

2016

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Recommended Citation

Gallagher, R., Miller, M. L., & Roso, C. (2016). Effectiveness of content order in improving ethical communication choices in oral communications. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education*, 7(1), 11-25. <https://doi.org/10.31380/sotlched.7.1.11>

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Effectiveness of Content Order in Improving Ethical Communication Choices in Oral Communications

by

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Abstract

Ethics is a concern within the field of communication (Canary, 2007; Cheney, 2008), and ultimately, the spiritual intent of oral communications at a Christian university is for students to relate biblically with other people. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine if change in content order improved integration of Biblical ethics into student knowledge and understanding in an oral communication course.

The hypothesis for this study was as follows: There is a difference in the ability to integrate Biblical ethics into knowledge and understanding in an oral communication course between those students who are taught using content focused on ethical communication and those students who are taught using traditional content order.

In order to determine the efficacy of the altered structure of the class, a ten-question multiple choice pretest/posttest were created and administered to both groups. A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to the data, with the independent variables being question number and content order, while the dependent variable was the change in ethical communication choices.

The results from the ANOVA indicated that there existed significant mean differences between the groups for both Content Order and Question Number. However, there was no significant interaction effect between Content Order and Question Number. The total mean scores for percent change from pretest to posttest for classes using the experimental content order were significantly higher than those classes using the traditional content order.

Based upon the analysis of the current data, it appears that the experimental content order was more effective in teaching the students Biblical ethics than the traditional content order, but the order in which the material is taught is less important than the instructor, or perhaps more accurately, the intentionality of the instructor.

Background

The integration of faith and learning has been an on-going concern in Christian education for decades (Claerbaut, 2004; Dockery, 2008; Gaebelein, 1968; Harris, 2004; Holmes, 1975; Steeg, 2012). Much of this concern resonates from a desire to adequately equip Christian students for the academic, social, and professional worlds in which they will live (Pearcy, 2006; Moreland, 1999). The integration of faith and learning is also necessary for students to articulate and practice their beliefs within their professions and personal lives (Liftin, 2004). A legitimate concern for Christian educators is that 60 percent of students who were active in church in their teens leave the faith in the early years of college (The Barna Group, 2006). Roughly 70% of students who grow up with a Christian background become disconnected with church within their late teens and twenties (The Barna Group, 2011a). A large reason for this disengagement is that the majority of Christian students do not know how the Bible applies to scholarship or their profession; 84% of Christians age 18 to 29 do not know how the Bible applies to their chosen career or professional interests (The Barna Group,

2011b). Enabling students to keep and articulate their faith is one of the many reasons why the integration of faith and learning is important in the classroom setting. Author David Dockery aptly presented the importance of integration in academics in a presentation to church leaders in 2000:

We need professors, staff, and students who are competent in their profession, caring in their relationships, but who also confess and, if necessary, contend for the truth of God that is foundational for life and living . . . Those involved in Christian higher education must be intentional about integrating faith and learning in every discipline—not as a cliché, or public relations watchword, but a foundational reality. (2000, p. 9)

While the Bible is taught at Christian K-12 schools and universities through multiple methods, much research on the integration of other topics has concluded that an intentional holistic integration is most effective method for impacting student learning and practice beyond the coursework (Banks, 2001; Bennett, 2001; Gaebelein, 1968; Lickona, 1992; Puentedura, 2006). The intentional approach to the integration of faith and learning is what Chewing (2001) describes as “Discipline Specific Integration” (p. 28). MacCullough (n.d.) calls this “The Integrating Core Model” (p. 14), which “allows one . . . to come to view life and learning as a unified whole,” thus closing the gap that The Barna Group’s research (2011) shows between the Bible and scholarship.

The journey toward applying Biblical principles to the oral communication curriculum at Oral Roberts University began with frustration when an instructor observed the disconnect between students’ professed beliefs and their daily interactions. While it seemed that students understood abstractly that Christians should behave responsibly toward others, they seemed to lack the ability to implement moral, ethical behavior. Upon reflection, it seemed that these students were capable in the abstract of understanding moral behavior and behaving in an acceptable fashion where application alone was required, but lacked the ability to determine which moral guidelines were of greater value in a given situation. Bloom’s Taxonomy states that understanding and application are lower level skills, while synthesis and evaluation are higher level skills (Bloom, 1956). Synthesis and evaluation skills are both necessary for becoming godly, Christ-like people.

Life is seldom a matter of clear choices, and even if students can understand and apply a moral concept, they are still at a serious disadvantage when they lack the ability to weigh one standard against another. In terms of understanding and application, morality is making choices between a good and an evil, but ethical behavior often hinges on choosing between two goods or two evils. This is the nature of life. Making ethical decisions often requires examination of moral beliefs and determining which behavioral guidelines are most important in order to choose an appropriate action in a given situation. It appeared that these students, who for the most part were taught to deal with simple choices of good or evil, were ill equipped to make subtler, more nuanced decisions.

The instructor has long been committed to challenging the ways students think about their words and actions. Encouraging self-reflection is central to her efforts, and she works hard at encouraging students to bring self-monitoring and integrity to their daily lives, to apply to themselves the same standards of behavior that they would apply to another. She was convinced there must be some way by which student behavior could be impacted.

In the midst of this frustration, the instructor was invited to attend a faculty luncheon where co-author Dr. Calvin Roso was speaking on the integration of Christian worldview into curriculum. During the presentation, he stressed the idea that Christian worldview should be integral to the material shared with students. The instructor realized that the oral communication course was a natural choice for integration of Christian worldview into the curriculum by arranging the material around godly principles of behavior, not arbitrary subjects (like listening or interpersonal communication or persuasive speaking). Seeking input from other colleagues in the communication

department about characteristics of godly communication, the instructor began to formulate a list of attributes that should be present in a godly communicator. In the end, the following attributes were selected: attentive, connected, considerate, self-aware, able to problem solve, culture/gender sensitive, organized, clear, informative, discerning, trustworthy, confident and persuasive.

After the list was complete, the order of the existing course content was rearranged to reflect those attributes. In order to evaluate the application of Biblical principles to oral communication classes, a pretest/posttest was structured to measure changes in students' ethical communications choices.

Statement of the Problem

While the integration of faith and learning is an ongoing concern for Christian educators, there is a parallel concern about whether attempts at faith integration are impacting how students communicate and relate to others. This concern is elevated in communication courses because these courses teach students how to speak and listen, as well as informing them regarding consumption of media, truly valuing diversity, and critical thinking applied to persuasion and public speaking. The concern for ethics in communication is a concern within the field of communication (Canary, 2007; Cheney, 2008). Ultimately, the spiritual intent of oral communications at a Christian university is for students to relate biblically with other people. It is no accident that communion, community, and communication all come from the same root. Contemporary students' perceptions of communication and relationships are strongly influenced by a relativistic, anti-Biblical, postmodern worldview that is prevalent in our culture. In addition, there is an apparent detachment from the consequences of communication that is influenced in part by social networking. Therefore, many students have a strong disconnect between what they profess to believe and their daily application of ethics in their communication. The disconnect between students' beliefs and actions support the need to teach Biblical ethics in oral communications courses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if change in content order improved integration of Biblical ethics into knowledge and understanding an oral communication course.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study was as follows: There is a difference in the ability to integrate Biblical ethics into knowledge and understanding in an oral communication course between those students who are taught using content focused on ethical communication and those students who are taught using traditional content order.

Methods and Materials

This quantitative study used a descriptive survey to determine students' knowledge and understanding of Biblical ethics as related to communication choices. The following steps were taken in this study. First, opinions were sought from multiple communications instructors regarding what actual ethical attributes should be addressed in the class. Once the list of attributes was selected, a new course content order was developed to intentionally focus on those attributes.

The control sections were taught using the traditional approach to the material in which the content was arranged around the types of communication (verbal, non-verbal, media, public speaking, etc.). The same course content was used with the experimental section; however, content in the experimental section focused on the attributes of an ethical communicator. For instance, the

support materials for the section about being a discerning communicator (e.g., reading lists, tests, study guides) were rearranged to accommodate the changes in content order for that particular topic.

Participants in the study were students in freshman level oral communications classes, with an average of 18-20 students per section. One instructor taught using the experimental content order to oral communications classes; other instructors taught utilizing the traditional or control content order. There were four sections taught using the experimental content order per semester and either three or four sections per semester that used the control content order.

In order to determine the efficacy of the altered structure of the class, a ten question pretest/posttest was created. Multiple choice questions were used that would require application of content in hypothetical situations in order to measure changes in the decision making process based on the ethical implications of each action. Each multiple choice question offered four possible answers. The pre/posttest was developed and then submitted to other instructors for feedback. After feedback and revisions, the final test was drafted (see Appendix). All students in all sections were administered the pretest and posttest.

Data was collected for four semesters. The instructor using the experimental content order taught the first three semesters using the experimental content order exclusively; during the fourth semester, however, she taught using only the traditional content order in an attempt to determine if instructor personality or style might be a critical issue should differences be found between the groups. For all four semesters, the control instructors taught using only the traditional content order. It would have been ideal to have all instructors teach using both content orders and administer the assessment tool, but no other instructor was willing to take on the challenge of mastering the experimental content order.

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to the data, with the independent variables being question number and content order, while the dependent variable was the change in ethical communication choices. It was assumed that the populations from which the samples came were approximately normally distributed as students from differing academic levels enrolled in each section of the course. It was also assumed that the samples were independent, in those responses on the pretest/posttest for each section was not influenced by responses from students in other sections. Finally, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances between the two groups revealed that the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Results

The study sought to determine the degree to which the instructional content order of oral communications courses impacted students' knowledge and understanding of Biblical ethics. Resulting descriptive statistics included the means and standard deviations for both the experimental group and the control group (see Table 1). Note the differences between the group means for questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. Though the differences between the means for these questions appeared larger than the means for the other questions, significant differences were identified only after analyzing the results of the two-way ANOVA.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for Percent Change for Each Question*

Question	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Experimental	.2754	.1636
	Control	.0617	.2579
2	Experimental	.1348	.1372
	Control	.1177	.1173
3	Experimental	.1881	.1087
	Control	.1860	.2054
4	Experimental	.3100	.1084
	Control	.2766	.1694
5	Experimental	-.0894	.1590
	Control	-.0536	.1111
6	Experimental	.1278	.3031
	Control	-.0799	.1612
7	Experimental	.2089	.1165
	Control	.1734	.1865
8	Experimental	.2371	.1257
	Control	.0600	.1903
9	Experimental	.0998	.0840
	Control	.1046	.1050
10	Experimental	.0209	.1487
	Control	-.0493	.1768
Total	Experimental	.1513	.1870
	Control	.0797	.1966
Total		.1179	.1942

Note. $N_{\text{Experimental}}=8$, $N_{\text{Control}}=7$.

The results from the ANOVA indicated that there existed significant mean differences between the groups for both Content Order and Question Number. However, there was no significant interaction effect between Content Order and Question Number (see Table 2). Thus, post hoc tests were required to identify significant mean differences.

Table 2: *ANOVA Summary of Between Subjects Effects*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Corrected Model	2.090	19	.110	4.051	.000
Question Number	1.595	9	.177	6.527**	.000
Content Order	.191	1	.191	7.047**	.009
Question Number *Content Order	.290	9	.032	1.188	.308
Error	3.530	130	.027		
Total	5.102	149			

Note. Dependent Variable = Percent Change.

** $p < .01$.

The Post Hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) revealed interesting results regarding the questions themselves. Three questions (5, 6 and 10) emerged in a cluster as having the most significant differences (see Table 3).

Table 3: *Multiple Comparisons using the Tukey HSD*

(I) Question	(J) Question	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	5.00	.32727	.056695	.000	.14474	.50979
	6.00	.23533	.056695	.002	.05281	.41786
	10.00	.20907	.056695	.012	.02654	.39159
2.00	5.00	.18373	.056695	.047	.00121	.36626
3.00	5.00	.28200	.056695	.000	.09948	.46452
	6.00	.19007	.056695	.034	.00754	.37259
4.00	5.00	.34193	.056695	.000	.15941	.52446
	6.00	.25000	.056695	.001	.06748	.43252
	10.00	.22373	.056695	.005	.04121	.40626
5.00	7.00	-.24053	.056695	.002	-.42306	-.05801
	8.00	-.30460	.056695	.000	-.48712	-.12208
	9.00	-.19600	.056695	.025	-.37852	-.01348
6.00	8.00	-.21267	.056695	.010	-.39519	-.03014
8.00	10.00	.18640	.056695	.041	.00388	.36892

Note. Dependent Variable = Percent Change. All mean differences are significant at $p < .05$.

After the analysis was completed, the question arose as to whether the difference could be isolated only to the content order, or if instructor intentionality was also a factor. Ultimately, a statistically significant difference between pre- and posttest was found when the data of the experimental group was compared to that of the control group. However, for the teacher who taught using both content orders, the results from her experimental group versus the results from her control group yielded no statistically significant difference. Thus, perhaps teaching style or instructor intentionality in weaving Biblical principles into the oral communication curriculum was more effective in changing student perceptions regarding ethical communication than rearranging content order alone.

Discussion and Conclusions

The total mean scores for percent change from pretest to posttest for classes using the experimental content order were significantly higher than those classes using the traditional content order. But it must be remembered, the measurement is the degree of change, not necessarily the degree of positive change. Many possible confounding variables could have impacted that degree of change. For example, perhaps the experimental instructor taught more toward the questions on the pre/posttest. Additionally, for one semester in the experimental class, the pretest was given immediately following an orientation slideshow that dealt with the issue of plagiarism in some detail. Since plagiarism was addressed on the instrument, the experimental class was provided information not afforded the control group, which could explain the greater degree of change in the control group.

Students were asked on some survey questions to make decisions about what they would do in a particular hypothetical situation; this was done in an effort to measure behavioral change rather than knowledge alone, but given a real situation, the students might have produced different results. However, of the hypothetical questions, the more direct the question, the stronger the positive results. For instance, the question about what constitutes plagiarism (item 10) was a direct question and easier for the students to understand and respond to correctly. Compare that to the question regarding gender based indirect communication (item 4), which required the student to deal with multiple layers of meaning in communication and necessitated synthesis and evaluation before the ethical choice could be made.

Another finding that emerged from the data analysis is that in some cases (e.g., question 10) the experimental group scores dropped from pretest to posttest, but the control group scores dropped further. It might be hypothesized that the nature of the oral communications class itself simply causes students to examine issues they have never considered before. Perhaps by its very nature the class “shakes up” the student’s worldview.

Finally, when the researcher switched from the experimental content order to the traditional content order during the fourth semester, she appeared to be just as effective using the traditional content order. In fact, the traditional content order appeared to be slightly more effective for her students. This might have been the result of students being able to simply read each chapter straight through, instead of having to “cherry pick” content in the text to find the appropriate material. It might also have resulted from the teacher becoming clearer in her approach to the ethical issues over time. Many teachers improve over time in teaching material and refining their explanation and illustrations as a result of seeing what works and reusing that approach. Ironically, it was impossible for the experimental instructor to withhold the discussion of ethical matters from her students during the teaching of the traditional content order without behaving in an unethical manner. Instructor change is impossible to prevent over time, and while it cannot be quantitatively measured for the purposes of this study, neither can it be totally ignored. Either way, with only one semester of data with the researcher using the traditional content order, the sample size was just too small to say definitively.

Implications for Further Study

As is always the case with such studies, the resultant scraps of knowledge gained only raised more questions. Would different instructors find the same results? Would a larger sample size for the experimental instructor teaching the traditional content order yield different results? Would having a text book written in the experimental order make a difference? The final conclusion of this study is much used, but still appropriate: More study is required. Based upon the analysis of the current data, it appears that the experimental content order was more effective in teaching the students Biblical ethics than the traditional content order, but the order in which the material is taught is less important than the instructor, or perhaps more accurately, the intentionality of the instructor.

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Appendix A

COM 101 Oral Communication Pretest/Posttest

Below are 10 multiple choice questions. Read them and mark the best answer based on what you know to be ethical behavior.

1. The person who lives in the dorm room next to yours comes into your room and relates a problem to you. What do you do to help?
 - a. Give them good advice.
 - b. Pray with them.
 - c. Ask them questions about what they think and feel.
 - d. Read them scripture.

2. You have just started your freshman year of college and your mother is missing you really badly and calls all the time. You don't want to hurt her feelings, but you need more time on your own to make new friends and learn more about yourself. What do you do?
 - a. Tell her to stop calling all the time.
 - b. Compromise and make appointments for phone conversations with her.
 - c. Just keep taking her calls all the time.
 - d. See your friends when you like, but email or text your mom when your friends are not around.

3. You are from the United States where people give you more personal space, but someone in your early morning class is from Iran where personal space is smaller. He keeps stepping into your personal space. What do you do?
 - a. Respectfully explain that in the U.S. people expect more space.
 - b. Step back over and over, hoping he'll get the idea.
 - c. Take a deep breath and remind yourself that he doesn't mean to make you uncomfortable.
 - d. Wait until you are really good friends and tell him in a private conversation that it drives you crazy.

4. Your new boss, Mrs. Smith, comes up to one of your coworkers and says to him, "The stockroom is really dirty. Do you think we can get that swept today?" He responds, "I think so." She is pleased and leaves for a meeting and is gone all day. When she returns, the floor has not been swept and scolds your coworker. He is very confused. What do you tell him?
 - a. You tell him to shake it off, that he's a good employee and she was just moody.
 - b. You tell your coworker that women tend to be indirect speakers.
 - c. You tell him he has to pay closer attention when women talk.
 - d. You don't say anything because you don't want to embarrass him.

5. What is the responsibility of a public speaker?
 - a. Give the audience as much information you can without overloading them.
 - b. Keep in mind the moral duty of all humans and try to help the audience make and meet those responsibilities.
 - c. Just give them the information and let them make up their own minds.
 - d. Give the audience information that will help them in their lives.

6. Your somewhat prissy great-grandmother has come to visit and needs help getting up and down from a sitting position. You know she has been sitting in a particular chair all morning and you suspect she may need to urinate. What do you say?
 - a. “Grandma, do you need to urinate?”
 - b. “Grandma, do you need to get up?”
 - c. “Grandma, do you need to use the bathroom?”
 - d. “Grandma, do you need to stretch your legs?”

7. One of the other students in your oral com class is petite and bubbly. When you tell her she is “cute,” she seems offended. Why is she upset?
 - a. Short people do not like to be reminded they are short.
 - b. She wants to be taken seriously.
 - c. She may be having a bad day.
 - d. The word “cute” has a bad connotation for her.

8. You find that you prefer to get your news from conservative news outlets. Is this a problem?
 - a. Yes. You are not getting a balanced view of the world.
 - b. No. Christians should support Christian broadcasting.
 - c. Maybe. It depends on how much time you spend consuming news media.
 - d. Probably not, if you make sure you spend at least as much time reading your Bible and praying as you do consuming news in order to reorient yourself toward godly things.

9. Is it okay to take information off the Internet without citing a source?
 - a. No. It’s stealing. Period.
 - b. If you use their ideas, but not their exact words, it’s okay.
 - c. Yes, because it is public domain.
 - d. Yes, because the Internet isn’t an academic source.

10. Your friend has a personal problem and has asked you to pray about it. Is it gossip to make it a prayer request?
 - a. No. Prayer requests are not gossip.
 - b. Yes. This is personal stuff and he didn’t give you permission to share.
 - c. It depends on what your motive is in making the prayer request.
 - d. Not if you give only the situation, but not his name.

Appendix B

COM 101 Oral Communication Pretest/Posttest—Best Answers with Rationale

Below are 10 multiple choice questions. Read them and mark the best answer based on what you know to be ethical behavior.

1. The person who lives in the dorm room next to yours comes into your room and relates a problem to you. What do you do to help?
 - a. Give them good advice.
 - b. Pray with them.
 - c. Ask them questions about what they think and feel.**
 - d. Read them scripture.

Rationale—Like most of the answers for these questions, the “best” answer was chosen based on the idea that the needs of others need to be valued and actions chosen to help the other person in the long run and to the best of one’s ability. The most obvious scripture is “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves” (Philippians 2:3). Prayer and Bible reading are very good methods of giving comfort to others, and can be useful for showing another what we think the Bible says about a given issue, but they will not be as helpful for finding a solution as asking questions and helping the speaker determine what they really think is best. While giving advice is tempting, you cannot give good advice without knowing the complete situation. Since it is impossible for the party sharing the problem to actually give an unbiased account of the situation, thus depriving the listener of the adequate information to make a good recommendation. Furthermore, it invites the listener to actually judge other people and their actions. The person with the problem is more likely to take constructive action if they come up with the answer on their own, so in the opinion of the author, asking good questions that help them come to a plan of action on their own is actually the most caring action.

2. You have just started your freshman year of college and your mother is missing you really badly and calls all the time. You don’t want to hurt her feelings, but you need more time on your own to make new friends and learn more about yourself. What do you do?
 - a. Tell her to stop calling all the time.
 - b. Compromise and make appointments for phone conversations with her.**
 - c. Just keep taking her calls all the time.
 - d. See your friends when you like, but email or text your mom when your friends are not around.

Rationale- This question deals with choosing between two goods: becoming a fully individuated adult and showing respect for one’s parents. The scripture that immediately comes to mind is “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” (Ephesians 6:1) It would be tempting to say that a student should always do exactly as the parent expects and desires, thus making this an easy choice, but in the long run, parents really do want their children to mature and be able to launch from the nest. No parent really wants to be saddled with making decisions for their child for a lifetime, so it is essential for children to individuate from their parents eventually. The student considering the needs of the parent needs to be able to kindly and tactfully begin to introduce some distance from the parents. Continuing to take the calls from the mother will not

enable individualization and may cause the student to become resentful. Dealing with friends as the first priority is somewhat dismissive of the parents' role in the life of the student, and so is not a good choice, though not as bad as simply telling the mother not to call so often. The best choice is for the student to work with the parents to find a suitable compromise.

3. You are from the United States where people give you more personal space, but someone in your early morning class is from Iran where personal space is smaller. He keeps stepping into your personal space. What do you do?
 - a. **Respectfully explain that in the U.S. people expect more space.**
 - b. Step back over and over, hoping he'll get the idea.
 - c. Take a deep breath, and remind yourself that he doesn't mean to make you uncomfortable.
 - d. Wait until you are really good friends and tell him in a private conversation that it drives you crazy.

Rationale—Again, giving proper attention to the long term needs of others dictates the correct answer (Philippians 2:3). The Old Testament is full of scriptures encouraging equal treatment for foreigners. “The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come” (Numbers 15:15.) The New Testament also tells us “In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you” (Matthew 7:12) and “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). The long term need of a person new to a culture is to help them learn how to fit in and function smoothly as quickly as possible to minimize the pain of adjustment. Therefore, continuing to step back, or saying nothing, or waiting until a friendship has been established, leaves the Iranian student flailing around, trying to determine why they are having so much trouble fitting in. A loving act would be to kindly tell them how to adjust to the new culture, thus minimizing their difficulty.

4. Your new boss, Mrs. Smith, comes up to one of your coworkers and says to him, “The stockroom is really dirty. Do you think we can get that swept today?” He responds, “I think so.” She is pleased and leaves for a meeting and is gone all day. When she returns, the floor has not been swept and scolds your coworker. He is very confused. What do you tell him?
 - a. You tell him to shake it off, that he's a good employee and she was just moody.
 - b. **You tell your coworker that women tend to be indirect speakers.**
 - c. You tell him he has to pay closer attention when women talk.
 - d. You don't say anything because you don't want to embarrass him.

Rationale—Actually, the rationale for this answer is not so different from the last one. Some experts believe that the differences in communication between the genders is equivalent to cross cultural communication. Ignoring the issue or encouraging and comforting the confused employee may make him feel better, but it will not prevent the problem from recurring, and that might even cost him his job. Telling him to pay attention is simply too vague to be helpful. While the understanding of gender difference is not addressed in scripture, the concept of telling the truth in a kind way is. “Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church” (Ephesians 4:15). It is a kindness to anyone who is confused to kindly, respectfully tell them what went wrong if you know. “The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice” (Psalm 37:30).

5. What is the responsibility of a public speaker?
 - a. Give the audience as much information you can without overloading them.

- b. Keep in mind the moral duty of all humans, and try to help the audience make and meet those responsibilities.
- c. Just give them the information and let them make up their own minds.
- d. Give the audience information that will help them in their lives.**

Rationale—Again, regarding others’ needs as important as your own is the justification for this answer. (Philippians 2:3). Giving a great deal of information may be comforting to the speaker, but the audience will retain what relates to them. The responsibility to consider the needs of the audience is the purpose of audience analysis, a concept found in all public speaking texts, but without an ethical rationale, the audience analysis becomes just another step in the speech-making process. If the audience is to be shown a particular course of action as the moral duty of humans, the speaker must disclose his persuasive intent or it becomes manipulation. Hence, gearing the information to the audience’s needs is the best goal.

6. Your somewhat prissy great-grandmother has come to visit and needs help getting up and down from a sitting position. You know she has been sitting in a particular chair all morning and you suspect she may need to urinate. What do you say?
- a. “Grandma, do you need to urinate?”
 - b. “Grandma, do you need to get up?”
 - c. “Grandma, do you need to use the bathroom?”**
 - d. “Grandma, do you need to stretch your legs?”

Rationale—This question addresses two issues: clarity and sensitivity. Paul encourages us to speak plainly what we mean. “For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken?” (I Corinthians 14:8-9). So, clarity has value in assisting others as does sensitivity to others. “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:6). The first answer may be clear, but is not sensitive; the second answer is sensitive, but unclear, as is the final response. Asking Grandma if she needs to use the bathroom is both sensitive and clear; thus, it is kind and responsive to her needs.

7. One of the other students in your oral com class is petite and bubbly. When you tell her she is “cute,” she seems offended. Why is she upset?
- a. Short people do not like to be reminded they are short.
 - b. She wants to be taken seriously.
 - c. She may be having a bad day.
 - d. The word “cute” has a bad connotation for her.**

Rationale—The issue of word connotations is similar to the previous question. It centers around taking another’s viewpoint into account, being sensitive to their feelings and treating their needs as important as your own. The scripture reference for Philippians 2:3, Colossians 4:6, and Matthew 7:12 all apply here. The first two answers are almost equally as good as the last, but the final answer is truer of the problem.

8. You find that you prefer to get your news from conservative news outlets. Is this a problem?
- a. Yes. You are not getting a balanced view of the world.**
 - b. No. Christians should support Christian broadcasting.
 - c. Maybe. It depends on how much time you spend consuming news media.

- d. Probably not, if you make sure you spend at least as much time reading your Bible and praying as you do consuming news in order to reorient yourself toward godly things.
9. Is it okay to take information off the Internet without citing a source?
- No. It's stealing. Period.**
 - If you use their ideas, but not their exact words, it's okay.
 - Yes, because it is public domain.
 - Yes, because the Internet isn't an academic source.
10. Your friend has a personal problem and has asked you to pray about it. Is it gossip to make it a prayer request?
- No. Prayer requests are not gossip.
 - Yes. This is personal stuff and he didn't give you permission to share.**
 - It depends on what your motive is in making the prayer request.
 - Not if you give only the situation, but not his name.

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