Purpose: Use this sample assignment for a better understanding of what is present in a high quality final paper outline. We've included these elements of constructive criticism to demonstrate that even "A" quality work still receives comments to improve the student's thinking and writing on the topic.

Please read the footnotes to read about what the student has done well in this assignment and also some areas for improvement.

Improved Communication at Work and Beyond

Sample Paper

COM200: Interpersonal Communication

Instructor Ketchum

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[1] Perfect title page! Notice that the student has included everything that is necessary and included a running header line. If you look to page two, you'll see the words "running header" have been removed.

I.   Introduction <u>AND</u> Thesis Statement

Communication is a process of two or more people trying to create shared meaning using verbal and nonverbal messages (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec. 1.1). We all need to communicate effectively with our colleagues and customers to create this shared meaning of our objectives and limitations.[2] As a global organization, we face natural challenges to effective communication. Luckily, there are skills and techniques we can practice to become more competent communicators. This memo is intended to outline the basics of communication, point out factors that can hinder communication, and provide you with some strategies for improving your communication.[3] Learning to be a more competent communicator can enhance your professional life and career options, and also improve the relationships in your personal life.[4]

1) **Explain the principles of and barriers to effective interpersonal communications**.

A.   Topic Sentence: In the transaction model of communication there are both verbal and nonverbal messages simultaneously exchanged among participants in a context (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec. 1.2).

Supporting Evidence:

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[2] Good establishment of the importance of the topic.
[3] Good preview of what will be covered in the paper. Effective introductions include these signals.
[4] This is a pretty good thesis. It is a bit tentative though. It could be worded more strongly to make a stronger, more definitive statement.

    i.   Verbal communication involves the use of spoken or written language, and

in the workplace the expectation is formal English Bevan and Sole, 2014,

sec. 4.1)[5]

    ii.   Nonverbal communication are physical cues that can indicate confusion or

contradiction with verbal messages. Some of the common things to look

for are body position, facial expressions, and gestures (Bevan and Sole,

2014, sec. 4.3).

    iii.   Some of the challenges to communication are noise, generational

differences, and long-distance relationships (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec.

1.3). [6]

B.   Explanation of the central points from the article(s):

Bevan and Sole do a good job of explaining the principles of communication and
pointing out the barriers. I will add details and examples from experience.[7]

C.   Why does this matter generally? Why does this matter for your audience?

This is providing background to the readers of the memo. Explaining the
difference between verbal and nonverbal communication fulfills the point of the
dictated outline rather than explaining the issues in particular contexts later on.

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[5] Good use of course content with direct connections made to the student's key points.

[6] This is a good description of some barriers. It would have been nice to see the student connect this point to his
or her audience more though. Also, in mentioning the transactional model as the topic sentence, I would expect to
see a bit more on this. The topic sentence establishes exactly what will be covered.

[7] Rather than saying "Bevan and Sole do a good job…," it would be preferable to see what the student thought as
good.

2) Analyze the role of communication in developing and maintaining one's self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem.

    a. Topic Sentence:

       Self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem determine how parties involved in an interaction will encode and decode messages.[8]

    b. Supporting Evidence:

        i. Required definitions of self-concept, self-image and self-esteem (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec. 2.1).

        ii. Examples of how a high and low levels of self-esteem can change how a message is delivered and how that can affect the team.[9]

        iii. Include recommendations for improving self-esteem (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec. 2.1).

    c. Explanation of the central points from the article(s):

       Different attitudes, shaped by self, can have positive or negative impact on the people you are interacting with. It is important to consider verbal and nonverbal cues that signal vulnerability when composing your message and method of delivery. [10]

    d. Why does this matter generally? Why does this matter for your couple?

       Individuals acting from either extreme of the high-low spectrum can have a negative impact on the team. Somebody with extremely high self-esteem can

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[8] This is a excellent point because it clearly connects these ideas of self to models of communication. It puts psychology in the center of the process of communication.

[9] It would have been nice to see a preview of the examples here. That way, the instructor could tell the student if he or she is on the right track.

[10] Here, the student is establishing the importance of self-concept in how your message is received (e.g. you can be read as "vulnerable" if you do not sound confident).

deter others from contributing, while somebody with very low self-esteem might lack the confidence to contribute their generally good ideas. Neither maximizes the overall effort and output of the team.[11]

3) Analyze the impact of gender and culture on interpersonal communications.

   a. Topic Sentence: Gender and cultural differences can both affect what messages are emphasized and how they are perceived.[12]

   b. Supporting Evidence: Gender differences in need or expectation of affirmation (MrHsEnglishZounds, 2013).[13]

   c. High-context and collectivist cultures need to be considered if they are different than the other party's background. As Bevan and Sole (2014) mentioned in their Chapter 3 introduction, the indirectness of communication associated with this background can be misinterpreted, leading to problems. Sanchez-Burks et al. (2003) also noted that the indirect communication common in Asia is missed by people from Western cultures, which focus more on direct communication and individuals. [14]

   d. Explanation of the central points from the article(s): According to the different cultures hypothesis, gender is identified as part of a person's overall culture and males and females develop in different cultures (Bevan and Sole, 2014, sec. 2.2). While there are some different characteristics associated with gender and cultural differences, awareness of those differences is important for good communication.[15]
   e. Why does this matter generally? Why does this matter for your audience?

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[11] Great description of the ways confidence can be an asset or liability. This signals to the reader that we need to be aware of the ways our self-esteem will influence message reception.

[12] The student has signaled he or she will focus on "emphasis" and "perception." The instructor will now look to see if these topics are adequately covered.

[13] This was confusing. As a reader, how might you adjust this sentence for clarity?

[14] This is a good, precise explanation of how cultural differences can impact how we communicate. To make even stronger, it could be connected to the audience (here, co-workers).

[15] Very good explanation of how culture influences the ways we think about gender and act, based on gender. Where is message emphasis and perception though? The student promised to cover this in the topic sentence.

The team receiving this memo works with people from around the world with

various culture-based identities and that need to be compensated for.

Communicating verbally with somebody in Japan requires looking for intended

meaning as well as understanding the written or spoken words.[16] Looking for

visual signals of confusion or distress when communicating face-to-face can give

clues that more, or better, information is needed.

    e. **Conclusion** - Thesis statement revisited with highlights of your key points.

This message was intended to inform you of some key points of interpersonal

communication and how you can improve yours. An awareness of some of the

impediments to communication, such as culture differences, as well as the impact of

nonverbal communication should make us better able to function as a team. This

knowledge and a little practice could also help your relationship with loved ones at

home.[17]

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[16] This sentence really helped the student do better in this section as he or she clearly recognizes the importance of cultural awareness and can illustrate how it impacts his or her specific workplace.
[17] This final sentence restates the importance of the topic overall and leaves the reader with a sense that what they've just read matters.

References

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