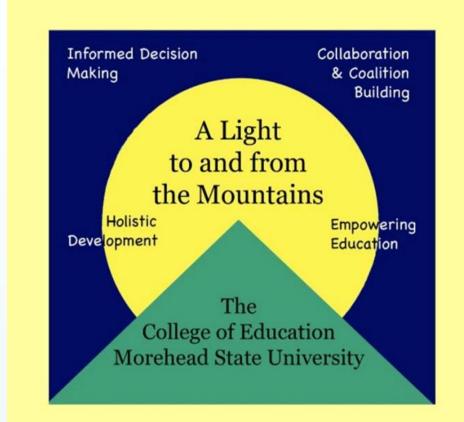
Examining and Identifying Components of Propaganda and Indoctrination



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Abstract

Indoctrination is the process where opinionated biases, methodologies, attitudes, and/or ideals are disseminated to others; it involves a disregard for evidence and reason. Further, it involves unsubstantiated conviction in one's beliefs and intolerance for opposing ideas, viewpoints, thoughts, etc. Propaganda is the purposeful promotion of certain beliefs and/or points of view and can be a political tool used rhetorically in speeches by those in positions of power, in order to sway public opinion about a certain issue. Critical thinking, which is a fundamental skill and a primary purpose of education, is needed to discern between indoctrination, propaganda, and knowledge. As such, and given the contemporary highly partisan political climate, we examined communications from current President Donald Trump and current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Methods

- We defined and identified components of propaganda.
- We then identified the types of these components as they occurred in education-centered speeches, statements, and interviews from Trump and DeVos.
- Next, we examined the frequency of these components using a checklist that was generated using the previously mentioned components of propaganda, which included: name-calling, glittering generalities, plain folks, testimonial, bandwagon, card stacking and transfer.
- Below are definitions of each component of propaganda looked for on the checklist¹:

Name Calling- giving a negative label to whatever the propagandist wants the audience to be viewed negatively

Glittering Generalities- using vague or abstract words to describe a person, place, or event in order to win approval

Plain Folks- presenting one's self as relatable in order to garner support Testimonial- having someone credible to give a speech or statement in favor of the propagandist to help promote their cause

Bandwagon- using the mantra that, "everyone's doing it, so should you", appealing to people knowing that other people are doing it

Transfer- when the propagandist uses a device or symbol with positive qualities to relate to whatever the propagandist is promoting (e.g. the American flag)

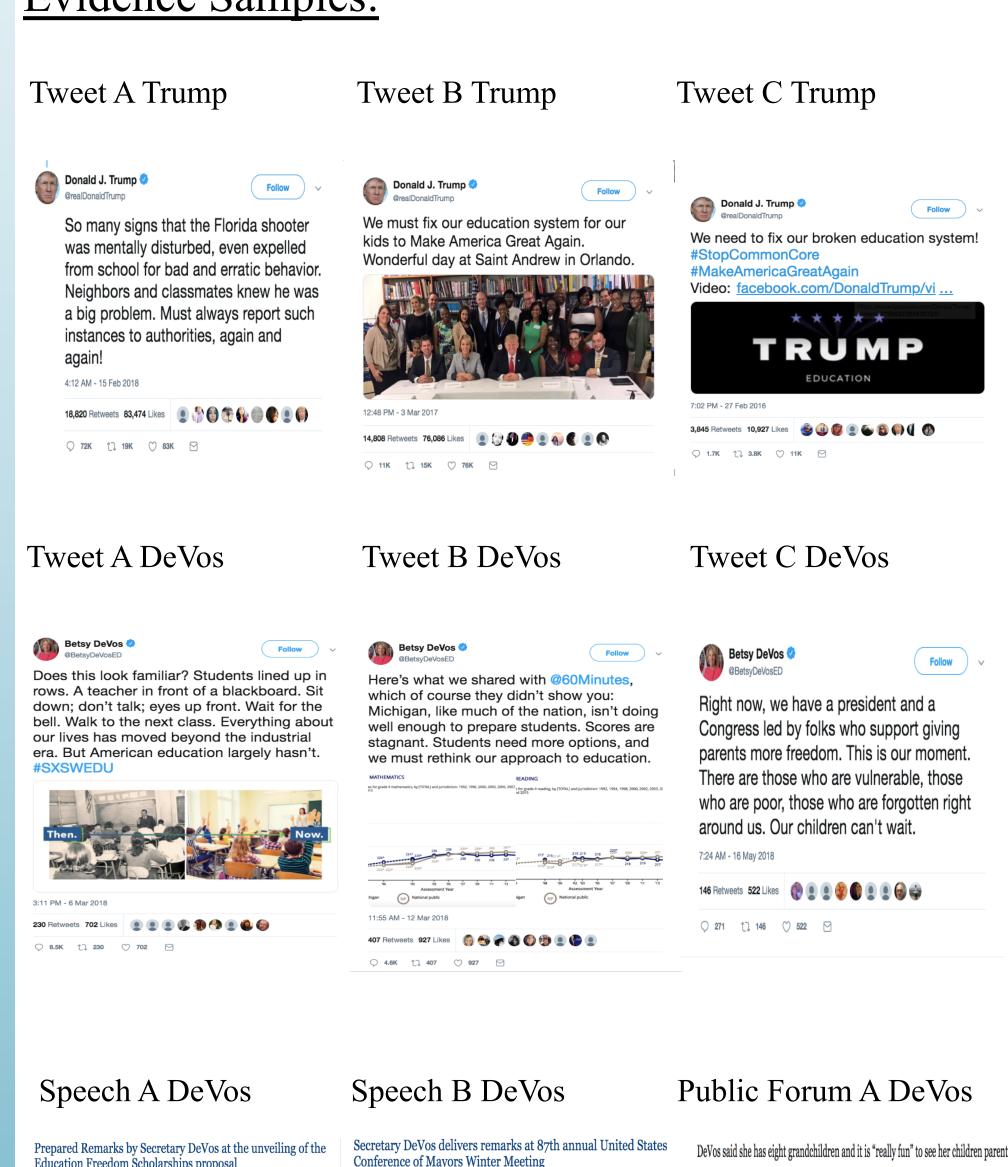
Card-stacking- selecting facts and statements that support what the propagandist is wanting to get to the audience, also involves omitting facts and/or distorting the truth

¹ definitions formed from *Understanding propaganda from a general* semantics perspective.

Methods (cont.)

 A sample of three tweets, two speeches, and one interview were examined from all, and the frequency of the seven main propaganda techniques were examined.

Evidence Samples:



Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov hisha Merriweather's touch my heart every time I hear them, and they keep me motivated every day. I know each of you has an A great education shouldn't be determined by luck or by address or by family income. And education shouldn't be an old-school, Every student is unique and every one learns differently. The freedom to do that is why I took this job. And it's why we're here this ids should be free to learn where and how it works for them. ation, can provide school choice to every disadvantaged child in America."

to participate in the program. Or they can elect not to participate. That's what freedom is all about.

Speech A Trump

Thank you. Thank you. (Applause.

Speech B Trump

eachers learn from and partner with their community's builders and doers.

now that they need different solutions for their different children. They know we need to rethink education.

We live in some of the most exciting and opportunity-filled times ever. Over the past 100 years, we've seen significant advances

echnology, medicine, and travel – just to name a few. But through all these changes in our homes, in our workplaces, and in o

Yet, right now, there are over seven million unfilled jobs in the United States. Last year when I was with some of you, there were six

o many students are unprepared for successful careers today, and beyond. And too many are treated more like commoditie

s mayors, you have an important opportunity to build relationships between employers and educators. Today giant silos e

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all right here at the White House. A very, very special place. We all agree. You is Rick Scott? Right over here, Governor Scott and Senator Marco Rubio and, as were saying before just how special it was, and it's special. Every time I walk into you know, Secretary DeVos — she was approved a couple of weeks ago. And she's to have a fantastic relationship with the Secretary, and that's going to be a lot of resource: our children. Every President since Harry Truman has honored the

the help of the school choice programs. This month, we commemorate the thousands of peaceful activists for justice who joined Martin Luther King on the march from Selma to Montgomery. And that day, Reverend King hoped that Corps, joining us in her honor. Thank you very much, Doctor. Appreciate it. speak, education is the civil rights issue of our time. And it's why I've asked Congress to support a school-choice bill. And we've come a long way. I think we School in Spokane, Washington, where she has been teaching English and math many ways when it comes to education. And, again, Betsy is going to lead that —

- and respect of students and colleagues throughout her school district, THE PRESIDENT: You're going to do a fantastic job. Denisha Merriweather is with us today and you were so wonderful the other night.

Public Forum A Trump

own, noting that as a grandmother she has to "sit back and not comment too much on

things." However, she said, she is "really encouraged" that her grandchildren are being

"encouraged to do the kinds of things I did as a child and to explore some unsafe things."

Returning to the issue of why young people are not as entrepreneurial as in the past, she

said, "Another factor is just a lack of practicing persistence, and bouncing back from thing

when they don't quite turn out the way you intended them to or hoped they would."

She told Daly that entrepreneurship is not introduced to students in school early enough

"There is very little discussion of what, you know, a business is and what do businesses do,"

students. And, by loving their students, they want to fight for their students more

But for any strategy to succeed, there must be accountability to all levels of decisively to warning signs, stopping tragedy before it strikes. And that's obviously our number-one goal: stopping it before it ever happens.

I look forward to discussion today. And we're going to have a big discussion. And incredible things to say. Incredible. And the incredible ideas — we couldn't have had the ideas that they have as parents and as loved ones. Nothing is more important than protecting our nation's childrer

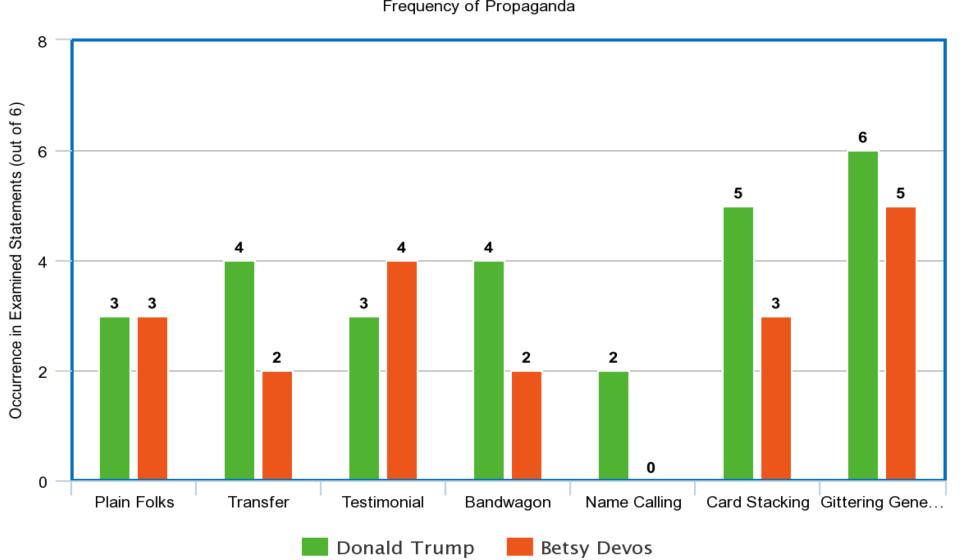
So, with that, I'd like to just ask Betsy to say a few words. And, Matt, you're going

Results

Below is a sample analyzed statement, the one below is Tweet C DeVos:

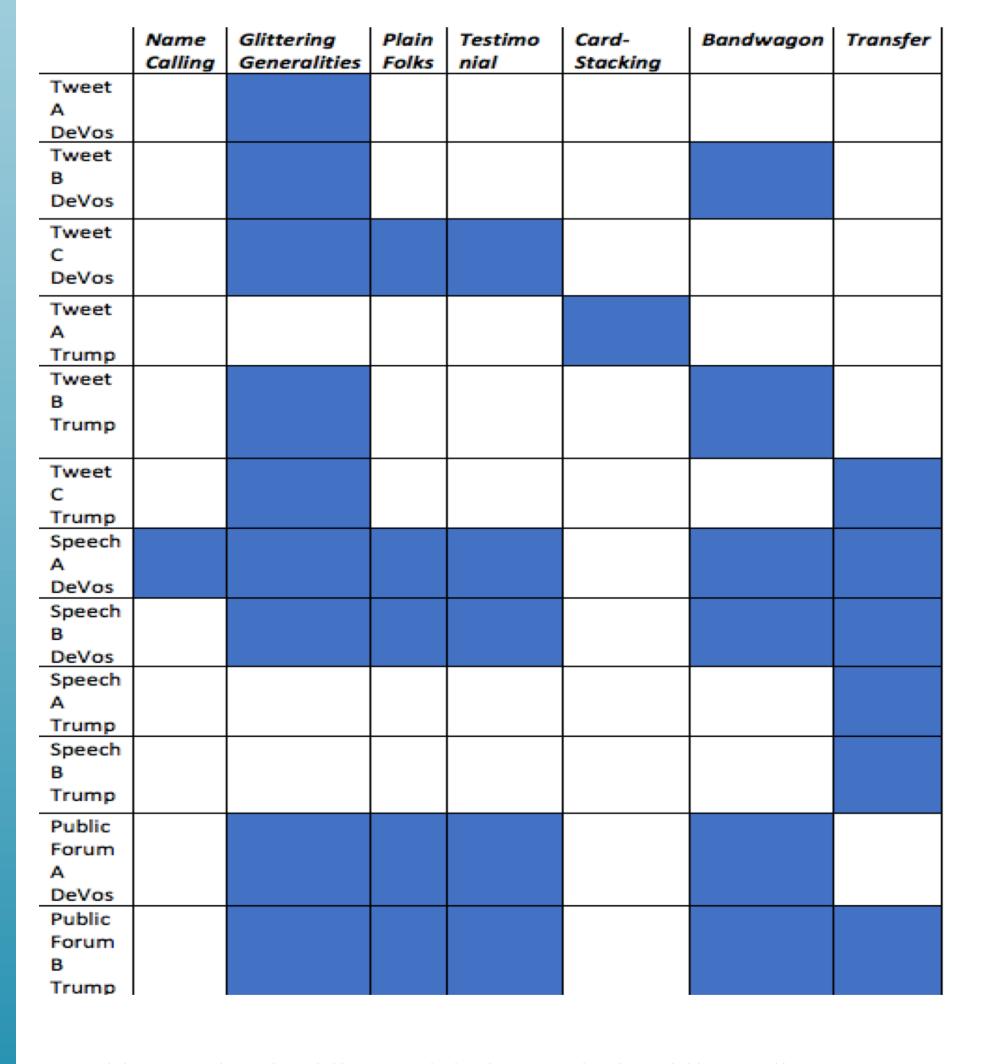


- Red- card-stacking
- Yellow- glittering generalities
- Green- plain folks



- Name-Calling was least used in both Trump and DeVos
- Glittering Generalities were most used in both Trump and DeVos
- In Trump's analyzed statements, tweets, and speeches, propaganda was more frequent

Checklist A



• This was the checklist used during analysis while reading statements and comparing to definitions given by Fleming¹

Conclusion & Discussion

Results suggested that <u>all</u> elements of propaganda were evident in the selected statements, with glittering generalities being the most used and name calling being used the least amount. The seven main techniques were searched for in the public statements, some appeared in the same analyzed document for Trump and DeVos, respectively, while other documents only possessed one technique of propaganda. However, none of the samples examined lacked one or more forms/types of propaganda.

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When these types of opinions are repeated, this then poses the question as to how the population internalizes and arrogates received information. Further, it begs the question as to where else such information is communicated, and in what ways. The question can then be raised about how the public can be aware of such propaganda and be able to discern between what is indoctrination, propaganda, and knowledge.

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