# The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing

## Business Communication

579    Alred, Gerald J. " 'We Regret to Inform You': Toward a New Theory of Negative Messages." *Studies in Technical Communication: Selected Papers from the 1992 CCCC and NCTE Meetings*. Ed. Brenda R. Sims. CCCC Committee on Technical Communications. 17–36.

Five factors determine how direct or indirect the communication of a negative message should be: (1) the reader's and writer's stakes in the message; (2) expectations of the discourse community or culture; (3) the ethos or value the writer wishes to project; (4) the writer's anticipation of the reader's response; and (5) the writer's and reader's personality characteristics. Standard advice to "buffer" negative messages is incorrect. Sometimes a buffered message will appear obtuse or insulting, especially to an American. Hence, the five factors should be consulted. However, many other cultures value indirectness, so American business students should learn indirect style options for use when cultural conditions demand it.

580    Bazerman, Charles, and James Paradis, eds. *Textual Dynamics of the Professions: Historical and Contemporary Studies of Writing in Professional Communities*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

In the workplace, "textual dynamics are a central agency in the social construction of objects, concepts, and institutions" (4). Fifteen essays examine the textual construction of professions, the dynamics of professional discourse communities, and the operational force of texts. Essays include Charles Bazerman, "How Natural Philosophers Can Cooperate: The Literary Technology of Coordinated Investigation in Joseph Priestley's History and Present State of Electricity (1767)"; Greg Myers, "Stories and Styles in Two Molecular Biology Review Articles"; James Zappen, "Scientific Rhetoric in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Herbert Spencer, Thomas N. Huxley, and John Dewey"; Robert Schwegler and Linda Shamoon, "Meaning Attribution in Ambiguous Texts in Sociology"; Carl Herndl, Barbara Fennell, and Carolyn Miller, "Understanding Failures in Organizational Discourse: The Accident at Three Mile Island and the Shuttle Challenger Disaster"; and Amy Devitt, "Intertextuality in Tax Accounting: Generic, Referential, and Functional."

581    Beard, John D., Jone Rymer, and David L. Williams. "An Assessment System for Collaborative Writing Groups: Theory and Empirical Evaluation." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 3 (September 1989): 29–51.

Group writing, ever important in business communication courses because of the prevalence of project teams in industry, is difficult to grade and