3 Levels of Learning in Business Communication

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Problem scenarios...

Instructor A says students haven't learned the basics yet, so she focuses on helping students develop a solid foundation of grammar.

Instructor B doesn't want to take time in a college class to teach what should have been learned in high school, so he skips grammar and focuses on higher-order problems and real-world business cases.

Instructor C is a new instructor and doesn't know how to present the course in an organized, logical way.

Problem scenarios...

Instructor A's students graduate *unprepared* to deal with higher-order issues of audience, context, and strategy.

Instructor B's students graduate *unprepared* to deal with lower-order communication basics.

Instructor C's students graduate *unprepared* to address business communication issues at all levels.

Today's Agenda

- **A three-level framework for teaching business communication (with focus on writing)**
- **Ways to help students learn and retain knowledge and skills**

Define the 3 Levels of Learning

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

Level 1: Rules & Mechanics

1 Rules & Mechanics

Learn basic writing rules and mechanics (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and grammar).

https://goo.gl/yVYD3D

Level 1: Rules & Mechanics

Level 2: Principles & Patterns

1	**Rules & Mechanics**	**Learn basic writing rules and mechanics (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and grammar).**
2	**Principles & Patterns**	**Learn paragraph- and message-level principles and patterns (e.g., direct/indirect approach, OABC pattern)**

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

Since 2011, when GAO last reported on this issue, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has increased veterinary oversight of antibiotics and, with the Department of Agriculture (USDA), has made several improvements in collecting data on antibiotic use in food animals and resistance in bacteria. For example, HHS's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a regulation and guidance for industry recommending changes to drug labels. However, oversight gaps still exist. For example, changes to drug labels do not address long-term and open-ended use of antibiotics for disease prevention because some antibiotics do not define duration of use on their labels. FDA officials told GAO they are seeking public comments on establishing durations of use on labels, but FDA has not clearly defined objectives for closing this gap, which is inconsistent with federal internal control standards. Without doing so, FDA will not know whether it is ensuring judicious use of antibiotics. Moreover, gaps in farm-specific data on antibiotic use and resistance that GAO found in 2011 remain. GAO continues to believe HHS and USDA need to implement a joint on-farm data collection plan as previously recommended. In addition, FDA and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) do not have metrics to assess the impact of actions they have taken, which is inconsistent with leading practices for performance measurement. Without metrics, FDA and APHIS cannot assess the effects of actions taken to manage the use of antibiotics.

Long paragraph

Source: GAO report: "Antibiotic Resistance," (March 2017), http://www.gao.gov/assets/690/683130.pdf

Define   Design   Level 1   Level 2   Level 3   Conclude

Level 3: Application & Adaptation

1	**Rules & Mechanics**	**Learn basic writing rules and mechanics (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and grammar).**
2	**Principles & Patterns**	**Learn paragraph- and message-level principles and patterns (e.g., direct/indirect approach, OABC pattern)**
3	**Application & Adaptation**	**Learn how to communicate in real-world situations (e.g., planning, audience/context analysis, strategy)**

Level 3: Application & Adaptation

Airline Got Too Big to Provide Good Service.

★★☆☆☆ By Disappointed Passenger - 08/06/2016

MINNESOTA -- Larger Airports have poor service. My checked in luggage was obviously searched. The handle on the luggage was also damaged. My trip started at a small airport where the personnel were very caring, but my trip required transfers to other flights. Minneapolis is a large airport and San Francisco is also large. I noticed most the personnel had a detached mode and treated people as if they were products on a conveyor belt. Since Delta gobbled up other airlines the staff also increased in number along with the passenger count.

It was almost impossible to get a phone number without punching in numbers to speak directly to a human. When I got connected I was told that it would be too much trouble to find my suitcase. Apparently a lot of other people had to speak to the luggage department as there was a long queue of people who needed to ask for help pertaining to their luggage. Only 2 people were behind the desk and their mood showed that they were overwhelmed with servicing the passengers need. BTW: Two items were missing from my baggage when I retrieved it.

How to resolve a consumer's complaint

Source: my3cents.com complaint, http://mythreecents.com/reviews/delta

The 3 Levels of Learning

Three Levels of Learning in Basketball
- **Rules and Mechanics**
- **Principles and Patterns**
- **Application and Adaptation**

http://bgr.com/2017/03/16/march-madness-2017-schedule-time-live-stream/
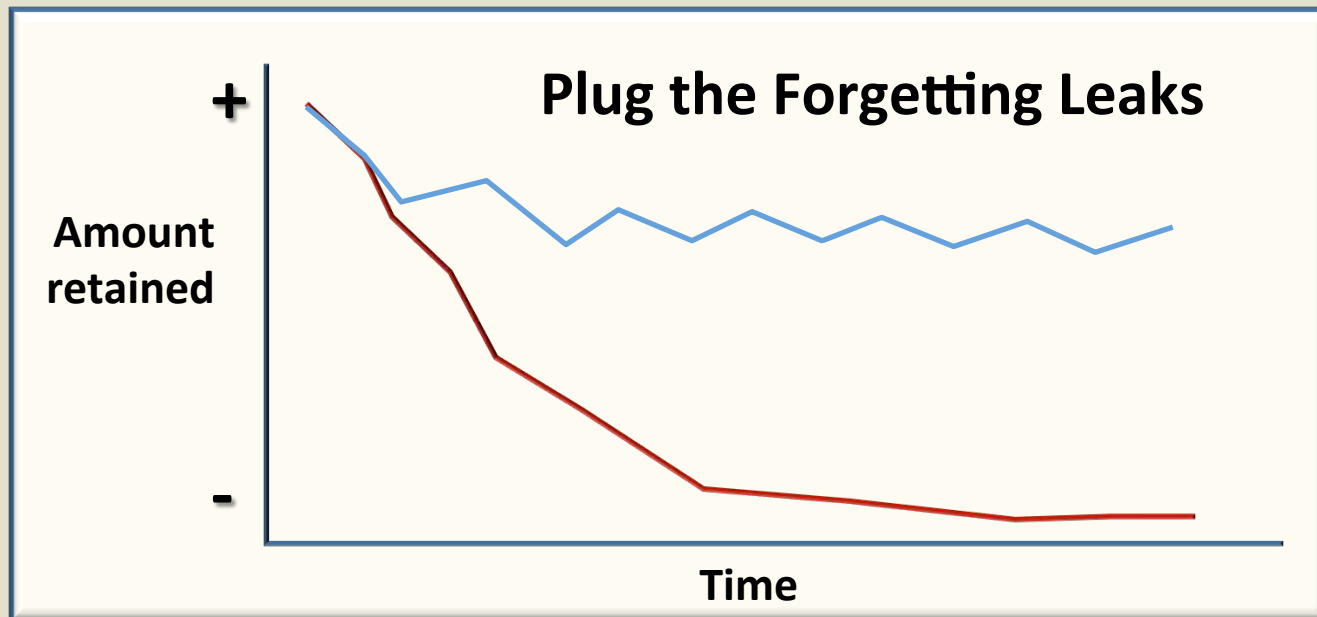
Define | Design | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Conclude

Design Learning & Testing

1. **Identify relevant material to learn**
2. **Develop effective learning activities**
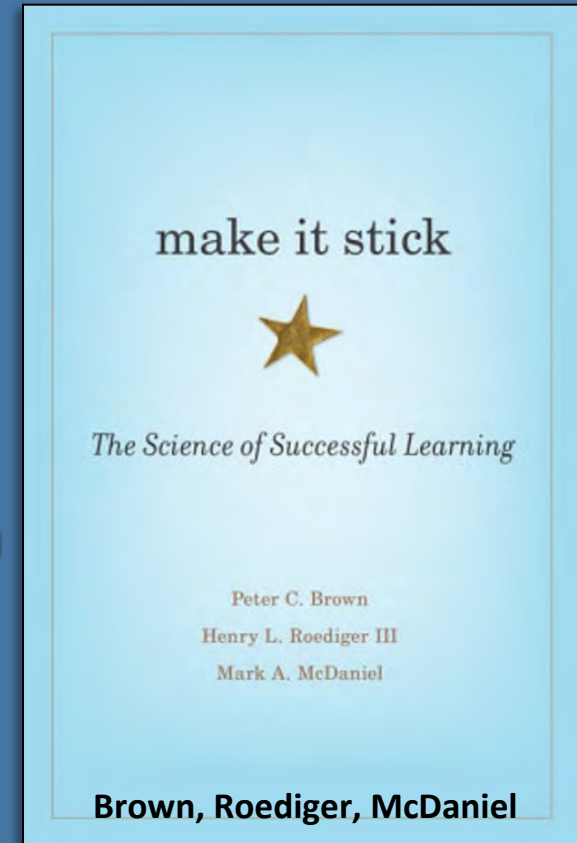3. **Reinforce learning—move knowledge from short- to long-term memory**

Plug the Forgetting Leaks

Amount retained

Time

Design Learning & Testing

Make It Stick

—Proven Learning Methods—

- **Give frequent low-stakes quizzes, rather than infrequent high-stakes testing (fosters frequent practice, not last-minute cramming)**
- **Drill with flash cards for factual information**
- **Use mnemonics for patterns and processes**
- **Quiz *old* material (to reinforce previous learning)**
- **Integrate all the knowledge learned**

make it stick

The Science of Successful Learning

Peter C. Brown
Henry L. Roediger III
Mark A. McDaniel

Brown, Roediger, McDaniel

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

- **Easiest to learn and teach**
- **Easiest to test**
- **Easiest to defend in grading**

Learning/Testing Ideas
- **Drill with flash cards**
- **Memorize with mnemonics (e.g., SPELL)**
- **Take frequent quizzes, pyramid quizzes, objective tests**
- **Fix existing text (e.g., peer reviews)**
- **Apply in composing original text**

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

▶ Drill with flashcards

What are the six main comma rules?

1. Divide main clauses
2. Divide after some introductory elements
3. Dive all items in a series
4. Divide adjacent adjectives
5. Divide nonessential sentence parts from essential
6. Use elsewhere as needed

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

► **Memorize with mnemonics**

Sentence acronym

- **S**tructure
- **P**unctuation
- **E**rrors in Grammar
- **L**anguage
- **L**ength

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

▶**Use pyramid quizzes**

1. **Student**

2. **Team**

3. **Class**

Punctuation Quiz

Key   C = Correct: I = Incorrect

1. C I   I have another meeting at 10 a.m., however, I'll hurry to your meeting just as soon as my meeting ends.
2. C I   Keith asked that all employees "submit their report no later than June 9".
3. C I   We would like you to teach the two and four-week management courses in July.
4. C I   I will be transferred to Denver; Kristi to Miami.
5. C I   Two of the above mentioned employees work at Simpson Springs, the weighing- and coal-screening site 25 miles east of the mine.

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

► **Use objective tests (e.g., multiple choice)**

39. Which item is correct?
    A   Todays newspaper includes details of the Benson's accident.
    B   Today's newspaper includes details of the Bensons' accident.
    C   Today's newspaper includes details of the Bensons accident.
    D   Todays newspaper includes details of the Bensons' accident.

Level 1. Rules & Mechanics

▶ **Fix existing text (e.g., peer review)**

As you recall last week I found out that Mary Jackson would be quitting. Mary who has been the data entry operator in the Financial Services Department for two years, had hoped to stay with us for another year, however, she was forced to quit because of ill health. This will significantly effect the work load in the department. To keep up with the work load, a replacement has been sought for. If the new operator is properly trained before Mary leaves the office will keep running smoothly.

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

- **Harder to learn and teach**

- **Harder to test**

- **Harder to defend in grading**
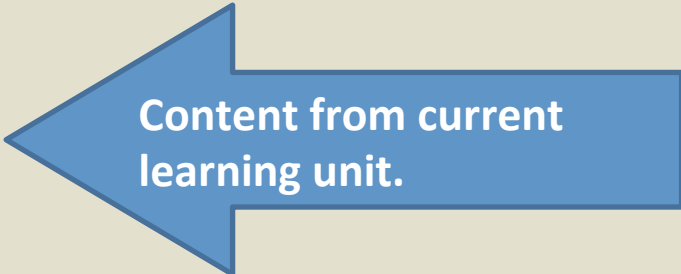
Learning/Testing Ideas

- **Take frequent quizzes**

- **Memorize with mnemonics (e.g., CLOUD, HATS)**

- **Evaluate and revise existing text (e.g., peer reviews)**

- **Compose original text**

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

► Take frequent quizzes

Reading Quiz

1. List and define the five attributes of effective paragraphs.

2. Explain the difference between the direct and indirect approach.

3. Correct any punctuation problems in this sentence: Sara, Sam and I will attend next weeks annual-planning meeting.

Content from current learning unit.

Content from previous learning unit.

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

►**Memorize with mnemonics (learning frameworks)**

Paragraph Attributes
- **C**oherence
- **L**ength
- **O**rganization
- **U**nity
- **D**evelopment

Message Pattern
- **O**pening
- **A**genda
- **B**ody
- **C**losing

Visual Enhancement
- **H**eadings
- **A**rt/Graphics
- **T**ypography
- **S**pacing

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

▶ **Evaluate and revise existing text**

The Safe Drinking Water Act establishes general minimum requirements for programs in each state. Applicants for a permit for underground injection must satisfy the state that the injection will not endanger drinking water sources, among other requirements. EPA and states rely on more detailed regulatory and policy safeguards to prevent fluids from migrating into aquifers that can be used as underground sources of drinking water. These safeguards require well operators to meet technical standards for constructing, operating, testing, and monitoring injection wells, among other requirements. In addition, if certain conditions are met, aquifers can be exempted from protection under the act and used for injection. An aquifer may be exempted if (1) it does not currently serve as a source of drinking water and (2) it will not in the future serve as a source of drinking water. If the state has primacy, well operators may request an exemption for injecting fluids into a particular aquifer or portion of an aquifer. The state must submit a request for the aquifer exemption to EPA for review and approval, and if EPA approves, operators may be permitted to inject fluids into the aquifer.

Coherence Length Organization Unity Development

Level 2. Principles & Patterns

► Compose original text

Read the following paragraph on safe drinking water. Then write two paragraphs as follows:

1. Paragraph 1. Evaluate the paragraph, using CLOUD as your guide.
2. Paragraph 2. Rewrite the paragraph, making appropriate changes.

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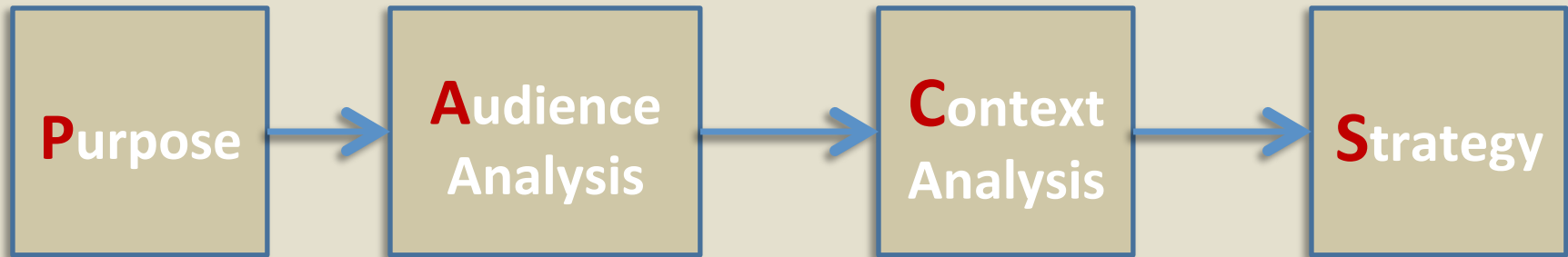
Level 3. Application & Adaptation

- **Hardest to learn and teach**
- **Hardest to test**
- **Hardest to defend in grading**

Learning/Testing Ideas

- **Memorize with mnemonics (e.g., PACS, DOCS)**
- **Analyze and resolve real-world problems and cases**
- **Evaluate and improve existing text (e.g., peer reviews)**
- **Integrate learnings (use various contexts/genre)**

Level 3. Application & Adaptation

▶ **PACS Planning (a critical 4-step process for Level 3)**

| **P**urpose | → | **A**udience Analysis | → | **C**ontext Analysis | → | **S**trategy |

> **If *content* is king, then *context* is God.** (Gary Vaynerchuk)

Level 3. Application & Adaptation

▶ **Emphasize audience and context analysis**

Context Considerations*

- Culture
- Organizational/Politics
- Interpersonal/social
- Legal/Ethics
- Past interactions
- Logistics/Spatial
- Future interactions
- Technical
- Financial
- Timing

Audience
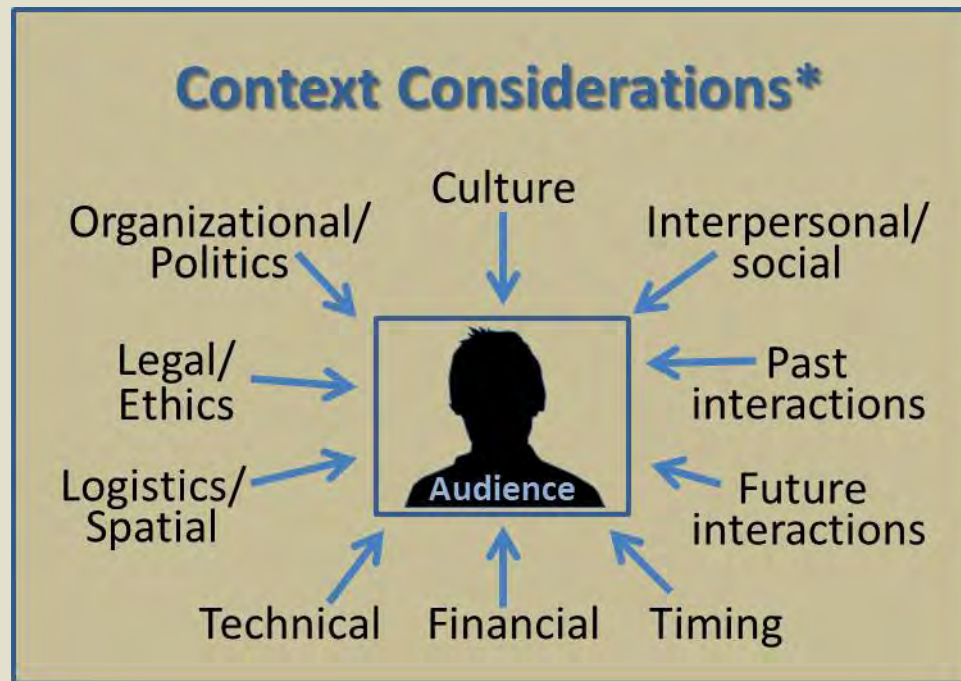
Level 3. Application & Adaptation

▶ **Use DOCS framework for Document Evaluation**

Design
- Format
- HATS
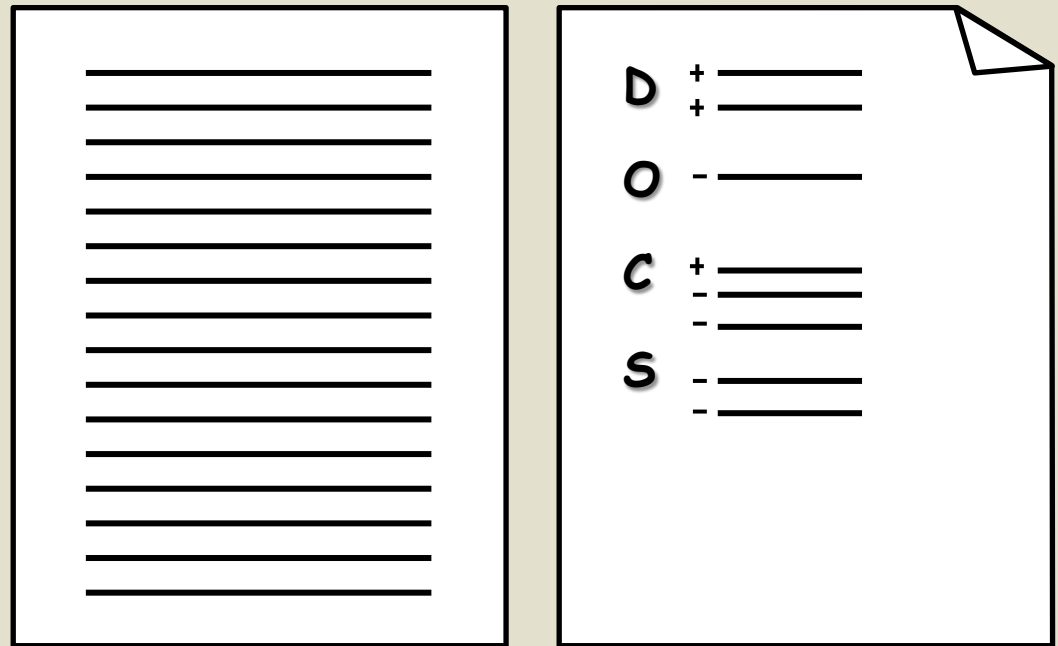
Organization
- Message pattern/OABC
- Direct/indirect approach

Content
- 5 C's
- CLOUD

Sentences
- SPELL

Level 3. Application & Adaptation

▶ Assign short problems with challenging contexts

Market Bread Website

You are completing an internship with Farm to Market Bread Company in Kansas City. During your first day on the job, your manager asks you to visit the company website and give her an honest written evaluation of the design and effectiveness of the site. Today is Tuesday, and you are to submit your evaluation by next Tuesday. Use your own best judgment in determining how to complete this task. For example, you could compare the Market Bread Company's website with competitors' websites to identify relative strengths and weaknesses. Or you might decide to take a different approach. Write your evaluation as an email, but submit it in paper form to your instructor. Feel free to attach any visuals that you think would be helpful. Your manager's name is Syvenna Siebert (Director of Sales and Marketing). Shortly after receiving this assignment, you find out that Syvenna is the one who created the overall design of the current website. Submit your PACS plan as a separate document.

Level 3. Application & Adaptation

► **Assign long cases with complex contexts**

Laser Technologies, Inc.
William H. Baker & Matthew J. Baker

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Laser Technologies, Inc. (usually referred to as Laser Tech) is a computer-services firm located at 4778 South Roselle Road, in Schaumburg, Illinois 60169 (northwest suburbs of Chicago). Many of its clients are small- and medium-size businesses, with the remaining clients being private individuals who want a reliable source of help for their home-computer systems and for training on popular software. Five major types of client services form the bulk of Laser Tech's offerings:

- Phone-in technical support for software problems
- Design of new personal and small-business computer solutions (hardware, software, networks, internet sites, etc.)
- Technical support for software installation, virus removal, data backup, and data recovery
- Hardware and network installation and repair (workstations, printers, routers, cabling, networks, hard-disk crashes, etc.)
- Software training (usually on site at Laser Tech but sometimes at vendor's site)

Laser Tech's organization chart is shown below:
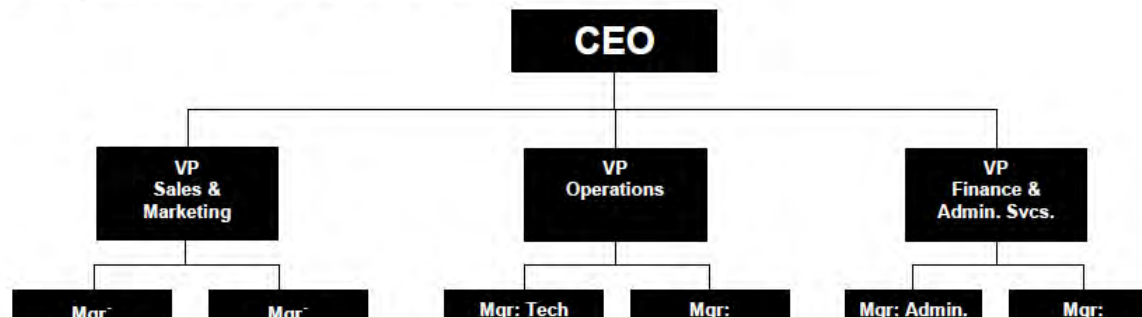
Level 3. Application & Adaptation

► **Assign long cases with complex contexts (cont.)**

PERSONAL NOTES—FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Adriana Perez: Generally a good, solid employee. Well liked. Has been with Laser Tech for 6 years and really needs the employment from a financial standpoint. Generally a very good trainer. Speaks with a Spanish accent, but is very understandable. Not a college graduate. Divorcee, age 40, mother of two teenagers.

Kristy Nixon: College graduate with a undergraduate major in political science (Northwestern University), has a sarcastic tongue sometimes, but gets along well otherwise, has been with Laser Tech for five years. Good presenter. Age 32, single, bright. Often one of the more dominant voices in informal hallway conversations

Matt McEwen: Working on his MBA degree in an evening program (Loyola), not tightly connected socially with the group, wants to advance into management as soon as possible; wonder if he will leave for a management position elsewhere if he can't see opportunities in Laser Tech. An effective presenter, undergraduate degree in communications, has been with Laser Tech for three years. Age 28, single.

Isaiah Johnson: A bit quiet in social settings, perhaps the hardest worker of the group, came into the training unit after working part-time in Troubleshooting & Repairs Department, so he knows computer hardware and software extremely well. Has been with Laser Tech for 3 years (2 years part-time in troubleshooting and 1 year full-time with training). Graduated one year ago from Howard University with a major in sociology. Married, age 29, one young child.

Jarom Hobbs: The oldest member of group (age 47). Has been with Laser Tech for two years, lots of experience with the high-tech industry, has worked with several other companies in computer-support positions, likes to talk about this company vs. others he has worked for, generally good attitude, but because he's a bit older, isn't quite as "connected" socially with the group—although no real problems. Married with a 22-year-old daughter living at home and a teenage son who is giving him problems. Generally a good presenter, although perhaps not quite as naturally talented in his teaching skills as some others. Not a college graduate.

Keira Lin: Age 28, single. She has worked for Laser Tech for 16 months. Hard worker. Good presenter. Bilingual: English and Japanese. Good social skills. College graduate (University of Kansas) with major in psychology. Good attitude.

Susan Serrano (part-time): Age 37. Married, 3 children who are in elementary and junior high, wants to be home when they leave for and come home from school, available to work from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Competent with software

Level 3. Application & Adaptation

▶ **Assign cases with integrated processes & outcomes**

Complaints Project

Your team has been hired to perform a consulting project for a major organization. The project consists of analyzing the complaints filed against the organization on my3cents.com (or other complaints website). The size of your sample should be 20 times the size of your team (e.g., if you have three team members, you will read and analyze 60 complaints). Read the complaints (remember that some complaint messages might have multiple complaints), classify each complaint into an appropriate category, and total the number of complaints in each category. Analyze your findings to determine the cause of the complaints. Then develop solutions for the each of the major complaints.

1. Create a slideshow and a one-page visually enhanced handout.
2. Write a formal report, complete with cover letter (addressed to an appropriate vice president), title page, table of contents, executive summary, report body (with graphics), and appropriate appendixes.
3. Give a formal 12-15 minute oral presentation to the executive board of the company (your class members and instructor).

Today's Agenda

- **A three-level framework for teaching business communication (with focus on writing)**
- **Ways to help students learn and retain knowledge and skills**

Quiz: What are the three levels of learning?

Conclusion

Students need competence at all three skill levels

1. If they don't know the rules & mechanics… → **they will make obvious errors that will damage their credibility.**

2. If they don't know the principles & patterns… → **they won't be aware of effective options, and their writing will be illogical and chaotic.**

3. If they don't know how to apply & adapt to real situations… → **Their organization value will be limited, and their careers will be damaged.**

Benefits

For students . . .

- Improved learning and retention at all three levels
- Improved student confidence and competence
- Improved chances for career success

For instructors . . .

- Useful mental schema for organizing the BC course
- Useful methods for achieving greater learning retention
- Improved teacher evaluations ☺

Q & A