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JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION PEDAGOGY

Volume 2

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Contents

Editorial Board	iii
Introduction	
And So It Goes: An Introduction to Volume 2 of the <i>Journal of Communication Pedagogy</i>	1
Scott A. Myers, West Virginia University	
Teaching Forum	
Perspectives on Teaching the Family Communication Course	3
Tiffany R. Wang, University of Montevallo	
Jeffrey T. Child, Kent State University	
Organizing the Organizational Communication Course: Content and Pedagogical Recommendations	7
Sarah E. Riforgiate, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee	
Ali Gattoni, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee	
Erika L. Kirby, Creighton University	
Engaging Persuasion: What Should Undergraduate Students Enrolled in a Persuasion Course Learn?	12
Stephen K. Hunt, Illinois State University	
Kevin R. Meyer, Illinois State University	
“NOT My Issue!!!”: Teaching the Interpersonal Conflict Course	17
Nancy J. Brule, Bethel University	
Jessica J. Eckstein, Western Connecticut State University	
Multifaceted Contents and Techniques for Designing Health Communication Courses	23
Maria Brann, IUPUI	
Laura D. Russell, Denison University	
A Pedagogical Guide to Teaching an Interpersonal Communication Course	27
Jordan Atkinson, Missouri Western State University	
David T. McMahan, Missouri Western State University	
Pedagogy, Gender, and Communication: Learning and Unlearning Gender	33
Marian L. Houser, Texas State University	
Robert J. Sidelinger, Oakland University	
Angela M. Hosek, Ohio University	

Argument Pedagogy for Everyday Life	37
Jeffrey P. Mehlretter Drury, Wabash College	
Nicholas S. Paliewicz, University of Louisville	
Sara A. Mehlretter Drury, Wabash College	
Pedagogical Tools in Our Briefcases: Teaching the Business and Professional Communication Course	43
Suzy Prentiss, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville	
Justin Walton, Cameron University	
Try It, You Might Like It: On Teaching Rhetorical Theory and Criticism	48
Deanna D. Sellnow, University of Central Florida	
Teaching the Communication Course: Intercultural Communication	53
Nathan G. Webb, Belmont University	
Mary Stairs Vaughn, Belmont University	
Teaching the Introductory Public Relations Course: Pedagogical Recommendations	58
LaKesha N. Anderson, Johns Hopkins University Advanced Academic Program	

Original Research Studies

“You Have to Cry Before You Teach This Class”: Emotion With Work and Resistance in Teaching Intercultural Communication	63
Brandi Lawless, University of San Francisco	
Yea-Wen Chen, San Diego State University	

Reflection Essays

Teaching Public Speaking Online—Not a Problem but an Opportunity!	76
Sherwyn Morreale, University of Colorado Colorado Springs	
Janice Thorpe, University of Colorado Colorado Springs	
Susan Ward, Delaware County Community College	
Reflections on a Pedagogical Shift: A Public Speaking for Social Justice Model	83
Angela L. Putman, Pennsylvania State University Brandywine	
Reducing Secondary Trauma and Compassion Fatigue in the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication Classrooms	90
Mary E. King, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	
Albra Wheeler, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	
Hearing Is Believing: Using Audio Feedback in the Online Interpersonal Communication Course	96
Krista Hoffmann-Longtin, IUPUI	

Best Practices

The Practice of Nonviolence: Teaching an Undergraduate Course in Nonviolent Communication	103
Sharon Lauricella, University of Ontario Institute of Technology	
Best Practices for Teaching Discussion as Part of High School Common Core State Standards	111
Mitchell Stengel, Illinois State University	
Leah Nolan, Illinois State University	
David Donnick, Illinois State University	
Wesley Skym, Illinois State University	
Anna M. Wright, Illinois State University	
Communication Concepts in Action: Best Practices in Case Study Pedagogy in the Organizational Communication Course	119
Andrea L. Meluch, Indiana University South Bend	
Patricia E. Gettings, Indiana University Southeast	
Developing a Digital Voice: Embedding Digital Communication Platforms, Networks, and Technologies in the 21st-Century Classroom	127
James M. Proszek, Northwestern University	
Best Practices for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues in the Basic Communication Course	134
Kristina Ruiz-Mesa, California State University, Los Angeles	
Karla M. Hunter, South Dakota State University	

INTRODUCTION



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Central States Communication Association

And So It Goes: An Introduction to Volume 2 of the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*

Scott A. Myers

With the publication of Volume 2 of the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* (*JCP*), I think it is safe to say that communication pedagogy has found its home. As part of the larger instructional communication education umbrella and similar to, yet distinct enough from, its related subdisciplines such as basic course scholarship, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and critical communication pedagogy (Myers, 2018), the articles published in this volume of *JCP* demonstrate the three forms through which communication pedagogy can emerge. That is, whether communication pedagogy centers on the systematic study (i.e., Original Research Studies), reflection (i.e., Reflection Essays), or identification of teaching practices (i.e., Best Practices) across communication curricula, the end result is that communication pedagogy acts as a vehicle through which teaching effectiveness can be improved, strengthened, or even realized, with the goal of enriching—in some way—the educational lives of instructors and students and assisting instructors, students, and classmates in the development and maintenance of productive and satisfying communication relationships with and among each other.

Just as important, however, is that communication pedagogy acts as a conduit through which instructors can learn from one another. One way in which this learning can be accomplished is by asking instructors to share their ideas about the course content that should or might be included when designing a particular communication course, which is the purpose of this volume's Teaching Forum. In 2009, Bertelsen and Goodboy surveyed 148 four-year colleges and universities to identify the courses offered by Communication departments. They found that although these institutions collectively offered 32 courses, the most frequently offered courses were interpersonal, group, and organizational communication; persuasion; public speaking; intercultural communication; communication theory and research methods; and argumentation and debate. Based on their findings, in concert with consulting *JCP*'s editorial board members about the courses taught at their own schools, I selected 12 Communication courses for inclusion in the Forum and solicited volunteers from among the *JCP* editorial board to write an article about each of these courses. Each article highlights the foundational and content areas

that should be taught to students enrolled in the course, offers two or three applied assignments, and discusses the specific teaching challenges associated with the course.

With the publication of Volume 2, I would like to thank my five associate editors, the editorial board members of both Volumes 1 and 2, and all the authors whose work has appeared in *JCP*. I would like to thank Patric Spence and Chad Edwards for the time, energy, and passion they spent toward making *JCP* an open access journal. I would like to thank the Central States Communication Association—particularly the 2017 Executive Committee—for providing all of us with the opportunity to create and sustain a platform for the dissemination of communication pedagogy scholarship. I would like to thank my colleagues Matt Martin, Alan Goodboy, and Joy Green for their assistance during the past 3 years.

As I finish my term as editor, I'm reminded of a phrase coined by journalist Linda Ellerbee. In her book *“And So It Goes”: Adventures in Television*, she explains how she came to use the phrase “and so it goes” to signify the end of each newscast:

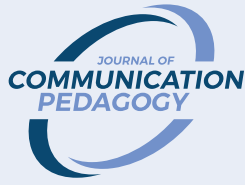
On television, I use the phrase, “and so it goes” to end my report and my shows. . . . [S]aying “and so it goes” leaves a door open. The implication is that things are still going. The tense is present. There are possibilities. (1986, p. 254)

It is my hope that Volumes 1 and 2 have opened the door for the study, reflection, and practice of communication pedagogy. Under the guidance of incoming editor Deanna D. Sellnow, I am confident that all things communication pedagogy will still be going, the tense will remain present, and the possibilities will be endless.

And so it goes.

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Perspectives on Teaching the Family Communication Course

Tiffany R. Wang and Jeffrey T. Child

Keywords: family communication, instruction, pedagogy, teaching

Abstract: This article discusses what undergraduate students enrolled in a family communication course should learn. It is intended to provide readers with a general direction on how to design or teach a family communication course so that students understand a communication-centered approach to family. This article highlights some of the foundational theories and concepts grounding most family communication courses, content areas typically addressed when considering the family communication course, possible assignments that might be useful in teaching the course, and relevant issues related to teaching family communication. If instructors thoughtfully consider content and assignment decisions in the family communication course, they have the potential to help students think about family communication in more nuanced and informed ways as they navigate family bonds as scholars and practitioners.

Family interaction is foundational to how people think about the interface of others and themselves in society. Parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and families (in all its varied forms and configurations) socialize the interaction norms that individuals carry into different types of relationships throughout life. Family bonds are among the longest lasting types of connections formed with others throughout life. This article highlights some of the foundational theories and concepts grounding most family communication courses, content areas typically addressed when considering the family communication course, possible assignments that might be useful in teaching the course, and relevant issues related to teaching family communication.

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Foundations

A diverse range of theories can be useful to understanding the interaction patterns that occur in families. In fact, the most recent edition of Braithwaite, Suter, and Floyd's (2018) edited family communication theories book highlights 29 theories that have a significant body of work in application to the study of family communication practices that might ground a family communication course. Thus, one of the joys in teaching this course is that two family communication courses might look dramatically different based upon the theories chosen to serve as a foundation for the course.

One way to decide which theories to include in the course might come from examining the published literature. Braithwaite et al. (2018) noted in their most recent analysis that from 2004 through 2015, the most commonly applied theories in the family communication area include communication privacy management theory, family communication patterns theory, relational dialectics theory, narrative theories, systems theory, and attachment theory. Grounding the family communication course in these six theoretical perspectives provides a snapshot of what is unique about family communication. Understanding family interaction requires exploration of dialogue and storytelling; power dynamics; and individual, dyadic, group, and system-based factors that shape and explain family interactions. Instructors should build a theoretical understanding of family communication among students that allows for the situating of family interactions through multiple meta-theoretical commitments, including post-positivist theories, interpretive theories, and critical theories (Braithwaite et al.). Another way to think about which theories might be privileged or deemphasized in family communication is to review the theories covered in related courses (e.g., interpersonal communication, communication theory) as a way to reduce redundancy in curriculum overall.

Beyond theory, students taking a family communication course should have an increased understanding about the diversity and complexity of what currently constitutes family communication and some of the unique communication-based issues that occur in different types of families. Such discussions begin by considering definitional issues for families grounded in biology, legality, relational choices, social construction perspectives, and discourse-dependence approaches (Turner & West, 2015). There is no widely agreed upon definition of the term “family” or a universal lens through which people consider family for the purposes of unpacking communication. Some of the family types that students should leave the course understanding better from a communication perspective include two-parent biological families, committed partners, single-parent families, solo parent, stepfamilies, gay and lesbian families, adoptive families, foster families, extended or intergenerational families, and self-defined families (Dorrance Hall & Scharp, in press; Galvin, Braithwaite, Schrod, & Bylund, 2019; Segrin & Flora, 2019; Turner & West, 2018).

Content Areas

After students develop a strong understanding of the foundations of the family communication course, students can use what they have learned about defining, creating, and theorizing about family to examine several general content areas. The varied family communication textbooks (e.g., Dorrance Hall & Scharp, in press; Galvin et al., 2019; Segrin & Flora, 2019; Turner & West, 2018) each take a slightly different approach to topics covered across a typical 15-week semester. For example, some textbooks embed issues of media, technology, and family communication across the entire textbook whereas other textbooks devote an entire chapter to the topic. No textbook is likely to address all possible content that could be covered, and it may be helpful to supplement the text with content from one or more of the areas listed below from other resources.

Across textbooks, some topics most consistently covered include culture and creating a family identity (e.g., relational cultures, communication patterns, societal influence, religion/spirituality), storytelling (e.g., functions of storytelling, types of family stories, rituals, and storytelling), and intimacy (e.g., commitment, disclosure, sexuality). Textbooks also cover roles and rules (e.g., role functions, gender and roles, role appropriation, types of family rules), power and influence (e.g., decision-making, violence in families), stress and conflict (e.g., process, factors, unresolved conflict, destructive conflict, constructive conflict, unpredictable stress, family coping patterns, crises), and well-being (e.g., physical well-being, difficult conversations). Consistently covered topics also include media and technology (e.g., televised messages about family, consumption of media, social media, technology and media access in the home) and the future of family communication (e.g., issues of diversity, multicultural families, understudied families, poverty and homelessness).

Applied Assignments

Family communication is an easy topic to get students out of the classroom interacting with others in meaningful ways. One assignment that does this is having students engage in an informed interview assignment. This assignment can be completed in three stages throughout the semester. First, students explore the literature on one family communication-based topic in the course and develop potential interview questions based on that literature. Then, students interview three generations of the same family on their topic of interest and develop three to five themes reflecting the most interesting insights from those interviews. Third, students write a final section that brings together diverse perspectives on research and practice related to their topic. Students can consider how the literature review and interviews confirm, contradict, and extend one another. Asking students to reflect on how the assignment has expanded their own understanding of family communication is a good way to synthesize the course content.

Some tips can make this semester-long interview assignment more productive. Telling students to be strategic in their selection of a family who will allow a deeper nuanced understanding of their topic is helpful to gain more substantial dialogue and possible perspective taking in interviews. Students often need help constructing descriptive interview questions that get others sharing perspectives and stories while centering a communication approach to their topic of interest rather than a psychological, sociological, family studies, or gender studies approach.

Another applied assignment that highlights the aforementioned foundations and content areas is a family sitcom analysis of classic or contemporary television sitcoms (e.g., *The Brady Bunch*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *The Fosters*, *Modern Family*). This assignment could include a paper or oral presentation that can be completed individually or as a group assignment. Students should view three to five episodes per sitcom and apply relevant content areas to specific examples taken from the sitcom in either a written or oral analysis. Potential content areas include the systems perspective, family communication patterns, meanings and rules, conflict, intimacy, family roles, or power and decision-making. Students who are asked to compare and contrast two sitcoms from different time periods also trace how these sitcoms reflect how the ways in which individuals define and create family have changed over time.

Issues to Consider

One critical issue for instructors is keeping student contributions and perspectives consistently centered on examining communication within families rather than providing prescriptive solutions for family problems that students may experience in their lives or drifting to discussion of issues

that do not center a communicative approach to understanding family. Instructors also should seek to cultivate a confidential and welcoming environment where students feel comfortable sharing their family experiences. Although family communication foundations and content areas often lead to rich discussion, instructors should caution students that family communication is not designed to replace counseling or therapy, and that self-disclosure about family experiences is voluntary. Often, family communication instructors are not trained counselors or therapists. If difficult topics arise that require counseling or therapy, instructors should direct and encourage students to use helpful resources on campus that allow them to engage with trained practitioners.

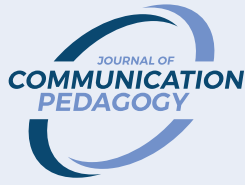
Family communication often is an upper-division elective; thus, in some cases, students may be unprepared for the course. Whereas students from multiple disciplines take the course, providing scaffolding for learning about foundational communication principles may be helpful to those students who are less familiar with communication theory. Balancing helpful scaffolding with challenging students who have extensive background in communication studies can prove difficult. Students outside of the discipline taking family communication as an elective course may be more interested in the application or practice of family communication rather than the theory of family communication. Highlighting theory, application, and practice are important to a successful family communication course. Another approach to this issue is requiring a prerequisite course before the senior-level class, such as interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

Instructors should ground the family communication course in theories and concepts that reflect the richness and complexity of family interaction, explore content areas that highlight the diversity of family communication, design applied assignments that encourage students to merge theory and practice, and remain mindful of potential issues that might arise in the classroom. If instructors thoughtfully consider content and assignment decisions in the family communication course, they have the potential to help students think about family communication in more nuanced and informed ways as they navigate family bonds as both scholars and practitioners.

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Organizing the Organizational Communication Course: Content and Pedagogical Recommendations

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Keywords: organizational communication, pedagogy, foundational concepts, active learning, sample assignments

Abstract: Organizational communication extends beyond communication that takes place in an organizational context to the ways communication is used to organize and facilitate activity. This article is designed to enhance organizational communication pedagogy practices by highlighting foundational concepts and content areas that should be included in undergraduate organizational communication courses. Additionally, four active learning assignments, including case studies, applied organizational communication theory papers, organizational audits, and media assignments, are described to enhance student engagement with class material and to assess student learning. Finally, the article includes common issues to help educators anticipate concerns and plan effective classroom strategies.

Students often enroll in organizational communication courses because they want to learn how to communicate effectively as an organizational member; in other words, they expect to gain professional skills to prepare themselves for work. While many organizational communication textbooks provide some insight into business communication skills (e.g., working in teams, using communication technology, communicating during conflict or crisis), they also focus on how communication organizes understanding and behavior. Importantly, organizational communication explores the ways communication constructs and constitutes organizations (Deetz & Eger, 2014). As Putnam and Mumby (2014) established, “without rhetoric, communication, and persuasion, we would have no organization”

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(p. 2). Organizational communication occurs not only in formal workplaces, but in volunteer groups, educational institutions, religious organizations, and across societies.

When communication is presented as an organizing mechanism, students gain an appreciation for how behaviors shape understanding and sensemaking, contest or reify behavior patterns, influence perceptions of identity and membership, create or limit opportunities for teamwork and leadership, perpetuate or resist organizational cultures, and provide an opportunity to negotiate intersections between hierarchical structures. Recognizing the organizing power of communication allows students to better understand organizational experiences *and* leverage this knowledge to adapt their communication to a rapidly evolving world. This article explores foundational principles and content that organizational communication students should learn, provides several assignments to enhance engaged learning, and discusses some of the challenges in teaching organizational communication.

Foundations

The communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) serves as an overarching umbrella under which organizational communication generally is researched and taught. Miller (2015) explained that understanding communication as constitutive provides an important “metamodel—an overarching way of thinking about communication” (p. 13). Further, Eisenberg, Trethewey, LeGreco, and Goodall (2017) contended that “the history of human civilization is fundamentally a history of *organizing*” (italics in original, p. 3). Organizational communication constructs individual and collective understandings (Deetz & Eger, 2014) and influences the interplay between individuals’ desire for autonomy and institutional goals for control and organizing (Conrad & Poole, 2005).

Within this CCO perspective, organizational communication courses should include some foundational elements. These elements include historical context: students should learn about classical and relational approaches, Taylorism, and the Hawthorne studies to understand the interplay between organizational members and leaders. Further, foundational theories that should be discussed include organizational assimilation, systems theory, structuration, sensemaking, stages of group development, Dewey’s standard agenda for decision-making, member roles, trait leadership theory, leadership styles theory (i.e., democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire), situational leadership, transformational leadership, emotional labor, organizational identity, and critical organizational theory. This list is not exhaustive, but instead serves to highlight central concepts in organizational communication that students should understand when completing the class.

Content Areas

Organizational communication courses include an array of content areas. We surveyed six organizational communication textbooks to determine the most frequently represented content areas (Brewer & Westerman, 2018; Conrad & Poole, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2017; Kramer & Bisel, 2017; Miller, 2015; Papa, Daniels, & Spiker, 2008). These areas include:

- ▶ Defining Organizational Communication
 - ▶ Approaches and Orientations to Organizational Communication
 - ▶ Organizational Communication Systems and Networks
 - ▶ Organizational Culture
 - ▶ Becoming an Organizational Member
-

- ▶ Team and Group Communication
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Organizational Conflict and/or Conflict Management
- ▶ Ethics
- ▶ Organizational Change and Crisis Communication
- ▶ New Trends/Changing World of Work (common topics include technology, diversity, globalization, and work/life concerns)

In addition, content areas included in some of the textbooks or embedded in chapters in other books include Power, Emotions, Critical Approaches, Feminist Approaches, and Postmodern Approaches.

Applied Assignments

In building connections between classroom learning of foundational concepts and content areas, active learning strategies and assignments encourage problem-solving, developing creative solutions, and enhance student learning and attention span (Markant, Ruggeri, Gureckis, & Xu, 2016; Sousa, 2011). Therefore, four active learning applied assignments are offered for organizational communication courses.

Case study assignments help students view organizational communication theory in action and provide a common context for analysis. Several case study textbooks are geared specifically toward the organizational communication course (see Anderson, 2012; Bisel & Kramer, in press; Fyke, Faris, & Buzzanell, 2017; May, 2013). Case study assignments can be structured as group or individual projects. In addition to traditional assignment forms (e.g., exams, papers, presentations), students also can be asked to create a short training video based on a case or write their own cases to share in class. Case studies should involve identifying a theory pertaining to the case (e.g., emotional labor, structuration, authoritarian leadership), explaining the theory, and using the theory to analyze the communication and implications.

An *applied organizational communication theory paper* allows students to integrate the information they learn about organizational communication theories in two ways. First, students articulate how they see their identity in the “world” of contemporary organizational communication theory: do they see themselves thinking in terms of systems, cultural, constitutive, or critical approaches? [And why?] Students then analyze an organization with which they are familiar through several lenses of organizational communication, such as systems theory, cultural theory, constitutive approaches, or critical approaches. For each required theoretical approach, students answer these questions as a way to directly apply theory to experience:

- ▶ What key concepts or terms would be used to study your organization through _____ theory?
- ▶ What aspects of your organization stand out through this lens?
- ▶ What assumptions would be made about the effectiveness of your organization through this lens?
- ▶ What suggestions might a _____ theorist make about your organization?

Organizational audits involve students working individually or in groups to observe an organization, apply theories and class concepts evident in the organization, and then make theory-based organizational recommendations to enhance communication. The recommendations can be delivered in written

or verbal forms and may be structured in different ways to accentuate particular learning objectives. Further, this assignment can be a community-engaged research project, requiring students to make a presentation to a community client.

Media assignments help students make connections to organizational communication concepts in the media. Students (or groups) select specific content areas (e.g., socialization, leadership, change/crisis, diversity, emotional labor) and identify examples of these areas in the media (e.g., television shows, movies, books, articles, current events). Students then use concepts from their content area to analyze the examples. Students deliver a brief presentation highlighting the examples and analysis, then lead class discussion where all class members critically analyze the examples. These discussions enable students to learn about course concepts in more depth and across multiple organizational contexts.

Issues to Consider

Organizational communication courses have much to offer students through foundational theories, strong content units, and applied assignments. However, teaching organizational communication also comes with challenges. To begin, students enter the course with diverse educational backgrounds and college majors. Students outside of the communication major may be drawn to (or required to take) the course to help them prepare for graduation and enter the workforce. Consequently, because student majors often vary from communication, not all students will have similar foundational knowledge about the communication discipline. Instructors should consider asking students preliminary questions (formally or informally) to determine necessary foundational communication content that needs to be covered or reviewed before delving into more complex organizational communication topics.

A related challenge is that often students (particularly from other majors) take communication for granted and assume the course will not be rigorous. These assumptions can make it difficult to engage students in deep critical thinking and analysis to question taken-for-granted assumptions and to identify how communication is shaping their understanding through discursive practices. Using applied assignments and modeling those assignments in class through scaffolding content and activities can help overcome this challenge.

Another challenge is that students enter the classroom with a range of organizational experiences and expectations. A study conducted by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce (2015) reported that 70% of college students work while enrolled in classes, with 40% of employed students working 30 hours or more. However, there also are students who have no work experience and they often worry about (not) having enough experience to contribute to class discussions. Further, variations in experience can be challenging if students view their experience as natural and dismiss other student experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a supportive classroom climate that honors *all* student experiences to help students recognize the fundamental organizing features of communication.

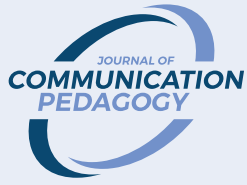
While differences in majors and work experiences produce challenges, they also create valuable learning opportunities. A wide range of students bring in diverse examples and insight that enable all students to connect concepts and examples across organizational contexts as well as to volunteer groups, community groups, and educational institutions. Diverse examples provide opportunities to connect course material in unexpected ways, enabling students to think more critically about course concepts.

Conclusion

This article provided foundational elements, standard content areas, applied assignments, and important considerations to enhance pedagogical practices and help educators engage students. The organizational communication class has the potential to positively influence students throughout their lifetimes and help them communicate appropriately and effectively at work, but also in the myriad organizations with which they interact daily. Leveraging the idea of how communication organizes allows students to think critically about their own and others' behaviors, and adapt to the increasingly changing world in which they live.

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Engaging Persuasion: What Should Undergraduate Students Enrolled in a Persuasion Course Learn?

Stephen K. Hunt and Kevin R. Meyer

Keywords: persuasion, influence, compliance gaining, pedagogy

Abstract: In our daily activities we are bombarded with persuasive messages. From advertising on mass and social media to interactions with friends, we are constantly exposed to attempts to change or reinforce our attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Conversely, we routinely attempt to influence others and gain their compliance through persuasive attempts of our own. Without question, persuasion is a central feature of virtually every aspect of human communication and is found wherever we find people communicating. Fortunately, scholars have developed a great number of empirically tested persuasive techniques, strategies, and theories that can help students become effective producers and consumers of persuasive messages. This article outlines the foundations, content areas, and applied assignments appropriate for an undergraduate persuasion course. In addition, we outline several pedagogical issues for instructors to consider.

Persuasion courses have been an essential feature of the curriculum in communication departments for some time. The roots of persuasion can be traced from ancient Greek and Roman scholars to present-day theorists and researchers. Most any communication department either requires students to take the persuasion course or offers it as a popular elective. This article outlines the foundations, content areas, and applied assignments appropriate for an undergraduate persuasion course. In addition, we discuss several pedagogical issues for instructors to consider.

Foundations

The primary goal of a persuasion course is to provide students with a solid grounding in theories, principles, and strategies of persuasion as they apply to everyday contexts in which influence attempts

occur. The course defines persuasion and juxtaposes that definition with related terms such as “coercion,” “propaganda,” and “deception.” Additionally, this course articulates the boundaries of ethical persuasion. Relatedly, this course should address the positive uses of persuasion that enhance the democratic process and common good as well as the dark side of persuasion wherein influence attempts manipulate, limit, or restrict free will and choice, or occur below the threshold of conscious awareness. Students will gain familiarity with findings from empirical investigations of persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining, as well as learn about strategies and techniques of persuasion relating to a wide variety of real-life communication contexts, situations, and settings. Students also should be provided with opportunities to develop a better understanding of the many ways that persuasion theories and skills can be used as a tool for civic and political engagement.

Content Areas

A suggested organizational pattern for a persuasion course is based upon the premise that students first need exposure to what persuasion is and its ethical implications when used in a negative manner. Ideally, instructors would begin the course by exposing students to the benefits of studying persuasion, clearly defining persuasion, and providing an overview of the aims of persuasive communication. Instructors should consider covering dual process models (e.g., Elaboration Likelihood and Heuristic Systematic Models, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken, 1987) of persuasion early in the course to lay the foundation for how persuasive messages are cognitively processed. In addition, instructors should cover ethical persuasion early in the semester and continue to make applications to ethics throughout the remainder of the course.

The next content area should introduce students to using persuasion for the common good. Students should be exposed to the positive contributions of engaged persuasion by understanding its applications to civic engagement, campaigns, social movements, and group decision-making. Demonstrating the relationship between persuasion and civic engagement helps students better understand the pro-social applications of persuasion research and theory, and establishes the foundation for any assignments used in the course.

Students then should be introduced to the role that attitudes play in persuasive communication as well as the attitude/behavior relationship (e.g., the theories of Planned Behavior and Reasoned Action, Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010), as well as explore the research literature on production and consumption of persuasive messages. Importantly, reading materials include both foundational theories (e.g., Diffusion of Innovations Theory and literature regarding framing of persuasive messages and persuasive appeals, Rogers, 2003) of persuasion as well as contemporary theories (e.g., Psychological Reactance Theory, Brehm, 1966; the Extended Parallel Processing Model, Witte, 1992) and cutting-edge research. Beyond these social scientific approaches, we suggest that instructors draw upon Toulmin’s (2003) Argument Model to demonstrate the essential elements of persuasive messages.

Next, learning about message reception and the dimensions of source credibility will provide the more technical aspects concerning the construction and decoding of persuasive messages. Covering message characteristics before source is unique for a persuasion course, but this sequence helps students understand persuasion fully before analyzing how messages are constructed and received (conversely, covering source before message characteristics is problematic because it assumes a linear process of

persuasive communication). Theory readings can be integrated as they relate to compliance gaining and sequential persuasion, receiving persuasive messages (e.g., priming effect, piquing receivers, and the role of culture in processing messages), and theories of behavioral reactions (e.g., Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Festinger, 1957; Social Judgment Theory, Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Motivated Reasoning Theory, Kunda, 1990).

Applied Assignments

A persuasion course should include three types of assignments: civic engagement projects, engaged persuasion activities, and a podcast journal assignment. Civic engagement projects are group-based, semester-long assignments wherein groups select a topic (with instructor approval) and design a persuasive campaign to enhance the common good. Possible topics would spring from an issue, cause, or organization pertaining to a social, political, or civic concern. Groups would work through the project logistics to implement a persuasive campaign that raises awareness and changes the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of an intended target audience. For instance, a civic engagement project could entail a group raising awareness about stem cell donation and obtaining commitments from target audiences to get tested and become potential stem cell donors.

Engaged persuasion activities, completed independently or in groups and embedded throughout each unit of the course, require students to make applications of course content to multiple personal and professional contexts. These instructor-developed activities take an issue such as anti-vaxxers and ask students to apply persuasion theories and research to understand how to counter the arguments against childhood vaccinations; students might be asked to play the role of a hired communication consultant for such a persuasive health campaign. In this instance, students are asked to provide recommendations that are firmly rooted in persuasion theory and research.

The podcast journal assignment helps students make connections to persuasion theory and research beyond the classroom, bolster their awareness of current events, and become more civically engaged. This assignment requires students to construct a podcast journal documenting that they listened to a minimum of 14 podcasts over the course of the semester selected from the following podcasts: BBC Global News Update, NPR Hourly News Summary, NPR Up First, PRI The World, or Decode DC. In the journal, students identify the name and date of the podcast to which they listened, write a brief paragraph noting the relevant connections to persuasion theory and research, and indicate the larger significance of the topic to local, national, or international politics.

Issues to Consider

There are several substantive issues that communication educators should consider when constructing their syllabi. Initially, instructors should consider how they will address persuasion theory and research in the post-truth era. Oxford Dictionary named “post-truth” the word of the year in 2016 and defined it as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). The term received a great deal of attention following the 2016 Presidential election, but has applications far beyond political

communication. As Waisbord (2018) argued, the post-truth era marks the “difficulty, if not impossibility, of sustaining rational, fact-based, scientific claims about reality as categorically true and dominant at a time when any assertion about truth and reality can become public, reach wide audiences, and get broad attention in the Internet” (p. 20). Students should come to an understanding of the implications of the post-truth era for persuasion by exploring research examining the origins of post-truth persuasion and how claims are disseminated as well as the strategies used for producing and consuming persuasive messages in a post-truth world. We agree with Waisbord that communication scholars and educators should “articulate communication ideals and the critique of new forms of mass deception with a viable, evidence-grounded roadmap for truth-telling in public life” (p. 31).

Persuasion instructors also should consider carefully the profound influence of new digital and social media on persuasive communication. As Weeks, Ardèvol-Abreu, and de Zúñiga (2017) noted, individuals are increasingly turning to social media to communicate, consume, produce, and distribute messages on a wide variety of topics, including politics. Simply put, online persuasive communication is ubiquitous and students should learn how message construction, reception, and dissemination in online environments differ from face-to-face persuasion. As a result, the course should introduce students to the most current research available on new media and persuasion.

In addition, students should be encouraged to envision how they could use persuasive communication to become civically engaged and advance the common good through social movements, communication campaigns, small group decision-making, and persuasive public speaking. This content helps prepare students to communicate effectively as citizens in a democracy and to avoid being victimized by manipulative messages and fake news. Several scholars (Hikins & Cherwitz, 2010; Hunt & Woolard, 2016; Palczewski, Ice, & Fritch, 2012) have made the case that communication faculty are well positioned to promote civic learning. Importantly, Hillygus (2005) argued that training in persuasive communication can play a significant role in encouraging students’ future civic and political engagement. While civic engagement is a unique characteristic of this suggested persuasion course, it also addresses more traditional ways in which studying communication can benefit students’ lives.

Finally, depending on the place of the persuasion course in the department curriculum, instructors may want to select a textbook that offers an appendix or chapter about delivering persuasive public speeches and/or group discussions.

Conclusion

The course described in this article is designed to enable students to become informed and critical consumers of persuasive messages. In addition, a better understanding of persuasive communication enhances students’ efforts to persuade others. In sum, this course should be constructed to introduce students to a wide variety of empirically tested persuasive concepts and theories that will aid them in every facet of their lives—from influencing friends and family to resisting the persuasive attempts of others to using their knowledge of persuasive communication to become an active citizen in our democracy.

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“NOT My Issue!!!”: Teaching the Interpersonal Conflict Course

Nancy J. Brule and Jessica J. Eckstein

Keywords: conflict, interpersonal, teaching, activity, application

Abstract: Students who enroll in communication courses to improve their conflict management abilities should be provided with both an understanding of, and skills pertaining to, interpersonal conflict across diverse contexts. In this article, we offer pedagogical guidance for teaching the Interpersonal Conflict course. With an emphasis on building communication skills usable in a variety of real-life situations and settings, this article includes discussion of necessary foundational concepts and applied content areas, sample application assignments, and relevant considerations for those teaching the course.

With ever-increasing frequency, communication students are expected by employers not only to possess knowledge about their field, but also to come equipped with the practical “soft skills” expected in the modern workplace. These skills include basic competency with interpersonal conflict: understanding it and effectively managing it in families, relationships, and at work. An Interpersonal Conflict (hereafter, IC) class should be offered to meet these student needs, particularly their abilities to develop the theoretical understanding of, and skills necessary to deal with, conflict on relational, family, and professional levels. Although not all universities have resources to offer an undergraduate course dedicated specifically to interpersonal conflict, those who do often draw students from across disciplines, including students majoring in Business, Psychology, Social Work, and Communication Studies. These students tend to enroll in an IC class in hopes of increasing their understanding and skills in dealing with conflict. Thus, there are incentives for students, instructors, and even departments to invest in offering this course.

In this article, we offer pedagogical suggestions for the IC course which hinge on the assumption that the primary purpose of this course is to provide students with solid groundings in IC theories and principles

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that can be simultaneously applied to allow them to build communication skills usable in a variety of real-life communication contexts, situations, and settings. These suggestions include (a) foundational theories/concepts to which every student should be introduced, (b) key content areas for application to which students should be exposed, (c) sample applied assignments, and (d) issues important to consider when teaching this type of theory/skills-based course.

Foundations

It is essential that students in a class dealing with IC be introduced to comprehensive definitions, formative lenses, and foundational theories. It is important to introduce and then frequently circle back to these elements throughout the course; this aids students in understanding how conflict functions at its most basic level, from which point they can engage in application to the different contexts in which IC occurs.

Foundational to any IC course, a clear *definition of interpersonal conflict* must be presented. Whereas there are many definitions of conflict, understanding that IC in particular has key operational components enables students to identify if IC actually is present. Perhaps the most accepted and widely used definition considers IC to be “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving goals” (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001, p. 13). We value this particular definition over alternative definitions because it highlights for students that IC involves a number of active dimensions that, when identified, help in assessing conflict and furthering resolution of it.

Once a clear definition is established, students must be taught the role of *perception* as it operates in any conflict scenario. Context is key; assessing conflict to determine an effective, appropriate resolution strategy in one instance may not transfer to other forms of relationships or settings. For example, perceived competence (i.e., effectiveness, appropriateness) can affect conflict behaviors and determine relational interactions in IC situations (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2010). However, perceptions of competence may be altered by the history, experiences, culture, personality, and even mood of all individuals in the interaction (i.e., sender, receiver, bystanders).

It also is essential to cover key IC theories that have been, and continue to be, tested empirically in diverse settings. These theories allow students to assess and diagnose effective IC behaviors when they see them in action. Three foundational theories exist, and presenting several of these to students deepens their appreciation for not only the potential complexities of any IC situation, but also allows them different frames of reference for their own and others' worldviews on conflict. The first foundation is the *Explanatory Model of Interpersonal Conflict* (Cupach et al., 2010), which focuses on cyclical and patterned responses to conflict interactions. Students who can analyze a conflict based on the functions and flows covered in this model (e.g., distal context, proximal context, conflict interaction, proximal outcomes, distal outcomes) are able to competently assess their own and others' IC interactions. The second foundation is the *Lens Model of Conflict* (Brunswik, 1956), which plays an important role in making students aware of the cultural, gendered, and socioeconomic aspects inherent when engaging in IC. Viewing a conflict through the varied lenses possible in an IC, students pause to reflect on how their own and others' lenses affect the escalatory/de-escalatory patterns present. *General Systems Theory* (Monge, 1973; Monge & Contractor, 2003), a third foundation, provides a holistic IC account, based from which *Family Systems Theory* (Broderick, 1993; Galvin, Dickson, & Marrow, 2006) contextualizes

interpersonal and relational foci, key elements of the IC course. A family systems approach to IC, one that examines patterns and focuses on the roles of individuals in creating, maintaining, and resolving system conflicts, is especially intriguing for students, who already have experiences to apply to its key axioms. A family systems approach also allows students to explore conflict interactions at both macro- (e.g., group, society, family) and micro-levels (e.g., individual setting) and helps them become adept at identifying the chains, triggers, coalitions, and triangles evident in IC patterns.

Although we argue these theories/models should be taught in all IC classes, other theories/models can be added based on the course's focus (e.g., family, organizational, mediation-negotiation). Some of the more compelling additional theories for IC contexts include *Face-Negotiation Theory* (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998), *Social Judgment Theory* (Sherif & Sherif, 1968; Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965; Smith, 1967), and *Relational Power Theory* (Dunbar, 2004; Dunbar, Pippus, & Young, 2008; Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). All of these theories contribute to the assessment, understanding, and explanation of IC.

Content Areas

Because of the interdisciplinary and practical nature of this topic, students have an expectation that, upon completion of the course, they will have the ability to apply and pursue additional, more in-depth knowledge of specific content areas to differing areas of their life. It should be considered mandatory that content areas for an IC course include conflict goals, tactics, styles, and strategies.

It is imperative that an IC class provide students with an understanding of *conflict goals* (i.e., topic, relational, identity, process) and *power currencies* (i.e., resource control, communication skills, interpersonal linkages, expertise) as they operate in IC. This provision is because the initial step in any conflict is determining whether the appropriate tactic is to engage in or avoid IC in order to achieve goals; many students are not aware that IC can be strategic.

Once students determine which tactic to use, their choices of how to engage in conflict can be explained through Thomas and Kilmann's (2008) often cited *5-Style Model* which is based on the two conceptual dimensions of cooperativeness and assertiveness, resulting in five conflict styles: competing, compromising, collaborating, avoiding, and accommodating. Students taking an IC course should have not only a clear understanding of these five conflict styles, but also should be taught the benefits and detriments to using each style in particular contexts.

Beyond understanding these content areas as they exist across multiple case-settings and scenarios, students should consistently develop skills in class actually practicing them (i.e., identifying goals and decision-making regarding tactics, styles, and strategies). We emphasize frequent use of in-class exercises and simulations, as this type of engaged learning shows how these content areas can be lived and useful in managing differing forms of conflict contexts.

Often, students' practice and development of these conflict skills furthers their interest in conflict mediation and negotiation (processes which can also be introduced as content areas in the course). Although there typically will not be time to completely train students in mediation and negotiation skill sets, allowing students to engage in this form of experiential learning provides a preview of other options and establishes a strong applied content area to the IC course.

Applied Assignments

The IC class is unique in that it not only provides students with a solid grounding in IC theories, concepts, and strategies, but does so in a way conducive to applied assignments and activities. One assignment is the *Conflict Assessment Journal*, which has proven to be one of students' favorites. This assignment runs throughout the semester and as students learn new theories and concepts, they continually apply these theories and concepts to specific contexts from their own life (e.g., family, partner relationships, work) via online, interactive journaling. This assignment also entails responding to other classmates' online posts, a process resulting in deep discussions both online and in-class about how IC has been handled and if/how it could be handled more productively. The purpose of this journaling is to create a conflict-analysis mentality, which heightens students' awareness of their own and others' IC reactions and ultimately urges them to become competent IC choice-makers.

A second activity we find powerful for students' learning is the use of *Simulated Classroom Negotiations and Mediations*. After they have been taught the basic steps to negotiation and mediation processes, each student is assigned a role to enact from a case study, with the goal of resolving a dispute. These activities not only provide engaging and active ways to apply conflict theories and concepts, but they also meaningfully show conflict resolved in practical, real-world contexts; in other words, these activities "bring it all together."

We also like to use (in many of our interpersonal classes, in fact) what we call the "Dear Ann" Assignment. Although more detailed information can be found in Brule (2007), in this assignment small groups (or modified to individual students) are assigned an IC situation in which they are required to help the individual who wrote the "Dear Ann" letter. As "Ann," the advice each group gives the writer must be "educated advice" on how to resolve the conflict based on established IC research and theories. Groups must respond with explanations a layperson could understand: They assess the conflict, describe to the letter writer what is going on in the conflict, and then offer solutions for the resolution of the specific conflict or repetitive conflict interaction pattern(s) observed. After many years of implementing this assignment in varying educational settings, we find that every debriefing of this "Dear Ann" Assignment involves spirited discussions on the "best" approaches to resolving IC.

Issues to Consider

Teaching the IC class can be rewarding yet challenging. Therefore, there are several important issues to consider before undertaking the teaching of this class. First, because the area of conflict research is so vast in breadth and depth, it is important to establish ahead of time a clear direction as to which areas are introduced to students and at what level of complexity. There is a fine line that sometimes gets crossed without knowing it, one where you begin engaging undergraduate students in applied IC study and then, without realizing what is happening, the course has suddenly morphed into a graduate level course deep in theory and research. Different from other types of classes, teaching IC can be more about deciding what *not* to include (i.e., limiting the information presented in favor of focusing on practice/application) than deciding what you want to cover. Students do not need to know all the research on every theory and concept in order to understand and improve their own IC skills. A good guiding principle on how much and how deeply to teach the subject matter in this course is to always strive for a way for students to apply each theory and concept in a way that is applicable to their own lives.

In addition, as with all interpersonal courses, this course will evoke some strong emotions and sensitive information from students as they begin to analyze and consider the impact their IC behaviors have had on their own families and relationships. Whereas these experiences can be valuable learning tools, often students want the type of advice that can easily evolve into a counseling situation. It is important to be clear at the beginning of the course that this is a sensitive topic which may cause strong feelings and regrets about their own conflict choices. Instructors teaching this course must continually encourage students to use the analysis of their past interactions as a means to improve their conflict skills and become more competent interpersonal communicators in the future.

Finally, the very nature of an IC class lends itself to the revelation of varying personalities within the class. It is important for instructors to develop a strong rapport with students in order to be able to be honest, reflective, and responsive regarding destructive and disconfirming conflict behaviors that need to be addressed, especially in the context of interpersonal relationships. Often students may want confirmation that some of their conflict choices are not destructive to relationships, even when those choices clearly lend themselves to disconfirming relational climates and defensiveness-raising communication interactions. Teaching a course focused entirely on IC requires instructors who are well versed in the subject, have a strong rapport with students, and are not afraid to challenge students to become better in their own conflict behaviors and relationships.

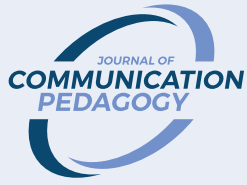
Conclusion

In this article, we explored teaching an in-depth and focused undergraduate interpersonal conflict course. Usually, this topic is taught as an advanced topics course or, even more likely, at the graduate level; despite this, faculty who undertake teaching this course at the undergraduate level will find that students embrace the topic enthusiastically and report later how it positively impacted their relationships at interpersonal, family, and organizational levels. Offering more classes on specific interpersonal concepts such as interpersonal conflict continues to showcase the relevance of the Communication Studies discipline to students' lives.

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Multifaceted Contents and Techniques for Designing Health Communication Courses

Maria Brann and Laura D. Russell

Keywords: health communication, discipline traditions, applied assignments, course content, sensitive topics

Abstract: Health communication courses explore health phenomena from various angles. Whether focusing on interpersonal and organizational relationships or addressing community and national campaigns, instructors may choose from various contents to design these courses. This essay highlights critical questions, contents, and activities useful for instructors seeking information for designing health communication courses. Moreover, the authors reflect on sensitive issues unique to these courses that instructors should take into consideration when teaching.

Health communication courses explore ranging meanings and implications for the well-being of individuals, interpersonal relationships, organizations, and global systems. This field probes questions such as What social symbols, interactions, and enactments constitute “health”?; How are responsibilities negotiated and conceived when narrating experience, seeking information, offering support, recommending treatment, promoting mass messages, and/or creating mediated representations?; and What cultural differences and disparities exist between and among different populations with regard to health education, access to resources, and belief systems? These queries call the attention of instructors and students to grapple with emerging needs for interpreting, communicating about, and responding to health phenomena.

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Foundations

Spanning across multiple contexts, vast foundations underlie the health communication field. From intimate interactions between patients and doctors to institutional structures/practices to widely casted health campaigns, instructors and students enter this field from various angles. Craig's (2009) seven traditions, including critical, cybernetic, phenomenological, rhetorical, semiotic, socio-cultural, and socio-psychological perspectives, provide palpable starting points for probing this vast field.

Those occupying a critical stance problematize relational and institutional power and injustice. A leader in this realm, Lupton (1994) promoted theoretical and methodological practices for interrogating the power dynamics inherent to health-related issues. Meanwhile, the cybernetic tradition attends to organizational and systemic dynamics, such as those occurring in online social support groups (Wright, 2016) and healthcare organizations (Barrett, 2018). Those teaching from a phenomenological perspective seek understanding of how persons live and articulate their health experiences. Notions of embodiment (Ellingson, 2006) and narrative sense-making (Harter, Japp, & Beck, 2005) provide robust material for exploring this tradition. From a rhetorical tradition, inquirers examine the intentionality and persuasiveness of messages and their corresponding impact on respective audiences. Zoller (2004), for example, explored the rhetoric shaping health policies in large corporations and demonstrates how such rhetoric may exploit certain employees. Similarly, semiotics involves exploring signs and symbols of health that yield unified meanings. For instance, King (2008) investigated how a pink ribbon became a prevalent social icon representing, and oversimplifying, the multiple complexities of breast cancer.

Other perspectives, such as those drawing from a socio-cultural focus, recognize culture as constituted through shared meanings, rituals, and collective enactments, thus suggesting that health is socially constructed (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2013). Dutta (2008), in particular, emphasized taking a culture-centered approach by urging instructors and students to recognize how health contexts vary in the dynamic identities, experiences, values, and beliefs constituting them. The socio-psychological tradition explores the cognitive dimensions that figure into individuals' understandings of and corresponding actions in response to health meanings. Theorists (such as Babrow, 2001) draw from this tradition to demonstrate how individuals wrestle with uncertainty, particularly when they are confronted by competing values for how they should act in response to their health complications.

Content Areas

When designing a health communication course, instructors either may select a particular tradition to frame their learning goals or adopt a hybrid of perspectives to expose students to a variety of viewpoints. These foundations can help learners make sense of various content areas within the health communication discipline. Health communication researchers explore interpersonal interactions (e.g., patient-provider communication styles and roles, everyday health talk with family and friends, socialization processes, diversity), health care approaches (e.g., Western and non-Western care tactics, health organization types, digital health), cultural and social issues (e.g., cultural influences, public health perspectives, media representations), and health outreach (e.g., campaign design, implementation, and evaluation). An introductory health communication course should survey these areas, but for a more in-depth understanding, a seminar course in any of these topics is valuable.

Interpersonally, individuals need to know how to interact with not only health care providers but also with peers and family members to negotiate shared meaning and possibly offer social support, for

example. Health professionals must understand diverse health perspectives to know how to communicate diagnoses, prognoses, and treatment options so that patients and providers can collaboratively engage in shared decision-making. With technological advancements and multicultural influences, students must be made aware of complementary health care approaches and systems to be able to knowledgeably communicate needs and desires as patients are their own best advocates. And in an increasingly patient-empowered society, students need competency to discern accuracy of public health messages and media representations of health.

Applied Assignments

Several applied assignments can be implemented to illustrate the practicality of the health communication course. Beyond the traditional application or response papers, case analyses, or campus campaigns, many specific assignments have been published elsewhere (e.g., *Communication Teacher*) to teach students transferable skills for their everyday lives. For example, to help students recognize diversity issues and public health messaging, students should engage in analyzing mediated messages. One useful way to do this is to have students assess health literacy levels of common health messages (see Staggers & Brann, 2011, for an applied assignment that can be completed in one class session). This assessment can enlighten students on how their educated status privileges them in understanding everyday communication about common health topics.

To further explore public narratives of health, a unique semester-long project that investigates “illusions of wellness” (Russell, personal syllabus) provides students with multiple opportunities to critically evaluate the health messages surrounding them interpersonally, in the media, and in health care organizations. Instructors can use all parts of this assignment throughout the semester or choose specific activities to highlight certain areas of the course. To begin the critical evaluation of messages of wellness (and ultimately illness), students are expected to conduct a phenomenological investigation by interviewing multiple people about their perspectives of wellness. By comparing and contrasting their perspectives with each other and also with what is rhetorically presented in the media, students gain a richer understanding of diverse perspectives while also learning about narrative approaches to health constructions. Once students have analyzed interview responses and media representations to determine what constitutes health, wellness, and illness, they are asked to create a photo journal of portrayals of health within health care organizations to critique how organizations corporately construct meanings of health. This critique helps students recognize the narrative construction of power, social responsibility, and relationships. A culminating paper can apply critical and/or socio-psychological theories to make sense of the findings from all of these investigations and present an explanation of their meanings.

Issues to Consider

Although students often embrace opportunities to learn about health phenomena, they sometimes hesitate when discussing issues conventionally deemed as private matters. Moreover, health communication courses may engage taboo topics that require instructors to build a sense of community among students needed to have open, vulnerable discussions. These topics also require instructors to be mindful of the ranging differences among students, taking into account their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds as well as their unique personal circumstances. Although instructors cannot possibly know everything about their students, at least they should be aware of the roles that power and privilege play in their students’ preconceived understandings of health as those students who have

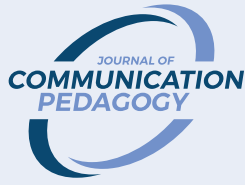
had access to resources throughout their lives may be completely unaware of the disparities or losses their peers may have experienced. Thus, maintaining a sensitive eye toward students' differences and fostering opportunities for them to express their perspectives openly are vital practices for cultivating a substantive health communication course.

Conclusion

There are several directions that can be explored when designing a health communication course. For example, the ever-expanding digital age has tremendous implications for what health is and will be beyond what can be conceived now. Instructors must be aware of, and caution students to recognize, the dynamic, ever-changing effect technology has on how health phenomena are conceived, discussed, represented, and treated. Furthermore, consumer interests and capitalist values driving Western ideologies have a significant bearing on the institutional infrastructures governing health practices. Questions regarding resistance, activism, (in)justice, and social change are pertinent for students to begin inquiring about their roles in future landscapes of the health communication field.

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A Pedagogical Guide to Teaching an Interpersonal Communication Course

Jordan Atkinson and David T. McMahan

Keywords: interpersonal communication, pedagogy, relationships, teaching

Abstract: This forum article focuses on the instruction of an interpersonal communication course. Interpersonal communication courses are widely included in undergraduate communication curriculum and can be fundamental to student development. The authors provide foundational material and various content areas generally included in such a course. The authors also provide various applied assignments and issues to consider when teaching an interpersonal communication course.

Interpersonal communication is now among the courses most frequently included in communication curriculum, and the centrality of personal relationships is increasingly recognized in the study of communication (Bertelsen & Goodboy, 2009; Wardrope, 1999). Discussions of such concepts as types of social relationships and interactional rituals began fully appearing in scholarship in the early 20th century (e.g., Simmel, 1908/2009), with examinations of conversation appearing in communication journals by the late 1920s (e.g., Howes, 1928). Through the ensuing decades, interpretations, understandings, and values given interpersonal competence and effectiveness frequently shifted. Since fully emerging as an area of study in the communication discipline by the 1960s, the study and instruction of interpersonal communication has experienced continued scrutiny and reevaluation (see Borisoff & McMahan, 2017, for an extended review). In part due to shifting academic and cultural trends and in part due simply to individual approaches to its study among communication scholars, varying views of the characteristics, nature, and processes of interpersonal communication exist. Further, the types of relationships,

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contexts, and topics that might be covered in an interpersonal communication course are expansive and continuously increasing and shifting. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish material and topics generally included in contemporary interpersonal communication courses.

In this article, we examine foundational material and content areas generally included in an interpersonal communication course. We then provide examples of applied assignments included in an interpersonal communication course. Finally, we discuss several issues instructors should consider when teaching an interpersonal communication course.

Foundations

We begin by examining the foundational material generally included in an interpersonal communication course, specifically, those fundamental areas that are central to the course. These fundamental areas include (a) verbal and nonverbal communication; (b) listening; (c) perceptions, identities, and emotions; (d) culture; and (e) media/technology.

Through the exploration of verbal and nonverbal communication, students are introduced not only to fundamental uses and forms of verbal and nonverbal communication evident in interpersonal communication, but also can develop a deeper awareness that personal relationships are created symbolically. Here, students gain a foundational understanding that communication does not entail mere interaction, simply passing symbols back and forth. Rather, communication is transactional and constitutive. Something happens beyond a simple exchange of symbols; in this case, relationships are developed, maintained, transformed, and terminated. Ultimately, verbal and nonverbal communication can be recognized as creating personal relationships, while at the same time, relationships are influencing how people communicate verbally and nonverbally.

Discussions of listening introduce students to a vital yet unfortunately underexamined area of communication. Although instructors might differ in the theoretical and the practical focus of their respective courses, this area is especially inclined toward practical instruction, with students gaining knowledge specific to improving listening in their relationships.

Explorations of perceptions, identities, and emotions enable students to recognize how personal relationships influence and guide what they perceive, their creation of identities, and their understanding of emotions as well as how perceptions, identities, and emotions influence personal relationships. Students learn that *perceptions* involve selecting, organizing, and evaluating what is encountered and ultimately what meanings are assigned to those experiences, which greatly influences how people view and understand themselves and others. They further learn that aside from the obvious fact that some *identities* involve the specific enactment of a relationship, it is through interactions and relationships with others in which identities are learned or created. Finally, students learn that while *emotions* are biological reactions, they are symbolically recognized and understood. It is through personal relationships that such recognition and understandings develop, while emotions are greatly influencing interactions with others.

When students are exposed to the study of culture, they can fully realize the significance of culture on these aforementioned areas. Culture influences what is perceived, how things are categorized, and how things are evaluated; it also influences identity creation and how identity is understood and valued. Finally, culture influences meanings assigned to emotional behavior and their subsequent appropriateness. Yet,

students also gain an awareness of the inextricable connection of culture and personal relationships. Culture influences an understanding of relationships, how relationships are valued, and how individuals interact in relationships. At the same time, personal relationships are the places where culture is created, maintained, and transformed. Personal relationships provide a tangible example for students when dealing with the abstract nature of culture.

The final foundation is media/technology, which admittedly is not one always included in an interpersonal communication course. Although interpersonal communication and media/technology have been historically and artificially separated in the discipline of communication, media/technology greatly influences relationships and relationships greatly influence media/technology. Media/technology is consumed and understood relationally. Relational knowledge and understanding are informed through media/technology, and relational processes take place through the use of media/technology. As media/technology becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, it becomes increasingly necessary to include its discussion in interpersonal communication courses.

Content Areas

Having been introduced to the foundations of interpersonal communication, students then are able to examine key content areas. These areas generally include the creation, maintenance, and transformation of personal relationships, guided by central theories and informed by research derived from those theories.

Although each relationship is unique, certain processes have been recognized as commonly occurring through the course of personal relationships. Most often, the process of personal relationships is taught in chronological order, beginning with relational attraction and initiation, moving on to developing and maintaining personal relationships, and ending with relationship disengagement and termination.

Theories included in an interpersonal communication course will depend on such factors as course level, instructor preference, and instructor background. Whichever theories are included, ideally instructors first will select and highlight theories developed in the discipline of communication prior, and in preference, to those theories developed in other disciplines. At the same time, if appropriate, a given theory or any line of research should not be ignored simply because it originated in another discipline. Generally, those theories can be developed further and improved upon by taking a communication perspective. Ultimately, evaluating theory or even arguing the merits of post-positivist, interpretive, and critical approaches are beyond the scope and purpose of this article. However, we can discuss general categories of theories from which instructors might select.

In the original edition of *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*, Baxter and Braithwaite (2008) noted three categories of interpersonal communication theory: (1) individual-centered, (2) discourse/interaction-centered, and (3) relationship-centered. Individual-centered theories of interpersonal communication focus on the individual, specifically on how individuals think when managing uncertainty, producing messages, and communicating effectively. Examples of individual-centered theories include action assembly theory (Greene, 1984), imagined interaction theory (Honeycutt, 2003), and uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Discourse/interaction-centered theories of interpersonal communication focus on messages, specifically their form, content, and function. Examples of discourse/interaction-centered theories include

communication accommodation theory (Giles & Powesland, 1975), expectancy violations theory (Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon, Stacks, & Woodall, 1979), and speech codes theory (Philipsen, 1975, 1992).

Relationship-centered theories of interpersonal communication focus on personal relationships, specifically how they are developed, maintained, transformed, and terminated. Examples of relationship-centered theories of interpersonal communication include affection exchange theory (Floyd, 1997, 2006), communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 2002), and relational dialectics theory (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996).

Interpersonal communication courses frequently conclude with an exploration of specific types of relationships, such as friendships, romantic relationships, family, and workplace relationships. Exposing students to the study of these relationships enables personal and professional development and the potential for lifelong learning. Although each type of relationship will bring about different topics, issues, and concerns, it is possible for instructors to provide a common theme throughout their discussion. Specifically, rather than seeing each type of relationship as an existing structure, these forms of relationships are created symbolically, and their uniqueness is due to distinct communication through which they are developed, maintained, and transformed.

Applied Assignments

Instructors can use several applied assignments that highlight the aforementioned foundational material and content areas. One such assignment is the analysis of a personal relationship. In this assignment, students are asked to apply an interpersonal communication concept or theory to one of their relationships or to a relationship they have observed. At the completion of this assignment, instructors are able to assess students' understanding of the concept or theory, as well as their ability to accurately apply the concept or theory to an actual relationship. Typically, instructors first will require students to describe the theory or concept and to synthesize its research findings. Next, students will describe a particular situation or behavior in the interpersonal relationship and apply the concept or theory to the situation or behavior. In this section, they address both the positive and the negative effects of the interpersonal situation or behavior and how it is enacted. Finally, students address the implications of how the concept or theory can be applied to the interpersonal situation. In this section, students address advice, practical strategies, or future directions of the relationship as it relates to the research, as this will assist students in handling various interpersonal situations using suggested communication behaviors. This assignment can be adapted to include relationships depicted through various media (e.g., movies, television).

A second applied assignment is a teaching demonstration. In this assignment, students select an interpersonal communication concept and create a short, in-class teaching demonstration about the concept. Sample teaching topics include uncertainty management, affection, identity, conflict, social support, attachment, attraction, forgiveness, self-disclosure, power, relational transgressions, or relationship termination. Students (a) describe the concept and its components thoroughly, (b) discuss the findings of three to five research articles about the concept, and (c) provide advice about the concept derived from the findings. To promote learning and engagement, students also should prepare and execute a short interactive activity during their demonstration. This assignment either can be a group or an individual activity, depending on the enrollment of the class; the length of the demonstration is left to the instructor's discretion.

Issues to Consider

One issue to consider when teaching an interpersonal communication course is that both instructors and students sometimes disclose personal information about themselves. If instructors open the discussion to students in their classes, then they must be equipped to effectively communicate about personal and sensitive topics. Clear guidelines regarding self-disclosure should be provided to students early in the semester. Instructors should adhere to institutional policies regarding Title IX, the Clery Act, and other federal and state laws and regulations. When instructors provide clear guidelines about self-disclosure to students, they can address issues of appropriate self-disclosure and how the self-disclosure should be relevant to the course topic.

Cultural sensitivity and diversity is another issue to consider and it is important for instructors to use examples representing diverse groups of people and relationships. For example, when teaching about dating relationships or marriages, instructors should be sure to address same-sex couples. Instructors should avoid utilizing heteronormative statements in their teaching and they should use images in their instructional materials that represent individuals of various ethnic, racial, and gender groups.

As with any course, it is important to stay current on the new directions of research in the field. Current trends in interpersonal communication research include, but are not limited to, the use of technology to communicate and maintain relationships, biological approaches to studying relationships, and the dark side of interpersonal communication (e.g., lying, sexual and emotional cheating, jealousy, interpersonal violence). Instructors should continuously update their instructional materials to include innovative research on these emerging topics.

Conclusion

The interpersonal communication course is central to the discipline of communication studies and a core requirement for students in many communication programs. This article presented what students enrolled in an interpersonal communication course should learn by addressing foundations and content areas. Applied assignments and issues for instructors to consider when teaching an interpersonal communication course also were presented. The interpersonal communication course can be an incredibly useful experience for students, assisting with both the advancement and improvement of their interpersonal knowledge and skills as well as assisting with the positive development of their personal and professional lives.

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Pedagogy, Gender, and Communication: Learning and Unlearning Gender

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Keywords: gender communication, gender identity, sex, intersectionality

Abstract: Courses in gender communication are designed to enable students to examine the role of gender and gender identity in everyday communication. To aid them to understand gender communication, they should be exposed to at least three foundational areas and supporting content. Sex and gender differences, the social construction of gender, and theoretical gender lenses (biological, psychological, and critical/cultural) are critical foundations that students should grasp to recognize the complexity of gender and gender communication.

Though it is difficult to pinpoint specific foundations and content that cut across all gender communication courses, there are a few areas that should not be avoided. The goal of most courses in gender communication is to equip students with the information necessary to examine the role of gender and gender identity in the communication that occurs within society and the rest of the world. For students to gain an understanding of gender communication, they should be exposed to at least three foundational areas and supporting content.

Foundations

First, it is critical for students to understand the differences between sex and gender. When students first enter college, these two terms often are thought to be interchangeable. Students must be presented with the differences: *sex* refers to biological/genetic differences and *gender identity* refers to the social

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construction of masculinity and femininity. Once students recognize this difference, they are able to examine their own communication and the communication traits of others and better understand gendered-perspectives within cultural groups.

Second, gender communication instructors should strive to raise student awareness regarding the ways in which gender is created, maintained, and changed through communication. What this means is instructors must help students recognize and analyze the gender filters that they use to predict how people will behave. As a socially constructed phenomenon, gender leads individuals to assess the ways in which they behave and if they do so appropriately. Because people “perform” gender through their communicative practices, gender is constructed through communication that is cultivated by social institutions (e.g., education, family, cultural groups).

Third, students must have an opportunity to learn the theoretical lenses (i.e., biological, psychological, and critical/cultural) through which gender is observed and examined. By analyzing gender via these lenses, they “can learn to move away from secondhand knowledge about men and women and analyze gender-related communication for [them]selves” (Bate & Bowker, 1997, p. 35). Essential theories that are reflective of these lenses include biological theories of chromosomal development and theories of brain development; psychological theories such as the psychoanalytic perspectives of Freud and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 2002; Mischel, 1966); and critical/cultural theories that create an understanding of the cultural and social construction of gender via communication.

Content Areas

Based on these foundations, three general content areas should be covered in gender communication courses. These areas are intersectionality, gender diversity and sex differences, and emancipation. Sex and gender are not fixed; they are more complicated than binary. People are not just either female or male or feminine or masculine. Gender and intersectionality consider gender at interplay with other overlapping and interdependent systems of social categorizations and power differentials such as ethnicity, class, kinship ties, sexuality, age, marital status, and abilities. To gain an in-depth understanding of gender, gendered lives must be more accurately studied across axes of other social identities, although it should be noted that other social identities can further complicate sex and gender identity.

Gender diversity is not the same thing as sex differences. A singular focus on gender and communication merely as sex difference does not explain the complexity of gender in communication. For example, queer theory critiques the binary categorization of gender and sexuality. Queer theory supports a nonnormative approach to gender studies and explores the notion that identities are not fixed (Elia, 2003). Individuals cannot be easily labeled as masculine (male) or feminine (female) because identities consist of many varied components. Understanding the complexity of gender allows students to examine gender in communication more than merely a way to track differences between men and women.

Emancipation from either the interrogation of normative gendered practices or binary gender practices allows students to embrace gender diversity. Gender identity need not be oppressive or limiting. It should extend a more fundamental understanding of difference and how individual identities and social perceptions shape attitudes and behavior toward others. For example, social construction of inequality considers how and why categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality are multilayered and deeply embedded ideologies. Knowing how each category is constructed, marketed, maintained,

and experienced allows for possible transformation. Breaking with socially-constructed, normative, gendered practices offers an opportunity for students to identify the ways that their own gendered practices provide potential for personal and social transformation.

Applied Assignments

Two applied assignments teach the aforementioned foundations and content areas. The first assignment, *Gender Communication in My World*, is intended to help students examine and apply aspects of gender communication to a specific “real life” context. Students select a specific context (e.g., classroom, media, music, film, video, organizations, friendship, family) to observe, analyze, and present in 10 minutes to the class. There are four parts to this assignment:

- ▶ Students first initially discuss what they know about gendered communication in this context based on text material, class articles, videos, and additional research. They should be prepared to discuss any theoretical perspectives and authors who have studied this context or area of gender communication.
- ▶ Students then present the “real life,” physical example of gendered communication (e.g., video clip, song lyrics, magazine advertisement, classroom observation, news story, Internet article, research article, family experiences, photographs).
- ▶ Students present their conclusions as they relate their selected example back to what they have learned in class. In other words, they address whether their experience validates or refutes what was discussed in class.
- ▶ Students prepare a bulleted handout of their presentation for the class. The handout is graded in terms of information and appearance.

The second assignment, *Advice Blog and Presentation*, requires students to select a topic from their course readings and conduct additional research that not only interests them, but also could help others. They write a 1,000- to 1,250-word blog post that summarizes the research area and offers theoretical and evidence-based advice for gender communication. Students are instructed to synthesize the scholarly research articles for an identified audience, paying attention to the opening paragraph, where word choice and sentence progression are important devices to attract and retain readership. For the body of the blog, students should choose words carefully and expand text to provide parenthetical or sentence-length definitions of key concepts, but avoid jargon. They should consider using similes, metaphors, or other words that convey a strong visual connection to things that readers are likely familiar. The “advice” should be specific. They then upload their blog post to *WordPress* and the instructor will critique the post. For this online assignment, students need to include images appropriate to the topic, voice, or advice in the blog.

Issues to Consider

To equip students with the information necessary to examine the role of gender and gender identity within communication, several topics must be taken into consideration. First, students often struggle with terminology and conceptual definitions that surround gender. It is important for both instructors and students to understand the difference among biological sex, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender, gender identity, and gender roles (Manning, Stern, & Johnson, 2017). Second, instructors must prepare students for difficult gender-related dialogue. Third, it is helpful for students and instructors to

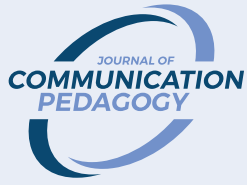
be hyper-aware when critically consuming gender-related content during the course of the semester in a variety of spaces (e.g., social media, news, documentaries) and in ways that may not be as central to daily life in other semesters. In these ways, the importance of covering potentially sensitive or controversial topics such as queer theory/quare theory, LGBTQ rights, and transgender identity become vitally important. Similarly, students who identify with traditional cisgender roles and values also must feel valued and free to share their ideas in class. Fourth, instructors must balance topic coverage in the course so one gender identity is not privileged over another; this may be especially necessary if the course fulfills requirements for university minors or certificates.

Conclusion

When teaching the gender communication course, there are any number of issues to consider from both the student and instructor perspective. In this article, foundations and content areas have been considered as related to terminology, difficult dialogues, contemporary conversations of gender, and balanced topic coverage. Above all, the gender communication course must raise student awareness for ways in which gender is created, maintained, and changed through communication.

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Argument Pedagogy for Everyday Life

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Keywords: argument, argumentation, debate, deliberation

Abstract: This article assists argumentation and debate instructors in developing courses that provide coverage of foundational concepts while reflecting their own interests. Courses in argumentation and debate also offer instructors an opportunity to teach through applied engagement with contemporary events. We encourage instructors to reflect on the various contexts of argumentation and debate as well as challenging questions concerning the role of technology in the classroom, the conflict between normative and descriptive examples of argumentation, how much to emphasize the role of argumentation and debate in societal change, and the connections between argumentation and deliberation.

Communication courses in argumentation and debate offer undergraduate students the opportunity to learn about how reasoning develops; how arguments can be evaluated, strengthened, and countered; and how systems of reasoning function in a variety of real-world contexts (see Drury, 2019). Furthermore, the critical thinking involved in an argumentation course offers students an important skill set for active involvement in a democracy, namely evaluating the reasons and evidence people use to justify their positions, values, and beliefs.

Foundations

Most courses in argumentation and debate tend to have three general units comprising foundational content: overview of key concepts and considerations, building arguments, and contesting arguments.

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These three units offer a robust overview of the considerations arguers often have to make when engaging with others in personal, professional, and public life.

First, the argumentation course should define key terms, such as “argument,” “propositions,” “debate,” and “controversy.” This definition ensures that all students use the terms in a consistent manner. This unit also should introduce students to the idea of spheres of argument and the importance of audiences and co-arguers for argumentation (Goodnight, 1982). Spending time with spheres and audiences early in the semester helps students connect argumentation to their own lives and recognize the various contexts in which argumentation occurs. Finally, this unit should consider argumentation ethics in order to sensitize students to moral considerations.

The second unit addresses how to construct arguments and cases. There are numerous key concepts and theories to include here. First, the Toulmin model of an argument helps students visualize the component parts of an argument that they can use to build their own arguments and make sense of others’ arguments (Toulmin, 2003). Second, instructors should introduce the concepts of presumption and burden of proof to frame the contextual nature of argumentation, which should be coupled with a discussion of affirmative and negative burdens of proof. The unit should also include argument commonplaces, such as fact, value, and policy claims (including the stock issues case structure for propositions of policy) and common patterns or schemes of argument (e.g., cause, generalization, sign). Finally, this unit should introduce assessments of evidence/data, including how to find and evaluate supporting materials. As part of this instruction on supporting materials, instructors should discuss differences between types of sources (e.g., fact-based reporting versus news commentary), potential bias in sources, and the rapid availability of (dis)information in the digital world.

In the third unit, students should learn how to evaluate and refute arguments. Of all three units, this unit is the most idiosyncratic across instructors. Some common topics include strategies of refutation, including the four-step process of name, explain, support, conclude, and argument fallacies that help students pinpoint logical flaws. Some instructors may choose to include standards for cogency (i.e., acceptability, relevance, sufficiency) as a framework for evaluating arguments (Johnson & Blair, 2006).

Content Areas

Instructors of argumentation and debate classes often supplement the foundational content with material that engages different themes and topics related to the interests of themselves and their students. To supplement the discussion of the Toulmin model, instructors can include standardization, which involves translating prose arguments into clear support-claim relationships, or diagramming, which involves translating prose arguments into a visual representation of chains of reasoning. In both cases, the goal is to give students the tools needed to capture the progression of an argumentative case.

The three foundational topics largely address logical understanding of verbal argumentation but instructors might also consider rhetorical and dialectical perspectives toward argumentation (Wenzel, 1990) as well as non-traditional forms of argument, such as narrative argument (Fisher, 1984; Rowland, 1987) and visual argument (Blair, 1996; Godden, 2013). Similarly, argument spheres might be usefully complicated by discussing related concepts such as disinformation, especially through social media (Stevens & Baumtrog, 2018), or different metaphors for public argumentation, such as public screen, counterpublics, enclaves, assemblages, and networks (DeLuca & Peebles, 2002; Paliewicz & McHendry, 2017; Squires, 2002).

Finally, instructors might include studies or cases studies about various argumentation contexts, including but not limited to argumentation in citizenship and civic engagement, political argumentation (including presidential debates), argumentation in social movements and social change, legal argumentation, scientific argumentation, and (socially) mediated argumentation (van Eemeren & Garssen, 2012). Instructors also can introduce competitive contexts for debate, such as parliamentary debate, policy debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, Worlds style debate, and Moot Court.

Applied Assignments

A mixture of written and oral assignments helps students realize the foundational and content-oriented objectives by applying the content to their everyday lives. One common assignment is an argument analysis/diagram that requires students to (a) select an opinion editorial, or some other argumentative discourse, from news outlets such as *The New York Times* and create an outline or diagram that maps all of the elements of argumentation following the Toulmin Model and (b) analyze the substance and cogency of the argument. Another applied assignment for achieving foundational and content-oriented learning outcomes is to have students write their own opinion-editorial or advocacy speech regarding a contemporary social, political, or economic controversy. Both assignments help students organize their learned knowledge in meaningful ways while also allowing them to apply that knowledge to their everyday lives (see Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010) and exercise civic skills (see Hogan, Kurr, Bergmaier, & Johnson, 2017). Argument, then, becomes a tool for advocacy and possibly social change.

Other assignments include in-class debates or argumentative pitches, rhetorical criticism of argumentation, *in-situ* argumentation (e.g., a visit to the campus art museum and a short essay on the extra-discursive possibilities of argument), and impromptu speeches on contemporary issue questions.

Issues to Consider

Moving into the 21st century, we observe four issues that argumentation instructors should consider: technology in the classroom, the balance between normative and descriptive approaches, the place of argumentation in contemporary culture and politics, and the role of deliberation in argumentation courses. We believe these four issues offer future pathways for pedagogical research, such that our teaching continuously seeks effective ways to bridge theoretical content with our students' lived experiences of argumentation.

First, should instructors allow technologies in the classroom? This perennial question is pertinent to argumentation classrooms because of the historical privileging of face-to-face communication, dialogue, and dialectical exchanges within the argumentation canon. While argumentation may be transitioning from the public sphere to the public screen (DeLuca & Peeples, 2002), such technologies also can be a distraction or nuisance in the classroom. There is not a right answer, but such technologies may be considered for in-class use if students are using computers for class-related purposes (e.g., accessing articles or visual arguments, doing research, taking notes) and in non-distracting ways; however, instructors must reserve the right to just say "no" to focus on speeches, specific lectures, and group work.

Second, given the abundance of fallacious, and sometimes farcical, arguments through social media networks, how should argumentation instructors balance normative and descriptive approaches to argument? Teaching argument as it occurs in real-world communication may increase knowledge on

the myriad ways argument works in society, but it also may leave students without standards for how argument should be used or for what constitutes a “good” argument. And while normative approaches suture this gap, they also risk teaching students a model of argumentation that is, or rapidly on its way to becoming, outmoded in a networked era. Given the stakes of argument in society and the classroom, instructors must find their own balance between understanding how argument *works* and how it *ought to work* in everyday life.

Third, should instructors be willing or obligated to frame argumentation as an efficacious intervention in political life? Contemporary society features economic and social injustices that defy principles of sound argumentation, but often are framed in terms of partisanship. Additionally, many people perceive a growing national and international threat of fascism that demands safeguards, such as honest argumentation (see Giroux, 2016). In discussing the normative and ethical ideals of argumentation, instructors should consider if it is their proper place to (a) outline what is right and wrong with current argumentation practices and (b) equip students with argumentative tools for social change. Instructors should be aware that both approaches risk alienating some students and possibly creating challenges within the class due to diversity of political allegiances or orientations.

Finally, should instructors teach deliberation as a means of addressing the aforementioned concerns by putting a stronger onus on the students to generate communal knowledge through argumentation? Deliberation, broadly defined, is the process of identifying a public issue or problem, articulating multiple avenues of addressing that problem, carefully considering the benefits and drawbacks of each possibility, and then coming to a decision (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002). The deliberative perspective seeks a cooperative process that creates space for localized knowledge alongside expertise, considers multiple values at play within the issue, and fosters understanding across differences. As such, deliberation rejects an adversarial framing of argument, calling on interlocutors to see “those who disagree . . . as resources rather than rivals” (Makau & Marty, 2001, p. 88). In addition to evaluating argumentation from traditional debate standards, instructors can prompt students to consider whether arguments acknowledge and include diverse experiences and expertise (Drury, Kuehl, & Anderson, 2017). Using this deliberative perspective, students also may evaluate whether arguments fully address the implications of competing choices while navigating the tensions among those options (Drury & Carcasson, 2017). Given the growth of deliberative processes such as Citizens Initiative Reviews and participatory budgeting, argument instructors may find the deliberative perspective to be a valuable real-world connection to cooperative argumentation in public settings.

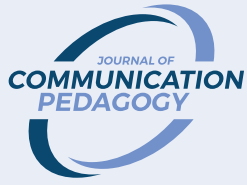
Conclusion

Argumentation courses are more important than ever in today’s political and media climate. These courses can help educate students for civic and professional life by emphasizing foundational concepts about argument forms and situations, offering tools for making sense of verbal and nonverbal arguments, studying relevant contexts of argumentation, and generating applied assignments that put the principles into practice. We also encourage instructors to carefully consider how best to (a) incorporate technology in the classroom, (b) balance normative and descriptive understandings of argumentation, (c) connect argumentation to political and social change, and (d) address the value of deliberation as a less adversarial mode of argumentation. Our hope is that this article provides instructors a blueprint to create argumentation courses that have high-impact learning outcomes.

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Pedagogical Tools in Our Briefcases: Teaching the Business and Professional Communication Course

Suzy Prentiss and Justin Walton

Keywords: business, professional, communication, practical, applied

Abstract: As a practical and applied course, Business and Professional Communication is an excellent opportunity to blend theory and practice, prepare students with the knowledge and skills they will need in the “real world,” and continually innovate and experiment to meet the ever-changing communication needs of the workplace. Whether filled with students majoring in communication, business, or another discipline, as a General Education or sequenced class, the Business and Professional Communication course is a worthwhile and value-added course that is both challenging and rewarding to teach.

Conventional wisdom states that effective communication skills are part and parcel of career preparation and professional success. Indeed, a variety of surveys and occupational assessments reveal a compelling degree of uniformity regarding manager and employer preferences for workplace communication behaviors and proficiencies (Bertelsen & Goodboy, 2009; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Hart Research Associates, 2018; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2018; Robles, 2012; Winsor, Curtis, & Stephens, 1997). Moreover, Morreale and Pearson’s (2008) thematic review of academic and professional publications from 1998 through 2006 identified “succeeding . . . in one’s career and in business” (p. 228) as a main justification for 21st-century communication instruction. Recognizing both individual and managerial interests in effective workplace preparation, many universities offer a range of career services and academic experiences aimed at equipping students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function proficiently in a competitive, information-driven job market. Within the Communication Studies discipline, coursework in Business and Professional Communication focuses on

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conceptual and applied issues in workplace communication, with particular emphasis on those practices viewed as central to communicating competently within diverse and rapidly changing organizational milieus. The purpose of this article is to identify the conceptual foundations of business and professional communication curricula, highlight major content areas covered in the course, present two examples of applied assignments, and call attention to special issues instructors might consider when planning and teaching the course.

Foundations

As a subdivision of organizational communication, coursework in business and professional communication affords instructors opportunities to lead students beyond “macro” level descriptions of organizational systems toward specific considerations for professional growth and individual career development. While particular objectives, approaches, and textbook content will vary, the “typical” course integrates fundamental concepts, theories, and perspectives from verbal and nonverbal communication, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, group/team communication, interviewing, and public speaking to prepare students with the requisite skills for communicating successfully across a variety of organizational and professional settings. Consequently, the business and professional communication course balances theory-guided information with an appropriate and engaging blend of experiential, hands-on instruction. Minimally, course curriculum and pedagogy should facilitate (a) an examination, synthesis, and application of basic communication theory and processes relevant to workplace contexts and experiences; (b) the acquisition and demonstration of effective business communication “core” skills (e.g., collaborating with others, employment interviewing, delivering informative/persuasive presentations); and (c) critical consideration of ethical challenges and obligations across varying professional levels, circumstances, and platforms.

Content Areas

A preliminary overview of the Table of Contents of 10 Business and Professional Communication textbooks listed over 30 chapter titles. From this overview, 10 content areas emerged as foundational to the Business and Professional Communication course. These key areas highlight the knowledge that students should acquire in this course to be applied across a variety of business and professional contexts. Combining complementary topics, the final list includes six substantive areas: Interpersonal Communication and Listening, Diversity and Intercultural Communication, Verbal and Nonverbal Messages, Interviewing and Employment Communication, Working in Teams and Small Group Communication, and Presentations. This list reflects the skills and knowledge traditionally covered in this course as well as what is required to succeed in today’s workplace. In this course, students should study, apply, and practice interpersonal, employment, and group communication. In the interpersonal realm, it is paramount that students actively listen and engage in conversation, appreciate and respect cultural and diverse experiences and perspectives, and effectively design and decode verbal and nonverbal messages. Within employment communication, it is necessary that they understand and practice interviewing and be aware of the job search process, which includes creating cover letters and resumes and defining career goals. The essential group communication section focuses on the advantages and challenges of teamwork and can include negotiation, leadership, conflict management, meetings, project planning, and decision-making. Students also must learn about, and practice, presentations, which includes the preparation and delivery of multiple presentations to various audiences through a variety of channels. These presentations may be individual, partner, or small group in nature, and may utilize technology and audiovisual elements.

Applied Assignments

As a practical and applied course, Business and Professional Communication offers students the opportunity to transform information into knowledge by focusing on content areas while connecting to core communication concepts and offering experiential learning opportunities. One assignment—Team How To Guide—focuses on intercultural communication in the business and professional world and incorporates multiple content areas including interpersonal communication and listening, diversity, and teamwork. With a global economy influencing much of the current business climate and with many students interested in study abroad experiences, this is an assignment with relevance and application. It encourages students to step outside their ethnocentric perspectives and learn more about the customs and nuances of Business and Professional Communication practices and expectations around the world. Students discover that things such as dress, greetings, and nonverbal communication vary widely across the globe and can be quite influential in business dealings. They are usually surprised by the role of time across cultures and are intrigued by gift giving and dining etiquette conventions.

In this assignment, students work in groups (i.e., partner, team) to design and present how to effectively and respectfully engage in business practices with professionals from other cultures. In effect, each group creates a “How to do business with the French” (for example) guide. The value of this assignment lies in both the creation and presentation of the group product and in the collective sharing of, and learning from, all presentations. Deliverables can include a group PowerPoint presentation, a written “How to” guide, and a team reflection. Additionally, each PowerPoint presentation can be posted to the class Learning Management System for student review and comments.

A second assignment highlights interviewing, a popular topic consistently covered in the Business and Professional Communication course. This assignment consists of (a) assigned readings (either textbook chapters or a collection of recent articles) written from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints and (b) an interview simulation activity. In the simulation activity, each student serves as a member of a hiring panel and as a candidate for a “real” position. As a member of the hiring panel, students create questions, collaboratively select a set of common questions to ask each candidate, interview each candidate, and then collectively deliberate to select a “hire.” As a candidate for a job, students research the company and position, have questions prepared to ask during the interview, and are appropriately dressed for an interview. Adaptations or additions could include writing cover letters, resumes, or thank-you letters.

Issues to Consider

Several issues should be considered in the planning and implementation of a Business and Professional Communication course. First, depending on its location in the department’s curriculum (i.e., course level, required/elective, prerequisites), students may come to the course lacking the requisite content knowledge in communication theory that would allow for more advanced pedagogical activities. In fact, for one of us, this course serves as a General Education class with no prerequisite expectations. While the course can easily be adapted for any level of student experience, we have found that when it is offered at the upper division level, students who have previously taken an introductory communication or public speaking course fare better on oral delivery assignments (e.g., sales speech, mock interviews) than those students who have not. For this reason, instructors should bear in mind the degree of background knowledge and preparation students have in the planning of learning objectives and teaching strategies to be used.

Second, instructors should consider the scope and sequence of course content. Given the conceptual breadth of subjects encompassed in the majority of Business and Professional Communication textbooks, instructors should reflect on two central questions related to their instructional planning: “How much content can be reasonably covered?” and “Do certain topics warrant more emphasis than others?” Approached as a survey course, instructors may allot approximately equal time to major class divisions and utilize projects or assessments that determine basic understanding and skills as set forth in the sequencing of material. Alternatively, instructors may schedule major units that span several class sessions or weeks that concentrate on focused themes or learning activities. A unit, for instance, on employment interviewing may encompass resume-building and cover letters, preparation for and participation in mock interviews, guest speakers, and self-appraisals of interview performances. Equivalent in-depth units also could be fashioned for professional speaking, communication technology and social media, or group and team communication. Likewise, it may be the case that not all textbook material is of equal importance and that the text’s composition is not necessarily optimal given the interests, needs, and abilities of students or departments. On this point, instructors are encouraged to consult with colleagues about the expected breadth and depth of the course as well as contemplate the overarching purpose of the class relative to the program’s curriculum plan and student learning outcomes.

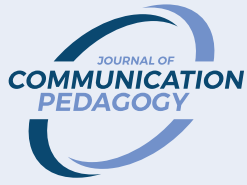
From an institutional perspective, it is important to consider the ways the Business and Professional Communication course—as taught in the field of communication—differ from the business communication curricula frequently offered in business administration departments. While these courses enjoy a great deal of conceptual overlap, two distinctions are worth mentioning. For one, recent audits of the business discipline’s course reveal that *written communication* (e.g., letters, memo writing, business proposals, formatting documents and e-mail messages) continues to be the prevailing pedagogical focus of business communication coursework (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014; Russ, 2009). Though written communication occupies a critical niche in our interpretation of the course, we suspect that it is not assigned the same degree of prominence as it is in business curricula. Second, in most business departments, business communication is taught as a stand-alone, independent course offering with few internal opportunities for advanced study in communication (Sharp & Brumberger, 2013). In contrast, for students majoring or minoring in communication-related areas, business and professional communication is much more likely to appear within a sequence of associated communication coursework. Accordingly, communication instructors may assume reasonably that students enrolled in such a course *have had* and/or *will have* additional opportunities for reinforcing prior study and supporting more sophisticated applications of communication theory.

Conclusion

The Business and Professional Communication course is an excellent opportunity to blend theory and practice, prepare students with the knowledge and skills they will need in the “real world,” and continually innovate and experiment to meet the ever-changing communication needs of the workplace. Whether filled with students majoring in communication, business, or another discipline, as a General Education or sequenced class, the Business and Professional Communication course is a worthwhile and value-added course that is both challenging and rewarding to teach.

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Try It, You Might Like It: On Teaching Rhetorical Theory and Criticism

Deanna D. Sellnow

Keywords: rhetorical theory, rhetorical criticism, instructional communication, communication pedagogy

Abstract: Students rarely question the relevance of most communication courses. For example, most students realize that courses focused on improving public speaking and interpersonal skills will benefit them personally and professionally after graduation. Convincing them that a rhetorical theory and criticism course is equally empowering can be a bit more challenging. This essay explores one approach for teaching rhetorical theory and criticism as uniquely relevant in the educational experience of communication students. By applying various rhetorical perspectives to artifacts that resonate with students' actual lived experiences, students become empowered advocates for positive change.

Communication teacher-scholars often cite ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, when teaching public speaking: "The audience is end and object of the speech." I argue that these words ring true for all teachers of communication, not just those teaching speech. We are only successful when our audience—our students—realize the value of the course content, understand the theoretical concepts and methods taught, and demonstrate appropriate use of them as critical producers and consumers of communication. I argue further that achieving these learning outcomes is absolutely crucial when teaching courses in rhetorical theory and criticism, courses that can otherwise seem abstract and irrelevant to undergraduate communication majors.

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Thus, I welcome this opportunity to share some of what I have learned over the years. In fact, what I have learned spurred me to write the book I use when I teach the course (Sellnow, 2018). The following paragraphs describe methods for teaching rhetorical theory and criticism courses organized in terms of foundations, content areas, applied assignments, and special issues to consider. Although these methods are not the only means by which to teach such courses effectively, they do outline one tried-and-true approach.

Foundations

The plethora of rhetorical theories and rhetorical artifacts from which to choose when developing a course in rhetorical theory and criticism is both deep and wide. Thus, the effective instructor of rhetorical theory and criticism does not attempt to teach everything but, rather, is selective in choosing those concepts and constructs that are most likely to resonate with students in achieving the goal and outcomes described in the previous paragraphs. In essence, the foundational course concepts and constructs should not (and, frankly, cannot) focus on covering as many theories as possible. Rather, the course foundations should address three primary questions: (1) What is the nature and evolution of the rhetorical tradition?; (2) What are the primary tenets of several rhetorical perspectives as they reveal what and how communication texts (e.g., oral, written, visual, multimodal) persuade receivers about what are “desirable/undesirable,” “appropriate/inappropriate,” and “normal/abnormal” beliefs and behaviors?; and (3) How does one conduct a rhetorical criticism regardless of rhetorical perspective or artifact? These three questions guide me as I prepare and deliver courses focused on rhetorical theory and criticism.

Content Areas

It is impossible to teach every available theory in a three-credit-hour 15-week course. Anyone who has tried to teach all the theories included in many of our communication theory and rhetorical theory books knows this fact all too well (e.g., Foss, 2018; Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2019; Littlejohn, Foss, & Oetzel, 2017; West & Turner, 2018). Thus, I shape the course around *rhetorical perspectives* and then highlight *representative theories* within each perspective. Representative theories can be introduced via the key content areas (rhetorical perspectives) of (neo)-Aristotelian, narrative, dramatistic, and critical (including neo-Marxist, feminist, cultural). (I also include units on musical perspectives, visual perspectives, and media-centered perspectives, although doing so is my own personal prerogative.) When addressing narrative perspectives, for instance, I credit foundational scholars (e.g., Walter Fisher/narrative). I also credit those that may have extended these ideas (e.g., Ernest Bormann/fantasy theme analysis) in ways that still highlight the ultimate goals of revealing an underlying “moral to the story” regarding how we “ought to/ought not to” believe or behave (Sellnow, 2018, p. 53). Similarly, students should discover that the ultimate goal for conducting a dramatistic analysis is to reveal underlying justifications for breaking society’s “rules for living” (Burke, 1973, pp. 293–304). They should also leave the course realizing that critical perspectives (e.g., neo-Marxist, feminist, queer theories) reveal how texts operate as sites of struggle to reinforce or oppose taken-for-granted ideologies that simultaneously privilege some people and oppress others (i.e., othering). All students should complete the course with a solid understanding of these big picture concepts and goals of the variety of rhetorical theories embodied in different perspectives.

Applied Assignments

Three key assignments that can be integrated into any rhetorical theory and criticism course are: (a) group analyses, (b) individual analyses culminating in short papers and presentations, and (c) a final paper and presentation.

First, group analyses of the same artifact provide an opportunity to steer students in how to apply a given theory before they do so on their own. For example, during the first week of class, we watch *A Charlie Brown Christmas* together and discuss what it reveals generally from a neo-Aristotelian perspective, narrative perspective, dramatistic perspective, neo-Marxist perspective, and feminist perspective. Doing so provides an overview that helps students see that conducting a rhetorical criticism through various lenses (i.e., perspectives) reveals different messages and, thus, different potential implications on intended audiences. We then do more in-depth analyses using each rhetorical perspective as we move through the course. For example, when discussing narrative perspectives, we might examine a popular television advertisement (I find the Super Bowl advertisements a good place to start); when discussing a neo-Marxist perspective, we might watch an episode of a popular television sitcom. Sometimes I assign students to examine the artifact at home and complete a worksheet asking them to address the following:

1. Describe the rhetorical situation, including “speaker(s),” occasion, audience(s) exigence, and constraints. [description]
2. Interpret the text using the rhetorical perspective being examined. [interpretation]
3. Evaluate the text based on its potential impact on intended (and perhaps unintended) audiences. In other words, answer the “so what” (positive and/or negative implications on people and society). [evaluation]

By doing so, students begin by grappling with the text on their own but then expand their understanding as we work through an analysis of that text in class. I find this helps students gain confidence to then do so themselves in criticisms of a variety of artifacts.

Second, after working through each perspective via a group analysis/discussion, I ask students to apply each rhetorical theory to a rhetorical artifact/text of their own choosing by, again, following the same three steps: description, interpretation, and evaluation. Each student produces a five-page paper and 5-minute presentation. In doing so, students learn what each theory helps reveal when applying it to a text in the form of a rhetorical criticism as they deconstruct their own artifacts and expand their understanding of its utility as they listen to presentations by their peers.

Third, the semester culminates in a rhetorical criticism paper and presentation suitable for submission to a professional conference or academic journal (e.g., Sellnow, 2018, pp. 293–299). I encourage students to take one of their five-page papers and expand it into an 18- to 25-page formal paper and 10- to 12-minute presentation. Essentially, students develop an introduction (approximately four to six pages) that establishes relevance for examining the artifact. This requires them to develop a literature review regarding both the artifact and the rhetorical perspective they have chosen. The body explains the process (method) they underwent to examine the text and what they discovered (results). Essentially, this is what they did throughout the semester in the form of their short five-page papers and presentations. Finally, the conclusion (discussion) focuses on the social issue/problem or norm addressed in the text and an

answer to the “so what” question for audiences experiencing it, as well as future research questions arising to extend theory and our understanding of the issue or norm addressed.

The presentation should mimic an academic conference presentation. The introduction should be brief and the main points in the body should be each conclusion drawn (with evidence from the artifact to support each one). This way, the conclusion can be short. It can merely summarize an answer to the research question, answer the “so what” question, and point to future research.

In sum, using this scaffolding technique of application assignments breaks the formidable task of understanding rhetorical theories and applying them to artifacts in the form of rhetorical criticisms manageable for students being introduced to them for the first time. Of course, these assignments are not necessarily the only ones that can be effective; however, they have served me well in teaching the course over the past 30 years.

Issues to Consider

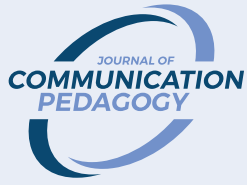
When planning to teach a course in rhetorical theory and criticism, I suggest paying attention to two key issues if you want to succeed in both motivating students to want to learn and helping them achieve the intended affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning outcomes we strive for in any course we teach. First, rhetorical theory and criticism should be taught together in one course if students are to achieve all of the aforementioned learning outcomes. A rhetorical theory course taught without also doing rhetorical criticism falls short in achieving behavioral learning and a rhetorical criticism devoid of theory cannot achieve cognitive learning of the theories that ground such analyses. Students need to grapple with both understanding the theoretical perspectives and their roots as well as applying them to various artifacts. Second, students ought to be afforded the opportunity to apply these theories to examine artifacts that *speak to* or *speak for* them. Thus, although I may address famous political addresses or historical speeches in my course, the crux is on popular culture texts (some historical and some contemporary). Moreover, students select their own texts for all papers throughout the semester. By conducting the course with these key principles in mind, students do achieve the goals of all three outcomes. They achieve affective learning because they see the value of the theories in revealing taken-for-granted beliefs and behaviors, as well as implications of ideological messages on audiences. They achieve cognitive learning because they study rhetorical perspectives and theories in ways that speak to their own lived experiences with texts that perpetuate daily life. They achieve behavioral learning because they apply theories to relevant texts in ways that push them to realize their powerful potential to persuade audiences.

Conclusion

Over the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to teach a variety of courses ranging from interpersonal and group communication to public speaking and research methods. Although I enjoy teaching each of them, I find teaching rhetorical theory and criticism particularly rewarding as I watch students discover the relevance of these theories as they reveal taken-for-granted as “normal” issues of empowerment and disempowerment. By the end of the semester, students realize that knowledge truly is power. Moreover, they realize that rhetorical theory and criticism is both relevant and empowering.

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Teaching the Communication Course: Intercultural Communication

Nathan G. Webb  and Mary Stairs Vaughn 

Keywords: intercultural communication, globalization, pedagogy, culture, cultural identity

Abstract: Intercultural Communication is a course that can help individuals gain the knowledge and tools to be an effective communicator in a globalized world. This article seeks to answer the question about what students enrolled in an Intercultural Communication course should learn. Specifically, the Intercultural Communication course is examined by highlighting its foundations, content areas, applied assignments, and issues to consider.

Globalization continues to change the way people work, learn, travel, build and maintain relationships, and live. To navigate these changes, individuals must learn to successfully communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural Communication is a course that can help individuals gain the knowledge and tools to be an effective communicator in a globalized world. This article will seek to answer the question about what students enrolled in an Intercultural Communication course should learn. Specifically, the Intercultural Communication course will be examined by detailing its foundations, content areas, applied assignments, and issues to consider.

Foundations

Before diving into theories and concepts specific to intercultural communication, instructors should begin by conceptualizing both communication and culture in the 21st century. Students enrolled in the Intercultural Communication course may not be Communication majors, so they should be introduced to what communication *is* and how *it works*. They also should be able to define and operationalize “culture” early in the semester and recognize intercultural communication as rooted in historical context

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and value systems. Once students have a basic understanding of communication and culture in a globalized world, they can begin to understand why the subject matter is important.

As part of their foundational study, students need to understand how culture relates to group identity. Making this connection will enable students to understand how ingroups and outgroups function in society, and how intercultural bias, prejudice, discrimination, and conflict exist. When having conversations connected to identity, students also can reflect on their own cultural identity, including ethnicity and race. Furthermore, students need to learn foundational principles related to how messages in intercultural settings are sent and received. For example, students should learn about nonverbal communication, verbal communication (i.e., linguistics), and how different cultures organize messages (i.e., code usage). Finally, students should learn how various interpersonal relationships can function across cultures, and they should examine intercultural communication across an array of social contexts in order to appreciate the applied nature of intercultural competence.

There are foundational theories, taxonomies, and models that should be included in an Intercultural Communication course, all of which come from both communication scholars and colleagues in other social science disciplines. To understand the basics of intercultural communication, students should be exposed to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), Hall's (1976) high-context and low-context cultures, and Kluchhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) Value Orientations. Students can gain a better understanding of cultural identity and group membership by learning about Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), and the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Theories related to culture and verbal and nonverbal communication include the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Sapir, 1912, 1949; Whorf, 1956), Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987), and Face-Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003).

Content Areas

There are additional content areas that students should learn when taking an Intercultural Communication course. When teaching students about how communication works at a fundamental level, students should learn about the communication process, including the transactional model of communication, the goal of communication (i.e., shared meaning), and challenges to effective communication. When learning foundational principles about culture, students should consider the factors that make cultures unique, which includes values, beliefs, norms, and social practices. In addition, students should examine how co-cultures and subcultures create differences within cultural groups.

Students in an Intercultural Communication class also need to understand the imperatives for the subject matter. Therefore, they should learn about globalization, its history, and its critiques. Students should be exposed to topics such as changing demographics, migration, and technological advances as reasons for intercultural communication. As part of this exposure, students should recognize the way that social, political, and religious histories impact intercultural communication in the present day.

It also is important to discuss components of cultural identity including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, social group, and religion, as these components may serve as a point of entry into examining cultural identity formation. By engaging diverse stories of identity formation (e.g., Nakayama,

2012; Nance & Foeman, 2002), students can begin to understand their own cultural context and how prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination develop within and between cultural groups.

When exploring nonverbal communication in intercultural contexts, students should study different types of nonverbal communication, how nonverbal communication is used, and the cultural variations in nonverbal behavior. For example, students might explore cultural differences in greetings and signs of respect. In addition, instructors should unpack elements of verbal communication such as learning a second language, translation, turn-taking in conversations, message organization, and linguistic relativity.

Finally, students should learn about cultural variations of interpersonal relationships. They should be exposed to examples of how the concepts of courtship, friendship, family, workplace relationships, and neighbors differ among cultures. Moreover, they should examine intercultural communication in various contexts such as the workplace, educational settings, popular culture, and travel.

Applied Assignments

Three assignments are particularly useful when teaching the aforementioned foundations and content areas. Near the beginning of the semester, when students are learning the basics of intercultural communication, they should conduct an intercultural identity inventory. Many students come into the course taking their cultural identity for granted, so this assignment allows them to stop and reflect on how their identity is shaped by culture. This in-class activity asks students to first individually answer a set of questions about their regular behaviors (e.g., they are asked about their normal practices related to eating, spending money, volunteering, greetings, and politics). Once they have answered the questions, they then are asked to reflect on which elements of these behaviors are particularly important to them, their families, and the culture at large. Students then share their findings with a partner. After a few minutes of sharing with partners, a discussion ensues with the rest of the class and students making connections between their daily activities and cultural identity.

When students are studying code usage and how cultures can view evidence and persuasive messages differently, they are asked to write a persuasive speech using different modes of evidence. In small groups, students are randomly assigned a persuasive topic and a country/culture. Groups then are tasked with determining how someone from that culture might make an effective persuasive argument. After students organize their argument, they either give the speech or explain to the class why they organized their speech the way they did.

Each semester, students complete an intercultural communication consultation assignment. For this semester-long assignment, students provide a mock consultation presentation to classmates who are pretending they are about to visit a new culture. Students pick a culture new to them early in the semester and then conduct academic research on that culture. They then must write an analysis and overview of their findings, which then will inform their consultation presentation. During the presentation, which occurs at the end of the semester, students give an 8–10-minute speech that provides an overview of the culture, in-depth information on two to three intercultural concepts within that culture, and tangible advice to their classmates who are about to “visit” that particular place.

Issues to Consider

As with any course, there are certain challenges and issues to consider specific to the subject matter. First, it is helpful if students have a basic understanding of communication theory and concepts prior to taking the class. Although this content is introduced in the first few days of the course, a background in communication courses helps students better apply theory/concepts to intercultural contexts. Second, it can be a challenge to explain globalization and its effects in a political climate that argues over—and sometimes against—the tenets of globalization. Students need to learn that globalization is a reality, regardless of their political and economic beliefs and values. Third, it can be a challenge to teach students about racism and prejudice, especially if they are students of privilege who have not faced much discrimination. That said, conversations about privilege and prejudice are essential to learning about intercultural communication, so instructors need to focus on setting rules for discussion, de-escalating conflict, and demonstrating listening. Fourth, gaining access to multiple voices and viewpoints as guest speakers can be a challenge due to time and monetary constraints. Therefore, it is imperative to find additional ways to get “guest speakers” from diverse backgrounds in the classroom through mediums such as TED Talks and documentaries.

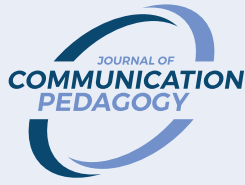
Conclusion

Intercultural Communication is a course that is vital in the 21st century. For students to succeed in a globalized world, they need the content in this course. Intercultural Communication will give them knowledge and tools to navigate the workplace, the university, travel, and relationships. This course also will help them understand why issues such as prejudice and discrimination exist in the world, and can provide clarity to why conflict between groups of people exists. Students who take the course seriously will learn valuable information that will help make them better neighbors and global citizens.

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Teaching the Introductory Public Relations Course: Pedagogical Recommendations

LaKesha N. Anderson

Keywords: public relations, pedagogy, higher education, teaching

Abstract: This article explores the foundations and the content areas that ground the introductory public relations course. Examples of two assignments designed to help students think critically, apply knowledge, and improve their writing skills are offered, as well as the identification of several challenges both students and instructors face and a brief discussion of the unique advantages provided by this course.

Heath (2001) defined public relations as “a relationship-building professional activity that adds value to organizations because it increases the willingness of markets, audiences, and publics to support them rather than oppose their efforts” (p. 8). This understanding of public relations, often described as *relationship management*, still is relevant today; however, key words such as “influence” and “engagement” have begun to creep into the industry jargon. Modern public relations, then, is essentially about engaging stakeholders in a relationship that spans across multiple platforms in an effort to influence public perceptions of a client organization. This article highlights some of the concepts and models that ground most introductory public relations courses, content areas often addressed in these courses, assignments that may be of value when teaching the course, and both student- and instructor-centered issues related to teaching public relations.

Foundations

There is no one theory of public relations. Rather, myriad theories and models have attempted to define public relations. Systems theory emerged early as the primary theoretical framework guiding public

relations. Several scholars (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Long & Hazelton, 1987) have explained that the role of public relations is to enable an organization to adapt to its environment, taking an open systems approach to public relations that is similar to the two-way symmetrical model of communication proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984; see also Grunig, 1984). In their work, Grunig and Hunt identified four models of public relations: the press agency model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetrical model, and the two-way symmetrical model. Of these models, the two-way symmetrical model was considered the most beneficial to public relations as it promoted mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. Grunig and Grunig (2000) and Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) went on to propose the Excellence Theory, which essentially states that for an organization to be effective, it must behave in a way that solves problems and satisfies both stakeholders and management. Today, despite several proposed models and theories, public relations campaigns often rely on multiple public relations models and theories, and scholars continue to suggest new frameworks for studying public relations, including positioning theory (James, 2015), postmodernism (Kennedy & Sommerfeldt, 2015), and transmedia storytelling and narrative transportation theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2018).

While understanding theory is fundamental to any public relations course, the course should provide additional foundational elements beyond theory, which includes a history of the field. This history lesson is important in teaching students the antecedents to what today is considered public relations, such as farm bulletins telling farmers how to plant crops nearly 2,000 years before Christ (Cutlip, 1994) and 19th-century railroad publicity and promotion (Cutlip, 1995). Any history of public relations would not be complete without knowledge of the key figures in the development of modern public relations. These individuals include PT Barnum, who exemplifies the press-agency model, and Edward Bernays and Ivy Ledbetter Lee, both referred to as the “father of public relations.”

Further, students taking a public relations course should have basic knowledge of the models used in creating and evaluating public relations campaigns. The models most often discussed in public relations texts are Jerry Hendrix’s (1998) ROPE model and John Marston’s (1963) RACE model. These models introduce the value of research, planning, communication, and evaluation in building effective public relations campaigns. Lastly, it is crucial that a public relations course introduce the roles of persuasion, culture, and ethics in public relations. This knowledge enables students to decipher persuasion from manipulation, propaganda, and “spin” while also teaching the role of culture in communicating with publics and ways of effectively navigating ethical dilemmas.

Content Areas

Once students have a solid understanding of the foundations of public relations, students can better define public relations, understand the basic parts of an effective public relations campaign, and engage in discussion and critique of theory. Yet, in addition to these foundations, public relations courses include more nuanced content as well. Topics found across different textbooks include publics (e.g., identifying stakeholders and audiences, determining types of public), audience analysis (e.g., demographics, attitudes/beliefs/values, knowledge, and segmentation), forming communication strategy (e.g., identifying goals, objectives, and appropriate messages), evaluation (e.g., formative and summative), persuasion (e.g., principles of liking, authority, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, and scarcity), writing for public relations (e.g., writing press releases and creating media kits), ethics (e.g., PRSA Code of Ethics, ethical dilemmas, legal versus ethical decision-making, normative ethics, and professional ethics), and the practice of public relations (i.e., careers in public relations).

Applied Assignments

The following applied assignments are designed to (a) help students think critically about public relations and apply their knowledge to actual public relations cases and (b) improve student writing skills for public relations.

Writing for PR. For this assignment, students are given basic facts about an event and asked to write a press release. The goal is to write a press release that would generate positive coverage of the event in the news media. Students are required to choose the audience for the press release, provide context for the editor or reporter who receives the press release, and provide interesting background information to the editor or reporter, breaking down any difficult concepts. Students write the press release using standard formatting guidelines for press releases and in Associated Press (AP) style. The goal of this assignment is to have students identify their publics and the best ways to reach those publics, as well as how to improve their ability to develop organizational messages that effectively communicate to a public(s).

Case Studies in PR. Case studies enable students to learn how public relations works in actual situations. These case studies allow students to critically assess what happens when public relations helps an organization and where mistakes are made when public relations efforts fail. Case study assignments involve determining a theory or model that pertains to the case, identifying publics, analyzing communication, and making suggestions for improvement (when necessary). Case studies can be completed in small groups or individually. While there are textbooks dedicated to public relations case studies (Hayes, Hendrix, & Kumar, 2012; Swann, 2014; Turk & Valin, 2017), case studies also can be found online at PR News (prnewsonline.com), PR Week (prweek.com), and PR Council (prcouncil.net).

Issues to Consider

As in courses across all disciplines, there are four challenges that can arise when teaching public relations. First, students enrolled in public relations courses may be from majors other than communication. It is not uncommon to have students from schools of business, advertising programs, or marketing programs enrolled in the public relations course. This can make it difficult for students to understand the communication and relational components of public relations, seeing it rather as a business tool. Often, even communication majors have difficulty understanding how public relations differs from advertising and marketing. Thus, it is essential to define public relations at the beginning of the course, making sure to emphasize the relationship management purpose of public relations.

Another consideration when teaching public relations is the oft-changing nature of the field. Advances in technology continually alter the ways publics seek information and how organizations provide information. Further, new technologies change the rules for what information is expected from organizations. When high-profile organizations are active online or engage often with their publics through online platforms, it may become the expectation that similar organizations will follow suit. The ever-changing technological landscape makes it difficult to stay abreast of the communication channels being used by various publics. It also means textbook chapters and case studies focused on technology use can become outdated quickly. As a result, instructors may need to provide supplementary information for these chapters and assignments.

Yet another issue for consideration is the difficulty of teaching writing in an already busy course. Writing for public relations is different than writing an APA-style final paper in a communication course. Public

relations students typically are required to learn AP style, as well as how to write boilerplate information for press releases. In an already busy survey course, it can be difficult to find the time in class to help students with poor writing ability or who have trouble adapting to this writing style. Providing time to work on writing assignments in class, requiring peer reviews, and providing supplementary materials including templates may help students quickly improve their writing skills.

How students understand and adapt to culture also is a consideration in this course. An understanding of cultural communication and the role of culture in communicating with publics is vital to the success of organizational messaging. Knowing how messages can be interpreted by different cultures, and which individuals hold the most credibility in various cultures, helps build organizational credibility and authority and leads to the development of effective messages sent through appropriate channels.

The public relations course also presents unique advantages. While it often can be difficult to engage students in meaningful course-related work outside the communication classroom, the public relations course lends itself to partnerships with non-profit organizations, community groups, and on-campus offices. These partnerships allow students to gain invaluable work experience by providing public relations services to these organizations. This experience helps students build portfolios and can give them an advantage when looking for internships and employment opportunities.

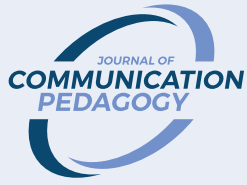
Conclusion

This article explored the foundations and traditional content areas of an introductory course in public relations, offered two examples of applied assignments, and provided a brief discussion of four issues to consider when teaching public relations. The public relations course gives students the opportunity to apply theory through the development of written materials, case studies, and even public relations campaigns. Many of these foundations and content areas appear in similar courses focused on communication campaigns, such as classes focused on political campaigns or health campaigns. Additionally, the knowledge gained from this course will strengthen student understandings of publics, messaging, message development and dissemination, mass media, and persuasion. This course also allows students to engage in critical thinking and challenges them to think about the ethical and cultural implications of communication. These skills will enable students to be more critical consumers and producers of information.

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“You Have to Cry Before You Teach This Class”: Emotion with Work and Resistance in Teaching Intercultural Communication

Brandi Lawless and Yea-Wen Chen

Keywords: emotion with work; critical communication pedagogy; intercultural communication; critical intercultural communication pedagogy

Abstract: In this study, we explore the ways in which Intercultural Communication instructors uniquely experience emotion with work and how this influences their pedagogical approaches to this course. We collected and analyzed interviews with 21 intercultural communication educators across U.S. colleges and universities. We present findings related to the types of resistance present and/or emerging in the intercultural communication classroom, emotional responses to resistance, and strategies for managing and negotiating emotion with work in the Intercultural Communication classroom. We end with discussing implications for teacher training programs designed for the Intercultural Communication classroom.

Communication is a broad and multifaceted discipline, with 48 interest groups, seven sections, and six caucuses serving the National Communication Association in 2018. As much as studying human interaction is at the heart of communication scholarship across areas, instructor experiences teaching in this broad field can vary by more than just content. Rather, our realities inside the classroom can shift due to different expectations regarding emotions, (body) politics, and social taboos. These differences can present unique challenges for Intercultural Communication educators who must navigate the murky waters of teaching diversity, inclusion, and social justice in the current political climate (Chen & Lawless, 2018; Halualani, 2018). For instance, Goodman (1995) suggested teachers committed to inclusive curricula for social and cultural diversities will encounter heated discussions and emotional reactions to

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material and suggest we "encourage ways to channel anger and other emotions constructively" (p. 51). Hedley and Markowitz (2001) argued that an additional obstacle may be "everyday stress on emotional disposition" which results in student resistance (p. 196). Although "cultural diversities" and "controversial topics" are central to the Intercultural Communication course, the study of the emotions that emerge in relationships between Intercultural Communication instructors and their students has not been studied. The challenges of emotion with work specific to the Intercultural Communication course lead to increased stress on the body, pedagogical obstacles, fear, and burnout amongst instructors. Thus, emotions with work and related resistance are important yet understudied issues for (intercultural) communication education (Lawless, 2018).

Emotions in the workplace have been studied in various forms, with earlier articulations focusing on *emotional labor*—affective forms of work, including developing, managing, and performing emotion in the workplace (Hochschild, 1983). The "labor" that academics experience stretches much further than Hochschild's early conceptualizations, leading researchers to expand the term beyond task orientation toward relationship orientation, including expectations (e.g., teachers should be nurturers/caretakers) and the bodily consequences for emotional risk-taking (e.g., students created a vulnerable classroom space in which they shared personal traumas) (Lawless, 2018). Also, it is important to note the range of emotions that result in this additional labor (e.g., anger, fear, frustration, sadness, mania, disappointment, anxiety) that extend beyond simple "exhaustion" (Boler, 1999). These emotions emerge in the college classroom as (implicit) expectations of sympathy, development of personal relationships, attention to immediacy, and responses to resistance. Moreover, such expectations of emotions not only differ across instructors because of their salient identity positions, but also have material consequences for educators. The expectation that these forms of labor be included as part of instructors' duties in addition to their standard job responsibilities should be problematized and explored. Thus, further discussion of emotions with work, specifically in college classrooms, warrants further attention. This study highlights narratives of emotion with work and explores the particularities of how emotions emerge in relationships between instructors and students in teaching Intercultural Communication in hopes of better understanding how to navigate teaching this course.

Literature Review

The unique difficulties in teaching diversity have been well documented (Boler, 2004; Broome, 1991; Chen, Simmons, & Kang, 2015; Duffy, Mowatt, Fuchs, & Salisbury, 2014; Goodman, 1995; Johnson & Bhatt, 2003; Simpson, Causey, & Williams, 2007; Smith, 1982). Student resistance to issues of diversity, equity, and social justice may manifest as overt challenges to the instructor, verbal/nonverbal aggression, and reinforcement of problematic normative ideologies (e.g., heteronormativity, colorblindness; Hedley & Markowitz, 2001). Moreover, a common resistance strategy by students from privileged identity positions is "uncritical sharing of experiences" to demonstrate authority of a subject matter (Davis & Steyn, 2012, p. 32). Watt (2007) argued that these resistive behaviors can intermingle with student perceptions of the instructor, especially those instructors from marginalized groups that students may or may not have been exposed to prior to the course. The overt political nature of intercultural communication makes it a hotbed for resistance, guilt, and anger (Lawless & Chen, 2018). Whereas skill-based classes such as math and biology have a seemingly fixed curriculum, students enter an Intercultural Communication course with competing ideologies that are individually fixed, yet socially constructed (Hedley & Markowitz). Instructors must be skilled in creating dialogues across differences in addition to simple dissemination of material. In addition, foundational intercultural concepts such as "empathy" are misperceived as skill-based variables that can be taught through transmissional modes of communication, rather than fluid,

culturally contingent, and relationally produced phenomena (Broome, 1991). Hence, there is a lack of perceived tangibility in this course, making it difficult to define and measure course learning outcomes.

The "affective component" of intercultural communication requires students to undergo a process of self-assessment that can call attention to prejudice and (implicit) bias (Kim & Gudykunst, 1999). Through consistent practices of self-reflection, emotions that typically are not central to course content (e.g., anger, guilt, and frustration) take center stage, requiring the instructor's navigation, attention, and intervention. Acknowledging the frequency of these challenges requires that Intercultural Communication instructors be prepared to discuss content and manage the emotional climate in the classroom; for instance, by preparing a repertoire of responses that might produce any number of uncomfortable and/or unproductive emotional responses.

Since Hochschild's (1983) work on emotional labor as unwritten emotional expectations, the terrain of literature on emotions and work has become more nuanced. Miller, Considine, and Garner (2007) documented five types of emotion in organizations: emotional labor, emotional work, emotion with work, emotion at work, and emotion toward work. This study focuses on *emotion with work*, described by Miller and colleagues as involving "emotion that emerges through relationships and interactions with other employees in the workplace" (p. 233). Given that academia is a unique workplace, this study adds students to the list of "coworkers" with whom instructors interact on a daily basis. Thus, emotion with work in the college classroom explains the emotions and affective work that emerge in interactions between instructors and his/her/their students. While Miller and her colleagues noted emotional support and emotional abuse as two types of interactions that manifest as emotions with work, this study highlights emotional resistance as an additional form of emotion with work.

An understanding of emotion with work is extended to include aspects of worry, trauma, emotional exhaustion, and self-defeat that also take a toll on the body. These extensions are offered as other important forms of work that emerge in interaction with students, as is a hallmark of emotion with work. When these become expectations or "part of the job," they should be labeled as work. Given this, there is a need to better understand such forms of work. The voices represented in this study describe their affective responses to resistance and challenges that are particular to teaching the Intercultural Communication course, helping answer the questions:

How do Intercultural Communication instructors experience emotions with work, and how does this influence their pedagogical approaches to this course?

Method

Participants

This article is part of a larger study conducted on intercultural communication pedagogy in which we interviewed 21 self-identified Intercultural Communication educators, teachers, and/or trainers across the United States (U.S.) who were recruited using purposeful sampling. The interviewees represented multiple positions in academia including 1 consultant, 2 graduate teaching assistants who taught stand-alone classes, 1 lecturer, 3 assistant professors, 4 associate professors, and 10 full professors (including 1 teaching at 2-year community colleges and 1 retired professor). Collectively, the participants were 10 men and 11 women; 7 people of color (1 Latinx, 2 Blacks, and 4 Asians) and 14 Whites; and 3 identified as gay or queer. In terms of immigration status, 19 of the participants were U.S. citizens, including 1 U.S. American working as an immigrant in another country and 1 naturalized citizen; 1 green card

holder; and 1 F-1 international student. One educator was teaching abroad, but previously held faculty positions in the U.S. Teaching experience ranged from 5 years to over 40 years of teaching Intercultural Communication. U.S.-based educators were chosen as part of a convenience sample, subsequently highlighting the unique experience of teaching within the current political climate. Because of the sample size, participants have been de-identified to maintain confidentiality.

Procedures

We utilized a semi-structured interview guide, allowing us to identify shared experiences and remain flexible in addressing individual narratives (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). IRB approval was received for this study. Interviews were conducted in neutral, quiet locations and lasted between 40 and 75 minutes each. Interviews were recorded, resulting in 287 pages of single-spaced transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Following Owen’s (1984) criteria for thematic analysis (i.e., recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness), codes were identified through open coding and later grouped into larger themes regarding emotion with work. In the first stage of open coding, each author coded the interviews independently noting “impressions, thoughts, and initial analysis” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). We then compared and contrasted our open coding to identify recurring, repeated, and forceful themes embedded in the interview discourses. In the second stage of closed coding, both consistencies and inconsistencies in our open coding were interrogated until reaching consensus on categories. As a White woman and an immigrant faculty woman of color, we relied heavily on our shared and unshared identity positions to constantly ensure that we interpreted the participants’ words on their terms. Furthermore, due to the sensitive nature of one participant’s interview, we submitted an earlier version of this manuscript with that person for member checking. This participant agreed with our interpretation and offered consent for publication.

Results

Overwhelmingly, many participants experienced some form of emotion with work when teaching the Intercultural Communication course, with several expressing that they felt the amount of this labor was incomparable to other subjects. Our findings also revealed that the experiences of, and struggles with, emotion with work were disproportionately felt by women (of color). In our interviews, every woman except one referred to the emotion with work they experienced in teaching the Intercultural Communication course, whereas only three men offered comments that were coded as emotion with work. We also found that much of the emotion with work when teaching this course occurred in response to unique forms of resistance in the classroom. Three key themes emerged from the interviews: (a) resistance in the Intercultural Communication classroom as emotion with work, (b) emotional responses to resistance, and (c) support and strategies for managing emotion with work.

Resistance in the Intercultural Communication Classroom

While any instructor can experience resistive behavior in the classroom, participants described the Intercultural Communication classroom as a hotbed for resistance due to the political nature of the topic, the taboo course content, and the ways in which individual identities become highlighted in classroom discussion. The types of resistance experienced by our participants were: (a) resistance based

on preconceived notions of course content; (b) resistance that manifests as inappropriate or offensive communication; and (c) resistance to student/instructor positionalities.

When using the lens of emotion with work (Miller et al., 2007), resistance in the Intercultural Communication classroom highlighted challenging relationships between instructors and students with conflicting views. As one male full professor of color articulated, “I think that teaching any course that deals with power normativities will encounter different pockets of resistance.” Another White male full professor explained three types of resistance unique to the Intercultural Communication classroom:

One form is the student who already believes they know it all and needs to fulfill requirements—that’s why they’re there. Another is the student who in some way believes that their worldview is superior to any and all others and they’re true believers. And I’ve often said I fear true believers of any sort because sooner or later they’re coming after me always, always, always . . . And the third kind of person is the one who builds emotional walls to keep the discomfort at bay.

The second and third types of resistance that this participant identified were echoed by several other participants across a variety of positionalities. This identification highlights many of the challenges that intercultural instructors face, be it combativeness, defensiveness, or ignorance. Moreover, the “discomfort” being described points to the difficulty in evoking honest yet respectful conversations about race, gender, sexuality, immigration, and difference, among other topics covered in the course.

In explaining where the additional resistance in this class emerges, one male full professor of color proffered:

On the first day, I tell them that this course is not about intercultural cookbooks. A lot of people kind of look at me like they don’t know what that means and I say, “Well, this is not like this is the 10 things that you do to get along with this other cultural group. Instead, it is a different kind of approach.” And there’s some resistance to that because some people, particularly when they’re looking at their own culture and if their own culture is unmarked in that process. For them to understand that a lot of times they’ll say “well but I thought this was intercultural and I want to know more about other cultures and you’re telling me to kind of look at my own.

This particular explanation echoes many of the participants who believe that the resistance they see and experience when teaching about diversity and social justice stems from the preconceived notions that students bring into the classroom regarding what should be taught and how instructors should teach it. When those expectations are not realized, students may become defensive, especially when it requires them to participate in processes of self-reflexivity and introspection, rather than learning about the Other from a safe distance. As one assistant professor pointed out, much of the work to push students beyond the “emotional walls” they build would happen early in the semester. He explained, “In the first three or four weeks, it’s a lot of emotional labor to push them to think critically,” adding that it made him “not want to do that” because of resulting emotional exhaustion.

In addition to the expectations that students bring into the classroom, several participants expressed their frustration, discomfort, and confusion regarding inappropriate and offensive communication about diverse others. As one White full professor woman stated, “The worst teaching and difficult scenarios are the ones where students would say really hurtful, racist, xenophobic, ethnocentric, [and]

homophobic things, and I didn't know how to handle it.” This example demonstrates the painstaking emotion with work instructors can experience when balancing free speech with honoring marginalized voices in the classroom. The types of communication behaviors expressed by this participant articulate two challenges: (a) facilitating a process of unlearning problematic ways of knowing that marginalize, demonize, and criminalize the Other and (b) the emotional caretaking of students who may be the target of such “hurtful” communication. One associate male professor of color shared the following example:

One [student] was doing a facilitation of an article that had something to do with whiteness in the classroom . . . she was talking about whiteness in a way that was sarcastic. That as if “all white people are white supremacists apparently.” And that's just one overt example but I certainly felt that the whole class atmosphere was just full of resistance even from a nonverbal perspective. I just felt very uncomfortable going in there every single time.

Likewise, a White associate professor lamented in her interview about a similar scenario in which a male student, who self-identified as a “neonazi,” made disparaging comments about an African American woman in class discussion. She asked, “How do I protect her and her vulnerability and shut him up?” Together, the comments suggest some validity to the statement that intercultural instructors might not “know how to handle it,” because such challenges are not as prevalent across the discipline and are not necessarily discussed in teacher training. Thus, the instructor is left on his/her/their own agonizing over the best way to manage these unique disagreements in the classroom.

Also, one's positionality can complicate an understanding of how to handle resistance, especially when an instructor's race, sex, gender, nationality, or sexuality become the target of negative communication. One White female full professor, who served as a supervisor for graduate teaching assistants teaching Intercultural Communication, argued that the magnitude of resistance has increased in recent years, especially for graduate students of color. She shared a scenario in which the positionality of the instructor was highlighted in a collective resistance in the Intercultural Communication classroom:

There is quite a resurgence [of resistance] in my observations of the intercultural TAs. Two TAs in our department who are persons of color were targeted by white male students in their classrooms and white female students. In both cases, it was groups of White students. In one case the resistance was so strong that they started a movement in the classroom to say, “We should not be talking about Black Lives Matter. We shouldn't even name that organization in class. We don't want any of these faculty, these negro, NEGRO faculty members coming in and giving guest presentations. I'm so surprised she's even a professor!” I mean it's that level of resistance . . . So, I do think it's extraordinarily difficult for a first-year TA to handle this.

This scenario demonstrates a similar notion that instructors of Intercultural Communication may (at least initially) lack the training needed to manage difficult dialogues that arise due to the sensitive nature of subjects discussed, the political nature of intercultural course content, and the inherent interpellation of vulnerable identities in classroom discussions. This scenario also highlights the unique challenges of instructors who are women, international, people of color, and/or occupy other marginalized positions who take on the challenge of negotiating dialogue, protecting the identities of subjugated students, and coping with the vulnerability of protecting themselves. While other communication courses might present one of these challenges, instructors of Intercultural Communication often find themselves navigating all these challenges simultaneously.

The forms of resistance embedded in Intercultural Communication courses were described as “emotionally exhausting” by about half of the participants interviewed. The undue burden of *feeling* exhausted exists on top of the task of building and articulating an agenda in the classroom. As one full female professor of color noted, “I didn’t want to spend time justifying or defending [what I was teaching].” Another full professor woman explained, “It is very exhausting to always feel like you’re fighting in class. I don’t want to fight in class; I want to bring them to an awareness in class so I want them to get there. How can I help them get there without trying to pretty much force it down their throat?” Another White graduate instructor added, “there was a lot of tension in that class that I wasn’t prepared to handle and I think now I would handle it much differently.” Such comments would suggest that Intercultural Communication instructors must have a repertoire of responses for such resistance. A White associate professor explained that this emotional exhaustion is not common in other classes she teaches:

[When teaching research methods] it’s in some ways so much more straightforward that it’s more relaxing to teach. I don’t feel like I have to be on my toes as much and so I welcome those off semesters when I’m not teaching intercultural for that reason. Just to kind of get a break. It’s having to be on my toes and having to be responding all the time.

Multiple interviewees compared their experiences teaching Intercultural Communication with other communication courses, agreeing that the excessive emotion with work described above is unique to the Intercultural Communication course.

Emotional Responses to Resistance

In describing resistance that takes place in the Intercultural Communication classroom, we have begun to articulate what it *feels* like to navigate these waters. Many participants explained that they feel “nervous,” “shocked,” “vulnerable,” “worried,” “overwhelmed,” and “angry” on a day-to-day basis. More than reactions, these feelings can be viewed as emotion with work that complicates the academic lives of these instructors. Participants offered many examples of the emotional responses to resistance and the impact that it had on their personal lives and their pedagogies. Here, the range of emotional responses the participants experience in the Intercultural Communication classroom is explained, including (a) vulnerability; (b) concern for emotional well-being; and (c) fear of risk-taking.

One of the most poignant explanations of emotions in the Intercultural Communication classroom came from a White professor at a community college who simply stated, “You have to cry before you teach this class.” This comment explains the material effect the course has on the body as well as the vulnerability that instructors may experience in this course in particular. Vulnerability was noted by another faculty member who mentioned, “[A challenge is] being vulnerable, showing them my vulnerability . . . Because I know for a lot of them, they’re worried about making mistakes.” In addition to vulnerability, the level of responsibility that instructors have over the emotional well-being for themselves and their students was articulated by several participants. A White graduate student instructor shared the following reflection:

I always reevaluate that pretty much every time we leave a classroom and that I think also teaching in this way there’s a lot of emotional labor . . . It’s flipping exhausting because you don’t go in there with your lecture notes and your script. You take on a lot of things. I think, “Did this student say too much or go too far?” It’s not just walk into the classroom, teach for an hour and 15 minutes and leave and move on with your day. I think it’s a struggle. That’s why I

think it's harder than other classes. Although I am always concerned about all my students in all of my classes and balance and what is fair, but in intercultural it's because there is so much emotion to it that I don't want people to leave there wounded. But I want people to also leave there knowing that this is what a racist looks like.

Here, the instructor is affected by the constant worry of whether her students are taken care of, which, perhaps ironically, has a more identifiable impact on her own self-care. She also decisively differentiates this experience from the other communication courses she teaches.

Similarly, in consideration of balancing well-being for all involved, a White assistant professor explained, "I probably spend more emotional energy just being worried about how my students will react to this and I don't want someone to feel singled out . . . I want everyone to feel comfortable. I don't want anyone to be offended." In response to her own emotional well-being, this instructor continued, "It is emotionally exhausting on some days. On some days it's not. Some days I leave and I feel more fulfilled than when I started, but there are other days that I leave and I'm like, 'I need three glasses of wine.'" This binary of responsibility for students' education and well-being and the caretaking of oneself was complicated further by a White female associate professor who was pushed by administration to teach about gay conversion therapy. She recalled:

I was told when I talk about sexuality in the intercultural class I also need to be teaching that reparative therapy is also an option . . . that they can go to counseling to basically remove the queer from their psyche. I just remember, this is probably within the first couple years of teaching [Intercultural Communication], I left the campus and cried because I thought, where am I?

This faculty member's narrative demonstrates how the political nature of the course can interfere with the emotional well-being of all parties involved. The micromanaging of content for a tenured faculty member seemingly challenges the intellectual freedom that tenure is supposed to protect, but presents itself due to the content of the course and the current political climate. Such an example showcases the fine balance to which most instructors of Intercultural Communication attune and their emotional response to the hidden aspects of their work. One full male professor explained that this challenge is due to "managing the dynamics and relationships" as they relate to course content in a way that other courses such as "research methods" do not necessitate. He thus argued that the Intercultural Communication classroom requires a "different type of teaching."

In realizing that the Intercultural Communication course differed from other classes in the field, one White full professor articulated a need to "let go" and move away from the comparisons that so many of our respondents offered. She explained:

Part of the emotional labor is letting go of feeling like, "I taught Interpersonal, and everybody said 'Wow this is so fun! I learned about my friend, and I learned more about what I want in a partner and, this is great!'" Then you come into Intercultural and it is the world of critique and difficulty, and challenge and struggle. So, letting go of that sense of "I just want to give them something that is going to make them feel better about themselves, about the field, about the class because then I'll get decent evals. I'm worried about my evals. That's important because I have to share those when I go on the job market." That's another big part of emotional labor in

dealing with the riskiness and taking risks in the classroom that you probably never thought you would before.

In asserting that teaching this course is “risky,” this comment complicates the notion that faculty are on an even playing field when applying for jobs or moving through the tenure track. When a course becomes more difficult to teach, partly due to emotions with work, it puts other parts of academic realities at risk and feeds into the cycle of worry and emotional exhaustion that seems to be a hallmark in the Intercultural Communication course.

The emotional exhaustion that participants described does not dissipate over time, but seems to become more navigable with experience. Some participants argued that new instructors in communication studies either are not prepared to teach the course or need additional support:

There was a new colleague who came up after I retired. She called me and said, “I’m going to be teaching the course. Can we please meet?” And so we did. I could see she was a little overwhelmed . . . I saw her recently and she said, “I’m never teaching that class again. I don’t have the stamina. It’s not my class.”

In the repetition and forcefulness of the notion that teaching this course takes additional labor and effort in order to be successful, necessary strategies for managing emotion with work must be reconsidered for the field of intercultural communication to continue growing in size, scope, and recognition.

Support and Strategies for Managing Emotion With Work

Participants offered three overarching strategies for managing emotion with work: (1) preparation for resistance, (2) developing intercultural commitments, and (3) seeking support. The primary recommendation from respondents for how to manage emotion with work is “be prepared for pushback.” Some explanations included:

Assistant Professor: My experience of resistance has been very nonlinear because I anticipate it. Part of it is that I anticipate that I will get resistance, so I go in there with little tools, like a mental cushion that I know it’s going to come up.

Associate Professor: Especially doing it from a critical perspective, be prepared for the kind of resistance you may face, but ultimately you have to still be true to yourself of what you believe in, how you teach Intercultural Communication, but at the same time be wary of the kinds of resistance that can be hurtful, that can be emotionally draining.

Full Professor: I’m going to meet with the TAs and say, “Let’s talk this through and let’s share strategies.” I think you need to think about it in advance. You need to recognize when it’s happening and then come to those for additional support whether it’s a classroom observation or bringing in strategies.

While these sentiments echo each other, the motto of “be prepared” is easier said than done. Instructors can only “anticipate” what is coming if they have experienced it before. Therefore, new and emerging instructors of Intercultural Communication are at the greatest risk for experiencing this content-based resistance in the classroom and are the most ill prepared for handling it. Moreover, it is difficult to assess how resistance can change from semester to semester, as the political atmosphere and other social

contexts quickly shift as well. Retooling must happen every semester and there must be systems of mentorship and support in place.

Still, long-time instructors of Intercultural Communication argue that the ship cannot be abandoned simply because of the additional emotion with work. As one White associate professor explained, “I think that it takes a lot of emotional, physical, mental labor to be teaching the course. So what advice would I give? I think it’s important to be true to your philosophies, to your intercultural commitments as an intercultural pedagogue.” Likewise, a White assistant professor who identifies as a critical intercultural communication scholar stated:

If you’re going to teach intercultural in the way that I think intercultural should be taught, which is this embodied way, not memorization, and regurgitation, but an embodied physical, mental, emotional experience, don’t be afraid to take risks. Do take risks, but when you take risks be aware that you will get pushback. Just like everything else in academia, you have to develop a thick skin. You cannot let every setback put you in the corner because you won’t survive. And never read your rate my professor reviews.

Both comments demonstrate an acquired balance of expecting resistance and forging forward with a commitment to social justice. Extending this position, one White full professor argued that she has the “responsibility” to confront White students stating, “When I talked to my colleagues who weren’t White, or who weren’t U.S. Americans, they had to deal with a lot more resistance. So, I kind of thought it was my responsibility to really talk to White students.” Whatever the commitments of the intercultural instructor, the participants agreed that the combination of preparation and a commitment to one’s own teaching philosophy work together in successfully navigating emotion with work.

Finally, one participant argued that instructors must have greater support on all levels: interpersonal, organizational, and institutional. She explained, “I think it’s great to have the national forum, a support group, but I think the challenge is more in the everyday within our institution and I think not having that support system, that’s where it’s hard to keep up the fight.” Her comment acts as a reminder that, while instructors can maintain their own pedagogies and seek supportive colleagues in developing successful responses to classroom resistance, they are always already part of larger institutions and structures that will define what is appropriate classroom content, how they should communicate in the classroom, and what forms of teaching will be rewarded. Lest instructors wish to contend with administrators telling them to teach within a particular paradigm, conversations about resistance and emotion with work beyond the classroom and throughout the campus community must be extended.

Discussion

The findings obtained in this study demonstrate glaring deficiencies in teacher training, both in communication studies as a whole, and more specifically for Intercultural Communication educators. Some graduate students find themselves thrown into the classroom with little or no training, whereas other students are required to take some version of a communication pedagogy course before their first semester as a stand-alone instructor. Focusing initial teacher training on “the basic course” or Public Speaking makes sense because of its wide offering as a general education requirement. However, graduate programs lack teacher training that is specific to the Intercultural Communication course. Basic teacher training does not attend to the nuances needed to prepare instructors to teach Intercultural Communication, given the unique forms of resistance reported above.

This study extends the literature on emotion with work to discuss the classroom as a work site in which students become a case study for “coworker” interactions. In organizational literature, emotion with work takes the form of emotional management, emotional support, and treating coworkers with respect. In the Intercultural Communication classroom, emotional resistance becomes a unique component of the interactions that fuel “the relational dimension of emotions in work life” (Miller et al., 2007, p. 236). Indeed, emotion with work stems from the challenging interactions these instructors have with students, rather than the work (e.g., lecturing or grading) itself.

In light of this, the comments and narratives presented in this study offer a fuller scope of realities inside the Intercultural Communication classroom and bring several questions to the surface: What should teacher training for Intercultural Communication that attends to emotion with work look like? Given the political commitments of the course, how can instructors better prepare for the types of resistance most often experienced in the Intercultural Communication classroom? How are teacher-student relationships in the Intercultural Communication classroom approached in a way that keeps the focus on learning in an increasingly divisive world?

Implications

Our findings imply that adequate teacher education in communication studies can be more subject specific and take into account differential experiences across gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration status (Chen & Lawless, 2018). Though no systematic teacher training for this course in particular is known, it would be worthwhile to invest in the training of instructors who staff one of the more commonly offered courses in communication studies across the U.S. (Bertelsen & Goodboy, 2009). These trainings could be offered in-house at graduate degree granting institutions, or as a training institute series sponsored by the National Communication Association, International Communication Association, or regional associations. Teacher preparation for Intercultural Communication must address all of the following:

Developing an Intercultural Communication teaching philosophy. While most communication studies instructors will develop a teaching philosophy at some point in their careers, we suggest that systematically thinking through one’s commitments in the Intercultural Communication course will strengthen instructors’ pedagogical practices while balancing their philosophies and managing emotion with work. Rather than having to “defend” one’s course materials, instructors can make course commitments and expectations transparent at the beginning of the semester, helping to challenge preconceived notions about what the course should look like and create a reference point for students, should challenges arise. A teaching philosophy for Intercultural Communication would include considerations of paradigmatic commitments relating to one’s positionality, content that one feels/thinks is consistent with those commitments, and relationship building with students, including how to respond to harmful communication while still promoting dialogue.

How to navigate difficult terrains in Intercultural Communication. Basic instructor training can rely on strategies for transmission of materials. Intercultural communication teacher training must move beyond such linear modes of communication to promote dialogue across differences. This movement includes discussions of what to anticipate, scenarios of resistive communication, and successful responses for engagement and promotion of well-being. Moreover, it is important to discuss the changing political, social, and cultural contexts that inevitably influence the Intercultural Communication classroom. In doing so, new intercultural educators can work through potential resistance scenarios and develop a repertoire of responses to questions, comments, and challenges.

Protecting individual positionalities in the Intercultural Communication classroom. Many of our participants' emotions with work are in response to the targeting of marginalized or subjected identities of their students or themselves. Articulating best practices for promoting vulnerability and self-care in the classroom can create an environment that recognizes the unwritten expectations of emotion with work for these instructors and matches those expectations with coping mechanisms. For instance, Yep (2014) promoted a pedagogy of cultural wealth that embraces strengths rather than deficits in approaching marginalized positions and perspectives. Individual positionalities can be protected by highlighting the lived experiences of instructors and students of color and fostering inclusivity (e.g., drawing the line between the terms "illegal" and "undocumented immigrants").

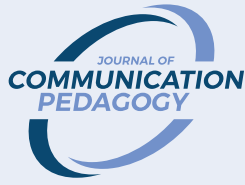
Conclusion

The stories presented here document the impact of emotion with work on the well-being of instructors of this course, particularly for women, international instructors, people of color, and graduate student instructors. Moreover, the findings create an impetus for us to respond to as a field. It is clear that emotion with work creates an undue burden for instructors of this course. We can address this burden by creating initiatives for mentorship and support at an institutional and organizational level. In addition, we can come together as a community of teacher-scholars to prepare the next generation of Intercultural Communication instructors through adequate teacher training. If our respondents are correct in saying that this work gets better over time and with experience, then that experience should be coalesced into a proper educational program.

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Teaching Public Speaking Online—Not a Problem but an Opportunity!

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Keywords: online public speaking, online course design, online course delivery

Abstract: This reflection essay focuses on the problems inherent in the design and development of an online public speaking course, which in part result from presuming the course must mirror its face-to-face counterpart. Based on our own experiences and background in designing an online public speaking course, we recommend that instructors and administrators of this course solve such problems by employing design strategies that effectively adapt the course content and pedagogy to a digital context. The essay begins with a description of an integrated course design model (Fink, 2005) that proved useful to us for accomplishing this task. Then we discuss how we used the four components of the initial design stage of this model to take advantage of opportunities for teaching public speaking online.

While teaching public speaking online is a rather common practice, concerns about doing so often prompt instructors to consider lingering problems inherent in the design and development of the course (Allen, 2006; Corum, 2013; Hunt, 2012). Because the approach to designing this course presumes it must be taught in a way that mirrors the face-to-face course, such an approach fails to employ strategies that effectively adapt the course content and pedagogy to a digital context (Schwartzman, 2007). Based on our own experiences and background in designing an online public speaking course, we recommend solving this problem by using Fink's (2005) Integrated Course Design model.

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To this end, this reflection essay first describes Fink's (2005) model and then moves to a discussion about how we applied the model to the design of our course. In so doing, it is our hope that instructors and administrators involved in one of Communication Studies' most popular basic courses (Morreale, Myers, Backlund, & Simonds, 2015) will realize that considering the digital context within which the course is taught acts as a solid foundation for effective course design as well as fosters a favorable learning environment for students.

Fink's Integrated Course Design Model

Fink's (2005) Integrated Course Design model is based on the notion that good course design combines the components of instructional design into "a relational, integrated model rather than a linear one" (p. 1). The initial design phase proposed by Fink, which guided our course development and design, calls for examining four components: situational factors affecting any course, learning goals as the course foundation, teaching and learning activities, and feedback and assessment.

Situational Factors Affecting Any Course

Considering the context within which the course is situated is important as it assists with creating a significant learning experience for students. Fink (2005) identified five key situational factors: (a) the specific context of the teaching/learning situation, (b) the general context of the learning situation, (c) the nature of the subject, (d) learner characteristics, and (e) instructor characteristics. In addressing the *specific context* of the teaching/learning situation, the instructor should consider, in part, the delivery method of the course and the physical elements of the learning environment that affect the course. The *general context* of the learning situation addresses any learning expectations placed on the course by the institution, the department, or the profession. In terms of the *nature of the subject*, the issue is whether the subject is primarily theoretical, practical, or a combination of the two. When considering *learner characteristics*, instructors should reflect on the life situation of the learners; their prior knowledge, experiences, and initial feelings about the course; and their learning goals, expectations, and preferred learning styles. *Instructor characteristics* that should be examined include assessing instructors' attitudes toward the subject and the students, their strengths in teaching, and their level of knowledge and familiarity with the subject.

Learning Goals as the Course Foundation

The development of learning goals should be motivated by one question: "What would I like the impact of this course to be on students, 2–3 years after the course is over?" (Fink, 2005, p. 8). The answer to this question encourages creating specific learning objectives for any given course, as opposed to solely focusing on the topics that instructors would like to include and teach about in the course.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Describing the difference between passive and active learning, Fink (2005) noted that simply receiving information is passive learning (e.g., reading a textbook), whereas active learning requires students to participate in reflective dialogue with themselves and others as they engage in activities that ask them to do and observe. Fink proposed a holistic view of active learning, one that integrates receiving information with doing and observing activities.

Feedback and Assessment

Fink (2005) encouraged the use of “educative assessment,” which focuses on active learning and is beyond evaluation “designed solely to give the instructor a basis for awarding a grade” (p. 15). Feedback should be given as *frequently* as possible and delivered as *immediately* as possible; it also should be *discriminating* in that it makes clear the differences among poor, acceptable, and exceptional work while being delivered in an empathic manner. Instructors should provide clear guidelines for how students will be assessed, including the criteria used for assessment and feedback, as these criteria reveal instructor standards and answer the questions regarding what quality work looks like in the course.

Design and Development of an Online Public Speaking Course

Armed with an explanation of Fink’s Integrated Course Design model, we now describe our application of the model’s four components to the design and development of our online public speaking course. In doing so, we will note how the use of this model helped to effectively adapt the course content and pedagogy to a digital context.

Situational Factors Affecting Our Course

The *specific context* of our online public speaking course centers on a course that is taught completely online, synchronously and asynchronously, without mandatory or optional on-campus meetings. Some disciplinary controversy about this specific context revolves around whether the course can be taught online because of the importance of speaking to a live audience (Ward, 2016). This challenge was addressed by including both synchronous and asynchronous speaking opportunities in our course. For example, we used technology (e.g., Microsoft Teams) to facilitate students presenting in real time to small groups of their peers. Regarding the *general context* of the teaching/learning situation, we wrote and adapted departmental expectations and existing learning goals for the course, but included additional delivery competencies relevant to presenting with online technology.

In terms of the *nature of the subject*, the online public speaking course should, like its in-seat (face-to-face) counterpart, be a blend of theory and practice. Students should learn about rhetorical strategies and how to apply these strategies in their presentations, whether in-seat or online. The design of our course emphasized an appropriate balance of content and application. For example, at the start of the course, students learned about the nature of public speaking and rhetorical competence, soon followed by substantive instruction about theories and models for speaking to inform and speaking to persuade.

Two *learner characteristics* were identified as most relevant. First, because many of our students take courses online for convenience, as their schedules do not allow them to come to campus, scheduling some speeches asynchronously addressed this characteristic, and engaging in clear communication at the start of the course about the synchronous requirements helped students to plan appropriately. Second, we recognized that some of our students may have public speaking anxiety, just as students do in any in-seat public speaking course. Given recent research demonstrating the potential for decreasing students’ public speaking anxiety scores from the beginning to the end of an online public speaking course, we addressed anxiety within the first 2 weeks of our course (Westwick, Hunter, & Haleta, 2015). This topic was specifically addressed in a discussion forum where students shared their experiences about anxiety with other students.

Finally, the *instructor characteristics* that mattered most tended to relate to motivation or hesitancy about teaching public speaking online. Beebe and Mottet (2009) provided practical advice about teaching competently, which was applied to the challenges inherent in the use of online pedagogical technology (Morreale, 2015). While this list is not exhaustive, the usefulness of these six components of instructional communication competence are worth consideration by instructors of any online course (see Table 1).

Based on our experience, instructors in online public speaking courses can use these six components to enhance their delivery or *presence* during an online course in the following ways (Beebe & Mottet, 2009).

1. *Immediacy* can be achieved nonverbally by looking directly at the students (i.e., the camera) and verbally using each student's first name when providing individual feedback.
2. A sense of *affinity* or liking can be communicated in all written communication with students, given it often is the primary form of feedback in a digital environment. During synchronous interactions, affinity behaviors should appropriately mirror those behaviors exhibited in an in-seat course (e.g., facial expressions, warm tone of voice, eye contact).
3. *Relational power* in the online environment can result from the instructor communicating about course expectations and requirements assertively and with confidence, both verbally and in writing (e.g., phrasing of announcements, online descriptions of assignments, feedback about speech performances).
4. *Credibility* can be enhanced by instructors demonstrating their depth of knowledge of course content and appearing to make fair decisions in the best interest of all students equally.
5. *Clarity* can be demonstrated by speaking at a rate and intensity that is easily understood in the online environment. Written instructions should be precise and explicit in this environment.
6. *Humor* can be used spontaneously during online interactions and in written announcements, carefully, of course, and never offensively.

Component	Description of the Component
Immediacy	The perception of physical and psychological closeness achieved by communication behaviors that enhance the quality of verbal and nonverbal interactions with another.
Affinity-seeking	Feelings of liking or attraction to the other person that result from verbal and nonverbal behaviors, which are used to develop high levels of attraction in a relationship.
Relational power (including behavior alteration techniques)	The ability to influence another person, either based on role or position or being trusted and liked.
Credibility	The perception of character, intelligence, and goodwill a person is deemed to possess.
Clarity	Speaking articulately and audibly, staying on task, and using commonly understood vocabulary.
Humor	Humorous statements related to course material, nonverbal behaviors, humorous props, sarcasm, and unintentional humor.

Learning Goals for Our Course

Collaboration with other faculty members in our department and in the Communication discipline led us to create a set of learning goals centered not only on equipping students to speak competently in digital contexts, but also—and equally important—on being able to transfer their newly acquired public speaking skills to other out-of-class digital and non-digital contexts. This skills transfer was facilitated by the pedagogical and evaluative use of the eight public speaking competencies, outlined in the Competent Public Speaker form available from the National Communication Association (NCA), which are not specific to any particular speaking context (Morreale, Moore, Surges-Tatum, & Webster, 2007) (see Table 2). We also decided to use Spitzberg's (2000) model of communication competence as the foundation for developing the course learning objectives. This model identifies three components of competent communication (i.e., motivation, knowledge, and skills) that interact to result in appropriate and effective communication in most communication situations, including public speaking in a digital environment.

Teaching and Learning Activities Based on Learning Goals

Motivation

To address the motivation (i.e., affect) component of Spitzberg's (2000) model, students participated in an online discussion forum to discuss public speaking anxiety in an online environment as opposed to a face-to-face offline environment. To help manage anxiety behaviorally in a variety of situations, some speaking assignments required students to deliver speeches live (but online) to a group of their peers, which allowed them to provide immediate feedback to one another.

Knowledge

Students initially met the knowledge component by viewing a professionally produced 10-part video series that included exemplary informative and persuasive speeches and a presentation by our two course instructors of the NCA eight public speaking competencies. (Free access to this video series is available at <https://www.uccs.edu/comm/courses/comm-3190>.) A follow-up assignment required students to reflect on, and apply, the eight public speaking competencies by contrasting a poor speech with an exemplary speech.

TABLE 2
Eight Public Speaking Competencies (Morreale, Moore, Surges-Tatum, & Webster, 2007)

Component
1. Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion.
2. Communicates the thesis/specific purpose in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion.
3. Provides supporting material (including electronic and non-electronic presentational aids) appropriate for the audience and occasion.
4. Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion, and purpose.
5. Uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion.
6. Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch, & intensity (volume) to heighten and maintain interest appropriate to the audience & occasion.
7. Uses pronunciation, grammar, & articulation appropriate to the audience and occasion.
8. Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message.

Skills

Students enhanced their skills (and knowledge) by researching, developing, and presenting a live webinar or Web conference to an online, geo-dispersed audience. In this assignment, the skills competency was addressed by allowing students to present their speeches using any virtual platforms to which they had free and easy access. To clarify, skills development included presentations to both synchronous (i.e., live online) audiences composed of other students, and an asynchronous audience in the form of recorded speeches submitted to the course instructors.

Feedback and Assessment in Our Course

Throughout this online course, speeches were evaluated and feedback was provided using NCA's eight competencies, but with specific attention to the nonverbal behaviors identified in the eighth competency but applied to the digital environment. Instructor feedback included guidance related to eye contact, gestures, and the surrounding environment, to name a few. Also, in keeping with Fink's (2005) suggestion of educative assessment, interaction with the instructor and feedback are important. At the midpoint in the course, an assignment was included for a one-on-one virtual meeting with the instructors, during which students discussed their strengths and areas for improvement in subsequent speeches. This meeting was a rewarding experience and enhanced the student-instructor relationship and fostered a sense of rapport. Similarly, student feedback gathered at the conclusion of the course revealed a desire for additional student-to-student interactions and more opportunities to view other students' speeches and offer feedback.

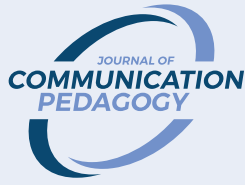
Conclusion

The goal of this reflection essay was to reframe disciplinary dialogue about teaching public speaking online by encouraging instructors to view teaching this course not as a problem, but as an opportunity. It is precisely those instructors in the Communication discipline with an interest in public speaking instruction who should respond informedly to this pedagogical challenge. Specifically, we recommended designing and developing this important basic course using Fink's (2005) Integrated Course Design model that calls for examining four components: (a) situational factors, (b) learning goals, (c) teaching and learning activities, and (d) feedback and assessment. Given the popularity of online courses, the responsibility for educating an orally literate society still falls to scholars and instructors in the Communication discipline.

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Reflections on a Pedagogical Shift: A Public Speaking for Social Justice Model

Angela L. Putman 

Keywords: social justice, activism, critical pedagogy, public speaking

Abstract: While the basic content of the public speaking course has changed little, the method and manner in which these skills are taught can, and should, reflect the dynamic socio-political contexts in which we live and teach. This reflection essay addresses a struggle to keep the public speaking course relevant, innovative, and practical while also incorporating necessary learning outcomes. As a potential solution, I introduce a Public Speaking for Social Justice Model for the introductory course. The model requires that students thoroughly examine a timely social justice issue; situate themselves and their classmates within the issue while featuring marginalized voices and narratives; seek a critical, well-researched understanding through sustained analysis and interrogation; and offer pragmatic solutions in order to affect change. The paper concludes with appraisals and limitations based on utilization of the model for four years.

Public speaking is a foundational course taken mostly by first- and second-year students as a general education requirement at universities, colleges, and community colleges across the United States (Engleberg, Emanuel, Van Horn, & Bodary, 2008; Morreale, Myers, Backlund, & Simonds, 2016). For two decades, I have found myself in an ongoing struggle to keep the course timely, relevant, and practical for our dynamic student populations and evolving sociocultural contexts. Through conversations and discussion panels at yearly communication conventions, I find that many of us experience frustrations with the limited variety surrounding textbook content, syllabi, presentation types, and course format. There are multiple critiques of our field's limiting and often outdated public speaking textbooks (Frobish, 2000; Hess & Pearson, 1992), as well as critiques of the syllabi that are used to teach the public speaking

course (Fisher, 2010; Gehrke, 2016; Porrovecchio, 2005). In this reflection essay, I add my own voice to the call for significant change in this foundational course that for many students may be their *only* communication course during their college careers.

Despite the oft-argued relevance and significance of the introductory communication course, specifically the public speaking component, Keith (2016) contended that the course has changed very little over the past 100 years. Porrovecchio (2005) discussed the “template” of this foundational course: one that often is institutionalized, that contains the standard four or five presentations on different topics, the typical organizational schemes, and any other accoutrements that best reflect an instructor’s personal style. Additionally, with the large number of institutions requiring all students to take public speaking, many programs utilize a Basic Course Director, which often results in standardized department-wide syllabi, textbooks, and content, as well as a large number of fixed-term/part-time instructors teaching the course (Morreale et al., 2016). This similarity among syllabi, along with the vast number of public speaking textbooks available for adoption/purchase that follow similar, if not identical, patterns regarding approach and content, seem to suggest that any discipline-wide deviance from the traditional manner and method for teaching this foundational course has yet to be thoroughly addressed or implemented on a large scale.

Although numerous published articles on public speaking focus on analyzing and reducing public speaking anxiety and communication apprehension, some communication scholar-educators have published articles that highlight alternative methods for teaching the course; these alternative methods include invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995; Salazar, 2015), culturally relevant pedagogy (Colvin & Tobler, 2012), service-learning in the public speaking course (Ahlfeldt, 2009), and using “community” as a guiding theme (Swenson-Lepper, 2012). In lieu of these useful approaches, I continue to grapple with the palpable tension between the challenging constraints and endless possibilities of teaching the introductory public speaking course in a manner that supports my own pedagogical philosophies with regard to communication activism, as well as our discipline’s learning outcomes.

Problem: The Need for a Pedagogical Shift

By my 10th year of teaching public speaking, I grew weary of listening to speeches every semester on the joys of pet adoption, the benefits of CrossFit, and why we should stop drinking water from those terrible plastic bottles. Porrovecchio (2005) and Fisher (2010) both noted the trend of students to choose seemingly random topics that inspire little awe or intrigue due either to the availability of research or because they believe it will be “easy” for them to discuss these topics. While such topics are worthy of exploration, I believed there must be a different method that I could use to teach basic public speaking skills, while also empowering students to think critically about social inequities and engage in a worldview that extends beyond their own limited experiences and positionalities. Additionally, with the limited time between speeches, students rarely can explore any of their chosen topics with true depth or critical thought which often provide audience members with a cursory-level summary of the topic or issue at hand. While reviewing the National Communication Association’s (NCA) Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC), I found myself drawn to LOC #9: *Influence Public Discourse* and reflected on its application in the introductory public speaking course. Two of the supporting elements of this learning outcome include (a) evaluating local/national/global issues and (b) advocating a course of action to address these issues, both from a communication perspective. As I reflected on the more “traditional” model for teaching public speaking outlined by many in the communication discipline, I wondered how I am preparing my students to engage in and influence public discourse that addresses

local, national, and/or global issues through the introductory public speaking course. These pedagogical concerns served as the impetus for a shift in my approach to teaching introductory public speaking.

In a review article about public speaking theory, content, and pedagogy throughout the 1990s, Goulden (2002) argued that the emergence of a more contemporary model of public speaking is predicated on the willingness of the communication education community to make much-needed changes regarding perspectives and pedagogy. Similarly, Fisher (2010) argued that public speaking was designed for the purpose of participating in the democratic process of engaging diverse opinions on a host of socially relevant and contextual issues. Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Artz, and Murphy (1996) recognized the difficulty in offering one precise definition for social justice, but offered one approach toward social justice as “the engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally underresourced” (p. 110). Rudick and Golsan (2016) also supported the desire of many educators to make a pedagogical shift toward social justice by stating, “as our (global) society moves ever closer to political, social, and ecological disaster, we fear that disconnecting learning from a social-justice understanding of education does not serve students’ or society’s best interests” (p. 112). Patterson and Swartz (2014) specifically called for the inclusion of a new learning outcome within the basic communication course that they labeled social justice sensibility, which encompasses citizenship education through public speaking. Taking into account my own struggles and reflections, calls from colleagues such as these offered here, and the timely NCA learning outcomes, I designed an introductory public speaking course that is rooted in social justice advocacy.

Solution: Teaching Public Speaking Through a Social Justice Framework

The model I developed (and continue to tweak) has an underlying commitment to sustained, in-depth, critical engagement with a *singular* topic for the duration of the public speaking course. Through three major presentations, the ultimate goals of this model are for students to (a) thoroughly examine a timely social justice issue; (b) situate themselves and their classmates within the issue while featuring voices and narratives that are frequently marginalized; (c) seek a critical, well-researched understanding of the issue through sustained analysis and interrogation; (d) succinctly explain the complexities of the issue to their classmates; and (e) offer potential macro- and micro-level solutions that are pragmatic and realistic in order to affect change. I contend that the skills acquired through this particular framework more accurately represent the demands and limitations students will face as democratic citizens within and beyond the academy, as well as the types of presentations or “public speaking” that they may encounter in their future careers. The more traditional outcomes of an introductory public speaking course—utilizing effective delivery techniques, demonstrating ethical standards in researching and presenting presentations, adapting messages to the diverse needs of audiences, and utilizing critical thinking and listening skills—remain an integral component of the course.

The first presentation of the semester is a speech of introduction, wherein students introduce themselves to their classmates, typically at the beginning of week four after spending considerable time discussing what social justice encompasses and researching/selecting their topics. During this speech, students share a variety of their cultural identity positions and discuss how these positions contribute to their self-concept and worldview, reveal their chosen social justice issue and rationale for the selection, and offer a brief narrative that personally connects them in some way to social justice broadly or, more specifically, their chosen social justice issue. The objective here is for students to begin to critically examine their own positionalities in relation to how they see themselves as well as how these positionalities affect the

lenses through which they engage in the world around them; as a result of these examinations, they will begin to situate themselves within a framework of social justice. Students are encouraged to focus on the parts of their identity that are most salient at this juncture and that they are comfortable sharing with their classmates. This presentation is uniquely important, as it responds to Donovan and Tracy's (2017) argument on critical pedagogy as a means of transformation: "If we heed the call to create students (citizens) who create social justice activism beyond the classroom, an integral step is to create students who are self-reflexive about their own experiences, attitudes, and (in)actions regarding social justice" (p. 379).

In their second presentation, students are required to think critically about the social justice issues they have chosen and to research and analyze the larger systemic and structural contexts that produce these inequities and allow them to persist. They must provide historical context for the social justice issue, describe an existing organization that is directly involved in the fight against this injustice, and discuss a recent event connected to this issue. The act of finding, selecting, and describing a current event that directly connects to their social justice issue, through multiple news outlets, offers an opportunity for students to increase their news literacy, engage in what is happening in the world at this moment, and demonstrate to themselves and their classmates that these social justice issues are contemporary, urgent, and important. The main objective of this presentation is for students to gain stronger understandings of what advocacy looks like in a "real world" context and also to start thinking about the implications of advocacy from the perspectives of dominant and marginalized voices.

The third presentation allows students to strengthen their understanding of advocacy by utilizing a combination of credible evidence, narratives, and emotional appeals to persuade their audience members that action must be taken to disrupt the systems, structures, and behaviors that allow these social justice issues to persist. Students must offer both macro-level solutions that address structural change and micro-level solutions that any person could enact, including their classmates. The inclusion of both macro-level and micro-level solutions is important because it allows students to make connections between the actions taken by individuals and groups (e.g., protests, letter writing campaigns, voting) and structural/systemic solutions that effectuate long-lasting change. Through this persuasive presentation, students learn how to passionately and enthusiastically argue for necessary change by featuring the voices and stories of those most connected to these social injustices.

All three presentations are graded using a rubric that I designed to assess the skills required for each presentation, as well as their continued understanding, explanation, and analysis of the social justice issue at hand. I do include a final round of presentations during the last week of the semester, where students have the option to re-do any previous presentation for a chance to earn a higher grade after making changes based on my feedback and the feedback of their peers, although this option connects more to my own pedagogical philosophies than to the social justice model presented here. Additionally, throughout the semester, students engage in three ungraded "mini-presentations" that are meant to offer more opportunities for them to practice their public speaking skills in a relaxed environment. These skills include impromptu speaking, vocal variety, utilizing transitions, maintaining eye contact, and eliminating vocal fillers. Finally, there is no single textbook that I have discovered to work perfectly with this particular model. One textbook that works well is *Presentations in Everyday Life: Strategies for Effective Speaking* (Engleberg & Daly, 2009) where the authors make the distinction between presentations and public speaking, noting that students are far more likely to give presentations in their courses, careers, and outside interests than they are to give traditional public speeches. Given the amount of outside readings connected to social justice that I often assign, I typically utilize a more concise public speaking

handbook in lieu of a full textbook [i.e., Griffin's (2011) *Invitation to Public Speaking Handbook* or Ford-Brown's (2013) *DK Speaker*].

Continuing to Reflect on Our Pedagogy

The anticipated outcomes of an introductory public speaking course are achieved through the design and implementation of this model. Through readings and class discussions, students engage with contemporary issues that include marginalization, dominant and minoritized positionalities, and imbalances of power relations. These readings and discussions create a foundation for students to critically analyze unjust systems and structures within contemporary contexts in order to influence public discourse, which is one of the additional learning outcomes for the course. Achievement of this added learning outcome also addresses the call by Giroux and Giroux (2006) to prepare students for what it means to be critical, active citizens locally, nationally, and globally. In my assessment of this model for the past four years, when comparing the entire learning experience to ten previous years teaching the more traditional public speaking course, I find it to be effective in accomplishing the aforementioned student learning outcomes, preparing students to become more engaged citizens, and meeting the demands of a contemporary introductory-level course.

Reactions from students who have taken this course have been largely positive and often include comments about enhancing their ability to critically analyze social problems around them, increasing their awareness of issues that do not affect their own daily lives, and discovering or reinforcing their passion around a social justice issue. Not all students respond positively to this model, however, and some feedback occurs each semester surrounding the “limiting” nature of being “forced” to choose a social justice issue that they did not find either interesting or relevant to their lives. Typically, these reactions are shared during office hour visits and come from students with multiple layers of privileged identities who struggle to select a social justice issue to which they feel they can personally relate. I also recognize that instructor positionality plays a role as well as geographical location of the institution. One way I address this issue is by encouraging students to examine their daily lives, hobbies and interests, and other coursework for inspiration. For example, I frequently ask students to think about what is readily available to them by virtue of the location of their homes; this prompted one student to examine the issue of food deserts after realizing that many people live more than 5–10 miles away from grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables and must rely upon public transit with no available routes to take them to these grocery stores.

I find myself reflecting most often on these situations, as I continue to wonder what I might be missing or where the disconnect may lie between *my* goals of creating civically-minded, critically-thinking, globally engaged citizens and the goals of today's contemporary *students* who enter my public speaking course every semester with their own ideas of how the course will be structured. Using this model over the last four years, I have seen a slight decrease in my student evaluation scores that seems to correlate with my social justice framework. Given the recent political climate in the United States, including a poll conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which found that 55% of the 902 White U.S. Americans surveyed believe that Whites are discriminated against in society (Gonyea, 2017), and the rising use of the label “social justice warriors” as a pejorative, it is not surprising to discover that some students are increasingly resistant to what they sense as a liberalized agenda within college classrooms. Despite this resistance, I continue to teach the course using this social justice framework and hope that discussions around public speaking pedagogy will persist and thrive.

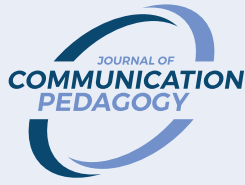
Conclusion

This model for teaching public speaking with a social justice framework is simply one attempt to decenter dominant norms and voices in the classroom and engage students in the process of analyzing injustices through the lens of those individuals who are most marginalized and underresourced in larger systems and structures around the world. If instructors are to heed Moon's (2010) call for critical scholars to encourage students to "unlearn" their previous notions about the world that bolster the status quo and envision alternative notions about the world that challenge it as well as Donovan and Tracy's (2017) call to create students (citizens) who engage in social justice activism beyond the classroom, more voices need to enter this dialogue and offer their own models for teaching the introductory public speaking course in a manner that supports a forward-thinking and civically engaged discipline.

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Reducing Secondary Trauma and Compassion Fatigue in the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication Classrooms

Mary E. King  and Albra Wheeler

Keywords: disclosure, dark side, interpersonal, secondary trauma, compassion fatigue

Abstract: This essay describes the experiences faculty may encounter when teaching tough topics. When professionals are in the position as the individual who cares for, hears about, or witnesses the trauma and suffering of others, they might themselves be at risk for experiencing vicarious stress, or secondary trauma. If ongoing and untreated, this traumatic stress can morph into compassion fatigue, which can impede professional success and contribute to burnout. This essay reflects on the experiences of teaching the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication where students openly shared course-related personal experiences. We reflect on how to successfully manage the delicate climate of the Dark Side classroom for optimal discussion and application of sometimes personal, and oftentimes difficult, course content. The pedagogical strategies reflected in this essay can be adopted for use in other courses with similar potential for student disclosure.

As a mid-career academic, I have had my fair share of unique teaching experiences. I have taught more than two dozen unique courses at five very different institutions with class sizes ranging from seven to 500 students across face-to-face, hybrid, and online formats. I have had countless positive student experiences and many less positive, as well. For example, I have had students lose loved ones and endure illnesses; others have been involved with gangs, imprisoned, deployed, or confronted with unintended

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pregnancy. Many former students faced unthinkable difficult circumstances with more grace than I personally could muster in similar situations.

My experiences as a professor are not entirely unique or uncommon; I think many of my colleagues and peers have similar stories. However, when I taught a Special Topics course on the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication, I was unprepared for the extreme cognitive and emotional load I sustained. Previously I heard similar stories from past students, but they were sporadic at best. This course was different in that I was faced with a room of students who each had questions and experiences for which I was unprepared. This reflection essay will highlight the unique challenge of this course, the steps I took to create and maintain a supportive environment, and advice for faculty in similar situations. Although my experiences and suggestions were employed in the Dark Side classroom, similar encounters could occur in other courses (e.g., Interpersonal Communication, Family Communication) or in other student interactions (e.g., office hours).

Dark From Day One

I realized almost immediately this course was going to be different. I began by reviewing the syllabus in which I included a section labeled “Tough Topics,” which served to alert students that the course content might be personally challenging, that they may wish (but are not required) to share personal anecdotes, and that the classroom would be a safe place. I provided contact information for several campus resources, including the counseling center, women’s resource center, health center, and LGBTQA center. This information was helpful during the duration of the course as I referenced it often. In hindsight, I would have included additional contact information for a more broad range of resources, including the Dean of Students office, the Office of Greek Affairs, and the drug and alcohol wellness office. Following a review of the syllabus, a discussion and overview of the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication began.

Almost immediately, students raised their hands asking *hypothetical questions*. They asked questions such as “What would the research say if someone [insert a highly specific, yet ‘hypothetical’ personal example . . .]” and “What would you tell someone who [insert a highly specific, yet ‘hypothetical’ personal example . . .].” After each question, the room fell silent and I was faced with 20 students leaning forward in their chairs anxiously waiting for the “right” answers to their “hypothetical” questions.

So of course I immediately felt a strong sense of fear. Fear and responsibility.

Although I taught the Dark Side course before (at a different institution, but the course demographic was relatively the same: upper-level undergraduate Communication majors), I never had the detailed and extraordinary barrage of questions I did this time. Whereas in prior classes students discussed the literature and sometimes shared experiences of infidelity or broken trust, the current anecdotes were different: everything from emotional abuse to cyberstalking to stories of seeking PFAs (Protections From Abuse).¹ Aside from the variety of experiences, the amount of disclosures was staggering. Students approached me before class, after class, and during office hours to unload sad and shocking past traumas. Moreover, I left class each day exhausted and upset, concerned for my students’ safety and well-being, and wondering how I could make class academically enriching, but also a healthy experience for them.

Reflecting on this experience, I query whether this occurrence was unique or represents a trend, potentially fueled by the current social and/or political climate. For example, I wonder if coverage of the #MeToo movement inspired students to open up about their own experiences or, perhaps, simply made them aware these incidents *were not okay*. Alternatively, it could be a sign of the political times. For example, “pussy grabbing,” the recent narrowing of definitions of domestic and sexual violence (NPEIV, 2019), and a flurry of sexual abuse and rape allegations currently represent a sizable portion of media coverage. Perhaps this is a challenge associated with a new generation of college students. Regardless, I believe this may be a developing trend faculty should be prepared to encounter.

Creating a Safe Haven

Instructional communication research studies suggest that a positive classroom climate consisting of mutual trust, openness, support, and effective interpersonal communication among students and with their instructors is strongly connected with involvement, affiliation, and courtesy behaviors (e.g., Myers et al., 2016). For this reason, I regularly emphasize the importance of a warm communication climate in my classes and take active steps to achieve this with my students. With the Dark Side class I was able to effectively enhance these efforts in three important ways.

I Know Someone Who . . .

I encouraged my students to share relevant anecdotes in class if they felt comfortable. One of my primary concerns, however, was that students might not be willing to openly engage the material as part of our class discussion if they had concerns about “outing” themselves or potentially being judged or embarrassed. To ensure students felt comfortable sharing personal stories and related experiences their friends or family members may have had, I encouraged them to use the phrase, “I know someone who” I emphasized that consistent use of this phrase would alleviate concern that the anecdote referenced a personal experience, the experience of a friend, or someone else in the classroom. I explained that using this phrase allowed the opportunity for anyone to be the subject of the anecdote, myself included.

The students applied this technique throughout the semester. It provided the opportunity for excellent conversations, especially with the sometimes challenging content. As the instructor, I also used this technique to highlight relevant experiences (personal or otherwise) that coincided with the day’s readings. (I encourage other faculty to do the same.) One significant outcome from this practice was that it not only provided a vehicle for class discussion, but also created an opportunity for students to ask follow-up questions (e.g., “What would have happened if . . .”). When this occurred, the students revisited the research, discussed implications of the findings, constructed tangible suggestions, and recommended alternatives and scripts for how they would provide advice and support for others in similar situations in the future. In other words, the “I know someone who . . .” practice was effective in having students engage the material in an applied manner.

PostSecret

The cultural phenomenon of PostSecret started when Warren (2005) asked people around the world to send him an anonymous postcard in which they revealed a secret they had never shared with anyone previously. The response was massive and individuals wrote about everything ranging from embarrassing habits to sexual assaults (Warren). I applied this anonymous disclosure practice to the

Dark Side classroom by bringing blank note cards and distributing them at the start of each class session. I instructed students to anonymously write something down on the card: a personal experience or way in which they could relate to the content for the day or a question about the material. Students also could elect to return a blank note card if they felt uncomfortable or did not have anything they wanted to contribute. At the end of class, I had a mix of questions and disclosures that served as an excellent class debriefing.

The PostSecret practice was designed to provide an opportunity to engage with the material anonymously, but in such a way that students could use these contributions as part of the learning experience and final reflection of the day's material. The students latched onto this ungraded practice in a potentially counterproductive way, however. Although I intended this to be a cathartic exercise for even the most reserved students, by encouraging these conversations I may have inadvertently reopened some students' wounds, thus intensifying their individual, perhaps negative, experiences. Moreover, this practice perpetuated a daily dose of disclosure, thus increasing the personal revelations to which I was exposed, and simultaneously consistently exposed the students.

My advice for instructors considering some version of this practice is to use it sparingly. One option to explore is to provide students postcards in class and ask them to do the PostSecret activity on their own time (perhaps even sharing cards with willing members of their social network), and mail them through campus mail. This process would allow students to remain anonymous and still engage in the experience, yet provide the opportunity for instructors to monitor the level and severity of the in-class discussions. Although there would still be a need to facilitate the practice, the intensity of the classroom experience might be less overwhelming.

Personal Responsibility

Finally, I placed the burden of responsibility on my students. I made the students aware that the content disclosed in the classroom stays in the classroom, and that it was each student's responsibility to care for, and protect, a strong sense of community where all students feel comfortable to share with one another. Drawing on Petronio's conceptualization of co-ownership and control of information (Petronio & Durham, 2008), I reminded them that when someone discloses information, we *all* are responsible to protect that information.

Calling in the Reinforcements: Professional Advice

Creating a protective educational environment was my first priority; a second goal was to obtain resources and information to better equip myself for this delicate situation. I contacted Albra Wheeler, the Coordinator & Sexual Misconduct Resource Advocate at Bloomsburg University, and shared my concerns about the Dark Side class. I shared how, because of the frequency and severity of disclosures, I felt so responsible for my students in a way I had not experienced previously, and the burden was emotionally overwhelming and physically draining. Our conversations were both informative (e.g., statistics about incidents on our campus) and cathartic (as someone who regularly manages other individuals' tough situations, it was a relief to talk with someone who *truly* understood what I meant when I described the crippling effects of my students' disclosures).

Albra introduced me to two concepts that explained my struggle: secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. Commonly examined in the helping services and medical field, these concepts are identified

as outcomes of taking on other people's traumas. *Secondary trauma* (or *secondary traumatic stress, STS*) refers to the distress family, friends, or professionals experience when trauma survivors retell and reenact traumatic events (e.g., Elwood, Mott, Lohr, & Galovski, 2011), and *compassion fatigue* refers to the cumulative stress caused by helping others who are suffering (Boyle, 2015).

Secondary trauma explained how I felt when my students recounted their situations. As an academic, it can be easy to think in broad strokes about the implications of research, but confronting it face-to-face was jarring. Each narrative the students shared stopped me in my tracks and the research became less theoretical and more real. Each recounting broke me from my academic mindset and forced me to see the actual faces of the Dark Side. This persistent secondary trauma I experienced resulted in compassion fatigue. I expected a few students to disclose, but I did not foresee the critical turning point where I was the trusted co-owner of nearly all my students' heavy disclosures. I constantly ruminated on their stories: on my commute to and from work, during office hours, cooking dinner, or playing with my children, for instance.

Albra and I decided an information panel would be beneficial to the students so she, my colleague David Heineman (who researches the damage and effects of gender disparities), and Bloomsburg University's Title IX coordinator spoke to the class. All three speakers were helpful in providing answers to questions I did not know (e.g., what can the university do when an abuser is in the same class/dorm/apartment complex as a victim). In the future, I will invite other professional resources to participate as part of the panel (specifically counselors, health care workers, and law enforcement), and I would recommend this to other faculty, as well.

Conclusion

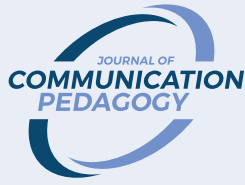
In hindsight, I realize I may not have been the only person experiencing secondary trauma or compassion fatigue; as students were disclosing their Dark Side experiences, their peers may have experienced their own secondary traumatic stress. Pedagogically, to offset this possibility in the future, I intend to emphasize the potential negative outcomes (as well as positive) students might experience and begin the semester with a detailed discussion of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. I also will introduce qualified professionals throughout the semester as guest speakers to address the specific questions and concerns of the students. I anticipated encountering some challenges teaching the Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication, but was unprepared for the outpouring of dark, personal stories my students shared. By creating a protective classroom climate, seeking advice and additional information, managing secondary trauma and compassion fatigue, and reflecting on the achievements and missteps I made throughout the semester, I was able to create an educational experience with personal benefits for my students. I hope the advice and suggestions presented here can be applied and adapted in other instructors' pedagogical pursuits.

Note

1. Student examples are hypothetical but representative of the topics and anecdotes covered in class, and no student's actual or personal experience shared in class was used in writing this paper.

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Hearing Is Believing: Using Audio Feedback in the Online Interpersonal Communication Course

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Keywords: audio feedback, interpersonal communication, communication education, online course

Abstract: The introduction to interpersonal communication course (IPC) is popular for both communication majors and nonmajors alike, and as such, many departments have designed online versions of the course. Teaching IPC in this format has challenges, given its dual emphasis on theoretical understanding and skill-building. This reflection essay explores the efficacy of providing audio feedback on essays in the online IPC course, as a way to create a positive online presence, manage the grading load, and encourage students to implement the feedback. The rationale for this approach to feedback and implementation strategies are provided, as well as a discussion of outcomes from the intervention. A review of course data and perceptions indicated gains in student application of course material and satisfaction with the audio feedback mechanism.

Although public speaking is often the required general education communication course, the undergraduate introduction to interpersonal communication course (IPC) still is taught frequently at colleges and universities across the U.S. (Morreale, Myers, Backlund, & Simonds, 2016). In a survey of communication departments, Bertelsen and Goodboy (2009) found that 96% of them offered an IPC course, an increase of 25% since 1999. Though online instruction has increased dramatically over the past few years, online sections of IPC courses may have grown more slowly than other communication courses (Alexander & Natalie, 2015; Jaschik & Lederman, 2018). This could be due, in part, to the course's goals of both theoretical instruction and skill development (DeVito, 1991).

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Broadly speaking, faculty are still skeptical that online instruction can be as effective as face-to-face instruction. A recent survey of college faculty indicated that only 35% of faculty who teach online agree that online instruction can be as effective as in-person instruction in the courses they teach (Jaschik & Lederman, 2018). Over a decade ago, in 2006, I received a grant from my university teaching center to transform our IPC course from an in-person course into an online format. At the time, there was little literature available about teaching IPC online. Like the faculty in Jaschik and Lederman's survey, I was not opposed to online courses, but I was skeptical that the online environment would be suitable for an IPC course.

In this reflection essay, I describe my experience of re-designing and refining a traditional, face-to-face IPC course for the online environment. More specifically, I discuss the challenges of grading load, student application of feedback, and instructor immediacy, and how providing audio feedback on students' written work helped to mitigate these challenges.

Description of the Course

Our institution offers approximately four sections of IPC each semester. The course attracts about 60% communication majors (because it is a pre-requisite) and 40% non-majors (because it fulfills a general education requirement). Like most other programs, the course is taught as an introduction to both interpersonal communication theories and skills (Alexander & Natalie, 2015; DeVito, 1991; Webb & Thompson-Hayes, 2002), and addresses communication process models, identity theory, the perception and attribution process, verbal and nonverbal communication, and conflict and relational communication theories, among other topics.

Each face-to-face IPC section traditionally enrolled 30 students; however, with the online sections, the university administration encouraged us to increase the course enrollment cap to 35. More recently, we were encouraged to admit students on the waiting list, increasing the average number of students in an online section to between 35 and 40. Although it is not a pedagogical best practice, many institutions report increasing caps in online sections of courses as a way to increase enrollment (Taft, Perkowski, & Martin, 2011).

As I developed my online course, I worked with an instructional designer to create three short paper assignments to replace or simulate some of the skill-building activities I normally facilitated in the face-to-face class. In each paper assignment, I asked the students to participate in a skill-building activity, synthesize and cite the communication theory they had learned thus far in the course, and reflect on their experiences in the skill-building activity. For the first paper assignment, students experienced a culture other than their own as a visitor and reflected on this difference using vocabulary from identity theory and intercultural communication. For the second paper assignment, students observed nonverbal rules in three settings, and in one setting I asked them to violate a simple social rule (e.g., talking too loudly or softly in a check-out line). The third paper included two components. First, the students read a short dialogue of a negative interaction between two romantic partners. Applying the principles discussed in the course, I asked the students to re-write the couple's dialogue into a more positive conversation. Second, I asked students to write a short narrative explaining the changes they made to the dialogue citing the course vocabulary and principles. As I implemented exclusively the papers and other aspects of the online version of the course, I emerged a few challenges.

Teaching Challenges

I encountered three challenges in teaching this new online IPC course. The first challenge I faced was related to the size of the online course sections. Although I had only five to 10 more students per section, that was as many as 60 more papers to grade. I quickly got behind on grading, even though I knew that timing is one of the most important aspects of feedback (Bonnell, Ludwig, & Smith, 2008). When I did finish a class set of papers in a reasonable time frame, I was unable to give my students the depth of written feedback necessary to improve their skills and encourage application of the theoretical content (Alexander & Natalie, 2015; Cavanaugh & Song, 2014).

Secondly, my students were not applying the feedback I offered on their paper assignments. This issue was particularly evident on students' submissions of the second paper. For example, in addition to their numerical score obtained using the rubric for the first paper assignment, I offered written comments such as, "You did an excellent job connecting your personal communication experiences to the material in your paper. For future papers, try developing a narrative, rather than simply answering the questions in a list. Writing in paragraph form might help you to draw connections between the questions in a way you might not have thought about." The student then would submit the second paper assignment that still contained a list of answers to the paper prompts, rather than a coherent essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Although this issue was not unique to teaching IPC online, I believe the asynchronous nature of the course exacerbated the problem, as I did not see my students as frequently (if at all).

The lack of opportunity for less formal, more timely interaction with students was a third challenge. I struggled to establish the robust connections with my online students that I did in my face-to-face courses. Even though I responded regularly in the online forums, it was challenging to get to know each student. I had trouble remembering their names and, at times, I found myself missing the sense of community that I had always developed in my face-to-face courses. I was not alone; creating instructor immediacy is a challenge for many online instructors (Dixson, Greenwell, Rogers-Stacy, Weister, & Lauer, 2017). More troubling than my feelings of lack of community, I was worried that my students were not developing the comfort required to openly question concepts and share their experiences as they would in my face-to-face class. Though they cited the textbook concepts in the discussion forum assignments, I often had to prompt them to relate those concepts to their experiences, which had never been a problem in my face-to-face sections. With these three challenges in mind, I turned to the literature for solutions.

Audio Feedback in Online Courses

Typically, in both face-to-face and online courses, feedback on papers is given in written form. However, with the advent of online learning, more instructors are considering new technology-enhanced ways to give feedback to students (Cavanaugh & Song, 2014; Dixson et al., 2017). A few studies (Cavanaugh & Song; Dixson et al.; Oomen-Early, Bold, Wiginton, Gallien, & Anderson, 2008; Wood, Moskovitz, & Valiga, 2011) indicate that students find online comments helpful. One study in the nursing discipline found that 70% of the students surveyed understood their instructor's comments more effectively with audio comments, 67% of the students felt more involved with the course, and 80% found the audio comments to be more personal (Wood et al.). In a controlled experiment with undergraduate students, Butler, Godbole, and Marsh (2013) examined the transfer of learning that occurred with three types of feedback: (1) correct answer, (2) no feedback, and (3) explanatory feedback (i.e., providing an explanation of why a particular response is correct or incorrect). They found that both correct answer feedback and

explanatory feedback encouraged students to recall concepts; however, explanatory feedback also enabled learners to facilitate deeper comprehension by being able to apply the knowledge to new contexts.

This literature review led me to consider how audio feedback comments could benefit more than just my students' abilities to apply course material across papers or manage my grading load. Rather, a multimedia approach such as this could be appropriate in helping me to make my thinking process visible to the students and demonstrate immediacy, two things about which I was worried when putting the course online.

Intervention and Study

In the following semester, I decided to provide audio feedback comments for student papers in my online IPC course as a strategy to create social presence, help students implement corrective feedback, and manage my grading workload. To introduce this technique to students, I created a short video explaining the process. Although I still completed the quantitative rubric for each student's paper, each student also received an individualized audio file of my voice explaining the quantitative score in lieu of providing written comments.

Admittedly, it took me a few attempts to become proficient in the new grading and recording process. I read each paper electronically and assigned it a number score on the rubric. I recorded a 60–90-second audio feedback file using Voice Recorder, the native audio recording program that is automatically installed with the Windows operating system (for Mac users, QuickTime has a built-in audio recorder). I made each recording while the student's paper was visible on my computer screen so that I could refer to specific areas of excellence or improvement. I began each audio recording with the student's name and tried to keep a relatively informal tone, as if I were having a conversation with the student in my office. I chose not to edit the audio file to limit the amount of time each one would take to complete, which decreased my grading time substantially. Once grading was completed, I uploaded the rubric and audio file (in mp3 format) to the learning management system (LMS) in the same section where students would find their paper score.

Since I first put my IPC course online in 2006, technology has changed dramatically. For example, the early Windows-based voice recording software was clunky, and the files would take a long time to upload into the LMS and could not be compressed. Sometimes, students had trouble opening the files, so I had to transcribe my comments anyway. Recently, our institution switched to the Canvas LMS, which includes a voice recording function within the gradebook. This has made the audio feedback process on papers even less time-consuming. Additionally, many faculty are using new software (i.e., VoiceThread) to encourage more engaging video, audio, and pictorial asynchronous communication (Dixson et al., 2017).

Student Responses and Assessment

To evaluate the effectiveness of this change in my assessment strategy in this course, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The first challenge—the amount of time I spent grading papers for my increased course size—was strongly mitigated by this new approach. As Ribchester, France, and Wheeler (2007) explained, many instructors choose to use audio feedback mechanisms because they can speak more quickly than they can either write or type. This was definitely

true for me. When providing written feedback, I could barely finish grading a class set of papers in 3 hours. With audio recordings, I was able to complete a class set in under 2 hours. Once I implemented the audio feedback model, I was able to return two sections of papers within a week without a struggle.

The second challenge—my students' lack of attention to my feedback on their papers—also was improved by the audio feedback approach. Quantitatively, about 40% of my students increased their scores at least 5% between the first and third papers. Particularly, their scores increased in three criteria of the Paper 3 rubric:

- ▶ Vocabulary: Does the paper utilize the vocabulary of power, conflict, and relationships correctly and appropriately? Are all borrowed definitions cited?
- ▶ Clarity: Does the scenario include responses that clearly illustrate the goals of each character? Does the justification clearly explain the reasons for each change?
- ▶ Research: Does the paper use at least one academic (peer-reviewed) source? Is it appropriately integrated into the text of the paper? Is it cited appropriately in-text and on a works cited/references page?

Qualitatively, I saw the students incorporating my feedback into their papers as well. They specifically attended to my comments in their subsequent papers, thus better meeting the course goals. This outcome was consistent with the work of Ice, Curtis, Phillips, and Wells (2007), who found that audio feedback increased students' perceptions of their ability to remember and apply course content.

The third challenge—creating instructor immediacy and a positive student-teacher relationship—was addressed in my students' responsiveness to me and my student ratings of instruction. For example, after sending the audio feedback on the first paper assignment, I asked students to e-mail me a few comments about what they liked and did not like about the new feedback approach. Of my 40 students in the course, 14 were positive, 15 did not respond to my survey, and 11 had some constructive feedback. They asked for more specific comments and suggestions for improvement; I also received a number of requests to speak more slowly. I was immediately able to implement my students' suggestions. I began using the structure of "liked best, next time" for organizing my audio feedback (these are the things I liked best, these are the areas they could improve next time). For example, I would often make a comment such as, "I like what you did in this section because it effectively synthesizes your experience with the course material. In this other area, consider applying this concept. It might more effectively articulate your argument." By structuring feedback in this manner, I was able to demonstrate to students my commitment to helping them grow. For example, one of my students e-mailed me and said, "I am really enjoying the videos and audio recordings regarding critiques with my grades instead of just getting little notes in the comments section. It helps make it feel more like I am in an actual classroom."

My student ratings of instruction (SRIs) also reflected a positive change in my relationship with students after implementing the audio feedback. For example, my mean score for "my instructor provided helpful feedback on my work" was 4.83/5, which was higher than both the department mean (4.19) and college mean (4.31). The audio feedback comments were the most frequently commented upon part of my course in my SRIs. In fact, two students listed the audio comments as the "most valuable" aspects of the course.

Overall, the process of moving IPC into the online environment was a positive experience, both for me as an instructor and for my students' learning outcomes. Comparing the face-to-face with online sections,

students' final grade distribution has been consistent, and my online section SRIs have remained positive in comparison with face-to-face sections, with approximately 80% of students willing to recommend the course to others.

Conclusion

I implemented an audio feedback strategy in my online IPC class to help create a positive online presence, manage the grading load, and encourage students to implement the feedback. The trend to offer online courses has presented unique challenges to faculty who teach IPC, because the course often includes a mix of theoretical instruction, experiential activities, and reflective writing. Given the number of institutions developing online courses and programs in communication, it is important to ensure the online learning experience is as rich as a face-to-face course. As illustrated by the data collected in my course and my experience with audio feedback, this strategy has the potential to preserve aspects of the face-to-face learning experience in the online IPC course.

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The Practice of Nonviolence: Teaching an Undergraduate Course in Nonviolent Communication

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Keywords: nonviolence, diversity, sexism, racism, peace

Abstract: This Best Practices article outlines 10 tips relative to teaching a course in Nonviolent Communication (NVC). It outlines suggestions for readings, activities, and projects throughout a semester-long undergraduate course. The article addresses how students can learn both the theory and practice of nonviolence by means of readings and activities that address social problems such as sexism, racism, bias, and violence against oneself and the earth. Specific suggestions are provided for creative ways in which students can be engaged with readings so that they have ownership of their in-class experience. Details regarding an independent long-term project providing freedom of creativity in out-of-class work are included, as well as suggestions for interactive, face-to-face activities in class.

In 2012, my faculty dean asked me to teach a fourth-year (senior-level) course titled “Communication and Conflict.” Given my research and training in women’s studies, spirituality, and learning with technology, I responded that I would prefer to teach a course on communication and . . . well, *anything but conflict*. I held this conviction in part because I embrace a positive approach to communication (Socha & Pitts, 2012; Pitts & Socha, 2012), and also because I am keen to teach with the intent of promoting peace-making, nonviolence, and activism. A course including the term “conflict” and without the term “resolution” felt anathema to my objectives as an academic, trained yoga instructor, mindfulness practitioner, and most importantly, engaged citizen. However, I understood the request, as my institution’s undergraduate communication curriculum includes teaching students to engage with, defuse, and transform conflict, for such skills are key to any communication professional’s personal and career success. While previous research (Baesler & Lauricella, 2013) has demonstrated the efficacy of a course in learning

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about peace and nonviolence, this Best Practices essay outlines 10 specific tips gathered from engaging with the challenges and solutions that I have employed after 7 years of planning, teaching, and learning from a nonviolent communication course at a large, secular public institution in Canada.

The Communication and Conflict: Nonviolent Communication (NVC) course seeks to describe the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to a number of social problems. Thus, careful choice of readings forms the backbone of the course. I began planning this course by considering McCarthy's (2014) 8-week peace course that he has, with much acclaim, taught at universities, prisons, schools, and churches. A longtime pacifist, peace activist, journalist, and teacher, McCarthy wrote columns for the *Washington Post* for nearly 30 years and has taught over 7,000 students in his peace course. A version of the course is available for free online (<http://peacecenterbooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/classofnonviolence12jan.pdf>). Although his online course served as a start in identifying readings with which my students and I would engage, I found McCarthy's reading list too male, too white, and too steeped in religious underpinnings to suit the progressive public institution at which I teach. To that end, the first five tips aim to help construct a meaningful, semester-long reading list that serves to address the notion of conflict in intrapersonal, interpersonal, political, and global communication. The second five tips provide direction for activities that can be incorporated during class, together with assignments that students can complete outside of class meeting times.

Best Practice #1: Ensure That Issues Associated With Women and Conflict Are Addressed

McCarthy's 8-week reading list includes pieces from 22 men and eight women, two of whom were second authors. I revised my syllabus to include significantly more female authors, including Chimamanda Adichie (2016), Luvvie Ajayi (2017), Julie Bacha (2017), and Greta Gaard (1993). I included readings by or about two transgender women: CeeCee MacDonald (Erdely, 2014) and Leslie Feinberg (2014). All of these readings are essential to illustrating course themes (i.e., gender conflicts, taking risks, the concept of otherness) while avoiding tokenism. Moreover, to ensure that women in the syllabus are not merely symbolic or perfunctory, the readings are essential to understanding the key concepts in each weekly theme. The inclusion of female authors is of particular importance to me given that the student population in the Communication program at my university is comprised of about 65% women.

Best Practice #2: Address Issues Associated With People of Color and Conflict

In August 2016, Nyasha Junior, scholar of race, gender, and religion at Temple University in Philadelphia, tweeted "Instructors, as you are preparing for the fall, review the books you have assigned #syllabus-sowhite." Junior's tweet invited faculty in all academic disciplines and at all levels to carefully consider the race and ethnicity of authorship for assigned books and course readings. To this end, I considered critically the race and ethnicity of readings in every week of the syllabus. Materials in the course include classics from Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, Eknath Easwaren, and Muhammad Ali, as well as the aforementioned readings by and about Adichie, Bacha, Ajayi, and MacDonald. All such readings addressed course topics such as civil rights, independence, and family life. One of the most meaningful experiences that I have had in teaching this course is when I showed the 30-minute film, *Right Here, Right Now* (Gandhi, 2003). This Hindi film (with English subtitles) demonstrates the potential outcomes of support, attention, and positivity over criticism, ignorance, and negativity. After showing the film in 2017, a Southeast Asian woman in the course e-mailed to tell me that this was the first time in her

university education that an instructor had shown a film that was directly relative to her culture. As the United Nations named Toronto the most multicultural city in the world, I was surprised that—especially as a fourth-year student—this student had not been given the opportunity to engage with material that represented her background or culture. I therefore continue to use this film and receive positive feedback from students.

Best Practice #3: Address Historical Events and Figures

In my experience, many communication students do not know the historical basics of Gandhi's Salt March, the roles of John Lewis and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the civil rights movement, the main tenets of feminism, or the historical background of apartheid. Although students have certainly *heard* of Muhammad Ali and know him exclusively as a boxer, they know nothing of his involvement in social and political activism. Rather than assigning a reading that addresses the civil rights movement, students are invited to watch a documentary (Dalaklis Media Enterprises, 2015) about Muhammad Ali and his personal struggles as a successful Black athlete in the United States. To avoid experiencing a holistic perspective on King's teachings of respect, students read King's (1957) sermon about loving enemies and discussed questions such as (1) What is love?; (2) What is the difference between eros, philia, and agape?; (3) What did King mean when he said to love your enemies?; and (4) How do we do (or not do) this in our own lives? It is this close interaction with King's work that can enhance students' understanding of King's historical importance beyond the "I Have a Dream" speech.

Best Practice #4: Include Religious and Spiritual Diversity

The history and practice of nonviolence is, in many cases, tied to religious or spiritual philosophy and practice. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist clergy member and Muhammad Ali's history as an activist is tied closely to religious discovery and transformation. Given that I teach at a large public (state) university, I must be mindful of the religious and spiritual background of both figures in the course and students in the classroom. Diversity of readings addressing religious/spiritual issues is essential to being aware and inclusive of the depth and breadth of nonviolent practice across a variety of traditions, which ensures that the course is not overwhelmingly representative of any one spiritual tradition. Similarly, nonviolence is not limited to the religious/spiritual arena. Conflict transformation occurs in struggles where religion does not play an underlying role. For example, interpersonal communication strategist Marshall Rosenberg (2003) employed peacemaking skills in desegregation of schools and reconciliation in economically depressed and politically discordant communities. The university at which I teach attracts students from a diversity of religious and spiritual traditions, particularly due to the multiculturalism of the region east of Toronto where the university resides. I therefore include a diversity of religious/spiritual backgrounds with a focus on inclusion of nonreligious nonviolent philosophical work by individuals with a primarily secular philosophy, including, for example, Robbins (1992) and Sharp (1973). Another important and related topic is intercultural communication, but because our university requires all communication majors to take an intercultural communication course, this topic is not included in the NVC course.

Best Practice #5: Spare Students the Cost of a Textbook

A key tenet of nonviolent communication is to understand the needs of those individuals with whom one is communicating. Having taught in higher education for nearly two decades, and with teaching this course for 7 years, I know that students at my university struggle financially. Sparing students the cost

of a textbook is a prime example of “walking the talk” of NVC and acknowledges a main tenet of non-violent communication: honoring another’s needs. Further, I have not yet found a textbook that meets the needs of this creative course. However, it is beautifully suited to free, online readings that meet the needs of students in a way that is meaningful to them. These materials not only are free, but also serve to provide them with dynamic course materials which suit their desires for multimedia learning tools. The use of YouTube videos, online documentaries, and other sources relative to nonviolence, activism, and political crises are updated constantly, and thus make the textbook delivery mode rather outdated.

McCarthy’s (2014) free online course was the launching pad for course readings and content, though as aforementioned, I have used less than half of McCarthy’s reading list and replaced the other portion with readings sourced online. For example, Adichie’s (2016) “How to Raise a Feminist Daughter” is available for free via Facebook, where she originally posted the manifesto; its status as a public post qualifies it as part of the public domain and thus qualifies under Canadian and U.S. Fair Dealing and Fair Use, respectively. Similarly, *Rolling Stone*’s article about CeeCee MacDonald is available for free online, is a publication that students find readable (and I find stylistic and rigorous enough to assign for class), and also qualifies under Fair Dealing and Fair Use terms. While it can be argued that texts such as Rosenberg (2003) or Lasater and Lasater (2009) would be inexpensive and suitable for this course, I find that the breadth and depth of readings sourced online provide a more robust and meaningful introduction to the principles and practices of NVC.

Best Practice #6: Assign Journal Entries to Emphasize Personal Relevance

Subsequent to completing the readings each week, students use the course learning management system to respond to the readings. They are asked to choose one quote or line from the assigned readings that is important to them, and then write a two-paragraph journal entry that explains (a) why the quote is meaningful (one paragraph) and (b) outlines how they might apply something from the reading to their everyday lives (one paragraph). These entries are graded using a 10-point rubric with criteria including writing style, clarity, thoughtfulness, and thoroughness of approach. These journal entries take the course away from the imaginary and into the practical. Because often at the start of the term, students will respond with vague sentiments such as “I will not hate my enemies,” or “I will consider nonviolent responses during conflict situations,” they are encouraged to go beyond the hypothetical or theoretical and move toward an applied, personal response. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s (1957) sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, invites the opportunity to discuss what “loving your enemies” really means. With this reading, students are encouraged to consider questions such as: (1) Who are your adversaries?, (2) Do you know people who are “enemies,” as evidenced in family drama or interpersonal conflict?, (3) What national or international relationships are adversarial?, or (4) How can you (or someone you know) move beyond resentment and move toward reconciliation with an old friend, former partner, or sibling? Students sometimes struggle with Adichie’s (2016) “How to Raise a Feminist Daughter” reading as most of them are 20–21 years old and almost none of them have children. Instead, students without children can be asked to reflect upon how they treat their sisters, their female friends, or even their mothers. Both men and women are encouraged to consider the ways in which they were raised, the chores they did (or did not do), or how their siblings were treated in comparison. A word limit for each entry is not imposed, which means that some students may write five succinct sentences which articulate how the reading is meaningful and how it can be applied in their lives, while other students may write several additional paragraphs that incorporate personal stories or anecdotes. One student even wrote a poem in response to the readings.

Best Practice #7: Assign Journal Entries That Can Be Used to Inform Class Discussion

At the conclusion of each journal entry, students are asked to submit one thoughtful question relating to the readings that they would like to see incorporated into class discussion. The creative and meaningful questions posed by students are never disappointing; they sincerely want to know what their classmates think and believe. While this best practice allows students to take ownership of any course, student-led questions are of particular importance in the NVC course as these questions allow for respectful dialogue and debate, which then models the nonviolent approach by incorporating active listening and articulation of needs. This recognition of needs is a hallmark of NVC, and practice in doing so in the classroom can model active listening that occurs outside academia. For example, in response to Ajayi's (2017) TED talk, one student wanted to know of her classmates, "If you could do one thing differently that you did not do because of fear, what would it be?" Similarly, in response to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (1957) sermon, a student confessed, "I totally struggle with holding grudges and living in the past. Have you ever forgiven someone who you felt wronged you? How did you feel and do you still have a relationship with them?" Additionally, it is not the same students speaking each week. Because the breadth of readings allows for the possibility for students to identify with or reject the notions presented in each of the assignments, some students will want to participate in discussions about gender, while other students are more enthusiastic about race and ethnicity issues. Regardless, all students are exposed to these issues, and opportunity to take ownership of what is discussed in class is a welcome experience for students. As a result, the discussions that ensue from student-generated questions are both sincere and enjoyable.

Best Practice #8: Invite Students to Complete a Nonviolent Communication Term Project

While readings comprise the content for weekly discussions and thematic progression throughout the course, a semester-long "Nonviolent Communication Project" provides a personal throughline in the course. Over approximately two thirds of the semester, students engage in an activity or "project" of their choice that directly relates to nonviolent communication. The term project invites students to engage in a new or different practice (e.g., beginning and maintaining a mindfulness meditation practice), participate in a new or different activity (such as volunteering at an organization in which they are interested), or changing a particular habit (e.g., observing and adjusting their participation in social media). Although it is most meaningful to leave students freedom in how they interpret and complete this project, criteria in creating and committing to a project is important. Term projects for this course must focus on something unique and atypical to students. For example, the project should not be becoming vegetarian if students already are, or volunteering at a specific organization in a capacity in which they are already involved. Further, students are asked to document their progress throughout the term (e.g., via a blog, social media account, or written piece). Finally, the project must include a rationale grounded in academic literature relative to nonviolent communication and peace.

Although the project is open-ended in terms of how students construct it, samples of projects completed by previous students are of great assistance. For example, one student worked with the Toronto-based charity Fix the 6ix (<https://fixthe6ix.ca/about/>) and collected ticket stubs at the end of home Toronto Raptors games in order to provide meals for the homeless; this student completed a blog that chronicled his involvement with the charity. Another student sought to get her entire family on board with recycling

(including green composting), which was challenging because her brother and father were resistant to the idea. One student approached me after the first class and said that she had to drop the course because the project seemed like too much work given that her father had cancer. I suggested that she chronicle her family's journey with his treatment; fortunately by the end of term, her father was considered in remission. This student created a photobook with captions addressing her family's struggle throughout the term, with a literature review about how cancer bloggers can create a sense of community. Her family was particularly grateful for this project given that they were so busy and had forgotten much of what their daughter chronicled for her project in the course. One student this term, in the spirit of Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory that we all adjust our self-presentation in order to guide others' impressions of us, wanted to see how it felt to wear thrift shop clothes for a month. She and her 10-year-old sister completed the project together, and concluded that the experiment helped them to explore and focus on how they felt on the inside and not the outside (see more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=te4zQcoKlf8>). Overall, the term project invites students to change or do something specific that is nonviolent in nature and allows them the opportunity to actively engage with the premises in this course and how these premises can be implemented in their own lives.

Best Practice #9: Experiment With Nonviolence in Online Forums

Suler (2004) suggested that some people self-disclose or act out more frequently in online contexts than they would in face-to-face situations. This "online disinhibition effect," in which people share personal experiences or are uncharacteristically critical, rude, or intimate, can be caused by factors such as anonymity, invisibility, and communicating in an online forum. Technology—in particular, online forums—can be used to experiment with online disinhibition effects in the NVC course. I have done this by means of online discussion forum applications such as "Answer Garden" (answergarden.ch), which allows for a virtual discussion "room" in which students can type responses to questions presented in a face-to-face class meeting, or it can be left running as a "back channel" of communication throughout each class period. For example, I opened an online forum at the start of class, and in a discussion of the civil rights movement, one student anonymously typed, "I honestly don't understand the conflict around '#BlackLivesMatter' and '#AllLivesMatter.' Can someone please explain this to me?" A student well-versed in issues of race gave a clear and concise response to a student who was too self-conscious to share this important question aloud in class. Similarly, Poll Everywhere (polleverywhere.com) hosts multiple-choice or open-ended questions created by the instructor in which students can either "vote" for a particular response or type in a response that then can be part of either a word cloud or provide a more lengthy set of prose responses. Responses can be projected from the instructor's computer to the screen in class, so that students can see all contributions. For example, in a discussion about ahimsa, or "nonharming," I begin by asking students about whom they care. Rather than having students raise their hands and report that they care about their parents, siblings, or friends, I open a Poll Everywhere forum. Responses are generally more candid in this forum; students report caring about pets, people who have passed away, or themselves.

Further to gathering more sincere responses in class, using online forums can invite a subsequent discussion about the concept of anonymity or willingness to share or say something digitally but not face-to-face. I invite students to consider if they are more likely to share something personal by means of a digital forum in class, and if they are more likely to get involved in a conflict if communication is exclusively digital (spoiler: most students admit that yes, arguments are "easier" to conduct via digital media such as text or social media messaging channels). This debrief opens the opportunity to discuss how conflict can be created or resolved online.

Best Practice #10: Illustrate Intersectionality

Crenshaw (1991) gave a name—intersectionality—to the notion that issues of power in context of race, class, sexuality, gender, and disability overlap and combine in each individual's personal experience. Thus, individuals do not belong to only one identity category. Rather, all persons exist at the intersections and overlap of their own backgrounds and experiences. For example, a Black woman may identify with being female, Black, heterosexual, and a millennial; she is not limited to only one identity category. The concept of self-identification, and the complexities therein, is particularly important in this course, because violence is both created and resolved in the context of power. Incorporating the notion of intersectionality throughout the course and as different topics are addressed is essential in students' understanding of how power is embodied and how it can be addressed in nonviolent communication. For example, I may ask students to identify ways in which they feel oppressed or marginalized. Some may respond with issues associated with economics, race, religion, ethnicity, or gender; it is nearly impossible for a student to identify with only one area of oppression. A discussion of Adichie's work about raising a feminist daughter invites acknowledgment of intersectionality whereby issues of race, culture, religion, and gender are all addressed, and do not exist independently of one other. We consider how being Black intersects with challenges related to motherhood and/or partnership. By illustrating and focusing on intersectionality, students have a more practical understanding of the complexity inherent in oppression, power, and how nonviolence involves understanding how each party relates to issues of power.

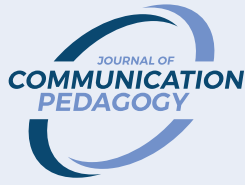
Conclusion

Feedback from students on this course consistently centers on two primary themes: "I learned more in this class than I did in my entire university career" and "Class is always exciting, fun, and different." I believe that this feedback is directly relative to the 10 Best Practices offered in this article. In the NVC course, students learn because they are engaged, and they learn both with and from each other. A combination of robust and engaging readings, together with lively in-class activities focusing on dialogue, debate, and personal interaction, the NVC course provides students with both a depth and a breadth of how they can, if they choose to do so, make nonviolent communication a daily and lifelong practice.

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Best Practices for Teaching Discussion as Part of High School Common Core State Standards

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Keywords: classroom discussion, Common Core State Standards, secondary education, participation

Abstract: Instructional discussion is a teaching method used in many classrooms across grade levels. In fact, the Common Core State Standards promote the use of instructional discussion in secondary classrooms (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018a). Students, however, are not always taught best practices for engaging in a discussion and may feel unprepared to participate. As a result, discussions may not produce the dynamic learning opportunity they are intended to foster. This essay provides 10 tips for high school teachers to prepare students in the high school classroom to engage in a meaningful classroom discussion effectively in order to ensure students are learning and are engaged in a productive manner while meeting the demands of the Common Core Standards.

When discussing and researching the teaching of communication, high school classrooms are often neglected. This neglect is unfortunate because the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) place an emphasis on Speaking and Listening in the K–12 curriculum. The CCSS were developed through a collaborative effort of educators (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018a) and have been adopted by 41 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018b). Accordingly, although many high school students are being taught speaking and listening skills to some extent, not all teachers are adequately trained or held accountable for teaching the standards (Wright, Rohman, Horn, Meyer, & Simonds, 2018), making the impetus for implementing communication pedagogy in K–12 schools even more paramount.

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The Speaking and Listening strand of the CCSS for English Language Arts has a focus on the use of instructional discussion. Within this strand, a standard titled Comprehension and Collaboration focuses on preparing for and participating in conversations with diverse individuals (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018a). The grade 9–12 standards include skills such as “propel conversations by posing and responding to questions,” “respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives,” and “work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018a, p. 50). Although teachers often require students to participate in instructional discussions, they seldom teach students how to engage in those discussions, including the aforementioned specific skills. If they did teach students to engage in instructional discussions, it could help prepare students to meet most of the Speaking and Listening standards. Although scholarship exists that highlights how teachers should facilitate an instructional discussion (Anderson, Nussbaum, Pecchioni, & Grant, 1999; Simonds, Wright, & Cooper, 2019) and how discussion occurs in problem-solving groups (Beebe & Masterson, 2012; Rothwell, 2019), there is a lack of resources for secondary educators on how to teach students to engage in instructional discussion (Larson, 2000). Therefore, this Best Practices article provides tips for high school teachers to use in order to prepare their students to engage in meaningful instructional discussions.

Best Practice #1: Introduce the Purpose of Discussion

Students are more likely to participate in discussion if they understand the purpose of the current discussion as well as the discussion construct in general. Brookfield and Preskill (2012) described four purposes of discussion, which include a better-informed understanding of a topic, increased self-awareness, an appreciation for the variety of opinions shared in a discussion, and a means to inspire taking informed action. Similarly, Phillips (1966) suggested that learning effective participation in small groups enables individuals to influence decision-making in society. Further, he asserted that in education, the use of discussion groups allows students and teachers to apply what they are learning as well as master content. The CCSS require students to be able to discuss with diverse partners and synthesize and respond to diverse perspectives. As such, high school educators should explain to students that discussion is a way to learn content, understand different perspectives, and discuss ideas in a comfortable, safe space designed to foster learning. In doing so, students will be better prepared to participate in small groups that will help them influence their world. To ensure a variety of opinions and shared ideas, teachers should explain that students do not have to agree with everything that is said, but that they should use the discussion as a learning opportunity.

Best Practice #2: Create a Comfortable Atmosphere

To learn from and respond to diverse opinions, students must first feel comfortable sharing their ideas. Brookfield and Preskill (2012) suggested that when promoting democratic discussions, teachers should place an emphasis on collaboration and respect. They noted that their experiences getting students to embrace this emphasis has been challenging; however, they found that teacher promotions of appropriate dispositions moves students in the right direction. These dispositions include hospitality, mindfulness, humility, and appreciation. *Hospitality* refers to creating an environment where people want to participate and are encouraged to take risks, *mindfulness* is paying close attention to what others are saying, *humility* expresses an ability to admit that knowledge is limited, and *appreciation* refers to acknowledging when someone has an insightful contribution or idea through feedback and commentary. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a basis for creating a comfortable space for sharing ideas and experiences.

Further, Gibb (1961) developed categories of communication that create defensive and supportive climates. He argued that a defensive climate is created by judgmental statements, lack of concern for others' well-being, and attitudes of superiority. Conversely, he suggested that using non-evaluative language, showing empathy, and investigating issues rather than taking a strong stance are all communication behaviors that promote a supportive communication climate. Teachers can promote these supportive communication behaviors in a number of ways, but the goal is for teachers to deliberately work toward creating an environment of mutual learning and ensuring that students enter discussions hopeful of either learning something new or acknowledging a new viewpoint.

Best Practice #3: Utilize Student Choice

Another way to encourage a comfortable discussion environment is to promote student choice through student-guided discussions. Giving students opportunities to make choices in the classroom will lead to intrinsic motivation and feelings of self-efficacy (Brooks & Young, 2011). In fact, the CCSS assert that students should work with peers to decide upon rules for a discussion. Teachers can have students work with peers to create their own rules and guidelines for all classroom discussions. Beebe and Masterson (2012) suggested that small groups develop ground rules, which are clear guidelines of acceptable behavior that group members agree upon. Teachers should allow students to decide what rules need to be explicitly stated to ensure the discussion moves forward how they wish. Larson (2000) mentioned that there is some flexibility regarding rules, stating, "other than a requirement to listen and respect their classmates' rights to share their opinions and ideas, these teachers often do not teach a specific list of do's and don'ts. They emphasize the intent of rules, rather than the rules themselves" (p. 673); therefore, this is a good area for teachers to implement student choice and responsibility. Teachers should allow students to take ownership of rules for participation in discussion to foster a student-centered learning environment. Additionally, when students are facilitating the discussion, they should be allowed to determine the path the discussion follows. Teachers should allow students to ask questions, so the discussion reflects what they deem important. Inherently, this not only introduces effective student choice, but also helps to make the conversation student-driven.

Best Practice #4: Teach Through Modeling

The CCSS require students to be able to ask their own questions and propel the discussion themselves. As such, modeling is a crucial component of the discussion process. Often, the best way to learn what a good discussion looks and sounds like is to view a discussion from the outside, which can happen in a number of ways. First, because teachers are the constant model for classroom discussion, teachers should model good listening, respect for other viewpoints, and appropriate question-asking techniques. As Larson (2000) explained, "if discussion is to be used as a way to help students construct knowledge and to help students learn how to go about the process of discussing, then the teachers are a crucial variable in creating such a context" (p. 663). In their study on student participation in the basic course, Meyer and Hunt (2011) reported that students felt that positive teacher feedback and nonverbal cues were influential to their in-class participation. Similarly, Simonds, et al. (2019) found that a teacher's reaction to student responses can either "stifle or enhance the discussion process" (p. 161). As such, they recommend teachers praise rather than criticize, encourage student input with questions such as "What does everyone else think of that?," and deliberately communicate their communication choices so that all students understand what is being said.

Accordingly, teachers should model these behaviors and identify them to students so that students can mirror them during their discussions. Further, if teachers wish to move to a more student-centered discussion, they can teach students to lead discussions by modeling a teacher-led discussion first (Haston, 2007). We recommend teachers begin with a teacher-led discussion and then slowly reduce their presence in the discussion environment. Students can also watch a discussion from the outside and learn from it by engaging in discussion techniques such as holding a Socratic Seminar, where an inner circle discusses content of the text being used while the outer circle discusses the functions of the inner circle's discussion itself (e.g., the dynamics, the flow, the usage of references). Teachers then can facilitate a discussion of what students observed that made a productive or unproductive discussion (somewhat of a meta-discussion).

Best Practice #5: Teach Preparation

Once certain parameters have been established and students have observed the teacher modeling effective discussion behaviors, there are certain skills that students need to learn in order to participate in effective, collaborative, and purposeful discussion. The CCSS (2018a) ask students to “come to discussions prepared, having read and researched the material under study” (p. 50), which means that students should come to class with an understanding of the content that will be discussed and be prepared to engage in a conversation that applies that content beyond simple recall. One important piece of a discussion, especially once students become familiar with the process, is that they should be student-run. Simonds, Hooker, and Wright (2015) explained that when students come to class prepared, the class inherently becomes student-centered. Preparation allows students to hold a stake in the conversation, bringing their own knowledge and experiences to the forefront of the discussion as well as to the forefront of their own learning. Preparation creates low-risk opportunities for students to jot down their own notes, thoughts, and experiences beforehand, allowing them to be less apprehensive to speak during the discussion.

This preparation can take many forms, such as completing anticipation guides, giving students possible prompts the day before the discussion, or having students write questions as they read so the students will have pre-prepared, low-risk opportunities to speak. Rattenborg, Simonds, and Hunt (2005) found that reading objectives and preparation prompts help provide the framework for discussion and aid in the comprehension of the content itself. Reading prompts serve as the content knowledge for the discussion, whereas discussion prompts ask students to engage in higher-order thinking (Simonds, et al., 2019). This way, students are aided not only in the transmission of content knowledge, but also, they have constructive scaffolding needed to participate in the discussion. Therefore, teachers should have a mechanism in place to have students come with notes or discussion prompts that prepare them to participate in the discussion in a low-risk manner.

Best Practice #6: Teach Active Listening

The CCSS require students to be able to respond to information presented in a variety of formats, including orally. To be able to respond, students must be able to take the information they have heard, effectively interpret the information, and formulate a coherent response. Inherently, this involves the instruction of listening. Best practices for teaching listening require interaction, encoding, and explicitly demonstrating skills to be a good listener. These quality active listening techniques involve nonverbal gestures and expressions, reflecting the message back to the speaker (Spataro & Bloch, 2018). Additionally, Simonds, et al. (2019) suggest teaching paraphrasing (i.e., restating the information and emotion in a

message), teaching question-asking, and helping students understand that listening is culturally-bound. Teaching listening involves the explicit demonstration of these tactics in everyday interaction, especially when students are answering questions or while having conversations. When teaching students to listen, teachers should focus on helping them listen with the intent to respond to what is stated. An ample way to teach students to listen is to inform students about active listening strategies through readings or lecture and then give them opportunities to practice these active listening strategies that are necessary for discussions to work within the walls of a classroom.

Best Practice #7: Teach Question-Asking

The CCSS require students to be able to propel conversations by posing questions, which means that students need to be taught appropriate question-asking techniques. Throughout the day, teachers should engage in question-asking techniques in order to model how students should ask questions in their own discussions. It also would be effective for teachers to demonstrate the facilitation of a discussion, modeling effective question-asking techniques during the discussion. The teacher can take time during teacher-led discussions to explain how they structured questions and why. Simonds, et al. (2019) suggest using Bloom's taxonomy to construct questions that vary in difficulty and work to get students to higher-level thinking; this taxonomy and rationale can be shared with students to help them learn to ask questions that will advance the discussion. Similarly, Anderson et al. (1999) offered four types of questions that should be avoided: yes-no questions, questions that ask students to continue answering after they have somehow indicated they do not know an answer, questions that require students to guess, and leading questions. Teachers should inform students to use these question-asking techniques that they themselves have been using while avoiding inappropriate questions to make the discussion truly student-led.

Best Practice #8: Teach How to Cite Textual References

One of the learning outcomes of instructional discussion is that students can use research or textual evidence to support claims. In fact, the CCSS (2018a) state that students should be able to refer to "evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas" (p. 50). Evidence is one of the most prominent ways students can increase their credibility within a discussion, particularly when the textual evidence reinforces their original ideas. Larson (2000) asserted that one purpose for questioning in discussion is to ensure students can use the best evidence they have available to respond to that question. Additionally, teaching students that citations increase credibility as a speaker is necessary to validate the use of textual references within discussion. Consequently, students must be taught how to use textual evidence in discussion. Presumably, students will have an understanding of how to cite sources in text; thus, a brief explanation of how that translates to an oral discussion is warranted. Basic communication course textbooks report inconsistent strategies for orally citing sources (Kinnick & Holler, 2012); however, in alignment with the CCSS, students should be able to cite, at minimum, an author and the year the work was published if it is a reference the class has not collectively read. If the students are more advanced, an article title and publisher would be even more appropriate. If the class is collectively reading a text, students should cite page numbers so their classmates can follow their statement(s).

Students should be taught phrases that help them cite textual references such as "according to," "the text mentions," or "in my experience." Similarly, students may need to be taught paraphrasing skills in order to accurately incorporate their own phrasing of the author's work or another person's idea into

classroom discussion. In a study designed to enhance students' use of oral citations in speeches, Buerkle and Gearhart (2017) created an online mastery training strategy. The online training asked students to read, among other content, a description of what constitutes plagiarism, elements of a citation, examples of different types of citations, and the use of paraphrasing when citing sources. Students who completed this training performed better on oral citations than those students who did not. In turn, teachers can provide students with examples and explain the importance of giving credit to sources as ways to help students complete their oral citations in discussion. If teachers want students to be able to accurately cite textual evidence and outside research, they must first teach them how to incorporate that information into the discussion.

Best Practice #9: Teach Improvisation Skills to Participate in Discussion

A critical part of a student-centered discussion is the ability for students to use words and phrases in order to move a discussion forward. Best Practice #5 recommended teaching students how to prepare to participate in an instructional discussion, but there are still skills needed to seamlessly carry out a discussion. The CCSS ask that students be able to respond to ideas in the moment to understand and engage in the larger discussion. Therefore, it is imperative that students learn improvisation skills in order to move the conversation forward and to connect their own ideas effectively. Improvisation skills help the discussion to move not only from topic to topic, but also from surface-level learning to deeper learning. Although improvisation is an important part of discussion, it does not come easily. It requires multiple sessions of teaching and a comfortable environment that allows for open and free-flowing discussion, which may include thoughts that have not been fully formed. Hickey (2009) argued that a classroom must be fit for improvisation, including an openness to diversity and students who are listening attentively.

There are ways that improvisation can be added to regular classroom content in order to prepare for discussion. For example, teaching students effective transitional words and phrases such as “to build on,” “in addition to,” or “I understand what you are saying; however, I disagree” will help students govern their own discussion and further it along. Additionally, impromptu speeches can help prepare students for the improvisation necessary in discussions. Having students listen to a stimulus and then orally respond to what they heard will prepare them to think in a manner conducive to the type of thinking required in instructional discussions. It is important for teachers to create many low-risk opportunities for students to practice their improvisation skills, especially when it comes to agreeing or disagreeing with others. These opportunities for improvisation help the conversation move along accordingly.

Best Practice #10: Vary Strategies to Create a Space for all Learners

In order for an effective instructional discussion to occur, all students must be willing to participate. It is no surprise that using the discussion method in the classroom is met with pushback from students who are shy, students with communication apprehension, students with communication disabilities, or students who simply do not want to participate orally. This can create uncertainty on the part of the instructor regarding whether discussion should be implemented at all. To combat this, instructors should teach students about communication apprehension and the strategies needed to overcome it. Gall and Gillett (1980) argued that there are many ways to combat apprehension including modifying the size of the group and the manner in which students are engaged in the discussion. For example, not every discussion needs to be a full class discussion. There are a variety of discussion methods (e.g., The

Fishbowl, Big Paper, Think-Pair-Share) that rely on smaller discussion groups and those groups provide more opportunities for different students to speak. Technology also can help facilitate instructional discussion. While some students discuss orally, other students can discuss in a back channel (similar to the Socratic Seminar mentioned in Best Practice #4), but with a simultaneous conversation via technology. Because students come to classrooms with a variety of experiences and needs, it is important for instructors to make a comfortable space for all students to participate in classroom discussions. Further, teachers should consult with students with disabilities or their corresponding special education teachers regarding how they can accommodate them in discussions.

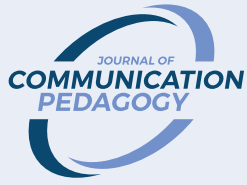
Conclusion

Instructional discussion provides a rich learning opportunity for students and teachers alike and it is important for both to be properly trained to participate in discussions. Specifically, instructional discussions allow students to be actively engaged in their learning, which enhances their learning (Simonds, et al., 2019), promotes critical thinking (Anderson et al., 1999; Simonds, et al.), and enhance their ability to influence change in their world (Phillips, 1966). Additionally, it creates a foundation for a strong high school communication course aligned with the CCSS. Because high school communication teachers often are ill-equipped to teach communication skills, these best practices provide teachers with ways to explicitly prepare students to communicate in discussions. Moreover, effectively teaching students to engage in instructional discussion lays the foundation for effectively meeting the Speaking and Listening Standards in the CCSS in a high school communication class.

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Communication Concepts in Action: Best Practices in Case Study Pedagogy in the Organizational Communication Course

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Keywords: case study pedagogy; organizational communication; student-written case studies; active learning

Abstract: Analyzing case studies is a useful way to assist students in drawing connections between organizational communication concepts and real-world experiences. As faculty members who teach organizational communication, we regularly use case study pedagogy. Case study pedagogy provides a rich narrative through which complex organizational communication concepts can be identified, analyzed, and reflected upon. This article provides 10 best practices for utilizing and assessing case study pedagogy in the organizational communication course. These practices include: to make clear connections between case studies and course materials, scaffold learning, choose a mix of cases, cultivate a sense of community in the classroom, enable self-directed learning, vary assessment formats, welcome ambiguity, evaluate analyses and provide directed feedback, use varied case study formats, and encourage students to write case studies.

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Organizational communication is a theoretical and applied area of study that lends itself to the use of case studies (Alvarez, Bauer, & Eger, 2015; May, 2017). A case study is typically a short reading based on real or re-constructed events that tells a story involving a dilemma for which there is no clear solution (May, 2017). Case studies are useful active learning techniques because they provide students with

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the opportunity to critically evaluate a real-world example, apply theoretical and abstract concepts, and reflect upon organizational members' responses to a problem (Alvarez et al., 2015; May, 2017). Furthermore, research suggests that students who utilize case studies experience higher levels of learning and develop more realistic outlooks on organizational life (e.g., Banning, 2003). In the organizational communication course, instructors can choose from a variety of case study volumes (e.g., Fyke, Faris, & Buzzanell, 2017; Keyton & Shockley-Zalabak, 2010; May, 2013).

Over the last 3 decades, case studies have served as a prevalent pedagogical tool for organizational communication instructors. However, instructors sometimes face challenges in the implementation of case study pedagogy. These challenges may include (a) students experiencing difficulty understanding the relevance of the case study to the course content and their learning process; (b) students having difficulty understanding case studies that involve unfamiliar organizational stakeholders; (c) students deferring to the instructor for “correct” answers instead of offering their own perspectives; (d) students not coming to class prepared to discuss a case study; and (e) assessing students' varied responses to case studies. To address these challenges, we offer the following case study best practices for organizational communication pedagogy. As organizational communication instructors at the undergraduate and graduate levels, we rely heavily on case study pedagogy in our courses and have drawn from these experiences to develop these best practices.

Best Practice #1: Make Clear Connections to Course Materials

Case studies can be a useful pedagogical tool to illustrate complex organizational situations and how organizational communication concepts can be applied to them (Alvarez et al., 2015; May, 2017). However, the narrative nature of case studies can make it difficult for students to identify the course concept(s) that the case aims to illustrate. Thus, delivering a short lecture discussing the concept(s), assigning a reading, and outlining learning objectives helps ensure that students understand the concept(s) the case study is illustrating. Edited case study volumes often provide learning objectives; however, instructors should develop learning objectives if they are not available. Learning objectives will help students apply course concepts to the narrative without relying on the instructor to do this for them. To ensure that students are applying organizational communication concepts to the case study, Alvarez et al. (2015) suggested asking students to embrace the role of “communication consultants addressing organizational dilemmas . . . offering theoretically informed practical solutions” (p. 304). Asking students to assume this role is useful since it requires them to critically analyze the case using course concepts as opposed to only offering their personal reactions. After students have analyzed the case study, debriefing sessions should be held that provide instructors with the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings, further probe students' application of theoretical concepts, and encourage students to reflect on the application of the concepts to their organizational experiences.

Best Practice #2: Scaffold the Learning

Scaffolding is the idea that a learner should collaborate with a more able partner to achieve success in a task (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The able partner organizes the learner's activities in ways that prevent him or her from becoming overwhelmed with new tasks and adjusts his or her contributions depending on the learner's current output (e.g., gradually increasing difficulty as the learner gains skills and confidence). Initially, the “able partner” may be the instructor, but as work progresses over the course of the semester a classmate could play this role as well. Scaffolding allows instructors to gain a sense of the extent to which students have previously been exposed to case study pedagogy and provides

the opportunity to develop a more collaborative instructor-student relationship. If students are novices, then instructors should structure simple, low-stakes learning activities early in the semester (e.g., analyzing a short case together as a class). Expectations for these foundational activities may focus on comprehending the material, identifying main characters and their actions, or describing how particular concepts are present in the case (e.g., different conflict management styles). As students become more adept at analyzing cases, students can individually examine more cases (e.g., written assignments) and then receive feedback. Instructors should expect that students demonstrate “critical thinking skills through analysis, reflection, and dialogue” (May, 2017, p. 216) for more advanced case-based assignments.

In our classes, we assign an individual written case analysis but scaffold by working through the exact assignment together (but with a different case)—first with students in small groups, then as a larger class discussion, and later by providing feedback on drafts. Scaffolding, then, becomes an important part of implementing case studies into the classroom as it prevents scenarios where students are asked to complete a case study having had no previous exposure to them. Furthermore, instructors should ensure that the student learning that results from scaffolding aligns with learning objectives such as to (a) identify and explain key concepts and theories of organizational communication; (b) describe the role of communication processes within and across organizational contexts; (c) explain current communicative issues facing organizations; (d) reflect on personal experiences within organizational contexts; and (e) enhance writing and presentational skills.

Best Practice #3: Choose a Mix of Familiar and Unfamiliar Cases

One of the benefits organizational communication instructors experience is that there is no paucity of examples to draw from in this course. We suggest using a mix of familiar and unfamiliar cases that vary in complexity. Students may find familiar cases particularly relevant to their professional and even personal lives; unfamiliar cases expose students to new ideas and perspectives that they may not acquire if they have viewed prior news coverage regarding the case. This mixture can be achieved through the use of published cases that focus on well-known organizations or reconstructed organizational events (e.g., Keyton & Shockley-Zalabak, 2010; May, 2013), the “Organizational Communication in the News” website that provides recent news articles examining organizational cases (Mitra, McDonald, & Fyke, n.d.), and newspaper articles for community organizations that students are likely to encounter if they plan on entering the local job market.

Instructors should select case studies that highlight diverse experiences in organizational life to further ensure that case studies are a mix of the familiar and unfamiliar. Ganesh (2011) argued that case studies are a useful pedagogical tool to spur student reflexivity and highlight organizational difference. Topics highlighting difference such as disability, gender norms, and generational differences will challenge students to consider the multitude of organizational experiences. Exploring complex issues within cases will keep students engaged as they come to better understand the wide variety of organizational issues that professionals experience.

Best Practice #4: Cultivate a Sense of Community in the Classroom

Cultivating a strong sense of community is a good idea in any classroom. However, doing so is particularly salient when using case study pedagogy because of the sensitive nature of some organizational issues and the common goal of facilitating honest classroom dialogue. Instructors serve as an impetus for creating a sense of community in the classroom by modeling appropriate attitudes, describing expectations, and

(perhaps) displaying openness and vulnerability themselves (Dannels et al., 2014). May (2017) explained that case study pedagogy is an opportunity for instructors to create a collaborative relationship with students that can “strengthen the classroom community via active, dialogic student involvement” (p. 217). Instructors who create this collaborative relationship reframe the instructor role as an active participant rather than as a manager and, hence, create a level of shared responsibility with students.

Case study pedagogy requires students to participate in discussion by asking questions, listening closely, and learning from others’ perspectives (May, 2017). To this end, it is critical to establish clear expectations early in the semester regarding the nature of respectful class discussion. Students enact quality participation and perceive a supportive classroom environment when instructors incorporate and affirm students’ contributions in discussions (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2004). Instructors can enact these behaviors when discussing case studies by directing students to “walk in the shoes” of each of the individuals in a particular case and view the dilemma from *that* perspective. We also would be remiss not to emphasize that neither students nor instructors enter classrooms as blank slates. Instructors should monitor their own responses to students who share personal perspectives and refrain from judging student perspectives that are different from their own. A possibility here is for instructors to explicitly describe their role in case discussions as a facilitator and that they will be evaluating student responses in terms of evidence for claims rather than grading based on whether they agree with a student’s perspective. In some instances, it may even be valuable for instructors to utilize technologies that allow for anonymous comments to ensure all voices are heard.

Best Practice #5: Enable Self-Directed Learning

There are benefits to having all students analyze the same case study (e.g., enables full-class discussion) and there are certainly times when this is necessary. Conversely, there are instances when providing students several case options from which to choose is both possible and desirable. Such an approach can enhance student interest and self-directed learning. Lewis and Hayward (2003) argued that choice-based learning is a useful pedagogical tool for the organizational communication course because individuals often are encouraged in the workplace to participate in organizational decision-making. They found that students who are “practice-minded” (p. 155) believe choosing their own assignments helps to better align course material with professional relevance. In our hybrid courses, we have enacted choice-based learning by inviting students to develop Narrated PowerPoint case analysis presentations in small groups. We provide a short synopsis of several options and then allow students to choose a topic that best aligns with their interests or goals. This approach has been successful in our past classes because it lets students read more about topics of most interest to them and also creates space for new information during in-class presentations instead of the repetition created by presentations all about the same case.

Best Practice #6: Vary Case Study Assessment Formats

Students can analyze case studies through papers, exams, online discussion forums, small group analyses, think-pair-share activities, large class discussions, and more. Each format has benefits and drawbacks related to case study integration. The instructor’s learning objectives should serve as the basis for the assessment and type of case study selected. For example, Wanguri (2005) used abbreviated case studies (fewer than 100 words) to help students quickly recall organizational theories in class. We have found this approach works well for short in-class discussions or as exam questions. Conversely, Long (2005) utilized one organization as a semester-long case analysis, which allows students to develop a deep understanding of the organization. Focusing in-depth on one organization provides the opportunity

to integrate the case into journaling assignments, ongoing in-class discussions, and group assignments. Using several (or all) of these assessment formats allows instructors to better integrate case studies throughout the semester.

Best Practice #7: Welcome Ambiguity

Case studies illustrate real-life scenarios and, like the real-life scenarios on which they are based, often do not have clear “right” answers (May, 2017). There are multiple paths that an individual in the scenario could pursue and students need to reflect upon the various options they would have at their disposal if they were in a similar situation. Banning (2003) stated that the ambiguous nature of case studies is beneficial to teaching students tolerance for ambiguity in organizational life. He observed that management students who used case studies in class were more tolerant of the ambiguous nature of the business world than students who were not taught using case study pedagogy. As an instructor, it is critical to inform students that the case is purposefully ambiguous and that they should be considering multiple perspectives in response. However, it also is important for instructors to explain to students that having no clear “right” answer does not mean that there are not wrong answers (e.g., students may misunderstand or misapply concepts).

One way to ensure that students understand that there are many potential responses is to develop open-ended questions to use during class discussion. For example, instructors can ask students to explain how they would navigate the dilemma if they were an organizational member in the case or how they believe the organizational issue could be resolved. Student responses to these open-ended questions provide instructors with the opportunity to question students’ reasoning and to redirect students if they present an answer that is incorrect.

Best Practice #8: Evaluate Students’ Analyses and Provide Directed Feedback

Although having ambiguity is desirable, it also is necessary for instructors to evaluate student work and provide regular feedback to ensure concepts are being correctly applied, discern whether students understand the process of case analysis, and encourage student self-regulation. Instructors should provide feedback to student case study analyses numerous times and in different ways throughout the course. For instance, if the class is divided into small groups tasked with analyzing a case, instructors may attend to each small group to provide corrective (e.g., if a term is being used incorrectly) and process-based feedback (e.g., praise for how the group is working through their analysis in a systematic way).

For more formal written assignments, a rubric is a useful tool for instructors and students alike. Sharing a rubric with students when the assignment is given increases transparency regarding expectations and can lead to improved performance (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Instructors also may share sample papers with students so they can gain a sense of what is expected. Rubrics for evaluating case studies should include criteria for assessing student writing (e.g., organization, clarity, appropriate citation), understanding of the organizational processes (e.g., extent to which course concepts are applied in accurate ways), critical evaluation (e.g., consideration of strengths and weaknesses of character decision-making), and reflection (e.g., relevance to future professional experiences). For each criterion, instructors can describe what differentiates grade achievement (e.g., exceptional, good, average, lacking)

by providing specific examples to students. Additionally, instructors can free-write comments to students to make corrections, offer praise, and probe further consideration.

Best Practice #9: Use a Variety of Case Study Formats

Traditional written case studies are easily accessible to instructors through edited volumes and textbooks. However, these types of case studies can sometimes be constraining to rich classroom discussion because they lack a visual element. As such, incorporating different formats for case studies can keep students engaged. Documentaries, television shows, and movies can all be integrated as cases in the organizational communication classroom (Heath & Isbell, 2015). For example, we have used the documentary *Blackfish* (Oteyza & Cowperthwaite, 2013) to discuss organizational crisis and change in our classes. Franzini (2007) made a strong argument for using the popular television series *The Office* as an organizational case study to be analyzed. Specifically, this television show uses a documentary-style narrative to illustrate everyday organizational communication processes and many students already are familiar with it for entertainment purposes. Varying the format and even complexity of cases helps keep students engaged in the material by preventing an overly formulaic classroom experience.

Best Practice #10: Consider Having Students Write Their Own Cases

With appropriate scaffolding, advanced students can develop their own cases and accompanying materials (e.g., discussion questions, learning objectives) as case writing is an effective practice that asks students to make connections to course materials and use creativity to highlight these connections (Bailey, Sass, Swiercz, Seal, & Kayes, 2005). However, students must fully understand the theories or concepts they hope to portray and how the theories or concepts intersect with workplace experiences to write a case study. In addition, this type of writing allows students to be creative and, therefore, engages problem-solving and innovation skills. Both of these skill sets are important in organizational contexts beyond the classroom. When assigning this activity, instructors will want to provide specific guidelines to help students be successful and may even choose to incorporate small checkpoint assignments along the way.

When we assign student-written case studies, we instruct students to reflect on their own organizational experiences, those experienced by friends/family members, and those experiences described in news stories and consider how these experiences intersect with organizational communication processes. Students then write a case that emphasizes dilemmas or challenges faced by an organizational member in this scenario. Students who write about personal experiences or those of their friends/family members are instructed to remove identifiable information, whereas those students who write using content from the news should use real and timely information. Students are encouraged to leave the events of the case unresolved. Once the case studies are written, students share and discuss their original case studies either in small groups or with the entire class.

Conclusion

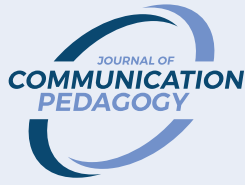
Case study pedagogy continues to be an engaging tool to incorporate into the organizational communication course. We contend that case study pedagogy is of critical importance to the instruction of organizational communication as an applied and theoretical area of study. Case studies actively involve students in the course materials and provide them with a forum for discussing difficult topics

and sharing different perspectives. However, it is crucial for organizational communication instructors to appropriately use case studies to ensure that they are meeting clear learning objectives and that students are receiving the full benefits of this pedagogical approach.

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Developing a Digital Voice: Embedding Digital Communication Networks, Platforms, and Technologies in the 21st-Century Classroom

James M. Proszek

Keywords: digital media, technology, communication pedagogy, introductory course

Abstract: Introductory communication courses are an invaluable resource for improving students' abilities to speak confidently, passionately, and persuasively, while also inspiring them to become more engaged citizens. However, digital media present new opportunities and challenges for designing courses that are relevant to students' personal and professional interests and goals. Instructors who incorporate digital communication platforms, networks, and technologies into their classrooms can better prepare students to meet the complex demands of the technologically-mediated 21st century. In this essay, I offer 10 best practices for developing students' digital media literacies within multiple communication contexts.

Increasingly sophisticated electronic communication networks, platforms, and technologies have opened new avenues and raised significant challenges to teaching in the 21st-century classroom. Educators have responded well to the demands, challenges, and possibilities of creating digitally mediated classrooms and engaging their tech-savvy students through sustained research in the connections between “Web 2.0” and pedagogy (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009; Hew & Cheung, 2013). Communication pedagogy scholars have recognized the importance of incorporating digital technologies into communication studies, particularly within introductory-level survey and hybrid courses with public speaking components (Frisby, 2017; Kirkwood, Gutgold, & Manley, 2011; Lind, 2012; Morreale, Myers, Backlund, & Simonds, 2016; Oh & Owlett, 2017). This essay offers 10 best practices for teaching students to develop their “digital voices” by embedding digital networks, platforms, and technologies into a variety of communication topics and courses.

Best Practice #1: Promote Media Literacy

Introductory-level communication studies survey and hybrid courses often attract students from varying cultural and disciplinary backgrounds who have diverse experiences, competencies, and anxieties in addressing an audience, and who bring different expectations for how the course will foster long-term success in their professional and private lives. Creating a common ground for the classroom experience is thus one of the most vital and yet one of the most challenging aspects of course design. Promoting media literacy can serve as a foundation and framework for preparing students to participate in digitally mediated environments in and beyond the classroom. According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education, media literacy is the ability to assess, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication, which are vital skills given the overwhelming amount of information and screens demanding one's constant attention. To teach students how to assess, analyze, and evaluate messages across different media, I design listening and viewing assignments to pair with each unit and chapter from the course textbook. Commercial print and television ads, for example, are great tools for teaching Aristotle's means of persuasion, because students can actively describe how the images or dialogue in each advertisement functions as an appeal to reason, emotion, authority, or some combination of each. However, it also is important for students to take an active role in sharing video, audio, and text materials with one another to bring the course concepts to life. Each week in my class, for example, two students serve as "digital curators." They submit a video, audio clip, or article to the course website and write a paragraph-long description about how the piece relates to the week's readings. Another way in which I promote literacy is when students draft their speeches in the course, I ask them to devise a strategy for how they would develop this speech to reach an audience outside of the classroom, paying particular attention to the digital technologies available to them. This reflective process encourages students to think of themselves not only as consumers, but also as producers of mediated content.

Best Practice #2: Incorporate Digital Technologies Into In-Class Discussions and Activities

Digital technologies are revolutionizing communication education, not only by offering plentiful new resources and tools for teaching and learning, but also by transforming the structure of the classroom itself (Morreale et al., 2016). E-textbooks, learning management systems, and mobile applications are now commonplace even in more traditional formats of survey and hybrid communication studies courses. Instructors should develop a technology policy in the course syllabus for using digital platforms and devices strategically during in-class discussions and activities. Instructors must convey to students that digital platforms and devices are not potential distractions to be removed from the classroom, but rather educational resources. During in-class discussions, I have students identify major and/or common questions and observations about readings and assignments using their laptops, tablets, or phones to access the course's online discussion board. This encourages students to visualize digital and face-to-face discussion practices as productively connected. For in-class activities, I incorporate "context statements," which are questions or tasks requiring students to connect to the Internet. For example, when I teach argumentation structure, I ask students to find online articles and write a context statement in which they identify the claims, warrants, and evidence in the articles. While digital platforms and technologies provide many opportunities to enhance student learning, instructors may face several hurdles incorporating them into discussions and activities. Digital technologies may not be uniformly implemented across institutions; instructors may, therefore, have to invest time and resources to learn how to use and teach with new software platforms. Technology policies should identify specific digital

resources available to instructors and students and how those resources will be used in in-class discussion and activities.

Best Practice #3: Reimagine Public Address

As with earlier forms of media (e.g., newsprint, radio, television), the advent of digital media signals exciting new possibilities for the study of public address. In fact, Kennerly and Pfister (2018) observed that “despite early concerns that the advent of digital mediation portended further marginalization of public address, digital media technologies appear at least partially responsible for an oratory boom” (p. 4). Digital platforms and technologies are an invaluable resource for teaching American public address. Special projects such as Voices of Democracy provide essays, analyses, and curriculum units on many historic U.S. speeches and debates. TED Talks, YouTube videos, Facebook and Twitch live streams, and Instagram stories represent a growing body of digital platforms that instructors can use to teach students how to analyze contemporary forms of public address. TED Talks, which deliver over 3,000 engaging, easy-to-access lectures on a wide variety of subjects, are perfect models for students to study the mechanics of verbal and nonverbal delivery and how to structure a speech’s content. Before the first major speech assignment, I have each student identify a topic of personal interest and then select two different TED Talks on that topic. Students then write a comparative analysis paper on the similarities and differences between each speaker’s verbal dynamics and body language and evaluate how verbal and nonverbal delivery adds to or detracts from their overall performance, and identify the types of arguments and evidence the speakers use to build the content of their address, their tone and engagement with the audience, and their use of visual aids, if applicable. I then ask students to identify elements of each speech that they would or would not incorporate into their own presentations and why those elements stood out to them. Students are thus able to study contemporary examples of public address through digital platforms to develop their own oratorical competencies.

Best Practice #4: Build Electronic Portfolios

Introductory communication courses with public speaking components are well-suited for developing student electronic portfolios where students can showcase their speech activities and performances. Case studies conducted by JISC (2008), a UK-based digital education and research group, have shown that building e-portfolios serves multiple purposes, including (1) improving self-understanding and understanding of the curriculum, (2) engaging and motivating learners, (3) personalizing learning, (4) supporting models of learning appropriate to a digital age, and (5) promoting reflective practice. Creating a digital copy of their speeches empowers students to think about the value of their work beyond the classroom space and encourages them to visualize their growth as speakers throughout the course. I encourage instructors to use third-party platforms to store files and build portfolios over their institution’s learning management systems (Canvas, Blackboard) to ensure students will not lose their work after the end of the course, graduating, or changing institutions. Instructors who are new to creating digital portfolios or are uncomfortable with using sophisticated e-portfolio platforms and design tools can create very basic e-portfolios using Google Drive, Dropbox, or Google Sites. No matter how simple or complex, building e-portfolios should be a collaborative effort. Students can add completed assignments, presentations, artifacts relevant to their projects (e.g., newspaper and journal articles and reflections), whereas instructors can provide detailed feedback for students’ written work and oral presentations and their overall progress in the course.

Best Practice #5: Incorporate Video Platforms

In today's digitally-mediated, screen-saturated environments, screen-to-screen communication is quickly becoming a dominant mode of both private and public address (Frisby, 2017; Kirkwood et al., 2011). Individuals are using video software to keep in touch with geographically distant friends (e.g., FaceTime, WhatsApp, and Hangouts) and to broadcast themselves to larger audiences (e.g., YouTube, Facebook Live, Instagram stories). Companies are utilizing different recording and streaming services to conduct interviews and internal meetings (Skype, Slack) and to create and share content with clients. Instructors, therefore, must prepare students to communicate effectively using video recording and broadcast technologies to meet the demands of a digitally-connected world (Lind, 2012). One way to do so is to transform a major speech assignment into a mock interview session. After students have delivered an informative or persuasive speech, instructors can ask students to distribute their working outline to several classmates, who then will prepare a series of questions as if the speaker and the speech were being profiled for a newspaper or magazine article. Instructors then can use the Skype video platform to facilitate the interview. Speakers must rely on the content of their speech and their sources to provide extemporaneous answers to their peers' interview questions; instructors should note how the speakers answer questions and how they manage their body language through the webcam. When conducting this assignment, instructors should consider potential barriers students may face when accessing and using digital resources such as finding a private space to communicate, maintaining stable Internet connection, and purchasing the latest software and hardware (Hawkins & Oblinger, 2006). Once the mock interview is completed, instructors can use Skype to provide feedback about the student's performance. When giving feedback, instructors should focus on developing students' proficiencies and reducing their anxieties in addressing an audience through video platforms, just as they would with a face-to-face audience.

Best Practice #6: Assess the Dynamics of Digital Audiences

Many incoming students are seasoned Internet users with considerable experience interacting with and acting as *digital* audiences. However, audience analysis concepts and techniques taught in communication textbooks, sample speeches, and assignments are predominantly geared toward *material* audiences that occupy a physical space. Instructors, therefore, must make a conscious effort to demonstrate how audiences access, convene, listen, and respond through digitally mediated networks and technologies. One activity that encourages students to critically think about and engage with the dynamics of digital audiences is to develop a series of imaginative hypothetical scenarios such as an end-of-the-world event or the discovery of a cure for cancer, and then challenge students to summarize and respond to the scenarios using the dominant mediums of different historical periods. Students form small groups and select a hypothetical scenario and an audience that primarily receives news from (1) a newspaper, (2) a radio broadcast, (3) a televised breaking news report, or (4) a Tweet or other type of social media post. Each group constructs a message addressing the hypothetical scenario, explains how the message fits the structural features of the particular medium, and describes how the audience would access and respond to the message. After each group presents their scenario and message, the entire class then identifies differences in each group's message and discusses how the context of the scenario and the medium affect the structure and content of the messages. Major current events such as a recent presidential address or upcoming global summit can be used in place of hypothetical scenarios by instructing students to find an actual message from a contemporary medium and have them describe how the content and delivery of the message would change if it were delivered in an earlier historical period.

Best Practice #7: Create Course-Specific Social Media Accounts

Social media plays a vital role in shaping complex digital communities. However, individual users—many of whom are students—tend to frame their participation in these communities as a private affair. Thus, while educators have spent over a decade studying and incorporating different social networking sites in the classroom (Gupta, 2014), encouraging students to embrace social media as an educational resource remains a tremendous challenge. For communication pedagogy scholars and teachers, it is a challenge worth taking. Within the context of the basic communication course, Oh and Owlett (2017) described how incorporating social media transforms assignments and activities “to better suit the current media diets of students” and fosters multiple long-term learning outcomes such as strengthening students’ “sense of political and civic engagement” (pp. 100–102). Creating course-specific social media accounts can foster dynamic, robust opportunities for students to use social networking sites in the classroom. For example, I create Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram pages for each course I am teaching. On the first day of class, I introduce the students to these pages and put the account handles on the syllabus. Each account is purposely generic in the beginning and devoid of all but the most basic information, but is then developed collaboratively throughout the course using concepts from the textbooks and discussions. In addition to uploading relevant external examples and resources to these accounts every few weeks, instructors can use them as a platform for discussions about the dynamics of communicating through social networking sites and the importance of social media literacy. These discussions include topics such as what is considered to be “public” and “private” information on social media platforms, how to critically evaluate different types of posts, and what constitutes “participation” in digital communities.

Best Practice #8: Discuss Digital Identities

Discussions about social media are not limited to the platforms themselves, they also address “digital identities,” or the complex ways in which individuals conceal and disclose information about who they are in digital spaces. Users must now make conscious choices about how much information they share about themselves—a decision often constrained by what information websites and applications require individuals to provide to gain access to content (e.g., name, e-mail, mobile number). Furthermore, digital environments present a unique set of affordances and limitations to establishing credibility with an audience. To demonstrate this, I divide students into small groups and assign each group a social media site such as Facebook, Tumblr, Reddit, and so forth. I encourage students to consider how digital identities often are mediated by the norms, practices, and features of specific websites. Using the assigned platform, each group explores how both a celebrity and an average individual would establish their expertise or experience on a topic. For example, students can compare how a celebrity and an amateur chef use social media to demonstrate their culinary knowledge and skills. In a post-assignment discussion, I focus on how the students connect the practices and concepts they identify in small group discussions with their own individual digital practices and identities.

Best Practice #9: Analyze Misleading Articles and Sources

Digital technologies have sparked an information revolution that not only is changing how information is accessed, but also how the information itself is created and distributed. The latter has raised serious concerns about source credibility and the purposeful spread of misinformation through electronic communication networks, which demands that educators teach students the proper information literacy skills to distinguish between reliable and biased or misleading sources and to conduct responsible

research practices (Meyer et al., 2008). A 2016 study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group found that across middle, high school, and college levels of learning, students’ “ability to reason about the information on the internet can be summed up in one word: bleak” (p. 4). Instructors must teach students how to track and analyze articles with misleading information and/or biased sources. One way I do so is by giving students a list of fake news websites (e.g., CBS, Wikipedia, and FactCheck.org), having them select an article from one of the sites, marking any information that seems suspect, and comparing the information with other news organizations for corroboration. Through a short essay or oral presentation, students explain how much of the article is false, what red flags appeared in its content, and (if possible) how the article circulated on the Internet. During the activity debriefing, instructors should encourage students to adopt and share positive, responsible fact-checking and citation practices. Students can read, discuss, and take the Pro-Truth Pledge as a first step to promoting proactive research strategies.

Best Practice #10: Build Library Partnerships

The massive amount of digital information and the complexity of Internet search tools and platforms pose a serious challenge to students as they strive to find reliable evidence from credible sources for their speeches. However, building partnerships with campus and community libraries can teach students how to navigate the world of information and develop responsible practices for conducting academic research (Carpan, 2011; Gaspar & Wetzel, 2009). Library partnerships are important not only for developing speeches during the course, but also serve students’ long-term educational goals by enabling them to continue to conduct quality research after the class is over. Instructors can take the first step by contacting librarians—colleges and universities often have subject-specific librarians who are familiar with the disciplinary nuances of conducting research—to assess what resources are available to students. However, it also is important to establish connections with local public libraries—many of which have their own robust digital collections—because students will not have permanent access to university library resources. Library partnerships create opportunities for collaborative teaching, in that instructors can invite library staff members into their classrooms to provide an overview of library resources and services and demonstrate how students can use them, or set aside class time to visit a campus or public library. One activity that is popular with my students when preparing for formal speech presentations is to make a “mind map” where they write all key words and search terms associated with their speech topic. They then strategically pair these terms in different combinations using newly acquired database search techniques to create a list of possible sources for their speeches. Often, this use generates new ideas and information that they otherwise would not have considered.

Conclusion

Of the many challenges that digital networks, platforms, and technologies present to instructors as discussed in the aforementioned Best Practices, the greatest challenge is in the nature of the medium itself—electronic programs and devices are continuously updating and adding new capabilities, user bases on social networking sites are constantly growing, and online communication norms and practices are becoming more complex. As communication instructors and scholars, the ideas and strategies used to assist students to develop their digital voices must also follow an adaptive, innovative path. Thus, I present these 10 Best Practices not as a definitive set for how to incorporate digital oratory comprehensively into multiple communication studies courses and special topics, but as the opening of a conversation and the start of a movement to be further shaped and shared by the dedicated members of this community.

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Best Practices for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues in the Basic Communication Course

Kristina Ruiz-Mesa and Karla M. Hunter

Keywords: basic communication course, difficult dialogues, facilitating discussion

Abstract: Effective facilitation of classroom dialogue can stimulate open discussion and debate, challenge students to consider diverse perspectives, and promote critical student reflection and growth. Unfortunately, some instructors may be hesitant to approach controversial topics, for fear of losing face or risking chaos in the classroom. By learning and practicing established facilitation techniques, teachers can develop confidence and competence in harnessing the pedagogical power of difficult dialogue while maintaining classroom cohesion and community. This article provides 10 best practices for facilitating difficult classroom dialogues. These practices equip instructors with resources for building community, maintaining classroom immediacy, and grappling with disagreements without destroying relationships and classroom climate.

Heated controversies surrounding issues of immigration, race, social class, ability, violence, sexuality, and gender inclusion touch most college campuses. Communication courses provide a unique, yet potentially challenging opportunity to use curricular goals as a backdrop for healthy and inclusive discussions of these complex topics. Some instructors, however, may have concerns regarding the difficulty of maintaining productive and respectful dialogue on these issues, or worry that such dialogues may have a chilling effect on classroom climate and student investment in a course. Difficult classroom discussions can impact instructor credibility and classroom community, leading some instructors to struggle with questions of how to handle these discussions, when to intervene when a conversation gets too combative, or whether to simply avoid controversial topics altogether. Worse, failure to properly frame and guide a class discussion about identity and difference-related topics can be damaging to students'

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learning (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012), academic self-esteem (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sriken, 2014), and even their mental health (Cokley et al., 2017). Therefore, the following 10 best practices are recommended to help instructors mitigate these concerns, and reap the pedagogical benefits of facilitating difficult dialogues in the classroom.

Best Practice #1: Set the Stage

Establish a classroom culture where open dialogue is expected. Instructors should begin laying this framework at the beginning of the semester by clearly stating what they hope students will learn and gain from this course, and inviting students to do the same. Setting clear goals for an open and respectful classroom culture on the first day of class can be instrumental in fostering successful dialogue throughout a course. A course framework that emphasizes clear expectations creates an environment where students can feel safe and confident expressing themselves and listening actively to the expressions of peers. In addition to enhancing students' likelihood of having a productive discussion, clarity promises to foster greater learning (Bolkan, Goodboy, & Myers, 2017).

Instructors can further set the tone for a positive course culture and gain student buy-in by sharing why they love to teach a particular course, and why they think this course material is important. When possible, instructors may share examples of how course material builds on previous knowledge and courses, and how the lessons and skills learned in a course can be applied in students' lives outside of class. Additionally, instructors may lead activities that help students learn each other's names, and a little about one another. Leading relationship-building activities during the first week of a course, along with providing specific directions about how classroom dialogues will be conducted, is paramount in setting the stage for a productive dialogic environment.

Best Practice #2: Explain Why Difficult Dialogues Are Needed

Instructors must talk about why open dialogue matters in a communication course. When teaching the basic communication course, many instructors begin the course by detailing the importance of communication in personal, professional, and civic life and addressing how the process of communication functions. These foundational discussions provide opportunities to connect the importance of difficult dialogues to communication theories, course objectives, and institutional mission statements. Discussions of encoding and decoding, for instance, can make visible how limited experiences and views may inhibit an individual's decoding of messages. By exploring how political, theoretical, ideological, and theological positions all can be deeply rooted in an individual's identity and experiences and affect how individuals (mis)understand social issues and positions, instructors can frame dialogue, particularly difficult dialogues about complex identities and issues, within the goals of the course. This framing may elicit greater student receptivity toward engaging in dialogue about important, and often uncomfortable, topics. For example, instructors may use a video clip that demonstrates a miscommunication due to a lack of dialogue as support for why difficult dialogues are necessary to improve individual and group understanding. Another example is for instructors to provide students with current event articles from two different news sources and ask them to talk through issues using information from both articles. Throughout the discussion, instructors can find teachable moments for highlighting the centrality of difficult dialogues in exposing oneself to divergent viewpoints.

Some students may question the value of classroom dialogue. Instructors can explain that perspectives may not be easily shifted or persuaded in a single class discussion; however, framing these conversations in learning objectives and institutional mission reifies why dialogue is needed in the course. Instructors should discuss the fears or concerns students might have about open dialogue on difficult issues with regard to particular perspectives and experiences with race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, social class, religion, and ability. When fears or concerns arise, instructors then can punctuate the purpose of dialogue as it relates and responds to institutional and classroom objectives and outcomes.

Best Practice #3: Create Ground Rules

One method for creating ground rules is for instructors to show a PowerPoint slide that contains a few basic guidelines that the class may consider for conducting productive dialogues. They then can invite students to add their own rules for discussion, print the slide, and have students sign and keep the slide for future class sessions. By posting this document on the course learning management system, students and instructors can refer to it and remind others of the ground rules if and when dialogue violations occur. The University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (n.d.) offers sample dialogue rules, which include the following:

- ▶ Be aware of how much you are contributing to in-class discussions. Try not to silence yourself out of concern for what others will think about what you say. If you have a tendency to contribute often, give others the opportunity to speak. If you tend to stay quiet, challenge yourself to share ideas so others can learn from you.
- ▶ Listen respectfully. Don't interrupt, engage in private conversations, or turn to technology while others are speaking. Use attentive, courteous body language.
- ▶ Understand that there are different approaches to solving problems. If you are uncertain about someone else's approach, ask a question to explore areas of uncertainty. Listen respectfully to how and why the approach could work.
- ▶ Make an effort to get to know other students. Introduce yourself to students sitting near you. Refer to classmates by name and make eye contact with other students.
- ▶ Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes in this setting, as anyone does when approaching a complex task or exploring new ideas. Be open to changing your mind, and make space for others to do so as well (para. 2).

Rules such as these can nurture student confidence to speak as well as to listen to diverse viewpoints. In this way, students not only gain deeper access to their colleagues' knowledge and perspectives, but also they have the opportunity to learn and practice powerful dialogue skills.

Best Practice #4: Model Disagreement With Ideas, Not People

When facilitating dialogues, instructors must teach students to focus on ideas and principles that involve asking questions about why an idea or position is favorable, problematic, or divisive. Students should be reminded not to focus on or attack peers in the classroom, but instead to disagree, deconstruct, and debate ideas. When considering various perspectives on ideas, instructors should ask students to reflect on the potential sources of their attitudes toward political or controversial issues. Additionally, instructors may suggest different situations or scenarios where a particular view might have emerged, and

question why a belief is held dear by some individuals or communities. Hunter (2016) recommended that instructors ask students to reflect on questions such as the following:

- ▶ Where did this position or idea originate?
- ▶ Was the student raised in a particularly liberal or conservative family?
- ▶ Do they prefer certain news sources over others?
- ▶ Do religious teachings play a role in their views?
- ▶ Is there a time when they changed their position on a social or political issue?
- ▶ Are there people in their social circles who disagree with their positions?
- ▶ Do most people in their life come from similar racial, class, and regional backgrounds?
- ▶ Is an underlying assumption rooted in some form of comparison based on “othering” (e.g., racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, or nationalism)?

This reflection can spark humane and respectful discussions that address “the varied legitimate ways people view controversial topics” (Hunter, 2016, p. 154) bridging differences among students whose attitudes, values, and opinions may span a spectrum of possibilities. Reflecting on these questions also may help make visible different ways of thinking that are challenging to effective dialogue. Instructors then can model respectful disagreement by emphasizing the vital nature of audience analysis that entails choosing topics, framing ideas, and selecting words and sources that build credibility and resonate positively with a diverse audience. This emphasis allows for relationship maintenance in the face of disagreement and establishes a classroom norm where students are led toward reflection that may help uncover their own biases and privileges and helps them to consider the viability of their classmates’ opposing viewpoints.

Best Practice #5: Cultivate a Safe Space

It is critical to create a classroom climate where relationships can be repaired if need be. While the terminology of a “safe space” has become maligned and politicized, a logical consequence of “a psychologically unsafe environment [is that it] will prevent students from expressing their thoughts and opinions aloud” (Tofade, Elsner, & Haines, 2013, para. 21). Creating and supporting safe psychological learning spaces is not about protecting a student from difficult discussions; rather, it is about creating a learning environment where such discussions can push the boundaries of heated topics in a way that allows students to balance potentially-conflicting values and competing ideas, while minimizing the risk of causing or triggering trauma. Such values include embracing inclusion and diversity balanced with an appreciation of free speech and a desire for a respectful learning environment. By making such values visible, the ethic of the safe space can serve to protect students from psychologically injuring one another, while speaking their truth. Holley and Steiner (2005) defined a safe space as “a classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 50). The Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Washington recommends that “[e]stablishing an atmosphere in which students will feel comfortable asking questions and contributing to discussion, in a respectful manner, will increase everyone’s potential for success” (University of Washington, n.d., para. 5).

Two simple rules guide a classroom that invites courageous, productive, and engaged participation: “Oops” and “Ouch.” The Oops and Ouch rule has been used in inclusive pedagogy, and by offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion (see Treveño, n.d.) to promote dialogue spaces where individuals can test and share ideas while having a safety mechanism in place to maintain classroom community and

preserve relationships. Pre-establishing classroom phrases like “yikes,” “oops,” “my bad,” or “foot in mouth” provides a quick and dignity-preserving way for students and instructors to retract a misstated, offensive, or incorrect statement. Conversely, when a classmate feels injured by the words or actions of another student or the instructor, course policies can invite that student to invoke “The Ouch Rule.” The device can be a simple “ouch,” “freeze,” “time-out,” or “hold up” to indicate that an idea or position could be interpreted as harsh or hurtful by classroom peers based on their divergent experiences or beliefs. This rule allows for students to indicate that an offense has occurred and creates an opportunity for the offending student or instructor to gracefully apologize without losing face.

Best Practice #6: Inoculate Students Against Potential Trauma

In many public speaking courses, students are encouraged to pick speech topics about which they are passionate. Often these topics include contemporary political and social issues, such as sexual assault on campus, intimate partner violence, immigration, and hate crimes. These topics provide vital opportunities for dialogue and idea exchange. When engaging in discussions of these topics, however, a balance between student academic growth and personal development is imperative for preserving an engaged and student-centered learning environment. Instructors providing students with “a quick heads up” (Manne, 2015, para. 11) about upcoming speech topics is not only considerate, but can be vital for maintaining a productive learning environment.

Like the term “safe space,” “trigger warnings” have become highly politicized, leading to miscommunication about their meaning and intent. When done well, trigger warnings empower speakers and audience members, encouraging rather than shutting down people and conversations (Ruiz-Mesa, Matos, & Langner, 2017). Trigger warnings are not intended to eliminate uncomfortable or controversial conversations; on the contrary, these few warning words create opportunities for engaged conversation while minimizing risk of student psychological harm. The warning need not be a dramatic declaration. Rather, it can be framed as a casual notification about the topic followed by a brief moment for questions and, ideally, a quick break while a speaker prepares or an instructor makes an announcement about a future class. An alternative way to prepare students for hearing about a potentially traumatic topic is for instructors to write speech topics and speaker order on the board before speeches begin. Therefore, if students feel the need to exit the classroom before a speech begins, they can do so between speeches without feeling stigmatized. Additionally, a simple PowerPoint slide presented at the end of class can remind students of the university’s counseling center services, complete with contact information and hours of operation. Harnessing professorial platforms to recommend such resources can help destigmatize students’ use of campus mental health services.

Best Practice #7: Be Prepared to Intervene

Beyond the “oops and ouch rule,” at times, instructors must go further to guide student learning when contention arises. A tangential point, a long-winded statement, or a well-intentioned (but patronizing or offensive) response can derail productive classroom dialogue. Repeating or paraphrasing student responses and then reframing, refocusing, or questioning them can maximize shared meaning, strengthening the value of the dialogue. Knowing when to intervene versus letting students talk through soliloquies and tensions is a necessary skill that requires honing and practice. Learning how to intervene when discussions become too heated takes practice, so instructors may want to role-play with other faculty members about difficult classroom discussions to strengthen their dialogue intervention skills

(Broeckelman-Post & Ruiz-Mesa, 2018). Another option for a conversation that has taken a turn toward the unproductive or when tensions escalate is to draw an “idea parking lot” (Moran & Lenderman, 2017, p. 1) on the board. This visual serves as a physical place where ideas can be “parked,” waiting to be revisited after students have completed readings on a subject or have time to collect their thoughts, cool down, and reflect on the idea or question.

On rare occasions, instructors may sense that nonverbal or verbal communication could spiral into bullying or a physical confrontation between students. If this occurs, instructors must immediately intervene to de-escalate the situation. De-escalation can involve a disruptive communicative practice in the form of a clap, a whistle, or a word that all students would recognize as a pause and reset opportunity. In the case where a situation does not de-escalate, instructors and students should have campus support resource phone numbers easily accessible (e.g., campus counseling, Student Affairs, or campus security).

Best Practice #8: Defend Dissident Voices and Perspectives

Instructors should never let a student be singled out and attacked for unpopular views. If at any point in a class students begin to minimize, malign, or ignore a person or perspective, it may be time for instructors to challenge students to examine dominant experiences in the classroom. Additionally, instructors should watch for groupthink and be ready to intervene if a dominant position emerges that fails to consider alternative possibilities. However abhorrent an idea may seem, instructors should remind students to discuss ideas and positions by focusing on the discourse, not the discussant. Instructors can play devil’s advocate to get the discussion going, and then retreat and gently facilitate the dialogue. It is imperative that instructors undertake critical reflections on their own privilege and perspective as well to recognize and address the power dynamics of the professorial platform. Without such reflection, instructors’ potential experiences of dominant social positions and privileged identities can unwittingly silence or shame students’ views and experiences that differ from their own.

This best practice is one that should be exercised carefully, as defending a dissident voice and perspective is not the same thing as condoning a student’s idea. Instructors should never accept or praise a behavior, idea, or perspective that they believe may harm individuals in the course or could damage the classroom culture or instructor credibility. By clearly reiterating that an idea/perspective is separate from the speaker, instructors and students can passionately disagree with an idea, but people and their individual, lived experiences are not to be minimized or othered. For example, after a speech with a particularly divisive conclusion, an instructor may say to the class: “I’m seeing a lot of strong reactions to the closing statement of this speech. What if we take a minute and unpack this issue?” Alternatively, instructors may use a student speech conclusion as an opportunity to remind students about the importance of audience analysis. Instructors also could remind students to consider how different experiences may shape various perspectives toward a speech conclusion or call to action.

This dialogue technique may require instructors to evoke the class co-created ground rules about being open-minded and respectful of diverse perspectives. Defending minority voices also may necessitate that instructors work through discomfort that may accompany articulating that while a perspective or idea is unpopular and perhaps rooted in a specific ideology, the goal of the discussion is to better understand the course material and one another. This facilitation practice requires empathy, a bit of emotional labor to maintain a calm appearance, flexibility in listening to diverse viewpoints, and the consideration that someone may be a good person, yet be grossly mistaken about a policy, belief, or idea.

Best Practice #9: Maintain Instructor Immediacy

Instructor immediacy practices are an important factor in establishing and fortifying a positive classroom climate that can circumvent potential hiccups of facilitating difficult dialogues. Andersen (1979) defined instructor immediacy as “nonverbal behaviors that reduce physical and/or psychological distance between teachers and students” (p. 539) including behaviors such as eye contact, vocal responsiveness, gestures, and smiling at students. Gorham (1988) expanded the construct adding a verbal dimension which includes disclosing appropriate personal examples to demonstrate course concepts, praising student work, using humor, and referring to the course as “our” as opposed to “my class” (p. 43). These verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors let students know that their instructors support and appreciate them, which then enhances student learning and communication satisfaction (Myers, Goodboy, & Members of COMM 600, 2014). By self-disclosing information about themselves (e.g., they are a first-generation college graduate, or they come from an immigrant family), instructors demonstrate receptivity by creating memorable moments that connect instructor and student experiences.

Calling students by their preferred names and accurate pronouns (as determined by the student) is a practice of inclusion that can help facilitate productive and meaningful classroom dialogue. One way to encourage immediacy is to empower students by avoiding roll call from official rosters on the first day of class. Instead, instructors can invite students to introduce themselves and identify their preferred name, interests, pronouns, and major. This practice also provides an opportunity to place self-disclosure decisions in the hands of the students (e.g., disclosing accurate pronouns or name changes).

Best Practice #10: Facilitate Positive Classroom Closure

At the end of each difficult dialogue, instructors can take time to re-emerge from deep discussion and assess the classroom climate, relationships, and purpose. Instructors may consider inviting students to reflect on whether they or a classmate may have felt defensive during the discussion and, if so, why. If needed, instructors should then repair relationships, reestablish ground rules, and reify the purpose of the course. One simple way to do this is for instructors to, when possible, lessen physical and psychological space and say, “Thank you all for a thoughtful discussion today. I know that these conversations can be tough, and I appreciate all of your contributions and honest sharing. Let’s keep up the good work, and I look forward to seeing you all next class.” Another way to reconnect the class is through a reminder of a recent funny moment that occurred in class or an upcoming positive campus event. Instructors can stoke student curiosity about issues and experiences, embrace difference, and support student connectedness by reminding students that they are a community, and that sometimes communities disagree; however, they continue to support one another.

Conclusion

As educators committed to teaching students about the power of communication, it is imperative that instructors are trained to harness the honest, critical, and sometimes divisive perspectives of students in classroom dialogues. By creating classroom climates that are inclusive of diverse ideas, students and instructors can grapple with complex contemporary issues in ways that support students and reinforce effective oral communication practices. While this is not an exhaustive list of tips and techniques, these 10 best practices for facilitating difficult dialogues provide a foundation for discussing controversial topics in class, and function to produce and maintain a learning environment where all students can feel empowered to engage diverse perspectives, challenge ideas, and preserve classroom relationships.

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