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Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota

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Communication & Theater Association of Minnesota JOURNAL

Editor's Note

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the CTAM Board of Governors decided that the *CTAM Journal* would go to an all-online format, beginning with the current issue (Volume 34, 2007). With this change, we remain dedicated to producing a high quality journal comprised of articles that have gone through a rigorous review process, while achieving the goal to increase access of the journal to a wider audience.

As the journal goes online, some readers will notice that the size of the journal has also changed. For ease of printing, the journal is now formatted for a standard 8 ½" x 11" page.

I would like to thank my Applied Communication Research Methods students—Laura Anderson, Rachel Anderson, Todd Anderson, Benjamin Chiles, Katherine Drewes, Kimberly Folkerts, Megan Luebke, Sean Volk, and Melissa Westfall—for their help in providing the final proofreading for this issue of the journal.

The *Journal* is available at the CTAM Website: http://www.mnsu.edu/spcomm/ctam/

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CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* (*CTAMJ*) is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota (CTAM). The journal is an outlet for articles related to issues of discipline-related importance including articles discussing innovative teaching methods. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome.

Authors should submit an **electronic** copy of their work as a Word document by e-mail to the editor. A separate, electronic title page should include a 100-125 word abstract of the article, author's name and professional title, job title, the school or institutional affiliation of the author/s, a mailing address, and an e-mail address. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the manuscript itself for review purposes. **All manuscripts should be prepared according to current APA or MLA guidelines.**

CTAMJ encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners, who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, and college or university groups. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles from both the theater and communication disciplines. Capable scholars in the appropriate field will blindly review all general manuscripts.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology or subject. Author sex, race, ethnic background, geographical location or work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the author(s) are never considered in making editorial judgments. The demands of the disciplines of speech communication and theater are key factors in the editorial judgments made. All editorial decisions attempt to balance these demands with the needs and interests of the journal's readers.

The journal is guided by three key principles:

- *To provide an outlet for the expression of diverse ideas.*
- *To publish high quality scholarship in the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater.*
- *To meet the journal-related needs of CTAM and its members.*

EDITORIAL POLICY

The call for Manuscripts goes out in the fall of the year and the deadline for submissions is in March of the following year. Details of how to submit are given in the Call which is sent to all members, departments, and announced in SPECTRA. Book review ideas should be queried with the editor in advance of the submission date. Book reviews are generally published if accepted on a space available basis. All articles are read anonymously by at least two associate editors. All author identification markings are removed from the articles and no editor reads the work of a colleague. Associate editors may submit articles to the journal, but their work must go through the process of blind review, just as any other submitter. The journal editor facilitates the process and makes final decisions based on the associate editor's recommendations and comments.

If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the journal editor.

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS VOLUME 35, SUMMER 2008

The Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal is seeking manuscripts for Volume 35, scheduled for publication in summer 2008. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles and teaching suggestions from theater, communication and forensics professionals from secondary and collegiate levels. All general articles will undergo a blind review process by a minimum of two reviewers. Manuscripts may be submitted for one of two sections: general interest research and essays, and teacher's workbook. Please indicate whether the manuscript is intended for the general interest research and essays section, or the teacher's workbook section. Contact the editor concerning book review proposals.

Authors should submit an **electronic** copy of their work as a Word document by e-mail to the editor. A separate electronic title page should include a 100-125 word abstract of the article, author's name and professional title, job title, the school or institutional affiliation of the author/s, a mailing address, and an e-mail address. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the manuscript itself for review purposes. **All manuscripts should be prepared according to current APA or MLA guidelines.**

Authors are reminded to keep the *Journal* audience in mind: students and teachers at the high school, community college, private college, and university levels. All manuscripts must be submitted by March 31, 2008. Please e-mail manuscripts and any questions to Aileen Buslig, *CTAM Journal* Editor, buslig@cord.edu

Communication is 93% Nonverbal: An Urban Legend Proliferates

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ABSTRACT

Perhaps the best-known numbers within the communication field are those that claim the total meaning of a message is "7 percent verbal, 38 percent vocal, and 55 percent facial." Despite the fact that this finding is derived from two 1967 studies with serious methodological limitations, these percentages have appeared in a wide variety of communication textbooks. This study takes the investigation a step further, beyond the academic environment, to determine if the 7-38-55 "formula" has now become the equivalent of an "urban legend" about communication in our society-at-large. Overall, this article finds that the formula in question has been widely disseminated across the Internet, and in ways that show little or no understanding of the research that generated these numbers. Given the widespread ignorance reflected in how these numbers are used—and abused—we as communication educators must consider how we should respond and what we can do to correct such misperceptions.

But the truth is, we all have those things that we know about ourselves and those things determine the outcomes of our life. And it comes when the pressure is on. You are going for that job interview. And if your personal truth is, I'm not as smart as these people, I'm not as good as these other applicants. This isn't me. That's gonna come out because 93 percent of your communications are nonverbal. So your personal truth is going to scream who you really believe you are.

<div align="right">Dr. Phil McGraw on CNN Larry King Live, 5/26/02</div>

In an article published a decade ago (Lapakko, 1997), I examined one of the most widely-cited academic studies in our field: the research on nonverbal messages conducted by Albert Mehrabian and colleagues in 1967 (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967). Out of this research came, arguably, the best-known set of numbers within the discipline: the idea that the total meaning in a message is "7 percent verbal, 38 percent vocal, and 55 percent facial." Indeed, in this 1997 *Communication Education* article, I tried to identify the many sorts of textbooks that have included the 7-38-55 "formula." As I demonstrated, these numbers can be found in our textbooks in public speaking, interpersonal communication, small group communication, persuasion, organizational communication, and intercultural communication (Lapakko, 1997).

However, despite the wide dissemination of these numbers, it is clear that this line of research has received considerably more attention—and more credence—than it could possibly warrant. As Burgoon (1985) contends, "A much-repeated estimate in the popular literature is that 93 percent of the meaning in an exchange comes from nonverbal cues, leaving only 7 percent to be carried by the verbal utterance . . . Unfortunately, this estimate is based on faulty analysis . . . ." (p. 346).   As I observed (Lapakko, 1997), the subjects in the main study by Mehrabian and Ferris (1967) were limited to 37 female psychology majors, and the language prompt was limited to but one word (the word "maybe"), making the role of language in this laboratory experiment largely irrelevant by design. Further, the numbers themselves are actually derived from two studies; neither study simultaneously compared the verbal, vocal, and facial channels. Also, as Hegstrom (1979) observes, "A formula such as Mehrabian's gives the impression that more is known about the relative contributions of the various channels of communication than in fact is known. It is misleading to use this kind of information as support for the importance of nonverbal communication 'in general' when no external validity has been demonstrated. The repetition of this and other formulas only muddies the theoretical water" (p. 135).

Finally, I cited a personal correspondence with Albert Mehrabian in which he himself believes his research has often been misinterpreted and misrepresented. As he stated, "My findings are often misquoted . .. Clearly, it is absurd to imply or suggest that the verbal portion of all communication constitutes only 7% of the message. Suppose I want to tell you that the eraser you are looking for is in the second right-hand drawer of my desk in my third floor office. How could anyone contend that the verbal part of this message is only 7% of the message?" (Mehrabian, 1995, as cited in Lapakko, 1997, p. 65). Therefore, for all of these reasons, I must take the presumptive stance that the Mehrabian research has been widely misinterpreted, and because of its limitations, any broad-based conclusions about the nature of communication simply cannot be derived from it.

Unfortunately, knowing that the Mehrabian research has serious deficiencies and limitations has not stopped the rest of the world from picking up these wonderfully precise numbers. As I suggested in 1997, the allure of this study is that it reduces the complex world of communication into a tidy and precise formula. At some point in the past, these concerns were essentially "quarantined" within academe—that is, confined to our own textbooks—but the academic world does interface with the larger world. What began as a fraudulent set of numbers in our instructional material has now become the equivalent of an "urban legend" within popular culture. The main goal of this paper—in essence, the research question—is to determine how far and in what ways this urban legend has spread, and to consider what lessons we should take away from this situation.

One might ask why there is even a need to document the wide dissemination of such "misinformation." As discussed later in more detail, it strikes me as an important issue for several reasons. First, in the most general sense, we need to appreciate how "polluted" our information stream has become with the advent of the Internet in particular. Never in the history

of humanity has so much data been disseminated in such volume and detail, with such lightning speed, and at times, with such recklessness; this paper is merely a case study of how that revolution relates to our discipline. Second, we need to consider how the academic world can and should deal with the larger world when it comes to explaining academic research: when misinformation is spread through hundreds or even thousands of websites, what can we possibly do to stem the tide? And third, as communication educators, we have an obligation to be concerned about how our research findings are used in the "real world." Within the academic community, concerns about how the public interprets our work should not be limited to "life and death" issues such as nuclear technology or global warming or stem cell research. As communication educators, we need to be aware of how our own research is interpreted by the general public and how we can help shape those interpretations. Indeed, if an accurate understanding of communication research is not a concern of ours, it becomes a tacit admission that what we are investigating is largely irrelevant to human life—that what other people think, know, or think they know about communication doesn't really matter. Not surprisingly, I resist that notion.

Method

To determine in what ways the research by Mehrabian and associates has become part of the larger culture's understanding of communication, the Google search engine was employed. Specifically, I conducted a Google search using the key words "communication 93 percent nonverbal"; all such data were retrieved on January 5, 2007. These search parameters resulted in more than 263,000 "hits." I chose to more carefully examine the first 100, performing a content analysis of the various sites using the criteria included below.

Results

Relevance of the Sites to This Study

Of the 100 sites visited using the search parameters above, seven made no reference to the Mehrabian study or the 7-38-55 numbers, so they were excluded from further analysis. In addition, eight sites essentially appeared twice in the first 100 listed, so these eight "duplicates" were also eliminated from further analysis. Finally, I decided to eliminate six sites that were not readily accessible to public access because they involved some type of subscription or registration requirement. Therefore, a total of 79 relevant sites became the focus of this investigation (See Appendix for a complete list of the sites).

Nature of the Relevant Sites

The remaining 79 sites—those which did make reference to the Mehrabian numbers and

were readily accessible to public access—are difficult to neatly categorize. Some were connected to educational institutions—e.g., the MIT Careers Office, Continuing Education at Loyola University, or the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Advising and Learning Assistance Center. Others were sites created by consultants—e.g., Mary Devlin Associates, Ginny Pulos Communications, Inc., DASH Consulting, and Karl Buhl Consulting. Other sites were affiliated with newspapers—e.g., the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Baltimore Daily Record*, or the *Pahrump Valley Times*. Some sites appeared to be private websites created for unspecified reasons—e.g., the Center for Nonverbal Studies, Roundstone International, and SixWise.com. One is also struck by the vast range and nature of these hits: difficult-to-categorize sites which provide the Mehrabian numbers include websites for the Sweet Adelines International, Lowe's Commercial Services, Goliath Knowledge on Demand, the ClickZ Network, Designed Thinking Seminars, and 40Plus of Greater Washington.

Orientation of the Sites

Of the 79 sites which did include a reference to communication being 93% nonverbal, only four actually took issue with the numbers derived from this research or questioned them in any way. For example, one source (Chapman, 2007) states that Mehrabian's research "is arguably on occasions applied in an overly simplistic or indiscriminate manner . . . . Style, expression, tone, facial expression, and body language in Mehrabian's experiments did indeed account for 93% of the meaning inferred by people in the study. But this is not a general rule that you can transfer to any given communications situation." However, such skepticism was difficult to find; the remaining 75 websites all simply passed along the numbers as being implicitly "correct." These 75 sites provided the 7-38-55 numbers as "facts," often with a fair amount of gusto. For example, one site (Beedon, 2005) states that "A staggering 93 percent of our communication is reported to be nonverbal." Another site (Eisenberg, 2001) takes the Mehrabian formula so seriously that it notes, if you are sending an email, that "You have to do 100 percent of the work with only 7 percent of the resources." Another (Barnathan, 2006) not only includes the numbers, but boldly adds "Almost 33 years later, that study has yet to be disproved."

Identification of the Source

In 16 of the 79 websites (20%), Albert Mehrabian was identified as the source for these numbers. More commonly, in 34 of the 79 websites (43%), the references to the source of these numbers were much more indefinite, including:
- "one study at UCLA" (8)
- "a classic UCLA study" (1)
- "a study of communication" (6)
- "one study done in the United States" (1)

- "research shows" (1)
- "studies show" (5)
- "experts say" (3)
- "some students of communication say" (1)
- "a commonly cited statistic" (1)
- "statistics from the communication field" (1)
- "psychologists and anthropologists" (1)
- "other scientists" (1)
- "research in the field of neurolinguistics" (1)
- "according to several communicationists [*sic*]" (1)
- "Neuro-Linguistic Programming Psychologists" (1) and
- "clinical studies done over the past 40 years" (1)

Additionally, ten of the 79 sites (13%) listed a source other than Albert Mehrabian for these numbers, including:

- "Kristen Amundson (1993)" (2)
- "Joan Smith, a career coach at Women Employed" (1)
- "according to Black" (1)
- "Thomas Crane, in *The Heart of Coaching*" (1)
- "Bovee and Thill (2000)" (1)
- "Mele Koney and Alton Barbour" (1)
- "Dr. Phil" (1)
- "Straw" (1) and
- "the now infamous Dr. Moravian from Stanford University [*sic*]" (1).

Finally, in 19 of the 79 websites (24%), the 7-38-55 "formula" was simply provided without any attribution—i.e., it was asserted that these numbers were correct.

Types of Evidentiary Distortion

Let us first keep in mind the focus of Mehrabian's research. According to Mehrabian himself (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967), the purpose of his research was to "find out how well people can judge the feelings of others" (p. 250). And in a personal correspondence (A. Mehrabian, personal communication, September 21, 1995), he confirmed this goal when he wrote, "Please remember that all my findings on inconsistent or redundant communications deal with communications of FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES." So, it has never been Mehrabian's conclusion that communication in general conforms to the 7-38-55 proportions; rather, he only believes it is applicable within the realm of interpreting the affect or emotional state of others. With this foundation established, we can now see whether his original research is viewed within this more narrow realm, or as a truism about communication in general.

Of the 79 sites referenced in this study, only one (Ragsdale, 2006) correctly described Mehrabian's findings as involving the "emotional meaning" within communication. On the

other hand, some 63 of the 79 sites (80%) used the 7-38-55 numbers as a general statement about the overall nature of communication. Another two sites (2.5%) discussed the figures in terms of the "total impact" of a message. Nine sites (11%) said that 93% of "communication effectiveness" came from the nonverbal message. One site stated that 93% of "a person's attitude" is nonverbal, while another included the rather odd statement that "most of us believe 93% of what we sense non-verbally and only 7% of what we hear spoken." Three remaining sites could not be readily categorized in this manner.

Another form of distortion involved what types of nonverbal messages were part of Mehrabian's original research. The 1967 studies were concerned with the verbal message, the vocal/paralinguistic message, and the facial message. But some sources in this sampling of websites went further—a chapter in a management text (*Principles of Management*, n.d.), for example, declares that the "other 93 percent includes vocal intonations, facial expressions, posture, and appearance." Or, another source (Pigford, 2000) takes a similarly expansive view: "According to several communicationists, people receive 93 percent of the message through nonverbal communicators—gestures, voice qualities, posture, appearance, and body language" (p. 182). Finally, another site transformed Mehrabian's research into the false context of memory. Yewman (2007) says this "classic 1971 study" showed "that when asked what they remembered about a speaker, . . . audience members indicated just 7 percent of their recall was verbal (what was said), but 38 percent of their recall was vocal (how it was said) and 55 percent was visual (the speaker's body language and confidence)."

Taken as a whole, it seems reasonable to conclude that virtually all of the 79 websites were mistaken in their understanding of Mehrabian's original research. Indeed, with one or two exceptions, it is highly unlikely that any of these "sources of information" traveled back to the *Journal of Consulting Psychology* or the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* to read the actual studies upon which they were relying.

Limitations

It is certainly worth noting that the sampling procedure in this study involved a type of convenience sample. First, it only made use of one electronic search engine, Google. Second, the research did not examine a wide variety of sources dealing with communication and randomly select certain ones for analysis with the Mehrabian study in mind. Rather, the objective was to locate only those electronic sources that dealt with the issue of communication being "93 percent nonverbal." Therefore, one could argue that this study creates a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy by only finding sources that include the Mehrabian numbers. However, the specific goal was to determine how widely disseminated the 7-38-55 numbers are, so the search parameters employed seemed reasonable. Further, it should be stressed that of the 79 sites examined, 75 simply provided the Mehrabian formula without any qualification; this indicates that his research has achieved wide dissemination with little critical evaluation.

Discussion

To the extent that any academic discipline has the potential to educate the larger community, it is clear to me, in this case, that we have failed in our mission. Perhaps this matter pales in significance to global terrorism or nuclear proliferation, but it should nonetheless concern those of us in communication studies. If it does not, then we would be forced to ask, why are we even in this field to begin with? At some level, we have to be concerned when so-called "experts" repeatedly chant that communication is 93% nonverbal. What that number tells people is to pay little attention to the words they use, because words don't really matter. For example, as suggested by the opening quotation from Dr. Phil, many of these sites are dealing with job interviews and suggest that applicants had better pay attention to their "nonverbals" or they will not be successful candidates, all the while offering no advice whatsoever about one's words— because again, the words supposedly don't matter. Is this really a formula for success? Couldn't it result in tangible harm to people in their quest for employment? To put it bluntly, we have, over the past many years, been willing accomplices in spreading information that is simply incorrect and misleading. And we are now left with the reigning authority on communication in the early 21st century—Dr. Phil—telling Larry King that communication is 93% nonverbal. What are we to do?

As educators in the field, one thing that we can certainly do is contact people who use the 7-38-55 formula and treat it as the gospel. We need to let them know that they are in error. In fact, with Dr. Phil in mind, I personally went to his website and sent him a note that he is "just plain wrong" when he says that communication is 93% nonverbal. Somewhat surprisingly, I was contacted by the show's producers, both by voice mail and email—they wanted to know if I was willing to debate Dr. Phil about this matter on the air! They asked, could I fly to Los Angeles on a particular date for a taping of the show? I readily agreed, but for some unknown reason, their initial enthusiasm was replaced by a very cold shoulder. I also sent a similar message to a local business communication columnist who used these numbers; I have no idea if she took my note to heart, but at least I felt as if I was doing something to help stamp out ignorance.

Perhaps our professional organizations could play a more active role in this type of dialogue as well. Although the National Communication Association has a wide variety of outreach initiatives within its own membership, perhaps NCA could play a more active role in communicating with the larger community. For example, recent findings from the *New England Journal of Medicine* are often cited in the popular press; such coverage does not happen by accident but can be cultivated.

Another obvious remedy to this type of misinformation is to be mindful of it in the textbooks that we adopt for our courses. Whenever I am looking at possible texts in interpersonal communication, public speaking, or intercultural communication, I make a point to see what has been written about nonverbal communication. If the 7-38-55 formula appears— especially if it appears without any critical analysis—I have been reluctant to seriously consider the book for classroom use. And I have gone out of my way in courses where nonverbal

messages are relevant to stress to my students that if they ever do encounter these numbers, they should take them with the proverbial grain of salt.

The Mehrabian research can also be used as an illuminating case study for introducing basic issues in critical thinking, communication theory, and social scientific research. From a critical thinking perspective, for example, one can ask students to consider a simple question: if the meaning in communication is in fact 93% nonverbal, what would be the point of learning a language? What possible purpose would it really serve? Then, with respect to "theory," one can discuss with students whether they have been in situations where a pivotal component of the message did involve language; chances are they know full well the very real power of words to convey both ideas and feelings. In the realm of feelings—supposedly the focus of Mehrabian's research—words of both praise and shame can affect us all deeply, and our students must therefore learn to measure their language with care and appreciate its potential impact. From a social scientific perspective, the Mehrabian research can be the focal point for a discussion to determine what would be a more methodologically valid way to assess the relative importance of the verbal and the nonverbal message. Included in that discussion can be the question of whether it is even prudent to attempt to quantify the relative importance of the verbal and the nonverbal in the first place.

The relationship between popular culture and the academic world has a symbiotic dimension. Popular culture needs academic research to answer an endless number of important questions. For example, will taking a daily baby aspirin stave off a heart attack? Does genetic makeup lead people to a life of crime? Can a more favorable jury be chosen for a client using "scientific" principles? Is televised violence adversely affecting our kids? And, if I am in a job interview, do my words matter, or only my "nonverbals"? These are all questions where the academic community seeks to have a "real world outlet" for its findings, and an impact on the issues of the day. Within communication studies, we have the potential to make a difference on matters of substance, and we should find ways to enable it to happen—making sure, of course, that they "get it right" in the process.

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Appendix

List of Sites Visited for Content Analysis

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Author's Note

Because of the transient nature of the Internet, some of the sources listed above may no longer be accessible.

The Triad of Evil and the Bush Incumbency:
Convergence, Competition and Cooperation

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, I analyze discourses circulating during the 2004 re-election campaign of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as a means to explore the interactions of three tropes of "evil" as identified by James P. McDaniel (2003). In the months between September 11, 2001 and November 2, 2004, the tropes of "Evil-in-itself," "Evil-for-itself," and "Evil-for-others" converged, combined, and competed in the culmination of criticism leveled at the Bush-Cheney campaign regarding the screening of entrants into events and rallies. Integral to this interaction is the articulation of American democracy with capitalism, as theorized by Kenneth Burke (1969). Ultimately, I argue that the establishment of "Evil-in-itself" served as grounds allowing a deployment of "Evil-for-others" to trump the attempt to argue for change utilizing "Evil-for-itself."

On the fifth anniversary of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush (2006) addressed the nation to "discuss the nature of the threat still before us," and to assure its citizens that "Since the horror of 9/11, we've learned a great deal about the enemy." The very first thing we've learned, as stated in the address, is that "they are evil." The invocation of "evil" has been a Bush administration refrain from the earliest public comments by the president following the attacks. Within a day of the tragedy, the president was painting the future in these terms: "This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil" (2001). During this same time, however, variations of an accusation of "evil" (Brown, 2002; Summers, 2003; Steinberg, 2004; McCawley, 2006) have been reflected back against the president, from comparisons to Adolf Hitler (Steyn, 2005; "Of Johnson," 2006; Saunders, 2006; McGovern & Everest, 2006) and characterizations as "fascist" (Donohoe, 2002; Farr, 2004; Herman & Hopgood, 2005), to the strategic reversal of labeling Bush a "terrorist" (Kelley & Cox, 2001; "Marchers in Paris," 2002; Bonokoski, 2003; "The president in Europe," 2004; "Bolivia moves left," 2005; Sommer, 2006). Multiple players in the struggle for political and persuasive force have turned to the power of "evil" and its variations as means to accomplish work in service of constructing their own (opposed) "social good."

The marked presence of "evil" for coalescing such force, particularly in the broader religious imagery favored by the Bush White House, has been noted by numerous rhetorical critics. Especially fruitful was discussion begun by a panel presentation at the National Communication Association convention in November 2002, published later as a forum in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* in 2003. As part of this interaction, James P. McDaniel offered a perspective that provides a means through which to consider the multiple, nuanced deployments of "evil," "with which we may begin to characterize, subvert, and reconstitute this theo-political imaginary…" (p. 540). McDaniel maintains that the dominant style of President Bush, "the representative of our state [U.S.A]," is grand, and relies on a very limited Christian vocabulary. This lexicon is stretched to cover an enormous range of judgments which become "'moralized' and 'theologized'" (p. 539) into a single choice between "good" and "evil." Drawing from Sartre, McDaniel "composes a template for *socio-anagogic* critique," (p. 540) which joins considerations of strategy to those of idealism. By substituting "evil" for "being" in the existential phenomenology of in-itself, for-itself, and for-others, McDaniel creates "a mode of composing or constituting social relations among things – a trope – shuttling back and forth from the rhetorical figure, the body politic, and the social imaginary" (p. 540). The struggle over who may claim "evil" in the name of what "social good," and how these tropes both rely on and compete with one another create layers of complexity which McDaniel's "analytic pivots" (p. 540) help to unpack. In the study of post 9/11 politics these tropes offer a means by which we might re-diversify discussion away from such a singular choice between "good" and "evil," and reign in the power of the executive (p. 539).

In the following essay, I consider a moment of political conflict where I read these tropes of evil[1] interacting with powerful consequence. McDaniel has already applied his first trope, Evil-in-itself, to discourse as a demonstration of its analytic potential. I build upon this beginning by analyzing the second two tropes, Evil-for-itself and Evil-for-others, within the situated moment. Additionally, I demonstrate how these tropes converge, cooperate, and compete with one another by tracing their interaction in circulating rhetorical deployment. Ultimately, I argue that the deployment of "Evil-in-itself" served as ground for a circulating construction of "Evil-for-others," allowing it to trump the attempt to deploy an argument for change utilizing "Evil-for-itself."

Moment of Consequence: Re-Election 2004

During the 2004 election campaign, incumbent President George W. Bush's team drew criticism from citizens, journalists and media personalities for implementing limitations on entrants into "public" rallies. The most infamous incident occurred at a New Mexico rally featuring Vice President Dick Cheney, where attendees were required to sign a loyalty oath stating that they endorsed Bush for re-election, and "In signing the above endorsement you are consenting to use and release your name by Bush-Cheney as an endorser of President Bush" (Ivins, 2004). At one Florida rally, nearly 2000 attendees were asked to raise their right hands

and recite the "Bush Pledge" (Suellentrop, 2004). At other events, attendees were denied entrance, threatened with arrest, or jailed if they were found to have items with slogans objectionable to staff, or for making critical remarks (Totenberg, 2004).   Critics were confounded by a contradiction between the Bush *Administration's* rhetorical construction of the "War on Terror" as the "spreading of freedom and democracy," and the Bush *Campaign's* instrumental curtailing of "freedom" and compromise of "democracy" by way of limiting access to rallies and events. (Ironically, those taking the "Bush Pledge" began by stating, "I care about freedom and liberty.")

The criticism of this contradiction was regularly available in broadcast and print commentary, and that paragon of political punditry, *The Daily Show,* every Monday through Thursday.   In identifying this contradiction in the Bush Administration's rhetoric and policy, opponents were not offering an especially unique observation. Similar argumentation had been offered in resisting other policies that the administration had implemented under its banner of "compassionate conservatism" (McMahon & Rankin, 2004). Critics from both right and left sought to weaken the administration's hold over the popular consciousness by pointing out that policies such as "No Child Left Behind" and the "USA PATRIOT Act" contained the same types of contradictions – uncompassionate compassion (pulling funds from schools that demonstrated increased need) and unconservative conservatism (changing structure but not decreasing the size of "big government"). In addition, action taken on the basis of an accusation of "un-American" or "undemocratic" has a forceful precedent in U.S. politics. During the cold war, such accusations flared periodically to threaten civil liberties, as the McCarthy Era attests. While our context has changed, the patriotic fervor in the wake of 9/11 opened the possibility that such accusations would once again be a persuasive force, and other analyses within this time frame have argued as much (Scheufele, Nisbet, & Ostman, 2005).

The moment of consequence was set for opponents of the Bush campaign to mobilize a broad-based protest which could wield the force necessary to correct perceived violations of civil liberties, like the right to public dissent, or to use this issue as a lever which could dislodge the incumbents from office. After all, the argumentation was familiar and understandable, the wave of pro-America sentiment was still cresting, and the evidence was widely available to the public. So the question becomes, in a moment rich with possibilities, how was it that the criticism of contradiction was not able to capitalize on this precedent of the power of "un-American"? It is my contention that an analysis of the claim "un-American" or "undemocratic" as a deployment of a specific *trope of evil* provides telling insight. In the next sections, I will utilize McDaniel's tropes of "Evil-in-itself," "Evil-for-itself," and "Evil-for-others" as a means to understand the failure of this criticism to achieve persuasive and political force.[2]

Deployment: Evil-for-Itself

I reviewed approximately sixty stories and editorials from mainstream U. S. newspapers and broadcast outlets (between August and December 2004) that addressed the Bush campaign's

strategies for limiting entry to campaign gatherings. These reports targeted a large, general consumership and not only expressed reactions, but also circulated these reactions to create a "pre-disposition" for those who had yet to make a decision about how to respond in the context of the election. A potential voter need not be escorted from a building or sign his/her own loyalty oath to gather the information upon which to form an attitude, and potentially to take action. In choosing these stories, I hoped to get a fair cross-section of the "average" voices deliberating in one public forum about the "contradiction" of entry limitations. The criticism voiced in these reports attempts to characterize the actions of the Bush campaign as a manifestation of *Evil-for-itself*.

As McDaniel explains, Evil-for-itself is understood as type of selfishness, greed, or "other form of misplaced longing" (p. 544). The motivation of the perpetrator of this variation of evil is understandable to observers, perhaps even "technically reasonable – but not ethically justifiable" (p. 541). This is the evil of the ruthless employer who pursues a "bottom line" (an understandable motivation) at the expense of the lives of his/her employees (unethical outcome). Outrage over military acceptance of "collateral damage" (loss of civilian lives to take strategic targets) recognizes this variation of evil. The very fact that the action can be *reasoned*, that it bears resemblance to decision-making that we might employ for a justifiable social good, is what makes it *sinister*. Such reasoning takes advantage of a familiar mode of thought, the logic of exchange (p. 542), for its operation. This logic suggests that every action must have a reaction, in particular that any gain must be accompanied by a loss.

In deploying the trope of Evil-for-itself, the rhetor(s) seeks to demonstrate the self-serving motivation of an opponent. The actions of the opponent are argued to be in violation of (sacred) principles and as sacrificing too much for the benefit sought. Critics of the Bush campaign described a number of actions that were in violation of the idealized principles of democratic electioneering. In the idealized version of (American) democracy, elections are competitive processes whereby the voters may reach a judgment about how to cast their ballots by means of comparing the performance of the candidates in response to questions, through demonstrations of "character," etc. Such an ideal expression of the democratic process would require observation of the candidates in competition (debate, etc.), as well as observations of interaction between the candidates and a diverse public. It would also require that voters have equal opportunity *to be in the presence* of each candidate in order to conduct this testing. The reports addressing entry limitations identified numerous actions on the part of the Bush campaign that were noted as a violation of such principles.

Most often cited was the use of some manner of loyalty oath as a guarantee that attendees would not be "disruptive" (Milbank, 2004; Loth, 2004; Shea, 2004; O'Skea, 2004; Dolan, Dolan & Conroy, 2004; Totenburg, 2004; Benke, 2004; Young, 2004; Messina, 2004; "Dodging debate," 2004; Wenzel & Slaughter, 2004). John Wade's story of the July 31, 2004 rally[3] featuring Dick Cheney was repeated in numerous publications. Quite typical is *The Boston Globe's* portrayal.

> When Vice President Dick Cheney spoke July 31 to a crowd of 2,000 in Rio
> Rancho, a city of 45,000 near Albuquerque, several people who showed up at the
> event complained about being asked to sign endorsement forms in order to receive
> a ticket to hear Cheney. "Whose vice president is he?" said 72-year-old retiree
> John Wade of Albuquerque, who was asked to sign the form when he picked up
> his tickets for the rally. "I just wanted to hear what my vice president had to say,
> and they make me sign a loyalty oath." (Larese, 2004)

Linked closely with the requirement of some type of signed affidavit was the accusation that non-registered Republicans need not try to get into a Bush rally. Stories told of individuals like Nick Lucy who was turned away from a Dubuque, Iowa rally because he was not registered as a Republican even though he had an official ticket (Larese, 2004).

Getting access to a ticket was portrayed as difficult, however, even for Republicans. In some locations, one had to "apply" for a ticket by "filling out forms stating their home and e-mail address, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, willingness to volunteer and whether they supported the president" (Halbfinger, 2004). Ticketing would become a major node of contention in demanding action, and answering criticism (Crowley, 2004; Milbank, 2004; Loth, 2004; Shea, 2004; O'Skea, 2004; Rowland, Johnson & Niquette, 2004). Of particular concern in some coverage was the recruiting of volunteers for the Bush campaign by requiring hours of work in exchange for a ticket, or a better seat at the rally (Crowley, 2004; Milbank, 2004; Kennedy, 2004). The example of Katrina Waite in *The New York Times* was especially detailed.

> At a rally in Bangor, ME, last Thursday, Katrina Waite had driven nearly two
> hours and then waited seven more under a sweltering sun to see the president.
> The reward for her early arrival? A spot way in back, atop a flatbed truck, where
> she downed cups of water fetched by her two children to stave off the heat. Ms.
> Waite said her mother had earned a spot up front. "She did three hours of phone
> calling to get it," she said, peering to try to pick her mother out in the crowd.
> (Halbfinger, 2004)

Criticism available to the general audience of readers/consumers noted that even if one had a ticket, freedom to participate and peacefully express oneself were not guaranteed at Bush campaign events. The most often repeated story involved Jeff and Nancy Rank who were asked to leave a Bush-Cheney event[4] because they were wearing T-shirts with anti-Bush slogans. The Ranks had tickets to the event, and Jeff was a registered Republican. The Ranks were charged with trespassing, jailed for several hours, and Nancy was excused from her job at FEMA (Bury, 2004; Herman, 2004). The lawsuit they filed against a White House Advance Staff member and a Secret Service supervisor was documented numerous times. Also repeated in several publications was the story of an Ohio State University professor who conducted an "experiment" to test entry limitations (Herman, 2004; Totenburg, 2004). John Prather wore a Bush shirt to a Kerry rally and a Kerry shirt to a Bush rally to see what types of restrictions he encountered. He was escorted out of the Bush rally, but not stopped at the Kerry rally. Multiple stories were told of individuals who were either asked to leave because of slogans deemed inappropriate by

campaign staff or escorted out after voicing a protest or producing a sign in silence (Totenburg, 2004; Halbfinger, 2004; O'Skea, 2004; Adair, 2004). Often other rally attendees were described as assisting staff in suppressing their fellows. Noted in several stories was the role of the Secret Service and local police in intimidating attendees (Totenburg, 2004; Benke, 2004; Mapes, 2004a).

In particular, critics characterized the limitation of access to the presidential candidate through the requirement of party membership, loyalty oaths, etc. as "undemocratic." One of the wire services characterized it this way:

> Unfortunately, we are seeing campaign trends that don't bode well for democracy – the condition of appealing only to a certain sector or demographic because that's where the votes might be. And unfortunately, such preaching to the choir becomes reflected in public policies, even if it reflects the minority viewpoint of a minority of Americans. (Young, 2004)

The Democratic National Committee Chairman, Terry McAuliffe, did make accusations against the Bush campaign, though it was not widely covered. He told *The Oregonian* that, "The president has stripped his events of anyone who might disagree with him, which is completely un-American" (Mapes, 2004b). The practices of the Bush campaign were widely enough recognized that John Kerry made loyalty oaths and stifled protest into a running joke at his own rallies (Milbank, 2004; Halbfinger, 2004; Gearan, 2004; Herman, 2004; Cerabino, 2004; Benke, 2004). Multiple interviewees described the result of limitations during rallies as the unrealistic presentation of an "adoring crowd" (Loth, 2004; Rowland, Johnson & Niquette, 2004; "Our Turn," 2004; Davies, 2004; Gearan, 2004; Young, 2004; Larese, 2004). By thus seeking to point out the self-serving element of entry limitations and identifying the principles which this action violates, these critics were employing the trope of Evil-for-itself. With this deployment made by its opponents, the Bush campaign was positioned as the respondent who would need to provide an adequate justification to deny that changes were necessary.

Articulation I: Public/Private/Evil-in-Itself

To understand the ability of the Bush campaign to "brush off" the accusation of Evil-for-itself, we must consider the articulation of numerous factors. In the coverage of election 2004, it first becomes clear that particularly relevant to the Bush camp's success was the blurring of the separation of the public office holder from the private candidate. Central to the operation of this conflation is a reliance on a previous deployment of the trope of *Evil-in-itself* established from the earliest moments after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The election took place against the backdrop of a symbolic overlap between capitalism and democracy, which leads to ambiguity between the public and private spheres as theorized by Kenneth Burke (1969). Burke argues that private business is rhetorically equated to public business in the context of American democracy. As an example, he cites the equivalence drawn by a reporter between the Soviet communist glorification of the public work of the Dnieprostroy

dam (destroyed by retreating troops in WWII), and the Empire State Building for New Yorkers. Key to this comparison is that the dam was produced with state funds as a "public" project. Burke suggests that the same amount of civic pride is attached for Americans to the "private" building project of real estate promotion (p. 395). It is the rhetorical work of constructing the private venture as a matter of civic pride (such as support for the local baseball franchise) that lays the ground work for this conflation. The blurring of the distinction between public and private in "civic pride" paves the way for a similar blurring between the public and the private in "civic functions," as in the 2004 election. Neither Kenneth Burke nor I contend that there is no public component to the building of private real estate ventures or in creating a baseball team.

Obviously, local, county, state, and even federal permits may be required, tax breaks may be provided, and other interactions with legal requirements and restrictions are always present. However, they differ as to the *consequences of ownership*. Public ownership typically treats a location, item, etc. as held "in trust" for all of the constituent population. For example, National Parks are considered as held in trust for "all Americans." When the Park Service tried to close the Devil's Tower Monument to climbers in observance of Native American sacred observances, they became defendants in a lawsuit charging that the land was not open to "all Americans."[5] In contrast, shopping malls are often considered "public" locations but are privately owned. Thus, owners can legally reserve the right to exclude patrons, and many lessees post notices that they retain the right to "refuse service to anyone, at any time, for any reason." In the first case, the consequence of ownership is that the public who have invested their civic pride in the location, item, etc. are held to have a legitimate claim to access. In the second case, the consequence of ownership is that the public may be denied access to the object of their investment of civic pride at almost any time. When the object of the investment is a sitting president, the consequences of ownership are in conflict.

The office of the president (and its current holder) serves (especially after the patriotic rally following 9/11) to bind us together in a "symbolic sociality." We see in the president an embodiment of our national selfhood. As John Kenneth White (1990) argued in reference to Ronald Reagan, the president has become the secular priest of the gospel of America. The social is symbolically reaffirmed in the person and the message of the president. However, during an election, the access of the American people to that social symbol is limited by a private organization: the political party. As the sitting office-holder, Bush is able to maintain the "*mask* of [a] public institution" while functioning through/by a type of "privately owned business" (Burke, 1969, p. 395).

The Republican National Committee (RNC) could utilize the ambiguity of Bush's position as an incumbent *public* office-holder to accomplish partisan *private* goals, and in fact *relied* on the contrary positions to justify its conduct. This ambiguity was stated clearly by *The Washington Post's* White House correspondent Dana Milbank on CNN.

> Well, of course, I mean, they're pre-screened in the sense that whoever comes to these events is already a Bush supporter. In some of the cases of the Republican National Committee events, there's actually been something of a loyalty oath that needs to be

signed. We've written about a case in which an Ohio professor came to a Bush event wearing a Kerry t-shirt and was sent out of the event. So of course it's pre-screened. But on the other hand, these are campaign events, and maybe it's a bit unrealistic to expect President Bush to invite in a bunch of hecklers who would ask hostile questions of him. I mean, the campaign's paying for this event. I'm not sure we in the press can really complain. (Kurtz, 2004)

This answer to the accusations of un-American-ness was offered by multiple spokespersons. For example, it was noted that the loyalty oath signed by individuals like John Wade carried a disclaimer that no public funds were used in its production (Larese, 2004). The rallies were described as "not official visits but party events" by several spokespersons for the Republican National Committee (Kurtz, 2004; Larese 2004; Totenburg, 2004). The campaign could claim that they could exclude entry because the event was "funded" by the RNC which could legitimately have rules about entry, while equally claiming (without outright lying) that it had not heard any public dissent about Bush's policies as he "traveled the nation." The comments of Yier Shi of the Republican National Committee were echoed by a number of individuals in numerous articles.

"If we feel our event will get disrupted again, we will use the same method [loyalty oath] to make sure it's a positive event," Republican National Committee spokesman Yier Shi said Thursday, defining positive as "without interruption, without debate – just [without] disruption, period." (Totenburg, 2004)

Central to the operation of the blurring between public and private was reliance on the well established trope of Evil-in-itself. As McDaniel (2003) explains, Evil-in-itself is so disturbing that it is nearly incomprehensible. The motivation of perpetrators of this type of evil "slips through the fingers of reason," and is manifested in acts of "radically 'senseless' violence and enjoyment of hatred" (p. 543). This is the evil of the serial killer who attacks random victims. Fear of the hidden threat in horror films recognizes this variation of evil.   The acts defy "the reach of reason" (p. 540). We "supply metonymies for it – call it by other names, such as tyrannical or terrible or insane" (p. 540), but it escapes the ability of observers to name it adequately.

In deploying the trope of Evil-in-itself, the rhetor(s) seeks to establish the acts of an opponent as motiveless and without cause. The actions of the opponents are so gross (in quantity or quality) as to shock the system, and importantly, to construct the allies of the rhetor into innocent victims. McDaniel drew on excerpts of Bush's remarks in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 to demonstrate the operation of deploying the trope of Evil-in-itself. In texts such as the "2002 State of the Union Address," "Anniversary Speech of September 11," and "Remarks to the Community in Atlanta Georgia," Bush establishes the boundaries of reason, discursively constructing the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks as operating outside these bounds. "Once set outside Reason's boundaries, however," McDaniel writes, "the figure of Evil-in-itself becomes a mirror that allows you to look (back) on yourself in an exalting way. If you can speak for all [as the symbolic sociality of the presidential office holder guarantees], your exaltation will constitute

'ours'" (p. 546).   The ours/us, inside, exalted position is established in opposition to the theirs/them, outside, lawless position. With an incomprehensible enemy established, "an even more encompassing strategy and policy of retribution in which 'no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them'" (p. 546) is constructed as sensible. Since one cannot reason with the unreasonable, elimination is suggested as the only possible solution.

Even as the legacy of 9/11 continued to be played out, the conversion of the military mobilization against the Taliban in Afghanistan to the War in Iraq provided material for continuing constructions of Evil-in-itself as a generalized threat. The discovery of the remains of the victims of mass murder under the regime of Saddam Hussein, followed by the incomprehensibility of suicide bombers injuring and killing American military and civilian personnel provided ever evolving evidence of the irrational "them" threatening the reasonable "us." In the election campaign of 2004, this trope of evil was specifically deployed as a means of answering criticism regarding event entry limitations. For example, readers of *Time* were warned, "With the election five weeks away, U.S. counterterrorism officials are obsessed with reports from multiple sources that terrorists hope to disrupt the campaign. 'Nobody can give you a date, time or place, but everyone is absolutely convinced we're doing to get hit,' says a top counterterrorism hand'" (Shannon, 2004). The screening to protect the "leader of the free world" from the "forces of evil" also functioned to protect him from the forces of the competitive electoral process. The continuing threat of the monstrous elevates the symbolic representative of the social collective into a position where his/her safety is *equated to our own*. Since s/he/we must protect ourselves, and the monstrous cannot be reasoned with, it must be eliminated (or at least have its sign confiscated and have it sit in a detention cell for a few hours). This action is so crucial that we will accept sacrifices of public monies, liberties, and even the compromise of sacred principles in service to the cause.

Articulation II: Evil-in-Itself/Evil-for-Others

The success of the Bush campaign in answering the critics of contradiction benefits from a second articulation as well. Along with the circulation of the well established discourse which invoked the trope of Evil-in-itself, the Bush campaign could also take advantage of a circulating discourse which invoked the trope of *Evil-for-others*. It is my contention that these two tropes were *articulated to one another* to create a particularly potent trump card.

McDaniel bases the figure of Evil-for-others on a deconstructive urge run amok. He suggests that this invocation of evil points to "the systematic breakdown of ontological-moral difference on which the judgment of Good or Evil depends" (p. 542).   The motivation of perpetrators of this type of evil is to quell the "fanatical devotion to some ideological ideal" (p. 543), which may in turn become its own brand of fanaticism. Disdain for the shifting ethical boundaries of "relativism" recognizes this variation of evil. The acts of these perpetrators make good equivalent to evil, and can turn the Christian into the Nazi apologist (p. 543). The paralysis

manifested by a "suspended animation and sustained hesitancy" (p. 544), and a functional inability to tell the good from the bad can transform elastic diplomacy (p. 542) into a threat all its own.

In deploying the trope of Evil-for-others, the rhetor(s) seeks to demonstrate that the opponent has a compromised faculty of judgment. The actions of the opponent are argued to be twisted, and without moral compass. McDaniel's (2003) description of Evil-for-others is reflected in a particular kind of counter-argument forwarded by supporters of Bush (both inside and outside the White House) to any questioning of the working of his *administration* in the months between September 11, 2001 and November 2, 2004, and by extension, his *campaign*. I read three particularly salient events (though there are many more) spaced throughout this time period in order to demonstrate the operation of this trope, and its availability as a resource for the campaign. While not unique, these three events do demonstrate the point with particular clarity. First, all three had wide coverage in newspapers and broadcasts. Second, each example demonstrates a different context and agent through which the argument of Evil-for-others was implemented. These facts suggest that these examples had exposure to a large general audience, and that the average audience member could track the argument from a number of perspectives, any of which s/he might fight persuasive.

The earliest of these events took place as a reaction to a September 24, 2001 contribution to *New Yorker* from Susan Sontag. Sontag was one of the first public intellectuals to offer an objection to the Bush administration's response to September 11, in oft-quoted statements such as, "If the word 'cowardly' is to be used, it might be more aptly applied to those who kill from beyond the range of retaliation, high in the sky, than to those willing to die themselves in order to kill others." Sontag "and her ilk" (Pech II, 2001) were characterized as "willfully obtuse," "perpetuators of moral equivalence," "promoting obfuscation" and "agonized relativism," and "woolly thinking" ("Treason of intellectuals?" 2001; Bottum, 2001; Krauthammer, 2001). *The Weekly Standard* introduced a derisive award in her honor – The Susan Sontag Certification – which was given in "recognition of particular inanity by intellectuals and artists in the wake of the terrorist attacks" (Bottum, 2001). An editorial in *The Washington Post* serves as a potent example of the deployment of the trope of Evil-for-others. Charles Krauthammer (2001) wrote, "What Sontag is implying, but does not quite have the courage to say, is that because of these 'alliances and action,' such as the bombing of Iraq, we had it coming. The implication is as disgusting as Jerry Falwell's blaming the attack on sexual deviance and abortion, except that Falwell's excrescences appear on loony TV, Sontag's in the *New Yorker*." The response to criticism demonstrated in these remarks indicates the ease of accessing the resource of this trope of evil.

A second exemplar event arose in March 2003 as the Bush administration was mobilizing the country to war with Iraq. Then Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle made headlines by commenting to reporters that "I'm saddened that the president failed so miserably at diplomacy that we are now forced to war" (Journal Sentinel Wire Reports, 2003). The trope of Evil-for-others was quickly invoked by fellow Senators. They characterized his remarks as "irresponsible

and counterproductive to the pursuit of freedom" ("Speaking out," 2003), "giving comfort to our adversaries" ("Speaking freely," 2003), and "emboldening Saddam Hussein" (VandeHei, 2003). Daschle, like Sontag, became associated with the condemning refrain that he was "blaming America first." Numerous news sources reported the response of Tom Delay. The Editorial Staff ("Speaking freely," 2003) at *The Boston Globe* wrote with particular verve that, "House majority leader Tom DeLay joined in the attack on Daschle, telling the South Dakota Democrat to 'fermez la bouche.' It is lost on no one that in using the French term for 'shut your mouth,' DeLay gets to paint Daschle with the same brush used to deride the French – with a white feather and a yellow streak." The trope of Evil-for-others was not merely functional within lay opinion, but also actively in use among elected leadership.

A third exemplar event forwarded an affirmative (rather than reactive) deployment of the trope of Evil-for-others made by Ann Coulter with the release of her book *Treason: Liberal Treachery from the Cold War to the War on Terrorism* in 2003. The title declares boldly that those opposed to the War on Terrorism are suffering from the kind of moral paralysis that produces a variety of evil. Passages in the book that were particularly tropic were quoted in general audience news outlets, exposing even those who did not purchase or read the book to its counter-argument. Average readers/consumers could readily encounter passages from Coulter's book, like "Liberals have a preternatural gift for striking a position on the side of treason…Whenever the nation is under attack, from within or without, liberals side with the enemy," and liberals "are either traitors or idiots, and on the matter of America's self-preservation, the difference is irrelevant" (Sibley, 2003). The book spent 13 weeks on *The New York Times* best-seller list (Guthmann, 2003), and was released in a second reprint in 2004. The affirmative deployment of the trope of Evil-for-others circulated widely, reifying an argument that could now be referenced virtually in short-hand.

Evil-for-others, however, *stands on the back of* the previously established and continually reaffirmed trope of Evil-in-itself. In the case of the Bush re-election campaign, the threat to the symbolic sociality of America as personified in the sitting president is a condition of possibility for Evil-for-others to be sensible. If the threat is severe, it is a *form of evil* to try to complicate our judgment of *that threat*, or to try to *re-prioritize* the evil of selfish motivation and reasoned but ethically questionable logic as being *of greater import* than the evil of the incomprehensible monstrosity of terrorism. As McDaniel (2003) notes, "Those who begin to understand such killers often are depicted as being 'touched by' Evil-in-itself, corrupted" (p.541). In essence, the Bush campaign could draw upon the ready resource of the trope of Evil-for-others to suggest that by criticizing the president, opponents were giving quarter to the monstrous and becoming corrupted in the process. The articulation of Evil-in-itself with Evil-for-others, then, is a powerful combination that *functions to silence* the trope of Evil-for-itself. With remarkable impertinence, the chairman of the RNC stated during the campaign, "Senator Kerry crossed a grave line when he dared to suggest the replacement of America's commander-in-chief at a time when America is at war" (cited in Piven, 2004). At the convergence, competition, and

cooperation between the three tropes of evil, such a statement reveals how imperative it is to "subvert and reconstitute" dominant political attitudes.

Conclusion

While hesitant to make specific recommendations for political intervention, McDaniel (2003) does suggest that the trope of Evil-for-itself offers the "most attractive" means for "re/dis/figuring" evil (p. 550). He writes:

> With Sartre, we might see the second strategy (the *for-itself* character of social moral existence) with new eyes after entertaining the excesses accompanying the alternatives: it resists identifying a subject with a substance, a person with Evil, yet allows for assessing the 'causes' of Evil in both senses of the term – the political identities for which we perform morally dangerous acts and the variable pressures on us as social as well as psychic beings that collaborate with our choices to bring actions into the world. (p. 550)

The critics of the Bush campaign's entrance limitations utilized this trope, possibly for the very reasons that McDaniel outlines. However, my analysis has revealed the vulnerabilities of this trope when in complex articulations with other tropes and with the social logic of capitalism. To be clear, while opponents of the Bush/Cheney campaign deployed the trope of Evil-for-itself, the particular circumstances that arose between September 2001 and November 2004 were articulated together in such a way that the strategy could not be effective. The blurred public/private symbolic sociality of the sitting president produced a discourse loaded with the trope of Evil-in-itself which set the stage to support a response with the trope of Evil-for-others. This potent confluence made it possible for McDaniel's favored trope to be trumped by the more theo-political tropes. However, as McDaniel suggests, the process of re/dis/figuring the American Sublime (the dominant grand, theo-political style) is not wrought through the simple identification of a trope, nor by the work of a single analysis. Seeking out strengths and weaknesses of these and other tropes *in sustained and multiple conjunctive analyses* is the way that the critic might influence the interplay of rhetorical figure, the body politic, and the social imaginary. Were the contingencies to change, the convergence, cooperation, and competition of the triad of evil could be significantly different.

Along with criticism, McDaniel implies that countering the American Sublime requires a productive experimentation. As a practical matter, the critique of contradiction did not appear to shake the administration's confidence, nor give it pause in its agenda on multiple occasions. Most importantly, such argumentation did not seem to affect the final outcome on November 2, 2004. In particular, given that this administration has demonstrated on multiple occasions that clear and articulate resistance to its policies does *not* provide any assurance of response, nor shake its support with a large portion of the population, opponents of the administration should consider whether "contradiction" is the most fertile ground from which to launch criticism, or they might experiment with strategies other than the focus on inconsistencies. If neither an

administration nor a significant amount of the public are bothered by inconsistencies in rhetoric and/or policy, such a focus becomes a waste of valuable resources. This analysis might also suggest that responding to "evil" with "evil" becomes a cycle that it would be better to avoid than to engage.

In this essay, I analyzed discourses circulating during the 2004 re-election campaign of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as a means to explore the interactions of three tropes of "evil."   I began from the deployment point of the trope of Evil-for-itself by critics of entry limitations implemented by the campaign.   Next, I mapped the articulation between private (capital) logic, public (symbolic sociality) logic, and the reaffirmed trope of Evil-in-itself. Evil-in-itself was further articulated with the developed trope of Evil-for-others. This matrix worked as a means of silencing the trope of Evil-for-itself, allowing the Bush campaign to brush aside criticism and avoid substantive response.

During WWII, the United States was the only one of the allies to hold regular elections. At that time, some questioned the wisdom of threatening the stability of the country by subjecting it to the rigors of the dissent brought about in campaigning. The question left open by election 2004 is whether even a campaign can bring about the type of rigorous dissent that would pose a *much needed* "threat" to this country. Such a threat, as McDaniel makes clear, would seek to de-stabilize the "poverty of its [evil's] uses by our national leadership" (p. 539). Such a threat would spark an "imaginative reconstitution" of the reigning passion emanating from the State, changing "self-certainty" to "humility" (p. 539). But, when the incumbent president becomes invested with the public's self-preservation instinct, it seems unlikely that an accusation of selfishness will humble his/her campaign or administration. When Evil-in-itself is the litmus test against which all choices are measured, it seems unlikely that the investment of civic pride can be reanimated to succeed in a demand for civil liberties. It may perhaps be only in the concentrated study of such "failure" that we prompt a new contingency to *dis*articulate these elements.

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Endnotes

[1] From this point forward, for reading ease, I will not place quotation marks around the term "evil." I continue to see it as set apart and uniquely constructed - to be deserving of the special attention and the inherent question that the marks would connote.

[2] To clarify: I am tracing the *discursive construction and deployment* of a notion of "evil." I am not forwarding a judgment that "in reality" a particular group or person is "evil" in whatever notion of the term.

[3] While a very few stories in the popular press distinguished between Bush-Cheney "rallies" (as privately funded by the RNC) and "events" (as events paid for with public funds), it would be difficult for an average reader to distinguish between them. As a result, I write of them together, while recognizing that there is a difference in the details.

[4] In the Rank's case, they were attending an event that was not privately funded, and thus their example became especially potent since answers regarding the public/private were not applicable.

[5] The original lawsuit was filed in 1995, and was finally decided on appeal in 1999. The Park Service was ultimately allowed to discourage climbers during the month of June. ("Court rules", 1999).

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Recognizing College Students of Today:
Generational Shifts Prompt Pedagogical Shifts

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ABSTRACT

As educators strive to continually improve the learning potential of the students in our classrooms, it is wise to evaluate traits of the students that may influence the effectiveness of the pedagogical methods employed. To this end, this essay introduces the reader to descriptions of today's college students that identify this cohort as unique in learning style as well as life experience from all previous generations. An assessment method was used to investigate the degree to which current students identify with these generational stereotypes. The method and results of the assessment are discussed, and suggestions for adopting new pedagogical strategies for teaching these students are offered. The essay concludes with suggestions for future research into the pedagogical methods that may better serve this cohort of students.

In February of 2006, a Basic Course Director's Conference was held in Fargo, North Dakota. The keynote address, delivered by Dr. Mark Taylor, M.S.W. Ed.D.(Director of Guidance Services at Arkansas State University-Beebe), focused on the presence of a new generation of students on campuses since the turn of the millennium and how the presence of these students in the classroom precipitates a need for change in current pedagogy practices. Shortly following this conference, in an issue of *Spectra* (April 2006), an article appeared titled "How do we communicate with 'Millennials?'" Millennials, a name coined by Howe & Strauss (1991), is but one name being used to describe this new generation of students; more recently other names, such as Generation NeXt, Gen Y, and Gen M, have been used to refer to these same individuals. Although the names have changed, the importance of the characteristics of this generation of students should not be overlooked.

Discussion of the characteristics of students (born in 1980 or later) in college classrooms today is warranted for a number of reasons. First, this new generation of students has been identified as notably different learners from previous generations (McGlynn, 2005; Oblinger, 2003; Taylor, 2004). Second, if educators aim to increase critical thinking skills and improve learning outcomes among these students, then teachers need to actively address the characteristics that make these students unique with regard to previous generations (Gardiner, 1994; Oblinger, 2003; Taylor, 2004). And, third, the seriousness of this topic needs to be

disseminated among a wider audience to prompt educators to discuss the pedagogical strategies that may be most successful with this new generation of learners.

The overall goal of this essay is to focus the attention of educators on characteristics associated with this generation of students relevant to pedagogy in secondary and post-secondary classrooms. To this end, the reader is introduced to characteristic traits of this new cohort, and offered pedagogical strategies that may enhance learning within the classroom environment. The essay closes with suggestions for further investigations on this topic.

Recognizing a New Generation of Students

With the onset of the 21st century, a distinct new generation of students was predicted to hit college campuses nationwide. This cohort of students has grown up in a period of national economic prosperity and government security, and is often identified as being doted on by parents whom often included them in family decision-making processes (Oblinger, 2003; Tucker, 2006). Verhaagen (2005) argues this generation has the potential to outshine all previous generations through their courage, character, determination, innovation, and vision.

Yet, problems with these descriptions arise when attempts are made to connect specific characteristics of this new generation to student learning and behavior practices in the classroom (e.g., Raines, 2002; Taylor, 2006). Intra-generational differences are becoming more apparent due to a seeming divide in the cohort, resulting in identifiable subgroups. When linked to pedagogy, educators should be aware of the various generational subgroups to fully comprehend the role these groups are playing in the adaptation of new pedagogical techniques within our discipline today.

Comparing Generational Subgroups: Millennial vs. Generation NeXt

During his 2006 presentation in Fargo, Dr. Taylor compared the characteristics associated with the predicted "Millennial" and currently realized "Generation NeXt" student population and drew the following conclusions. To distinguish between the Millennials and Generation NeXt students, it is important to keep in mind that each label refers to the same generational cohort of students; however, the associated characteristics appear to be polar opposites. While Millennial students were expected to be extremely focused on grades and performance (Raines, 2002; Tucker, 2006), Generation NeXt students are less studious than previous generations and particularly noted for reporting greater levels of boredom and tardiness in class and for perceiving themselves as better students than their college grade performance would indicate (Taylor, 2005, 2006). While it was anticipated that the Millennials would be willing to conform to convention, and respect norms and institutions (Raines, 2002; Tucker, 2006), the Generation NeXt students are noted for high levels of incivility, low levels of conventional conformity and civic activity, and weak association with traditional social structures (Taylor, 2005, 2006). While the Millennials were predicted to be more interested in math and science, the Generation

NeXt students are not showing great interest in math, science, or the humanities (Taylor, 2005, 2006). Lastly, while the Millennials were predicted to seek a secure, predictable environment, the Generation NeXt students are noted to seek environments that allow for their individual freedom involving personal behavior and choices (Taylor, 2005, 2006). Conversely, characteristics shared by both Millennial and Generation Next students include a close relationship with parents, technological sophistication, ethnic diversity, and a majority of females over males (Jayson, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Tucker, 2006).

Examining the differences between Millennial and Generation NeXt subgroups. In light of the comparison between Millennial and Generation NeXt students, Taylor (2006) offered some theories as to why these subgroups may have formed. Social and economic contextual factors, Taylor argued, have heavily contributed to the generation's characteristics. For example, in his keynote address at the conference, Taylor argued that traditionally-aged students' critical thinking skills and attitudes regarding education have been more influenced by personal opinion and consumer interest, than by the traditional religious or scientific values influential in previous generations. From a postmodern perspective, he argued Generation NeXt students may see reality as individually and socially constructed, which has the effect of prioritizing opinion and personal preference over truth and absolute meaning in daily decision-making. From a sociological perspective, Taylor argued Generation NeXt students have been witness to dynamic social shifts, such as large numbers of mothers joining the workforce, an equal occurrence of divorce and marriage, a shift of parental role-models to include daycare and educational staff members, and, as a group, have experienced an increasing reliance on television for social information and entertainment. Taylor argued all of these contextual factors are at work shaping the characteristics of Generation NeXt students entering college today.

Interestingly, Taylor's perspective is not always represented in the work written up on this new generation (Raines, 2002; McGlynn, 2005; Oblinger, 2003). As convincing as Taylor's (2004, 2006) argument is, it is with care that any generalization should be applied to a group of students. Keeping this in mind, it is important to acknowledge the potential for this new generation of students to have differing motivations and goals regarding their post-secondary educations. As a result, a classroom may consist of a combination of Millennial and Generation NeXt students. What seems most important, then, is to devise ways for identifying the types of students present in the classroom and also how to best teach to the mix that one finds.

Fostering More Learning via New Teaching Strategies

Previous college generations were often taught through lecture-driven teaching methods, referred to today as passive teaching strategies (Gardiner, 1994). Although current pedagogy practices espouse a need for active strategies to replace these passive methods (Bain, 2004; Fink, 2003; Weimer, 2002), it is even more vital that attention be drawn to this pedagogical shift in light of the interpreted difference in characteristics of the subgroups of the new student

generation. Thus, being able to identify what type of student is sitting in the classroom, in addition to accurately implementing a relevant teaching method, is essential to enhancing learning outcomes among the college students of today. As a result, educators may need to investigate the generational stereotypes that are being used to characterize students today by asking students questions such as:

RQ1: What is your overall reaction to the label "Generation NeXt?"

RQ2: Which Generation NeXt characteristics do/do not "fit" when you think of yourself?

RQ3: What strategies could educators employ to best meet your needs in the classroom?

Method & Results

Assessments are a common way to gather information from students, and can help to identify the degree to which students in a course accept or reject the characteristics identified within a stereotype, such as "Generation NeXt." Following is a description of an assessment method that was used to identify if students related to the Generation NeXt stereotype. Based on the results of using the assessment in class, suggestions for implementing pedagogical strategies to better suit the learning needs of the students are reviewed.

Administering the Assessment

A formal and informal assessment was administered during the 2006 spring semester in a university-level basic interpersonal communication course. The course enrollment was 23, with 19 students (6 female, 13 male) in attendance the day the assessment was administered. The assessment involved having students read an essay by Taylor (2004) titled, "Generation NeXt: Today's Postmodern Student – Meeting, Teaching, and Serving." After reading the essay, each student was asked to respond in written form to the three research questions noted above (formal assessment), and then was asked to engage in a class discussion of his/her responses to the questions (informal assessment). While this was a class assignment, permission was gained from each student to use their responses in the form(s) of an academic paper and/or presentation to advance research investigating this topic.

Gleaning Information from the Assessment

Regarding the first research question, 17 of the 19 students completing the assessment fit the Generation NeXt age-demographic, and all 17 overwhelmingly reported that they recognized and identified with at least some of the stereotypical characteristics Taylor (2004) used to describe the Generation NeXt student. See Table 1 for examples of the student responses to the first research question.

Table 1

RQ1: Student Assessment Responses to Generation NeXt Label

"I think that the characteristics of GenNext are pretty much right on."

"I believe that the characteristics are very accurate."

"Many of these labels are shockingly true."

"I feel like a lot of it is true."

"I agree with Dr. Taylor. I'm surprised he has such a clear picture of the next generation."

"I feel that a lot of this is true with our generation. I know that some of them apply to me."

"My reaction to the label and characteristics of GenNext is positive because everything written on the handout is true."

"It is very true that today education is viewed as a commodity to be consumed, acquired, and accumulated and not as a personal transformational process."

Regarding the second research question, while students generally identified at varying levels with the Generation NeXt characteristics, some students believed only particular characteristics were applicable to their generation and that the overall generalizations were a bit too harsh. See Table 2 for examples of student responses to the second research question.

Table 2

RQ2: Student Assessment Responses to Specific Generation NeXt Characteristics

"There are some portions of these characteristics that are completely off. Within each person there is an anomaly that doesn't fit in any category that Mark Taylor listed."

"I don't agree with the whole instant gratification. I don't think that I need instant gratification."

"I think that our generation is really lazy but I don't think it is all our fault. This is the way we were raised and if you aren't like this you're probably considered an outsider."

"I don't think all of it applies to everyone, but I know that some of them apply to me."

Regarding the third research question, the overall responses provided by the students in the formal and informal assessments suggest that building critical thinking skills, empowering students to learn, and emphasizing basic skills would be beneficial areas of pedagogical focus. For example, students suggested that educators needed to engage their students in more critical thinking exercises. An approach that may help achieve this goal was offered by one participant:

> *"...give students projects with little guidance the first time so they have to think for themselves and outside the box. Then give them the project back with pointers so that they can redo it and turn it in a second time for a better grade.*

This will make students express themselves more and teachers will not have fifty projects that are all the same, every time."

Students also noted that higher quality standards should be set in the classroom in an effort to encourage students to produce higher quality assignments. One student suggested teachers "…reward for excellence instead of effort. In other words, a student shouldn't get a good grade just for showing up."   Lastly, students indicated that they wanted to learn in realistic environments. Be it outside of the classroom or by bringing in applicable speakers, students adamantly expressed the need for hands-on, real-life learning experiences that would help them practice and hone basic communication skills.

Adopting New Pedagogy Practices Based on Assessment Information

After assessing student identification with the characteristics reflective of the Generation NeXt student population, decisions can be made to employ teaching strategies designed to enhance student learning potential.   There is overwhelmingly strong support for active and hands-on learning experiences in the literature (Oblinger, 2003; Olsen, 2005; Taylor, 2004, 2006; Tucker, 2006).   If Generation NeXt student characteristics are reflected in the assessment responses collected from students, an educator may want to consider adopting pedagogical strategies noted to be more successful with this new generation of students. See Table 3 for a list of pedagogical methods provided by Taylor (2006) to enhance student participation and interest in classroom activities.

Related to the communication classroom in which the described assessment was administered, specific strategies that could be employed to increase participation and enhance critical learning include the use of regular quizzes to assess general knowledge acquisition regarding course content, the integration of the internet and implementation of video/audio methods to disseminate course content and feedback on assignments, and the infusion of interactive activities into the more traditional "passive" lecture.

The first strategy, regular quizzing, may hold students more accountable to course work expected to be accomplished outside of the classroom, so that valuable class time is available for exercises and activities. The second strategy aims at Taylor's (2006) suggestion to build technological sophistication into course delivery. At times it can be challenging enough to get a room full of students to engage in discussion of course content, however, these attempts are especially difficult when students come to class unprepared. Technological integration within a course may serve as a means of satisfying student's technological needs and appeal to the perceived credibility these students associate with the use of technology in the learning process, which may foster greater interaction with course material outside of class.

For example, to combine the first and second strategy, quizzes, blogs or other electronic assignments could be administered in an online format so that students could interact technologically while working to better understand content on their own time. Consequently, the creative door stands open to the teachers who are willing to explore unknown territory with

technologies in the classroom and try new strategies to incorporate multiple senses in the learning process.

Table 3

Postmodern Education for Generation NeXt (Taylor, 2006, pp. 103-105)

1. Establish clear expectations, and communicate these expectations early and often.
2. Be consistent.
3. Articulate all desired outcomes.
4. Develop meaningful citizenship and character development goals and activities.
5. Stress the role of the scientific method in understanding, as well as the potential abuses of science and data.
6. Move to a learning-centered academic paradigm.
7. Use active and creative methods to facilitate significant learning experiences.
8. Teach "up" educational taxonomies.
9. Provide meaning through real-life application.
10. Avoid the expectation of blind acceptance of academic authority.
11. Maintain technological sophistication.
12. Expand the parameters for class projects from the traditional paper to other types of demonstrations of research and learning.
13. Offer many opportunities for interpersonal involvement.
14. Appreciate diverse viewpoints.
15. Increase flexibility in course schedules, semesters, and in entry and exit.
16. Recognize trust and safety issues.
17. Moderate a customer-based service model.
18. Develop student services and programming based on institutional and student needs.
19. Lighten up.
20. Expect their best.

The third and last strategy suggests students leave their textbooks at home, with the expectation that students will be held accountable to read the text before coming to class. Instead of just repeating the content of the text, incorporate examples and illustrations from real life sources (e.g., articles, newspapers, websites, books, real interactions with others, participation in community events, service-learning assignments) that will inspire students to do more of the in-class talking and constructing of knowledge as they experience the material directly. This does not imply that textbooks are not necessary or useful, but that class time may be better utilized by incorporating higher standards for students to use the textbook outside of class, and focus class time interaction on application exercises.

Future Directions

Besides helping teachers recognize the presence of this new generation of student characteristics in their classrooms and offering some initial ideas for teaching strategies to enhance these students' learning outcomes, an underlying goal of this essay was to also bring to light the need for more research to be completed in this area of the communication field. Educators across the state are interested in addressing issues that influence student learning outcomes, and the communication discipline is well suited to pursue collaborative research into pedagogical methods.   Some fruitful directions for future work include examining the relationships between student and teacher perceptions of "postmodern" (Taylor, 2006) teaching strategies, amount learned (both perceived and real) in classrooms implementing postmodern teaching strategies, and amount learned in classrooms employing more passive teaching strategies. A noteworthy construct that has received attention from scholars in the field over the past 15 years related to pedagogy is immediacy, which may offer more insight into the effectiveness of new teaching methods. In addition, a student's attitudes and beliefs as they are related to his/her degree of identification with these generational stereotypes should be included as a dimension of future work investigating this topic.

Conclusion

While labels and stereotypes provide generalizations that can be used to describe a group of individuals sharing similar characteristics, it is important to acknowledge that not all college students identify with the generational descriptions reviewed. Thus, a guarded use of the described characteristics should be applied. What appear to be more applicable to college students today are the assumptions students bring to the classroom that associate technology and interaction as inherent components of the learning process. Pedagogically, it seems we are in a stage of transition that requires us to build our awareness of these assumptions and consider the impact student characteristics may have on shaping the pedagogical strategies educators use in the future.

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Scripting Relationships Through Adolescent and Adult Television Dramas: Perceptions of Completion in Romantic Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This content analysis sought to observe the number of relational messages present in adult and adolescent serial television dramas in order to understand the presence of Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10, or "Finding the right mate 'completes you'" (p. 201). The presence of this completion ideal illustrates the Cultivation Analysis Theory (Gerbner et al., 1986) and is significant in the development of adolescents' identities and attitudes due to the persuasive power of repetition. Analysis of 101 conversations in 13 episodes found that relational messages are more frequent in adolescent dramas than adult dramas, but Myth #10 is emphasized more in adult dramas. Further research on the romantic relationship behavior of adolescents in regards to media consumption is suggested.

Media messages bombard teenagers and adults alike with lessons, especially lessons about romantic relationships. One message that appears to be reoccurring frequently is an image of completion, or of needing another to be complete. According to Galician (2004), the dark side of this completion ideal can imply human beings are not complete until they are in romantic relationships, they are not worthy of "living" until they find this other person, and those that decide to remain single are doing something "wrong." Galician (2004) identifies 12 different mass media myths that illustrate the way people's perceptions about romantic relationships are affected by the media. The myth depicting the earlier sentiments is Mass Media Myth #10, or the belief that "the right mate 'completes you'—fulfilling your needs and making your dreams come true" (Galician, 2004, p. 201). This myth is prominent in television shows, movies, and music, and can alter a person's idea of identity. Given the influence of television on people's world views, as reinforced by the Cultivation Analysis Theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986), it is important to look at this myth in relation to television's strong influence as well as what impacts this message could have on adolescents and young adults who are in the process of formulating and solidifying their identities. Misconceptions about romantic relationships represented in the media could be harmful to the development of healthy romantic relationships and self-concepts (Galician, 2004).

The Idea of Completeness

Through the use of a survey, Galician (2004) found the majority of college-age men and women believe finding the right person will complete them, and asserts that something within the media is affecting how people act and what they believe. In this case, the culprit could be something as simple as wanting the Hollywood ending for every story told on television. Dyer (1976) points out popular songs present lyrics that reinforce this myth, but the music industry would be reluctant to change those to a more beneficial message (as cited in Galician, 2004). Galician (2004) even describes a remedy to this myth: "Cultivate your own completeness" (p. 201). Why, then, does this stereotypical message of completion influence the population when it has such a simple remedy?

Myth #10 seeps in through television, much like with music. People miss the realistic expectations of a romantic relationship as they remain media illiterate, or unable to understand the full extent of the effects media continues to hold on them (Natharius, 2004). It is no secret media continues to have an effect on the general public. The theory of Cultivation Analysis (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986) describes how media gradually changes a person's world view over time, as people see something on television and incorporate that new knowledge into what they "know." This change can result in people behaving in certain ways since they may act on that new knowledge.

The resulting action is not always beneficial to the individual. Galician's (2004) Myth #10 illustrates the media representation that being single is undesirable (Morgan & Harr-Mazar, 1980; Morgan, 1980; as cited in Signorielli, 1991) and people should be in romantic relationships. The undesirability of being single may lead to concentrated effort to avoid the single status or unrealistic expectations which can later influence people in romantic relationships, such as their perceptions of marriage (Larson, 1988). Galician (2004) explains this myth may have adverse outcomes: "putting your mate in a straight jacket of unrealistic romanticized expectations can actually have the opposite effect [from making dreams come true], leading to disappointment and depression" (pp. 202-203).

Persuasiveness of Media

Media has been closely linked with altered realism from the introduction of television, and research suggests this link is worth exploring. The main reason television holds such an important role in the formation of a social reality is because it is a social institution (Silverblatt, 2004). Silverblatt (2004) argues that television is such a common, steady presence in our lives it is impossible to ever be completely segregated from its effects. This institution can quickly appear "real" and influence people who are in need of guidance (Silverblatt, 2004). Silverblatt (2004) explains "social institutions educate their members—either about the parameters of the social institution itself or about the larger world, interpreted through the ideology of the social institution" (p. 37). Whatever the media decides is worth knowing is shown and repeated. This

has the effect of teaching viewers the values media demonstrates and exemplifies. It may seem as though media, and more specifically television, exist only to entertain, but whether intentionally or unintentionally, media does fulfill the role of a social institution (Silverblatt, 2004). People can learn from what is shown—despite, or because of, their original intentions for watching.

Television uses the variable of repetition to pursue its point. Repetition of messages will help reinforce those messages and aid retention. Booth (1971) found that:

> Repetition with variation in form and message is more effective than a single exposure in aiding recall and convincing persons to engage in a particular course of action. Sheer repetition may tend to irritate. However, varying messages on the same theme serve continually to remind the individual and simultaneously appeal to different needs or predispositions to learn the material. (p. 605)

Messages depicted in television series—in this case, television drama series—are not one message repeated word-for-word. The messages vary slightly for each show, but subtly work to persuade as long as the format for each remains new (Kellerman, 1985).

Groppe (1984) also explains the number of repetitions has a positive relationship with persuasiveness and a change in perceived reality—the more repetition, the more persuasive the message because the message will be remembered. This idea corresponds with the Cultivation Analysis Theory (Gerbner et al., 1986) and helps explain why Galician's (2004) myths may be believed by many people. Groppe (1984) argues:

> Language does its task of ordering experience by establishing patterns of recurrence…. The degree of intensification depends upon the stability of the world view. The more unstable the world view, the more pronounced the repetition must be. The more stable the world view, the more relaxed and unobtrusive the repetition can be. (p. 168)

The Cultivation Analysis Theory relies on the availability of television and what is shown (Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978). Without the repetition of, for example, violence on television, people may not view the world as more violent (Gerbner, Gross, Morgon, & Signorielli, 1980) or be likely to behave more violently (Anderson et al., 2003).

Groppe (1984) suggests, as Silverblatt (2004) described before, "that the function of dominant rhythms in persuasive discourse is to create that common rhythm of the concerted social action" (p. 170). As in the case of violence, one purpose of violence on television could be to show the audience, or society, that violence is around and it is something that they should notice. The audience, then, may believe society is dangerous and violent because these images are overrepresented in television shows (Gerbner et al., 1980). Many reasons for showing relational messages, or conversations about relationships, exist, and not all of the reasons involve teaching the completion myth to the public. However, what could be the effect of repeating relational messages about romantic relationships? If television is thought to represent the idea of reality (Gerbner et al., 1978) and these relational messages support the idea that a person is not

complete without finding a mate by showing dissatisfied single characters or satisfied coupled characters, the audience could inadvertently believe they are not complete unless they have mates. They might also believe society is inherently paired up and feel outside the norm if they are not in a romantic relationship. This is much like people may believe the world is more crime ridden when violence is overly shown. The audience may feel as if they have to be in romantic relationships as well, but are dissatisfied with them because they do not resemble the romantic relationships shown on television.

However, media also has the power to educate the audience about bad romantic relationships. By representing dissatisfied coupled characters and satisfied single characters, audience members could learn to find this sense of completion outside of the bad romantic relationships and through themselves or a healthy romantic relationship. Audience members in bad romantic relationships might recognize that unhealthy romantic relationships are not good and better ones exist. However, they are not isolated from the effects of the other relational messages, though. These audience members may realize these bad romantic relationships are unhealthy and stay in them, because they also may believe they have an obligation to be in romantic relationships regardless. The repetition, in either case, would be a foundation for discord and has the potential to incite an action by society to formulate romantic relationships in order to feel complete.

Media Influence on Identity Formation

Feelings of discord further propel people to search for a source of stability, such as an identity. Identity is defined as "a clear and stable self-definition with inner continuity in values, attitudes, beliefs and interests" (Blustein & Palladino, 1991, p. 438). People may turn to a social institution, such as television, that can educate them on how to resolve these feelings of discord and give them models that are socially accepted to follow (Silverblatt, 2004). This results in a social, or group, identity (Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005). Postmes, Spears, Lee, and Novak (2005) state, "What defines the social identity of a deductive kind is that group members are differentiated from a background (the population at large or a specific comparison group) by a property (or set of properties) that they have in common with the group" (p. 749). Television provides a medium for others to find models of that social identity, which creates the perfect opportunity for Galician's (2004) mass media myths to take root.   Myth #10 is particularly important with the idea of identity, because one appears to find a sense of completion and wholeness through a romantic involvement with another person.   However, in order to understand the significance of television's influence on belief in Galician's (2004) Myth #10, one must first understand:

RQ: To what extent do the relational messages repeated in adult and adolescent television dramas support or refute Myth #10?

This social identity is extremely important in adolescents' identity formation (Blustein & Palladino, 1991). While adults are vulnerable to repetition of the messages, adolescents are

particularly vulnerable to the messages apparent on television because of the constant change present in their lives, resulting in a sense of instability (Robbins & Patton, 1985). As Groppe (1984) suggested, messages are persuasive when they are repeated to the point they become reality and convince people to follow what is being shown as socially acceptable and desirable. People could change their perceptions to believe what they see on television represents reality (Gerbner et al., 1986). Adolescence is a time when identity is beginning to form, and due to the instability of their lives at the time, adolescents "may be exploring the various dimensions of their identity in order to seek support and sustenance from their environment" (Blustein & Palladino, 1991, p. 449).

By seeking these external stimuli, adolescents may seek out the media as a representation of reality. Signorielli (1991) explains how:

> Morgan and Harr-Mazar (1980) and Morgan (1980) found, in a 3 year panel of 200 adolescents, a positive relationship between television viewing and expressing the view that "single is bad," "families are good," and "families are large." (p. 123)

Television has been shown to influence the perceived realities of adolescents, which makes adolescents particularly susceptible to the unrealistic portrayals of romantic relationships Galician (2004) identifies. Because Potter and Chang (1990) found the amount of television consumption is not as important as the type of television shows people choose to watch, the question, then, is what type of television shows are more likely to reinforce relational messages related to one or more of Galician's myths?

Drama as a Medium

Little has been done to analyze relational messages in prime time serial dramas. Studies of television dramas have typically analyzed the more serious side of the visual message, such as violence (e.g., Gerbner et al.,1986; Reith, 1999) and the role of occupations (e.g., Reith, 1996), with little focus on the idea of romantic relationships outside of marriage and the family (e.g., Morgan & Harr-Mazar, 1980; Morgan, 1980; as cited in Signorielli, 1991). Signorielli (1991), though, explains dramas "present a less positive view of marriage and monogamy. They often revolve around characters who may be divorced, who do not express positive notions about marriage, or who may partake in sexual activity outside marriage" (p. 122).

These romantic relationships in prime time dramas should not be overlooked as all negative. If Groppe's (1984) argument holds merit, then messages about romantic relationships, whether negative or positive, could be influential if repeated often enough. If the instability of adolescents is greater than adults, relational messages that provide a representation of what is expected of them and reduce the sense of uncertainty would be repeated more frequently. Adolescents would have something to gain from watching the television show. The need to repeat relational messages in adult dramas, targeted toward people who may be older and in a

more stable period in their lives, would be less apparent, because no major shifts in world views are occurring. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H1: Relational messages appear more frequently in adolescent television dramas than adult television dramas.

However, not only should relational messages be more apparent, they are also likely to reinforce the idea of Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10. In order to inform the younger generation (Silverblatt, 2004), adolescent dramas may perpetuate the myth. According to Erikson (1966), each stage of life has a specific purpose, or stage of development, associated with it. In the case of adolescents, they are in the stage of *identity versus identity-diffusion* where they should be solidifying their identity. The next stage designated by Erikson (1966) for young adults, typically starting around ages 18 to 20, is *intimacy versus isolation*, or the pursuit of a romantic relationship. While the exact age one enters each stage varies on an individual basis, the fact remains the stages are meant to be completed in order—validating Galician's (2004) prescription of "cultivate your own completion" before becoming involved in a romantic relationship (p. 201). It is possible television is demonstrating the intimacy versus isolation stage to adolescents by showing single as undesirable and a coupled status as the social norm.

If media shows adolescents on television finding completion through a romantic relationship, the order of the two stages becomes blurred. As a result, adolescents could cultivate a social identity that dictates identity is primarily found through romantic involvement. Adolescents may believe they can only be complete if they are in romantic relationships. This leads to distorted notions of romantic relationships, as Galician (2004) suggests, and could hurt the development of their identities as individuals. However, in Erikson's (1966) stages of development, adults are past identity formation and are either past or in the stage of intimacy versus isolation; therefore, their identity stability would be higher and the need for repetition would be lower. The following hypothesis is then proposed:

> H2: Relational messages that support Galician's (2004) Myth #10 appear more often in adolescent television dramas than in adult television dramas.

Method

A content analysis was conducted in order to observe the number of relational messages present in prime time adult and adolescent dramas as well as which messages support Galician's (2004) Myth #10.

Sample

To find the shows watched by adolescents, a list was compiled of all the current dramas shown on major networks and other popular stations (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CW, MTV, ABC FAMILY). A show was categorized as an *adolescent drama* if the main characters were adolescents or the story followed the life of an adolescent. An *adult drama* was identified as

such if it was classified as a drama according to the network and did not fit the category of an adolescent drama. A preliminary survey of adolescents, ages 14-18 ($N = 65$), from a Midwestern high school was conducted in order to find the most commonly watched adult and adolescent dramas. The students were asked to identify the shows they watched on a regular (two or more times a month) basis. The results were analyzed and the top three shows for each type (adolescent: *Laguna Beach*, *The O.C.*, & *Gilmore Girls*; adult: *CSI*, *House*, & *Without a Trace*) were coded. Only episodes for which transcripts were available were considered and a random numbers table was used to narrow the seasons down to two episodes per television show. This was done for all but one show due to a difference in show durations. Because *Laguna Beach* is a shorter show, an extra episode was coded to equal out the time difference. Thirteen episodes of adolescent and adult dramas were coded in total.

Unit of Analysis

For this study, the unit of analysis was the *relational message*. Only direct relational messages, involving an explicit statement one or more persons made regarding their feelings (negative or positive) about their romantic relationship status, were coded. Of the 13 episodes coded, all had at least one relational message, for a total of 101 relational messages.

Coder Training

Relational messages were coded by six student coders enrolled in a first-year introductory college course to ensure interrater reliability. Each episode was coded twice. Coders were broken into pairs and given 4-5 episodes to watch (2 adult & 2-3 adolescent). Coders were trained by the principle researcher using one episode of a television drama not included in the final analysis. Coders practiced together with the researcher, and they explained after viewing the practice episode what their individual responses were. They discussed with the primary researcher what would and would not be considered examples of the variables coded until reaching an acceptable level of understanding. Coders were then asked to view and code their assigned episodes independently of one another.

In order for a relational message to be considered, both coders had to have coded the same relational message. A transcript of the episode was used to see which relational messages a coder was identifying and to ensure separate coding. A seventh coder (the researcher) also went through the episodes when disagreement between coders occurred or an episode was only coded once. Coding done by the researcher was only used for reliability tests, and analysis was done on the six outside coders' content to reduce the possibility of introducing researcher bias. Interrater reliabilities are discussed below and were calculated using Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960).

Coding Categories

Character attributes.   The *initiator*, or the character who began the relational message, and the *recipient*, the character the comment was directed to, were coded for gender, character status (major/minor), and relationship status (single/coupled/married). Characters could be either major or minor and a list of major characters for each episode was given to coders to ensure reliability.   A character was coded as single if he or she was not in a mutual romantic relationship, coupled if in a mutual romantic relationship, and married if in a legally binding romantic relationship. Cohen's Kappa (1960) was used to measure interrater reliability for the initiator: for the initiator's gender, 95% agreement (κ = .90); for the initiator's character status, 95% agreement (κ = .83); and for the initiator's relationship status, 86% reliability (κ = .76). The recipients also showed high reliability using Cohen's Kappa (1960): for the recipient's gender, 93% agreement (κ = .86); for the recipient's character status, 93% agreement (κ = .64); and for the recipient's relationship status, 92% reliability (κ = .85). Differences among coders about who was the initiator and the recipient caused these disagreements.

Relational messages.   Type of relational message was also recorded to determine to what extent Galician's (2004) Myth #10 was supported. Coders determined whether the relational message showed single dissatisfaction, single satisfaction, couple dissatisfaction, couple satisfaction, or desire for being set-up. The relational message showed *single dissatisfaction* if the initiator showed dissatisfaction, or unhappiness, towards his or her own single status or towards someone else's (e.g., "I just want to go on a date" or "What's wrong with you? Why won't you go out?"). *Single satisfaction* occurred when the initiator showed satisfaction toward his or her own single status or someone else's (e.g., "I'm happy now" or "You seem so much more content now that you are single"). *Couple dissatisfaction* was coded when the initiator showed dissatisfaction for his or her coupled or married status or for someone else's (e.g., "Why won't he/she listen to me?" or "You aren't happy in this relationship"). *Couple satisfaction* happened when the initiator showed satisfaction for his or her coupled or married status or someone else's (e.g., "Things are so much better now that we are together" or "You seem so much happier now that you're together"). The *desire to be set-up* by another character or to set-up another character showed extreme single dissatisfaction to the point of action.   If the relational message did not fit into any of these categories but the coders felt the relational message was applicable, the *other* category was used. The primary researcher reclassified the *other* relational messages based on the notes of the coders.   Interrater reliability was evident in this variable as well; relational messages showed 88% agreement (κ = .84).

Relational messages thought to support Myth #10 were single dissatisfaction, couple satisfaction, and set-up. In these three relational messages, characters were seen as reinforcing the idea that one cannot be happy unless they are with someone else, because they were reinforcing the idea that being single was not a good thing and people are only happy when in a romantic relationship. Because of the low number of set-up classifications, those were recoded

under single dissatisfaction. Single satisfaction and couple dissatisfaction were not necessarily viewed as illustrating Galician's (2004) Myth #10's prescription "cultivate your own completion" (p. 201), but were considered refuting Myth #10 by not supporting it.

Results

Out of the 13 episodes coded, 101 relational messages were analyzed. The initiator was female 61.4% of the time (*n* = 62) and male 38.6% (*n* = 39) of the time.   Initiators were also usually major characters (*n* = 86, 85.1%). The majority of initiators were single (*n* = 57, 56.4%), with the rest either coupled (*n* = 11, 10.9%) or married (*n* = 33, 32.7%). Recipients were also more likely to be female (*n* = 59, 58.4%) than male (*n* = 42, 41.6%) characters. Recipients were major characters (*n* = 90, 89.1%) more frequently than minor characters (*n* = 11, 10.9%). The recipients also depicted characters whose relationship status was single (*n* = 66, 65.3%), coupled (*n* = 7, 6.9%), and married (*n* = 28, 27.7%).

Research Question: Relational Messages and Support of Myth #10

As noted before, a greater number of the characters in the shows were single (56.4% of the initiators), while the second biggest category was married (32.7% of the initiators), suggesting more relational messages would revolve around single dissatisfaction or couple satisfaction because single is undesirable and families are desirable (Morgan & Harr-Mazar, 1980; Morgan, 1980; as cited in Signorielli, 1991). Presence of these perspectives would support Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10. The myth was supported in 56.4% (*n* = 57) of the 101 relational messages apparent in the dramas. The myth was refuted, or not shown, in 43.6% *(n* = 44) of the relational messages. This means the episodes, when looking at both adult and adolescent dramas, are both supporting and not supporting Myth #10.

Hypothesis 1: Frequency of Relational Messages

Hypothesis 1, which proposed relational messages would occur more often in adolescent dramas, was supported by this study. Relational messages appear four times more frequently in adolescent dramas (*n* = 80, 79.2%) than in adult dramas (*n* = 21, 20.8%). This supports Groppe's (1984) idea that repetition would appear more frequently for those, such as adolescents, who needed the reinforcement to stabilize their world views.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescent Dramas and the Support of Myth #10

While Hypothesis 1 was supported, Hypothesis 2, or the proposition that relational messages supporting Galician's (2004) Myth #10 are more frequent in adolescent dramas, was not. Within adolescent dramas, relational messages supporting the myth are single dissatisfaction

(n = 18, 22.5%) and couple satisfaction (n = 22, 27.5%). Although these relational messages represent 50% (n = 40) of the total adolescent dramas coded, no real variation between what does support Myth #10 (single dissatisfaction and couple satisfaction) and what does not (single satisfaction and couple dissatisfaction) exists.

Although adult dramas were less frequent (n = 21, 20%) than adolescent dramas, relational messages apparent in the episodes were more likely (n = 17, 90%) to support Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10. Single dissatisfaction was most apparent (n = 15, 71.4%) within all adult dramas.

Post Hoc Analyses

To further explore the meaning of the results of this study, a series of post hoc analyses was conducted.

Whereas adolescent dramas did not support Media Myth #10 (Galician, 2004) to the same extent adult dramas did, adolescent dramas did show a large number of couple satisfaction and dissatisfaction interactions. This suggests a coupled status is more important than was originally thought. Adolescent dramas portrayed couples' satisfaction (n = 22, 27.5%) and dissatisfaction (n = 30, 37.5%) in 65% of the 80 adolescent dramas. Relational messages about coupled relationships only occurred 23.8% of the time in adult dramas, while 76.2% of the relational messages in the adult dramas consisted of single dissatisfaction (n = 15, 71.4%) or single satisfaction (n = 1, 4.8%).

Further analyses also revealed the unsurprising finding that characters who were single tended to initiate more conversations about their single status, while characters who were part of a couple (coupled or married) initiated more conversations about their partnered status, regardless of whether the drama was targeted toward adolescents or adults. However, the number of interactions focusing on couples' relational issues is disproportionately higher in both

Table 1
Frequency Counts and Percentages for Focus of Relational Message Initiation

	Relational Message Focus	
	Single-status	*Couple-status*
Adolescent Dramas (n = 80)		
Single (n = 40)	23 (57.5%)	17 (42.5%)
Coupled (n = 8)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Married (n = 32)	3 (9.4%)	29 (90.6%)
Adult Dramas (n = 21)		
Single (n = 17)	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)
Coupled (n = 3)	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Married (n = 1)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)

types of dramas than the number of initiators who are coupled, continuing the emphasis on couplehood in yet another way. Within adolescent dramas, couples account for only 50% of all initiators, yet 65% (*n* = 52) of all conversations focus on couples' relational messages. In adult dramas, couples account for 19% (*n* = 4) of all initiators, yet 23.8% (*n* = 5) of conversations still focus on couples' relationships. Adult dramas, however, primarily focused on the single relational messages: 82.4% of the single initiators supported the single relational messages of single dissatisfaction and satisfaction. See Table 1 for complete results on these findings.

Furthermore, within each relational message category, the frequency of characters who supported Myth #10 varied according to relationship status. Conversations initiated by singles in adult dramas usually sustained the myth, while single initiators in adolescent dramas still supported the myth the majority of the time, but not as frequently as in adult dramas. Married initiators in adult dramas supported the myth in all of the cases coded, but coupled initiators only supported it 66.7% of the time. A different pattern was observed in adolescent dramas, as married initiators reinforced the myth in only 40.6% of the cases, while coupled initiators supported the myth in 62.5% of the cases. See Table 2 for complete results on these findings.

Table 2
Frequency Counts and Percentages of Support for Myth #10 in Relational Messages

	Relational Message Focus	
	Myth Supported	*Myth Refuted*
Adolescent Dramas (*n* = 80)		
Single (*n* = 40)	22 (55%)	18 (45%)
Coupled (*n* = 8)	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)
Married (*n* = 32)	13 (40.6%)	19 (59.4%)
Adult Dramas (*n* = 21)		
Single (*n* = 17)	14 (82.4%)	3 (17.6%)
Coupled (*n* = 3)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)
Married (*n* = 1)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)

Discussion

The results of this study might suggest to viewers that relational messages supporting or refuting Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10 are fairly balanced. While relational messages supporting the myth are 56.4% of all the relational messages coded, the fact remains relational messages exist and are repeated. This demonstrates the completion message is still able to affect people through repetition and varied narrative patterns even though couple dissatisfaction and single satisfaction were also shown. Belief in Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10 is still a viable social reality that can influence the behaviors of adolescents. The idea that coupled status is desirable was also reinforced by the presence of a large number of married and coupled characters within the relational messages, especially in adolescent dramas. This was not as

obvious in adult dramas, where conversations focused primarily on single characters, but the majority of relational messages in adolescent dramas were about couples and/or married characters.

In adolescent dramas, it could be suggested those coupled-centered relational messages also support the idea that being in a romantic relationship is better than being single due to the sheer repetition of the coupled/married (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) relational messages. This could influence adolescents watching these shows, because their idea of reality is influenced by a television world of couples and their lives—a person is in the minority if single while an adolescent, reinforcing the idea that being single is undesirable (Morgan & Harr-Mazar, 1980; Morgan, 1980; as cited in Signorielli, 1991).   This could be sending mixed signals to adolescents: either they are in a romantic relationship and "better" or they are single and people may think something is "wrong" with them. Adolescents in a coupled status could think they are more interesting, or more worthy of interest, because 65% of adolescent dramas focused on relational messages about couples.

This focus on coupled or married characters was not nearly as evident in adult dramas, but adult dramas supported Myth #10 (Galician, 2004) to a greater degree. As Groppe (1984) suggested, the number of repetitions were lower and less obtrusive. But one could argue that due to the lower amount of repetitions, the repetitions would not be able to vary from the original message—in this case, the idea of needing to find a mate to be "complete." This, as with the adolescent world, could be advocating the same disregard of the single status. Instead of the message being directed to both the single and coupled audiences, relational messages in adult dramas seem to be focusing on the single. Relational messages present in adult dramas circle around single characters and single dissatisfaction. A majority of single characters ($n = 14$, 82.4%) initiated conversations that illustrated Galician's (2004) Myth #10 and relational messages focused on single satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Relational messages present in adult dramas were primarily single dissatisfaction ($n = 15$, 71.4%). The message of completion is for single people in the audience, it appears—a single person, in an adult drama, is seldom happy with his or her single status. The repetition appears to be stressing that being single is something with which to be dissatisfied. If that is true, why should the world view of the viewer be any different?

It is being subtly suggested through the repetition of single dissatisfaction and couple satisfaction relational messages that viewers of adult dramas, if they are happy with their single status, should not be. The relational messages conveyed in these dramas suggest that to be single is to be unhappy with that level of romantic relationship, and this unhappiness could be said to combine with a sense of desperation. This desperation could be because of the repetition of single dissatisfaction. This potentially creates a need for action—to be in a romantic relationship regardless, or to never be happy with the romantic relationship a person is in because it is not "perfect."

In addition to the adult audience, adolescents are receiving this desperation message. However, due to the instability of an adolescent's life (Robbins & Patton, 1985), their sense of

identity remains vulnerable to outside influences. Their beliefs about, and actions regarding, romantic relationships could be shaped by the relational messages presented. The presence and repetition of Galician's (2004) Mass Media Myth #10 illustrates what seems to be expected of them—a coupled relationship status. They are receiving this message at an age where they are learning who they are and are grasping at the lessons society is giving them. Society, through the use of television, though, is telling them that completion, or in this instance, the formation of an identity, is primarily achieved through an interpersonal romantic relationship. The overwhelming presence of coupled-centered relational messages ($n = 52$, 65%) in adolescent dramas demonstrates the amount of repetition adolescents face. This could negatively affect their perceptions and implementation of future romantic relationships, such as marriage (Larson, 1988). Also, if their perceptions of completion are wrapped up in another person, they may never know how to depend on themselves.

Directions for Future Research

While there were ample observations of relational messages in adolescent dramas on which to base a conclusion, the number in adult dramas was far less. This could have skewed the results. One might code more adult and adolescents dramas, as well as increase the diversity of dramas coded (e.g., coding the top six dramas watched instead of the top three), for a better representation of what relational messages adult and adolescent dramas contain. Another suggestion would be to code relational messages in a different genre of television, such as a sitcom, in order to see how the different genres represent Galician's (2004) Myth #10, as Potter and Chang (1990) found the genre matters more than the amount of consumption in the acceptance of the social reality presented by the media. Also, Galician's (2004) myths focus on romantic relationships, yet the myths, especially Myth #10, could be expanded to incorporate other types of relationships, such as parent-child or friendship.

Furthermore, much speculation exists about the effects of this myth on people. Galician (2004) explains how in her survey a majority of both the males and females believed Myth #10; but do those beliefs ever translate to action? Further research could be compiled on the manifestations of this ideal in adolescent or adult communication in order to make a more direct comparison between the media portrayals of this myth and the interpersonal romantic relationships of those age groups.

Conclusion

Relational messages apparent in adult and adolescent dramas may not perpetuate the idea of completion as defined by Galician (2004), but adolescent dramas do show couples, and relational messages about couples, more frequently. By reinforcing the idea of a "couple," adolescents, as well as adults, remain vulnerable to the idea that finding the right person will "complete you" as the repetition present in the media could inherently change a person's world

view. Much along the lines of the "mean world" syndrome (Gerbner et al., 1986), believing the world to be more couple oriented essentially creates a paired-world syndrome. This would support the idea that an individual is not "right" unless he or she is in a romantic relationship. Adolescents may realize being in a romantic relationship does not guarantee completeness, but the social presence of this idea may make it difficult to truly surmount.

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Rhetorical Strategies of Visual Pleasure in Situation Comedies: 'Friends' and Female Body Image

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ABSTRACT

The visual messages conveyed by and about the female characters on Friends reinforce hegemonic ideals of femininity and an ideal female body image that is excessively thin. Messages of narcissism, voyeurism, and fetishism draw adolescent female viewers to identify with the images, characteristics, and behaviors of Rachel and Monica as models and to distance themselves from the images, characteristics, and behaviors of Phoebe and "Fat Monica" as anti-models. The messages sometimes overtly and often covertly perpetuate hegemonic stereotypes about women. Messages advocate that the ideal female body image is a sex object, and the most desirable sex objects are excessively thin. Implications from this analysis include: (1) Happiness and success for women are defined and restricted by hegemony. (2) "Beauty" is crucial to a young woman's happiness and success. (3) "Beautiful women" are excessively thin at all costs, even costs related to physical health and professional achievement.

Dieting has been part of American culture for decades, particularly for women. This ideology manifests itself, for example, in a plethora of weekly magazines targeted toward women and adolescent girls. In fact, studies suggest that as many as 65 percent of adult women are concerned about being or becoming overweight (Anderson, Eyler, Galuska, Brown, & Brownson, 2002). More alarming is the fact that by age 13, 80 percent of young girls report both dissatisfaction with their bodies and having been on a diet (Natenshon, 1999). These statistics are particularly disconcerting in light of the surgeon general warning that "35 pecent of normal dieters will become obsessive, unhealthy dieters" ("Overweight and Obesity," 2002, pp. 8-9). Unhealthy dieting, also known as disordered eating, includes participating in unsafe diet programs, taking unproven diet products, and pursuing unreasonable weight standards, as well as the more commonly understood disorders of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (Dorotik, 2006).

Disordered eating is especially pervasive among young women. Studies report that 40 – 50 percent of college women are disordered eaters and that the number one preoccupation of high school girls is weight (Natenshon, 1999). Moreover, although males also diet, the practice

of disordered eating is significantly more prevalent among females (Harrison, Taylor, & Marske, 2006). Most of these young women are not overweight, but actually believe they are "being more health conscious" (Neumark-Sztainer & Story, 1998, p. 446). Interestingly, "women's fitness" as practiced today is being touted as the "newest patriarchal religion," with anorexics filling fitness classes "like worshippers in a church" (Valdes, 2001, p. 31). At a time when young women could be seizing the opportunity to "create a world in our image," too many are concentrating instead on "recreating the shape of our thighs" (Chernik, 2001, p. 110).

An essential predisposition to disordered eating is a distorted perception of body image as it relates to "personal beliefs about the social benefits and consequences of 'thinness'" (Thombs, Mahoney, & McLaughlin, 1998, p. 107). Many women have come to believe that success and empowerment are reserved for the very thin (Hendricks, 2002). Consequently, one out of every two women claims to be dissatisfied with her body (p. 109).

This trend of disordered eating can have serious consequences on young women. Lack of sufficient nutrients (such as carbohydrates, fats, and lipids) can lead to serious complications, including delay in puberty, osteoporosis, infertility, hair loss, anemia, and organic brain syndromes (Becker, Grinspoon, Klibanski, & Herzog, 1999), as well as numerous psychological difficulties (e.g., Cash & Ancis, 1997; Derenne & Beresin, 2006; Wiseman, Sunday, & Becker, 2005).

Although many cultural influences contribute to body image perceptions (including peers, families, schools, and religious beliefs), media play an important role (e.g., Becker, 2004; Camarena, Sarigiani, & Petersen, 1997; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2001; Harrison & Hefner, 2006; Wiseman, Sunday, & Becker, 2005). Mediated messages perpetuate a "cultural 'pressure to be thin' [and set] the stage for the dieting and body disparagement that often precede an eating disorder" (Becker & Hamburg, 1996, p. 163). The influential role of the media is particularly alarming for young girls. Schlenker, Caron, and Halterman (1998) point out that "adolescence is marked by a girl's loss in confidence of herself" and, consequently, she is particularly vulnerable to the mediated messages to "be attractive at all costs" (p. 147). The female images portrayed as attractive essentially become role models for these young women (Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2001).

Females portrayed in the media as "attractive role models" are usually very thin. In fact, since the birth of television, "more than half [of the female television personalities] meets the criteria for anorexia nervosa" (Harrison, 2000, p. 143). Moreover, women's body types as portrayed on television are less diversified than men's body types and are "not reflective of the general population" (White, Ginsburg, & Brown, 1999, p. 391). Television presents as standard a female body image that's "nearly impossible to achieve" (Olson, 1996, p. 11). This thin ideal is also communicated compellingly "by portrayals of fatness as an undesirable trait" (Harrison, 2000, p. 121). Since these images of ideal female beauty are so clearly and narrowly defined, it follows that ramifications for young female viewers might include loss of self-esteem and lowered perceptions of self-worth, as well as disordered eating habits (Harrison & Hefner, 2006).

Interestingly, Becker et al. (1999) examined the effects of satellite television on adolescent girls in Fiji. Prior to the introduction of satellite television, about 3 percent of these girls reported to have dieted. Less than three years later, two-thirds reported to have dieted and 15 percent of them admitted vomiting to control their weight. Although television programs do not act in isolation, they do play a role in "body image processing" by encouraging adolescent girls to "endorse a thin ideal" (Botta, 1999, p. 35) and are "positively related to eating disorder symptomology" (Harrison, 2000, p. 143).

If this is so, then we concur with Hendricks (2002) who argues that it is crucial to both deepen and broaden our understanding of the relationship between televised messages and body image. She contends further that such research must extend beyond existing studies that rely "almost solely on empirical evidence to explain the influences of television on body image and satisfaction" to offer theoretically grounded interpretations as to why and how television programs do so (p. 111).   This study seeks to answer her call via a rhetorical analysis of messages about female body image portrayed in the popular television program *Friends*. In other words, we seek to deepen intellectual understanding regarding how rhetorical strategies employed in television sitcoms like *Friends* communicate messages about female body image.

During the duration of the series, *Friends* and its actors won more than 20 Emmys, a People's Choice Award for Best Comedy Series in 2001, and a Screen Actor's Guild Award for Outstanding Comedy Series in 1996. Moreover, its primary target audience is adolescent girls and young women (Olson, 1996). Although some sources argue that its target audience is 18 to 35 year-old women, Neilson ratings data report that nearly 2 million viewers are between the ages of 2 and 17 (Parents Television Council, 2004). Finally, two of the female leads, Courtney Cox and Jennifer Anniston, lost noticeable amounts of weight by the time the series ended.

Bandura (1994) contends that social learning occurs vicariously by observing the behaviors and consequences of others. Adolescent girls use media as an important source for such social learning (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). They do so by comparing themselves to and identifying with model characters. Model and anti-model characters are established by observing each character's image and behaviors, as well as the apparent consequences of them (Hendricks, 2002). As viewers begin to identify with the characters, they are more likely to accept the messages conveyed as social reality (Rubin, 1993). Since the average American watches at least three hours of television per day and millions of adolescent girls watch *Friends* (now rerunning in syndication on many stations at all hours of the day), the potential implications of the program's messages about thinness become more compelling. Hence, we sought to answer the question:

RQ: What rhetorical strategies are employed to convey messages about female body image in the show *Friends* and how? More specifically, we examine the messages expressed by and about the primary female characters using visual pleasure theory grounded in a feminist perspective.

Rhetorical Perspective and Method

We ground our analysis in a feminist perspective because it allows us to deconstruct the taken-for-granted ways in which society perceives the world. These taken-for-granted beliefs and behaviors are rooted in hegemony, which is perpetuated through any processes that "support the dominant ideology" by "reproduc[ing] that ideology in cultural institutions and products" (Dow, 1990, p. 261). Typically, these processes operate on "'common sense' and conventional morality . . . secur[ing] the dominance of some men (and the subordination of women) within the sex/gender system" (Hanke, 1990, p. 232). Essentially, a feminist perspective helps reveal the ways "gender has been constructed to degenerate women" (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1991, p. 276). Doing so provides a foundation to incite change.

One of the ways in which women continue to be oppressed by our social system is through television. More specifically, television continues to perpetuate hegemony by limiting our perceptions of both women and men by presenting them in stereotypical ways (e.g., Davis, 2003; Dow, 1996; Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee, & Sebastian, 2002; Stern & Mastro, 2004).

We examine the messages about female body image conveyed in *Friends* through the portrayal of "model" and "anti-model" female characters (Bandura, 1994). Model characters are rewarded based on their image, characteristics, or behaviors and anti-model characters are chastised, laughed at, or punished based on their image, characteristics, or behaviors (Barrett, 1986). As such, viewers are encouraged to learn how they "ought to" look and act (Bandura, 1994).

We rely on visual pleasure theory to examine the messages about female body image employed in *Friends* because the notion of body image is related directly to visual perception. Visual pleasure theory suggests that visual symbols function rhetorically as they communicate messages of narcissism, voyeurism, and fetishism (Mulvey, 1989). Visual pleasure theory is useful for this analysis because it isolates specific messages expressed through visual symbols with regard to female body image. Each of the four main female characters (Rachel, Monica, Phoebe, and "Fat Monica") is examined initially as she perpetuates or challenges hegemony via narcissism, voyeurism, and fetishism and then the ramifications of doing so.[1] By determining the images, characteristics, and behaviors portrayed as "model" and "anti-model," the analysis reveals how visual pleasure theory may function in situation comedies like *Friends* to reproduce hegemony and "ideal" female body image.

Narcissism is when an image (or character) draws the viewer to "mirror" him or her. Essentially, narcissists "portray an image of what the average person would like to be" (Fromm, 1980, p. 47). Voyeurism is when a character's behavior is illicit or improper (according to cultural norms) for public display. Voyeurism occurs when models in advertisements "caress each other in passionate embraces to sell perfume, provocatively zip and unzip their designer jeans, and jog across beaches in bathing suits to sell beer" (Seeger, 1997, p. 155). Fetishism is when an image (e.g., a character or her body part) is portrayed as a "spectacle" to be gazed at as

an object (Brummett, 1994, p. 181). Finally, it is important to note that instances of narcissism, voyeurism, and fetishism do not occur in a vacuum. That is, an image or behavior discussed under the realm of one category may also be coded within one or both of the other categories. What is important rhetorically is the holistic analysis as narcissism, voyeurism, and fetishism work together to convey perceptions of each character (and her image, characteristics, and behaviors) as "model" or "anti-model" (based on consequences) to viewers.

Analysis

The *Best of Friends* video collection serves as a representative sample for this analysis. The titles of the episodes are: "The Pilot," "The One with All the Poker," "The One Where Ross Finds Out," "The One with the Prom Video," "The One Where No One's Ready," "The One with the Embryos," and "The One with All the Thanksgivings."

"The Pilot"

Since situation comedies rely almost invariably on a reiteration of stock character types and storylines (Dow, 1996, p. 37), "The Pilot" serves to establish the characters. Most of the action takes place in the "Central Perk" coffee shop.   Rachel is portrayed as "perpetuating the values of the status quo," which is typical of mainstream media (Jaggar, 1983, p. 197).   Monica is portrayed as striving to do so, although not always successfully. Phoebe, on the other hand, is characterized as embracing an oppositional ideology. Viewers are encouraged to laugh at her oppositional behavior.   Because the consequences of her choices are almost always negative, she serves as an "anti-model" for young female viewers (Bandura, 1994).   Ultimately, her characterization reinforces hegemony by placing it "within the safe confines of the joke" that is inherent in situation comedy (Taylor, 1989, p. 27).

Rachel's behavior initially challenges hegemony when viewers learn she just left her fiancé at the altar. This behavior is not what "ideal women" (i.e., who embrace hegemony) would do. Likewise, her attire in the opening coffee shop scene (a wedding gown) is gawked at as inappropriate. By the end of the program, however, she is clearly portrayed as a model that reinforces hegemonic ideals of femininity. Even the oppositional behavior of leaving her fiancé at the altar is eventually excused. While watching the wedding episode of *Joni Loves Chachi,* she exclaims "Oh . . . see . . . but Joni <u>loved</u> Chachi! <u>That's</u> the difference!" Viewers learn that Rachel does want to marry, but she wants to do so for love. Leaving her fiancé is excused because "ideal women" would only marry for love.

The messages Rachel's character sends with regard to attire are also noteworthy. After the opening wedding gown scene, she changes clothes five times during the 30-minute program. Each outfit consists of tight jeans or a short skirt with a low-cut, tight-fitting blouse, perpetuating the hegemonic ideal of model women as objects inviting viewers to gaze at them as beautiful

spectacles. Rachel is ultimately rewarded for doing so as both Joey and Ross find her so desirable that each one asks her to go on a date.

Similar to Rachel, Monica is shown wearing three different trendy outfits, which seem to invite viewers to gaze at her as a beautiful sex object. Moreover, she is portrayed as empathetic and caring as she attempts to comfort both Rachel (her good friend) and Ross (her brother). This behavior also seems to establish her as a model. What is perhaps most interesting about Monica, however, is her illicit behaviors. During the short duration of the program, Monica spits on her date, participates in a one-night stand, and talks about sex at work. These behaviors clearly do not reinforce hegemony. She suffers negative consequences for her behavior. She is portrayed as unhappy because she is not involved in a romantic relationship. Hence, her behavior and consequences reinforce the status quo by demonstrating what not to do. Viewers learn that even young women who strive to embrace feminine ideals with regard to appearance and empathy, but who act like Monica regarding men, will be miserable because they will not be able to maintain a long-term romantic relationship.

Phoebe's appearance and behavior throughout "The Pilot" challenge hegemony. For example, she talks openly about her mother's suicide and the suicide of her albino roommate. Because both discussions make the other characters visibly uncomfortable, viewers learn that doing so is inappropriate. Moreover, she consistently behaves in ways that are perceived as "odd" by the others, cultivating a stronger impression of her as anti-model (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994, pp. 17-41). For example, she pulls out her own eyelashes, "cleanses" Ross's "aura," colors with crayons in the coffee shop, and sings lewd songs about "love" as a "giant pigeon crapping on my heart" at the top of her lungs in the subway station. Unlike Rachel and Monica, Phoebe's attire also challenges hegemony. She wears only one dress throughout the episode. She also wears her hair in two braids or ponytails, and wears a bulky necklace and bulky earrings. Her attire looks nothing like the models in the fashion magazines adolescent girls peruse or, for that matter, nothing like Rachel or Monica.

The threefold punishment for Phoebe's appearance and behavior confirms her as a "feminist buffoon" and anti-model for young female viewers (Dow, 1996, p. 149). First, Rachel and Monica are not as intimate with her as they are with each other. Second, Phoebe is not portrayed as desirable by the male characters in the show. Third, both her male and female friends dismiss her and her behavior as odd. Hence, Phoebe functions as the comic relief and sacrificed scapegoat who helps preserve the social order through laughter, humiliation, and embarrassment (Duncan, 1962, pp. 378–89).[2]

"The One with All the Poker"

This episode focuses on Rachel's unsuccessful attempts to secure professional employment and, ultimately, on helping her cope with rejection. Ross lusts after Rachel throughout the episode. Hence, she is portrayed as desirable to men (model). It is not clear whether her desirability is in spite of, because of, or regardless of her apparent inability to get a

"real" job. As in "The Pilot," Rachel wears five different tight-fitting outfits with low-cut blouses during this episode. Moreover, she bends over several times to pour coffee or to take orders, enticing the viewer to gaze at some body part as a sexy spectacle. Ross ogles her throughout, further emphasizing her as an object to be gazed at. After Rachel interviews for a position at Saks Fifth Avenue—a position she fails to get—she exclaims the interview was "great" because the interviewer said she had "great taste in clothes." The message is clear—how women look and dress is important, even if they can't get a job (Projansky & Vande Berg, 2000).

Monica is again portrayed as the caretaker, reinforcing hegemony. She wears three different outfits, each of them tight fitting and sexy.   As in "The Pilot," she is punished when she engages in behavior that opposes hegemony. This time, the others taunt her when she becomes competitive while playing Pictionary. Viewers learn from Monica that model women do not act in aggressive or competitive ways (Dow, 1996, pp. 146-148).

Phoebe is again depicted doing things the other characters perceive as odd. For example, she throws away jacks because "they weren't happy" and "curses" the money she loses in the poker game. Because her friends perceive her as odd, (e.g., socially rejected), her appearance and behaviors are portrayed as ones to be avoided.

"The One Where Ross Finds Out"

In "The One Where Ross Finds Out," Ross chooses Rachel to be his girlfriend and drops his current girlfriend in the process. Rachel is depicted as caring, loving, and wanting "her man" more than anything else. She is rewarded by winning Ross's heart and even a kiss from him at the end. She does get drunk at one point during the episode, which might appear to oppose hegemony. However, she is punished for doing so. First, she embarrasses herself while drunk by taking a stranger's cell phone to call Ross; then by leaving an embarrassing message on Ross's answering machine; and, finally, by regretting her actions and sporting a hangover the next morning. These sanctions serve to reinforce hegemony by purporting that ideal women do not get intoxicated. Interestingly, viewers also learn that Rachel essentially got drunk because she loves Ross and did not have the courage to tell him so when she was sober. Even though the behavior itself is anti-model, Rachel's motive (love) perpetuates hegemony and essentially excuses the behavior under the circumstances.

Monica is not romantically involved with a man and is depressed about it. As a result, she becomes obsessed with her appearance and engages in an excessive diet and exercise plan. Her desire to be in a relationship with a man and to look good by dieting and exercising perpetuates the hegemonic model for women to be attractive and desirable to men in order to be happy. Moreover, this marks the first blatant message that desirable women are thin. Although her behavior does not immediately result in achieving her romantic desires, eventually she is rewarded with Chandler as her intimate partner.

Phoebe continues to engage in behaviors perceived as odd by the others. When Joey tells her she has a "nice rack" and a "great butt," for example, she replies, "Really? That's so sweet."

Her reaction visibly stuns Joey and sets off the laugh track. Phoebe's indifference to Joey's reaction opposes hegemony and the laugh track encourages viewers who don't want to be laughed at to interpret her behavior as anti-model. She also makes references about attempting to get her date to "put out" throughout the show. She comments, "Look, y'know, I don't mind taking it slow. I like him a lot. Y'know he's really interesting and he's really sweet and why won't he give it up?" These comments that oppose hegemony shock her friends and set off the laugh track, which sends a message that they are not appropriate for young women who want to be popular. Although patriarchy dictates that women should be viewed as sex objects, they should not openly thank someone for commenting on their nice butt or breasts nor should they talk about their dates as unwilling to engage in sexual activity.

The attire trends of the first two episodes continue. As in previous episodes, Rachel and Monica each wear five different tight-fitting, sexy outfits portraying them as sex objects. Phoebe wears an oversized shirt with a tropical pattern on it, a sweater with oversized buttons, and a silk shirt with an embroidered dragon on it, none of them portrayed as feminine or sexy.

Most important, however, is the fact that weight becomes a central issue in this episode. Although Monica is not overweight, she engages in an obsessive diet and exercise program in an attempt to get a boyfriend. At one point, Phoebe actually comments, "Every time I put on a little weight, I start to question everything." Toward the end of the program, Monica boasts about how "in shape" she is. Monica is noticeably thinner than she was in "The One with All the Poker." Making weight a topic of the narrative serves to expand on the work of Mulvey (1989) and Pribram (1988), among others, who claim that female images as spectacles tend to slow down the narrative rather than advance it. The notion of excessively thin women as beautiful is made poignant not only in the images, but also in the narrative of the script itself.

"The One with the Prom Video"

Many men pursue Rachel throughout this episode, again promoting her as a model with which adolescent female viewers are lead to identify. Likewise, Monica continues to be depicted as responsible and caring. Moreover, when Monica tries to be financially independent, she ends up relying on Ross (a man) to pay her rent for her, reinforcing that even independent women need men to take care of them financially (Dow, 1996, p. 213). Phoebe rarely appears. When she does, her image and behaviors continue to oppose hegemony and result in negative consequences in terms of how others perceive her. She describes how "lobsters fall in love and mate for life," again establishing herself as disconnected from "reality," based on the others' reactions. In another scene, she imitates a male as she sings to Joey "Dude, 11 o'clock, totally hot babe checkin' you out. That was really good, I think I'm ready for my penis now." Joey is visibly stunned and uncomfortable. Viewers learn that desirable women are sex objects for men to enjoy, but desirable women do not reduce men to the same status.

Perhaps the most interesting development with regard to messages about female body image is the introduction of "Fat Monica." "Fat Monica" is actually a flashback of Monica when

she was a teenager. Viewers are introduced to her via a high school prom video. "Fat Monica," who is much larger than Monica, is portrayed as insecure, clumsy, and constantly hungry. She is also portrayed as a sloppy eater when she gets mayonnaise on Rachel's prom dress.   She is clearly portrayed as unattractive and undesirable by her friends as they watch the video. Several of them make jokes about "Fat Monica" as they view the videotape. Joey remarks, for example, "Who ate Monica?" We even hear Monica's father say "How do I zoom out?" as he attempts to get all of "Fat Monica" into the viewfinder. Moreover, "Fat Monica's" prom date is portrayed as an "undesirable" nerd. Viewers learn that fat girls only attract undesirable boys if they attract any at all. Her anti-model status is further strengthened when contrasted with Monica who is now visibly thinner than in previous episodes and is now also happy (Dow, 1996, p. 147).

Attire also sends some interesting messages in this episode. Rachel wears three sexy and revealing outfits.   Thus, she continues to be portrayed as a sex object. Monica also wears mostly tight-fitting tops and jeans, accentuating her thinner look. Moreover, "Fat Monica" wears a huge prom dress that looks like it was made from living room draperies. This contrasting anti-model image further reinforces Monica's new, thinner look as ideal. Phoebe continues to wear clothes that oppose hegemony as they are neither sexy nor feminine. Viewers are led to disassociate from "Fat Monica" and to identify with the "new" Monica as the "real" Monica (Rubin, 1993, pp. 98-105).

"The One Where No One's Ready"

This episode focuses on the characters as they dress for a banquet. Since the program is about getting dressed, the most compelling messages revolve around attire.

Rachel is depicted as blissfully in love with Ross and wants to "look good for her boyfriend." She actually models seven different outfits as she attempts to find the "right look," thus establishing her as the "fashion queen" and perpetuating hegemony.

Monica also tries on four different outfits. First, she wears a short skirt and blouse. Then, she is shown wearing only a slip. Next, she is shown wearing a different slip. Finally, she is shown in a very revealing and sexy red dress. As such, this thinner Monica is portrayed much like Rachel—as a sex object to be gazed at (Mulvey, 1989). Monica is also obsessed with a past love. Throughout the episode, she obsesses about leaving a message on her ex-boyfriend's answering machine after agreeing not to call him. These actions reinforce the hegemonic ideal that a woman needs a man to be fulfilled.

Phoebe is the only female character dressed and ready for the banquet from the start of the show. She waits in the living room with the men while Rachel and Monica rush around trying to "get beautiful."   Phoebe actually wears a form-fitting dress, which the others take note of as attractive. Just when it seems her attire could be coded as model, however, hummus is spilled on her. Rather than change clothes, Phoebe covers the spot with a Christmas ribbon. The fact that she doesn't change clothes several times coupled with the fact that she doesn't change clothes when spilled on clearly opposes hegemony. The fact that the others perceive this as

unusual and that the laugh track encourages viewers to laugh at her portrays Phoebe's image and behavior as an anti-model.

Although weight issues are not central to this episode, little comments about weight are mentioned throughout it. For example, Rachel complains that certain outfits make her ankles "look fat." Hence, the notion of weight and desirable women worrying about looking fat is perpetuated via little asides throughout the episode, comments that may go unnoticed by viewers who are not "attuned to the subtleties" of them (Dow, 1996, p. 272).

"The One with the Embryos"

This episode continues to portray Rachel and Monica as models in terms of attire and behavior. Moreover, both Rachel and Monica talk about their apartment as a "girl's apartment" because it is "clean and purple." Viewers learn that model women are not only desirable to men, but also are good housekeepers. "Fat Monica" is mentioned once as a "big fat goalie," again reinforcing that fat women are undesirable.

The most interesting aspect of this episode, however, is Phoebe as an anti-model. Phoebe has agreed to implant her brother and sister-in-law's embryos in her uterus. Although the others say Phoebe is very kind, they also say they would never do so themselves. This act, combined with what the other characters view as an odd behavior of sitting upside down to "let gravity do its job," adds to what is portrayed as undesirable behavior for young women. At one point, Phoebe actually engages in a conversation with the embryos in the Petri dish. She tells them to "really grab on" once they get inside. Although Phoebe's decision is lauded as altruistic, it is also dismissed by the others as abnormal. Hence, this instance of valuing Phoebe for her independent, anti-hegemonic decision is ultimately placed within the "system's overall hegemonic design" (Cloud, 1992, p. 313). As for attire, Phoebe wears a juvenile-looking dress at the outset, then a hospital gown and cartoon-print socks and, finally, the juvenile-looking dress again. Again, Phoebe's attire, which opposes hegemony, is portrayed as both odd and funny, reinforces her as an anti-model.

Although weight is not central to the narrative of this episode, Rachel has lost a noticeable amount of weight compared to "The One Where No One's Ready." Now, both she and Monica portray messages that ideal women (e.g., desirable and popular) are also excessively thin. Because both model female characters are noticeably thinner, the cultivation effect potential becomes more compelling as well (Gerbner et al., 1994). Further, the groceries Rachel buys during this episode consist of diet soda, yogurt, and apples. Model women, it seems, are also very careful about what they eat in terms of the number of calories they ingest.

"The One with All the Thanksgivings"

"The One with All the Thanksgivings" adds unintelligent to Rachel's characteristics. In flashback scenes, she is portrayed as both lacking common sense and being very popular. She

mentions, for instance, that she changed her major because there was "never any good parking by those buildings."

In the videotape flashback, "Fat Monica" is portrayed as clumsy and lacking self-esteem. Chandler (who eventually becomes thin Monica's boyfriend) is heard on the videotape referring to her as Ross's "fat sister" and exclaiming that he would never date her. We also hear "Fat Monica's" parents make demeaning remarks about her appearance and eating habits. In the next flashback scene one year later, she has lost weight and wears a tight and elegant, low-cut dress. Chandler finds her attractive and desirable, and tells her he loves her. She is now a "good girlfriend" to the same man who said he would never date Ross's "fat sister" just one year earlier. This shift from "Fat Monica" to "sexy Monica" underscores the importance of weight for attractive, desirable, and happy women.

Phoebe continues to say and do things that are perceived as bizarre by the others, reinforcing her as an anti-model. She wears a purple lacy dress that has not been in style since the early 1980s. She also sits on the floor, which is not considered ladylike, particularly when wearing a dress. At one point, Ross even chastises her for being "different" when he says "In this life Phoebe." To which she responds "Oh, this life! Oh, ok."

Weight is again a central issue in this episode. Although Rachel's weight loss is noticeable, Monica's weight loss is even more pronounced. While wearing a low-cut, sleeveless blouse, viewers' eyes are drawn to her pronounced sternum and very thin arms. The contrast between "Fat Monica" and this new, excessively thin Monica is blatant. Thin Monica as ideal is reinforced when Chandler finds her desirable. The message conveyed is that overweight girls can somehow achieve this very thin look if they try hard enough, a look that is not only unhealthy, but "nearly impossible" to attain (Olson, 1996, p. 11).

Conclusions

The messages conveyed by and about the female characters in *Friends* perpetuate hegemonic stereotypes about women, including the notion that the ideal female body image is excessively thin. The messages of narcissism, voyeurism and fetishism establish model and anti-model female characters that reinforce or challenge hegemony based on the consequences of doing so. Essentially, viewers learn how they "ought to" look and act based on the perceived rewards and punishments of the characters. Ultimately, ideal women perpetuate hegemonic stereotypes in terms of both image and behavior. Ideal women are sex objects, and sex objects are excessively thin.

Rachel and Monica, who typically embody characteristics and behaviors that perpetuate hegemony and are rewarded accordingly, are essentially the models with whom young woman are led to identify. They are more likely than either Phoebe or "Fat Monica" to be portrayed as attractive and desirable to men; as engaged in long-term romantic relationships; and, ultimately, as "normal," popular, and happy. Moreover, whenever either Rachel or Monica does engage in a behavior that challenges hegemony, she is punished for doing so. Hence, even ideal women will

suffer the unavoidable "negative consequences of female independence," thereby reinforcing hegemony (Dow, 1996, p. 144).

Conversely, Phoebe and "Fat Monica" usually embody characteristics and behaviors that challenge hegemony and are punished for them. They are likely to be portrayed as unattractive and undesirable to men, as well as laughed at or humiliated, thereby serving as anti-models to viewers. Although Phoebe is often noticeably unconcerned and even unaware of the perceptions others have of her, viewers are encouraged to laugh at her image and behaviors. Thus, although her character is usually portrayed as happy, she serves as an anti-model to viewers who want to be popular. Vulnerable, adolescent female viewers may be drawn to identify with Rachel and Monica who are rewarded for perpetuating hegemony and, at the same time, to distinguish themselves from Phoebe and "Fat Monica" as they attempt to gain "self-confidence" by striving "to be attractive at all costs" (Schlenker et al., 1998, p. 147). This argument becomes particularly compelling in light of the research suggesting that the media dramatically influence the behavior of adolescent girls (e.g., Becker, 2004; Derenne & Beresin, 2006; Groesz et al, 2001; Harrison & Hefner, 2006; Wiseman et al., 2005).

These conclusions also raise some important implications. For young women, the messages sent on *Friends* stress that beauty is crucial to be happy and successful. Moreover, the notions of what constitutes beauty, happiness, and success are deeply embedded in hegemony. More specifically, beautiful women are not only physically attractive to men, but are also excessively thin, sex objects. Finally, happiness and success for women are achieved by engaging in activities that lead to securing a long-term romantic relationship with a man. These messages are troubling in that they may perpetuate beliefs that young women must embody these traits at all costs, "even if it means foregoing the development of [their] personal and academic interests" (Schlenker et al., 1998, p. 147).

Another disturbing implication for young women stems from the fact that *Friends* offers only one female body image, the excessively thin image, as ideal. Moreover, this narrow definition does not reflect the general population who "tend to be spread more evenly across the spectrum of body types" (White et al., 1999, p. 391). While ectomorphic women might be able to achieve this image, endomorphic and mesomorphic women are very unlikely to be able to do so. Yet, viewers watch "Fat Monica" achieve this very outcome through obsessive dieting and exercise. She is essentially transformed into excessively thin, happy, and desirable Monica. Unless a broader spectrum of ideal female body image appears on television sitcoms targeted toward adolescents, it is fairly safe to assume that young women will continue to be influenced in ways that perpetuate disordered eating habits.

This analysis also gives rise to important implications for young men. Certainly, men who watch the program may be influenced to believe that only excessively thin women ought to be considered attractive. More important, however, is the possibility that they will believe that women want to be and ought to be treated as sex objects, as well as submissive to and dependent on men, in order to be happy and successful. If these stereotypical gender roles pervade

television situation comedies as the norm for happiness and success, young men might find it difficult to accept or respect successful, independent women in society.

Certainly, the rhetorical power of such messages are meant to be humorous and viewers ought to be given credit for realizing that humor often relies on deprecation and stereotypes. However, repeating the same narrow covert messages about what constitutes ideal female body image and behaviors across episodes of a particular program or even a genre warrants examination.

Some might dismiss the potential power of the messages in programs like *Friends* by contending that other popular programs counteract them. Whether or not such a contention is true, we believe there is value in revealing the nature of the messages perpetuated on popular sitcoms such as *Friends* as they might influence young women to believe and behave. Moreover, failing to do so essentially grants such programs more power to persuade viewers in subtle ways.

We hope that this study and others like it encourage industry gatekeepers to broaden the kinds of messages portrayed on television as normal and abnormal, desirable and undesirable, and attractive and unattractive, particularly with regard to hegemony and ideal female body image. Likewise, we hope that educators will find ways to encourage critical analyses and discussions with students about the role of media in influencing beliefs and behaviors. Finally, academic scholars must continue to research, publish, and present these results to foster more critical consumers of entertainment media's persuasive role in society.

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Endnotes

[1] We are defining "model" as it perpetuates hegemony. We are not arguing, however, that "model" is "ideal." It is only "ideal" in the sense that it reproduces hegemony and not in the sense that it is how the world ought to be.

[2] We realize that some viewers may, in fact, identify with and want to be like Phoebe. We argue, however, that the message being sent via comic relief is one that essentially reinforces hegemony. Most adolescent female viewers who are trying to "fit in" are more likely to interpret Phoebe's character as someone they should not look or act like if they want to be popular and happy.

Developing a Senior Capstone and Portfolio Course

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ABSTRACT

Our purpose in this essay is to explain how the Speech Communication Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato developed a senior capstone and portfolio course. We describe how this course helped the department improve its curriculum and teaching, and helped its students enhance their learning of the discipline.

Introduction

As educators, we are interested in discovering if our students are learning what we are teaching, if they are able to apply that knowledge in a variety of settings, and if they are able to demonstrate knowledge of the discipline of communication. As William Bennett (Adelman, 1986), former Secretary of Education, argues "given the importance we place upon college education … it is only reasonable that students, parents, government officials, and others should look for—and expect to find—evidence that they are getting their money's worth" (p. 1). To help address these issues, the Speech Communication Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato developed SPEE 485: Senior Seminar. Senior Seminar is a three-credit semester-long undergraduate course. The course is the capstone experience for all speech communication majors.

First, we provide an overview of the principles of course design, second highlight the course rationale and structure for Senior Seminar, next address the intended learning outcomes for the course, fourth discuss the overall department student learning goals, then provide a template for our Senior Seminar Portfolio, and finally address the limitations and benefits of the course.

Principles of Course Design

The department utilized the principles of course design proposed by Posner and Rudnitsky (2001) in *Course Design: A Guide to Curriculum Development for Teachers* to develop the senior capstone and portfolio course. The Posner and Rudnitsky model includes the following components. A course rationale is devised as the beginning of the process. Intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the course, which incorporate cognition and cognitive skills, psycho-perceptual skills and affective understandings, are prepared. The actual course units and their titles are developed. ILOs are assigned to each unit. Course ILOs are a product of curriculum planning and initial course planning completed by the Speech Communication Department. The specific ILOs for each unit are part of the planning for the course. The instructor then gathers the tools needed for learning to take place. Again, Posner and Rudnitsky refer to these as instructional foci. A general teaching strategy is "developed around the foci for the accomplishment of the ILOs. These strategies are described at a level more general than daily lesson plans but more specific than a list of materials to be used" (p. 276). Finally, course and unit evaluation procedures are designated.

Not all students in the Speech Communication program complete the Senior Seminar course. Students completing the teacher licensure program in Speech Communication have a parallel program that assesses disciplinary knowledge. As a matter of fact, Senior Seminar grew out of a desire to emulate the capstone experience for non-education majors. "Capstone" in teacher preparation programs generally describes activities, experiences and/or courses that compose the final touches in the program (McCarty, McIntyre, & Prushiek, 2001). This description guided the course designed for speech communication majors as well. McCarty, McIntyre and Prushiek also note that "the university experience should consist of meaningful, relevant, rigorous experiences and products culminating in a student's decision about choosing a job and the faculty's decision regarding the students ability to succeed in the … profession" (p. 704). Clearly such a program should apply to non-education majors as well as education majors.

Course Rationale and Structure

Senior Seminar is designed to assess and showcase students' accomplishments during their tenure as speech communication majors. The course also aids departmental assessment functions. The rationale for the course leads to individualized instruction based on student background and interest area in Speech Communication. However, the instructor must also include components that will allow for departmental curriculum review and evaluation.

The rationale for the course, as proposed to the University Curriculum and Academic Policy committee (UCAP, p. 4) in 1999, stated, "this course is designed to make sure that speech communication majors have attained competency in oral and written communication, are capable of conducting independent research utilizing critical thinking skills, and are able to demonstrate knowledge of the relationship of communication to an area of specialized study or a vocation."

The format for this capstone course has its theoretical base in the recommendations of The Carnegie Foundation. The Foundation recommends "a portfolio, a senior thesis or project, and an oral presentation …as the key instruments to measure achievement of outcomes at the capstone level" (Moore 1994, p. 164).

Wallace (1988) identified several advantages for a senior seminar course. "First, this format provides for close contact with faculty.… it provides practical career-related experiences … offers the student a sense of accomplishment as they serve … in a quasi-professional, practical capacity" (p. 35). For example, a senior project could be designed in collaboration with a job or internship. The collaborative effort could emphasize problem solving, critical business communication skills, developing a project that could benefit a place of business, or exploring interpersonal skills needed in a business setting.

Imposing deadlines on various phases of the senior project is beneficial for students. By imposing deadlines and checkpoints, even for the college senior, the professional concept of deadlines and personal and professional responsibility are enhanced. As Moore (1994) notes, "the integration of an internship-type experience can help the student learn contextual and adaptive competence and develop a professional identity" (p. 164).

The senior portfolio in Speech Communication is a method of documenting a student's progress within their major. Orlik (1994) argues that portfolios are a long-standing tradition in the business world for demonstrating various abilities (e.g., artistic, design, research, writing). An assessment portfolio provides a holistic view of each student's developmental educational experiences. The portfolio provides evidence of the depth and breadth of a student's involvement in the major and in his/her experiences within the program and department. The portfolio becomes a "cumulative collection of a student's work" (Davis, 1993, p. 247). The portfolio may include papers, videoclips/audioclips of speeches and/or presentations, journal entries, essay exams, and other representative examples of the student's achievements over the course of study as a Speech Communication major. As a tool for departmental assessment, the portfolio provides a method for the department to determine if the program and course learning outcomes are being achieved by students (Orlik, 1994). The department can examine the student portfolios to determine where issues might exist in the scope and sequence of the curriculum. The department may also gain insight regarding concepts, theories, or skills that are repeated or introduced too early/late in the program.

Intended Learning Outcomes

The following objectives and outcomes were developed by the MSU, Mankato Speech Communication Department and are required outcomes for Senior Seminar: "Following the completion of this course, students will be able to: 1) demonstrate competency in oral communication; 2) demonstrate competency in written communication; 3) demonstrate the ability to use the research process utilizing a critical, humanistic, or social scientific approach."

The course goals are further refined and written as Intended Learning Outcomes. The ILOs for Senior Seminar are:

1. To review experiences in the Speech Communication major, comparing and contrasting prominent perspectives in the discipline, assessing strengths and limitations of the curriculum, and to prepare documentation summarizing those experiences.
2. To provide students the opportunity to produce an independent research project in their area of interest and expertise, and to present the project in a public forum.
3. To assess student competencies in areas such as cognitive knowledge, personal affect, and behavioral skills pertaining to the discipline.
4. To reflect upon the discipline and what it means in terms of the student's overall educational experience, and the anticipated impact it will have on one's career and life experiences.

Department Student Learning Goals

The Senior Seminar portfolio is based on department-wide student learning goals. The goals are made available to all students on the department website (www.mnsu.edu/spcomm). Driving the goals is this statement: "Speech Communication is a field of study inviting students to engage in the theoretically-informed practice of communication in their personal, professional, and public lives. Students who succeed in Speech Communication can expect to meet the following goals:

1. *Presentations*: Increased confidence and competence in public presentations.
2. *Relationships*: knowledge of the manner in which communication creates, maintains and transforms relationships, and the ability to engage in effective and productive relational communication.
3. *Contexts*: knowledge of the crucial role communication plays in community, professional and civic contexts, and the ability to use communication behaviors ethically and effectively in various contexts.
4. *Diversity*: Knowledge and respect for the role of culture and diversity in communication, and the ability to effectively communicate within and across cultures.
5. *Influence*: Competency in reflective construction and analysis of arguments and discourse intended to influence beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices.
6. *Technology*: Ability to effectively use communication technology and to critically evaluate how technology affects communication.
7. *Research*: Competency in systematic inquiry, including the process of asking questions, systematically attempting to answer them, and understanding the limitations of the conclusions reached.

Senior Seminar Portfolio Template

The department student learning goals form the foundation for the Senior Seminar portfolio project. Each of the seven goals forms a primary component of the portfolio. The primary areas require students provide documented evidence/artifacts of involvement in the seven goals in both lower-level and upper-level courses. The lower-level/upper-level requirement is included so students may demonstrate growth in the seven areas as they progress through the curriculum.

Students are required to provide reflection statements for each artifact signifying how the artifact demonstrates competency in each goal. The requirement of the reflection component insures students move beyond a simple catalog of activities to a reasoned discussion of the place and function of the artifact in their overall program in speech communication.

Four additional components are included in the portfolio. Three of the components are used to measure longitudinal development. The three longitudinal components are widely accepted standardized quantitative measurement instruments. The three instruments are the Basic Course Communication Competency Measure (BCCM), the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24), and the Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Majors are required to take the BCCM, PRCA-24 and the WTC in SPEE 190 (a required course for majors) and then in SPEE 485. A pre-test/post-test comparison of the scores on an individual and aggregate level may thus be performed to determine if the department curriculum is developing specific areas of competency with our students. The fourth component is an exit interview. The exit interview gathers demographic data, provides an opportunity for affective responses to the department and its curriculum, and includes an adaptation of McCroskey's (1994) instructional affect assessment instrument.

Thus, 11 specific components are in the portfolio, all of which are used to both allow the student to demonstrate what they have learned and the department to assess the degree to which student learning outcomes have been met. The 11 components are:

1. *Presentations*: Assignments demonstrating increased confidence and competence in public presentations.
   - A. Assignment demonstrating individual public speaking ability (Suggested assignments might include video recordings, audio recordings, manuscripts or outlines. Speech evaluations do not belong in this area).
   - B. Sample individual public speaking evaluation (Student must include with this assignment a statement (minimum 100 words) reflecting on how this assignment demonstrates individual public speaking ability).
   - C. Reflection Statements: Student must include with the assignments statements (minimum 100 words) reflecting on how the assignments demonstrate growth or competency as a speaker.

2. *Relationships*: Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the manner in which communication creates, maintains and transforms relationships, and the ability to engage in effective and productive relational communication.

A. Assignment from a 100-200 level course:
B. Assignment from a 300-400 level course:
C. Reflection Statements: Include statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting how the assignments demonstrate understanding of the role of communication in relationships, and your ability to engage in effective relational communication.

3. *Contexts*: Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the crucial role communication plays in community, professional and civic contexts, and the ability to use communication behaviors ethically and effectively in various contexts.
A. Assignment from a 100-200 level course:
B. Assignment from a 300-400 level course:
C. Reflection Statements: Include statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting how the assignments demonstrate understanding of the relationship between communication and context, and your ability to engage in effective community, professional, and civic-related communication.

4. *Diversity*: Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the role of culture and diversity in communication, and the ability to effectively communicate within and across cultures.
A. Assignment from a 100-200 level course:
B. Assignment from a 300-400 level course:
C. Reflection Statements: Include statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting how the assignments demonstrate understanding of the relationship between communication and diversity, and your ability to engage in effective communication with individuals of diverse cultures.

5. *Influence*: Assignments demonstrating competency in reflective construction and analysis of arguments and discourse intended to influence beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices.
A. Assignment from a 100-200 level course:
B. Assignment from a 300-400 level course:
C. Reflection Statements: Include statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting how the assignments demonstrate understanding of the relationship between communication and influence, and your ability to engage in effective construction and analysis of communication designed to influence others.

6. *Technology*: Assignments demonstrating ability to effectively use communication technology and/or to critically evaluate how technology affects communication.
A. Assignment from a 100-200 level course:
B. Assignment from a 300-400 level course:
C. Reflection Statements: Include statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting how the assignments demonstrate understanding of the relationship between technology and communication, and your ability to engage in and/or analyze effective communication through technology.

7. *Research*: Assignment demonstrating competency in systematic inquiry, including the process of asking questions, systematically attempting to answer them, and understanding the limitations of the conclusions reached.

    A. Senior Seminar Final Research Project
    B. Reflection Statements: Student must include with this assignment a statement (minimum 100 words) reflecting on how this assignment demonstrates understanding of the research process, and your ability to design, implement, and write communication research.

8. Scores for the Basic Course Communication Competency Measure in 190 and 485.

9. Scores for the PRCA in 190 and 485
    A. Reflection Statement: (The PRCA is measure of your communication anxiety. Your scores should generally go down at the later stage of your major.) Student must include a statement (minimum 100 words) comparing, contrasting, and/or reflecting on how these scores demonstrate growth as a speech communication scholar.

10. Scores for the WTC (Willingness to Communicate) in 190 and 485.

11. Online exit interview

Limitations and Benefits

In developing and teaching this course, the department has learned some additional lessons. Students are still learning to recognize and realize the many and various ways they can prepare a portfolio. Second, faculty of other department courses need to help students identify and collect assignments and activities that allow the students to demonstrate knowledge and ability as portfolio artifacts. As students are instructed, directed, and made aware of the Senior Seminar portfolio requirements and options within the system, more students have artifacts that are readily available. Students are very careful to save and request videotaping of speeches and projects for inclusion in their portfolios. As students become more technologically competent, their portfolios have taken on far greater sophistication. This has had the added benefit of encouraging faculty to develop and use technology tools in the classroom.

Finally, departmental assessment has become more dynamic as a result of the exit interviews and portfolios prepared for Senior Seminar. The data is longitudinally analyzed and evaluated. Changes in the program and in specific courses are based on quantified data, rather than on the subjective feelings of department members and students. As noted in other institutions, "Departments of Communication … are being called upon not only to make claims about the competencies they provide students but to evaluate the extent to which their program provides such competencies" (Decker & Lont, 1990, p. 54).

Conclusion

The development of SPEE 485: Senior Seminar is a continuous and evolving process. As each instructor teaches the course it will become "his/her" own. However, certain elements are the foundation of every section. The objectives and ILOs remain relatively stable. The function

of the course—student demonstration of discipline knowledge and skills, and department assessment of student learning—is constant. Through the development, implementation and ongoing adaptation of Senior Seminar, the Speech Communication Department is able to address its limitations and celebrate its strengths with confidence.

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Appendix
Exit Interview

<u>Department of Speech Communication Exit Interview</u>

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC AND ATTITUDINAL

(Instruct the student to answer the questions as indicated. Remind them there is no obligation to answer a question if it makes them uncomfortable.)

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Anticipated graduation date: _____
4. Major(s)/minor(s) combination _____
5. Why did you choose to go to college? Why did you choose XXX University?
6. What do you hope to be doing in 5 years? 10 years?
7. What do you want most in a job/career?
8. What do you want most from life?

SECTION II: OPEN-ENDED AFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO PROGRAM

1. What lead to your decision to become a Speech Communication major?
2. What was most valuable in your education in to Speech department? For example, what courses, activities or faculty did you find most useful?
3. What course was offered that you wish you had taken, but did not? Or, what course or opportunity would you like to have taken that we did not offer?
4. What was least valuable or missing in your education in the Speech department? For example, which were your least favorite classes, and why?
5. What have you sought to accomplish in your academic preparation as a Speech major? For example, making speeches, improving writing skills, etc. How well have you succeeded in meeting those goals?
6. Do you feel the Speech department has adequately prepared you for your post-college plans? Why or why not?
7. Were you involved in co-curricular department activities or other campus activities which enhanced/utilized your communication skills? Briefly describe your experience.
8. Did you feel a sense of continuity or connection between the courses in the major? Why or why not?
9. What would you like us to know about the Speech department?

SECTION III: INSTRUCTIONAL AFFECT ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT (McCrosky, 1994)

Using the following scales, please evaluate the speech department as a whole. (Coder: circle the number for each items which best represents the student's feelings)

I felt the program's content was:

1.	Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad
2.	Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Valuable
3.	Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
4.	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

I felt the communication behaviors recommended in the department's content were:

5.	Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad
6.	Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Valuable
7.	Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
8.	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

The instructors I had in the department were:

9.	Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad
10.	Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Valuable
11.	Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfair
12.	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

In real-life situations, my likelihood of actually attempting to engage in the communication behaviors recommended by the department are:

13.	Likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlikely
14.	Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
15.	Probable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Improbable
16.	Would not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Would

My likelihood of using the content and applications I learned in this program is:

17.	Likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlikely
18.	Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
19.	Probable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Improbable
20.	Would not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Would

If I had to do it over again, my likelihood of enrolling in this program--knowing what I know now—would be:

21.	Likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unlikely
22.	Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
23.	Probable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Improbable
24.	Would not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Would

Dusting off the Trophies:
Filling in the Gaps in the Forensics Collective Memory

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ABSTRACT

With any organization or group, certain areas, events, and individuals eventually become forgotten and left out of the collective memory. Forensics, at the institutional level, is no exception. This essay explores the concept of collective memory, with particular attention to how some areas are left out. It examines how and why certain areas of forensics history are lost, and the impact that has on the forensics community. Finally, it offers some suggestions for forensics educations on how to keep desired stories from being left out of the collective memory. Advice includes recording the stories in written or audio/visual format, bringing alumni back to share the stories with the current team members or others on campus, and constructing a team's history.

As an undergraduate forensics competitor, whenever I was practicing or working at school I found myself surrounded by dozens of trophies from victories over the last few decades. Most were team trophies, but one section included individual ones that graduating seniors would give back to the team at the end of their collegiate experience. This tradition included a short speech by the senior at the team's banquet at the end of the year. Usually it included some stories or memories and explained why that trophy was the one that meant the most to them. At one point during my forensics career, a teammate and I were moving the trophies and started looking at the bottom of them to see who had given them. Some of the names were ones we had met or at least heard of from a coach or former competitor. However, we noticed that many of the trophies did not have name on them. We spent several weeks attempting to discover who had won those trophies as we asked coaches and looked through old team records. Some of them remain unmarked.

Later that year a few alumni of the program came and we showed them their trophies they gave back. Usually they would laugh and then tell a story about that tournament or a particular round that had made that trophy so meaningful to them. It was an exciting moment for us all as they relived a great forensics memory, and as we learned and became connected with those who went before us. Sadly, most of the stories remain untold, and may soon be forgotten

entirely as alumni pass away. Whenever that happens, a part of the team and its heritage dies with them.

This essay seeks to explore how those forgotten memories and stories of forensics yesteryear can be rediscovered in order to create a more meaningful experience for all involved in the program. This will be accomplished by first examining research on collective memory and how it applies to forensics. Next, the harmful effects of forgotten aspects, or holes in the collective memory, will be explored. Finally, ways to prevent this erosion of memories and create a healthy team history will be discussed.

Building a Collective Memory

The term "collective memory," developed by French sociologist Halbawachs (1992), refers to the shared identity and understanding of the past for a community. Each community, whether it realizes it or not, has a collective memory to which it is constantly adding, and losing, memories and experiences. Collective memory research is a growing field with numerous communication studies ranging from media coverage, national memory, smaller community, museums and the remembrances of historical events (e.g., Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Hariman & Lucaites, 2003; Hasian & Carlson, 2000; Hasian & Frank, 1999; Hasian & Shutgart, 2001; Haskins, 2003; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2000; Peri, 1999; Prosise, 1998; Weng, 2001; West, 2002). For a forensics program, the collective memory, or sense of tradition, can play a vital role in "building and maintaining a sense of team (Derryberry, 2005b, p. 5). Forensics coaches/scholars have argued that a sense of tradition is important for forensics teams (Compton, 2000, 2006; Derryberry, 1997, 2005a; Jensen & Jensen, 2007; Redding & Hobbs, 2002). As Compton (2006) offered, "How a collective tells its stories, and how a group balances the importance of commemorating with accurately documenting, affects not only how a collective views its past, but also its future" (p. 33).

For the forensics community, several important aspects from the collective memory research can be useful to our remembering of the past, particularly for individual teams. First, as a community, a forensics team's collective memory is created by both shared, or team, memories and the collection of individual memories or experiences. It is also diverse as it travels across the forensics generations just as the team does. With each new class of students, new memories will be added to that of the collective, and those of the previous students will be more likely to be lost or forgotten. Next, Katriel (1994) argues that it is important to recognize the difference between memory and history. Although history is an analysis and recording of what happened in the past, memory is the living experience of the past interacting with the present. She writes that in the realm of history one finds "the isolating, intellectual stance of critical reflection," but in the realm of memory finds "the all-consuming moment of ritual, communal bonding" (p. 16). This tension between history and memory will be important as team attempt to preserve their past. Finally, the (re)telling of a group's collective memory influences the collective, or team, identity and experience. Schiffrin (2001) suggests, "Collective narratives are formed by group and

communal experiences and come to play a role in collective identities" (p. 508). Understanding the impact these stories from the past have on the present and future identity of the team and its competitors suggests the significance of examining a team's collective memory and working to create a healthy understanding of the past.

Impact of Holes in Collective Memory

When the collective, or institutional, memory of a community leaves out significant details and stories from the past, it can create problems in the present and future. When the successes, excitements, and experiences of previous competitors are lost, then the current and future competitors lose out on living those experiences with them. Sometimes not knowing history does not doom one to repeating it, but will keep one from ever experiencing or enjoying it. As Compton (2006) argued, "the community should ask not only who emerges as forensics legends in their collective memory, but also who does not" (p. 32). There are several subgroups of the forensics community that are hurt when the collective memory leaves out the stories of past competitors: alumni, students, and coaches and administrators.

The alumni of the program are the ones most obviously affected by the forgotten past as their stories and experiences are lost. With the exception of a few trophies and photos, there may be very little left from their time on the team. Current competitors may have to work very hard to even find out if someone was on the team twenty or so years ago; hearing the stories from that time can be next to impossible. Alumni want to be remembered and feel that they still have a connection with the team. Keeping alumni connected also helps keep them giving, either financially or through service such as judging. When alumni feel they are no longer remembered, and therefore no longer appreciated, then they may quit trying to help the team or stay connected with what is happening. Unfortunately, it seems that the majority of alumni take this route eventually. Perhaps even for them their forensics career becomes all but forgotten.

Current (and future) students are also hurt by holes in the collective memory passed on to them. Often the extent of their institutional memory of the program may be a few years before they came until a few years after they leave. The continual movement of students, with a complete new group every four years, makes it more difficult for a collegiate community to maintain a deeper understanding of the group's heritage. Students may not think that the past is that significant to them (but that argument is generally made only by those who do not know the past). When the stories of those who went before are lost, the sense of being part a something bigger than oneself is lost. Without the stories of the past, it can be hard to truly appreciate how the program is today. I still remember the stories of how the team traveled when it began— staying at homes of family and friends and eating lunches packed by the cafeteria. It helped me to be thankful for the donations that those competitors gave as alumni so that we could enjoy better traveling conditions and afford to travel more frequently for tournaments. The older the team, the richer that sense of heritage and being part of something great should feel. Being a part of an honorary or national organization should also aid in this sense that the current students are

one chapter in the middle of great book. Particularly in an organization like Pi Kappa Delta with lifetime membership and rituals such as the ceremony for new members, it becomes harder to feel the past is completely irrelevant. And competitors *should* feel that they are a member of their team for a lifetime. Thus, they are teammates not just with the competitors with whom they actually compete, but also with all who have competed with the team. But when the past stories remain untold, the current competitors are much less likely to develop that sense of team.

Finally, the coaches and administrators may be unable to perform their duties as well if the collective memory is not sufficiently detailed. Without an understanding of the past, a coach will not be able to help students discover it and feel connected. New coaches, in particular, may find it difficult to understand some of the traditions and aspects of the program that their students are a part of unless they learn about how the team got to where it is today. Administrators are less likely to make efforts to learn about the team's history, which is why the coaches should work from time to time to help them learn it. An administrator could come who does not know the team's rich past and thus make decisions that could adversely affect the program's future. Without a solid institutional memory, coaches and administrators may steer the program in a harmful direction.

Collective Memory and the Team

Coaches of forensics, like those of sports such as gymnastics and track, must constantly work to bring individual competitors together as a team. Team sweepstakes awards assist in this building of a team *ethos* and focus. One of the greatest skills that forensics students can learn is that of cooperation on a team. The team bonding can also assist in enriching the forensics experience. With this sense of team spirit, individual competitors may push themselves harder than they might otherwise have, so that they will not let their teammates down. Usually, they will find greater individual success because of their work for the team. As Derryberry (1991) argues, "My experience with this blending of interests is that a speaker's motivation to assist the team through broader participation also brings a sense of accomplishment to individual students as well" (p. 22). This sense of team should extend beyond simply those who they compete with during the same four-year period. As a result of the teammates who have gone before, perhaps even before the current competitors were alive, and their accomplishments, students might work even harder to keep the tradition alive and not let the (overall) team down.

By increasing the depth of the team's institutional memory, this sense of being a part of the greater team, and the desire to live up to the team's tradition, can be increased. Embree (2001) contends that one important reason for telling the history of the team is to help current students see how the history affects them: they are part of the overall history, are where they are because of those who went before, and are helping build on that rich tradition. Kaylor (2003) posits that when writing or telling the team's history, "One should attempt to build one continuous narrative so that highlighting the past raises the stature of the team as a whole, then and now" (p. 13). However, when there are significant holes in the team's collective memory,

this feeling of being part of a team and something larger than oneself may be lost, or at least diminished.

It is important to note, though, that simply learning the history and past of the team is not a magical formula for success. Obviously, there are more important aspects of a forensics team—such as competition and learning public speaking skills—that need to be the focus. Although it is important to highlight the team's past, it should be done in a healthy level of moderation. However, it is unlikely that any team focuses too much on its past. Instead many, if not most, teams probably ignore it too much and have allowed holes to develop in their institutional memory. Since holes in the collective memory of a forensics team, particularly holes in the stories of past competitors, can hurt the overall sense of team and lessen the experience, it is important to work to (re)build the collective memory. There are many ways that this can be accomplished, and what works well will differ depending on the team and the history. Here are a few such ways that the "lost" stories of the past can be (re)discovered.

Record the Stories

An important step in keeping the stories of past competitors is to record them. Some teams have team histories, or at least scrapbooks and records from which a team history, but these are generally made up mostly of tournament results and photos. Although these are important aspects of the past, they are fairly uninspiring without that story, or *pathos*. A coach may want to ask graduating team members to write or tape a story or some of their favorite forensics memories. If a team has a banquet or other special occasion where students share stories, then taping that event would capture these reflective moments. These stories could be used in a number ways as discussed below. The importance here is simply collecting the memories so that they will be available for sharing later.

For teams that have not been collecting these stories, now is the time to contact alumni and ask them to share them. Again, this can be done in a written or taped format. For older teams, there may be some alumni whose stories shed light on a very unique and different era and who may not be around much longer to share those stories. An added benefit of this collection process is that it engages the alumni and reassures them that they are not forgotten and that they are still an important part of the team. Once the alumni feel connected again, they will be more likely to help out the team with financial or other contributions and to return for a homecoming or team banquet.

Bring Alumni to Share Stories

Another way to help fill in the holes of a team's collective memory is to bring the alumni back to share their stories. This can be done successfully in both formal and informal settings. Bringing back alumni to address a team banquet or other occasion gives them the opportunity to reflect on their time as a competitor and what they have learned since then. During this time a

speaker will often share humorous stories of their forensics experiences, as well as some things from that time that they continue to treasure. This will not only enliven the event for the current competitors who will usually enjoy the stories that are unique, but yet refreshing similar. In fact, students may learn that they share more in common with these past students (who may be the age of their parents or grandparents) than they do with many of their classmates who do not quite understand the forensics world. This event also reaches out to alumni by showing them that they are important and that their stories are valued and not forgotten. Even those who do not speak can feel like the team from their era is remembered. Also, when an alumnus speaks, it usually will increase the attendance from other alumni of that time period. This brings them back to campus and gets them reconnected with the team. At this event it is also important to help the alumni feel connected with the current team by allowing current students to share a little about their year, their experiences, and the results. Forensics coaches/scholars have noted the critical role a banquet can have in recreating and celebrating a team's heritage (Compton, 2006; Derryberry, 2005a, 2005b). With this verbal give-and-take, both groups feel more like they are a part of the other. Because of these types of stories from alumni, the banquet for my forensics team was one of the experiences I most looked forward to at the end of the year.

Less formal occasions may also provide great opportunities for alumni and current competitors to share stories and create a cross-generational team. When alumni come to judge at a tournament, it helps them feel like they are still a part of the team and are needed. Just as important as this service they provide the team are the opportunities to chat with the current competitors, whether it be between rounds, in the hotel, or at a restaurant. In this relaxed setting, it will not take forensics students (old and new) too long before they start talking about forensics. The alumni and the current competitors will likely share stories back and forth, finding similarities in their experiences and gaining a sense of being part of the same team and tradition. Some of my greatest memories from my forensics career are those times hanging out with alumni swapping stories and sharing laughs.

Tell the Stories

Finally, it is important for the team to tell its story and history. Many teams do this with data and photos, but stories are also needed. Once they have been collected as discussed above, then one has a great resource for adding *pathos* to the team's history. In fact, these stories should constitute the bulk of the telling of the team's past. Few things can capture the experiences and recreate the past as good as stories. Photos, tournament results, and other significant events should be included throughout, but these should be used to add to the stories and not the other way around. The stories of the alumni and current competitors, if woven together well, will create a powerful journey through the past and present and bring the photos and other data new life and interest. As Redding and Hobbs (2002) explain, the stories of alumni can be a one of the most powerful ways to tell the past of a team. It is time to move beyond a simple history but toward presenting the memory (as suggested by Katriel, 1994). Speech teachers and coaches

teach the importance of stories and *pathos*, but it is also important to implement these lessons personally to communicate a team's heritage.

Through it all the focus should be on building up to the present. It should be evident for the audience to capture not only a sense of awe and excitement about the past, but, more importantly, a sense that it all worked together to create the team of today. As Kaylor (2003) argues:

> Telling the stories and presenting the success of a team's history should help communicate that the program has been valuable to the students and the school, and that all the money, energy, and time spent over the years has been a good investment (p. 12).

This telling of the team's past should be done periodically as the team celebrates milestones or anniversaries. Once packaged together it could make a great fundraiser as alumni will want a copy of their and their teammates' collective memories. One should also be given to key administrators and other supporters of the team. Additionally, as one's school celebrates an anniversary, the team can use this time of reflection to highlight their past as well (and should be able to more powerfully communicate their tradition than any other campus group). As Redding and Hobbs (2002) argue, one's team history helps justify the team's existence and purpose in the academic community in which it resides.

Conclusion

This essay has explored the concept of collective memory and how it relates to a forensics team, the problems with having holes in that institutional memory, and then offered a few suggestions on how a healthy team history can be passed down through the team's generations. A team's past, and the telling of it, is a living and breathing thing that affects not only the past, but also the present. It is what unites a team divided by different times and experiences. If we ignore it, then it will be lost, to our own detriment. Therefore we must continually work to (re)tell it and (re)live it. The time has come to dust off the trophies and let the stories begin.

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Author's Note

Making Historians of Theatre History Students: The First Three Steps

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ABSTRACT

Without the guidance of a clear hypothesis, student research projects founder. This paper outlines a process by which students undergo the essential first stages that lead to successful research projects in Theatre History. The paper outlines three stages: "Quest for Fire," in which the student identifies a subject area that interests them; "Fence Me In," in which the student defines the research area and established distinct parameters; and "The Dreaded Hypothesis," in which the student articulates a clear, unique and functional hypothesis. By implementing these initial three stages, teachers can create the conditions under which students motivate themselves to complete a research project.

Theatre history tends to be taught passively, with students reading one of the many fact-filled textbooks and listening to lectures. Theatre history courses usually require students to read dense textbooks, memorize names, dates, places and events. In most courses, students need to turn in a paper on some aspect of Theatre at the end of the semester. In my experience as a student, an academic and a teacher, the research paper is looked upon with dread, accomplished under duress, and generally done poorly.

As a professor who teaches both Acting and Theatre History, I often had students taking courses from me in both areas, and the contrasts in the classes were stark. Students who never skipped acting would routinely arrive late to history classes. I picked great plays, collated exciting materials, and threw myself enthusiastically into the lectures; the students remained unconvinced.

To combat this problem, I adapted the pedagogy of my Theatre History class to make it more like an Acting class. While there are many good books on acting, students generally do not learn to perform by reading books. Acting students improve their performance skills by memorizing lines, analyzing characters, creating movement, and shaping sound. In general, the pedagogy of acting is to have students do the thing they are trying to learn. In the same way that students learn acting by practicing performing, students could learn theatre history by trying to become historians. If students began to do history, rather than just read about what others have done, they might discover that it can be fun and interesting—and they might actually learn more.

A historian is defined not by what they know, but rather by what they do: theatre historians conduct historical scholarship on past theatrical practice. There are several good books on the research process that teach students how to use various systems to find information, including *Writing About Theatre* (Thaiss and Davis 76) and *How to Write About Theatre and Drama* (Hudson 153). Books like these tell the reader to choose a thesis, and then begin detailing the steps of creating an academic paper, including research methods, how to weigh evidence, and formal writing. While these are important skills, the books create the illusion of a linear process to research, and bypass the early critical steps of crafting an effective research question.

One problem with the pedagogy of research books is the illusion of a linear process. While historical scholarship has discrete stages, students need to be reminded that research is not a linear march down a well-trodden path, but rather a recursive process that involves a fair amount of circling back. Theatre scholars find an interesting question, formulate a reasonable hypothesis, conduct research, refine the thesis, research, draft, edit, research, refine, write and edit and write and research and edit. Eventually, scholars present their scholarship at conferences and submit their writing to journals; but while presentations and papers are finished products, scholarly research is never "done," like one might think of baking a cake. A better analogy is the painter who at some point has to put down the brush and declare that they aren't going to work on a piece any longer. While the painter could add more brush strokes, he or she at some point deems it best to leave that painting and move on.

The more challenging problem is to help students craft an effective thesis. Without the right research question, students get overwhelmed or underwhelmed, bored and frustrated. The research process becomes a chore, and the writing feels punitive. With an effective research question, on the other hand, students become self-motivated to do scholarly research. At that point, they have taken the first step to becoming theatre historians.

Engaging students in research moves them from passive to active learners, just as putting students on stage helps them to learn about acting. The key to getting students engaged in research lies in guiding them to an effective research hypothesis. First, each student needs to claim a topic area in which they are interested. Second, the student needs to define their area of research. Third, the student needs to frame the research question as a coherent hypothesis, and test its validity on both theoretical and practical levels. By going through these three initial stages, outlined in detail below, students form hypotheses that create the conditions for successful research projects. The completion of a successful research project is a key step in students learning what it means to be a historian.

Stage 1: "Quest for Fire"

When students complain about having to work on "boring research," they are not reflecting the experience of professional scholars. While scholars work on all manner of strange

and obscure topics, each individual is generally excited about their own topic. Professional scholars work on research that they find interesting; student scholars need to do the same.

Students need to find a research question that they find compelling. Many theatre students already have a general subject they are eager to research if they are already engaged in a design area or performance; others have no idea at all. To help spark an idea, students are instructed to leaf through any general theatre history text, such as McKernie and Watson's *A Cultural History of Theatre*, Wilson and Goldfarb's *Living Theatre* or Brockett's *History of Theatre*. Each student must leaf through the appropriate period in the textbook and select three different pictures that interest them. For each picture, students are required to write a few sentences about what has drawn their interest, read the section of text that the picture refers to, summarize it in 25 words, and create a bibliographic entry.

When students share the results of this homework with the class, they have to admit to some enthusiasm for a topic. This first step is critical, as spending weeks or months on a topic that is uninteresting to the student will crush all joy in the project. One student I taught struggled to find a research topic for a study-abroad trip through Europe. She could not find a research area that excited her; yet every day as I entered the classroom she was talking with classmates about all the shoes she was going to buy in Europe. She was first shocked and then delighted when I suggested that she should research shoes on the trip; she eventually created on a project to investigate the shoes in portraits of actresses. Rather than having an albatross limiting her enjoyment of her study-abroad experience, her research project added value because the topic interested her. Teachers may set up parameters, such as historical periods, geographical areas, or cultural boundaries, but each student must find their own spark of inspiration that will motivate them to learn more.

Stage 2: "Fence Me In"

Once a student has identified a research topic, he or she must begin to put boundaries on their project. Often, students want to research a question that is too broad, such as "Chinese Theatre," which may be a fine topic for a book, but is obviously too broad for a research paper. Students need to delineate what aspects of their research area they want to include, and what to exclude. In theatre history research, five commonly-used boundaries provide significant focus to a research question: period, geographical area, cultural boundary, associated literature and people.

Historic period and geographic area are the most familiar tools with which to create boundaries. Given an area of interest, students may identify a time periods they might investigate. Students should discuss the scope of period they might encompass—what is the shortest length for which they might find information, and what is the largest span they can handle? Often there is a normal period which can be used to contain research, such as the 5th Century B.C.E. Greek "Golden Age," or the English Restoration period, commonly identified as between 1660 and 1700. Similarly, geographical areas help to provide common boundaries, and

many research topics are defined by community, region, state, country or continent. The experience of the teacher can be useful in helping students to identify a period of time which will provide enough information for the research project without overwhelming the student.

Cultural boundaries—using a broad definition of "culture" to include distinctions of race, gender, sexual orientation, and language—are also familiar delimiters for research. Depending on their interests and the availability of information, a student may choose to look at Jewish characters, Black playwrights, or Tklingit performance. Many students use these distinctions to tie together their own contemporary political and social interests with historical research.

In addition to place, period and culture, there are literary limitations that can be placed on student's research. When looking at a body of dramatic literature, students choose a genre, such as tragedy or realism, which limits the scope of the project. A body of plays may be identified that all incorporate a common theme, e.g. the supernatural. Or students may choose to focus on a particular playwright or group of playwrights, e.g. the University Wits.

The final parameter students must address is that of people. Students may identify a particular individual, and choose to conduct research on that person's sphere of influence (for example, the costumer Inigo Jones worked with a number of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights). Students often lack the breadth of knowledge to identify a useful person around whom to construct their research, and so the instructor can be particularly useful in this area.

Delineating parameters is a critical early stage in topic selection. A topic too broad (such as the "Chinese Theatre" example at the beginning of this section) forces a student to do only superficial research, and results in a general encyclopedic paper. Students end up summarizing vast reaches of information, and ultimately create a condensed version of a theatre history text. Conversely, a topic too narrow can frustrate a student who discovers that source materials are inaccessible, or beyond their ability to process. The process of delineating parameters must be done in conjunction with a faculty member whose research experience can serve as a guide. "Too broad" and "too narrow" are relative terms, and most students lack the experience to make those judgment calls.

It is important to remind students, as they move through each stage of the assignment, that the process is more recursive than linear. Once the student has defined their research question by putting these parameters in place, they must check to make sure that they still have the "fire" they found in the first step. If placing parameters around the problem has led them away from their area of interest, they need to circle back and continue to adapt the topic such that it still strikes the student as interesting. The defined topic must still contain the spark that drew the student initially.

Stage 3: "The Dreaded Hypothesis"

Having found and defined an area of research which excites them, it is essential that students arm themselves with clear hypotheses as they embark on their research projects (I refer students to the Wikipedia entry on "hypothesis" for terms and definitions). I then work with

students to craft hypotheses which meet basic tests for humanities applications—all hypotheses should be falsifiable, should be stated as simply as possible, and should provide application to other cases beyond the scope of the immediate study.

At this point in the process, each student should be working with a research question which has been clearly defined, and for which the student legitimately wants to learn the answer. The first step in creating a hypothesis is to morph the research question into a hypothetical statement. To do this, the student should make their best educated guess (based on conversations with peers, teacher, and their own "think time") as to what the answer to their research question might be. For example, the question "What led medieval stage designers to represent Hell as giant toothy mouths?" might become the hypothesis "Medieval sermons provided the foundational ideas that led to the staging of Hell." The hypothesis posits the researcher's most likely answer to the research question, and gives initial guidance to the research project.

Before the student goes to the library, three quick tests will help to ensure that the hypothesis will function. First, all hypotheses should be falsifiable—it must be possible to show that the hypothesis is incorrect. Second, check for simplicity; as the principle of Occam's razor indicates that "all things being equal, the simplest solution tends to be the best one." Third, the hypothesis should provide application to multiple cases of phenomena—extending beyond a core body of dramatic literature, for example.

If the hypothesis meets these tests, then the student needs to begin their research with a simple and direct test: has the student's research question already been solved? Students begin by writing out the keywords of their research question and searching for books and journal articles on their question. If the student discovers that someone else has already conducted their exact research study, then that student needs to modify their existing question, or find a new question. While this can be a disappointment, if caught early the student will still have plenty of time to make the changes and complete the project. If their research has already been done and the hypothesis supported (or not supported), then the student can only do a report on someone else's research, rather than the work of a historian.

In traditional research paper assignments, topics are chosen by the teacher, or students are left to fend for themselves to find a workable topic. Students are expected to have a lengthy bibliography, and they are often thrilled to find a number of books on their research question. Their work is then to skim the books and provide a condensed version of their findings. The student is not expected to discover or create anything new, but simply to digest and regurgitate what others have discovered. In my experience, traditional research papers are a grind to create, and dreadfully dull to read. Students who are actively engaged in their research create interesting and lively papers, and begin to get a feel for what historians do.

Once I shifted to this staged assignment, in which significant attention was spent on the early stages of crafting an effective and original hypothesis for the research project, student responses to their papers (and my experience of reading them) also shifted. Students surprised themselves by spending hours in the library, losing track of time as they pursued their research. The room would buzz as they entered the class, talking with each other about new sources and

research strategies they had found, and discussion of the relative merits of various reference librarians. Students took pride in their projects and became self-motivated to achieve success. Of course, they still wanted to please me and get a good grade, but they also wanted to know the answers to their questions.

I was able to work with small classes in developing this system, and students certainly benefited from the close attention I was able to pay. It should be possible to adapt this process for larger classes, using peer critique and group feedback techniques. By implementing a staged assignment system from the first week of class, students begin their projects early and have time to adapt their work when they run into the inevitable snags. I find that I spend more time in class in the first weeks talking about research projects, but I spend much less time at the end of the semester meeting with teary-eyed individuals who are feeling stuck and lost.

When students followed their own interests (which were not necessarily mine), they engaged in their research with vigor, depth and commitment. With tightly focused research questions, students were able to complete original research projects in a semester. The papers were well detailed, as students defined their research narrowly rather than crafting broad reports. Students learned the pleasure of making discoveries and sharing them with their peers and mentors. When it came time for the students to present their research, each one discovered that she or he had become the expert in their topic area—with a depth of knowledge (albeit narrow) greater even than their teacher. At that point, each student got a taste of what it means to be a historian.

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TomKat!: Linking Theory and Practice in Communication Studies Courses Through the Introduction and Application of Social Exchange Theory

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ABSTRACT

This article describes an activity suitable for either high-school or university-level communication courses. Combining outside online research, small group discussion, and class interaction, this exercise uses Social Exchange Theory, applied to examples of celebrity relationships generated by students and discussed in groups, to illustrate the process by which individuals decide whether or not to initiate and sustain interpersonal relationships. Although students should be reminded that the reasons relationships do or do not survive are difficult enough to understand when we are involved in them, let alone when we view them from an outside perspective, the activity proves intriguing and involving for students and serves as a good starting point for a more in-depth discussion of their own relationship challenges and choices.

Objective

The basic objective of the "TomKat!" activity is to give both majors and non-majors in high school or college communication studies courses insight into the value and use of communication theories in everyday life. Specifically, this exercise is intended to capitalize on students' interests in relationships and popular culture to generate greater enthusiasm for studying interpersonal communication theories. More specifically still, this activity helps students to understand the unique assumptions and concepts that are part of a specific interpersonal communication theory—Social Exchange Theory.

Developed by psychologists John Thibaut and Harold Kelley, Social Exchange Theory focuses on the key concepts of social exchange—relational outcomes, satisfaction, and stability (Griffin, 2006). Basically, the theory suggests that people attempt to predict outcomes of their interactions with others before they take place in order to determine (through an internal cost-benefit analysis of the interaction in question, as well as of the other interpersonal interactions we currently have in our lives) whether or not the relationship in question is worth initiating and/or sustaining. Whereas this perspective is similar to other interpersonal communication theories in that there is a focus on the processual/staged nature of relationships, on prediction (to

some degree), and the concepts of rewards and costs, this activity helps students to observe how Social Exchange Theory offers a unique approach to analyzing relationship rewards and costs and introduces the concepts of 'ratios' in relational decision-making.

Intended Courses

This exercise is appropriate for basic/hybrid courses which discuss group and interpersonal communication as well as public speaking, but is adaptable to a wide range of contexts. To date, the activity has been successfully used in introduction to communication theory and services/social marketing courses, as well as at the basic/hybrid course. The activity works well if conducted during two consecutive 40-minute course sessions (for instance, during the second half of one 80-minute T class and the first half of an 80-minute TH class).

Introduction and Rationale

This activity admittedly plays to the secret addiction I share with many of my students—a weakness for celebrity gossip. The exercise also allows us as a group to discuss one of our other favorite shared topics—relationships, their embedded rules, and our own successes and failures in making those rules work for us. Pedagogically speaking, however, "TomKat!" was also designed as a way to begin introducing mini-case studies of communication problem-solving throughout the semester in preparation for similar problems featured on course exams. If the students complete the activity successfully, they should have begun developing the critical thinking skills needed to help them determine effective strategies for change in a difficult communication situation. For a middle-school or high-school class, the exercise can be conducted minus the theory references/discussion in order to demonstrate the useful application of communication skills to real-world situations that are of interest to students.

Preparation for the Activity (Day 1)

Explain that one of the challenges for students in learning communication theories is understanding 'why there are so many rules.' Point out that this is a way not only to improve one's speaking skills, but going a step further, to enhance one's ability to analyze other people's communication and also experience personal growth in everything from friendships to romantic relationships. Establish with students that the current and next sessions of class will give everyone a chance to gossip about famous people as well as think about their own relationships, provided they do a little gossip homework between the current session and the next.

Review the basic concepts of Social Exchange Theory with students (see Appendixes A and B; another basic explanation of the theory provided by David Straker and set within the context of audience and interpersonal persuasion can be found at the Changing Minds.org website at http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/ social_exchange.htm). Help students

connect the ideas of the theory to the need to improve their ability to present themselves in communicating with others so that they are perceived as people with whom it would be rewarding and desirable to live, work, or play.

Distribute the "TomKat!" handout (see Appendix A) and ask students to complete it before the start of the next class session. Tell students that they can choose another celebrity couple that fits the pattern if they have difficulty finding information on the couples mentioned (this handout can also be updated to reflect the celebrity breakups *du jour*).

Conducting the Activity (Day 2)

Ask students to take out their "TomKat" handouts. Do a quick assessment (by show of hands of who selected which couples) whether it would be better to assign students to groups by celebrity breakup or randomly assign students to small groups. Once the students are in groups, ask them to discuss their findings and come to conclusions as a group.

Have groups report on their findings and ask the students to discuss similarities and differences in the analyses of the celebrity relationships. Help the students apply the terms *outcomes*, *comparison level*, and *comparison level of alternatives* to their findings. After the discussion, ask each student to write down a realization the exercise provided with respect to his/her personal or professional relationships.

Debriefing Post-Activity

The instructor can ask for a few of the realizations students wrote down about their own relationships and point out the connections between learning the theory, observing the theory in action, and applying it to our own lives in order to understand our communication with others. The instructor might also choose to emphasize that this process of critical analysis is not only the foundation for going forward with a major, a degree, or a career in communication, but also a vital part of the life skills that every student has the ability to take away from a course in communication studies.

Appraisal: Limitations and Variations

The activity might be less successful if numerous other popular culture-based exercises have been introduced throughout the course (although I personally have not found students to get tired of popular culture topics). The course size also has an impact on the effectiveness and relative student involvement with the activity.

For a more advanced course in interpersonal communication or research methods, this exercise could be used to preface a deeper analysis of the functions of the various matrices introduced in the theory, or the use of the more familiar 'Prisoner's Dilemma' activity. The exercise can also be used in cross-disciplinary courses in marketing communications or

organizational development/human resources, particularly with reference to the application of Social Exchange Theory in a variety of fields and social contexts (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005; Kramer, 2005; Sierra & McQuitty, 2005).

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Appendix A

Student Handout

TomKat!...Applying Social Exchange Theory

Go online, go to your nearest stack of *People* magazines, or go to your most media-frenzied friends and dig up some background on one of the following celebrity relationships—Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, K-Fed (Fed-Ex) and Britney, Bobby Brown and Whitney Houston…you get the idea. If nothing else, you should enjoy the gossip! To apply social exchange theory, your challenge is to discover…

1) What are the perceived rewards and costs for your celebrity couple? What do each of them stand to gain/lose/risk?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2) What other options do they have for dating other people?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3) How stable is their relationship?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4) What issues arise in terms of behavior control (what might frustrate them about each other's behavior, and what do you think they would like to change in the other person)?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Will this relationship survive? If it's already been terminated, will it be revived in the future?…as a scholar of Social Exchange Theory, you make the call!

Appendix B

PowerPoint Outline for "TomKat!" Exercise

When used for a basic communication course rather than an introductory communication theory course, only the sections highlighted in bold are to be used.

Chapter 11: Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley)
Or, "So What's in it For Me?"

Key Concepts of SET

- **<u>Outcomes</u> are *high* (greater) when relationship has *many rewards/fewer* relative *costs***

- **<u>Comparison Level</u> (<u>CL</u>) – Judging relational satisfaction by comparing past relationships**

- **<u>Comparison Level of Alternatives</u> (<u>CL$_{ALT}$</u>) – Perceived chances of future relationships**

Key Concepts of SET

- **When CL or CL$_{ALT}$ are better than the 'status quo,' relationships become unstable**

- **Optimum situations:**
Outcome > CL$_{ALT}$ > CL or
Outcome> CL > CL$_{ALT}$

- **If past/possible relationships seem significantly better than current outcomes, relationship may dissolve**

Influences on Costs/Benefits

- <u>Given</u> matrix (how your *environment* guides your relationship rewards/costs)

- <u>Effective</u> matrix (the ways *you* can make *behavioral changes* to affect your relationship rewards/costs)

- <u>Dispositional</u> matrix (how you *believe rewards should work* in relationships)

Problems With Social Exchange Theory

- Hard to test (individuals may define rewards/costs very differently)

- Assumes very rational human behavior…people do not necessarily run relationships like businesses!

- The theory may not pay enough attention to group influence on relationship decisions

Adapted from West, R., & Turner, L.H. (2004). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.

Not Your Average Speech of Self-Introduction:
The "Talking Résumé" Alternative

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ABSTRACT

The "talking résumé" activity is designed as a creative and useful alternative to the standard speech of self-introduction exercise in the university public speaking classroom. Using Visual Communicator software, this assignment guides students through the process of preparing, orally delivering, and critiquing résumés for themselves and their classmates. This brief article is geared toward public speaking instructors looking for innovative ways to begin the semester and provides suggestions for how to assign, conduct, and evaluate the "talking résumé" activity.

Introduction

The first assignment given to students in the average college-level public speaking class is the speech of self-introduction. To assist instructors in assigning this first speech, the majority of introductory public speaking textbooks suggest a standard set of first-speech-of-the-semester activities such as: introducing a classmate (Andrews, Andrews, & Williams, 2002), using a personal object to introduce yourself (Lucas, 2007), conducting a self-awareness inventory (Osborn & Osborn, 2000) and informing the audience of a current issue (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Although these kinds of assignments are often a fun and simple way to start off the semester, I would like to propose a more challenging, useful and technologically advanced activity for the semester's first speech: the "talking résumé" activity. Using *Visual Communicator* software (or the program of your choice), this assignment guides students through the process of preparing, orally delivering, and critiquing résumés for themselves and their classmates.

This brief article is geared toward public speaking instructors looking for innovative ways to begin the semester and provides suggestions for how to assign, conduct, and evaluate the "talking résumé" activity. This assignment not only hones students' public speaking skills, but also assists them in designing a résumé and critiquing the "talking résumés" of their classmates.

Application

I typically assign this first speech around the second or third week of the semester. Before doing so, I am in contact with an IT specialist on campus with whom I coordinate the day, time and place for filming the "talking résumés." It is helpful to have someone film the speeches (in the campus film studio, if you have one) while you grade, if possible, but it is certainly an assignment an instructor can conduct on his/her own.

If your college/university has purchased *Visual Communicator 3* (information on this software can be found at www.seriousmagic.com) this is a great program for filming the "talking résumés". This program provides the background design and graphics for students' names and information as well as a teleprompter, video creation capabilities, and templates that make the "talking résumés" look very professional. If your department is not able to purchase this program, you will need a laptop and webcam or camcorder to film these on your own and view and evaluate the speeches after they are delivered. The activity can certainly be conducted without the software, but using *Visual Communicator* makes the overall experience of putting together the "talking résumés" activity easier and more efficient.

Once the date, time and place is coordinated and I have done a sample run-through a week before speech day, I write up an assignment sheet so that the students will know where to go, what to prepare for, and how they will be graded.

For example, at the top of the assignment sheet you might choose to write:

> *This "talking résumé" speech will be delivered extemporaneously from brief typewritten notes that occupy no more than one page. Students may not read their speeches and should use as much eye contact as possible. Before delivering the speech, each speaker will prepare a résumé that s/he will then deliver orally in front of a camera in a designated studio space on campus.*

> *The speaker will need to provide interesting information about him/herself - including basic facts such as home town, academic major, personal interests, hobbies, career aspirations, etc. However, the speech should not be a simple recitation of biographical data. Students should be creative in their self-presentation and avoid a boring list of standard information.*

I ask students to re-read the section in their textbook for guidance in preparing and delivering an introductory speech. I then remind them that their "talking résumé" speech should include the following information:

> *1. Your name and the kind of position you are looking for*
> *2. Your educational experience (including your major)*
> *3. Your employment history (any applicable experience you have)*
> *4. Your personal interests (think of what makes you unique)*
> *5. Your contact information (conclude by stating how you can be reached)*

Of course, at the bottom of the assignment sheet I write (and remind them orally in class) that the speech will be timed and should take 1-2 minutes. I ask them to practice often so that

they maintain eye contact with the camera, but I let them know they can keep one piece of paper with notes (or their résumé itself) in front of them while they are speaking.

I also like to reiterate to students the benefits of keeping a professional, up-to-date résumé throughout their college careers. Even if the students are freshman (and quite a ways off from graduating) they may choose to gear their résumé away from a full time professional position and toward a summer job or internship. Despite the content of the résumé, it is extremely important for students to be able to speak about their work/ academic experiences (and not just write about them) in an interview setting – and this assignment gives them a great chance to practice doing so.

Evaluation

How you evaluate this assignment depends on the point system you are using, but I gave students the option of earning a total of 25 points (out of a possible 200 for the semester). I created an evaluation sheet that broke down the points as follows:
 1. Staying within the 1-2 minute time limit (5 points)
 2. Sustaining eye contact with the camera (5 points)
 3. Evidence of advance preparation leading to a creative presentation (5 points)
 4. Including the 5 résumé talking points listed in "Application" section (10 points)
I discuss the various aspects of the "talking résumé" that they will be graded on in class and show them a copy of the evaluation sheet I will use to determine their score.

Conclusion

The class after the "talking résumés" are delivered is devoted to a class-wide critique. Before I show each speech (if you have 25 students, it takes about 50 minutes) on screen in the classroom, I ask my student to write each of their classmates' names on a separate note card. As they are viewing the "talking résumés", they are assigned to write one thing the speaker did well and one thing the speaker needs to work on for their next speech on the note card. When I return my evaluation sheet and grade to my students, I include their classmates' note cards so that they have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their speech.

I have conducted this activity over the course of one academic year and found that my students responded very favorably to it. Given the career-mindedness of most college students, it is hard for them to deny the relevance and applicability of this assignment to their lives outside of the classroom.

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Towards Curtailing Speaker Anxiety
Via Impromptu and Oral Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines a series of short oral assignments designed to help alleviate some of the anxiety that many students face when giving public presentations. The assignments consist of: giving an impromptu speech, giving a spoken performance of a song or poem of their choice, and a short reading from a children's book. Each of these assignments are seen as building blocks, methods for reducing nervousness, methods for building confidence, while concurrently developing peer support as students are working towards a more formal presentation later in the semester. There should be a class debriefing/discussion after all three assignments have been completed. Here, students share their personal experiences and provide ideas to each other for successfully presenting their final speeches.

Objective

To reduce public speaking anxiety by using the impromptu speech and two oral interpretation-type presentations as building blocks leading to the more formal informative/ persuasive speeches.

Course

These assignments can be used for any hybrid Basic Course, a public speaking course, or any course where students are required to give a formal presentation.

Introduction

Public speaking is considered one of the most feared activities that humans engage in. According to the Book of Lists (1983), Americans report fearing public speaking more than any other activity, including death. But throughout their professional and private lives, people will find themselves in situations where they will be required to address a group, be it large or small. Many colleges require students to take a public speaking-type course before graduation. At least

75 percent of students in these courses report experiencing anxiety before they have even started the course (McCroskey, 1977) with the highest level of anxiety taking place for students just after the public speaking assignment is announced in class (Behnke & Sawyer, 1999). Subsequent research by McCroskey (2001) conducted with over 50,000 college students and adults found that the majority of Americans fear speaking in public. Another study of social phobias in general found that the majority of respondents feared public speaking the most, putting it in its own phobia class compared to a list of other social phobias (Kessler, Stein, & Berglund, 1998).

The impromptu speech and oral interpretation assignments are designed as metaphorical building blocks to have students confront and lessen their speaking fears as they prepare for their final larger presentation(s), which will, at the instructor's preference, be either an informative or persuasive speech, or both. Public speaking instructors are encouraged to require their more difficult and anxiety-producing assignments for later in the semester, providing opportunities for students to develop confidence and strengthen their skills (Witt & Behnke, 2006). Therefore, these assignments will come towards the second half of the semester, leading towards the more formal and longer informative and/or persuasive speeches. These assignments will incorporate a variety of important aspects of public speaking, like anxiety, thinking on one's feet, providing information via the spoken word, and speaking as performance. As the students take part in these assignments, they will strengthen their skills as well as develop an awareness of areas in need of improvement as they prepare for their final speeches which are given extemporaneously.

Directions

These assignments have primarily been used in the hybrid Basic Course. The semester is typically designed so the impromptu speech comes before the performances, and at the end of the semester, students will present their informative and/or persuasive speeches. Dates for each of these presentations are clearly listed in the syllabus and some discussion has taken place about the assignments in previous classes.

For the impromptu speech, students are given no prior knowledge about the topics at all, with the exception that they are all social issues and current events that they should all have some common knowledge about. On the day of the impromptu speech, students must choose from a variety of topics laid out on a table in front of the room. Upon their turn, they are instructed to go to the front of the room, pick a topic, take a look at it and spend a moment to collect their thoughts, introduce themselves, their topic, and begin speaking. They are timed by the instructor for two minutes and she provides a nonverbal cue to signal when they have completed their two minutes. If during the presentation, the student gets stuck, the instructor should feel free to give prompts to assist the student. They are evaluated on the following issues: could the speaker be heard, did the student make eye contact with the entire audience, were few detractors used, was sufficient information given, and did the speaker exhibit appropriate enthusiasm.

The students are required to do two oral interpretation presentations. The first one is referred to as a Performance. Students are required to choose the lyrics to a song or poem to recite before the class. The piece can be of any length and of any style. It can also be an original work or their creation. The basic requirements are that the item must have a personal meaning to the student and that it be something that is socially acceptable to the audience (devoid of explicit language). Students are required to recite the piece as they feel the author wished it to be performed. If the student chooses a song to perform, he/she is not to sing it. If there is a section of the song that lends itself to a bit of singing or melody, that is acceptable because it relates to the concept of this assignment as a performance and interpretation of the message and meaning. Upon conclusion of the piece, students are required to discuss their rationale for choosing the piece and what it meant to them. This provides them with a chance to add a bit of extemporaneous speaking to their presentation. Students are evaluated on the following issues: could the speaker be heard, did the student make eye contact with the entire audience, was the selection appropriate to the audience, were few detractors used, and did the speaker exhibit appropriate enthusiasm.

The next performance asks the students to choose a children's book and perform it as if they were addressing an age-appropriate audience for the book. Picture books are the best to use for this assignment. Since the subject matter is "simple," students are required to use their voice as it is suitable for the subject matter. They should shift voice tone, pacing, use varied voices to represent the characters, and any other creative measures they deem fit. "Performing" this reading relaxes the students, encourages positive feedback from the audience, adds some levity to the presentation days, and reduces the anxiety that many students feel from being in front of their classmates and instructor. In this final aspect of the assignment, students are evaluated in the same manner as they were for the song/poem performance.

Debriefing

After all three assignments have been completed, students engage in a class discussion with the instructor where they address the following questions:

1. *Which performance did you feel was more difficult, the impromptu speech, the song/poem presentation, or the children's book reading? Why?*
2. *What were the challenges you faced with each one?*
3. *Which one did you like the best?*
4. *How did you prepare for each one?*
5. *How do you think this will help you in preparing for the final speech?*

The debriefing aspect of the assignment plays a number of significant roles for the students. Leading into these presentations, the students tend to share many of their anxiety concerns about speaking in front of the group, along with their concerns about whether or not they will have any personal knowledge about the impromptu subjects. Once these presentations have been completed, the debriefing time allows for them all to share in a collective sigh of

relief, relax, and share their critical insights as to the significance and value of the assignment. Along with these insights, many students share their methods for success; how they were able to get through it, and advice for what others can do as they prepare for the final presentation(s) which takes place about 2 weeks later. The instructor also shares her insights about the quality of the work presented and provides general feedback for the class and suggestions. They receive their written feedback with specific comments during the next class period or two. This discussion period allows the students to recognize their strengths and areas they would like to work on, along with the fact that they are not alone in their experiences. Everyone is encouraged to share their thoughts and the instructor calls on students who have not shared.

The rationale for the order of the presentations is manifold. One could say that beginning with the impromptu speech gives the students a baptism by fire. In other words, they are, for the first time in the semester since class introductions, on their feet, in front of the room, bringing all of the elements of public speaking together in a two-minute time period. They are organizing a topic into some kind of sensible and logical order, they are providing information, although cursory, to the audience, they have done an audience analysis to make sure their presentation is appropriate, they are staying within a prescribed timeframe, and they are thinking quickly. For many students, it is the most difficult of the three.

Having the song/poem come second provides a more relaxing counter to the intense impromptu speech. Students consciously choose their own piece to present, they have some time to prepare, and are active participants in what they would like to share with the audience. For this part of the assignment, any emotions tied to this piece should be reflected in their presentation. The audience should have a clear idea as to why this piece is important to the person and more of that takes place during the debriefing discussion. Also, this gives the student the chance to allow their voices and bodies to be conduits of the messages they are sharing. This will prepare them for the emotional and passionate aspects that should be illustrated in their final presentations. For some students, the emotional pull of this assignment makes this the most difficult of the three.

Having the children's book reading as the final assignment gives the class a chance to relax even more and have some fun with being in front of the room, underscoring the elements of telling a story, which in many ways, they do with their speeches. There is an innocence and simplicity of the messages put forth in the children's stories, and in many ways, the students enjoy being presenter and audience member, since storytelling is fundamentally interactive and so is speechmaking. The students almost naturally change their voices to accompany the characters in the story and adjust their pacing to emphasize and underscore certain points. Some of the loudest applause comes from the presentation of these stories. Given the time constraints, students are not required to read the entire book and the instructor decides after a few minutes or at a particular time in the story to have the student stop.

Although these assignments are graded separately, they are interrelated and given in subsequent classes. The three presentations should be able to be completed in three, no more than four 50 minute class periods of 18-20 students. The debriefing period should be for about

10-20 minutes and can take place at the end of the final day or at the beginning of the following class period.

Appraisal

These assignments, done in successive class periods, allow for several positive things to happen for the presenters. They have an opportunity to stand in front of the class alone for literally the first time in the semester and think quickly and speak clearly without any prior significant preparation. Here, they have been able to face their fear of speaking, given that they have jumped in feet first. With the performances, they experience the ability of using their voices as a tool and an instrument. They see the effectiveness in changing tone of voice, pacing, pauses, use of body and eyes, and other nonverbal codes in communicating emotion and meaning. Having them choose a piece that has personal meaning to them also illustrates the importance of relating and connecting to one's subject matter, how it evokes feelings and how those feelings can be expressed to others in the spoken word.

Another important aspect of this assignment is that it creates a support system and a sense of community in the class that clearly did not exist prior to the presentations. Students bond with each other over the perceived "ambiguity" of the impromptu assignment. In other words, many of them express a fear that they will not know the subject matter they will be asked to speak about and they tend to share these concerns with each other and come together quickly over this aspect of the assignment. They want to do well but they clearly want their classmates to also do well. They can often be heard giving encouraging words to each other and being outwardly supportive of those who struggle. They bond even further and come to understand each other a bit more deeply after listening to the song/poem presentations. In many cases, students have used this part of the assignment to self disclose personal things that have not come up in class discussions. Oftentimes, the choices students make provide for an emotional connection which buoys them as they prepare for the informative and/or persuasive speeches which come towards the end of the semester, about two to three weeks later. With the children's story, students are amused by the simplicity of the language and the fact that they, as adults, are reciting it to other adults. But, again, the informality of it encourages another level of anxiety reduction as they work up to the more formal presentations.

Students have said that although they were nervous prior to giving each presentation, they were not as nervous and anxious giving their final speeches, and they would have been had we not done these previous assignments. Part of the lessening of their anxiety comes from having these as "practice" or "warm up" assignments and the fact that there was a variety to the assignments. They have stated that in the moment of actually giving the initial presentations, they did feel nervous but as they reflected upon them, the assignments helped them to feel better prepared, develop a bond with their classmates, and give more effective speeches with minimized anxiety.

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BOOK REVIEW

Generation Me

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As many instructors search for academic writing to address the increasing problem of academic classroom incivility, many will overlook the book, *Generation Me*, by Jean Twenge. The author, "a widely published associate professor of psychology at San Diego State University" (book cover) feels compelled to specifically address academic incivility through issues of cheating and questioning of authority in only a few areas of the book. However, the analytical teacher will soon recognize how the common tendencies of this generation are directly related to civility issues in the classroom. It is evident in the author's often sarcastic tone that she is a member of Generation Me (commonly called GenMe). GenMe covers anyone from 18-35 years of age; so many younger instructors may also find themselves in this generation description. The book may be an enjoyable journey of self-discovery or childhood reminiscence, however even more so it gives excellent insight into the operations of this generation.

This author (with the help of graduate/research assistants) gathered "results of twelve studies on generational differences" (mostly between Baby Boomers and GenMe) "based on data from 1.3 million young Americans" (p. 3). One might question why it is important to understand generational differences. Is it not more important to know how a person was raised; his or her background, economic status, geographical location, race or gender and the influence these factors have on the individual's personality? Several of the studies quoted found "that *when* you were born has more influence on your personality than the family who raised you" (p. 3). This may be true; however, the author should also briefly recognize or address that some do not fall into the generational definitions. One chapter labels previous generations as 'prude' regarding sexuality, while GenMe is the 'crude' generation. Some may consider this an inequitable generalization.

The book examines several tendencies of GenMe.   The first prevalent tendency identified is the overall lack of need for social approval and the decline of social rules. It is more important to "rebel against restrictive social mores" and not "follow the rules" and instead "do whatever makes you happy" (p. 21). The very nature of this attitude screams a lack of concern for others and general order. To follow the rules, is a direct rejection of the individual's needs and wants, which is against the tendencies of GenMe. Academic civility, at its core, is the exact opposite, needing one to care for the needs of others with a focus on the community. It soon becomes clear why academia has issues with civility more now than ever.

One might wonder when reading some of this, "How is this unique to GenMe? Didn't the Baby Boomers also rebel against authority, along with social rules and roles?" The book included juxtaposed lists comparing Baby Boomers/GenMe. However, the discernible difference comes in that Baby Boomers seemed to want a change in community along with the self. I believe it is best explained in "a careful study of news published or aired between 1980 and 1999 [which] found a large increase in self-reference word (I, me, mine, and myself) and a marked decrease in collective words (humanity, country, or crowd)" (p. 51).

The author states that this lack of care for others can "explain the decline in manners and politeness" (p. 26). There is a constant desire to question authority. Most instructors have experienced a student who asked for a grade change, cheated on a test, or plagiarized a paper. This all stems from GenMe's sense of entitlement. "If you acknowledge that you were lazy about studying-or just plain stupid-your self-esteem will suffer. If you can blame the teacher's unfair test, however, you can slide through the experience still feeling good about yourself." (p. 147).

Twenge chastises the academic community for the focus on self throughout the 80s and 90s by giving constant messages such as "You are special", in addition to the bombardment of self-esteem propaganda. Popular media picked up on this trend by poking fun through the Saturday Night Live character, Stuart Smalley ("I'm good enough. I'm smart enough…"). Even the United States Army participates in this individual focus with its "Army of One" campaign, yet the Army to some level needs conformity in order to efficiently operate in war. In this effort to appease the self above all else, Twenge declares, "we have become a Lake Wobegon nation: all of our children are above average" (p. 63). Academic inflation continues to rise. In addition, this expectation that one will and should succeed above all the rest (the American Idol 'disease') has lead many young people to be disheartened and even depressed. She suggests in the last chapter that academic professionals need to provide more counseling by directing students to the careers and schools best for the individual specifically, instead of directing them to the 'best' schools and careers (whether or not those careers include college at all).

Issues of incivility also come from a lack of appropriate professional distance. GenMe coined the acronym "TMI-too much information."   In all actuality, TMI doesn't exist with GenMe; instead every level of self-disclosure is a possibility. One colleague of mine contends that this problem is ubiquitous as he shared an e-mail from a student explaining why she couldn't come to class, because she "puked twice this morning and went #3 (diarrhea) like three times…"

along with many other gruesome details the instructor did not need to know. The author makes some reference to the possibility that we, as managers of the classroom, have brought some of this on ourselves by presenting ourselves as only facilitators of the classroom process (rather than experts in our field) and asking students to call us by our first names (often in the hope of seeming more accessible to the student).

On a more positive note, *Generation Me* also discusses the changes in attitude: an "Equality Revolution" (p. 180). She references to the "Civil Rights movement and the general shift toward racial equality has had a striking effect on the self-esteem of black minority youth… who grew up hearing that 'Black is Beautiful'" (p. 185). Twenge exemplifies this change in attitude in the following quote.

It's generally the Boomers who say, "Wow, isn't it great that Condi Rice is the

first black woman to be secretary of state?" "Sure," GenMe thinks, "it's great,

but what did you expect? She's smart and capable, so where's the news story?" (p. 183)

The author also reveals changes in personality as women have made strides toward more "stereotypical masculine" (p. 197) traits, such as assertiveness and a greater trend toward individualism.   Men have also taken on more stereotypically feminine characteristics of nurturance, home-making, and care for physical appearance and fashion. She explores many other changes in attitude of tolerance regarding race, religion, orientation, and gender. Some would argue this has created a more positive environment for discussing diversity issues in the classroom.

After reading *Generation Me*, the instructor should have an overall understanding of GenMe. The last chapter of the book discusses possible ways of handling this generation. She suggests giving more counseling to students for a career path, create support for working parents, and even gives some suggestions for public policy (such as making "child care expenses tax-deductible") (p. 232). The author does not hide her political leanings, so the reader may need to sift through this perceptual filter to get to the core of the generational research and suggestions. However, despite the often cynical stance of the book (cynicism is also common among GenMe, as the popularity of the sitcom "Seinfeld" will attest) the author gives hope at the end with ways for the generation to cope. GenMe's disenchanted members (as shown in a great increase in cases of depression compared to other generations) can feel best about themselves by helping others. Today's "young people are more willing to commit themselves to good causes for long periods" (p. 241). Twenge ends with suggesting community involvement, which correlates to our current trend in academia: service learning. Perhaps we are on the right track after all.

BOOK REVIEW

Mediamaking

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The book has an attitude. It has no pictures. It does not come out in a new edition every semester. These three characteristics alone set it apart from many college-level mass media texts.

The lack of pictures, as well as Grossberg's refusal to print a new edition every six months, goes along with the attitude of *Mediamaking*, one of the best media and culture books available for advanced media coursework. The attitude is based on a quasi-Marxist approach to the media, which critiques capitalist institutional trademarks of mass media, therefore implicitly critiquing the glossy and facile approach of most media overview textbooks today.

It is a standout in many other ways as well, as it combines media history and processes with a "not-too-watered-down" approach to media theory. It can serve as a springboard to more complex theories of popular culture and media impact. In fact, the ability of this text to allow teachers and students to move in various directions is what makes it so powerful. For example, the book refers to more radical theories of popular culture without fully ascribing to them, such as the theories of John Fiske and others who believe that popular culture is invented by the people, that it directly contradicts mass culture, thus separating commercial meaning from meaning created by viewers.

Grossberg's view of popular culture is less defined than the view just described. To him (and his co-authors), cultural forms arise from the modes of production ("making") apparent in national media, and are acted on by the various people, groups, and organizations both internal and external to the media. This more general view allows the instructor to teach various critical theories of the media in a way that is consistent with the text, while adding deeper understanding.

Another good feature of this text is its focus on economic principles as tied to cultural production. Grossberg's discussion of Marx demystifies terms like surplus value, exchange

value and superstructure, and at the same time ties them to industry terms such as vertical and horizontal integration, turnstile sales and economies of scale. This blend of practical and theoretical knowledge is useful to students interested in media careers, but also provides an analytical framework for them to understand the reasons behind media processes.

Mediamaking's coverage of critical/interpretive theories is concise and easy to understand. Students learn to apply semiotic understandings of meaning to cinematic texts as easily as they learn to apply effects theory to examples of media violence. Discreet descriptions of complex terms allow students to share points of view easily in classroom discussions and exercises. The book's repeated explanation of the cultural model, which teaches ways to account for cultural context in meaning creation, provides an easy way to talk about both sender and receiver perspectives.

Finally, an additional author to the second edition of the text has added a much-needed emphasis on international media. J. MacGregor Wise brings his own international background to the new chapter on media globalization. Students respond well to the chapter's discussion of the co-existence and contradictions inherent in the competing concepts of "McWorld" vs. *jihad.* Since classrooms themselves are increasingly diverse and international, the text has been improved by providing the vocabulary which allows today's students the means to do advanced investigation into global issues.

Mediamaking is a useful and provocative text, well suited to upper-level college media courses with a cultural bent. It supports a liberal arts approach to the study of media and gives students a balanced, yet pointed set of arguments about the commercial nature of the media. In today's increasingly complex mediated universe, *Mediamaking* brings students to a necessary critical understanding of mass communication.