PowerPoint presentation (0133809307) that accompanies Small Group Communication includes lecture slides based on key concepts in the text. This supplement may be downloaded from www.pearsonhighered.com/irc (access code required).

For a complete listing of the instructor and student resources available with this text, please visit the Communicating in Small Groups e-Catalog page at www.pearsonhighered.com.

This text is available in a variety of formats—digital and print. To learn more about our programs, pricing, and customization options, visit www.pearsonhighered.com.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Three and a half decades ago we met as new college professors sharing an office at the University of Miami. Today we live only miles apart in different Texas communities and remain united by a common bond of friendship that has grown stronger over the years. Our collaboration as friends continues to make this book a labor of love. This book is a partnership not only between us as authors, but also with a support team of scholars, editors, colleagues, reviewers, students, and family members.

We are grateful to those who have reviewed this edition of our book to help make this a more useful instructional resource. Specifically we thank Jeanne Christie, Western Connecticut State University; Meikuan Huang, California State University-Stanislaus; Daryle Nagano, El Camino College; David Kahl, Jr., Penn State Erie, The Behrend College.

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Finally, as in our previous editions, we offer our appreciation and thanks to our families, who continue to teach us about the value of teamwork and collaboration. Our sons are taking their place in the world and our spouses continue to be equal partners in all we do. John’s sons, John III and Noah, are older than we both were when we began the first edition of this book. John III and Noah continue to make their dad smile with pride at their successes. Nancy Masterson continues, as always, as John’s greatest love, best friend, and most respected critic.

Steve’s sons, Mark and Matt, are now also older than their dad when he started this project. Matt and his wife, Brittany, teach us the power of supportive collaboration and teamwork. Mark continues to teach his dad the importance of endurance and ever-present power of renewal, even when life presents ongoing challenges. Susan Beebe has been an integral part of the author team in this and every previous edition for over 30 years. She continues to be Steve’s personal Grammar Queen, life’s love, and best friend.

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John Masterson, Seguin, Texas