CHAPTER 16

Griffin, E. M., (2004). *A first look at communication theory* (5th ed). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Functional Perspective on Group Decision Making

of Randy Hirokawa & Dennis Gouran

Have you ever wondered how your communication professors got their jobs? Over a fifteen-month period, I served on four departmental search committees appointed to select final candidates for positions in rhetoric, theater, journalism, and broadcast production. Of course the whole department expected each group to come up with top-notch candidates, and consistent with a discipline that values rational discourse, they likely assumed that we'd make our high-quality decisions after systematic and reasoned discussion.

As the committee meetings piled up, however, I wondered if the time and energy we put into discussing the applicants might not be wasted effort. Given the mix of communication interests, academic knowledge, and personal prejudices that committee members brought to the table, weren't our final choices likely to be made on political rather than rational grounds? Even if we could be objective, I feared that our free-for-all debate over candidates would so cloud our judgment that we'd end up making second-rate choices.

Nagging doubts about the role of group discussion are reflected and magnified in oft-heard criticisms that cynical committee members voice when they talk in the corridor after a meeting:[1]

"If you want something done, do it yourself."

"Too many cooks spoil the broth."

"A committee is a group that keeps minutes and wastes hours."

"Committees lure fresh ideas down a cul-de-sac and quietly strangle them."

Communication professors Randy Hirokawa (University of Iowa) and Dennis Gouran (Pennsylvania State University) believe that these pessimistic views are unwarranted. Assuming that group members care about the issue, are reasonably intelligent, and face a challenging task that calls for more facts, new ideas, or clear thinking, Hirokawa and Gouran are convinced that group interaction has a positive effect on the final decision. Hirokawa speaks of *quality* solutions.[2] Gouran refers to decisions that are *appropriate*.[3] Both scholars regard talk as the social tool that helps groups reach better conclusions than they otherwise might. As the Hebrew proverb suggests, "Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed."[4]

The functional perspective described in this chapter illustrates the wisdom of joint interaction. Gouran laid the groundwork for the theory with his early writing on group decision making. Hirokawa developed the core principles of the theory during his graduate studies, and today his research tests and refines this theory. On the assumption that you might be interested in a behind-the-scenes look at the faculty hiring process, I'll draw on my search committee experience to illustrate Hirokawa and Gouran's functional perspective.

FOUR FUNCTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Consistent with Bales and other pioneer researchers, Hirokawa and Gouran draw an analogy between small groups and biological systems. Complex living organisms must satisfy a number of functions, such as respiration, circulation, digestion, and elimination of bodily waste, if they are to survive and thrive in an ever-changing environment. In like manner, Hirokawa and Gouran see the group decision-making process as needing to fulfill four task requirements if members are to reach a high-quality solution. Hirokawa and Gouran refer to these conditions as *requisite functions* of effective decision making—thus the "functional perspective" label.[5] The four functions are (1) problem analysis, (2) goal setting, (3) identification of alternatives, and (4) evaluation of positive and negative consequences.

1. Analysis of the Problem

Is something going on that requires improvement or change? To answer that question, group members must take a realistic look at current conditions. Defenders of the status quo are fond of saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But as Hirokawa warns, any misunderstanding of the situation tends to be compounded when the members make their final decision. He also notes that the clearest example of faulty analysis is a failure to recognize a potential threat when one really exists.[6] After people acknowledge a need to be addressed, they still must figure out the nature, extent, and probable cause(s) of the problem that confronts the group.

Most communication departments have little difficulty analyzing the situation when a faculty member resigns or retires—departments move quickly to initiate a search for a new hire. To the extent that an opening provides the opportu-

nity to shore up a weak area or enhance the reputation of an already recognized concentration, a vacancy is a nice problem to have. My department's searches for a rhetorician, a theater director, and a broadcast production person presented no apparent difficulties. In each case, we formed a search committee, drafted a position description, published it throughout the profession, and checked with friends on other campuses to see who might be interested.

The journalism search, however, was another matter. This newly created position had been on the books for two years, but none of us seemed in a hurry to fill it. We were holding out for one of two nationally recognized reporters who had expressed interest in coming to Wheaton. But the timing wasn't right. We did, however, have confidence that the students were well served by a part-time instructor. Although he had few academic credentials, he was a marvelous teacher and mentor. No problem, right? Then, for the first time, someone on our rather dormant committee asked whether we'd be able to keep the full-time faculty line if we didn't fill it for another year. She was addressing the function of problem analysis, and her question forced us to take a realistic look at the situation. When we consulted the dean, he said, in effect, "Use it or lose it." We quickly switched into an active search mode.

2. Goal Setting

Because group members need to be clear on what they are trying to accomplish, Hirokawa and Gouran regard discussion of goals and objectives as the second requisite function of decision making. A group needs to establish criteria by which to judge proposed solutions. If the group fails to satisfy this task requirement, it's likely that the decision will be driven by politics rather than reason.[7]

Faculty members involved in our search for a rhetorician agreed unanimously that a successful candidate should possess an earned doctorate, have taught at the college level for at least five years, and be a scholar publishing actively in communication journals. Because our school is first and foremost a teaching institution, we also insisted that finalists demonstrate their ability to engage our students in a live classroom situation. Finally, consistent with Wheaton's worldview that all truth is God's truth, we informed applicants that we were looking for a scholar with a faith commitment who was unafraid to pursue knowledge from a liberal arts perspective. This rather exacting set of standards reduced our pool of applicants, but the criteria gave us increased confidence in our final decision.

3. Identification of Alternatives

In their original statement of the functional perspective, Hirokawa and Gouran stressed the importance of marshaling a number of alternative solutions from which group members could choose:

> If no one calls attention to the need for generating as many alternatives as is realistically possible, then relatively few may be introduced, and the corresponding possibility of finding the acceptable answer will be low.[8]

"Gentlemen, the fact that all my horses and all my men couldn't put Humpty together again simply proves to me that I must have more horses and more men."

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Limited choice was never an issue in our search for a drama coach. More than 150 candidates applied for the opening. In the initial stage, all we had to do was open the envelopes. The broadcast production search was a different story, however. We wanted a person with industry experience, a doctorate or a master of fine arts degree, and equal abilities to teach radio *and* television production. Numerous audio technicians with radio experience applied for the post, but only a few had the advanced degree we required. And none of these applicants had a background in video production. After three months we had no viable alternatives.

At that point, one of our members reminded us that we were a *search* committee and suggested that we get off our butts and start beating the bushes for candidates who met our criteria. So we held a brainstorming session where everyone kicked in ideas on ways to extend the search. As a result, phone, fax, and

e-mail messages tapped into a network of production houses, station managers, deans, and college presidents. By fulfilling the functional requirement of generating relevant alternatives, the group discovered two candidates who not only met our basic criteria but also brought desired ethnic diversity to our department.

4. Evaluation of Positive and Negative Characteristics

After a group has identified alternative solutions, the participants must take care to test the relative merits of each option against the criteria they believe are important. This point-by-point comparison doesn't take place automatically. Hirokawa and Gouran warn that groups get sloppy and often need one member to remind the others to consider both the positive and negative features of each alternative.

As a case in point, the search committee was tremendously impressed with the credentials, talent, and personality of Mark, the leading candidate for the position of theater director. He brought extensive experience on the stage, had directed a well-received production of *The Diviners* as guest director the year before, and showed an interpersonal warmth that connected with students and faculty alike. All of our drama majors signed a petition urging that we select him for the position. It took our committee "realist" to point out that Mark had never worked in an academic setting. If he came, we shouldn't underestimate the difficulty this creative artist would have adapting to the routine chores of grading, academic advising, attending committee meetings, and filling out reports.

We almost made the opposite error in another search. An otherwise strong applicant had not received tenure at his current school, and the circumstances surrounding that denial seemed to dominate our discussion to the exclusion of his many strengths. The same pragmatic committee member urged us to spend time examining the applicant's positive characteristics, which far outweighed the negative.

Hirokawa notes that some group tasks have a *positive bias* in that spotting the favorable characteristics of alternative choices is more important than identifying negative qualities.[9] For example, the recommendation forms for "Teacher of the Year" at my school accentuate the positive. A rating of "good enough" is not good enough to get the award. Hirokawa says that other group tasks have a *negative bias*—the unattractive characteristics of candidates carry more weight than do the positive attributes. Tenure committee deliberations at colleges where there's a premium on teaching rather than research tend to be more influenced by instructors' shortcomings. That's because committee members are loath to condemn future generations of students to mediocre teachers who've been granted job security for life.

PRIORITIZING THE FUNCTIONS

The word *prioritizing* could mean addressing the four requisite functions in a logical progression. Or it could refer to deciding which one is most important. In much of their writing, Hirokawa and Gouran maintain that both are nonissues. The theorists repeatedly state that all four functions need to be accomplished to

maximize the probability of a high-quality decision, but that no single function is inherently more central than the others.[10] Likewise, no one group agenda or plan of attack seems to get the job done better. As long as the group ends up dealing with all four functions, the route its members take doesn't appear to make much difference. Hirokawa does add, however, that groups that successfully resolve particularly tough problems often take a common decision-making path.[11]

Figure 16–1 portrays the path that seems to offer a natural problem-solving progression. Groups start with problem analysis, then deal with goal setting and identifying alternatives, and end by evaluating the positive and negative characteristics of each alternative before making the final choice. This decision-making flow parallels the advice I heard on National Public Radio's *Car Talk*. Asked how car owners should handle close-call decisions on auto repair, mechanics Tom and Ray Magliozzi ("Click and Clack, the Tappet Brothers") gave a street-smart answer that ran something like this:

> First, figure out if it's broke. Then, make up your mind how good you want to fix it. Or before that ask your mechanic to list the choices you've got. Either way, you gotta do both. Finally, weigh the bang-for-the-buck that each job gives. Then decide.

Hirokawa also recognizes that the requirements of a given task may make a specific function less important than it normally is. For example, to the extent that the task is obvious to everyone, problem definition and goal setting will have less of an impact on the quality of the solution than time spent generating and evaluating solutions. That was the case in our departmental search for a broadcast production specialist. We already knew what we wanted.

A different task, however, might make problem analysis definition a functional priority. Suppose the dean told our department that we had to decide once and for all whether we wanted a journalism program. Up or down—what's it going to be?

FIGURE 16–1 An Effective Decision-Making Path from a Functional Perspective

The closed-ended nature of the task would obviously reduce the importance of generating alternatives. On the other hand, developing a set of criteria by which to make a decision would (or should) be the committee's highest priority.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN FULFILLING THE FUNCTIONS

Most communication scholars believe that discussion among members has a significant effect on the quality of group decisions. Traditional wisdom suggests that talk is the medium or conduit through which information travels between participants.[12] Verbal interaction makes it possible for members to (1) distribute and pool information, (2) catch and remedy errors, and (3) influence each other. Similar to Shannon and Weaver's concept of channel noise causing a loss of information (see Chapter 2), group researcher Ivan Steiner claimed that[13]

$$\text{actual group productivity} = \text{potential productivity} - \text{losses due to processes}$$

It follows that communication is best when it doesn't obstruct or distort the free flow of ideas.

While not rejecting this traditional view, Hirokawa believes that communication plays a more active role in crafting quality decisions. Like social constructionists (see Chapters 5 and 12), he regards group discussion as a tool or instrument that group members use to create the social reality in which decisions are made.[14] Discussion exerts its own impact on the end product of the group.

How does this work in practice? Think of the lines in Figure 16–1 as safe trails through a dense thicket—paths that connect the four key task functions and lead ultimately to the goal of a high-quality group decision. Members can easily wander off that goal path and get caught up in a tangle of pricker-bushes that thwart the group's progress. The bushes in this analogy represent distractions or barriers that retard movement toward the goal. Gouran and Hirokawa list a number of thorny obstacles—ignorance of the issue, faulty facts, misguided assumptions, sloppy evaluation of options, illogical inferences, disregard of procedural norms, and undue influence by powerful members. They believe that people go astray through talk, but they also believe that communication has the power to pull them back onto the goal-directed path.

Consistent with these convictions, Hirokawa and Gouran outline three types of communication in decision-making groups:

1. Promotive—interaction that moves the group along the goal path by calling attention to one of the four requisite decision-making functions.
2. Disruptive—interaction that diverts, retards, or frustrates group members' ability to achieve the four task functions.
3. Counteractive—interaction that members use to get the group back on track.

Hirokawa and Gouran suggest that most comments from group members disrupt rather than promote progress toward the goal. They conclude, therefore, that "effective group decision-making is perhaps best understood as a consequence of

	Problem Analysis	Goal Setting	Identification of Alternatives	Evaluation of Positives/Negatives
Promote				
Disrupt				
Counteract				

FIGURE 16–2 Function-Oriented Interaction Coding System (FOICS) Checklist

the exercise of counteractive influence."[15] In other words, someone has to say something that will get the group back on track.

Hirokawa has made repeated efforts to develop a conversational coding system that classifies the function of specific statements. Much like Bales' interaction categories outlined in the introduction to decision making, Hirokawa's Function-Oriented Interaction Coding System (FOICS) requires researchers to categorize each functional utterance, which is "an uninterrupted statement of a single member that appears to perform a specified function within the group interaction process."[16]

Figure 16–2 shows a FOICS checklist that researchers might use to analyze communication within a group. As you can see, raters are asked to make two judgments: (1) Which of the four requisite functions, if any, does an utterance address? and (2) Does the remark facilitate (*promote*), inhibit (*disrupt*), or redirect (*counteract*) the group's focus on that function? Ideally, this 4 × 3 classification scheme provides twelve discrete categories of group discussion. With that information, researchers could determine the effect of communication on the quality of the decision the group makes.

In practice, however, analyzing the content of group discussion is fraught with difficulty. In the first place, independent raters find it difficult to agree on how a statement should be coded. Extensive training does boost the reliability of their judgments, but Hirokawa is keenly aware that a single comment may serve multiple functions. In addition, words that appear helpful on the surface may have hidden power to disrupt, or vice versa. The process of coding comments has turned out to be an ongoing problem for all researchers who want to study the nature and effects of group communication. Hirokawa continues to work on refining his methodology, but he ruefully cites the tongue-in-cheek words of Tom Scheidel, former department chair at the University of Washington:

> All group communication researchers should employ the method of interaction analysis once in his/her career . . . to learn never to use it again.[17]

FROM THE TINY POND TO THE BIG OCEAN

The heading above was Hirokawa's title for the 1999 B. Aubrey Fisher Memorial Lecture—an end-of-the-century review of the functional perspective's status.[18] His pond-ocean metaphor refers to the risks and challenges of taking results from

tightly controlled laboratory studies and finding out whether they are robust enough to hold their own in the turbulent "real world" where multiple forces come into play.

In a typical laboratory study of the functional perspective, Hirokawa presents a problem to thirty or more newly formed three-person groups.[19] For example, he might ask them to develop specific recommendations for fair and reasonable discipline of a student caught cheating on a term-paper assignment. In order to determine how well each group meets the four requisite functions, he has trained FOICS raters to watch videotapes of the discussions. As a way to determine the quality of the each group's decision, he submits their final recommendations to teacher-administrators who have lots of experience dealing with plagiarism. Finally, he compares each group's FOICS rating with the quality of its decision.

Summing over a dozen empirical studies of the functional perspective, Hirokawa has found that it's quite good at predicting which groups will make high-quality decisions. Specifically, his theory is able to account for over 60 percent of the total variance in group performance.[20] To explain what this means, Hirokawa asks us to imagine entering a Las Vegas casino and discovering that they have a game called *Predict how well the group will do.* The game is simple. We watch a videotape of a group discussing a decision, and just before the members decide, we must bet on whether their decision will turn out to be good or bad. To say that the functional perspective accounts for 60 percent of the variance means that if we were to place our bets based on our knowledge of how well the group fulfilled the four functional requisites identified by the theory, we would win roughly 60 percent of the time. If we bet the same amount of money every time, we'd be among the few who leave Las Vegas a winner.[21]

As impressive as these results might be, Hirokawa doesn't believe the functional perspective will forge a stronger connection between communication and good group decisions until he can isolate specific comments that move a group along its goal path. Using the FOICS matrix, his raters can approximate the quantity of statements that "speak" to each task function, but they have a tough time gauging the quality of those contributions. Yet Hirokawa is convinced that group decision-making performance is dependent more on the *quality,* rather than the *quantity,* of functional utterances.[22]

In 1995 Hirokawa moved the functional perspective out of the laboratory and into the field—literally. He joined a four-person medical team that served rural Iowa communities that had no physician. Members of the team were *student* health care professionals—a future doctor, dentist, pharmacist, and nurse. Consistent with the four requisite functions specified by the functional perspective, team members jointly discussed the symptoms, diagnosis, potential quality of life, and treatment options for each patient. The results were gratifying. Hirokawa discovered that the quality of medical service they offered was more satisfying to the patients and less expensive to the state than was the case when an established physician visited the community on an individual basis.

Hirokawa's health care experience strengthened his faith in the vitality of the functional perspective in a real-world context where life-and-death decisions are

made. But he also saw some cases where the group thoroughly addressed all four requisite functions, yet the patient got worse. Hirokawa concludes that there are times when following his prescription to carefully analyze the problem, set goals, identify alternatives, and evaluate each option doesn't lead to a decision that works. He believes that the crucial challenge now facing group researchers is "to discover precisely when a group's performance of functional requisites yields effective group decisions and when it does not."[23]

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS

How can you and I use the functional perspective to facilitate better group decisions? We can start with a healthy dose of humility concerning the wisdom of our own opinions. Hirokawa and Gouran report that groups often abandon the rational path due to the persuasive efforts of members who are convinced that they alone have the right answer. Their discussion style proclaims, "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind's made up," and they wear down the opposition. We can make sure that we don't come to the table with the sort of closed-minded attitude that contributes to the problem rather than the solution. Additionally, we should be wary of pushing any "intuitive hunch" or "gut feeling" that we can't back up with reasonable evidence. These are errors to avoid.

We can also take proactive measures to promote clear thinking within the group. In almost every article they write, Gouran and Hirokawa acknowledge their intellectual debt to the early twentieth-century American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey.[24] Dewey's pragmatism was based on the hopeful assumption that practical decisions can be brought under more intelligent control through the process of rational inquiry.[25] He advocated a six-step process of *reflective thinking* that parallels a doctor's approach to treating a patient:[26]

1. Recognize symptoms of illness.
2. Diagnose the cause of the ailment.
3. Establish criteria for wellness.
4. Consider possible remedies.
5. Test to determine which solutions will work.
6. Implement or prescribe the best solution.

Note that Hirokawa and Gouran's four requisite functions are almost exact replicas of steps 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Dewey's reflective-thinking process. Both lists recommend that group members discuss issues in a way that promotes problem analysis, goal setting, finding alternatives, and evaluation of these options. When we're tempted to make remarks that will detract from the process, Hirokawa and Gouran suggest that we bite our tongues. And when others say things that sidetrack the group from fulfilling the four functional requisites, the theorists urge us to counter with a comment aimed at getting the group back on a rational path.

You may be hesitant to counteract the dubious logic of a powerful leader or a high-status member of the group, but Gouran and Hirokawa don't advocate direct criticism. Instead, they recommend a strategy of insisting on a careful process.

By raising questions, calling for more alternatives, and urging a thorough evaluation of evidence, a low-status member can have a high-power impact on the quality of the final decision.

CRITIQUE: IS RATIONALITY OVERRATED?

In their review of the small group communication literature, John Cragan and David Wright conclude that there are three leading theories.[27] One is Bormann's symbolic convergence theory, discussed in Chapter 3. The second is Scott Poole's adaptive structuration theory, which I introduce in Chapter 17. The third is Hirokawa and Gouran's functional perspective. In their 1993 *Communication Yearbook* critique of the functional perspective, Purdue University communication researchers Cynthia Stohl and Michael Holmes explain why it is so highly regarded:

> The basic premise of the perspective, that communication serves task functions and the accomplishment of those functions should be associated with effective group decisions, is intuitively appealing and sensible.[28]

As a result, many communication scholars endorse the theory as a model for group discussion and decision making. One of my students is so convinced that he wrote, "A list of the four functions should be woven into the carpet of every committee room."

Hirokawa's exclusive focus on rational talk may be the reason why researchers get mixed results when they test his theory's predictions.[29] Note that the FOICS method of coding conversation all but ignores comments about relationships inside or outside the group. Yet by treating relational statements as a distraction, Hirokawa commits the same mistake that the late Aubrey Fisher admitted he made in his own task-focused research:[30]

> The original purpose of the investigation . . . was to observe verbal task behavior free from the confounding variables of the socioemotional dimension. That purpose, of course, was doomed to failure. The two dimensions are interdependent.[31]

Stohl and Holmes' critique frames the same issue in a slightly different way. They contend that most real-life groups have a prior decision-making history and are embedded within a larger organization. They advocate adding a *historical function* that requires the group to talk about how past decisions were made. They also recommend an *institutional function* that is satisfied when members discuss the reality of power brokers and stakeholders who aren't at the table, but whose views clearly affect and are affected by the group decision. During the search committee discussion of journalism candidates, for example, a senior faculty member observed, "Two years ago we recommended hiring a journalist without an advanced degree, and we got slapped down by the dean and the faculty personnel committee. Let's not fight that losing battle again." She served us well by dealing with historical and institutional functions that Hirokawa and Gouran ignore.

Recently, Hirokawa has turned to naturalistic inquiry as one way to answer the basic question, *Why are some groups more effective than others?*[32] In a move somewhat akin to the People's Choice Awards as opposed to the Academy Awards

voted by "experts," Hirokawa asked individual members to write an account of their most memorable group success or failure. He collected over 500 stories from members who participated on sports and work teams, committees in educational and health settings, and community, church, and service groups. His purpose was to use their narratives to learn what each participant thought was the primary cause of the group's success or failure.

A careful analysis of the stories revealed three themes that differentiated success stories from accounts of failure. Group members attributed their success to *relationship* factors such as friendship and team cohesiveness, *emotional* factors such as enjoyment and pride, and *member attributes* such as commitment and experience. These issues were usually absent in stories of failure. They are also absent in Hirokawa and Gouran's list of functional requisites for good decisions. If the *functional perspective* is to take the *participants' perspective* seriously, the theorists will need to figure out how social-emotional satisfaction fits into their theoretical mix.

QUESTIONS TO SHARPEN YOUR FOCUS

1. Hirokawa and Gouran claim that small groups are like living *systems.* Do you see parallels between the four *functional requisites* of task groups and the body's need for respiration, circulation, digestion, and elimination?

2. A recent analysis of over a dozen empirical studies showed that *evaluation of the negative consequences of alternative choices* is more important in reaching good group decisions than *problem analysis, goal setting,* or *identification of alternatives.*[33] Why might this be so?

3. Think of a time when you've been part of a task group that strayed from the *goal path.* What *counteractive statement* could you have made that might have brought it back on track?

4. Why might you find it frustrating to use Hirokawa's *Function-Oriented Interaction Coding System* (FOICS) to analyze a group discussion?

SELF-QUIZ

For chapter self-quizzes go to the book's Online Learning Center at:
www.mhhe.com/griffin

CONVERSATIONS

As you might expect from an objective theorist discussing a rational theory, Randy Hirokawa gives clear, concise responses to my opening questions about group decision making. Is the order in which functions are addressed important? Is one function more important than the others? Is it possible he will find a yet undiscovered fifth function? But as the conversation continues, Hirokawa voices ideas not usually heard from

View this segment on the book's CD.

thoroughgoing empiricists. He refers to the irony of questionable motives producing beneficial actions, a subjective standard to determine whether a decision is good, and his belief that there are no guarantees in life. Many students consider this segment the best one on the CD.

A SECOND LOOK

Recommended resource: Dennis Gouran, Randy Hirokawa, Kelly Julian, and Geoff Leatham, "The Evolution and Current Status of the Functional Perspective on Communication in Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Groups," in *Communication Yearbook 16,* Stanley Deetz (ed.), Sage, Newbury Park, CA, 1993, pp. 573–600.

Original statement: Dennis Gouran and Randy Hirokawa, "The Role of Communication in Decision-Making Groups: A Functional Perspective," in *Communications in Transition,* Mary Mander (ed.), Praeger, New York, 1983, pp. 168–185.

State-of-the-art review: Randy Hirokawa, "From the Tiny Pond to the Big Ocean: Studying Communication and Group Decision-Making Effectiveness from a Functional Perspective," 1999 B. Aubrey Fisher Memorial Lecture, Department of Communication, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Role of communication: Randy Hirokawa and Dirk Scheerhorn, "Communication in Faulty Group Decision-Making," in *Communication and Group Decision-Making,* Randy Hirokawa and M. Scott Poole (eds.), Sage, Beverly Hills, CA, 1986, p. 69.

Integration with other theory: Randy Hirokawa and Abran Salazar, "An Integrated Approach to Communication and Group Decision-Making," in *Managing Group Life: Communicating in Decision-Making Groups,* Lawrence Frey and J. Kevin Barge (eds.), Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1997, pp. 156–181.

Empirical test: Randy Hirokawa, "Group Communication and Decision-Making Performance: A Continued Test of the Functional Perspective," *Human Communication Research,* Vol. 14, 1988, pp. 487–515.

Coding group interaction: Randy Hirokawa, "Functional Approaches to the Study of Group Discussion," *Small Group Research,* Vol. 25, 1994, pp. 542–550.

Field study: Elizabeth Graham, Michael Papa, and Mary McPherson, "An Applied Test of the Functional Communication Perspective of Small Group Decision-Making," *Southern Communication Journal,* Vol. 62, 1997, pp. 269–279.

Group member stories of success or failure: Randy Hirokawa, Daniel DeGooyer, and Kathleen Valde, "Using Narratives to Study Task Group Effectiveness," *Small Group Research,* Vol. 31, 2000, pp. 573–591.

Critique: Cynthia Stohl and Michael Holmes, "A Functional Perspective for Bona Fide Groups," *Communication Yearbook 16,* 1993, pp. 601–614.