

# 國立臺灣海洋大學 103 學年度研究所碩士班招生考試試題

考試科目：英文文章摘要和評析

系所名稱：應用英語研究所碩士班不分組

1. 答案以橫式由左至右書寫。2. 請依題號順序作答。

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## 英文文章摘要和評析

### **New Communication Demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace**

*By Jennifer Grau and Carole Grau*

Stronger, more sophisticated communication skills are essential for leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. The continuing diversity of employees, the rapid expansion of information technology and the economic downturn have created unique leadership challenges. Expanded listening capability and well-developed conflict management skills are now indispensable management tools.

The amount of information available and the speed at which it changes makes it nearly impossible for any individual to independently obtain, analyze, and integrate the data necessary to make effective decisions. To remain competitive, many organizations have embraced decentralized, team-based leadership. This shift in leadership style necessitates a parallel shift in communication style in order to fully reap the promised productivity.

Decentralization, with its resulting delegation of authority, has created a work climate in which entrepreneurial, innovative, collaborative planning and decision-making skills are necessary. Leaders are required to be more interactive and interdependent, sharing and receiving information throughout the organization and empowering others to do the same. A collaborative communication style, grounded in strong listening skills, is an essential component for success in this climate.

New information technology not only impacts the way we work. The Wall Street Journal, the Gallup Organization and others have published numerous studies reporting the alarming volume of daily communications characteristic of today's work environment. E-mails, facsimiles, pages, cell phones, and more recently, instant messaging, have made it impossible to hide from the communication demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

To take maximum advantage of available information and tap the synergistic potential in every team, organizations are now seeking leaders whose skills go beyond subject area expertise. Modern challenges and opportunities call for leaders with more sophisticated listening and conflict management skills.

Training people equipped to handle the communication demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one of the challenges facing business schools today. On September 9, 2002, the Wall Street Journal's report reviewing business schools across the country indicated that communication, leadership and interpersonal skills in general were still lacking in today's MB graduates. Historically, neither conflict management nor listening training has received significant attention, leaving individuals to master those critical skills on their own. The penalties paid by organizations for undervaluing the

skills were, and remain, missed opportunities, lost time and dissatisfied employees.

The communication pressures of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, brought on by shifts in technology and leadership styles, were heightened on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Anyone who has lived in the United States since then can attest to the ongoing emotional impact of that tragedy. New security measures in office buildings, airports and elsewhere, are constant reminders of the anxiety, uncertainty and tension that people now experience. Health care professionals repeatedly warn of immediate and delayed reactions.

The mass of people coping with what happened has created a more conflicted, strained workplace. This conflict can be diffused with strong listening and conflict management skills.

Many respected management consultants have highlighted the role listening plays in organizations and careers. Steven Covey identifies listening as a key behavior of highly effective people. Peter Drucker suggests that the most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said, a listening challenge many have not mastered. John Naisbitt wrote, "If you listen to your customers, you'll never have to compete." Implying that effective listening permits successful businesses to keep customer needs at the center of their management policies and decision.

The role of listening as a key interpersonal tool in conflict management is underscored in The Art of Listening, by Michael P. Nichols. He wrote, "When we fail to get through to each other, we have a tendency to fall back on blaming... Much misunderstanding could be cleared up if we learned to do two things: appreciate the other person's perspective and, at times, clarify what usually remains implicit... Effective listening promotes growth in the listener, the one listened to and the relationship between them." Effective listening skills are the foundation of constructive conflict management.

The road to effective, productive listening and conflict management is open to anyone motivated to make the journey. Any organization or business leader willing to establish a supportive listening climate; any organization or business leader willing to work through conflicts to the mutual satisfaction of those involved, in short any organization willing to do the work will be repaid with trust, commitment and most importantly-productivity and profits.

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(2) Please offer your personal opinions regarding this article (50%)

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