

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS'  
PERCEPTIONS

by

DAVID MANDZUK

A Thesis

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of  
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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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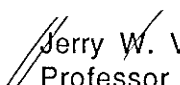
Dave Mandzuk

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Dave:

The purpose of this letter is to formally provide permission for you to use the Audit of Administrator Communication in your research project. Please keep me apprised of the results of the study.

Sincerely,

 Jerry W. Valentine  
Professor

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine principals' communication skills. Teachers' perceptions were compared to principals' self-perceptions. A number of demographic variables were also investigated to determine if they were related to principal-teacher communication.

The study populations consisted of 592 randomly-selected public school teachers in Winnipeg, Manitoba and 181 principals in this same city.

The study's instrument was a Likert-type survey called the Audit of Administrator Communication (AAC). The AAC is based on Valentine's four factors of communication which view the principal as a(n): a) Affective Involver, b) Informer, c) Developer and d) Encourager.

On the basis of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Teachers perceive principals to be strongest as 'Encouragers' and weakest as 'Affective Involvers' while principals perceive themselves strongest as 'Informers' and weakest as 'Affective Involvers'.
2. Teachers' perceptions vary as a function of: a) whether or not the principal evaluates them on at least an annual basis, b) whether or not they have the opportunity to evaluate their principals, and c) whether or not they have knowledge that the principal has had recent communication training. Principals' perceptions did not vary significantly as a function of any of the variables investigated.

3. There is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions on all four factors of communication. In each case, teachers rated principals significantly lower than principals rated themselves.

Implications for education are that principals' communication strengths and weaknesses are identified. Study results indicate how administrators' perceptions compare to the perceptions of teachers. This research indicates how important a role the evaluation process plays in principal-teacher communication. Data also suggests that communication training might affect how principals are perceived by their teachers.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background and Research Problem

The quality of the communication between employer and employee has long been a source of concern. As the potential for administrators to improve relationships in the workplace has become better understood, this concern has increased in recent years. The school setting is similar to that of any large business in that effective communication between supervisors and their employees is essential. Thus, the communication between teachers and principals is very important. In fact, Bagin, Ferguson and Marx (1985) referred to this communication as "the lifeblood of the organization". The role of the principal is vital in determining the quality of this communication. Valentine (1975) and Hunter and Cavanaugh (cited in McCurdy, 1983) stated that, "The most important skill that a principal needs is to be able to work with and through people." If all these claims are true, then educators need to improve their understanding of the communication process.

The purpose of this study is to examine the communication skills of principals. The study compares teachers' perceptions of how principals communicate with principals' own perceptions. The investigation examines:

- a) teachers' and principals' perceptions with respect to specific dimensions of communication

- b) the relationship of teachers' and principals' perceptions to a variety of demographic variables
- c) the comparison of teachers' and principals' perceptions of principals' communications skills.

How do principals know if they are working effectively 'with and through people'? Essentially, there are two sources from which the concerned principal can obtain feedback. The first source is the feedback received from teachers. No other group works as closely with principals on a daily basis as do teachers. The kind of information that teachers can provide is invaluable. The second source of feedback is from principals themselves. Self-appraisal of one's own communication skills can be an enlightening exercise in personal honesty. Feedback from teachers coupled with self-evaluations can furnish principals with a more comprehensive picture of how effectively they communicate.

Studies done by Meyer and VanHoose (1981) and Beckner (1985) showed that teachers and principals do not always agree with respect to how principals communicate. They indicated that principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions often differ greatly. They also suggested that principals need to be more aware of how they are 'coming across' to their teachers.

Awareness of the quality of their own performance is essential to current administrators and future educational leaders. It is essential because principals need to know which communication skills are being performed well and which need improvement. According to Valentine (1981), "the first

step to improvement can occur only if principals take an honest, introspective look at themselves and how they communicate with their teachers." According to Ellett (cited in Bromberg, 1985):

Through their daily functioning, principals may indeed set a tone for the educational environment that either fosters or inhibits student growth. However, it appears that these influences impact more directly on teachers and their attitudes, which subsequently engender student attitudes conducive to learning. (p. 13)

## 1.2 Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to examine four major research questions and their related hypotheses. They are:

### Research Question #1:

- a) In which dimensions of communication do teachers rate their principals highest?
- b) In which dimensions of communication do teachers rate them lowest?
- c) In which dimensions of communication do principals rate themselves highest?
- d) In which dimensions of communication do they rate themselves lowest?

(See 1.3 Operational Definition of Terms for an explanation of the dimensions of communication as described by Valentine, 1981)

### **Research hypotheses relevant to Research Question #1:**

- i) Teachers will rate principals highest as 'Informers' (or communicators of factual information) and lowest as 'Affective Involvers'.

ii) Principals will rate themselves highest as 'Informers' and lowest as 'Affective Involvers'.

**Research Question #2:**

Do teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills vary as a function of:

- a) sex of teacher?
- b) sex of principal?
- c) grade/teaching level?
- d) size of student population?
- e) size of teaching staff?
- f) whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- g) whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed?
- h) the number of years the teacher has worked with the particular principal?
- i) principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?
- j) teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?
- k) whether or not the principal has had any recent training in communication techniques?

**Research hypotheses relevant to Research Question #2:**

i) Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of principal
- grade/teaching level of teacher
- whether or not the principal has a teaching load
- teachers' opportunities to evaluate their principals
- principals' recent communication training
- size of student population
- size of teaching staff

(Specifically, with respect to the last two demographic variables, teachers' perceptions will be significantly lower in schools with large student populations and large teaching staffs.)

ii) Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will not vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of teacher
- whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed.
- number of years teacher has worked with that particular principal.

**Research Question #3:**

Do principals' perceptions of their own communication skills vary as a function of:

- a) sex of principal?
- b) grade/teaching level?
- c) size of student population?
- d) size of teaching staff?
- e) whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- f) principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?
- g) teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?
- h) whether or not the principal has had any recent training in communication techniques?

**Research hypotheses relevant to Research Question #3:**

i) Principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:



- whether or not the principal has a teaching load
- whether or not the teachers have the opportunity to evaluate their principal
- whether or not the principal has had recent communication training
- size of student population
- size of teaching staff

(Specifically, with respect to the last two variables, principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will be significantly lower in schools with large student populations and large teaching staffs.)

ii) Principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will not vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of principal
- grades for which the principal is responsible
- opportunities for principals to evaluate their teachers

#### **Research Question #4:**

Are there differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills and principals' self-perceptions on the dimensions of communication identified in Research Question #1?

#### **Research hypothesis relevant to Research Question #4:**

Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will differ significantly from principals' own self-perceptions on the four dimensions of: Involver, Informer, Developer and Encourager.

### **1.3 Operational Definition of Terms**

a) Principals' communication skills are defined as outlined by Valentine (1981). There are four dimensions of

principal-teacher communication. The four dimensions are:

- 1) **Affective Involver** - The administrator understands and accepts the feelings, thoughts and values of the teacher. The administrator seeks involvement in the personal, nonprofessional life of the teacher, and shares personal, nonprofessional interests with the teachers. The administrator seeks opinions and feelings on school-related issues and shares with teachers personal thoughts on school issues. Teachers feel comfortable discussing personal or professional problems with their administrator.
- 2) **Informer** - The administrator clearly communicates information, directions and decisions to the teachers. Teachers feel they are well-informed. Teachers understand what is expected.
- 3) **Developer** - The administrator stimulates and encourages the teacher towards personal and professional growth. This involves establishing personal and professional goals coupled with a realistic assessment of present capabilities.
- 4) **Encourager** - The administrator utilizes positive rather than negative reinforcement. The administrator encourages teachers by showing an interest in teacher concerns and making the teacher feel those concerns are significant.

(Valentine, 1981)

b) Teachers' perceptions and principals' self-perceptions of principals' communication skills are measured by scores derived from the Audit of Administrator Communication.

c) 'Training in communication techniques' (variable 'k' from Research Question #2) is defined as any academic coursework, workshops, in-services or other training programs that principals have recently attended.

d) 'Recent' is defined as any training that has taken place within the last five years.

#### 1.4 Educational Significance

The results of this study may provide:

1) A broad overview of teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills. The results may also isolate dimensions of principal communication in which principals as a group are seen to be strong and those in which they are seen to be weak. In this context, results may show how teachers rate principals in terms of:

- their affective involvement with staff members.
- their communicating of factual information.
- their encouragement of teachers towards personal and professional growth.
- their use of positive rather than negative reinforcement.

2) A broad overview of principals' self-perceptions with respect to the above dimensions of communication.

3) An indication of the extent to which teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions are seen to be related to certain demographic variables.

4) A basis for comparing teachers' and principals' perceptions within the context of the four dimensions of principal-teacher communication already described.

**Some of the secondary outcomes of this study may be:**

- 1) that teachers may be better able to clarify their perceptions of their own communication skills.
- 2) that principals may learn more fully how they communicate through the self-appraisal process and from the feedback provided by teachers.
- 3) that principals may also be better able to decide which specific communication skills are being performed well and which need improvement.
- 4) that, from the results of this study, some principals may be stimulated to plan strategies for self-improvement.

**Unique Aspects of this Study**

Some of the unique aspects of this study are:

- 1) Responses of a group of teachers and a group of principals will be compared. Most of the previous research using the Audit of Administrator Communication examined:
  - a) either teachers' perceptions or principals' perceptions, or
  - b) specific clusters of principals and their respective teachers.
- 2) The relationships between teachers' and principals' perceptions and a number of new demographic variables will be investigated. These variables are:
  - size of student population
  - size of teaching staff
  - principals who also have teaching loads
  - opportunities for teachers to evaluate their principals
  - principals' recent training in communication techniques

3) Although many studies on principal-teacher communication have been conducted in the United States, no similar Canadian Studies were found. This study examines principal-teacher communication in a Manitoban context.

### 1.5 Study Limitations

Limitations of this study are as follows:

- 1) The study is descriptive in nature and utilizes a brief and closed-response survey instrument. The AAC, a Likert-type survey, does not encourage respondents to elaborate on responses. Therefore, the insight required for greater understanding, is fairly limited.
- 2) Two very specific populations are sampled. The investigation of teachers' and principals' perceptions in Winnipeg means that results are probably only generalizable to that group. An investigation into the perceptions of rural and/or northern educators, for example, might produce completely different results.
- 3) This study also does not link up teachers with their specific principals. The resulting general overview might not be as meaningful as would an examination of clusters of principals and their respective teachers.

## CHAPTER 11

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter will review the related literature and relevant research in the area of principal-teacher communication. Discussion will focus on topics such as definitions of communication and will progress to topics which address specific research in the area of principal-teacher communication.

#### 2.1 Definitions of Communication

What does communication mean? Kindred, Bagin and Gallagher (1984) provided us with a definition that serves as a useful point of departure:

Communication doesn't mean just telling or hearing something. In the true sense of the word, it means communion or the mutual sharing of ideas and feelings. It comes from the Latin communico meaning "to share" or to make common . . . In any event, communication is a co-operative enterprise requiring the mutual interchange of ideas and information, and out of which understanding develops and action is taken. (p. 78)

Merrihue and Davis (cited in McCurdy, 1978) supported the notion that communication is a mutual process. Merrihue defined communication as "any initiated behaviour on the part of the sender which conveys the desired meaning to the receiver and causes desired response behaviour from the receiver." (p. 239)

The two previous definitions may imply that the communication process is, for the most part, intentional. However, Boles and Davenport (1983) suggested that not only is communication "a process through which an individual receives a sense impression of another," . . . but also that "many of the messages received are not intentionally sent. Even when one is consciously sending, the receiver may be picking up unintended messages on channels of which the sender is unaware." (p. 167) Wallen (1968) alluded to the ambiguous aspects of communication when he stated that "the concept of communication includes all those processes by which people influence one another . . . This definition is based on the premise that all actions and events have communicative aspects, as soon as they are perceived by a human being." (p. 2)

Bhola (1973) viewed communication in a more structured manner. He said that "communication simply means establishing commonality of meanings given to signs and symbols by the communicator and the one communicated to." (p. 104) He further suggested that "the problems related to effective communication arise because establishing commonality is difficult, even impossible in an absolute sense." (p. 104)

## **2.2 Elements of Communication and the Communication Process**

There are countless models of communication. Some of these include those of Shannon and Weaver (1964), Wallen (1968), Schmuck and Runkel (1972), Arnett (1976), Fischer

(1978), Katz and Kahn (1978) and Boles and Davenport (1983). Each of these outlines the communication process and the elements involved. This study views the communication process as seen by Wallen (1968) and Boles and Davenport (1983). They described four basic elements involved in all communication:

- 1) A person to originate a thought or idea.
- 2) The idea itself as it is expressed.
- 3) A medium or channel for expressing the idea.
- 4) Someone to receive and interpret the idea.

Wallen (1968) stated that if any one of the four basic elements was missing, effective communication could not take place. Kindred, Bagin and Gallagher (1984), on the other hand, identified an extra element involved in the communication process. Their model was similar to that proposed by Wallen except that the receiver had two roles - that of decoding the message and then reacting to it.

Viewing the communication process in terms of four or five elements may be an oversimplification. It may limit understanding of how A and B communicate. Boles and Davenport (1983), in addressing this, proposed that there were a number of factors that crucially affect each of the elements. For example, senders were affected by their skill, experience and knowledge levels, attitudes and origins. Important factors affecting the message were: the content, symbols used, modes of phrasing used and the technical and grammatical quality. The medium was affected by such things as: the channel and the materials used. Receivers (like senders) were influenced by their skill, experience and



knowledge levels, attitudes and origins. Wallen (1968) revealed additional factors that were involved. He suggested that mental and physical health, environment, emotional state, prejudices, tone of voice and body language also played a role in the communicating of a message. According to Wallen:

An awareness of all these factors and their ever-changing variability should help us realize how easy it is to have a breakdown in communications, and make us more careful in our own efforts to communicate and to be more patient with the efforts of others. (p. 2)

### 2.3 Basic Communication Skills and Techniques

There are a number of communication skills which are vital if a principal is to be an effective communicator. Wallen (1965) identified four basic communication skills. They are: a) paraphrasing, b) perception checks, c) behaviour description and d) description of feelings. Paraphrasing involves stating someone else's idea in your own words to show that you understand what he/she has said. Perception checks involve stating what you perceive the other person to be feeling. Behaviour descriptions describe specific behaviours which you are responding to. Description of feelings describe feelings that you are experiencing. Schmuck and associates (1977) (cited in Rothberg, 1984) agreed with Wallen but added the following skills: listening attentively, offering relevant information, seeking information to understand the other better and offering

opinions. Wallen (1968) described eight other communication techniques. (See Appendix B)

#### 2.4 Types of Communication

The literature identified types of communication necessary in order to understand the directions and channels through which communication can flow within a school organization.

**Internal communication** is viewed as the communication that goes on between the administration and staff **within** an organization. This is in contrast to **external communication** which is the communication that is carried out between the school and various external publics in the community such as: parents, nonparents, taxpayers and businesspeople. (Bagin, Ferguson and Marx, 1985). The major problem with internal communication is that it is often taken for granted and not planned. Bagin et al. suggested that many organizations do not plan systematic internal communications. Informing and listening to staff ideas are often noted as important but too often are forgotten when the need arises. "In some cases, staff members are seen not as a part of the team, but as tools to get the job done." (p. 39)

Bagin et al. and Hoyle, English and Steffy (1985) agreed that staff burnout, morale concerns and increasing stress levels have brought the key issue of internal communications to the forefront. Bagin et al. reported that in order to improve internal communications, teachers need: 1) to feel that their ideas count, 2) to know expectations of

the administration, and 3) to know that opportunities exist to express their concerns. Hoyle et al. added that in order for teachers to feel that they are important, principals need to rely on staff members who have specific knowledge and skills and to involve all staff in decision-making so they have a greater sense of ownership. In essence, "the right hand must know what the left hand is doing." (p. 49)

How serious is this need to improve internal communications? Bagin et al. cited a study done by D'Aprix (1982) which showed that 90% of the teachers who lost their jobs to declining enrollment said that they would not return to their positions. The reason: lack of feedback from their 'bosses'. "Another alarming statistic was that only 20% of teachers and principals interviewed by D'Aprix from 1979-84 said they would bother suggesting an idea to improve the schools, even if their ideas cost nothing to implement." (Bagin et al., 1985)

**Vertical** and **horizontal** communication are two other types of communication. (St. John, 1983 and Jwaideh, 1984). **Vertical communication** is viewed as the communication between two different levels (ie. administration and teachers). **Horizontal communication** usually represents the communication between staff members at the same level (ie. teacher-to-teacher or principal-to-principal). St. John and Jwaideh proposed that vertical communication is just as important as horizontal communication. Communication between teachers and principals

is essential if the sources to problems are to be diagnosed and corrective action is to be taken.

Jwaideh suggested that "Upward communication can be effective only when people at the bottom and middle levels are free from any sense of intimidation and when those at the top accept and even seek communication from below." (p. 14) Jwaideh also reported that in large organizations, there was the further problem of persons at top levels talking mostly with people at the same level, thereby reinforcing each other in their views.

**Written and verbal communication** are two other forms of communication used by the principal. Certainly, some messages are communicated much more effectively one way than the other. Botting (1986) reported that comprehension is greater when the communication is in written form but if opinion change is important, face-to-face, verbal communication is needed.

Valentine (1975) and Rose (cited in Gilbertson, 1978) stressed the importance of a principal's verbal communication skills. They stated that verbal interaction is so significant that it is probably the chief means by which the principal influences educational outcomes. Valentine (1980) and Gitzel, Lipham and Campbell (cited in Gilbertson, 1978) reported that the verbal skills which a principal uses in face-to-face encounters are crucial in determining both staff morale and the general effectiveness of the organization.

**Interpersonal communication** is probably one of the most difficult types of communication to define. Breckman

(1986) described it as more than the business at hand - it deals with the feelings and emotions of those involved. Miskel (1977) and Byrne and Griffitt (cited in Knutson, 1985) referred to the social-emotional interactions of group members. They described the interpersonal dimension as consisting of the expressed attitudes members hold toward other members in the group.

Although it appears that most educators agree that internal communication is important, many administrators tend to assume that good interpersonal communication comes from having a 'knack' for it, Bagin et al. (1985) suggested that too many administrators are content to 'wing it' in face-to-face situations, even though some of the most important communication occurs in this way. According to Berlo (cited in Gilbertson, 1978), "the goal of effective interpersonal communication is interaction or reciprocal role taking, the mutual performance of empathic behaviour." (p. 131)

What importance do principals and aspiring principals place on interpersonal communication skills? At the Sixth Annual Principals' Leadership Course held in Clear Lake, Manitoba (July, 1986), the fifty participants were asked to rate the previously-described types of communication according to their perceived importance. The respondents were unanimous. All rated interpersonal skills as those most important for a principal to possess.

## 2.5 The Effects of Ineffective Communication

Schaub (1980) reported that one of the most common problems cited by educators is that of poor communications between teachers and principals. Lack of adequate communications, breakdown of communications and lateness of communications were constantly listed as getting in the way of effective teaching. Lefan (1986) added that it is even more discouraging for teachers when poor communication skills not only lead to failure at problem-solving but actually contribute to making bad situations worse.

During the 1979-1980 school year, Sullivan and Walker (1981) asked 300 teachers to complete a supervisory behaviour questionnaire. They noted that many of the responses indicated a lack of effective communication by principals. Among the most common responses were:

- 1) principals rarely complimented their teachers when a job was done well.
- 2) principals said something on one occasion and then denied it at the next meeting.
- 3) principals answered teachers' questions with questions.
- 4) principals were never fully attentive to what teachers were saying.

Bhola (1973) identified the problem of stereotyping as it is involved in the communication process. He proposed that administrators often stereotype the receivers of their messages and fail to see what effect their messages have on these receivers. Bhola stated that not only must

administrators re-discover their receivers as current interaction proceeds, but future communication should be re-designed on the basis of this ongoing interaction.

LeFan (1986) suggested that communication failures are largely due to 'seven deadly sins'. They are:

1. **Bad Timing** - There is danger when your communication is either too early or too late.
2. **Indifference** - If you want your message heard, you've got to tell your listeners what they want to hear. You've got to, as he says, pay attention to their needs, wants and dreams.
3. **Hesitancy** - Nothing is more offensive or frustrating than someone who refuses to take a stand when that is what is called for.
4. **Prejudice** - We feel before we think and therefore make it impossible to hear or communicate new ideas.
5. **Smoke Screening** - This is what you do when you do not really want to be understood. The inappropriate use of jargon confuses rather than impresses people.
6. **Arrogance** - This allows no questioning, is averse to criticism and seeks to cram information down others' throats by edict.
7. **Incompetence** - If you lack knowledge or know-how in communicating, you'd be wise to withhold your contribution until you can qualify yourself.

(pp. 22-23)

Bagin, Grazian and Harrison (1972) identified two other examples of how ineffectively principals sometimes communicate. The first deals with the frustrating feeling of an employee who makes suggestions which are never acted upon. The authors recommended that if the idea could be

implemented, fine; if it could not, the principal should explain why this was the case. The second example identified how poor communication skills can affect a staff meeting.

They suggested that teachers do not appreciate:

- a) being read a statement when they have their own copy in front of them.
- b) having to listen to a discussion that involves only one teacher or department.
- c) being reprimanded in the presence of other teachers.

## **2.6 Skills of Principals Who Communicate Effectively**

St. John (1983) proposed that successful communications and desirable communicator attitudes go hand-in-hand. He outlined 14 key attitudes required by the administrator.

They are:

- 1) the desire to communicate.
- 2) the willingness to listen.
- 3) the desire to understand and to be understood.
- 4) the courage to say it as it is.
- 5) the maintenance of an open-door policy.
- 6) the focusing on the receiver and impact of your message.
- 7) the making of available time to circulate and chat with staff.
- 8) the recognition that communication problems are often only symptoms of other difficulties in the school.
- 9) being friendly and approachable.
- 10) the sharing of information promptly and fully.
- 11) the taking of action on communication needs.
- 12) the identification of informal leaders and opinion molders on staff and listening to them closely.
- 13) striving to maintain good upward communication channels, especially during times of change, trouble and tension.
- 14) remembering that horizontal communication is just as important as vertical communication.



In their examination of effective communicators, Bagin, Grazian and Harrison (1972) and Fasnemeyer (1984) appeared to agree that a vital step is for the principal to establish a communication forum for all staff. By providing such a forum, the principal can encourage all teachers to share their opinions and concerns. Fasnemeyer and Ellett (cited in Bromberg et al. 1985) also added that "the principal must strive to treat teachers fairly because this, in turn, will be passed on from the teachers to the children. Another crucial point is for principals (whether dealing with students or parents) "not to second guess their teachers any more than they like to be second-guessed." (Fasnemeyer, 1984, p. 3)

Affective involvement appeared to be the concern of Walton (cited in Brodinsky, 1983) and Fasnemeyer when they reported that both staff and student accomplishments need to be recognized. Many principals forget to compliment staff when they see something they like but, for some reason, never forget to comment on the unfavourable results produced. Walton stated that "praise is not the absence of criticism. Unexpressed gratitude is no gratitude at all. All human beings need recognition, gratitude and praise." (p. 11)

Common (1986) questioned: What other qualities must principals possess if they are to be effective communicators? She referred to the work of Croghan, Lake and Schroder (1983). Their work focused on the competencies of average and high-performing principals. Among the competencies found in the latter group was the ability to conduct that they

called the 'interpersonal search.' According to Crogan, Lake and Schroder, principals who communicate effectively are continually talking with others, asking questions, comparing situations and generally, probing for more information.

Mohlman (cited in McCurdy, 1983) stressed the importance of principals supporting teachers in order to improve staff morale and to develop closer associations with individual teachers. Rothberg (1984) agreed with this notion when he referred to 'developing a climate of trust.' He stated that a climate of trust will result not only in job satisfaction but increased productivity.

Beale and Bost (1979), Berlo (cited in Gilbertson, 1978) and Rogers (cited in Beale and Bost, 1979) agreed that a pivotal communication skill for principals is to achieve and convey empathy accurately. Beale and Bost's interest lay in determining whether specially-designed workshops would produce significant changes in the empathic discrimination abilities of the principals who participated. They developed an instrument called The Administrator Empathy Discrimination Index (AEDI). Twenty-six administrators took part in the set of workshops which consisted of four two-hour sessions held over a period of three weeks. Study results indicated that communication skills, especially those dealing with empathy, could be enhanced through active participation in a short-term training program.

## 2.7 Comparing Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions

According to Valentine (1981), most principals are well aware that they spend at least three-fourths of their working day communicating with teachers, students, parents, secretaries and many other persons with whom they work. Kindred, Bagin and Gallagher (1984) proposed that principals must constantly be sensitive to the way their behaviours and actions affect their teachers.

Beckner (1985), Valentine (1984) and Kindred et al. (1984) supported Meyer and VanHoose (1981) in stressing that, in general, the perceptions of teachers and principals with respect to how they communicate, must be understood. They suggested that agreement between the two groups is not always necessary but it is necessary that each know what the other is thinking and doing. Jwaideh (1984) and Beckner reported however, that this is not common at present. Jwaideh stated that in most schools, there is a lack of interaction and understanding between teachers and their principals.

Beckner (1985) found in a recent study on the perceived needs for improvement in smaller schools in Texas, that there were less than ideal relationships between teachers and principals. Study results indicated that "Teachers did not feel as strongly as did the administrators that the administration was: 1) available to the instructional staff, 2) effectively communicating information to them, or 3) demonstrating active support for them." (p. 5)

Since principals are at the nerve centre of the communication network of the school, it is imperative that

they self-evaluate and also assess how others perceive their communicative abilities. Valentine (1981) supported the views of Bhola (1973) when he proposed that not only should principals obtain teachers' perceptions of how they communicate, but for additional insight, they should also compare teachers' perceptions to their own self-perceptions. Redfern and Bolton (cited in McCurdy, 1983) suggested that the administrator should try to take advantage of the creativity and motivation that comes from self-evaluation. They viewed self-evaluation "not as a device for self-incrimination but as a tool for designing a self-improvement strategy without the threat of an external evaluator." (p. 85)

### 2.8 Instrumentation Available

Over the years, a number of instruments were developed to assess principals' leadership skills. The communicative ability of principals was often one aspect of this assessment. Information is available on the development and refinement of an early instrument called the Administrator Professional Leadership Scale (APLS-II) developed by Thompson in 1974. He designed this instrument to assess the professional leadership qualities of school principals with respect to their: 1) instructional leadership, 2) personal warmth, and 3) managerial effectiveness. Unfortunately, results of studies where the APLS-II was actually implemented were not found.

Meyer and VanHoose (1981) developed a similar survey instrument consisting of 37 skill areas. Their study attempted to pinpoint the areas of agreement and disagreement between teachers and principals. The focus was on the analysis and comparison of the perceptions of principals and teachers toward the performance of principals in middle schools. This study looked at the middle school principal in terms of: 1) instructional leadership, 2) administrative service skills, and 3) interpersonal skills. Meyer and VanHoose found that in the instructional leadership area, there was a statistically significant difference between the response patterns of teachers and principals in terms of what was practiced on all 12 items. In the administrative service area, a statistically significant difference was found between the responses of the two groups on 11 of 14 items. A similar trend was also found in the interpersonal relationship domain as to what was **actually** practiced. However, there was agreement with respect to what **should** be practiced.

Valentine (1981) developed a third survey instrument called the Audit of Administrator Communication (AAC). He refined this Likert-type instrument from 40 to 27 items. He designed it so that principals could quickly self-assess perceptions of their communicative abilities and that teachers could also assess principals' communication skills. The survey looks at the principal as:

1. **an Affective Involver** - communicating in the affective domain.
2. **an Informer** - communicating factual information and decisions.
3. **a Developer** - stimulating and encouraging personal and professional growth.
4. **an Encourager** - using positive rather than negative reinforcement and showing an interest in teachers' concerns.

Research results showed that principals were rated highly in communicating factual information but were consistently rated low in the personal, affective domain. Valentine (1981) reported that "principals could be pleased with the skills of clear, precise communication of decisions, information and expectations; and concerned about the absence of strength in the affective areas of communication." (p. 37) Other findings of interest to the practicing principal indicated the overall communicative ability of principals was most favourably rated by those teachers with:

- a) fewest years of experience
- b) fewest graduate hours
- c) fewest years working with their current principal
- d) administrative duties (such as department heads).

Valentine found that teacher perceptions of principals' communication skills were alike regardless of the sex of the teacher and whether or not they were assessing a previous principal or one who had hired them.

Valentine and Rawn (1981) examined principal-teacher communication across grade levels and also found that

principals, regardless of teaching level, communicated factual information best but needed improvement in the affective domain. Results showed that there was a significant difference in the ways in which elementary principals were perceived by elementary teachers as compared to the ways in which senior high principals were perceived by their teachers. In short, elementary principals were perceived as being better overall communicators than their senior high counterparts. Junior high principals were perceived to communicate more like elementary principals than senior high principals.

### 2.9 Recent Studies Using the AAC

A number of studies using the AAC have recently been conducted. Most have investigated principal-teacher communication as related to other concepts such as: personality types, learning styles and school effectiveness. Although these studies follow different directions than the study conducted by the researcher, a brief examination of them serves:

- 1) to illustrate the versatility of the AAC, and
- 2) to reinforce some findings from the current study.

In 1981, Lewman utilized the AAC to study communication effectiveness as perceived by secondary school principals. He wanted to see if there was a significant difference in the ways that secondary principals perceived their 'real' (or actual) and 'ideal' communication practices. He was also interested in determining if student enrollment,

administrative experience and teacher experience were at all related to principals' self-evaluative ability to communicate. Lewman found that a significant difference between principals' 'real' and 'ideal' communication skills did not exist. The principals in the study perceived themselves as effective communicators. He also found that the three independent variables examined (student enrollment, administrative experience and teacher experience) were not significantly related to principals' self-evaluations.

Battle (1982) implemented the AAC to examine teacher perceptions of male and female principal communication styles. The study was conducted in secondary schools located in a six-state mid-western area. Battle found that female principals scored higher than male principals on all dimensions of communication. She also found that female teachers more positively rated principals' communication skills than did male teachers, regardless of the sex of the principal. In her study, Battle raised three vital questions. They were:

- 1) Are female administrators inherently better communicators than male administrators or are factors such as: innate intelligence, specific skills and personalities significant and contributing variables?
- 2) Is it possible that females score more highly than males because only the best of the female applicants receive administrative positions while males receive less scrutiny when being considered for administrative positions?



3) Do higher scores on the AAC necessarily relate to more effective schools for students?

(These questions are important as 'sex of teacher' and 'sex of principal' are two demographic variables investigated in the current study.)

Laffey (1983) looked at the relationships among principals' learning styles, teachers' learning styles and principals' communication styles. She wanted to determine whether there were differences in the ways teachers perceived their principals' communication skills, based upon the learning styles of both teachers and principals. In this study, the AAC was used to measure communicative ability and the Gregorc Style Delineator, a self-analysis tool that enables individuals to determine how they apprehend and express information, was used for identifying learning channels. The analysis of the data demonstrated that the predominant learning channel for both groups was that of 'Concrete Sequential'. In terms of communication styles, the predominant factor evident in both teachers' and principals' responses was that of 'Encourager'. When looking for correlations between principals' learning styles and teacher-perceived scores on the AAC, three significant correlations were found. These correlations were:

- a) Abstract Sequential negatively correlated with Encourager.
- b) Abstract Random positively correlated with Encourager.
- c) Abstract Random positively correlated with Affective Involver.

Laffey also found that there was no significant difference in the overall communication effectiveness of principals (as perceived by teachers) based upon the learning styles of principals (as perceived by principals themselves.) In looking at the communication styles of principals (as perceived by teachers) and the learning styles of principals (as reported by the principals themselves) a significant difference was found only with respect to the principal as an 'Affective Involver'. The analysis of the other three communication scores ('Informer', 'Developer' and 'Encourager') and the learning styles of principals did not produce significant F's.

In 1984, Bueler utilized the AAC to study the relationships among personality traits and communication styles of secondary and elementary school principals. He was interested in determining if there were any significant differences between these two groups of administrators and if there was a relationship between communication styles and personality traits. The AAC was used to gather data on principals' communication styles while the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was used to gather data on personality traits. Bueler found that there was no difference between the personality traits of elementary and secondary principals. He also found that there was no difference between communication styles of elementary and secondary principals. Finally, Bueler found no significant relationships between personality traits and communication styles of principals at either level.

Taylor (1984) studied administrator communication behaviour as a function of teacher perceptions in rural school districts. Data was gathered from Missouri teachers on their superintendents, high school and elementary principals. Some of Taylor's conclusions were:

- 1) Rural superintendents were perceived as less effective communicators than either elementary or high school principals.
- 2) Rural teachers perceived both elementary and high school principals to be strong in dealing with school problems in a positive manner and in informing teachers. On the other hand, rural teachers perceived elementary and high school principals to be much weaker in developing professional growth and in accepting the thoughts and feelings of teachers.
- 3) When the results of this study were compared to previous similar research, rural principals were typically rated lower than principals from non-rural areas.

In 1984, Knowles investigated the relationship between principal communication behaviour and school effectiveness. The AAC was used to measure principals' communication skills while student gain scores on standardized achievement tests were used to measure school effectiveness. Knowles found that the principals included in the study communicated least effectively on a personal level with their teachers. He also found that principals in larger schools communicated less effectively than did principals in smaller schools. Finally, Knowles found that improved principal communication skills,

when considered alone, did **not** have a significant positive effect on student achievement.

### 2.10 Summary

To summarize the review of the related literature, a philosophical foundation for understanding the communication process was first established. This included definitions of communication and types of communication found within the school setting. A practical view of the impact of effective or ineffective communication skills was then provided. Studies involving the comparison of teachers' and principals' perceptions were presented and a number of instruments designed to measure these perceptions were also described. This section concluded by focusing on the research of Valentine and other researchers who have recently-utilized the AAC.

The related literature indicates that effective communication between teachers and principals is essential. At the same time, it would appear that there are many hurdles to overcome before effective communication can be achieved. From the research done in the U.S., it would appear that there is some disagreement between teachers and principals with respect to the communication skills of principals. Valentine's AAC provides one way of looking at communication and the perceptions of those within the school setting. Some related demographic variables have been identified but other factors appear to be contributing to the variability between

teachers' and principals' perceptions. For these reasons, a similar study using the AAC in a Canadian context and investigating new demographic variables seems to be in order.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### 3.1 Subjects

There were two populations used in this study:

- a) The first population consisted of teachers who were currently teaching Kindergarten to Grade 12 inclusive in any of the Winnipeg school divisions. A random sample of this population (approximately 10%) was generated, producing a list of 592 teachers.
- b) The second population consisted of all principals who were currently responsible for Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools in Winnipeg. Since the number of principals was so much less than the number of teachers, it was decided that all 181 principals would be included in the sample.

#### 3.2 Instrument

##### Rationale

After examining instruments designed to measure principal-teacher communication, the researcher concluded that, for the following reasons, the AAC was the best available instrument:

- a) The Audit of Administrator Communication had been used in many contexts and was found to be both valid and reliable by a significant number of researchers such as: Lewman (1981), Battle (1982), Laffey (1983), Knowles (1984) and Taylor (1984).

b) The AAC was brief and easy-to-administer. These criteria were important as they could have a direct impact on the response rate. As a group, teachers are surveyed frequently and therefore, long and complex surveys are often not completed. The brevity of the AAC then, was one of the major selection criteria.

c) The AAC could be used by teachers and principals. Therefore, the perceptions of both groups could be measured within the same study.

### Purpose of the Instrument

The Audit of Administrator Communication was developed so that principals could quickly self-assess perceptions of their own communicative abilities and so that teachers could also assess their principals' communication skills. The survey is a Likert-type instrument that consists of 27 items which are based on four factors or dimensions of principal-teacher communication. (see 1.3 Operational Definition of Terms) Initial validity and reliability data was based on responses from urban teachers and principals in the American mid-west. After careful consideration, there appeared to be no reason to doubt the suitability of the AAC in an urban Canadian setting.

In discussing the reliability of the instrument, Valentine (1981) stated:

The Audit of Administrator Communication was validated by a panel of public school principals, college faculty who have also served as public school administrators and by public school teachers. Reliability of the instrument was

measured at .985 using the split-half methodology and a co-efficient alpha of .973 using the Kuder-Richardson Modified 20 formula. (p. 109)

The panel included teachers, principals and professors representing all three teaching levels. They tested the instrument for content and face validity. Through ongoing factor analysis, a five-factor, 40-item instrument was refined to four factors and 27 items.

The groupings of questions which comprised each of the four factors were studied for content similarity and their relationship to the theoretical constructs of the instrument. To review, the four theoretical constructs as they relate to principal-teacher communication are:

- Affective Involver
- Informer
- Developer
- Encourager

### **Changes to Demographic Variables**

From his research, Valentine found that some of the variables initially examined such as: age of teacher and age of principal, and academic qualifications of teachers, were minimally related to the major concept of principal-teacher communication. In 1981, Valentine suggested that future studies using the AAC investigate the possible relationships of other variables to the concept of principal-teacher communication. The original instrument and copies of the principals' and teachers' AACs illustrating the new demographic variables are found in Appendix B.



The rationale for retaining some original variables and for substituting others, follows:

- 1) The researcher believed that the sex of the principal could sometimes affect the quality of principal-teacher communication. In fact, Battle (1982) suggested this when she proposed that female principals were typically perceived as better communicators.
- 2) Variable c) dealt with 'grade or teaching level'. Valentine and Rawn's research (1981) indicated that there was usually greater agreement between the perceptions of elementary teachers and their principals than with the perceptions of teachers and their principals at other levels. The researcher was interested in seeing if the results of this study would be consistent with Rawn's findings.
- 3) Variables d) and e) addressed the 'size of student population and teaching staff'. Valentine reported that, "there was some indication that as the size of the faculty got larger, the perceptions of teachers towards principal communication became more negative." (J. Valentine, personal communication, Sept. 18, 1986).
- 4) Variable f) asked if the principal in question had some kind of teaching load. This variable had not been previously investigated. Would **teaching** principals empathize more with their teachers than those without teaching loads?
- 5) Variables i) and j) investigated whether there were evaluation opportunities for both principals and teachers. Specifically, was effective communication fostered when teachers had the opportunity to evaluate their principals?

6) Variable k) attempted to determine if there was a correlation between teachers' perceptions and their knowledge of whether or not their principals had had recent training in communication techniques.

### 3.3 Design and Procedure

The initial mailing of 181 principals' surveys and 592 teachers' surveys took place early in November, 1986. The mail-out included:

- 1) a copy of the teachers' or principals' AAC
- 2) a cover letter
- 3) a stamped, self-addressed envelope
- 4) a return card  
and,
- 5) a letter of endorsement from the Manitoba Association of Principals.  
(see Appendix C)

Surveys were numerically-coded so that the researcher could accurately record who had responded and who had not. This was necessary for the implementation of the follow-up mailing. When a completed AAC was returned, it was recorded on the master list. As well, the return card was examined to see if the respondent:

- a) wanted final results sent to them, and/or
- b) agreed to be interviewed by phone at a later date.

Initially, the investigator included the latter option so that more in-depth responses could be pursued after the actual data collection period had ended. However, it was later decided that this follow-up might not be as useful as was first thought.

The response rates from the initial mailing differed between the two groups. Approximately 30% of the teachers and 40% of the principals responded by late November. At that point, the follow-up mailing was started. Second copies of the instrument plus a follow-up letter were sent to all of the subjects who had not yet responded. The follow-up reminder was tactfully worded so as not to offend any respondents whose surveys had already been sent but which had not been received. This letter also re-emphasized the significance of the study and the importance of the respondents' input.

December 25th, 1986 was used as the cut-off date for follow-up responses. By this date the response rates had improved and once again, the rates differed between the two groups. Out of a possible 181 **principals'** surveys, 113 responses were received - a 62% response rate. Seven of the 113 responses were not able to be used. Therefore, 106 principals' surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 59%. Out of a possible 592 **teachers'** surveys, 341 were received - a 58% response rate. Two of the 341 responses were not able to be used. Therefore, 339 teachers' surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 57%.

Overall, the response rates of both groups were encouraging when considering the following factors:

1. Educators are a widely-surveyed group. Due to the long and complex nature of some of these surveys, many teachers and principals have been 'turned-off' from responding. That

is why the brevity of the instrument as well as its validity and reliability were considered so important.

2. The data collection period took place during the months of November and December, 1986. The response rates might well have been affected by the busy nature of the Christmas season in the schools.

3. Similar studies using the AAC such as those done by Bueler (1984) and Laffey (1983) also produced comparable response rates.

### 3.4 Treatment of Data

There were four phases in the treatment of the data. In all phases, analyses were performed using the Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) Package.

#### **Phase One**

Teacher and principal demographics were summarized using information provided by respondents on the first page of the AAC.

#### **Phase Two**

Factor and overall scores were computed for all surveys completed and returned by teacher and principal respondents.

- Items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 24 and 26 were totalled and divided by 8 to compute the factor score for 'Affective Involver'.

- Items 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 25 and 27 were totalled and divided by 8 to compute the factor score for 'Informer'.

- Items 3, 7, 11, 15, 19 and 23 were totalled and divided by 6 to compute the factor score for 'Informer'.
- Items 4, 8, 12, 16 and 20 were totalled and divided by 5 to compute the factor score for 'Encourager'.
- In order to calculate overall average scores for each respondent, the values for all items were totalled and divided by 27. (Appendix D provides additional information regarding this scoring procedure.)

### **Phase Three**

Teacher and principal mean factor scores were cross-tabulated with the study's demographic variables. Analyses of variance and independent sample t-tests were used to determine if teachers' and principals' perceptions varied as a function of the study's demographic variables.

### **Phase Four**

Independent sample t-tests were used to examine differences between teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills and principals' self-perceptions on each of the four factor scores and on an overall communication score.

## **3.5 Summary**

The following topics were addressed in this chapter:

- a) The two samples were described as were the methods by which they were chosen.
- b) The Audit of Administrator Communication and the purpose for using this instrument were described in detail.

- c) Data collection procedures were outlined, from the initial mailing to subsequent follow-up activities. Response rates for both groups were reported.
- d) The four phases in treating the data were summarized.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare teachers' and principals' perceptions of how principals communicate. The communication skills of principals were surveyed using the Audit of Administrator Communication (AAC). The participants in this study were current public school teachers and principals representing all teaching levels in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Five hundred and ninety-two teachers were randomly-selected from a possible 6,000 teachers to form the teachers' sample. All 181 principals in urban Winnipeg were chosen to form the principals' sample. From these samples, 341 teachers and 113 principals satisfactorily completed and returned the AAC resulting in response rates of 58% and 62% respectively.

#### 4.2 Demographics of the Samples

##### **Principals**

A number of demographic questions were included in the survey. Principal demographics are shown in Table 1. As there were principals who did not respond to the demographic questions, not all of the percentages total 100. The data indicated that the vast majority of principals in the sample were males (77%) as opposed to females (14%). The most

Table 1

## Demographic Information (%) on Principal Sample (N=106)

Demographic Variable	Categories					
Sex of Principal	Male 77%			Female 14%		
Grade Level	N-6 48%	K-9 16%	7-9 9%	7-12 3%	9-12 11%	K-12 2%
Student Population	1-100 1%	101-200 8%	201-300 17%	301-400 18%	401-500 14%	501-600 19%
	601-700 2%	701-800 5%	801-900 5%	901-1000 2%	over1000 2%	
No. of Staff Members	1-10 3%	11-20 21%	21-30 36%	31-40 24%	41-50 4%	
	51-60 2%	61-70 2%	over70 1%			
Does Principal Have a Teaching Load?	YES 4%			NO 88%		
Does Principal Evaluate Teachers Annually?	YES 44%			NO 45%		
Do Teachers Have the Opportunity to Evaluate Principal?	YES 54%			NO 38%		
Does Principal Have Recent Communication Training?	YES 71%			NO 21%		



frequently-noted teaching level was that of N-6 which was comprised of 48% of the principal respondents. The student populations of the schools involved were quite diverse. The greatest number of respondents (19%) were principals who were responsible for schools with populations of 501-600 students. The most frequently-noted staff size was 21-30 teachers. Thirty-six percent of the principals supervised staffs of this size. Eighty-eight percent of the principals who responded stated that they did not presently have a teaching load. The responses were split with respect to whether the principals evaluated their teachers on at least an annual basis. According to the principal respondents, 54% stated that their teachers had the opportunity to evaluate them. Finally, 71% of the principal respondents indicated that they had had recent training in communication techniques.

### Teachers

Teacher demographics are shown in Table 2. Once again, there were some teachers who did not respond to the demographic questions. For that reason, not all of the percentages total 100. The data indicated that 53% of the teacher respondents were female. At the same time, only 17% of the principals being assessed were females. The greatest number of teacher respondents were from the Nursery to Grade 3 level. Twenty-four percent of the teacher respondents did most of their teaching at this level. As noted with the principals, the student populations of teachers' schools were also quite diverse. The greatest percentage of respondents

Table 2

## Demographic Information (%) on Teacher Sample (N=339)

Demographic Variable	Categories				
Sex of Teacher	Male 37%				Female 53%
Sex of Principal Being Assessed	Male 73%				Female 17%
Grade Level	N-3 24%	4-6 18%	7-9 17%	10-12 17%	K-6 4-8 8-12 6% 2% 8%
Student Population	1-100 1% 401-500 13%	101-200 4% 501-600 11%	201-300 12% 601-700 6%	301-400 16% 701-800 6%	801-900 6% 901-1000 2% over1000 13%
No. of Staff Members	1-10 4% 51-60 6%	11-20 16% 61-70 6%	21-30 27% over70 6%	31-40 16%	41-50 10%
Does Principal Have a Teaching Load?	YES 2%				NO 88%
Were You Hired By the Principal You Are Assessing?	YES 28%				NO 63%
Number of Years Worked With Current Principal	0-2 35%	3-5 35%	6-12 18%	13 and over 3%	
Does Principal Evaluate Teachers At Least Annually?	YES 31%				NO 58%
Do Teachers Have the Opportunity to Evaluate Principal?	YES 16%				NO 73%
Has Principal Had Recent Communication Training?	YES 28%	NO 6%			NOT SURE 56%

(16%) were teachers who taught in schools with populations of between 301 - 400. The most frequently-noted staff size was that of between 21 and 30 teachers. This accounted for 27% of the teacher respondents. A vast majority of the teachers (88%) indicated that their principals did not currently have teaching loads. This was consistent with responses received from the principals' sample. Sixty-three percent of the teachers who responded indicated that they were not hired by the principal who they were assessing in this study. This majority of teacher respondents (70%) indicated that they had worked with their current principal from 0-5 years. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers in the sample stated that their principals did not evaluate them on at least an annual basis. At the same time, 73% of the teachers responding stated that they did not have the opportunity to evaluate their principals. When asked whether or not their current principals had had recent communication training, 56% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure.

#### **4.3 Statistical Analysis**

There were four research questions investigated in this study. The statistical analysis of each along with statements addressing related hypotheses now follow. As mentioned in previous chapters, all data analyses were conducted using SAS. All tests of hypotheses were conducted at the .01 level of significance.

**Research Question #1:**

- a) In which aspects of communication do teachers rate principals highest?
- b) In which aspects of communication do teachers rate principals lowest?
- c) In which aspects of communication do principals rate themselves highest?
- d) In which aspects of communication do they rate themselves lowest?

Principal and teacher surveys were 'factor scored' according to the directions of Valentine (see Appendix D) in order to test the hypotheses relevant to Research Question #1. That is,

- i) Teachers will rate principals highest as 'Informers' and lowest as 'Affective Involver', and
- ii) Principals will rate themselves highest as 'Informers' and lowest as 'Affective Involver'.

Table 3 illustrates the factor and overall AAC means and standard deviations for principals and teachers in this study compared to normative data for the AAC, as reported by Valentine (1981). According to Valentine, "normative data was calculated by multiplying the factor score coefficient for each item within the factors by the average score of all participants." (p. 11) In this case, participants were represented by teachers. As seen in the table, normative data describes principals strongest as 'Informers' or communicators of factual information, directions and

Table 3

**Factor and Overall AAC Means and Standard Deviations  
for Principals and Teachers**

Factor	Principals			Teachers			Normative Data M	<sup>a</sup>
	N	M	S.D.	N	M	S.D.		
INVOLVER	103	3.88	0.37	332	2.90	0.80	3.36	
INFORMER	104	4.46	0.33	331	3.93	0.67	4.89	
DEVELOPER	103	4.32	0.44	314	3.54	0.94	4.37	
ENCOURAGER	105	4.38	0.41	335	4.08	0.79	3.79	
OVERALL	98	4.24	0.25	306	3.57	0.71	N/A	

<sup>a</sup> reported by Valentine (1981)

decisions. However, the means of 4.08 shows that the teachers in this study considered principals to be strongest as 'Encouragers'. In fact, 61% of the principals were seen primarily as 'Encouragers' by teacher respondents. On the other hand, the mean of 4.46 illustrates that the principals in this study perceived themselves strongest as 'Informers'. Forty-one percent of the principals scored themselves highest in the 'Informer' domain.

Table 3 also shows the weakest perceived communication skills of principals. Teachers and principals in this study agreed with normative data for the AAC that principals' weakest aspect of communication is in the 'Affective Involver' domain. The mean score of teachers' responses (2.90) compares to 3.88 as perceived by principals and 3.36 for normative data. Eighty-one percent of the teachers saw principals weakest as 'Affective Involvers' as compared to 72% of the principals. As the standard deviations presented in Table 3 indicate, there was greater variability in teachers' responses than in principals' responses.

Table 3 also illustrates the rank order of the factor means for teachers and principals as compared to normative data for the AAC. Since principals' strongest and weakest perceived communication skills have already been addressed, attention should be directed to the second and third strongest communication factors as perceived by principals and teachers. Normative data describes principals' second and third strongest areas of communication to be in the 'Developer' and 'Encourager' domains. Principals in this

study agreed on the domains but disagreed with respect to their perceived degree of strength. Teachers in this study rated principals' second strongest area as that of 'Informer' and their third strongest area to be that of 'Developer'. It was this latter area (Developer) which illustrated the only agreement between the teachers' and principals' groups. The agreement was one of rank only as there was a significant difference between the mean factor scores for 'Developer' for both groups. Table E1 in Appendix E provides a comparison of item means for teachers and principals for all 27 items of the AAC. Tables E2 and E3 illustrate the rank order of the highest ten item means and lowest ten item means according to principal and teacher responses.

In summary, the data provided only partial support for Hypothesis i). That is, although teachers in this study rated principals lowest as 'Involvers', they did not rate principals highest as 'Informers'. Instead, as Table 3 indicates, teachers rated principals highest as 'Encouragers'.

Hypotheses ii) was supported by the data. Table 3 illustrates that principals rated themselves highest as 'Informers' and weakest in the 'Involver' domain.

### **Research Question #2:**

Do teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills vary as a function of:

- a) sex of teacher?
- b) sex of principal?

- c) grade/teaching level?
- d) size of student population?
- e) size of teaching staff?
- f) whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- g) whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed?
- h) the number of years the teacher has worked with the particular principal?
- i) principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?
- j) teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?
- k) whether or not the principal has had recent communication training?

Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) and independent sample t-tests were used to test the hypotheses relevant to Research

Question #2. That is,

i) Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of teacher
- grade/teaching level
- whether or not the principal has a teaching load
- teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals
- principals' recent communication training
- size of student population
- size of teaching staff

(Specifically, teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will be significantly lower in schools with large student populations and large teaching staffs than in schools with small student populations and small teaching staffs.)

ii) Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills will not vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of teacher
- whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed
- number of years teacher has worked with that particular principal



In all cases, the demographic variables served as the 'independent' variables while the dependent variable was the overall perception of communication mean score. Two independent sample t-tests were computed for those demographic variables having only two levels. They were: 'Sex1' (sex of teacher), 'Sex2' (sex of principal), 'Load' (whether or not the principal has a teaching load), 'Hired' (whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed), 'Eval1' (principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers), and 'Eval2' (teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals).

Single factor ANOVAs were performed on those demographic variables having more than two levels. They were: 'Grade' (grade/teaching level), 'Pop' (size of student population), 'Staff' (size of teaching staff), 'Years' (number of years teacher has worked with current principal), and 'Train' (whether or not the principal has had recent communication training).

The results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4 through 6. Table 4 contains the means and standard deviations for each of the demographic variables as they relate to teachers' overall perceptions of principals' communication skills. Tables 5 and 6 present the results of the t-tests and ANOVAs performed on these variables.

As seen in Table 5, teachers' perceptions of the overall communication skills only varied significantly as a function of 'Eval1', 'Eval2' and 'Train'. Teachers' perceptions of the overall communication skills of principals did not vary

Table 4

**Means and Standard Deviations for Demographic Variables  
as Related to Teachers' Perceptions (n=339)**

Variable	Levels	N	Mean	St. Deviation
Sex of Teacher: 2 Levels	Male	126	3.60	0.70
	Female	179	3.56	0.72
Sex of Principal: 2 Levels	Male	246	3.55	0.72
	Female	58	3.65	0.67
'Grade': 7 levels	1.(N-3)	80	3.69	0.71
	2.(4-6)	62	3.65	0.62
	3.(7-9)	57	3.30	0.71
	4.(10-12)	56	3.51	0.75
	5.(K-6)	19	3.80	0.66
	6.(4-8)	6	3.54	0.55
	7.(8-12)	24	3.63	0.78
'Pop': 11 levels	1.(1-100)	3	4.04	0.46
	2.(101-200)	15	3.48	0.63
	3.(201-300)	42	3.61	0.70
	4.(301-400)	55	3.64	0.72
	5.(401-500)	45	3.47	0.74
	6.(501-600)	37	3.57	0.68
	7.(601-700)	21	3.67	0.72
	8.(701-800)	19	3.75	0.72
	9.(801-900)	19	3.57	0.63
	10.(901-1000)	7	3.06	0.83
	11.(1000+)	43	3.50	0.77
'Staff': 8 levels	1.(1-10)	12	3.59	0.68
	2.(11-20)	55	3.68	0.65
	3.(21-30)	93	3.50	0.74
	4.(31-40)	53	3.69	0.67
	5.(41-50)	34	3.65	0.63
	6.(51-60)	19	3.46	0.87
	7.(61-70)	21	3.31	0.74
	8.(70+)	19	3.53	0.73
'Load': 2 levels	Yes	7	3.39	0.62
	No	298	3.57	0.71

Table 4 (continued)

Means and Standard Deviations for Demographic Variables  
as Related to Teachers' Perceptions (n=339)

Variable	Levels	N	Mean	St. Deviation
'Hired': 2 levels	Yes	94	3.60	0.78
	No	212	3.56	0.68
'Years': 4 levels	1.(0-2)	117	3.64	0.68
	2.(3-5)	120	3.54	0.71
	3.(6-12)	60	3.53	0.75
	4.(13+)	9	3.37	0.86
'Eval1': 2 levels	Yes	106	3.82	0.63
	No	196	3.43	0.71
'Eval2': 2 levels	Yes	53	3.93	0.58
	No	248	3.50	0.71
'Train': 3 levels	Yes	95	3.88	0.61
	No	20	3.06	0.83
	Not Sure	191	3.47	0.69

**Table 5**  
**Analysis Table**  
**Demographic Variables as Related to**  
**Teachers' Perceptions (n=339)**

Demographic Variable	Test Statistic	Df	p	Significance <sup>a</sup>
Sex of Teacher	t = 0.53	273.7	0.60	NS
Sex of Principal	5 = 0.99	90.7	0.32	NS
Grade/Teaching Level	F = 2.07	7/298	0.05	NS
Student Population	F = 0.80	10/295	0.63	NS
Teaching Staff	F = 1.08	7/298	0.37	NS
Teaching Load	t = 0.74	6.4	0.49	NS
Hired By Principal	t = 0.54	159.1	0.59	NS
Years With Principal	F = 0.68	3/302	0.56	NS
Eval1	t = 4.92	236.9	0.0001	S
Eval2	t = 4.70	90.5	0.0001	S
Train	F = 17.96	2/303	0.0001	S

<sup>a</sup> S = Significant; NS = Nonsignificant

Level of significance = .01

Table 6

**T Test and Analysis of Variance Summary Tables  
for 'Eval1', 'Eval2' and 'Train'**

Variable = 'Eval1'	n	Mean	St.Dev.	t	Df	Prob>T
1. (Yes)	106	3.82	0.63	4.92	236.9	0.0001*
2. (No)	196	3.43	0.71			

Variable = 'Eval2'	n	Mean	St.Dev.	t	Df	Prob>T
1. (Yes)	53	3.93	0.58	4.70	88.9	0.0001*
2. (No)	248	3.50	0.71			

**Variable = 'Train'**

Source	df	SS	MS	F Value	PR<F
Model	2	15.92	7.96	17.47	0.0001*
Error	303	138.03	0.46		
Corrected Total	305	153.95			

\* p < .01

significantly as a function of any of the remaining demographic variables. An examination of the means of Table 4 indicates that teachers who are evaluated by their principals on at least an annual basis, perceive principals significantly more favourably as communicators than principals who do not evaluate their teachers as regularly. (3.82 versus 3.43) In addition, the data indicates that teachers who have the opportunity to evaluate their principals perceive their principals as being significantly better communicators than those who do not give their teachers this opportunity. (3.93 versus 3.50)

In order to locate the source of statistical significance associated with the demographic variable of 'recent communication training', the Tukey test (Tukey, 1953) was conducted on all possible pair-wise comparisons among the 'Train' means. The variable 'Train' asked teachers if their principal had had recent communication training. Response options were 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not Sure'. Using a .01 critical value, two out of three comparisons were found to be statistically significant. These comparisons revealed that teachers who knew their principal had received recent communication training rated them as significantly better communicators than those who were either not sure or knew their principals had not received communication training. There was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of principals' overall communication ability between teachers who did not know about the communication training of their

principals and those that knew their principals had no communication training.

While the statistical tests associated with the variables of 'Eval1', 'Eval2' and 'Train' were found to be significant, these tests do not speak to the question of practical significance. In order to assess their practical significance, the proportion of variance accounted for by each effect (via 'omega squared'  $\hat{\omega}_2$ ) was computed.

According to Cohen (1969), in the behavioural sciences, large treatment effects account for about 14% of the variance in the dependent variable; medium effects and small effects account for about 6% and 1% of the variance respectively. Bearing these benchmarks in mind, the following effects sizes were found for the three significant variables in question:

- 1) The effect of 'principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers' was found to be medium in size, accounting for approximately 7% of the variance in teachers' perceptions of principals' overall communication skills;
- 2) The effect of 'teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals' was found to be medium in size, accounting for 7% of the variance in teachers' perceptions of principals' overall communication skills; and
- 3) The effect of 'whether or not the principal has had recent communication training' was found to be moderately-large in size, accounting for approximately 10% of the variance in teachers' perceptions of principals' overall communication skills.

In summary and with respect to the research hypotheses related to Research Question #2, the first hypothesis was only partially supported by the data. Five of the demographic variables ('sex of principal', 'grade', 'load', 'pop' and 'staff') were found not to be significantly related to teachers' perceptions. However, the two remaining variables ('Evall' and 'Train') were found to be significantly related to teachers' perceptions. Teachers whose principals evaluated them regularly perceived these principals more favourably as communicators than principals who do not evaluate as often. In addition, teachers who were aware that their principals had recently undergone communication training, perceived their principals more favourably as communicators than principals who did not have this training. The second hypothesis was supported by the data. 'Sex of teacher', 'Hired' and 'Years' were all found not to be significantly related to teachers' perceptions.

### **Research Question #3:**

Do principals' perceptions vary as a function of:

- sex of principal?
- grade/teaching level?
- size of student population?
- size of teaching staff?
- whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?
- teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?
- whether or not the principal has had recent communication training?

Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) and independent sample t-tests were used to test hypotheses relevant to Research



Question #3. That is,

i) Principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- whether or not the principal has a teaching load
- whether or not teachers have the opportunity to evaluate their principal
- whether or not the principal has had recent communication training
- size of student population
- size of teaching staff

(Specifically, principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will be lower in schools with large student populations and large teaching staffs than in schools with small student populations and small teaching staffs.)

ii) Principals' perceptions of their own communication skills will not vary significantly as a function of the following demographic variables:

- sex of principal
- grade/teaching level
- principals' opportunities to evaluate their teachers

In all cases, the demographic variables served as the 'independent' variable while the dependent variable was the overall perception of communication mean score.

Two independent sample t-tests were computed for those demographic variables having two levels. They were: 'Sex' (sex of principal), 'Load' (whether or not the principal evaluates teachers on at least an annual basis), 'Eval2' (whether or not teachers have the opportunity to evaluate their principal), and 'Train' (whether or not the principal has had recent communication training).

Single factor ANOVAs were performed on those demographic variables having more than two levels. They were: 'Grade' (grades for which principal is responsible), 'Pop' (size of student population), and 'Staff' (size of teaching staff).

The results of these analyses are presented in Tables 7 and 8. Table 7 illustrates the means and standard deviations for all of the demographic variables as related to principals' overall perceptions of their own communication skills. Table 8 provides the t or F statistic for each of the demographic variables and indicates whether each is significantly related to principals' perceptions. As Table 8 shows, none of the variables investigated were found to be significantly related to principals' own perceptions of their communication skills. That is, principals' views of their own communication skills did not vary as a function of any of the above mentioned variables.

In summary and with respect to the research hypotheses related to Research Question #3, the data failed to support the first hypothesis. 'Whether or not the principal had a teaching load', 'teachers' opportunities to evaluate their principals', 'size of the student population', 'size of teaching staff' and 'recent communication training' were found not to be significant with respect to principals' perceptions.

The data supported the second hypothesis. The 'sex of the principal', 'grades for which the principal was responsible' and 'principals' opportunities to evaluate

Table 7

**Means and Standard Deviations for Demographic Variables  
as Related to Principals' Perceptions (n=106)**

Variable	Levels	N	Mean	St. Deviation
Sex of Principal: 2 levels	Male	82	4.24	0.24
	Female	15	4.20	0.33
'Grade': 6 levels	1.(N-6)	51	4.23	0.28
	2.(K-9)	17	4.20	0.28
	3.(7-9)	10	4.25	0.14
	4.(7-12)	3	4.25	0.46
	5.(9-12)	12	4.29	0.19
	6.(K-12)	2	4.22	0.10
'Pop': 11 levels	1.(1-100)	1	4.15	.
	2.(101-200)	8	4.34	0.19
	3.(201-300)	18	4.18	0.28
	4.(301-400)	19	4.27	0.26
	5.(401-500)	15	4.23	0.25
	6.(501-600)	20	4.25	0.29
	7.(601-700)	2	4.02	0.13
	8.(701-800)	5	4.21	0.17
	9.(801-900)	5	4.31	0.23
	10.(901-1000)	2	4.28	0.13
	11.(1000+)	2	4.05	0.45
'Staff': 8 levels	1.(1-10)	3	4.37	0.21
	2.(11-20)	22	4.23	0.26
	3.(21-30)	38	4.21	0.27
	4.(31-40)	25	4.28	0.24
	5.(41-50)	4	4.08	0.10
	6.(51-60)	2	4.46	0.13
	7.(61-70)	2	4.13	0.55
	8.(71-80)	1	4.37	.
'Load': 2 levels	Yes	4	4.31	0.21
	No	93	4.23	0.26
'Eval1': 2 levels	Yes	47	4.27	0.23
	No	48	4.21	0.27
'Eval2': 2 levels	Yes	47	4.23	0.25
	No	48	4.21	0.27
'Train': 2 levels	Yes	75	4.24	0.24
	No	22	4.23	0.29

**Table 8**  
**Analysis Table**  
**Demographic Variables as Related to**  
**Principals' Perceptions (n=106)**

Demographic Variable	Test Statistic	Df	p	Significance <sup>a</sup>
Sex of Principal	t = 0.47	16.7	0.65	NS
Grade/Teaching Level	F = 0.16	6/90	0.99	NS
Student Population	F = 0.55	10/86	0.85	NS
Teaching Staff	F = 0.79	7/89	0.59	NS
Teaching Load	t = 0.67	3.4	0.55	NS
Eval1	t = 1.10	91.0	0.27	NS
Eval2	t = 0.05	81.5	0.96	NS
Train	t = 0.16	30.2	0.88	NS

<sup>a</sup> S = Significant; NS = Nonsignificant

Level of significance = .01

teachers' were found not to be significant with respect to principals' perceptions. Basically, none of the variables investigated were found to impact significantly on the ways in which principals view themselves as communicators. Therefore, other variables must be contributing to the variability in principals' perceptions.

**Research Question #4:**

Are there differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills and principals' self-perceptions on the dimensions of communication identified in Research Question #1?

Two independent sample t-tests were conducted to test the hypothesis relevant to Research Question #4. That is, i) that teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions of principals' communication skills will vary significantly. The type of respondent (principal versus teacher) served as the 'independent variable' while the dependent variables were the mean scores on each of the four factors of 'Involver', 'Informer', 'Developer' and 'Encourager' plus an overall communication score. Thus, five t-tests were conducted. Their results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.

Within the populations examined in this study, the mean principal score for 'Involver' was 3.88 as compared to the mean teacher score of 2.90. The t statistic of 16.94 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two mean scores. That is, principals'

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Teacher and Principal Data**  
**for the Four Factor and Overall Means of the AAC**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>T Stat.</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Sig.<sup>a</sup></b>
Involver	P=103	3.88	0.37	16.94	369.60	0.0001	S
	T=332	2.90	0.80				
Informer	P=104	4.46	0.33	10.84	353.40	0.,001	S
	T=331	3.93	0.67				
Developer	P=103	4.32	0.44	11.37	368.00	0.0001	S
	T=314	3.54	0.94				
Encourager	P=105	4.38	0.41	5.11	345.10	0.0001	S
	T=335	4.08	0.79				
Overall	P= 98	4.24	0.25	13.89	398.00	0.0001	S
	T=306	3.57	0.71				

<sup>a</sup>

S = Significant

P = Principals

T = Teachers

Level of Significance = .01

perceptions were significantly higher than those of teachers when viewing principals as 'Affective Involvers'. Table E4 in Appendix E provides a further description of 'Affective Involver'. It shows the item means and standard deviations for the factor as they relate to both teachers and principals.

Within the population examined in this study, the mean principal score for 'Informer' was 4.46 as compared to the mean teacher score of 3.93. The t statistic of 10.84 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two means with respect to the 'Informer' domain. That is, principals' perceptions were significantly higher than those of teachers when viewing principals as 'Informers'. Table E5 in Appendix E provides a further description of the 'Informer' factor. It shows the item means and standard deviations for the 'Informer' factor as they relate to both teachers and principals.

Within the populations examined in this study, the mean principal score for 'Developer' was 4.32 as compared to the mean teacher score of 3.54. The t statistic of 11.37 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two means with respect to the 'Developer' domain. That is, principals' perceptions were significantly higher than those of teachers when viewing principals as 'Developers'. Teachers in this study did not feel as strongly as principals that principals stimulate teachers towards personal and professional growth. Table E6

in Appendix E provides a further description of the 'Developer' factor. It shows the item means and standard deviations for the 'Developer' factor as they relate to both teachers and principals.

Within the populations examined in this study, the mean principal score for 'Encourager' was 4.38 as compared to the mean teacher score of 4.08. The t statistic of 5.11 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two means with respect to the 'Encourager' domain. That is, principals' perceptions were significantly higher than those of teachers when viewing principals as 'Encouragers'. Teachers in this study did not feel as strongly as did principals that principals provide teachers with positive rather than negative reinforcement. However, it should be noted that it was the 'Encourager' domain that illustrated the greatest degree of agreement between the principal and teacher groups. Table E7 in Appendix E provides a further description of the 'Encourager' factor. It shows the item means and standard deviations for the 'Encourager' factor as they relate to both teachers and principals.

Besides the four individual factor means, overall means were also calculated for both teachers and principals. The overall mean from teachers' responses was 3.57 while the overall mean calculated from principals' responses was 4.24. The t statistic of 13.89 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two means



with respect to the overall AAC scores. That is, principals in this study viewed themselves significantly stronger as communicators than did teachers.

While the statistical tests associated with the above comparisons were found to be significant, these tests do not speak to the question of practical significance. In order to assess the practical significance of these effects, the proportion of variance accounted for by each effect (via 'omega squared'  $\omega^2$ ) was computed. Bearing the benchmarks mentioned earlier in mind, the following results were revealed:

- 1) The effect of the type of respondent (principal or teacher) was found to be large in size accounting for approximately 24% of the variation in perceptions regarding principals as 'Affective Involvers'.
- 2) The effect of the type of respondent (principal or teacher) was found to be large in size accounting for approximately 12% of the variation in perceptions regarding principals as 'Informers'.
- 3) The effect of the type of respondent (principal or teacher) was found to be large in size accounting for approximately 14% of the variation in perceptions regarding principals as 'Developers'.
- 4) The effect of the type of respondent (principal or teacher) was found to be small in size accounting for approximately 4% of the variation in perceptions regarding principals as 'Encouragers'.

5) The effect of the type of respondent (principal or teacher) was found to be large in size accounting for approximately 15% of the variation in perceptions regarding principals as overall communicators.

These results indicated that, except for the factor 'Encourager', the differences between teachers' and principals' perceptions in this study were not only statistically significant but practically significant as well.

In summary and with respect to the research hypothesis related to Research Question #4, the data supported the hypothesis. All t-tests were statistically significant and indicated that principals viewed themselves as significantly more effective communicators than did teachers. Results were also practically significant but differed with respect to the level of their practical significance.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to compare teachers' perceptions with principals' perceptions of how principals communicate. The instrument used was a previously-developed survey called the Audit of Administrator Communication (AAC). The AAC views principal-teacher communication in terms of four broad factors or dimensions and consists of 27 items.

Subjects in the study formed two groups - one of teachers and one of principals. Approximately 10% or 592 teachers from urban Winnipeg schools were randomly-selected to form the teachers' sample. One hundred and eighty-one principals - all those currently in these positions in Winnipeg schools, formed the principals' sample. All teaching levels were represented in both samples. Surveys were mailed to all subjects in November, 1986. Data collection was completed by December, 1986. Final response rates were: 58% for teachers and 62% for principals.

At the outset, four research questions were stated. These questions and statements indicating whether or not the data supported or failed to support the accompanying hypotheses are presented here:

#### Research Question #1:

a) In which aspects of communication do teachers rate their principals highest?

- b) In which aspects of communication do teachers rate their principals lowest?
- c) In which aspects of communication do principals rate themselves highest?
- d) In which aspects of communication do principals rate themselves lowest?

Hypothesis i) was partly supported by the data. Teachers did rate principals lowest as 'Affective Involvers'. However, they did not rate principals highest as 'Informers' but as 'Encouragers'. Hypothesis ii) was supported by the data. Principals did view themselves strongest as 'Informers' and weakest as 'Affective Involvers'.

**Research Question #2:**

Do teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills vary as a function of:

- a) sex of teacher?
- b) sex of principal?
- c) grade/teaching level?
- d) size of student population?
- e) size of teaching staff?
- f) whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- g) whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed?
- h) the number of years the teacher has worked with the particular principal?
- i) principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?

- j) teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?
- k) whether or not the principal has had recent communication training?

The data partly supported Hypothesis i). Teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills varied significantly as a function of 'teachers' opportunities to evaluate their principals' and 'principals' recent communication training'. However, teachers' perceptions did not vary significantly as a function of 'sex of principal', 'grade/teaching level', 'whether or not the principal had a teaching load', 'student population' and 'size of teaching staff'.

Hypothesis ii) was supported by the data. Teachers' perceptions did not vary as a function of: 'sex of teacher', whether or not the teacher was hired by the principal being assessed', and 'number of years the teacher has worked with that particular principal'.

### **Research Question #3:**

Do principals' perceptions of their own communication skills vary as a function of:

- a) sex of principal?
- b) grade/teaching level?
- c) size of student population?
- d) size of teaching staff?
- e) whether or not the principal has a teaching load?
- f) principals' opportunities to evaluate teachers?
- g) teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals?

h) whether or not the principal has had recent communication training?

The data failed to support Hypothesis i). Principals' perceptions did not vary as a function of: 'whether or not they had a teaching load', 'teachers' opportunities to evaluate principals', 'whether or not they had had recent communication training', 'size of student population' and 'size of teaching staff'. The data did support Hypotheses ii). Principals' perceptions did not vary as a function of: 'sex of principal', 'grade/teaching level' and 'principals' opportunities to evaluate their teachers'.

#### **Research Question #4**

Are there differences in teacher's perceptions of principals' communication skills and principals' self-perceptions on the dimensions of communication identified in Research Question #1? The data supported the hypothesis. Teachers' and principals' perceptions were significantly different with respect to the four factor and overall mean scores. For each factor and the overall communication score, principals perceived themselves to be better communicators than did the teachers surveyed in this study.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the results of this study. They should be tentative however, due to the limitations mentioned in Chapter 1. The study is a broad overview of the topic and specific samples were surveyed.

Final results are generalizable but only to other similar samples. Keeping this in mind, a number of conclusions may be stated:

- 1) Teachers and principals in this study feel that principals are strongest in communicating factual information, directions and decisions and in providing teachers with positive rather than negative reinforcement. This is consistent with the findings of Valentine (1981), Lewman (1981) and Knowles (1984). Although research conducted by Valentine identified the 'Informer' dimension as that which is perceived strongest by both teachers and principals, teachers in this study viewed principals strongest in the 'Encourager' domain. This latter result is supported by the findings of Laffey (1983). Both teachers and principals surveyed in Laffey's study rated principals strongest as 'Encouragers'.
- 2) Teachers and principals in this study feel that principals are weakest in communicating in the affective domain and in stimulating teachers towards personal and professional growth. This is also consistent with the findings of Valentine (1981), Lewman (1981) and Knowles (1984).
- 3) The results of this study indicate that teachers and principals agree to a large extent regarding principals' strengths and weaknesses in communication. Even though their rankings of the communication factors are strikingly similar, it should be noted that principals' perceptions are higher than those of their teachers on all 27 items. These kinds of

findings are common in studies investigating the superior-subordinate relationship. Sullivan and Walker (1981), Jwaideh (1984) and Beckner (1985) all found that principals consistently rated themselves higher than did their teachers.

4) The findings of this study indicate that a large portion of the variability in teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills is not related to the demographic variables investigated. 'Sex of teacher', a variable found to be significant in a study done by Battle (1982), was not found to be significant in this study. She found that, at the secondary level, female teachers rated principals more positively, regardless of the principals' sex. Battle also found that the sex of the principal was significantly related to teachers' perceptions. She concluded that female secondary principals were typically rated higher than their male counterparts. Both of these findings, however, are not supported by the results of this study.

5) The work of Valentine and Rawn (1981) indicated that teaching level was significantly related to teachers' perceptions. This, however, is not supported by the present study. No significant differences in perceptions were found between teachers at the elementary, junior high or senior high levels.

6) Knowles (1984) and Valentine (1986) suggested that as the size of the faculty and staff increases, the quality of communication often decreases. Teachers' perceptions in larger schools are often lower than those in smaller schools.



This trend is not evident from the results of this study.

7) The researcher hypothesized that 'teaching' principals (those with teaching loads) would be perceived as better communicators than their full-time counterparts. The data, however, does not support this hypothesis. In this study, only three percent of the principal respondents actually had teaching duties. Since the number of subjects in this cell was so small, results are inconclusive and further research in this area might be warranted.

8) It appears from the results that whether or not a teacher is hired by the principal being assessed is not significantly related to teachers' perceptions. This differs from the findings of Rawn (1979) who found that teachers hired by the principals being assessed viewed their principals more favourably than others.

9) Beale and Bost (1979) and Bromberg (1985) suggested that specially-designed workshops could improve the communication skills of principals. These researchers would not be surprised to find that, in this study, 'recent communication training' was found to be significantly related to teachers' perceptions. The question arises: Are principals with recent communication training **actually** better communicators or are they just perceived to be better communicators by teachers who know that this training has taken place? Moreover, is it possible that recent courses in communication training make principals more aware (at least temporarily) of their own communication skills?

Further investigation into the significance of this variable is necessary before results can be conclusive.

10) The findings of this study indicate that a large portion of the variability in principals' perceptions is not related to the demographic variables investigated. None of the variables examined were found to be significantly related to principals' perceptions. Of particular note were:

'teachers' opportunities to evaluate their principals' and 'principals' recent communication training'. It was predicted that those principals who provide teachers with the opportunity to evaluate them and those who have undergone recent communication training would perceive themselves to be better communicators. This, however, is not supported by the data shown in Table 8.

11) Valentine (1986) suggested that 'size of teaching staff' and 'size of student population' might prove to be significant factors. For this reason, the researcher predicted that principals of larger schools would perceive themselves weaker as communicators than their counterparts in smaller schools. The data shown in Table 8 does not support these hypotheses.

12) The research of Sullivan and Walker (1981), Valentine (1981), Jwaideh (1984) and Beckner (1985) found that principals' and teachers' perceptions are often vastly different. The results of this study support past research in this regard. An area of concern, however, is that principals so consistently rated themselves higher than did their teachers in all areas of communication. A question

that arises is: "Is this simply the nature of the superior-subordinate relationship or do principals, in fact, perceive themselves to be better communicators than they really are?"

### 5.3 Implications

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it investigates a crucial issue in education - namely, that of principal-teacher communication. Research done by Valentine (1981), Jwaideh (1984), Beckner (1985) and Bromberg et al. (1985) indicated that a principals' communication skills have a direct impact on teacher job satisfaction, general school climate and even student productivity. Greater understanding of the communication that goes on between teachers and principals then, is essential.

Study results suggest that principals can be satisfied with their communication of information, directions and decisions. Teachers in this study feel well-informed and appear to understand their administrator's expectations of them. Principals should also feel that they are positively reinforcing their teachers and are showing an interest in teachers' concerns.

On the other hand, principals might re-examine their interaction with teachers on the interpersonal, affective level. Do principals show a concern for their teachers' personal lives and interests and do they share their own personal lives with their teachers? Results suggest that improvement may be needed in the affective area. Principals

might also examine their encouragement of teachers towards personal and professional growth. The assessment of individual teachers' capabilities and the establishing of personal and professional goals for each is a time-consuming and difficult task for today's principal to achieve. In spite of this, the insightful administrator will be one who will overcome this hurdle and will be able to develop a strategy for self-improvement in this regard.

Although the evaluation process is often difficult and uncomfortable for all concerned, it would appear that benefits are widespread when a principal evaluates teaching staff on a regular basis. Moreover, allowing teachers to evaluate their principal also appears to be step in the right direction. Training in communication techniques also appears to be a worthwhile endeavour. Not only will principals who undergo this training have a better understanding of the communication process, there is also the possibility that these principals will be perceived more favourably by teachers.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research is suggested by the results of the study. There are five particular suggestions that are outlined by the researcher.

The first recommendation would involve following-up with the 'willing respondents' from this study. These subjects are those who indicated that they would be willing to discuss principal-teacher communication in greater depth if contacted

at a later date. This investigation could take two directions:

- i) Data from the 'willing respondents' could be compared to that of the total samples. A comparison of the two data sets would indicate how representative the 'willing respondents' were of the general population.
- ii) If the comparisons indicated a strong relationship, more in-depth questions regarding principal-teacher communication could be asked of the 'willing respondents'. One specific area that warrants additional investigation is the importance of the 'Affective Domain', the weakest aspect of principals' communication skills as perceived by teachers and principals.

The second recommendation would involve a procedure already implemented by Valentine and Rawn (1981), Battle (1982) and Laffey (1983). Specific schools would be selected where both teachers and principals would be surveyed. In this way, specific principals' perceptions could be compared to those of their teachers. Areas of agreement and disagreement could then be identified and an individual school program for improved communication could be developed. The researcher has some hesitation in recommending further research in this direction. These concerns are:

- a) The use of 'intact groups' suggests that only principals who were willing, would participate. How representative would these principals be of principals in the general population?

b) How honest would teachers' responses be if they knew that the object of the study was to match their responses with those of their principals?

A third recommendation would involve the comparison of teachers' and principals' perceptions in different geographic locations. Taylor (1984) looked at this area when he investigated teachers' perceptions of administrator communication behaviour in rural Missouri school districts. He found that when his findings were compared to previous similar research in non-rural school districts, rural principals were typically rated lower. This suggests that an urban/rural/northern examination of principal-teacher communication in Manitoba might be of interest to educators in this province. Similarities and differences from one geographic area to the next could be identified. Suggestions for improvement could follow. A natural follow-up would be to compare this data to that of Valentine (1981) and Taylor (1984). Would there be any inconsistencies across borders? If final results were similar, the applicability of the AAC in different settings might be enhanced.

A fourth recommendation originates from comments made by teacher respondents. They noted that they interacted more with their vice-principals than with their principals. A comparative study of the perceptions of teachers, vice-principals and principals might be useful in better understanding the communication networks within schools.

A final recommendation would follow-up with the variables found to be significant in this study. It appears

that the evaluation process and recent communication training are significantly related to teachers' perceptions of principals' communication skills. Since these results are inconclusive, further research is necessary in order to determine how these variables are significant.

### 5.5 Concluding Summary

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the communication skills of principals. Teachers' and principals' perceptions were compared using their responses on the Audit of Administrator Communication (AAC). This instrument was a Likert-type survey comprised of 27 items. Five hundred and ninety-two teachers were randomly-selected from approximately 6000 teachers who were currently teaching K-12 in the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. All principals who held positions in K-12 schools (181) were chosen to represent the principals' sample. Three hundred and forty-one out of 592 teachers responded to the mail survey producing a 58% response rate. This compared to 113 out of a possible 181 principal responses which produced a 62% response rate. There were four phases to the data analysis. Phase One involved the summarization of teacher and principal demographics. Phase Two involved the 'factor scoring' of teacher and principal surveys according to the directions of Valentine (1981). Phase Three involved the cross-tabulation of teacher and principal mean factor scores with a number of demographic variables. Phase Four involved conducting independent sample t-tests in order to examine differences

between teachers' and principals' perceptions on each of the four factor scores and an overall communication score.

On the basis of the findings and the limitations imposed on the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Teachers perceive principals strongest as 'Encouragers' and weakest as 'Affective Involver's'.
- 2) Principals perceive themselves strongest as 'Informers' and weakest as 'Affective Involver's'.
- 3) There is a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and:
  - a) whether or not their principal evaluates them on at least an annual basis.
  - b) whether or not teachers have the opportunity to evaluate their principals.
  - c) whether or not teachers know if their principals have had recent communication training.
- 4) There are no significant relationships between principals' perceptions and the demographic variables investigated in this study.
- 5) There is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions and principals' perceptions with respect to principals' communication skills. That is, principals perceive themselves to be much stronger communicators than do teachers on all four factors of communication and as overall communicators.

Implications for education are that principals should examine more fully how they are communicating, particularly in the affective domain and in how they stimulate teachers towards personal and professional growth. The benefits of the evaluation process and of communication training should



be examined in more depth. In general, principals should take an honest, introspective look at their own communication skills and compare their perceptions with those of their teachers. Further research may examine clusters of principals and their respective teachers. A comparative investigation into teacher-principal communication in different geographic locations might also be warranted.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**WALLEN'S 8 COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES**

## Wallen's Eight Communication Techniques

Wallen (1968) described eight communication techniques. They are:

1. **Transitions**           > used when a person wishes to add something to a discussion.
2. **Elaboration**           > used when a person wishes more information from the speaker.
3. **Name calling**           > used when one person uses another's name when talking to them. (Although this is a relatively simple technique, it is often forgotten. When used, it can make a message more meaningful.)
4. **'You' messages**       > used when a person wishes to practice some reflective listening.
5. **Support Statements**   > used when a person wishes to tell another that he/she agrees with what is being said.
6. **Clarification**       > used when a person wishes to check the accuracy of a message.
7. **'I' messages**       > used in three different ways:
  - i) when one person wishes to tell another something positive.
  - ii) when a person has a problem and wishes to tell another.
  - iii) when a person is having a problem with a particular person and wishes to tell that person.
8. **Closure**           > used when a person has been asked a question by another. The person answers and makes 'closure' by tying things together.

(pp. 3-4)



**APPENDIX B**

**INSTRUMENTATION: ORIGINAL AAC  
TEACHERS' AAC  
PRINCIPALS' AAC**

## AUDIT OF ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION

Form 9-79-P

There are 27 statements in this instrument. Each statement describes an aspect of communication between you and your administrator. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly. Your response should reflect your perception of the communication between you and the administrator you are assessing.

Please complete the information below before beginning the instrument. Note that there is no place for your name. DO NOT record your name. All responses will be reported as group, not individual, data. The information will be processed and analyzed by the developer of the instrument. No identification of individuals will be made, so please be honest and candid in your responses.

PLEASE RESPOND TO EVERY ITEM!

\* \* \*

Circle the appropriate response:

- |   |          |        |             |        |
|---|----------|--------|-------------|--------|
| 1. How many years have you been a teacher?  | 0-2      | 3-5    | 6-12        | 13+    |
| 2. What is your highest academic degree?  | Bachelor | Master | Master Plus | Doctor |
| 3. How many years have you taught at this level (elem., jr. high, sr. high)?                        | 0-2      | 3-5    | 6-12        | 13+    |
| 4. How many years have you worked as a teacher with this administrator?                             | 0-2      | 3-5    | 6-12        | 13+    |
| 5. Do you have any administrative responsibilities in the building (team leader, dept. head, etc.)? |          | Yes    | No          |        |
| 6. Were you hired by the administrator you are assessing?   |          | Yes    | No          |        |
| 7. Please identify your sex.  |          | M      | F           |        |

DIRECTIONS

Please write in the name of the administrator you are rating and today's date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's date

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the degree to which the statement describes communication between you and your administrator.

Circle "N" for NEVER if you feel the statement describes communication behavior that is never present.

Circle "R" for RARELY if you feel the statement describes communication behavior that is rarely or seldom present.

Circle "O" for OCCASIONALLY if you feel the statement describes communication behavior that might on occasion be present.

Circle "U" for USUALLY if you feel the statement describes communication behavior that is usually or typically present.

Circle "A" for ALWAYS if you feel the statement describes communication behavior that is always present.

- 
- N R O U A 1. Your administrator discusses school related problems with you, seeking your opinions and feelings about the problems.
- N R O U A 2. Your administrator communicates to you directions and instructions regarding school issues.
- N R O U A 3. Your administrator encourages you to develop professional goals and to strive toward those goals.
- N R O U A 4. Your administrator makes statements to you that tend to belittle or make light of teachers as individuals or as a group.
- N R O U A 5. Personal thoughts shared by your administrator about school helps you develop a sense of pride and loyalty as a member of the school.
- N R O U A 6. The decisions communicated by your administrator are clear and easily understood.
- N R O U A 7. When criticizing poor practices, your administrator provides suggestions for improvement.
- N R O U A 8. Communication from your administrator discourages your creativity.
- N R O U A 9. Your administrator demonstrates a sincere interest in your personal life through discussion and inquiries about your family, activities, interests, and/or accomplishments.
- N R O U A 10. Your administrator keeps you informed about those aspects of the school program about which you should be aware.

N=Never      R=Rarely      O=Occasionally      U=Usually      A=Always

- N R O U A 11. When discussing your areas of professional strength and weakness, your administrator assists you in focusing upon a program of growth to overcome areas of weakness.
- N R O U A 12. When you present a thought or concern to your administrator, your administrator gives you the feeling the thought or concern is insignificant and will not be considered.
- N R O U A 13. Your administrator shares with you personal feelings and opinions about school issues.
- N R O U A 14. When communicating with you, your administrator emphasizes those points which are most important to remember.
- N R O U A 15. Through the evaluation process, your administrator stimulates and encourages your professional growth.
- N R O U A 16. When you discuss a problem with your administrator, your administrator demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of how you feel about the problem.
- N R O U A 17. You discuss personal problems with, and seek advice from, your administrator.
- N R O U A 18. Your administrator keeps you informed of those administrative decisions which affect you as a teacher.
- N R O U A 19. Your administrator speaks candidly and sincerely when discussing your teaching ability.
- N R O U A 20. When talking to your administrator, you have the feeling your administrator is sincerely interested in what you are saying.
- N R O U A 21. Your administrator shares personal, non-professional interests and activities with you.
- N R O U A 22. Through individual, small group, and/or staff meetings, your administrator provides information relative to school issues.
- N R O U A 23. Your administrator encourages changes in school programs that lead to a better school for the students.
- N R O U A 24. Your administrator notices minor accomplishments that others do not notice and takes the opportunity to compliment you on those accomplishments.
- N R O U A 25. When you are informed of administrative decisions, you are aware of what is expected of you as it relates to the decision.
- N R O U A 26. Through discussions with you about concerns and problems that affect the school, your administrator involves you in the decision making process.
- N R O U A 27. Your administrator communicates to you the reasons for administrative practices used in the school.

\* \* \*

*Have you responded to each statement? If not, please do so!*

A U D I T O F A D M I N I S T R A T O R  
C O M M U N I C A T I O N

(Form 9-79-P)

There are 27 statements in this instrument. Each statement describes an aspect of communication between you and your principal. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly. Your response should reflect your perception of the communication between you and the principal you are assessing.

Please complete the information below before beginning the instrument. Note that there is no place for your name. DO NOT record your name. All responses will be reported as group, not individual data. The information will be processed and analyzed by the researcher. No identification of individuals will be made, so please be honest and candid in your responses.

PLEASE RESPOND TO EVERY ITEM!

\* \* \*

Circle the appropriate responses:

- |  |  |        |          |
|--|--|--------|----------|
| 1. Please identify your sex.   | Male   | Female |          |
| 2. Please identify the sex of your principal.  | Male   | Female |          |
| 3. Please indicate the grade(s) at which you do the majority of your teaching.   | K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,<br>7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.   |        |          |
| 4. Please indicate the approximate student population of your school.  | 1-100, 101-200, 201-300,<br>301-400, 401-500, 501-600,<br>601-700, 701-800, 801-900,<br>901-1000, over 1000. |        |          |
| 5. Please indicate the approximate number of teachers on staff at your current school.   | 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40,<br>41-50, 51-60, 61-70, over 70.  |        |          |
| 6. Does your current principal have a teaching load of some kind?  | Yes  | No     |          |
| 7. Were you hired by the principal you are assessing?  | Yes  | No     |          |
| 8. How many years have you worked as a teacher with this principal?  | 0 - 2, 3 - 5, 6 - 12, 13 +   |        |          |
| 9. Does your principal evaluate your performance on at least an annual basis?  | Yes  | No     |          |
| 10. Do you as a teacher have the opportunity to evaluate your principal?   | Yes  | No     |          |
| 11. Has your principal had any recent training in communication techniques? ( ie. formal course work, workshops, inservices etc. within the last 5 years.) | Yes  | No     | Not Sure |

DIRECTIONS

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the degree to which the statement describes communication between you and your administrator.

Circle "N" for NEVER if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is never present.

Circle "R" for RARELY if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is rarely or seldom present.

Circle "O" for OCCASSIONALLY if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that might on occasion be present.

Circle "U" for USUALLY if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is usually or typically present.

Circle "A" for ALWAYS if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is always present.

- 
- N R O U A 1. Your administrator discusses school related problems with you, seeking your opinions and feelings about the problems.
- N R O U A 2. Your administrator communicates to you directions and instructions regarding school issues.
- N R O U A 3. Your administrator encourages you to develop professional goals and to strive toward those goals.
- N R O U A 4. Your administrator makes statements to you that tend to belittle or make light of teachers as individuals or as a group.
- N R O U A 5. Personal thoughts shared by your administrator about school helps you develop a sense of pride and loyalty as a member of the school.
- N R O U A 6. The decisions communicated by your administrator are clear and easily understood.
- N R O U A 7. When criticizing poor practices, your administrator provides suggestions for improvement.
- N R O U A 8. Communication from your administrator discourages your creativity.
- N R O U A 9. Your administrator demonstrates a sincere interest in your personal life through discussion and inquiries about your family, activities, interests, and/or accomplishments.
- N R O U A 10. Your administrator keeps you informed about those aspects of the school program about which you should be aware.
- N R O U A 11. When discussing your areas of professional strength and weakness, your administrator assists you in focusing upon a program of growth to overcome areas of weakness.

N=Never      R=Rarely      O=Occasionally      U=Usually      A=Always

- N R O U A 12. When you present a thought or concern to your administrator, your administrator gives you the feeling the thought or concern is insignificant and will not be considered.
- N R O U A 13. Your administrator shares with you personal feelings and opinions about school issues.
- N R O U A 14. When communicating with you, your administrator emphasizes those points which are most important to remember.
- N R O U A 15. Through the evaluation process, your administrator stimulates and encourages your professional growth.
- N R O U A 16. When you discuss a problem with your administrator, your administrator demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of how you feel about the problem.
- N R O U A 17. You discuss personal problems with, and seek advice from, your administrator.
- N R O U A 18. Your administrator keeps you informed of those administrative decisions which affect you as a teacher.
- N R O U A 19. Your administrator speaks candidly and sincerely when discussing your teaching ability.
- N R O U A 20. When talking to your administrator, you have the feeling your administrator is sincerely interested in what you are saying.
- N R O U A 21. Your administrator shares personal, non-professional interests and activities with you.
- N R O U A 22. Through individual, small group, and/or staff meetings, your administrator provides information relative to school issues.
- N R O U A 23. Your administrator encourages changes in school programs that lead to a better school for the students.
- N R O U A 24. Your administrator notices minor accomplishments that others do not notice and takes the opportunity to compliment you on those accomplishments.
- N R O U A 25. When you are informed of administrative decisions, you are aware of what is expected as it relates to the decision.
- N R O U A 26. Through discussions with you about concerns and problems that affect the school, your administrator involves you in the decision making process.
- N R O U A 27. Your administrator communicates to you the reasons for administrative practices used in the school.

\* \* \* \*

Have you responded to each statement? If not, please do so!

A U D I T   O F   A D M I N I S T R A T O R  
C O M M U N I C A T I O N  
(Form 9-79-P)

There are 27 items in this instrument. Each statement describes an aspect of communication between you and your teachers. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not hesitate to mark the statements frankly. Your responses should reflect your perceptions of your own communication skills.

Please complete the information below before beginning the instrument. Note that there is no place for your name. DO NOT record your name. All responses will be reported as group, not individual data. The information will be processed and analyzed by the researcher. No identification of individuals will be made, so please be honest and candid in your responses.

PLEASE RESPOND TO EVERY ITEM!

\* \* \*

Circle the appropriate responses:

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 1. Please identify your sex.  | Male   | Female |
| 2. Please indicate the grades for which you are responsible.  | K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,<br>7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.   |        |
| 3. Please indicate the approximate student population of your school.   | 1-100, 101-200, 201-300,<br>301-400, 401-500, 501-600,<br>601-700, 701-800, 801-900,<br>901-1000, over 1000. |        |
| 4. Please indicate the approximate number of teachers on staff in your present school.  | 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40,<br>41-50, 51-60, 61-70, over 70.  |        |
| 5. Do you presently have a teaching load of some kind?  | Yes  | No     |
| 6. Do you evaluate the performance of your teachers on at least an annual basis?  | Yes  | No     |
| 7. Do your teachers have the opportunity to evaluate <u>your</u> performance?   | Yes  | No     |
| 8. Have you had any recent training in communication techniques? (ie. formal course work, workshops, in-services etc. within the last 5 years.) | Yes  | No     |

\* \* \*



DIRECTIONS

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the degree to which the statement describes communication between you and your teachers.

Circle "N" for NEVER if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is never present.

Circle "R" for RARELY if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is rarely or seldom present.

Circle "O" for OCCASIONALLY if you feel the statement describes communication - behaviour that might on occasion be present.

Circle "U" for USUALLY if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is usually or typically present.

Circle "A" for ALWAYS if you feel the statement describes communication behaviour that is always present.

- 
- N R O U A 1. I discuss school-related problems with my teachers, seeking their opinions and feelings about the problems.
- N R O U A 2. I communicate directions and instructions regarding school issues to my teachers.
- N R O U A 3. I encourage my teachers to develop professional goals and to strive toward those goals.
- N R O U A 4. I make statements to my teachers that tend to belittle or make light of them as individuals or as a group.
- N R O U A 5. Personal thoughts shared by me about school help to develop a sense of pride and loyalty in my teachers.
- N R O U A 6. The decisions communicated by me are clear and easily understood.
- N R O U A 7. When criticizing poor practices, I provide suggestions for improvement.
- N R O U A 8. Communication from me discourages the creativity of my teachers.
- N R O U A 9. I demonstrate a sincere interest in the personal lives of my teachers through discussion and inquiries about their families, their activities, interests, and/or accomplishments.
- N R O U A 10. I keep my teachers informed about those aspects of the school program about which they should be aware.
- N R O U A 11. When discussing areas of professional strength and weakness in my teachers, I assist them in focusing upon a program of growth to overcome areas of weakness.

N = Never      R = Rarely      O = Occasionally      U = Usually      A = Always

---

- N R O U A 12. When my teachers present thoughts or concerns to me, I give them the feeling that their thoughts or concerns are insignificant and will not really be considered.
- N R O U A 13. I share my personal feelings and opinions about school issues with my teachers.
- N R O U A 14. When communicating with my teachers, I emphasize those points which are most important to remember.
- N R O U A 15. Through the evaluation process, I stimulate and encourage the professional growth of my teachers.
- N R O U A 16. When a teacher discusses a problem with me, I demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how that teacher feels about the problem.
- N R O U A 17. My teachers discuss personal problems with, and seek advice from me.
- N R O U A 18. I keep my teachers informed of those administrative decisions that affect them as teachers.
- N R O U A 19. I speak candidly and sincerely when discussing the teaching ability of one of my teachers.
- N R O U A 20. When my teachers talk to me, they get the feeling that I am sincerely interested in what they are saying.
- N R O U A 21. I share personal, non-professional interests and activities with my teachers.
- N R O U A 22. Through individual, small group, and/or staff meetings, I provide information relative to school issues.
- N R O U A 23. I encourage changes in school programs that lead to a better school for the students.
- N R O U A 24. I notice minor accomplishments of my teachers that others do not notice and I take the opportunity to compliment them on those accomplishments.
- N R O U A 25. When I inform teachers of administrative decisions, they are aware of what is expected of them as it relates to the decisions.
- N R O U A 26. Through discussions with my teachers about concerns and problems that affect the school, I involve them in the decision-making process.
- N R O U A 27. I communicate to my teachers the reasons for administrative practices used in the school.

\* \* \*

\* HAVE YOU RESPONDED TO EVERY STATEMENT? IF NOT, PLEASE DO SO!

**APPENDIX C**  
**CORRESPONDENCE**



THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
Department of Curriculum,  
Mathematics and Natural Sciences

\* Teachers' Cover  
Letter

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2

October 20th, 1986

Dear Colleague:

How effective a communicator is your principal? Do you feel that a principal's communication skills (effective or ineffective) have any bearing on the daily operation of a school?

If you are like me, you have asked yourself similar questions at one time or another during your teaching career. This is precisely why I am conducting the following study, in partial fulfillment of a Master of Education degree at the University of Manitoba. As an educator, I want to know more about how principals interact with their teachers.

The focus of this study is the communication skills of principals. It will compare principals' own perceptions of how they communicate with the perceptions of their teachers. That is where you come in... The enclosed survey asks you to rate your principal's communication skills. Final results will compare teachers' perceptions with those of principals themselves. Areas of agreement and disagreement will be pinpointed. Recommendations for enhancing principal-teacher communication will then follow.

Your input is essential - without it, it will be impossible to reach a consensus of how teachers really feel. I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. You will notice that there is no place for you to record your name or the name of your school. That is because the intent of this study is to get a broad overview of principal-teacher communication, not to link up specific teachers' responses with those of their principals. Please rest assured that all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential - results will be made known only in their totality. For those who are interested, I will gladly forward survey results. Please check off one or more of the boxes on the return card if you would like a copy of the final results and/or would be willing to be interviewed in more detail by telephone.

I look forward to receiving your completed survey and return card. Thank you for your anticipated participation and co-operation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at either: 452-1328 or 474-9063.

Sincerely,

*Donald* (Researcher)

*Jim Bellard* (Faculty Advisor)

\* Teachers' Follow-up Letter



THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
Department of Curriculum:  
Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2

November 1st, 1986

Dear Colleague:

How effective a communicator is your principal? Do you feel that a principal's communication skills affect the daily operation of a school? These are questions I have often asked myself. In fact, I am conducting a study to determine how teachers, in general, feel about the communication skills of principals. The study will compare teachers' perceptions with the self-perceptions of principals.

As an initial letter and survey have already been forwarded to you, I realize that you have either probably meant to respond or, in fact, you never did receive a copy. If this is the first time that you have heard of the study, I apologize for there must have been some kind of mix-up in the mail. Please complete the survey and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at either: 452-1328 or 474-9063. If you have received an initial copy but have not responded, I urge you to do so now.

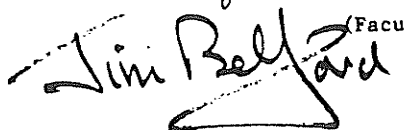
I understand what it is like to have extra demands placed on your time. However, I'd like to stress how important your input is to the study. Hopefully, the conclusions that will be drawn and the recommendations that will be made will enable principals to communicate more effectively with their teachers. This will, in turn, make the jobs of teachers easier and more pleasant. To date, the response rate has been very good. I have received a number of favourable comments from teachers who feel that this study is very worthwhile. In order to get an accurate picture of teachers' perceptions, however, I need to know how you feel.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Also, please return the enclosed card and check off the boxes that apply to you. For those who are interested, I will gladly forward survey results. Please rest assured that all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential. Results will be made known only in their totality.

Thank you for your anticipated participation and co-operation.

Sincerely,

 (Researcher)

 (Faculty Advisor)



\* Principals' Cover Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
Department of Curriculum:  
Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2

October 20th, 1986

Dear Colleague:

How effective a communicator are you? Do you feel that your communication skills have any bearing on the daily operation of your school? How do your teachers perceive you as a communicator?

If you are like me, you have asked yourself similar questions at one time or another during your career in Education. That is precisely why I am conducting the following study, in partial fulfillment of a Master of Education degree. As an educator, I want to know more about how principals interact with their teachers.

The focus of this study is on the communication skills of principals. It will compare the perceptions of teachers with the self-perceptions of principals. That is where you come in... The enclosed survey is designed so that you can quickly self-assess your own communicative ability. Final results will compare self-perceptions of principals with perceptions of teachers. Areas of agreement and disagreement will be pinpointed. Recommendations for enhancing principal-teacher communication will then follow.

Your input is essential - without it, reaching a consensus of how principals feel they are communicating will be impossible. I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. You will notice that there is no place for you to record your name or the name of your school. That is because the intent of the study is to get a broad overview of principal-teacher communication, not to link up specific teachers' responses with those of their principals. Please rest assured that all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential. Results will be made known only in their totality. For those who are interested, I will gladly forward survey results. Please check off one or more of the boxes on the return card if you would like a copy of the final results and/or would be willing to speak to me at greater length on this topic.

I look forward to receiving your completed survey and return card. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at either: 452-1328 or 474-9063. Thank you for your anticipated participation and co-operation.

Sincerely,

*D. Frank*

(Researcher)

*Jim Bell*

(Faculty Advisor)

\* Principals' Follow-up Letter



THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
Department of Curriculum:  
Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2

November 1st, 1986

Dear Colleague:

How effective a communicator are you? Do you feel that your communication skills affect the daily operation of your school?

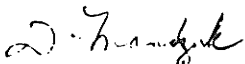
These are questions I have often asked myself. In fact, I am conducting a study to determine how principals feel about their own communicative abilities. The study will compare principals' self-perceptions with the perceptions of their teachers. As an initial letter and survey have already been forwarded to you, I realize that you either probably meant to respond or, in fact, you never did receive a copy. If this is the case, I apologize as there must have been some kind of mix-up in the mail. Please complete the survey and if you have any questions, please contact me at either 452-1328 or 474-9063. If you have received an initial copy but have not responded, I urge you to do so now.


I understand what it is like to have extra demands placed on you. At the same time, I'd like to stress how important your input is to the study. Hopefully, conclusions drawn from the research will indicate areas of agreement and disagreement between teachers and principals with respect to principals' communication skills. From this data, suggestions and recommendations will be made. To date, many of your colleagues have responded and have made favourable comments regarding the value of the study. However, in order to get an accurate picture of how principals feel about their own communication skills, as many responses as possible are needed.

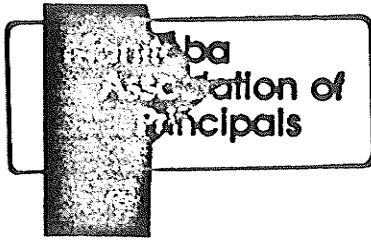
I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the survey and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Also, return the enclosed card and check off those boxes which apply to you. For those who are interested, I will gladly forward survey results. Please rest assured that all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential. Results will be made known only in their totality.

Thank you for your anticipated participation and co-operation.

Sincerely,

 (Researcher)

 (Faculty Advisor)



\* M.A.P. Letter of Endorsement

October 24, 1986

*President*

John Proudfoot  
Sturgeon Creek High School  
2665 Ness Ave  
Winnipeg MB R3J 1A5  
Bus 888-0684  
Res 475-6674

*Past President*

Art Van Steenan

*1st Vice-President*

Harvey Kingdon

*2nd Vice-President*

Lenna Glade

*Secretary*

Walker Morris

*Treasurer*

Con Erickson

*Urban Directors*

Ernie Shuma  
Jeanne Gitzel  
Don Mandryk  
Dennis Wilson

*Rural Directors*


Cathy Philpson  
Gary Grubert  
Aaron Redekop  
Frank McKinnon  
Barry Anderson  
Levi Reimer  
Henry Bankowski  
Heather Wood

Dear Colleagues:

Your M.A.P. Executive passed a motion at our September 28, meeting to support in principle a study of "Communications between Teacher and Principal" to be undertaken by Dave Mandzuk. I would urge all members to take the time to fill out this questionnaire.

The results of the survey will be forwarded to your Executive and the results will be published in our Principal Issue.

Yours truly,

  
John Proudfoot,  
President,  
M.A.P.



RETURN CARD: Please check off those boxes below which are appropriate and return this card with your completed survey. Thank you.

YES

NO

I have completed and returned my copy of the Audit of Administrator Communication.

I would like a copy of the final results sent to me at the conclusion of the study.

I would be willing to speak to you at greater length on this topic, if you contacted me by telephone.

**APPENDIX D**

**SCORING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE AAC**

**AAC FORM 9-79-P**

**SCORING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. ON THE SURVEY FORM, WRITE A NUMERIC VALUE NEXT TO EACH ITEM AS FOLLOWS:
 

A. SCORE ITEMS 4-8-12 USING	N=5	R=4	O=3	U=2	A=1
B. SCORE ALL OTHER ITEMS	N=1	R=2	O=3	U=4	A=5
  
2. ADD THE VALUES FOR ALL ITEMS; THEN DIVIDE BY 27 TO OBTAIN YOUR OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. COMPUTE THE SCORES FOR EACH OF THE FOUR FACTORS USING THE INFORMATION BELOW AND PLACING THE VALUE NEXT TO EACH ITEM THEN DIVIDING BY THE NUMBER OF ITEMS.

**FACTOR ONE**

**AFFECTIVE INVOLVER**

ITEMS	VALUE
1	_____
5	_____
9	_____
13	_____
17	_____
21	_____
24	_____
26	_____

TOTAL VALUE: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 8 = \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR TWO**

**INFORMER**

ITEMS	VALUE
2	_____
6	_____
10	_____
14	_____
18	_____
22	_____
25	_____
27	_____

TOTAL VALUE: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 8 = \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR THREE**

**DEVELOPER**

ITEMS	VALUE
3	_____
7	_____
11	_____
15	_____
19	_____
23	_____

TOTAL VALUE: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 6 = \_\_\_\_\_

**FACTOR FOUR**

**ENCOURAGER**

ITEMS	VALUE
4	_____
8	_____
12	_____
16	_____
20	_____

TOTAL VALUE: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E**

**SELECTED DATA TABLES**

Table E-1

Comparison of AAC Item Means for Teachers and Principals

Item	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
Teachers	3.04	3.84	3.47	4.41	3.33	3.88	3.80
Principals	4.20	4.60	4.38	4.68	3.79	4.20	4.44

Item	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
Teachers	4.11	2.83	4.04	2.97	4.01	3.09	3.70
Principals	4.26	3.78	4.62	4.12	4.51	3.94	4.10

Item	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.
Teachers	3.22	3.87	2.03	4.09	3.81	3.96	2.65
Principals	4.25	4.30	3.45	4.73	4.18	4.13	3.57

Item	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.
Teachers	4.31	3.95	3.03	3.98	3.23	3.51
Principals	4.65	4.58	3.92	4.34	4.26	4.43

Table E-2

Rank Order of the Highest 10 Item Means for the AAC

= Teachers' and Principals' Responses

Rank	Teachers			Principals		
	Item No.	Mean	St.Dev.	Item No.	Mean	St.Dev.
1.	4.	4.41	0.83	18.	4.73	0.45
2.	22.	4.30	0.75	4.	4.68	0.67
3.	8.	4.11	0.95	22.	4.65	0.48
4.	18.	4.09	0.91	10.	4.62	0.51
5.	10.	4.04	0.91	2.	4.60	0.57
6.	12.	4.01	1.11	23.	4.58	0.55
7.	25.	3.98	0.78	12.	4.51	0.92
8.	20.	3.96	1.03	7.	4.44	0.70
9.	23.	3.95	1.14	27.	4.43	0.62
10.	6.	3.88	0.90	3.	4.38	0.84

Rank Order 1 = 10 (High to Low)

Table E-3

Rank Order of the Lowest 10 Item Means for the AAC

- Teachers' and Principals' Responses

Rank	Teachers			Principals		
	Item No.	Mean	St.Dev.	Item No.	Mean	St.Dev.
1.	5.	3.33	1.22	19.	4.18	0.72
2.	26.	3.23	1.03	20.	4.13	0.54
3.	15.	3.22	1.33	11.	4.12	0.71
4.	13.	3.09	1.04	14.	4.10	0.63
5.	1.	3.04	1.05	13.	3.94	0.63
6.	24.	3.03	1.21	24.	3.92	0.63
7.	11.	2.97	1.32	5.	3.79	0.68
8.	9.	2.83	1.14	9.	3.78	0.68
9.	21.	2.63	1.09	21.	3.57	0.76
10.	17.	2.03	1.07	17.	3.45	0.71

Rank Order 1 = 10 (High to Low)

Table E-4

## Comparison of Item Means for 'Affective Involver'

Item	P		T	
	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.
1. I discuss school-related problems with my teachers, seeking their opinions and feelings about the problem.	4.20	0.49	3.04	1.05
5. Personal thoughts shared by me about school help to develop a sense of pride and loyalty in my teachers.	3.79	0.67	3.33	1.22
9. I demonstrate a sincere interest in the personal lives of my teachers through discussion and inquiries about their families, their activities and interests and/or accomplishments.	3.78	0.68	2.83	1.14
13. I share my personal feelings and opinions about school issues with my teachers.	3.94	0.63	3.09	1.04
17. My teachers discuss personal problems with, and seek advice from me.	3.45	0.71	2.03	1.07
21. I share personal, non-professional interests and activities with my teachers.	3.57	0.76	2.65	1.09
24. I notice minor accomplishments of my teachers that others do not notice and take the opportunity to compliment them on those accomplishments.	3.92	0.63	3.03	1.21
26. Through discussions with my teachers about concerns and problems that affect the school, I involve them in the decision-making process.	4.26	0.52	3.23	1.03
Overall Factor Score: Affective Involver	3.88	0.37	2.90	0.80

P = Principals  
T = Teachers

M = Mean  
S.D. = Standard Deviation



Table E-5

## Comparison of Item Means for 'Informer'

Item	P		T	
	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.
2. I communicate directions and instructions regarding school issues to my teachers.	4.60	0.57	3.84	0.91
6. The decisions communicated by me are clear and easily understood.	4.20	0.47	3.88	0.90
10. I keep my teachers informed about those aspects of school problems about which they should be aware.	4.62	0.51	4.04	0.91
14. When communicating with my teachers, I emphasize those points which are most important to remember.	4.10	0.63	3.70	0.90
18. I keep my teachers informed of those administrative decisions that affect them as teachers.	4.73	0.45	4.09	0.91
22. Through individual, small group and/or staff meetings, I provide information relative to school issues.	4.65	0.48	4.31	0.75
25. When I inform teachers of administrative decisions, they are aware of what is expected of them as it relates to the decisions.	4.34	0.53	3.98	0.78
27. I communicate to my teachers the reasons for administrative practices used in the school.	4.43	0.62	3.51	1.07
Overall Factor Score: Informer	4.46	0.33	3.93	0.67

P = Principals  
T = Teachers

M = Mean  
S.D. = Standard Deviation

Table E-6

Comparison of Item Means for 'Developer'

Item	P		T	
	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.
3. I encourage my teachers to develop professional goals and to strive toward those goals.	4.38	0.84	3.47	1.32
7. When criticizing poor practices, I provide suggestions for improvement.	4.44	0.70	3.80	0.96
11. When discussing areas of professional strength and weakness in my teachers, I assist them in focusing upon a program of growth to overcome areas of weakness.	4.12	0.71	2.97	1.32
15. Through the evaluation process, I stimulate and encourage the professional growth of my teachers.	4.25	0.60	3.22	1.33
19. I speak candidly and sincerely when discussing the teaching ability of one of my teachers.	4.18	0.72	3.81	1.19
23. I encourage changes in school programs that lead to a better school for the students.	4.58	0.55	3.95	0.98
Overall Factor Score: Informer	4.32	0.44	3.54	0.94

P = Principals  
T = Teachers

M = Mean  
S.D. = Standard Deviation

Table E-7

Comparison of Item Means for 'Encourager'

Item	P		T	
	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.
4. I make statements to my teachers that tend to belittle or make light of them as individuals or as a group.	4.68	0.67	4.41	0.83
8. Communication from me discourages the creativity of my teachers.	4.26	0.62	4.11	0.95
12. When my teachers present thoughts or concerns to me, I give them the feeling that their thoughts or concerns are insignificant and will not really be considered.	4.51	0.92	4.01	1.11
16. When a teacher discusses a problem with me, I demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how that teacher feels about the problem.	4.30	0.52	3.87	1.03
20. When my teachers talk to me, they get the feeling that I am sincerely interested in what they are saying.	4.13	0.52	3.87	1.03
Overall Factor Score: Informer	4.38	0.41	4.08	0.79

P = Principals  
T = Teachers

M = Mean  
S.D. = Standard Deviation