Public Abstract
First Name: William
Middle Name: Allan
Last Name: Reed
Degree: Ph.D.
Degree Program: Communication
Advisor's First Name: Michael
Advisor's Last Name: Kramer
Co-Advisor's First Name:
Co-Advisor's Last Name:
Graduation Term: Winter
Graduation Year: 2006

Title: Unexposed, Unexplored and Unresolved Conflict as Precursors to the Failure of High Technology Projects

This qualitative study of high-technology projects investigated how enduring conflict can operate as a precursor to project failure.  Three types of conflict were found to be indicative to the outcome of projects. *Unexposed conflict* represented problems with obtaining knowledge and coherency for important project-related differences. *Unexplored conflict* reflected issues with power and voice, where important communication about known differences was consistently inhibited or suppressed. Finally, *unresolved conflict* centered on issues of timing and action which involved difficulties with adapting to change, negotiating solutions to problems, and agreeing on priorities and scope.  Two contextual factors, *project complexity* and the *ambiguity of success* provided a substantial contribution to the experience of these conflicts among the participants.  The theoretical construct of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) provided a framework to understand how each type of conflict was constructed and had the potential to become enduring.  Implications are discussed with emphasis on the potential for qualitative assessments to provide important insights into the status of complex high technology projects.