

The Discourse of Local Public Broadcasting Managers and Producers: The Speech Act amid Organizational Transition

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Abstract

South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB) underwent a significant structural and organizational transition in the 1990s. This historical study describes the discursive activity of SDPB managers and producers amid that change. It also discusses a number of structural and historical arrangements that appear to have caused contradiction and conflict.

What follows is the transcribed discourse and speech act activity of several individuals involved in South Dakota Public Broadcasting including those in management, programming and production. It describes interaction during activities such as departmental strategic planning meetings, network reorganizational sessions, production meetings, interviews and Educational Telecommunications Board (ETB) meetings, as well as hallway conversations over many months.

Since Universal Pragmatics encourages attention to the representation of the external, internal and social worlds through language in the context of everyday life as it is lived (the lifeworld), these transcriptions provide substantive evidence for the analysis of how reality is constructed by these local public broadcasting managers and producers amid conflict and change.

Universal Pragmatics assumes that the presence of such "de-linguistified steering media" as power and money can replace language as a mechanism of social integration and therefore have a "disintegrative effect on the lifeworld (Habermas, 1984, 343).

My previous article (IJHCS 1(4), 2015, pp. 469-490) held that various steering mechanisms can exist within institutions like South Dakota Public Broadcasting and can influence the relationships within them. It suggested that Universal Pragmatics could be used as a methodology for analyzing institutional cultures. This work is the second of three articles in a process that will put that methodology into practice.

The following historical analysis includes three segments concerning a time period during a year in which there was a resignation and replacement in the Executive Director position at South

Dakota Public Broadcasting. This became a catalyst for total network reorganization. The three segments include (1) six months following the resignation of the Executive Director, (2) the arrival of the new Executive Director, and (3) three months following the arrival of the new Executive Director.

Keywords: Habermas, Universal Pragmatics, Ideal Speech Situation, Public Sphere, Culture, Democracy.

IJHCS

The Executive Director Resigns

South Dakota Public Broadcasting's Executive Director resigned in April of 1992. It was the beginning of a time of challenge and change for the network. The theory of communicative action assumes input and the opportunity to participate for those in the lifeworld whom challenge and change will affect.

A communicatively rationalized lifeworld would have to develop ... limits to the inner dynamic of media-steered subsystems and to subordinate them to decisions arrived at in unconstrained communication. Central to these institutions are those that secure an effectively functioning public sphere, in which practical questions of general interest can be submitted to public discussion and decided on the basis of discursively achieved agreement (Habermas, xxxvii, 1984).

Since the Executive Director's resignation came under duress and as a result of conflict with the Secretary of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs (DECA) and consequently a loss of ETB confidence, the situation as it developed may not have been conducive to limiting the media-steering mechanisms of money and power, or in fostering unconstrained communication. Various facets of SDPB appear to have been effected including programming and production.

Following the Executive Director's resignation, SDPB made some controversial programming decisions. In July of 1992, SDPB refused to broadcast a Masterpiece Theatre program titled Portrait of a Marriage. The program involved content concerning a three-year lesbian relationship, and SDPB network programmers canceled it because they said, "even Masterpiece Theatre can deliver a program that is not appropriate for all audiences."

The decision not to air Portrait of a Marriage sparked a controversy that received a great deal of attention in state newspapers and numerous letters to editors from members of the public. Headlines of stories concerning the issue included "Viewers Can Select TV Shows," (Hepner, August 7, 1992), "Public TV Decision Sparks Uproar," (Grauvogl, September 10, 1992), "Public TV Tangled in Power Struggle," (Grauvogl, October 14, 1992), "Board Meeting Excludes any 'Portrait' Discussions," (Grauvogl, October 17, 1992), "Public TV is Failing Viewers," (Gambill, November 7, 1992), "Editorial View on PBS Accountability off Base," (Bonaiuto, November 10, 1992) and "TV Declines Review of 'Portrait'," (Grauvogl, December 10, 1992).

In one October story, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader newspaper reported that South Dakota Public Broadcasting's decision not to air Portrait of a Marriage is not an isolated situation. In the past few months, pieces of other series also have been pulled in South Dakota (Grauvogl, October 15, 1992, 1A).

From the time of the Executive Directors' resignation in April, through October of 1992, the

network refused to air a number of programs including Tongues Untied, Metamorphosis, American Tongues, The Lost Language of the Cranes, Alive TV, Looking for Langston, Used Alive, Watunna and Ogichidag, Reckin' Shop, The Issue is Race, Great Performances 20th Anniversary Special: Celebrating Creativity, American Style and Portrait of a Marriage (Grauvogl, October 15, 1992). All of these programs dealt with cultural diversity related to either sexual identity or ethnic and racial issues.

Canceling Portrait of a Marriage sparked so much controversy that the Educational Telecommunication Board decided that at its August, October and December meetings it would invite public comment on the issue. At the August meeting about 50 people spoke both for and against showing the program.

As I see it there are at least three important things, which are related to this issue.

(1) ETV has various recommendations submitted by individuals who are members of the public. ETV should take these comments seriously and consider the seriousness of censorship of any material on South Dakota Public Broadcasting. It is therefore important that ETV consider adding "sexual persuasion" to its list of things that should not be discriminated against in programming.

(2) The Friends of South Dakota Public Broadcasting have recommended that the program be shown, however so far, that recommendation has been ignored by ETV. It is incumbent upon this organization that it adhere to guidelines related to the programming of material involving diverse content.

(3) Finally, let me stress that programming policy not be set on that basis of fear of retaliation from either state leaders whether they be legislators or the governor. The public broadcasting system should be free of undue state control (Roberts, October 16, 1992).

The Board's apparent openness to discuss the issue seemed to lend credence to the expectation that they were willing to take a position on the issue and perhaps support the ideal of cultural diversity in SDPB programming. However, at all of these meetings the Board listened to public comment, and then went ahead with other items on its agenda with little or no discussion.

At the December, 1992 ETB meeting, several more individuals expressed their opinions.

The SDPTV censorship of Masterpiece Theatre and Portrait of a Marriage has shocked South Dakotans. Censors have deleted programs which are controversial but which show a better cross-section of America. With ever constricting programming, South Dakotans are losing the larger views of mainstream America. Programs about African-Americans, racism, Asian-Americans, and so on, are not broadcast here. This shrinking mirror on life and the arts fosters an image of South Dakota as a cultural isolationist. This reputation will not be good for economic

development.

The Friends of Public Broadcasting have in one year contributed nearly \$700,000, collected through fund-raising from private citizens and businesses. Their generosity pays for at least half of programming costs. In return they are getting a shrinking menu for their money and their concerned advice is being ignored. Programs like Bill Moyers, Masterpiece Theatre, Point of View, and Great Performances, have already been censored. Similarly, prime-time slots have already changed, the evenings are dominated more and more by programs that do not educate, nor challenge, nor provoke, nor deepen, no test the experiences of South Dakotans.

Public television programming avoids its mission by being measurably less free, culturally ingrown, and politically right wing. SDPTV provokes us as much as a quaint old-time dance orchestra of a vanishing era with a conductor that leads the ensemble in playing the same anonymous bland song over and over again (Gambill, December 9, 1992).

As it did during the August and October meetings, the Board simply allowed people to speak and then went on to other items on its agenda without even addressing the issue. The behavior of the Board seemed to answer SDPB managers' questions about control of the system. The combination of events including HB-1123 (the legislative proposal to move administrative control of SDPB from the ETB to DECA) earlier in the summer, the Executive Director's resignation and the controversy over Portrait of a Marriage had cast a cloud over the network regarding who was in charge. The Board's unwillingness to "second guess" management's cancellation of the program was perceived to be a positive development in favor of SDPB management (Acting Executive Director, December 9, 1992).

However, in the middle of all of these events, the Co-Chair of the S.D. Joint Appropriations Committee, who had sponsored HB-1123, began having secret meetings with some SDPB employees. This was considered an intrusion and an effort to circumvent the authority of the Acting Executive Director and the ETB.

We have had some legislative intrusion which has bothered me greatly and it may well be why Dave Leonard is no longer with us, at least I think it was a major contributing factor. I think there are some appropriate ways that legislators and the legislature collectively should be involved in who we are and what we do in South Dakota Public Broadcasting. One of those is the Appropriations Committee, and we should answer to them. They have every right to question us about how we are spending state money.

But we have seen a transgression which has gone far beyond that to the point where we have a legislator who is meeting with staff, privately without either the

Board or management knowing about it. To me that is unconscionable and unprofessional and unethical, and it just makes absolutely no sense, however well intended it might be.

I think if there are serious questions about things going on in the network, the first place a legislator should start is with the governing board. It then ought to be the Board that is held accountable, and it ought to be the Board then that goes to the Executive Director and says "What in the world is going on here?"

This has been undermining the authority of the licensee (the ETB) and it undermines the authority of the senior management of the network and thus there may well be a sense at the producer level that what they do or don't do may somehow be measured or graded or positively or negatively received and they may be thinking more about the legislator or group of legislators than their audience.

I think therefore there is a sense of frustration that all of us have over who is in charge and that has been voiced verbally at our last Board meeting. We had a staff meeting ahead of the Board meeting and the Board came in and met with the staff at that meeting and several of the staff came in and said, "Who is in charge?"

Some of the concern then was directed at the Secretary of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, because I think there has been a real sense of the usurping of authority by the Secretary of the Department of Education and by the Chair of the Appropriations Committee. She has the ability to intimidate a lot of people including the DECA Secretary and some ETB members.

As late as October, the Chair of the Appropriations Committee had met with some staff again on some issues. I was fairly livid and went to the Board again and said this is ridiculous and that the Board needs to assert itself and let her know that this is not something she ought to be doing. The Board agreed that something needed to be done, but I've heard nothing since October that anyone has confronted her.

I think it's reflective of reluctance on the part of the Board, they just want everything to be healed and to go away. I think it is a systemic problem and expecting that we can run the network from Pierre in terms of personnel decisions is a mistake, it creates great problems and difficulty.

The Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs does affect personnel very, very acutely and I don't know how you separate control of personnel and control of programming. And the connection is that it is easier for the Chair of the Appropriations Committee or anyone else to deal with a single political appointee like the Secretary of DECA, than it is to deal with a multi-headed monster like an Educational and Telecommunications Board. And according to the FCC, as the licensee, they should have the responsibility for programming, for personnel and for

fiscal affairs (Acting Executive Director, January 14, 1993).

Other managers including the Director of Television Programming indicated that they felt similar pressures and conflicts involving political intrusion from state legislators.

Politics interfere. Politics are getting in the way of doing business. It ought not to be that way but it is. The bureaucracy has taken on a life of its own and that can be kind of nasty. Dave Leonard is not here because he got crossways politically with the wrong people, I might not be here in six months because I got crossways with the wrong people.

The real test of an Executive Director's success is in keeping the politics away from the producer level, it should never get out and permeate the staff people, they should always be removed from it.

As long as you have politicians who are elected and therefore appoint boards to control entities there needs to be some kind of removal of control outside the political arena. We have to go before the Appropriations Committee to have our budget approved. If we do not make them happy, we could be in trouble.

Its control and accountability, and by having control of the purse strings you can control it. I don't know if it is politics per se, but it is the power that goes with politics. Because of the way the system is set up, you are not in charge of your own destiny.

Therefore it is important to gain an understanding of what that audience wants. One of the key elements of what I do is knowing the audience and understanding them, and I've been listening to them for seven years. You read this mail on a daily basis for seven years and pretty soon you get a feel for what the majority wants and that is where I try to go, I don't try to exclude the minority. If I had scheduled this (Portrait of a Marriage) at midnight, it would have come and gone with very little fan fare.

I don't think censorship has anything to do with it. We are just trying to make adult material available at a safe time.

We really are not a whole lot different then the commercial world, except we do not need the big numbers (Director of TV Programming, January 11, 1993).

The time between the resignation of the Executive Director and the arrival of the new Executive Director was both a period of frustration and anticipation for managers and producers of SDPB. Frustration existed because of the controversy over Portrait of a Marriage and because of a perception that no one really knew who was in control of the system. Producers in particular seem to have looked forward to a "changing of the guard."

I'm excited personally. I don't know a lot about the new guy coming in but an I know what the old guard was like and I like the fact that he has a younger mentality, is an ex-hippie, and therefore a certain amount of liberalness and used to work for a community license station and has done all kinds of jobs. That means he probably will like to be in touch with staff. The past administration, to me had a certain elitist attitude, "I'm an administrator and you're a peon. You guys are to be foot soldiers and I will give the orders and you will carry out the orders, while I stand up here on the hill and direct the battle."

In reality we are too small a station and don't have enough people, therefore the people at the top have to be involved. Like when I ran the department, I told everybody, we have to think like community theatre, we don't have enough numbers and so everyone has to be involved right up to me. But there are people in this organization, particularly at the administrative level that think "I'm an administrator and I hand down orders and they carry them out." I don't think that is viable in such a small organization and is not conducive to creating an atmosphere of working together and cooperation.

I think the pyramid management style needs to be hanged to something more round, more cooperation. I think a lot of people here are more excited in regards to just the few things they have heard about this guy. It's as simple as getting a recent E-Mail message from him and calling himself "Staff" and using inclusionary language like that rather describing himself as part of "administration." That's really exciting to think that someone like that is coming in after ealing with people like we have had in the past.

The Portrait of a Marriage thing for instance, makes me suspicious of this administration. To me people who are bigoted toward one aspect of cultural diversity are usually bigoted toward other aspects of the world, whether its culture, religion, race. When you make arbitrary decisions and stick to them the way they did, I think it is very indicative of their style of management that they think "I'm right and they're wrong and by god I'll go down in a flaming ship to prove it."

I think when the first title wave of negative response came from the public they should have said "Alright fine, we'll put it on a 11:30 at night and will flag it and you will get to see it," and that would have been the end of the problem. But they stiffened up and said, "We aren't going to be told what to do, we run the show here." And I think that is what got them into trouble. I think that is indicative of what their style has been like and I don't think you can get away with that. I don't think a totalitarian mentality can survive in this day and age.

For me I have to read a lot of things in the paper in order to find out a lot of instead of knowing from the inside. That's made me concerned because when you find out from someone else about programs which have been recorded and shelved

that you don't even see, you get concerned.

I have had a running gun battle with administration, part of it is personality but part of it is message. If you go to them they will say "Well its because he is a disgruntled employee who is trying to push the boundaries of our tolerance and live in his own world and do his own thing." But I turn around and say, "I was a good employee until I was discriminated against by this organization." Thereafter I have been in a low level battle with administration because if people push you, you push back.

So I am looking forward to the new guy and starting over with a clean slate. Because if he does have an open mind, we can start from scratch and work from there and he can see the product I'm trying to put out and can see what I am trying to do because I don't have any selfish motive for doing what I'm doing. I just have an ability to combine an interest in cultural issues with this visual medium (SDPB Producer #1, January 20, 1993).

The New Executive Director Arrives

The new Executive Director arrived on January 25th. One of his first activities was to schedule a general staff meeting for employees at KUSD in Vermillion. The expectation that his management style would be defined by openness and a willingness to listen to everyone and anyone, seemed to prove valid during this meeting on January 28th. About 75 people gathered in the South Dakota Public Television studio.

The meeting started with introductions including everyone in the room involved in describing who they were and what they did at SDPB. The atmosphere was generally relaxed and the use of humor helped define the situation. Following the introductions the Executive Director (ED) attempted to set a tone for discussion.

ED: I guess, what I would do is ... ah tell me what you want to know about me or anything. Go ahead, ask me anything, "How does Superman fly?"

Audience Question (AQ): You're from Indiana, are you a Hoosier fan?

ED: I am probably more of a Notre Dame fan. The "Fighting Irish," all those guys. Did anyone watch An American Experience the other night? Newt Rockney. All American, wasn't it great. I thought it was pretty interesting to watch that. The unfortunate part of An American experience was that WNIT didn't produce anything on the show. That sort of bummed me out, cause we live right there and I wondered what happened. Sometimes as you may know, producers come into town and do things that you don't even know about 'til you see it somewhere. It's happened in a number of places I've worked, and we've wondered, "Why didn't anyone call us?"

But we had a pretty good relationship with Notre Dame. Notre Dame is a pretty good-sized college, the student population is probably no larger than here, but the endowments are rather large and the campus is pretty neat. In fact Notre Dame is one of the only universities I know of that owns a commercial NBC affiliate, WNDE. A very well funded facility, and we were real tight with them, worked a lot of neat things, and did co-production and a number of other things. It was a good relationship.

Anyway my background ...? I've been in broadcasting since 1966. If any of you saw Good Morning Vietnam, I did that. That's what I did in 1966 and '67. I was a radio announcer in Armed Forces Radio and Television. Spent some time in Southeast Asia, talking and playing records and having a great time. Then I moved into commercial radio for a while, CBS affiliates in Richmond, Virginia and Pennsylvania and all of those wonderful places. Little jobs, doing everything, everything ... literally.

Then one day I decided I didn't like the way things were getting done, so I started fighting with management and began to realize that the only way I might affect some change in management was to become one of them. And I thought that was a pretty good idea. In fact what happened was my boss told me, "Shut up, if you don't like the way things are being run, get one of your own and run it yourself."

That made some sense, and I started thinking, "That's what I'm going to do, I'm going to try that." Then once I got into management I began to realize how much trouble it really is. It's not the easiest job in the world because you're dealing with so many different personalities, dynamics and problems. But the exciting part has always been that diversity. That's why I like public broadcasting.

Most recently, I wanted to get out of this business, and I took a little hiatus, and I went into the wonderful world of cellular communication. I became the state sales manager for Sentel Cellular Corporation, which is a large company with 44 thousand employees. I managed the sales force and I tried to sell cellular phones. The more I did this ... and the benefits ... I'm telling you we could fund several state networks off of the waste in corporate America. But the more I did it I realized that it wasn't really what I wanted to do, and I missed my public broadcasting family, and decided it was time to get back into it.

And that's sort of how I ended up here in South Dakota. And I'm just beginning to get a feel for what has been happening here, and what we want to do and where we need to go. All indications are that we have a great staff, fairly decent facilities, a lot of potential, a lot of room for growth, and I'm in a honeymoon period right now, so I can say anything I suppose, and we'll be able to measure direction better later on as I get a firmer feel for what's going on.

I'm very open to communication. I am a real big believer in trust and in honesty. Those are the two major things I've learned in the 45 years I've been on this planet to work hard at trying to establish. So I'm going to be up front with everybody, and you can count on that, that I'm not going to pull any strings and I probably ... oh I don't know .. I may say things that not everyone agrees upon. But hey, isn't that what public broadcasting is all about? I mean, think about all of those programs we run which are not the most comfortable situations, but we do it anyway.

So hopefully I'll be able to set up some kind of communication with everybody so there's lots of input, I like input. We're all in this together. That's always been my vision. And as far as organizational charts go and all of that, they're necessities and yeah, you live with them, and job descriptions are important, and all of that's wonderful, but I come from an "up the organization" school of management. I don't feel I am any better than anyone else, I'm just the leader of a group right now, and have been fortunate enough to have moved into this position for whatever the reason.

I've heard all kinds of stories about, "Oh boy, we can't wait to get a new guy in South Dakota and things are going to change." But it isn't going to be me, it's going to be everybody in this room and all over the network that are going to help change us and push us in some direction.

I can't open up heads and change morale, I can't change attitudes. It's all of us working together, and I'm hoping that we're going to have that kind of comradery and team spirit and all of that rah, rah, boom, boom, yeah, yeah, team! stuff that goes on.

So, I don't know, ask me anything.

AQ: What are your experiences and concerns about television?

ED: I have produced and directed a lot of things, and I have executive produced and I'm a real stickler for "look." That's all we have, is our look. People decide who we are ... you know ... people ... the average ... everybody out there in TV land that watches, they don't care about us. I mean you got to think about that, us personally, and I don't mean to sound cynical, but they could care less about what's happening inside this building. All they care about is that when they turn on the TV, what is there is what they said is going to be there and that it is the highest quality we can present. And it today's world, viewers are very sophisticated. That is something that we never used to think about. People used to be amazed with snowy pictures and all of that, but today people don't stand for that. So my efforts have always been to try and create a situation where the organization that we belong to can become a standard, so that people begin to look at that and go, "Wow, those guys know there stuff, they look great." So our "on- air" is totally critical to me, I'll be watching. I think there is some room for improvement in our on-air look, our breaks, how we

use our breaks, all of those things.

And I'm not going to make decisions in a vacuum or just say we're changing things, I'm going to expect all kinds of input. I want to work with you and help make that all better. And I think some of you at least have indicated that you feel the same way and that there is some room there. It's just a matter of deciding what we need to do, how we're going to do it, what do we need to do to get there, do we have the money? How innovative can we be? It's surprising what you can do when you put your mind to it. The biggest thing is getting over the frustration of all of the ... of just letting yourself get down about a lot of things. It's easy to get into that rut.

AQ: What is your philosophy of programming in general and local production in particular?

ED: Well programming in general is an easy answer because I believe that public broadcasting has this broad ... broad ... a large effort or goal of trying to present a lot of different things to a lot of different people. And I believe in the philosophy that it is our job to expose viewers to the world around them. It doesn't necessarily reflect our beliefs. You know if we run a program on communism or homosexuality or whatever it might be, doesn't mean I buy into that, doesn't mean that South Dakota Public Television buys into it. What it means is that that's the world around us folks and that's happening and this is a vehicle for you to take a look at stuff and make some decisions. So I like that, I know we're going to run programming that isn't the most comfortable. And I think that when the phone rings with people saying, "I hate what you're doing," or "I love what you're doing," we are doing are job.

"Local production?" I don't know. That's a good question. I think it depends on what we want to do with it. Who are we serving? The need. What are our reasons for doing local production? Are we altruistic, or is it just a project that someone is really pushing? Does it serve a purpose? Can we afford it? These are questions we need to talk about. It is a tough decision, sitting there trying to decide what to we can afford to do and what makes sense to do. Is there funding? And then you get into the whole question of, "Well yes there is funding," people are coming to you with money. Then you have to decide if you want to do it just for the money. Does it make sense?

AQ: Can you give us an idea of what any outline might be for ... let's say the first one hundred days?

ED: Well obviously you all know better than I some of the things that are sort of bubbling around, and fermenting and growing. House Bill 1123, have you heard of that? That's happening. I don't know what that all means yet, I need to get a handle on that with the powers that be up in Pierre. I guess as I become more comfortable with what is going on, I'm going to try and communicate with all of you about what it all means to us and how it will affect us or if it will affect us.

I think what I want to be able to do is to help resolve the negative stuff that might be going on so that we can get on with our business of public broadcasting, radio and television, to make some kind of environment here, working with all of you that will allow us to feel good about what we do and want to keep doing it so we can get better at what we do. How can I do that? What do I need to do? You all probably have a better handle on that than I do. But ... the first hundred days? Hey, am I going to make it that long? (Laughter). But, hopefully will move in a very positive direction ... you know, do we have a morale problem around here? Do we? How many people think we have a morale problem? (Hands rise). Why?

Audience Answer (AA): What you said before, "Trust" and "Honesty."

ED: I want to fix it, I really do? And, you all have to help me to, because I don't want to be stepping on land mines. I don't want to go off doing things and then getting killed for it. I'm going to be counting on you to be giving me direction and input.

What other problems do we have?

AA: "Communication."

"Communication" is a good one. I want to communicate. I hope that some of the initial things that we do, like division head meetings, can all be made available on E-Mail. We'll create a sort of bulletin board, if you will. You all need to know what is going on. Now from time-to-time there will be an executive session that comes up and there are certain things that I'm not going to be able to share with everybody, but for the most part I don't see in any organization anything that secretive that's going on that people don't need to be aware of.

I mean rumors, you know ... boy, they get started fast when it seems like people are plotting and planning things, so I want to keep communication open, and call me anytime. I'm pretty direct. I'm not afraid to deal with people one-to-one, individually, groups, whatever. I may be wrong ... sometimes, and I'm not afraid to admit that. I'm not perfect. So communication is very important to me. I'll do everything I can to make sure you all know what is going on. And sometimes we are going to run into things that we probably aren't going to be able to change, that I'm not going to be able to change. And then we're going to have to decide whether it's worth crying over, fighting over, whatever, or do we get on with it.

There's politics in all of it. People get mad about programming. I mean ... "Tongues Untied," ... I had an underwriter who gives 35 thousand dollars a year write me a letter thanking me for not running that program, and that they would continue to support. It was a controversial thing in our state. And part of the reason

it was controversial was because people were not really on top of what was going on with that program. It was a last minute situation. The biggest they had in that state was that most of the people didn't communicate on their own staffs about what was going on with the program. Programming wasn't talking to management, management wasn't talking to programming.

Luckily for us, we communicated and we turned that into a real positive thing for our station, which I think worked out real well. We didn't air it, but we still got a real positive bunch of press out of it and a lot of other things, and I think we handled it pretty well.

AQ: How do you feel about the HB-1123 thing?

ED: I guess we're under the Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs anyway aren't we, and I think this bill is nothing more than finalizing that. Is that true? At least that is the reading I get from it, so I'm not sure it's ... I don't know ... it seems to me ... here is an analogy. Somewhere in the past somebody stabbed the state monster. Somewhere. Opened a wound. It seems that over a few years, people keep sticking sticks in that wound and that monster is starting to look back there and see what that is all about. I'm getting a feel for that. I don't know whether it's good or bad, but somehow or another we've got to heal that wound, and let the monster go on its way.

What I get from DECA and ETB and everybody at Pierre, is that I can do anything and everything I want within the guidelines of state government. They are going to be counting on me to make those decisions, they aren't going to be making them for me, and that's what they have told me. Now, true, one of the problems that we have that's scary is that the guy who is the secretary is an appointed official, and you know that two years from now he isn't going to be there anymore. And maybe he is a friend of public broadcasting, I don't know, and maybe the next guy that comes in won't be. Who knows? I don't know whether we have any power. Don't get me wrong, I do believe in integrity when it comes to who makes programming decisions, and I think that lies here, that rests here. And I think that in running our operation, that rests here and I want to be involved in the people that work here and who don't work here and all of those things. I don't want to be a puppet and I don't think anyone else wants to be a puppet. Right? I think we want to do our thing ... and be rewarded for it to the best that we can be and all of that.

AQ: Doesn't it concern you that in giving an appointed official additional power as far as this organization is concerned?

ED: Are we giving them additional power?

AQ: Well if it's taking something away from the Board, isn't it placing it somewhere else.

ED: I guess that's what I don't understand yet and I will be trying to get a handle on that (SDPB Staff Meeting, January 28, 1993).

While this meeting was constructed as a question and answer session between the new Executive Director and his staff, it also included other characteristics. At times it resembled a class lecture or a sermon, with the Executive Director expounding on various concepts concerning public broadcasting in an attempt to construct knowledge for his new parish.

It also had characteristics of a campaign stump speech including topics which in later meetings and conversations he frequently talked about. His concern over SDPB's "look" is an example.

The lecture itself involved an introduction and a re-construction of his professional life, which seemed to lend validity to his selection as Executive Director. He also frequently referred to his philosophy regarding openness and the importance of communication in the organization. Most interesting, at least in retrospect however, may have been his self disclosing comments concerning his own stormy relationship with management. "If you don't like the way things are being run, get one of your own." It was only a matter of weeks before a number of staff members came to understand the poignant meaning of those words.

This session also resembled a pep rally in an attempt to bolster morale following all of the turmoil of the last few months. He skillfully referred to each issue which had been effecting the organization including HB-1123, Portrait of a Marriage, and SDPB's relationship with ETB and DECA. Yet at the same time he claimed to be just the "new guy" with little knowledge of what was really going on, and soliciting help in understanding the situation.

The session had a calming and yet and energizing effect on the staff. The hallway conversation following the meeting was enthusiastic and upbeat. Assumptions about him being the one to turn the organization around appeared to have been validated. His expressed willingness to be accessible and to communicate with everyone about "everything" was accepted at face value.

The Executive Director's First Three Months

Between February 1st and May 1st of 1993, a number of developments began to affect dramatic change on the SDPB organization. First of all the 68th legislative session slashed SDPB's operating budget by \$225,000. Later in the same session HB-1123 was re-introduced and passed by both houses of the South Dakota State Legislature. As chapter six pointed out, HB-1123 contains wording which would transfer administrative control of South Dakota Public Broadcasting from ETB to DECA.

A number of individuals including the former Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of Programming feared that this move would further enhance the state's control of SDPB. Both the former Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director had strenuously fought the provision.

In late March, the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of Programming resigned their positions. In addition the middle manager group, which had been managed by the Deputy Executive Director and included all division heads from Television, Radio, Engineering, Business and Public Information/Development was dissolved. A Management Team headed by the new Executive Director replaced this.

Also about this time, word began to circulate at SDPB that a number of changes were about to take place concerning the focus, organization and location of the television production department. On March 17, the department again met in order to discuss strategic planning. By now however, their perspectives of the new Executive Director had changed from including anticipation and expectation to including perplexity and concern. The March 17th meeting was another attempt for them to construct meaning in the midst of organizational change. Attending was the Production Manager (PM) and four producers, P1, P2, P3, and P4.

PM: This is what I've got on the agenda for strategic planning meeting here is, where it's at now, what's the new message being sent and the changes that we're going to be looking at. Then we'll look at personal working relations. Our future relies on the team.

Goal one: To produce quality television program services that effectively meet the educational, instructional, cultural and informational needs and interests of the people of South Dakota.

Under that is objective A: To serve a broader population through improved program acquisition, scheduling, promotion and services.

Activity One: Television will continue to obtain and use ascertainment information in acquiring and scheduling programs and services to reach that segment of the population that it would most benefit. The reason I left that in is because we are becoming more service oriented and that incorporates outreach promotion to our projects.

Objective B: To produce programs and services that provide public and private school systems with materials that directly correlates with national and state education goals.

Those kind of go along with what has been my understanding of what the message of the Executive Director has been. And that is to do more programs that

we're producing and services for the public school system, with materials that correlate with national and state educational goals. And so we're trying to look more at the goals of other state agencies.

That's about what I've been hearing, anybody heard anything different? You haven't heard anything different?

P2: We haven't heard anything about that.

PM: Does that sound like everyone else has heard?

P4: Um, it still seems to be kind of a gray area as to what we define as service. Whether we're talking in line with the old special projects unit concept of service to other state agencies. In other words, we do in house non-broadcast productions.

PM: No that would be like secondary market use of the product that we produce. We have to look at the aftermarket and how it fits with the educational strength. At least that's what I'm reading. It looks like there should be more of an aftermarket for our product after it hits our air.

P1: Also a determinant to me is, who is going to make the initial contact? Is it every different organization that wants to have something done? Are they going to come to us and all of a sudden we're going to say, "All right, we're going to do it for you." That's the attitude that existed with the special projects group which was a fiasco because they always came and wanted you to do things too cheaply. As compared to, do we make decisions to target certain areas and then approach organizations and say, "You're trying to do this, we'd like to help you."

PM: That's part of the reason for joining with other state agencies that have similar goals as we have, and then trying to use their resources.

P4: Rather than letting them lead and letting them define who we are?

PM: Right, so its going to take us to find out what the other state agencies are looking at as far as their mission and goals.

P4: In terms of local production though, I think that we have to, kind of, within the organization, not without, but within the organization we have to lead the other departments, or the other departments will lead us. In other words, if PI becomes a major thing, as a department within public television, we don't want our missions and goals defined by PI. The same is true of PI and management as a whole. We have to define our own.

P1: But who defines that, I mean who makes the decision as to what's the priority and what's important, and what kind of areas we should be getting into?

PM: Well, it was brought up in a meeting not too long ago that the Executive Director had said that we all, as a network get behind a drive such as pre-school education and adult literacy. Well you know, that covers a broad base. But at least it gives us a focus and a direction that we're going to go for the next year or two.

P4: But does it define everything we should be doing? Are we getting narrow focused?

P1: Yeah, I think that is a concern.

P4: I've got a big concern, and I realize that I'm arguing against what could be considered my area but while right now education might be the thing, a few years from now when we have a new governor it might very well be a totally different focus. He may be totally into gambling. I don't know.

PM: Well, we'll be doing gambling then.

P4: But I think as a department we have to help to define our mission and not get too narrow focused. Just because we have a strong secretary in DECA and just because we have a strong governor who is pushing in the area of education, shouldn't define us as a department because we are then only defined as long as those political realities are reality. And I'm concerned if we put all of our eggs into that one basket.

PM: Well you've got a good point, but I guess the other things he is looking at is, what are the national goals? And that's the drive right now, the national goals. And those are going to be around for a few years.

P4: Well that's one of the drives. It certainly isn't the overpowering drive that it was under the Bush Administration. Even though he did nothing, it was one of his banners. And part of that same argument is that health care is at least as big as education. So are we going to define ourselves in terms of health care too?

PM: Well when it comes down to it we need to focus on our department and what we do. We need to include what we feel we should be doing. We have to lay it out and say, "This is the way we feel the network should be going."

P1: Yeah, but the reality of it is that we don't ultimately make those decisions.

PM: No, but at least we've got that input. And if we don't, then what are we doing here?

P2: So if we make a suggestion that's a little bit off to the side of what comes down as THE decision, would our decision temper that? I mean we can't gear

everything in one area can we, is that a smart thing to do?

P4: That's why I asked the question. Our fundamental driving principle, all of these years, has been that we are an alternative programming system.

PM: But with the alternatives that are out there now days, you know, that's stretching it pretty thin.

P4: Well, there are a lot more vehicles of delivery out there now, but there still is very little alternative programming. And what there still is not South Dakota specific. And, the fundamental principle behind all public television systems, from the beginning, has always been to serve our local public first and priority, and that we service them by giving them alternative programming that they cannot get elsewhere, and that includes in a state like South Dakota, giving them opera. That includes in a state like South Dakota, dealing with race issues that deal with Native Americans because that is of most importance. It also includes giving them other minority points of view that they are not exposed to.

PM: That's why the big meeting on April 1st in Sioux Falls is going to be so important because what we hear from the Executive Director will determine the direction we are going.

P4: But are you assuming that we should just let him say where we should go and that's not why we called the meeting.

PM: Well no, I agree, but I have a feeling that he's got a predetermined direction.

P4: Well, yes he does, but he also has his antenna out and he's saying, "Listen folks your part of the equation."

P2: Well the one thing you know is that he wants to align with other state agencies.

PM: Yeah, more of education programs oriented with what DECA's got.

P2: The thing is defining "education." How strict, how narrow, how broad? Because "education" is broader than most people think.

P4: And it's broader than if you asked DECA.

PM: And I think that when the producers from both Vermillion and Brookings get together in Sioux Falls they will be hashing out the direction we need to be going.

P2: Because the producers should have input in their areas. I mean the Executive

Director will make the decision, but he's got to be informed of the areas, because ... you know ... it's just his lack of knowledge on the areas and the people, because South Dakota is a unique state.

P4: I think his intention is to have an open forum discussion with all of the producers, not to tell us where he wants us to go but to get us to tell him where we want to go so, that he can evaluate where he wants to go, where he's being pushed to go, because a lot of this is from outside. Because he is being told which direction to go too like from the Board and different members of the Board.

P4: For instance when I talked one-on-one with the Executive Director he defined "education" much more narrowly than I would. He defined it more along the lines of K through 12 which is basically the way DECA looks at it. And that is not unlike the ETB chair's definition of "educational TV."

PM: And this will be more clearly defined at the April 1st meeting. But my own feeling is that we have to be prepared when we go into that meeting that we know what direction we need to be going as a production department. Like I said before, I here messages coming down ... the writing on the wall, if you want to call it that, is that "education" is going to be the key to the programs that we do whether it be pre-school or adult literacy.

That doesn't mean that we can't do these other projects that we're talking about doing and we also need to get defined what the Executive Director means by "education."

P4: Well he's getting his definition from the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, he's getting it from DECA, he's getting it from the Board, he's getting it from the governor's office.

PM: Well he keeps coming back with, "The legislature, the legislature, what are we showing the legislature?" He wants to make sure that what we are doing is visible enough to the legislature to justify why we're around and get the funding.

P4: Right, it all comes down to that.

P1: But the thing about it is that we're losing focus again, and we're allowing people in leadership positions of state government to say, "Here's what should be." But I can guarantee that if we go out into the community and get a grass roots perspective, it will be totally different as to what they want to see from us as compared to what these people at the top want to see from us. Because basically you got people at the top in charge like the DECA secretary and the Chair of the Appropriations Committee who is also a high school principal, all defining "education" in terms of K through 12 and very narrowly.

What we need is either enough money budgeted to an ascertainment study conducted properly or they need to allow the producers who know their areas best to do their jobs.

I talk with people and use gut reaction. As a gate keeper, it's part of my responsibility to make those decisions, I mean that's what we are basically. I know saying and I make decisions from there. And then I analyze and study the overall picture in order to develop an agenda for using this medium to affect change, to affect attitudes, to affect feeling, to affect emotions, to push people's buttons, to push them into action, you know ... to call them to action.

P4: You hit the nail on the head. You listen to people. That doesn't mean you go the direction they tell you to go. You listen to them and you incorporate all of these different things together and that's what we're paid to do as producers. And to some extent I'm leery of too much attention being paid to only one or two of the other gate keepers out there; the governor, legislators, or whatever. Yes they control our money, but our viewers are what we're all about.

P1: The fact that I've completely stuck with American Indian issues is plainly because I've felt that that's one of the most critical issues that's going to face this state into the next century. I have firm beliefs in that, strong beliefs, very strong beliefs, and I feel I have the data to back why I feel the way I do.

I think it's one of the most critical issues we can get into. We can talk about conflicts of gender and conflicts of other minority issues but they just don't raise the red flags the way a conflict between the Lakota/Dakota people here in this state and the non-Indian people who live in this state and the critical issues that surround it. And so I've basically made a conscious effort to focus and concentrate what small resources I have on this issue.

I fear that if we go any other direction for making production decisions we will lose program production as the center of the network because everything will get too watered down.

P4: That's why we exist. People keep saying, "We have to figure out why we exist." We exist for our product. The product doesn't exist because we exist, we exist because of the product. And he's right we have to get back to production being the center. When Martin Busche started the network we were central to it. But we have become since less important than the Business Office, less important than PI (Public Information), less important than the Program Guide, less important than Operations, and we can't allow that to continue. We have to signal our own value to the network.

PM: That's something that will have to be a main focus, that we have to make sure that we are signaling our value to the network, otherwise if we don't have any

value were does that leave us. Nowhere.

And you know, the PBS Signaling Value, you know ... PI was going to come in and give us all the low down ... they sent I don't know how many people from PI down to Arizona last time and did the signaling value thing.

P4: And who went from production?

PM: We didn't hear a damn thing about it. And I still hear bits and pieces and I don't hear any more than that.

P3: The other question that concerns me since that first meeting with the new Executive Director is what he said about us maybe having too many producers. I think that is definitely going to come up at this meeting on April 1st and what are the implications of that?

P4: Yeah, that concerned me a little bit too.

PM: Yeah, I'd like to know too because I don't quite understand what he meant by that other than saying, "Well if that's the case what are you going to do," are you going to reallocate people, are you going to say that we're only going to have so many producers and their just going to be in a pool, doing so many different projects and we're only going to allocate so much money for three or four different projects or what?" I haven't gotten any feedback, have any of you guys heard anything?

P4: No.

P3: He's told another producer outright that there's going to be layoffs. I mean that certainly ...

PM: Well now, I haven't heard that one!

P4: I haven't heard that one yet either.

P3: Not from him, but I've heard from you know ...

P4: He also did say that there are a lot of rumors floating around ...

P3: Well, no, this producer said that he asked him point blank if there were going to be layoffs and he said, "Yes, there are."

PM: Well I guess I'll go ask him myself just to quell any rumors.

P4: Yeah, and I'm a little curious as to ... you know ... he did say that he wanted to quell any rumors, but I haven't seen so many rumors flying in twenty years.

PM: Well, part of the thing is that he does throw out ideas just to get feedback from everybody else.

P4: I think you hit it on the nose, he does play devil's advocate in order to see where you're at.

P3: But I think that has destroyed my morale, hearing that there's going to be layoffs, you know.

P4: But she raises an important question. Do we have too many producers and if so why? Cause we're not doing enough? Is it because we don't have enough budget to support that many projects? Is it because we don't have enough support staff to keep all those projects afloat for all of those producers? Or is it because as producers we are all on our own agenda?

PM: I think it's all of those things, agendas, support ... the other thing is that there probably are some things we don't need to be doing, like some of the stuff out of Brookings like, well I'm not going to make any hits.

P3: Oh why not?

PM: Ok, On-line is one of them. Midwest Market Analysis, we don't need to be doing Midwest Market Analysis. South Dakota Outdoor Guide, I don't know about that one. What does that have to do with what we are in place to do?

P4: But the political realities keep those shows going.

PM: Well, it's the same thing with the South Dakota Affairs producer, there are a lot of producer positions, do they need to be there? Or do they need to be so well defined that everybody's only doing one thing?

P1: The thing that worries me is that Brookings is the one that right now has too many producers but the mentality is that if Brookings loses one then Vermillion has to lose one. They're the ones that have the problem and they're the ones that are going to have to bite the bullet.

P3: But as the Vermillion staff, that's one of the things that we're going to be fighting against at this meeting.

P4: Well, if at the meeting it goes ... "Ok, we're cutting back to five producers over the network, who's going to take the hit?" No body's going to say ... "Oh, well, go ahead, I'll leave." So everybody's going to be justifying what they do. I mean they can justify South Dakota Outdoor Guide by saying, "Well we have lots of viewers."

Ok, but is that justification enough? Then they'll say, "Well it's kind of educational,» or "We can make it educational!"

On-line, is the same way. Midwest Market Analysis, is all but handed to them on a platter, why do they need a full-time producer designated for it?

P1: Ag Extension is who produces it, we should get completely out of agriculture.

P4: Except here comes the political battle again because as soon as you say, "We're eliminating the Ag producer from the South Dakota Public Television network," you have the number one industry in the state saying, "Like hell you will! You will not eliminate it."

You have the Ag university up there and their president and the whole of Ag Extension and everybody else saying, "You're not going to eliminate that."

P1: But these are questions we need to be ready with.

P4: We also need to be ready to defend our positions in arts, cultural and minority affairs.

PM: That's what is going to happen at this meeting on the first. We're going to have to sit down and take a real hard look at everything, and everybody's going to have to be there to justify why they're there and what they're doing. And so we have to really try to step outside our positions in an objective sense and say, "Well if you look at Midwest Market Analysis, as a prime example, let the extension people do it, you don't need to be doing it, we don't need to be doing it, let them take care of it." That's one prime example.

P1: Then we better sit down and decide what our plan of attack is going to be, how we as a production unit in Vermillion are going to justify keeping our positions even if Brookings takes a hit (SDPB TV Production Meeting, March 17, 1993).

The Vermillion producers however, never got a chance to sit down and decide what their "plan of attack" was going to be. During the next few days, word came definitively from SDPB management that some major changes were in the works for the way the production units were organized. All work on strategic planning was to stop until network reorganization could be accomplished.

It was virtually certain that most if not all Vermillion producers would be moved to Brookings where what was coming to be defined as "external production" was to be located. External production was described as local program production while "internal production" which was to be located in Vermillion was described as anything related to promotion, development and

fundraising.

Vermillion producers seemed demoralized and appeared unable to respond to the impending development. For them it was a debilitating prospect because many of their program oriented resources existed in Vermillion. They looked upon such reorganization as destructive to the programs which they produced. They thus came to the April 1st meeting in Sioux Falls in a somewhat disillusioned condition. On the one hand they had believed the new Executive Director when he had told them many times that he would listen to them, respect their opinions and wanted them to be a part of the decision making process in the network. On the other, they felt as if they were even farther removed from decision-making processes than they were before.

Before the meeting in Sioux Falls, one producer expressed a newly developed perspective of the Executive Director. "I've pretty much said all I'm going to say to him. I don't think he cares one bit about minority or cultural affairs. I don't think he has been truthful with us" (SDPB Producer, Interview, April 1, 1993).

The April 1st meeting was held at the downtown Holiday Inn, in Sioux Falls, a midway point between Vermillion and Brookings. The conference room chosen for the meeting was organized with tables in a U shape. In somewhat symbolic, if not predictable fashion, the Vermillion and Brookings producers sat opposite from one-another, with the newly formed SDPB Management Team at the connecting table.

The Executive Director began the discussion, explaining that the day would be structured so that the morning session would be generally devoted to the network reorganization plan while the afternoon session would be dedicated to a discussion about programming.

The Sioux Falls Meeting

What we're looking at today is major change, philosophically, structurally and everything else in re-shaping what South Dakota Public Broadcasting is in this state. This is not just a cosmetic, minor thing that we're talking about. We're talking about everything in this network is under a microscope, and I think it should be after all of these years. We're looking at how best to use the resources that we have, the people that we have, and all of it to serve the people of South Dakota to provide them with programming.

Now there are a lot of different factors involved in this. Obviously some of the factors are state government and state funding. Two hundred and twenty five thousand dollars is being cut out of the 1994 budget. Can we get it back for fiscal year '95? Possibly. I talked to the people in Pierre and they say that once we get reorganized and everything is functioning well we might be able to make the case to

see that funding come back, who knows?

On the other hand, just look around you at the world we live in and what's going on in this country today and what's going on in state public broadcasting networks, what's going on in the corporate world. This morning we're reading about the airlines laying off 30,000 people. They're talking about restructuring all over this country in corporate America. Colleges are restructuring, medical institutions are restructuring, everything, its a changing environment. I think we're going to be seeing more and more diminishing funding for state agencies and state resources as well as the battle that we're constantly fighting at the federal level.

What it means, ladies and gentlemen, is that we're living in a changing, dynamic world that will impact all of us. It's not business as usual and nothing will be the same. Everything is changing. I've always been a proponent of change and I've never feared it and have never thought it was a negative thing and under the right direction, change can be very beneficial.

I can't guarantee that everyone at SDPB will be employed by SDPB. There may be circumstances due to budget cuts that cause us to reduce our staff. The \$225,000...yeah its operations but again be realistic as to what that means.

Obviously the state is looking at cutting operating budgets because politically and everything else they don't want to get into that whole fight with personnel. But what they're doing is laying it on us, because if they take your operating money away then one has to say, "What are we going to do with these people?" You need to be aware of what can happen.

Who's to say that in 1995 we don't see another budget cut, who's to say that the legislators don't push the privatization thing even further? What happens if they say, "SDPB needs to reduce its funding by ten percent, you guys figure out how you're going to do that."

All of this is a monumental dilemma and a monumental management task to bring about this change. So my approach has been to create a Management Team, a new structure. You know who the players are in that structure. And you have to understand, and you have to trust, and you have to believe that group of people isn't sitting around a table just throwing out wild ideas and crazy thoughts. There's a lot of discussion and viewpoints and thinking and deliberation that goes into trying to set direction.

One of the big problems has been two locations for primary staffing and production. There has always been this Brookings and Vermillion thing going on. I've been thinking that maybe we can find one place to consolidate, maybe Sioux Falls? Whatever. But I don't see that as a short-term thing given the fact that we're seeing our funds being reduced. So I see consolidation as a long-term thing with a

lot of other players needing to be involved.

But for the short term how do we resolve our problem between Brookings and Vermillion? The problem seems to be that we have a group of people charged with doing programming in two locations. So as I begin to think about this it began to make sense that if we're going to live with two locations, then maybe those locations would be charged with certain very defined goals and duties.

So, we have a network operations center, and that network operations center has all of our on-air, development and all of that, and that group of people is responsible for those tasks under a manager that can drive itself and do its thing.

Then, as one management team member calls it, our external side, will be the actual television production that gets done. That's the goal of the other side, the Brookings side. That group of people is driven by doing quality production, based upon the kind of things we've been talking about ... education, children, and community as part of our mission.

The problem with all of that is that it does mean that people may have to move. It does make it likely that people will have to move from Vermillion to Brookings or from Brookings to Vermillion. The fact of the matter is that we haven't determined who those people are, who the players are going to be or any of that. We're just looking at this from the broad viewpoint that this makes sense. So that is how we have gotten to where we are (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).

This lecture on the part of the Executive Director also contained a number of elements which he mentioned over and over again during the rest of the day and in one-on-one conversations elsewhere. Some of the key terms used during the day were "reorganization", "on-air look", "seamless programming", "players", and "teamwork". In addition, the Executive Director consistently repeated the necessity of using the new CPB programming goals identified as education, children and community.

He attempted to lead both a pep rally and a revival meeting. He chastened people for being critical of the management team concept and gave a mild tongue lashing for what he called "off color comments" about the reorganization. On occasion he lapsed into an "I'm just the new guy" or "I'm just one person" speech wherein he begged for their help and assistance to get the job done.

For the first time in public, he mentioned the term "privatization" in connection with the recent legislative decision to cut \$225,000 from the network's budget. He made the connection that danger existed in showing that they could raise the deficit through other ways such as by corporate support. It might then be assumed that the network could do quite well without state support on a permanent basis.

The Executive Director then turned the rest of the time over to the Management Team members (MTM's). They included the Director of Development and Marketing, the Director of Engineering and Technical Services, the Business Manager, the Director of Radio Broadcasting, the Network Production Manager, and the new Director of Television Programming. Each in turn gave a summary of their vision for the area which they supervised. Occasionally the Executive Director interjected commentary in order to clarify certain points.

On occasion the term "signaling value" was used. It refers to a marketing program promoted by PBS and patterned after various advertising strategies used in the corporate world hinging primarily on promotion of a particular image based upon a specialized positioning statement.

"Institutional positioning is creating a strategic identity. It means differentiating your station from others in your market, from other community services or institutions, and in the mind of your viewers and members. Chevron provides a good example of an organization that adopted a strategic communication program when it began a long-term institutional positioning effort to combat a strong negative image (PBS, 1992, 9,10).

After each MTM's presentation the Executive Director offered additional commentary or asked for questions about what the MTM had said. A number of individuals did ask questions. The Vermillion producers were present but silent, except during the Network Production Manager's (NPM) presentation wherein he further explained his vision regarding the dichotomy between external and internal production and the potential personnel moves involved.

P4: How long a term are these changes for? You're saying, "We'll determine what programming we need to do and then we'll move people to accommodate that." What happens next year when and if your priorities change? How permanent is this structural change?

NPM: I've come to the realization in the last three weeks, and I think the rest of the management team has that there ain't nothing permanent anymore.

P4: So we can look forward to selling houses and moving every year?

NPM: I've come to the realization that whatever ... something may happen next year that will totally change my life and I have to either accept it or move away and do something else.

This meeting appeared to be a pivotal point for a number of reasons. Not only were things like "privatization" contextualized but also a management style using language such as "either accept the change or move on" began to be articulated. Following the Network Production Manager's presentation, the Executive Director offered support for the perspective. "I came to Vermillion, bought a house, put money down, nobody paid for that. I don't have any guarantees. It

goes with my territory, I have to accept that." This style seemed to gain momentum with this meeting and came to be more clearly defined later in the month of April.

In addition, the Vermillion producers expressed concern that they had not been represented on the Management Team.

P4: What about in terms of input? You indicated that most of your input in terms of production came from the Network Production Manager. But he's been 120 miles away (in Brookings) and this is no reflection on him, but he had his shop up there to run and I don't see where the Management Team has gotten a whole lot of input from Vermillion production. I don't see how we could have been represented fairly.

A number of MTM's attempted to defend the contention that Vermillion production had been fairly represented and that many of them had articulated concerns for Vermillion producers. MTM's insisted that they were taking a holistic approach to management as opposed to carving out territories within the network. Following the Executive Director's (ED) lead some of them began indicating that these changes were hurting them as much as they were hurting everyone else.

MTM1: We don't want to jack you around. We're trying to be sensitive about it and it hurts us too. And I know it's easier to say, "Well you don't have to move, so it's easier for you." Yeah, we're making changes in how we do business.

ED: I think it's important that we understand that this hasn't been comfortable for anybody on the staff. If you think that as Executive Director this is a comfortable situation ... you're wrong. I'm charged with making changes, setting direction and trying to do that. This isn't easy. It's April Fools maybe we should call the old Executive Director and have him come in and give us some counseling. Come on guys, something has to be done and I'm trying to do it. It may not be the most comfortable approach, but I believe it's going to work. I can't please everybody.

When I have to sit down with any employee and tell them that, "Due to these circumstances you're no longer needed," that's not fun. You want to do that. When we have to sit down and make hard decisions you have to make hard decisions too. But it's life choices. That's what it gets into ... life choices.

This generally concluded the morning session. The afternoon session consisted of a discussion of programming goals based primarily upon the new CPB study involving education, children and community. The Network Production Manager (NPM) took a position at the front of the group with three flip charts available; one for education, one for children and one for community.

The group then began suggesting topics for potential programs relevant to each category while the NPM wrote them down for everyone to see. The stated assumption was, "At this point, no

idea is a bad idea."

Numerous topics were suggested throughout the afternoon. In the "Education" category for instance, some topics included ready-to-learn, drug awareness, literacy, GED, continuing education, vocational education, day care, elderly ... Under the "Children" category some topics included health, youth at risk, teen pregnancy, addictions, nutrition, government, self esteem, parenting ... For the "Community" category, a number of topics included health, addictions, nutrition, day care, elderly care, economic development, patenting, resources, racism, lifestyles, women's issues, violence, domestic abuse, poverty, taxes, AIDS ...

After about an hour one producer suggested that the group consider the relevance of the topics listed.

It seems to me that what we're doing is just making a list of all the social ills of America, and I'm not quite sure where this is going in terms of productions. I mean we could sit here all afternoon and talk about all the bad things that are going on in America ... you know, and all of our social problems. I'm not sure what that means to us in terms of making programs.

ED: Yeah, I know I have been sitting here thinking too that we could list lots of things but I think it's a good exercise. I keep thinking that I can't believe that there are not a lot of people or agencies in this state that have picked out a lot of reasons and are trying to make some kind of difference and that's where I see part of our collaboration with other agencies.

Because then what we're doing is we're building partnerships so that when state funding comes around, and other things come around, not only do you have your viewers and members supporting public broadcasting but you have other agencies saying, "No you gotta keep them in place because they're very important to our mission."

Another producer, however took issue with the breadth of the exercise and attempted to inject another perspective about the way program production choices should be conducted for public broadcasting.

P1: What we're doing is venturing into the development of propaganda. Basically you take an issue, make your message simple and pound the hell out of it, into the people's minds, that's how you change attitudes. That's how its always been done in warfare, that's how its always been done in advertising. Making a simple message and continuing the process of always constantly bombarding people with that message until after awhile they'll begin to believe it.

Yeah there's a lot of stuff up here but I think we've got to boil it down to the critical issues that matter to life.

I've been talking to tribal elders for an awful long time. Men who are connected with the natural law, with the natural world and the messages that are being spoken. There are certain things in place and decisions must be made about what direction we need to go. As an organization we must decide, What ... are ... THE ... critical ... issues that are going to make the difference. We can't deal with everything, there's no way. So we have to decide what are the critical issues and where are they going.

ED: How do you narrow it down?

P1: You've got to look at the things that are going to affect the world, our world... the things that are critical. Water is critical, you have to live. Peace of mind is critical, we can't be at each other's throats. I would propose two issues of very high priority. One is racism and the other is natural resources especially water.

Because when you look at South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana; some of you have listened to this story, I'll lay it out again. What happens? How come water development hasn't happened? Because of money, from D.C. for big time projects. When New York and Chicago began to use their water up and the numbers began to make a difference then the money will be there.

What we have to do is to educate our society about regionalism because that's what its all going to be about. People sit here and think that the ideals of America will temper things like are going on in Bosnia and various other places around the world. It's not. It won't. It's just a matter of time. It's just a matter of time.

Like I said before, I've been talking to tribal elders for a long time, people who I believe have insight and connection to what's going on. And what they're saying is that the number one issue, the number one issue, not only in the Indian community, but community wide is that we have to learn respect for each other, and respect for the mother earth. And unless we begin to adopt those sorts of principles and begin to adopt those sort of ideals and begin to work towards those ideals, it's inevitable that we're going to end up on the rocks.

We can go one course or another, but we've got to make a determination and that's where we come in. I've got my ideas about what is important. For me self-esteem and alcoholism are the two critical issues in the community. How do you build up self-esteem, make them believe in themselves, make them feel some self worth in what they do in the culture, their language, their spirituality.

Alcoholism is a driving force and a Catch-22. No one will become part of a community while they are unstable and until they get off of alcohol and drugs.

Right now the average age of an Indian person is 18.5. The average age of the non-Indian person is 35.5. The non-Indian population is leaving the state and getting

older. The Indian population is getting bigger and staying younger with more children and a more rapid rate. The problem within that context is that in 27 years the Lakota culture, the Lakota people will represent 33 percent of the population of this state. And out of that 33 percent, 10 percent will be highly affected by fetal alcohol syndrome. It costs between 2 and 3 million dollars per person from childhood to death. Who's going to pay for that? We are. That's why I see alcoholism as one of the most critical issues facing this state.

And, I've decided that that's what I'm going to attack because it's time that we as Indian people face up to that issue. Not a lot of people are going to. Some of you have read my script for Pine Ridge Lullaby. It's getting a lot of mixed reviews. A lot of people like it. A lot of people don't want to talk about it. The bottom line is that the people who are in control of the political mechanisms say its time we declare war on this thing but nobody wants to. Since they all have to live in that society, no one wants to take action.

I have chosen to. You know what I've been told? "Get a gun." That's what I've been told. But I've chosen to take this on anyhow. And that's what we all have to do. Make a decision about what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. If we're going to commit to it, where are we going with it? How are we going to do it? In the past we take one issue and play with it for a while and then we drop it. It doesn't make changes. It influences a few people, but it really doesn't make a change. If we're going to make solid change, pick an issue and pound the hell out of it.

NPM: The other part of that is to make them watch. We can put all of the stuff we want on that TV and they're not going to watch.

P2: They'll watch.

P4: Well if all we're worried about is that they tune in and say, "Wow, that was a good documentary!" that doesn't do any good because there is no participation, no actors involved. There has to be participation. It means getting people to sit down and talk. It means getting people to sit down and say, "By golly, racism doesn't exist only in Sturgis, it exists right here in the oldest university community in the state."

P1: And you have to get them to understand the ramifications. That's why a program like Buffalo Nation Journal is so effective because I'm taking Ph.D's from the Indian community and people who are doctors, lawyers, professional people from the Indian community and giving them a voice and letting people see what the Indian community is all about. People begin to see that Indians are not all welfare drunks and that's what it's all about.

P5: The thing is, it's trendy right now to talk about social issues and things like what a jerk Christopher Columbus was. And we're talking about all of these social issues. Well the CPB sits down and says we'll we have all of this stuff for kids and

education and you look at the PBS rundown and you see Nature and you see Nova and you see Mystery and you see Masterpiece Theatre and you see all of these other programs and every once in a while they'll throw in a show about some social issue.

And we're sitting, talking about doing shows about all of these social changes and we're talking about trying to get viewers. Well, you're not going to get viewers to watch by running programs about alcoholism. You might be able to get some people to watch but in general the Executive Director is saying that he wants to have an audience.

ED: The problem is that if we look at this in the context of this idea of privatization. If we look at all of the money we make in underwriting and membership and however many hundreds of thousands dollars, what is it ... a million bucks a year? That million dollars a year, why are we getting that money?

A: From people who enjoy the programs.

ED: What programs?

A: We might be presenting Lawrence Welk to a lot of influential people.

ED: I would venture to say that the number one reason people are funding South Dakota Public Broadcasting with their own money and the tax dollars of this state ... First of all I think we can all agree that we receive our state appropriation for a number of reasons but the number one reason is that we do a Statehouse program.

I think that legislators are our biggest underwriters to the tune of about three million dollars a year. Now there's other things they believe in that we're doing; education and all of that, but probably high on their list is that we're providing this statehouse service. So there's three million bucks that comes in, not because we're doing anything but a local show that doesn't deal with any of these issues. Then, when you start looking at the money that comes in from underwriters, they're very program specific, yeah, McNeil/Lehrer, yeah this, yeah that, the other thing. They'll underwrite and give money if they like it. And then the members. There are a variety of reasons, but the number one reason is their favorite program. And that favorite program could be Mystery, Masterpiece Theatre, Sesame Street, the children's block, it's all national stuff.

Then, inside of that feeling of giving us money they might say, "Well, I think it's nice that you do local programming or that you're ours, that you're South Dakota Public Broadcasting."

What I'm saying is that if we were going to go out and say "We do all of these local programs about all of these issues," and if we were to support ourselves on this

and try to find funding, we wouldn't be able to sell any of it. So the question becomes, if we weren't doing any local programming, how much money would we lose?

We have to realize the politics involved in all of this. What if we all decide that we shouldn't be doing Statehouse, that we should be doing something else. If we sit here like a group of adults and professionals and say, "That show is really not doing much for us," we've all agreed now that we are going to take those resources and produce THIS show which we think will have a bigger impact on the state of South Dakota ... what's going to happen reality wise?

We're probably going to lose funding (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).

Shortly after this, the meeting ended. Some individuals expressed the opinion that they had learned a great deal. The group generally agreed to consider what had been discussed in terms of the topics listed. In the near future, program proposals would be considered with a hope that this discussion would prove fruitful in determining a focus for both local program production and programming in general.

The Vermillion producers, who were responsible for Cultural Affairs, Minority Affairs and Instructional Television programming, and who had been the most vocal in articulating concerns about network reorganization were ambivalent about the meeting's meaning. They said they feared a move for them would compromise the momentum of their programs since many of their resources existed in the Vermillion area.

In retrospect, the network producers who had been most critical of the new network organizational plan and direction, had produced the most controversial programming and had articulated a definition of "educational programming" in terms of diversity rather than traditional K through 12, were the ones which were being asked to uproot their lives.

The Management Team meeting ended and the Executive Director and Network Production Manager left to tell the producers "the way it was going to be." The Vermillion producers who were responsible for Minority Affairs, Cultural Affairs and Instructional Television productions were essentially given the choices of moving or leaving the network.

A new Management Team policy regarding the definition of producer duties in terms of specialties was established. Producer duties were longer be defined in terms of such categories as "Minority Affairs" or "Cultural Affairs." Rather they simply became known as "producers" for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and described as "generalists."

Expressing dissatisfaction with the decisions made and the direction the network took, the current Minority Affairs producer said, "Its another example of non-Indian people making

decisions on what they are going to give them."

Summary

This article discusses the discursive behavior of South Dakota Public Broadcasting managers and producers in the context of organizational change. It allows them to tell their stories that include dealing with conflict, contradiction and struggle while the world around them is undergoing transition.

This story encompasses many facets of a large statewide network affected by legislators, state agencies such as DECA, the Educational Telecommunications Board, SDPB managers and producers, and members of the public. It is thus a complex saga with many "players."

It also provides a glimpse of some of the interaction and speech act behavior of individuals involved. During departmental meetings, general staff meetings, ETB meetings involving both Board members and members of the public, interviews and hallway conversation, it is possible to gain a partial understanding of the complexities, the emotions, the dilemmas and the conflict imposed by the steering mechanisms of money and power which affect the human condition and the lifeworld.

This was not a pleasant experience for many employees of the network. But it occurred for reasons related to historical developments, to structure and to steering mechanisms. It was affected by action which may not be communicative in nature, for such action has apparently forced them to construct meaning for their lives in less than democratic contexts. As a result, this affected program production at South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Essentially, producers of the system were forced to make choices which they opposed for philosophical reasons and to which they had very little if any genuine input. At the same time, by articulating opposition they were being defined as less than "team players", and the productions they developed, less than appropriate for SDPB.

The "team" metaphor which was used over and over again as in: "Management Team," "team player," "I'm here, and I'm playing and I'm playing hard," "play by the rules," among others; was being used to define individuals who were conforming to certain ideals but which still may have had very little to say about diversity and democracy, the very ideals upon which public broadcasting was founded.

The final article in this series, to be published at a later date, will apply the concepts of Universal Pragmatics including communicatives, representatives, regulatives and constatives and their four respective validity claims: comprehensibility, truthfulness, appropriateness and truth (Schlenker, 484) to the speech acts of SDPB managers and producers detailed in this current work.

It will provide further understanding of the steering mechanisms involved and either the facilitation or lack of facilitation of the ideal speech situation for employees at South Dakota Public Broadcasting and consequently, also for the people of South Dakota.

IJHCS

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