Basic Communication Course Annual

Volume 12 Article 12

2000

Basic Communication Course Annual Vol. 12

BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE ANNUAL 12

2000

EDITOR
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published by
american press
Boston, Massachusetts

ISBN 0-89641-340-3

Printed in the United States of America.

Editorial Board

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The Effects of Praise on Student Motivation in the Basic Communication Course[1]

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Researchers interested in communication education have recognized the importance of various student characteristics relating to student success in the basic communication course. Several researchers have explored characteristics and behaviors such as communication apprehension (i.e., Beatty, Forst, & Stewart, 1986; Daly, Vangelisti & Weber, 1995) and student study habits (i.e., Carrell and Menzel, 1997) to determine how those characteristics relate to cognitive and behavioral outcomes for students. A conclusion from these research studies is that student characteristics are important predictors of student success in the basic communication course. This study explores how one student characteristic, motivation to learn, is influenced by messages of praise from the teacher.

Student motivation was conceptualized by Brophy (1987) as both a state and trait characteristic of students. "The *trait* of motivation to learn is an enduring disposition to strive for content knowledge and skill

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented during the Central States Communication Association Convention, April 1998, Chicago, IL, and was awarded the Gustav Friedrich Award for top student paper in the Communication Education Division. The author wishes to thank William J. Seiler and the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions.

mastery in learning situations. The *state* of motivation to learn exists when student engagement in a particular activity is guided by the intention of acquiring the knowledge or mastering the skill that the activity is designed to teach" (Brophy, 1987, p. 40). Although research suggested motivation is an important determinant of student success in the basic course (Beatty et al., 1986; Carrell & Menzel, 1997), there is little guidance for teachers who want to motivate their students to learn.

Most educational theorists seem to agree that student motivation results, in part, from communication occurring in the classroom. For instance, Woolfolk (1995) explained that motivation is influenced by the "warmth" and "enthusiasm" displayed by the teacher during interactions with students (p. 456). Similarly, Pintrich and Schunk (1996) argued that motivation is primarily the result of teacher-student interactions. Although there are undoubtedly other influences on student motivation, there is strong agreement that teachers can and do impact student motivation. Accordingly, motivation is perhaps one of the most relevant topics for instructional communication research.

In fact, the topic of student motivation has received a great deal of attention by communication researchers. One area of research explored the relationship between *relational* components of messages and student motivation. For example, several researchers explored the effects of verbal and nonverbal immediacy on students' levels of motivation (see Gorham & Christophel, 1990a; Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996). Although this research has consistently found that higher levels of immediacy are associated with higher levels of motivation, it has failed to account for the relationship between message *content* and student motivation (for a discussion of relational versus content aspects of messages, see Norton, 1977; Nussbaum & Scott, 1980).

Other researchers devoted specific attention to message *content* as a predictor of student motivation. An example of this type of research involves the use of behavior alteration techniques (BATs) by teachers. This research concluded that student motivation is negatively associated with coercive behavior alteration techniques and positively associated with pro-social behavioral alteration techniques (see Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey & Richmond, 1986; Richmond, 1990). Though this line of research can inform basic course instructors about how message content relates to student motivation, BATs were initially conceived as reactive strategies used by teachers to reduce student misbehavior rather than proactive strategies to encourage positive behavior (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1985; Kearney, Plax, Smith, and Sorensen, 1984). For that reason, research on BATs offers little practical advice on proactive communication techniques for increasing student motivation.[2]

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[2] Several of the BATs (i.e., deferred reward from behavior, immediate reward for behavior, teacher feedback, etc.) identified by Kearney, Plax, Richmond and McCroskey (1984) are similar in nature to Brophy's (1981a, 1981b) characterization of praise. However, these BATs have been researched as pro-social strategies for getting students to cease off-task behavior. This form of communication is qualitatively distinct from praise which attempts to reinforce positive student behaviors. Moreover, in later articles Kearney and Plax (1997) argued that the BATs are conceptually distinct from "teacher approval/disapproval rates, teacher use of praise/criticism, and other select managerial teacher behaviors designed to desist negative student behaviors or reinforce positive ones" (p. 96).

This study extends previous research by exploring the effects of praise on students' levels of motivation in a simulated classroom setting. Brophy (1981a) explained that praise "expresses positive teacher affect (surprise, delight, excitement) and/or places the student's behavior in context by giving information about its value or its implications about the student's status" (p. 6). From this perspective, praise includes and moves beyond immediacy since it influences both content and relational components of a message. Praise is also a proactive strategy that is qualitatively distinct from the compliance-gaining, cease-and-desist strategies characterized by BAT research. This study was undertaken as a pilot attempt to document the effects of praise and to identify future avenues for this potentially important area of research.

Exploring praise within the context of the basic course has undeniable pedagogical utility. First, the basic course is uniquely susceptible to both positive and negative motivational outcomes because of the performance nature of the class. When giving speeches or other oral performance activities, students may perceive a great deal of risk because their behaviors are open to public scrutiny by peers and performance evaluations by the instructor. Because of the perceived risk involved in such performances, feedback provided by the teacher in these situations can potentially have substantial motivational implications. Put simply, effective feedback can serve to increase student motivation whereas ineffective feedback can lead to performance orientations among students (Elliott & Dweck, 1988) which could result in higher levels of anxiety (Beatty, Forst, & Stewart, 1986).

A second reason why praise should be explored within the context of the basic course lies in the possibility that teachers may be more likely to use ineffective praise in this setting. Because most basic course instructors are aware of the risk perceived by students when giving performances, they often attempt to temper critical feedback with some element of praise. If this positive feedback appears insincere, contrived, or overly general (i.e., "This was a really good speech, but...") the result may actually be lower student motivation (Black, 1992; Brophy, 1981a). In summary, the performance nature of the basic course raises unique motivational concerns for both teachers and students. Accordingly, research exploring the relationship between forms of teacher feedback and student motivation has a great deal of practical utility for basic course instructors and directors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Surprisingly little research exists on praise (Pressley & McCormick, 1985). The majority of literature provided prescriptive techniques for using praise (i.e., Black, 1992; Brophy, 1981b), however, those techniques have not been supported by research. Other articles offered theoretical insight into how praise should affect student motivation, metacognition, and self efficacy (i.e., Brophy, 1981a; Emmer, 1987/1988), however, those theoretical predictions have not been investigated. Pressley and McCormick (1985) summarized the need for investigation by writing "[praise] is potentially a great program of research that would be informative about an inexpensive but too rarely exploited approach to classroom motivation" (p. 99).

Conventional wisdom suggests that praise is the expression of favorable judgment. However, as Emmer

(1987/1988) observed, "within this broad concept lies ranges of expression from highly affective to simply approving, from general and unspecific to focused and explicit, and from personal to behavioral" (p. 32). Like any other message strategy, praise may be used in an effective or ineffective manner. Black (1992) warned that "most teachers aren't trained or coached to praise students effectively. And these researchers agree that ineffective and indiscriminate use of praise can actually hurt students more than it helps them" (p. 2).

Because ineffective praise could be detrimental to students' motivation, "tips" for effective praise have been advanced by several authors who concluded, for example, that praise must be administered in response to specific student behaviors (Black, 1992; Brophy, 1981a; Emmer, 1987/1988). That is, praise should not be general in nature (i.e., "You are doing well in the class"), but should be tied to specific behaviors exhibited by students (i.e., "The way in which you studied for the test had a positive impact on your performance"). Overly general praise, while providing external motivation, may not increase the intrinsic motivation of students.

In addition to making praise criterion referenced, Black (1992), and Brophy (1981a) also argued that praise must be spontaneous. Praise administered in a predictable fashion may be perceived as insincere and students may attribute the praise to "the teacher's propensity to comment, not to any special accomplishment" (Black, 1992, p. 25). For praise to be effective, it must not only be tied to a specific student behavior, but it also must seem spontaneous and genuine.

Brophy (1981a) reasoned that for praise to motivate it must attribute success to behavior and imply future success from continuing the behavior. By applying praise in this manner, students may begin to make positive attributions of their own behavior and exhibit higher levels of motivation toward using specific behaviors in the future. If success is not attributed to behavior, the praise may not function as a reinforcer. In summary, Black (1992) and Brophy (1981a) suggest that effective praise should contain the following elements:

- *Sincerity* – the praise should show that the teacher is genuinely pleased with the student performance;
- *Spontaneity* – praise should surprise the student and not be viewed as an automatic or expected external reward from the teacher;
- *Criterion Based* – praise should be offered only after the student exhibits a high level of positive behavior; and
- *Attribute success to behavior* – for praise to work, it must identify the student behavior being praised and imply that future successes will be achieved if the behavior is continued.

From the perspective of reinforcement theory, praise is a potentially powerful motivational tool for teachers. Reinforcement theory assumes that “teachers should behave in ways which will foster the development of feelings of mastery and of intrinsic motivation to learn in children who have not already developed them, and to reinforce them in those who have” (Brophy, 1972, p. 243). Reinforcement theory is based on the premise that individuals learn behavior by reacting to the positive or negative responses from others (see Skinner, 1969). As students exhibit positive behaviors, teachers react with “reinforcers” which motivate students to continue displaying such behaviors. As noted by Brophy (1981a), praise is one example of a reinforcement technique for positive behaviors:

> Praise is widely recommended as a reinforcement method for use by teachers .... Praise is free, and it is usually seen as desirable not only because it can be an effective reinforcer but because it is thought to provide encouragement to students, to help build self esteem, to help build a close teacher-student relationship, and so forth. (p. 7)

In essence, praise is a tool used by teachers to increase students' intrinsic motivation to enact positive behaviors. When student behaviors are praised by the teacher, those behaviors are associated with positive outcomes and the motivation to exhibit those behaviors increases. Thus, theory suggests that praise should be an antecedent to student motivation.

Based on this theoretical understanding of praise and reinforcement, it is reasonable to predict a positive relationship between teachers' use of praise and student motivation. Moreover, motivation and affect towards a class or instructor are strongly related (Richmond, 1990). For that reason it is also reasonable to predict that teachers' use of praise would be positively related to student affect. Hypothetical teacher-student interactions were constructed to experimentally test these tentative predictions. The following research questions guided data analysis:

RQ1: Is a teacher's use of praise predictive of student motivation?
RQ2: Is a teacher's use of praise predictive of student affect?
RQ3: How do students perceive a teacher's use of praise or neutral feedback in the classroom?

METHOD

Given the nature of the research questions and the exploratory nature of this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Statistical analyses were used to determine the effect of praise on student affect and motivation levels while student explanations of their feelings were used to describe the effects of praise.

Participants

Sixty-four students enrolled in the basic communication course at a large Midwestern university took part in the study. There were slightly more males (n=35; 55%) than females (n=26; 41%) and the majority of the participants were Sophomores (n=29; 45%) or Juniors (n=25; 39%) with only a handful being Seniors (n=9; 14%) and Freshmen (n=1; 2%). The average age of the participants was 20.87 years old (sd=2.83) and they had been in school for an average of 5 semesters (sd=1.9). The average GPA for participants was 3.06 (sd=.43).

Materials and Procedures

All participants were enrolled in one of two back-to-back sections of the basic course taught by the same instructor. Participants were assigned to either the experimental or control condition and were instructed that they would listen to a short interaction between a teacher and student concerning the student's performance on an exam. The standard instructions indicated that the participants would answer a few questions about the interaction at the conclusion of the tape and that they would answer those questions from the perspective of the student in the simulation. That is, participants were asked to assume the role of the student in the tape and indicate how they would feel based upon the interaction with the teacher.[3]

An audio tape was used to control for possible nonverbal immediacy effects (i.e., attractiveness, eye contact, etc.) during the simulation. The simulated interaction involved a male student interacting with a female teacher about his performance on a midterm examination. In both conditions the student was told that he received a "B" on the exam, a single letter grade improvement from the first exam. In the experimental condition, the teacher praised the student on the methods he used to study for the midterm. For example, in response to the student's description of how he studied for the essay exam the students in the "praise" condition hear the teacher respond by stating: "I really want to commend you on your studying. By practicing the essay questions you were able to organize your thoughts more clearly and you were also able to include more information in your answers .... I hope that you realize that the success you had on this test was because of your actions in preparing for it .... If you work like

[3] Kearney, Plax, Smith, & Sorensen (1988) observed that the use of simulations and role-playing is common in both communication and education research. Validity of this technique is dependent on the believability of the scenario and the accuracy with which variables are manipulated. Qualitative data were analyzed for any indications that the scenarios were not believable and none were found. Recommendations by Brophy (1981b) and Black (1992) were used to ensure valid manipulation of the praise variable. Even with these considerations in mind, the artificial nature of these scenarios limit the generalizability of the results.

this on the final you can probably improve your grade even more.

In the control condition, students in a separate room heard a similar interaction involving the same teacher and student, however, the teacher provided neutral feedback about student's efforts by simply acknowledging the student's grade and asking if there were additional questions. Based upon the simulations created, the praise interaction lasted three minutes and 27 seconds and the neutral interaction lasted two minutes and 10 seconds.[4]

Although it would have been preferable to conduct the study in more naturalistic conditions (i.e., to study the effects of praise in an actual rather than simulated class), two reasons prompted the use of simulated classroom scenarios. First, the exploratory nature of the study warranted a more cautious approach. By using simulations, it was easier to manage nonverbal behaviors, environmental conditions, and other potential confounding variables. If the experimentally manipulated scenarios result in significant effects, the logical next step would be to conduct a more naturalistic study. Second, there are ethical considerations involved which outweighed the potential benefits of a more naturalistic design. It would clearly be problematic to require random application of praise or neutral feedback to students in a natural classroom setting. By using simulations in the experimental procedures, praise and

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[4] As noted by one of the anonymous reviewers, the time differential between the praise and neutral groups could confound results of this study. This possibility was considered when the scenarios were constructed, however, Brophy's (1981b) description of effective praise suggested that it should take longer than ineffective praise or neutral feedback. Thus, valid manipulation of this variable requires some time differential.

neutral conditions could be manipulated without harming student's motivation levels in their actual class.

Two measures were used to assess the dependent variables. Affective learning was measured using a semantic differential scale developed by Scott and Wheeless (1975) and later revised by Anderson (1979). The affective learning scale assesses students' affect toward the course subject matter, the instructor, taking additional courses with the same instructor and taking additional classes in the subject matter. The scale was adapted to include the "taking additional courses from the same instructor" dimension for the purposes of this study. A four factor solution was used where higher scores indicated higher affect towards the class as a whole. In addition to the four factors, a total affect score may be calculated by adding the scores for each of the factors. Reliability of the instrument is high with alpha estimates ranging from .86 to .98 (Gorham, 1988; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Richmond, 1990). Alpha reliability estimates for the present study were strong (total affect, .97; instructor, .92; behaviors, .93; enroll in course, .64; enroll with instructor, .97). Construct validity of the Affective Learning Scale was also reported to be strong (Kearney, Plax, & Wendt-Wasco, 1985).

Student motivation was operationalized using the Student Motivation Scale (SMS) originally developed by Beatty, Behnke and Froelich (1980). The original version of the SMS was a one-item semantic differential scale which was later expanded to include twelve items (Christophel, 1990a). Responses to each of the twelve items were added to get an overall student motivation score where higher numbers represented higher levels of motivation. Reliability estimates for the twelve item scale ranged from .95 to .96 (Christophel, 1990a) and considerable construct validity existed for the instrument (Christophel, 1990a; Richmond 1990). The alpha reliability estimate for the present study was .97.

Also included in the survey packet were open ended questions designed to elicit qualitative responses from the participants. The first question asked students to describe their feelings about the interaction from the standpoint of the student. The second question asked participants to comment on teacher behaviors that were either highly effective or ineffective, based upon what they heard in the interaction. To avoid "coaching" students in terms of answers to the open ended questions, the word "praise" was not used at any time when explaining the procedures or in the written directions accompanying the materials. The entire experimental procedure, including listening to the audio-tape and completing the survey packet, lasted approximately 15 minutes for both the experimental and control groups.

Data Analysis

All quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for Windows. Multivariate analysis of variance procedures and independent sample t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant mean differences in affect or motivation between the experimental and control groups. Alpha was set at .05 for all statistical tests. Additionally, qualitative comments were analyzed for recurring themes. The researcher along with a colleague not involved in the study analyzed participant responses for general themes that could classify statements. After generating independent lists of themes, the two coders met to discuss the themes and combine the two lists. This procedure resulted in 3 themes characterizing the experimental group responses and 3 themes characterizing the control group responses. Armed with this list of themes, the coders then placed individual responses into the categories. After each person categorized participant responses, the coders compared placement of each response and discussed differences. In the case of differences, the coders discussed how the response should be coded until mutual agreement was achieved.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results

Before conducting t-tests on the dependent variables, a MANOVA was computed to determine if significant multivariate differences existed. Means for each of the dependent variables and means for each of the factors of the affect scale are reported in Table 1.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations
for Dependent Variables

Variable	*M*	sd
Total Affect	85.22	22.32
Course Content	21.36	4.92
Instructor	21.86	5.66
Enroll in Similar Course	20.30	6.25
Enroll with Instructor	21.70	7.18
Motivation	81.27	20.50

The overall F for the multivariate test was significant, F=33.92 (2, 60); $p \leq .001$. Subsequent t-tests indicated that mean group differences were significant for each of the dependent measures and sub-measures. Means for each group and *t* statistics are reported in Table 2. As shown in the table, the group hearing the simulated praise reported higher levels of hypothetical affect and motivation than the group hearing simulated neutral feedback.

Table 2
Tests of Mean Differences in Motivation and Affect

	Praise Group		Neutral Group			
Variable	M	sd	M	sd	t	
Total Affect	98.85	12.02	69.76	12.28	6.61	*
Course Content	24.29	3.10	18.03	4.48	6.56	*
Instructor	25.2	2.82	18.10	5.75	6.12	*
Enroll in Similar Course	23.79	4.07	16.33	5.93	5.78	*
Enroll with Instructor	25.58	3.91	17.30	7.52	5.42	*
Motivation	94.90	10.64	65.20	17.47	7.99	*

*$p. \leq .001$

Multiple regression procedures were also calculated to determine how much variance was accounted for in the dependent variables by the manipulation of praise. In addition to including praise in the regression equation, age, semester in school, and grade point average of the participants were also included as possible criterion variables. Stepwise procedures were used to generate a descriptive model. Age, semester in school, and GPA did not account for significant amounts of variance in any of the dependent variables and were not entered into the equations. Overall, the use of praise significantly accounted for 43% of the variance in students' affect toward the class and 53% of the variance in student motivation levels. Praise also accounted for significant variance in each of the sub-scales on the affective learning instrument (subject matter, 35%; instructor, 41%; enrolling in course, 35%; enroll with instructor, 41%).

Qualitative Analysis

Are there differences in students' perceptions of interactions with teachers who use praise compared to interactions where teachers do not use praise? This question guided the qualitative analysis in this study. The qualitative data were used to accomplish two objectives. First, the qualitative data helped determine whether the students perceived the experimental manipulation. That is, did students perceive the experiential interaction (with praise) differently than the control interaction (neutral)? If differences in perceptions exist, there is reason to believe that the experiential manipulation had validity. Second, the qualitative data may be used to help explain why differences in motivation and affect existed between the experimental and control groups.

Experimental Group Themes. In the experimental group, participants articulated two themes relating to the quality of the teacher's feedback and one theme relating to perceptions of their own behaviors based upon the teacher's feedback. The first two themes, caring and effective feedback, characterize the participants' perceptions that the teacher provided quality feedback to the student about his or her behavior. For instance, participants who commented on the *caring* aspect of the teacher's feedback noted that "The teacher does well in showing that she cares about the student and illustrates that she is very willing to help the student." Another participant wrote, "She was very positive about his improvements and seemed to care a lot about his grade. If any teachers were really this helpful and positive it would make life easier." All comments indicated that they not only perceived the teacher to be immediate, but that they also felt good about what the teacher said, implying that the content aspect of the message was contributing to their perceptions.

A second theme emerging from the experimental group related to the overall *effectiveness* of the teacher's feedback. Many participants commented that they liked the specificity of the feedback. For example, one person wrote "I think that the praise she gave was highly effective. She pointed out the differences in the scores to show that studying really hard does help you improve. She also took the time to discuss the test with the student. She could have just let him look over the test and leave it at that." Another participant commented that the feedback of the teacher was effective because of the effect that it had on the student: "I thought that the teacher's praising of the student was highly effective in building confidence and self-esteem." These comments were particularly revealing given that participants were unaware that the specific focus of the experiment was on teacher praise.

Participants hearing the simulated praise also indicated that they appreciated the *encouraging* nature of the feedback and the fact that she recognized the behaviors of the student. For instance, one participant noted, “I would feel more sure of myself because the teacher recognized the work that I put into studying for the test. I would probably be motivated to go study for the final.” Another participant wrote, “The teacher complimented the student on how hard he studied and the grade he got. I would feel very proud of myself.” Thus, students hearing simulated praise indicated they would be proud of their performance, in part, because of the feedback of the teacher.

Themes Emerging from the Control Group. Participants hearing simulated neutral feedback articulated three primary themes. The first two themes, wants praise and lack of feedback, related to the lack of content in the teacher’s feedback. The third theme, businesslike interaction, simply attempted to characterize the tone of the interaction.

Many participants indicated that they *wanted praise* for their effort. For instance, one person commented that he or she wanted validation of effort: “I think he [student] is concerned with whether or not his effort was really worth it. He would like for the instructor to see that he is truly interested in doing as good of a job as possible.” Another student viewed the teacher’s role as that of a “motivator” and commented on the lack of praise: “I would tell her [the teacher] to try and make a difference in students’ lives. I would be more involved and care. More supporting and encouraging.”

Related to the lack of praise theme was a theme describing a general *lack of feedback* from the teacher. Some of these comments were very broad: “She should have told him good job on improvements and encouraged him to talk to her with any more questions." Other comments were more specific, yet still observed that the interaction was lacking: "The teacher did not respond supportively to comments the student was making. I would say something about a previous test and she would not be a (friend-?) or encourager. She did not respond at all, but did just enough to be an OK teacher." These comments, although very similar to those in the first theme, suggested that students perceived the interaction to be generally lacking in terms of detail.

The majority of participant responses tried to characterize the tone of the interaction. Many individuals used a *business metaphor* to describe the interaction. For example, one participant said that the interaction "was strictly a business conversation except for 'How are you?'" Another participant wrote, "The teacher didn't want to get very personal, it was like she was there to help because it was her job and she had to. She wasn't very helpful, you would think she was teaching a huge lecture hall and she wouldn't have a chance to get to know the students." Several participants indicated that the effect of such a businesslike interaction were negative. For instance, one person wrote, "I would feel unimportant, unrewarded, and unmotivated to do better."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this pilot study was to test the effects of praise on students' levels of state motivation. By using tenets of reinforcement theory, it was predicted that students hearing simulated praise would report significantly higher levels of hypothetical state motivation and affect than students hearing neutral feedback. Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that there were meaningful effects. The group hearing praise reported significantly higher levels of hypothetical motivation and affect than the group hearing neutral feedback. Additionally, there were significant differences in students' hypothetical affect toward the course content, instructor, likelihood of enrolling in a similar course and likelihood of enrolling with the same instructor. Subsequent regression analyses indicated that the use of praise accounted for large portions of variance in motivation levels, affect levels, and subscales of affect. Furthermore, analysis of the qualitative data suggests that students not only reacted differently because of the type of feedback provided by the instructor, but they also made internal attributions for success as a result of hearing praise.

Importantly, the goal of this pilot study was not to determine definitive answers to the question of whether or not praise is an effective reinforcement tool for teachers. Rather, the purpose of this study was to gather initial evidence concerning the effects of praise and then to highlight potential venues of research. Before proceeding with a discussion of research possibilities, one important point needs to be considered. Results of this study, which are consistent with both Brophy (1981a, 1981b) and Black's (1992) discussions of the concept, suggest that if praise is used with careful consideration (i.e., it is sincere, it provides contextual explanations of what the student did) there are many potential benefits for students. Although the results of this single study cannot draw definitive conclusions, teachers are encouraged to consider ways for improving their own praising behaviors with students because of the positive motivational outcomes which may occur.

Although the results must be interpreted with caution, the findings of this study suggest current theories of student motivation should be expanded to include teacher communication characteristics beyond low-inference immediacy behaviors. Based on the data, it is possible to conclude that the content of a teacher's message can and does effect students' levels of hypothetical motivation and affect. Though extensive research on instructor immediacy behaviors and other relational aspects of messages should not be minimized in importance, the content of a message — what the teacher says – must also be taken into consideration when examining motivation in the classroom. Our current theoretical understanding of classroom motivation must move beyond isolated studies of instructor immediacy and reactive behavioral alteration techniques to include specific pro-active motivational strategies like praise. Put simply, communication-based theories of classroom motivation must be refined and/or expanded to address variables like praise before these theories can substantially inform pedagogical practice.

In addition to expanding theoretical understanding of relevant classroom motivation variables, a number of potential directions for additional research on praise in the basic course should be explored. At minimum, this study suggests that student reports of hypothetical motivation and affect are greater when receiving simulated praise rather than simulated neutral feedback. The simulations used in this study could not take into account other variables influencing student motivation in an actual classroom setting. Because the scenarios were limited in terms of generalizability, future research efforts are necessary before the tentative conclusions of this study can be applied to situations other than simulated interactions.

One direction for future research is to address limitation in the scenarios used for this study. For instance, the praise simulation was somewhat longer than the neutral condition in terms of time. This difference in time is a potential confounding variable and should be controlled in future studies, even though Brophy (1981a) suggests that effective praise should take longer than ineffective praise or neutral feedback. Additionally, the teacher in these simulations was female. Research on teacher immediacy suggests that female instructors are perceived as more immediate than males, which could influence student reports of motivation and affect (Christophel, 1990b). Thus, future research should explore whether or not student reactions to praise differ depending on whether or not the instructor or student is male or female. Moreover, instructional communication researchers should heed Nussbaum's (1992) call for naturalistic observation of teacher behaviors. Specifically, future research should systematically observe real teachers in actual classroom situations to determine how praise is used and with what effect.

Future research efforts should also extend results of this study by exploring the cumulative effect of praise over time. An assumption of reinforcement theory is that repeated use of reinforcement is what causes motivation to increased (Brophy 1981b; Skinner, 1969). Future research needs to determine how praise works over the course of an entire term, year, or even a student's career. Such longitudinal research designs may also uncover how motivation either develops or wains.

Brophy (1981a) and Black (1992) also recognized that some types of praise are better than other types. They reason that insincere, general, and anticipated praise could be detrimental to motivation, however, these dimensions were not explored. Future research should determine what the effects of "bad praise" actually are and whether students perceive differences between "good praise" and "bad praise." In this study the neutral feedback did not elicit overwhelmingly negative responses, which leads one to believe that students may like any feedback regardless of whether it follows the suggestions articulated by Brophy (1981a). Additionally, by looking at the effect of different types of praise, research could begin to uncover individual differences in perceptions of praise. For example, does praise function differently when comparing students motivated through intrinsic rather than extrinsic cues?

Finally, in the specific context of the basic course several questions remain concerning the effects of teacher praise. Do students react differently to praise related to performances (i.e., speaking assignments) rather than written assignments? Is teacher praise effective at orienting students toward a mastery orientation rather than a performance orientation? Can praising low-inference performance behaviors play a role in reducing student apprehension toward performance activities? How often do basic course teachers enact specific praising behaviors? How is praise related to other teacher communication behaviors like immediacy, clarity and behavior alteration techniques? Does praise significantly impact student performance on examinations or presentations? These are only a sample of the potential questions which remain unanswered.

In summary, this pilot study established a foothold in terms of understanding the effects of praise on student motivation. In a carefully designed simulation, students hearing praise reported higher motivation and affect levels than students hearing neutral feedback. Armed with these initial findings, additional research efforts can explore the effects of praise in a more systematic fashion and our current theoretical understanding of classroom motivation can be expanded. If the results of this study are replicated in future research, justification should quickly emerge for training basic course teachers how to implement effective praising behaviors in their performance evaluations of students.

Motivation is undoubtedly one of the key variables in any learning situation. In the basic communication course there are ample opportunities for teachers to motivate or de-motivate students and, for that reason, basic course instructors and directors should continue to explore tools like praise as strategies that can be used to facilitate higher motivation levels. By undertaking such research, we may discover important pedagogical tools for fostering student communication expertise and commitment toward life-long learning.

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The Relationship between a Required Self-Disclosure Speech and Public Speaking Anxiety: Considering Gender Equity[1]

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A good deal of research exists about the role of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Bochner, 1983; Chelune, 1976; Derlega & Chaikin, 1976; Dolgin, Meyer & Schwartz, 1991; Gitter & Black, 1976; Jourard & Jaffe, 1970; Komarovski, 1974; McCroskey, 1977; Pearce & Sharp, 1973; Reis, Senchak & Solomon, 1985; Rosenfeld, 1979; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991a; Shaffer, Pegalis & Cornell, 1991b; Snell, Miller & Belk, 1988; Taylor & Hinds, 1985; Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977; Williams, 1985; Winstead, Derlega & Wong, 1984). This existing research generated some commonly accepted conclusions. For example, appropriate self-disclosure can foster attraction, comfort, trust, and intimacy. Conversely, inappropriate self-disclosure can lead to negative evaluations, loss of self-esteem, loss of control over a situation, and projection of a negative self-image.

Self-disclosure has received relatively little attention, however, with regard to its function in public speaking situations. A few studies suggest that appro-

[1] Parts of this article are based on a similar study conducted for Ms. Golish's Master's thesis project under the direction of Deanna Sellnow.

priate self-disclosure can warm the communication climate, thereby reducing speech anxiety levels expressed by students (Petronio, Martin and Littlefield, 1984; Littlefield and Sellnow, 1987; Mulac and Sherman, 1975; Rosenfeld, 1979; Derlega and Chaikin, 1977). If this research is correct, then it seems sensible to require a self-disclosure speech early in the term as a means by which to warm the communication climate and reduce perceived speech anxiety.

A potential gender bias may be inherent, however, in requiring such a speech. To clarify, interpersonal communication studies document fairly consistently that significant gender differences exist in terms of self-disclosure. Generally, females tend to be socialized in ways that make them higher disclosers than males (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Gitter & Black, 1976; Pearce & Sharp, 1973; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991a; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991b; Williams, 1985; Winstead, Derlega, & Wong, 1984). Not only do females tend to self-disclose more often than males, they also seem to feel more comfortable doing so (Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991a; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991b). Conversely, males may be reluctant to disclose in public speaking contexts because doing so is a sign of weakness (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977). Further, "men who identify with the masculine role may fear being rejected or ridiculed if they violate ... appropriate sex-typed behavior" (p. 377). If educators are to maximize the potential climate-warming and anxiety-reducing benefits of a self-disclosure speech, then, care must be taken to overcome the potential gender bias inherent in such an assignment.

Some guidelines for overcoming potential gender bias can, again, be drawn from interpersonal research. Aires and Johnson (1983), for example, discovered that males and females tend to self-disclose about different topics. More specifically, "women share more about themselves, their feelings, homes, and close relationships; men share more about sports and amusements; competition and aggression; and things they have seen, read, or heard" (p. 1185). Males also tended to self-disclose more about activity-oriented topics, whereas females tend to discuss topics focused more on relational issues (Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991). Public speaking research also suggested that students should pick a topic they like and are interested in to diminish speech anxiety (Littlefield & Sellnow, 1984). Hence, taking these gendered topic selection differences into account may also reduce the potential for gender bias in such an assignment.

This study sought to answer four general research questions.

- First, we examined whether or not requiring self-disclosure in a formal public speech influences anxiety levels experienced by student speakers. In other words, we sought to expand on the assumptions made by Petronio, Martin, & Littlefield (1984), Littlefield and Sellnow (1987), Rosenfeld (1979), and Derlega and Chaikin (1977) that appropriate self-disclosure among students may warm the communication climate and, consequently, reduce public speaking anxiety. If anxiety levels expressed by speakers are higher when they are required to self-disclose than the levels they report about public speaking in general, then the disadvantages may outweigh any potential climate-warming advantages inherent in such an assignment. For purposes of this study, self-disclosure was described as the degree to which one person reveals personally significant, and probably unknown, information about him or herself to another. Examples and stories that were considered self-disclosure, then, were limited only to those that revealed personally significant information that was generally unknown to each speaker's classmates.

- Second, we attempted to discover whether there is an inherent gender bias in a required self-disclosure speech assignment. Since interpersonal research suggested that females are socialized to be higher disclosers than males and appear to be more comfortable doing so, then a required self-disclosure speech may be inherently biased against males. In other words, if males report higher anxiety about self-disclosing in a public speech than their female peers, then this assignment may unfairly discriminate against males.

- Third, to gain more depth of understanding, we also examined student perceptions about particular characteristics of communication anxiety. In other words, we asked students to define what they believe to be the primary characteristics of "comfort" and "anxiety" as they relate to a public speaking situation. We examined students' answers qualitatively to identify emergent themes about the characteristics of public speaking anxiety. Comfort level was operationally defined for this study as the degree to which a student feels he or she is in a state of well-being. Anxiety, on the other hand, was described as the level of uneasiness, nervousness, apprehension, or worry the student feels about speaking in front of an audience. Although comfort level and speech anxiety may not be diametrically opposed, the terms were defined to students in this way for purposes of this study. Doing so provided a means by which to examine student perceptions of anxiety within both a positively and a negatively charged valence. Providing these definitions so also allowed increased reliability of our findings, as well as helped us generate greater depth and breadth of insight regarding students' perceptions about the characteristics of comfort level and contributors to anxiety in a public speaking situation.

Current research assumes that the elements of communication anxiety embedded in clinical definitions are synonymous to student perceptions. To date, no research has been conducted to discover whether or not student perceptions about the characteristics of communication anxiety are congruent with clinical definitions. If students describe elements of comfort and anxiety in ways that are incongruent with characteristics described in existing literature, then it may be necessary to engage in new research and develop new teaching strategies designed to help students cope effectively with public speaking anxiety, as well.

- Fourth, we conducted a qualitative analysis of gender differences regarding topic selection and thematic content for this speech assignment. Doing so allowed us to expand on previous research (Aires and Johnson, 1983; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991, Littlefield & Sellnow, 1984) to speculate as to whether or not any potential gender bias in a required self-disclosure speech is reduced when students are provided freedom in terms of topic selection and thematic content.

Results of this study may extend current research about the characteristics of public speaking anxiety and the role self-disclosure may play in reducing it. Results may also help educators determine new pedagogical approaches for reducing speech anxiety in public speaking situations. If a required self-disclosure speech is not inherently gender biased, and if the required self-disclosure speech does not give rise to higher than "normal" perceived anxiety levels by speakers, then such an assignment might be used to warm the communication climate and, ultimately, reduce perceived speech anxiety levels experienced by students as the semester progresses.

METHOD

Subjects

For this study, 538 students at a mid-sized, Midwestern university, ranging from first-year students to seniors, were asked by their public speaking fundamentals instructors to complete a questionnaire during one class session. Of the 538 students who completed the questionnaire, 42 percent (227 students) were female and 58 percent (311 students) were male. Also, 52 percent (280 students) of the students who completed a questionnaire were first-year students. Approximately 28 percent (150 students) of the respondents were in their second year of college, 12.5 percent (67 students) identified themselves as juniors, and about 6 percent (34 students) as seniors. Students received no extra credit for participating in this study.

The Required Self-Disclosure Speech

The *Speech of Personal Significance* is a four- to six-minute informative speech about a person, object, or belief that has somehow influenced the student. This speech is the first of four major speeches required of students during the term. Main points must be specific characteristics or values held by the student that are represented by the speech topic selected. No external sources are required for this assignment. Rather, supporting material and evidence for each main point must be stories, illustrations, and examples that come directly from the student's personal life experiences. Since self-disclosure was described as the degree to which one person reveals personally significant, and probably unknown, information about him or herself to another, examples and stories that had arisen in earlier class periods with the same students were not considered to be evidence of self-disclosure. By the time the speaker finishes delivering his or her speech, audience members should understand why the speech topic is important to the speaker and how it has shaped their personal beliefs and values.

Instrument

The three-part questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceived comfort levels with self-disclosing information as part of a required public speech assignment entitled the *Speech of Personal Significance*. The questionnaire was comprised of 20 questions and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The instrument was field tested using 15 students who were also teaching assistants for the course. Their responses to the questions and format were used to modify the questionnaire in ways that would better insure content validity and reliability.

The first part of the questionnaire asked students to report personal demographic information, as well as the topic and supporting material used in the speech. We asked questions about topic choice and supporting material in order to determine whether or not existing research that suggests gendered topic selection differences in interpersonal settings is transferable to public speaking situations (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991).

The second portion of the questionnaire used a self-created Likert-type scale to determine the speaker's perceived anxiety about disclosing personal information in the public speech. Students were asked to respond to these closed-ended statements on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree). These questions were adapted from Richmond and McCroskey's (1992) "Situational Communication Apprehension Measure" (SCAM) and McCroskey's (1970) "Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety" (PRPSA). One question from this portion of the questionnaire, for example, states: "I felt comfortable talking to other people about something or someone personally significant to me." Other statements focus on extraneous variables that may have played a role in the speaker's perceived anxiety level (e.g., amount of preparation time spent, difficulty in topic selection, overall enjoyment in completing the assignment). The reliability coefficient for this scale was .75.

The last portion of the questionnaire attempted to measure variables such as student's actual and perceived grades on the assignment, perceived speech anxiety, and unforeseen difficulties incurred while completing the assignment. One week earlier, students had completed McCroskey's (1970) "Personal Report of

Public Speaking Anxiety" (PRPSA) and calculated their own speech anxiety score. To compare students' general speech anxiety level to their perceived anxiety regarding self-disclosure in a public speech, one of the items asked students to report their PRPSA score.[2] Subsequent questions were designed to determine any perceived difficulties expressed by the students, and also provided an opportunity for students to address any concerns not accounted for in the questionnaire.

Procedure

After obtaining IRB (Internal Review Board) approval, packets of questionnaires were distributed to all public speaking instructors who required the *Speech of Personal Significance* in their course. These instructors were asked to administer the questionnaire to their students after all students had completed their personal significance speech. Each teacher was provided with oral and written instructions detailing how they were to administer the questionnaire. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that all answers would be anonymous.

The data collected were divided into two groups (male and female) so that comparisons could be drawn. Central tendencies of male and female perceived anxiety levels were then analyzed quantitatively, using percentages, frequencies, chi-square, and t-tests. Open-ended questions were coded according to emergent themes and examined qualitatively.

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[2] Personal copies of each student's PRPSA had been returned to them for reference. Instructors were also available if students chose to ask them for the score.

RESULTS

The results were grouped into one of the three categories. The first category was titled "perceived anxiety about self-disclosing in a public speech." The second category was labeled "what comfortable means in a public speaking setting." And the final category was identified as "topic selection and thematic content."

Perceived Anxiety

One of the questions on the survey asked if the student felt comfortable disclosing personally significant information in the public speech. Based on responses to this statement, "I felt comfortable talking to other people about something or someone personally significant to me," most students did not report increased anxiety levels due to self-disclosure. As Table 1 indicates, responses from a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, showed that a majority of the participants agreed (46.8%) or strongly agreed (18.0%) that they felt comfortable disclosing personally significant information in their public speech. The majority of the respondents indicated that they felt comfortable self-disclosing, even though 80 percent of this pool scored moderate to high on the PRPSA one week earlier. Moreover, contrary to results of gender differences in interpersonal settings, t-test results comparing males and females revealed no significant differences in comfort level about disclosing personally significant information ($t = 2.5$, d.f. = 310 and $t = 2.2$, d.f. = 226, respectively; $p = .71$).

Table 1
Degree of Comfort, Resistance, and Confidence with Self-Disclosing Information

Degree	n	Comfort	n	Resistance	n	Confidence
Strongly Agree	97	18.0%	15	2.8%	53	9.9%
Agree	252	46.8%	62	11.5%	232	43.1%
Neutral	114	21.1%	112	20.8%	144	26.8%
Disagree	64	11.9%	254	47.2%	87	16.2%
Strongly Disagree	11	2.0%	95	17.7%	22	4.1%
T-test Results (F=Female; M=Male)						
Means	F=2.2		F=3.8		F=2.6	
	M=2.5		M=3.6		M=2.6	
	Prob>F'=0.7051		Prob>F'=0.5235		Prob>F'=0.6096	

An additional question asked whether students attempted to avoid revealing certain information about themselves in the speech. More specifically, students were asked to respond to the statement, "I tried not to disclose or reveal personal information about myself in my speech." As is illustrated in Table 1, nearly half (47.2%) of the students reported that they were not inhibited to self-disclose. Again, there were no significant gender differences between males and females with regard to anxiety level in self-disclosing personal information in the personal significance speech ($t = 3.6$, d.f. = 310 and $t = 3.8$, d.f. = 226, respectfully; $p = .52$). In fact, based on this survey, a large number of both males and females expressed minimal anxiety about revealing personally significant information about themselves in the speech.

One item on the questionnaire examined students' degree of confidence about giving this speech in front of other students. Students responded to the statement, "I felt confident giving this speech in front of the other students." Again, nearly half of the students surveyed (43.1%) did report that they were confident about presenting this speech in front of others. Again, as depicted in Table 1, no significant gender differences between males and females were revealed with regard to degree of confidence (t = 2.6, d.f. = 310 and t = 2.6, d.f. = 226, respectfully; p = .61).

Also related to comfort level is the student's perceived level of security while preparing the speech. Students responded to the statement, "I felt insecure while preparing this speech." Consistent with the findings on comfort, Table 2 illustrates that only 19.0% of the students surveyed indicated feeling insecure while preparing the speech compared to 55.4% who indicated

Table 2
Degree of Insecurity with Self-Disclosing Information

Degree	n	Insecurity
Strongly Agree	19	3.5%
Agree	85	15.5%
Neutral	136	25.3%
Disagree	241	44.8%
Strongly Disagree	57	10.6%
T-Test Results		
	Female = 0.79	Male = 0.79
	Prob>F'=0.1140	

that they did not feel insecure. No significant gender differences were revealed with regard to level of insecurity while preparing the speech (t = .79, d.f. = 310 and t = .79, d.f. = 226; p = .11).

Two other questions examined the amount of time spent preparing and rehearsing the speech as they might impact comfort level. Each statement asked students to respond with "agree" or "disagree." One item stated, "I spent enough time writing this speech." Another item stated, "I spent enough time rehearsing the delivery of this speech." As Table 3 indicates, the majority of both males (64.3%) and females (83.25%) indicated that they did not believe they had spent enough time writing the speech. Moreover, chi-square results reveal a statistically significant gender difference. Although both males and females reported a need to spend more time rehearsing the speech, females spent significantly more time rehearsing the delivery of their speech than did males (x2 = 18.33, d.f. = 4, p = .00).

Table 3
Feeling That Enough Time
Was Spent Writing the Speech

Gender	n	Agree	n	Disagree	n	Total
Female*	189	83.25%	38	16.74%	227	42.19%
Male**	200	64.20%	111	20.63%	311	57.81%
Totals***	389	72.30%	149	27.70%	538	100.0%

Prob>F'=0.000

*This percentage is based on the total number of female students surveyed.
**This percentage is based on the total number of male students surveyed.
***This percentage is based on the combined number of male and female students surveyed.

Table 4 shows that significantly more females (60.79%) agreed with the statement that they spent enough time rehearsing the speech than did males (40.83%)(x2 = 18.73, d.f. = 2, p = .00). In other words, more females reported that they spent enough time rehearsing the speech than males, although a majority of students of both genders reported being comfortable, confident, and secure presenting the speech.

Table 4
Feeling That Enough Time Was
Spent Rehearsing the Speech

Gender	n	Agree	n	Disagree	n	Total
Female*	138	60.79%	89	39.20%	227	42.19%
Male**	127	40.83%	184	59.16%	311	57.81%
Totals***	265	49.26	273	50.74%	538	100.0%

Prob>F'=0.001

*This percentage is based on the total number of female students surveyed.
**This percentage is based on the total number of male students surveyed.
***This percentage is based on the combined number of male and female students surveyed.

What Comfortable Means

To help gain insight into why students may or may not feel anxious about self-disclosing in a public speech, respondents were asked to define in our open-ended portion of the questionnaire what being comfortable in a public speaking situation means to them. Five predominant themes emerged from the responses.

The first theme focused on the need to feel in control of the situation and to deal effectively with nervousness (see Table 5). About one-third of the females (31.71%) and one-third of the males (35.69%) responded that comfortable means being in control of the situation. Nervousness was described in both physical and psychological terms. For example, participants reported a desire to control physical reactions such as shaking, sweating, stuttering, stomach aches, cracking voice, and so forth. According to one student, being comfortable meant "not having your heart race, face turn red, stutter over words ... basically, being calm, cool, collected." Students also indicated a need to control their psychological reactions, such as maintaining a positive attitude, casting out doubts, and feeling secure. As one student explained, being comfortable means "not being so nervous that you can't think of what you're going to say next, that your thoughts are clear and reasonable." In the words of another, being comfortable is "feeling a little nervous about getting up in front of people but not 'out of control' nervous."

Confidence was another dominant theme that arose in 33 (6.13%) of the responses (see Table 5). Of those 33, about half were female and half were male. Confidence was related to both the topic and personal ability. Based on the responses offered consistently by students in this study, confidence meant not being afraid to reveal information about the self and overall confidence in the self and speaking ability. For example, as one student explained, it is "when you feel ... confident in your topic and abilities." Or, as another indicated, "Being comfortable means to me that I can get up in front of people and give my speech with confidence and ease ... . Also not being afraid to say things about myself or the subject I am discussing in front of my classmates."

Table 5
What Comfortable Means to Students

Gender	n	Control	n	Confi-dence	n	Deli-very	n	Topic	n	Audi-ence
Female*	72	31.71%	17	7.48%	27	11.89%	43	18.94%	72	31.71%
Male**	111	35.89%	16	5.14%	55	17.68%	40	12.86%	83	26.68%
Total***	183	34.01%	33	6.13%	82	15.24%	83	15.42%	155	28.81%

*This percentage is based on the total number of female students surveyed.
**This percentage is based on the total number of male students surveyed.
***This percentage is based on the combined number of male and female students surveyed.

Clear delivery emerged as another important dimension of comfort (see Table 5). Eighty-two students (15.2%) responded to the comfort question in this way. Twice as many males (n=55) as females (n=27) reported that comfort meant clear delivery. In terms of percentages, about 17. 68% of the males and 11.89% of the females reported delivery as a major component of comfort. According to one participant, comfortable meant "being free to discuss the topic well enough to add necessary ad libs and tailor it for an audience instantaneously upon feedback." Students reported the desire to communicate intelligibly and with relative ease. As one student wrote, comfortable meant "being able to talk fluently throughout the speech. Being able to converse with the audience." Or, so that "your nervousness doesn't interrupt or outshine the flow, presentation, and quality of your speech."

The fourth theme focused on having a genuine interest in and knowledge about the topic (see Table 5). Eighty-three students (15.4%) offered responses coded into this theme. The gender distribution was fairly evenly divided between males (12.86%) and females (18.94%). Being interested in and enjoying the subject played an influential role in being comfortable. For example, one respondent stated that "comfortable means that I'm well prepared and enjoy what I am talking about." Some students indicated that using personal experiences as supporting material fostered this. As one student noted, "If the speech is from your personal experiences, I think this is comfortable." Another student illustrated, "I'm comfortable if I'm speaking about something I care about and know about... I like to let people know who I am and where I stand on important issues." The students also indicated the need to be perceived as knowledgeable about the topic. For instance, to one respondent, it meant "feeling at ease with myself and feeling as though I know a lot about my topic." Or, "Comfortable to me means that the person giving the speech feels the audience will learn something or be entertained. Also that you ... sound like you know what you are talking about."

The final theme concerned the audience (see Table 5). One hundred fifty-five students (28.8%) mentioned the role audience plays in comfort level. A fairly evenly distributed number of males and females indicated that it was important to gain the audience's approval, not be looked upon with judgment, and imagine talking to audience members as though they were close friends. Similar to the first theme (in control), about one-third of the females (31.71%) reported audience as a major factor. About one-fourth of the males (26.68%) reported in this way. For instance, according to one student, comfortable meant "being able to look out at the sea of faces comfortably, not feeling like you are being stared at or like the walls are closing in on you." To another student, "being comfortable in public speaking situations would mean that I would be able to talk about anything in a way that I would talk to my best friend." To another, it meant "not being worried about what others think." Or, "To me, comfortable means being able to communicate with others in a way that you're able to talk naturally and not worry about what your audience is thinking about or how they are judging you."

Based on these results, it seems that students believe a sense of control (34.01%) and respect from the audience (28.81%) are the most important components of comfort level in public speaking situations. Four of the five themes were fairly evenly reported by males and females. The only gender difference emerged in the clear delivery category. Males reported a link between clear delivery and comfort level twice as often as females.

Topic Selection and Thematic Content

As Table 6 illustrates, students were afforded the opportunity to base their personal significance speech on an object, person, belief, or "other." Previous research conducted in interpersonal settings suggests that males and females tend to self-disclose about different topics and in different ways (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991). More specifically, females tend to disclose more about their feelings, their homes, and their close relationships. Males, on the other hand, tend to share more about sports, competition, activities, and things they have seen, read, or heard. This portion of the questionnaire was designed to discover whether similar gender differences arose in a public speaking setting. If so, it may provide insight into how instructors might structure a self-disclosure speech assignment with gender equity in mind.

Results reveal that there was a significant gender difference with regard to topic selection. Significantly fewer females (23.34%) chose to talk about an object than did males (35.36%). More males (12.22%) chose a belief than did females (0.08%), and more females (41.40%) than males (28.29%) chose to talk about a person. In other words, males were more likely to talk about objects and beliefs than females. And, females were more likely to talk about a person than were males. Hence, consistent with the results of topics discussed in interpersonal settings, a gender difference did emerge with regard to topic choice.

To extend our understanding of gendered topic differences, an open-ended question asked participants to explain the thematic content (or the main points) used for their speeches. Students were asked, "In a few short sentences, briefly explain the main points of your speech." Several themes emerged for each of the possible topics: object, person, belief, and other.

Table 6
Topics Chosen for the Speech

Gender	n	Object	n	Person	n	Belief	n	Other	n	Total
Female*	53	23.34%	94	41.40%	20	0.08%	60	26.43%	227	42.19%
Male**	110	35.35%	88	28.29%	38	12.11%	75	24.11%	311	57.81%
Total***	163	30.30%	182	33.83%	58	10.78%	135	25.09%	538	100.0%

*This percentage is based on the total number of female students surveyed.

**This percentage is based on the total number of male students surveyed.

***This percentage is based on the combined number of male and female students surveyed.

First, there were significant gender differences with regard to how objects were discussed in the speeches. For instance, stuffed animals or pets were often used as topics, but the way speakers referred to them differed according to gender. Females (17 out of 19 respondents or 89%) spoke about animals as if they were human, capable of being best friends and maintaining relationships. In other words, they tended to personify their pets or stuffed animals. For instance, as one woman wrote, "I talked about my Snoopy and how he is a long time best friend to me. I included stories of our times together throughout my childhood, how I took him to college and Arizona with me, and how I continue to collect Snoopys today." Males (6 out of 10 respondents or 60%), on the other hand, tended to talk more about the proper training techniques, responsibility, and learning gained from pets. One male wrote, for example, that "dogs mean much to me and it is of importance to me that people know proper care and training techniques and following these simple guidelines can benefit both owner and dog."

In addition, more males (71 out of a total of 311 males or 23%) discussed sports and activities than did females (22 out of a total of 227 females or 9%). When they did, their thematic content emphasized competition, the hard work ethic as it leads to success, responsibility, confidence, and self-esteem. As one student stated: "My speech was about basketball and what it taught me. It taught me competitiveness, teamwork, and hard work." Another male stated, "My main points were how athletic competition helps me to feel good about myself, it makes exercise less monotonous, and is a way I enjoy spending my free time." Conversely, females who reported talking about sports and activities identified consistently thematic content revolving around important relationships that developed as a result of participating, dedication, and teamwork. One female, for example, told how it "helped me with friendships, teamwork skills, and a skill of playing ball that I can use in the future for recreation."

Also consistent with gendered self-disclosure differences conclusions drawn from interpersonal settings, females talked more about family members and best friends than did their male counterparts (81 out of a total of 227 females or 36%; 67 out of a total of 311 males or 22%). The bonds and relationships formed among family members were identified as the primary themes. More specifically, sisters and mothers were described as best friends and as role models. For example, one female wrote “My sister is a very important part of my life. Our relationship is more like best friends than sisters. Her life has been a good role model for me.” Or as another woman explained “I wrote about my twin sister as being my best friend. She’s my best friend because she’s someone I can go to. I’ve learned valuable lessons from her, and we’ve been through a lot together.” Mothers were also selected by many female respondents. As one female wrote “My speech was about how important parents are, especially my mom. My mom has provided me with a role model unlike any other. She has continued to impress me with her unending love and empathy for others as well as her understanding.” As another women explained, “I spoke about my mother I talked about how she is one of my role models, a best friend, and someone who continues to help me learn and grow.”

Some males also talked about friends and family members (about 282% as compared to about 36% of the females). Interestingly, however, males who spoke about friends and family members emphasized thematic content focused on activities they participated in together rather than relational issues and feelings. For example, one male noted that “I talked about how hunting with my dad helped me get closer to him, how hunting with my friend helped me keep friendships, and how I will be looking forward to hunting with my kids.”

And another wrote, "The main points that I covered were how my Grandpa affected my life in three ways: First, how he got me started in sports. Secondly, how he got me to be a fisherman, and finally how he helped to keep up my confidence and to stay in school." These responses regarding thematic content chosen by males and females who talked about important people in their lives support the conclusions drawn in interpersonal research about gender differences in self-disclosure (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Dolgin, Meyer & Schwartz, 1991).

Finally, some students talked about a specific place or event (32 of the 538 respondents or 6%). Ten of these 32 respondents were female (31.3%) and 22 respondents were male (68.8%). Thematic content chosen to develop these speeches was, again, consistent with the conclusions drawn in interpersonal settings. Females spoke about things like dedication, responsibility, and family. One female's "topic was about the town of Hazelton, ND; the people who live there, my family, and the values I learned from this town." Another female described "how living on a farm has taught me dedication, responsibility, and family unity and how it has helped me become who I am today." Males, on the other hand, talked about it as a place to get away from it all, where it was peaceful, or where there were lots of things to do. For instance, one male claimed, "In my speech, I talked about a place where I could go to get way from it all called the castle. I talked about how the castle got its name, how much the place meant to me, and the knowledge I gained by going there."

DISCUSSION

Numerous studies exist that conclude that appropriate self-disclosure can foster attraction, comfort, trust, and intimacy in interpersonal relationships. Although relatively few studies exist to date focused on the role of self-disclosure in public speaking situations, some have suggested that appropriate self-disclosure can warm the communication climate, thereby reducing speech anxiety levels in students (Petronio, Martin and Littlefield, 1984; Littlefield and Sellnow, 1987; Mulac and Sherman, 1975; Rosenfeld, 1979; Derlega and Chaikin, 1977). These two veins of research seem to support requiring a self-disclosure speech as part of the public speaking fundamentals curriculum as a possible means by which to attempt to reduce anxiety levels of students. We sought to determine the relationship between a required self-disclosure speech and perceived public speaking anxiety experienced by student speakers. If perceived speech anxiety of speakers is not negatively influenced by required self-disclosure, then such an assignment might be used early in the term to warm the climate and, perhaps, reduce anxiety levels experienced during future presentations.

If the existing research about gender differences with regard to self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships holds true in public speaking situations, however, then an inherent gender bias might exist in a required self-disclosure speech (Aires & Johnson, 1983; Gitter & Black, 1976; Pearce & Sharp, 1973; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991a; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991b; Williams, 1985; Winstead, Derlega, & Wong, 1984). This study also examined whether or not differences exist between perceived anxiety levels of females and males when they are required to self-disclose in a public speaking situation. If males report higher anxiety about self-disclosing than their female counterparts, then the potential advantages of such an assignment may be outweighed by the inherent gender bias in it. The results of this study revealed four primary conclusions.

First, the results of this study indicate that a majority of both males and females feel comfortable self-disclosing personal information in a public speech. Essentially, although 80 percent of the students reported general PRPSA scores in the "moderate" to "high" anxiety ranges, approximately 65% of these same respondents indicated that they were comfortable presenting this self-disclosure speech. Results of this study suggest that a required self-disclosure speech did not raise anxiety levels expressed by student speakers. Hence, this assignment might be used by public speaking instructors to warm the communication climate and reduce perceived anxiety levels experienced by student speakers later in the term. Although other factors may have influenced students' perceptions about reduced anxiety (such as length of time spent with others in the classroom and reduced uncertainty about teacher's grading criteria), the results of this study do suggest a relationship between the self-disclosure speech and a reduction of perceived speech anxiety.

If our conclusions are accurate, then public speaking fundamentals instructors might consider ways to incorporate self-disclosure as a requirement to warm the communication climate and, perhaps, reduce anxiety. This study affirms previous research suggesting that appropriate self-disclosure can warm the communication climate and potentially reduce public speaking anxiety. Our research extends current thought by approaching self-disclosure in the form of a required public speech. Our conclusions here also raise additional research questions about more specific causal relationships between public speaking anxiety and a required self-disclosure speech.

Second, this study suggests that there are no significant gender differences with regard to perceived anxiety levels experienced when presenting a required self-disclosure speech (*Speech of Personal Significance*). Although gender differences did emerge in some areas of the study (i.e., males spent less time rehearsing their speeches than did females), both male and female students reported feeling comfortable presenting the required self- disclosure speech.

Interestingly, our findings contradict conclusions drawn in interpersonal settings, which suggest that females self-disclose more often than males and feel more comfortable doing so (Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991a; Shaffer, Pegalis, & Cornell, 1991b) and that males might be reluctant to self-disclose because it is a sign of weakness (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977). Perhaps future research might be conducted to determine why males do not report increased anxiety about self-disclosing in a required public speech. More study is needed to discover possible relationships between a required self-disclosure speech and perceptions of "appropriate sex-typed behavior" (Derlega & Chaikin, 1997, p. 377).

Third, our qualitative analysis of what comfortable means provided new insight about the nature of public speaking anxiety. More specifically, current research tends to assume that the elements embedded in clinical definitions of communication anxiety are synonymous to student perceptions. Results of this study extend current research by revealing the multifaceted nature of comfort and anxiety in public speaking situations according to student perceptions. Student responses reveal that, to be comfortable in a public speaking situation, students need to feel (a) in control of the situation,

(b) confident, (c) fluent with delivery, (d) adequately prepared and knowledgeable, and (e) respected by the audience. About one-third of the students surveyed (34.01%) reported that feeling in control of the situation was an important facet of comfort. Twice as many males as females indicated that delivery was an important component associated with comfort. More females (31.71%) than males (26.68%) noted feeling respected by the audience as an important dimension of comfort.

Our conclusions suggest that more research could be conducted to discover the nature of communication anxiety based on student experiences and perceptions. It seems prudent to consider elements of anxiety and its counterpart (comfort) as expressed by students in order to create more effective tools and strategies for coping effectively with it. Our research also suggests possible gender differences with regard to the elements of comfort and anxiety in public speaking situations. These potential differences also warrant further study. Failing to enhance existing research about communication anxiety in ways that consider student perceptions of its components limits the degree to which we might create successful treatments for it.

Fourth, this study supports existing research conclusions that males and females tend to disclose about different topics and in different ways. Gender differences did exist with regard to the topics chosen and thematic content used in the self-disclosure speech. Males surveyed in this study self-disclosed about activity and sports oriented topics, whereas females discussed topics related to relationships, community, and personal issues (e.g., Aires & Johnson, 1983; Dolgin, Meyer, & Schwartz, 1991). The majority of female respondents in this study reported talking about people (41.40%), whereas the majority of males indicated discussing topics related to objects (35.36%). Traditional gender differences were also born out in these public speeches in terms of thematic content. For example, when females talked about an object such as a pet, they tended to personify the pet by talking about it as a friend with whom they have a relationship. Males, on the other hand, talked about pets as tools to help them learn (e.g., use them as hunting dogs) or to become more responsible (e.g., master training techniques). When males talked about people, they tended to talk about the kinds of activities they engaged in together or what they learned from the person (competition, independence, self-reliance). Conversely, females talked about people as their best friends, role models, and supporting characters with whom they continue to have relationships. Based on these results, perhaps the potential gender bias inherent in a required self-disclosure speech can be accounted for by allowing students freedom in terms of topic selection and thematic development.

The conclusions drawn from this study provide impetus for considering a required self-disclosure speech in the beginning public speaking course. Moreover, the results of our research give rise to several new questions for future study. Perhaps one of the most intriguing of these questions is: to what degree are anxiety levels actually reduced after presenting a required self-disclosure speech? We know from this research that anxiety levels do not rise and even appear to be lowered. Future studies should study more directly causal relationships between a required self-disclosure speech and public speaking anxiety. Moreover, additional questions about gender differences emerge from this study, as well as about other demographic characteristics of speakers such as race and ethnicity. Similarly, does the gender of the instructor influence perceived anxiety about required self-disclosure in a public speech?

Finally, results of this study give rise to a potential need for curricular reforms in public speaking fundamentals programs. Perhaps educators could require a self-disclosure speech early in the term to address public speaking anxiety. Likewise, instructors might adjust our approach to the discussion of comfort and anxiety with regard to public speaking in ways that account for student perceptions of what comfortable really means in a public speaking situation. It also follows that gender differences do exist in public speaking situations and instructors might reach more students effectively by adapting curricular requirements in ways that strive for gender equity.

The relationship between public speaking and anxiety poses continual challenges for us as educators and as communication researchers. This study offers a required self-disclosure speech assignment as a possible strategy for warming the climate and, perhaps, reducing anxiety. This research has revealed that requiring a self-disclosure speech does not negatively influence perceived anxiety expressed by speakers. We also determined that no gender bias exists in requiring this assignment as long as students are free to select their own topics as well as self-disclosive examples and stories. We have uncovered new avenues to explore regarding students' perceptions of comfort as they relate to public speaking situations. Finally, new questions have been raised which will require examination as instructors in our classrooms and as researchers in our journals if we are to increase our understanding of the relationship between self-disclosure and public speaking anxiety.

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Critical Thinking Assessment: The Link Between Critical Thinking and Student Application in the Basic Course[1]

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Critical thinking is a skill that is highly valued in the educational enterprise. The term is used often in many contexts. But, what does it look like; how do we know it when we see it; and most importantly, how do we measure it? The intent of this study is to evaluate existing literature on the concept, the teaching, and the assessment of critical thinking. To reach this goal, critical thinking will be examined in terms of its multiple definitions, and its relationship to higher order thinking, critical teaching, and assessment. In addition, the study will introduce a practical basic course classroom activity that effectively assesses students' ability to apply critical thinking skills outside the classroom. In the end, it is hoped that the reader will come away with (a) a well-rounded knowledge of critical thinking, (b) acknowledgment of the link between critical thinking and higher order thinking, (c) an idea of the various

[1] An earlier draft of the article was presented at the Annual Teaching Symposium at Illinois State University (October 1998) and the Central States Communication Association Convention at St. Louis, MO (April 1999).

assessment tools available, and (d) an understanding of the new assessment tool presented in this study.

The authors take the perspective that students are active agents in the learning process, as opposed to passive audience members absorbing only what the teacher deems appropriate. This perspective implies that students take responsibility for their own learning and have the skills necessary to provide the theoretical/practical links between course content and real-life experiences. Therefore, this study uses the students' own words as support for the claim that certain aspects of critical thinking can be assessed by the qualitative data (i.e., the artifact assignment) introduced in this paper, which relies heavily on student involvement in learning. Once again, this places each student in the role of active participant in her or his learning process.

CRITICAL THINKING

Definition

Although most definitions of critical thinking contain common themes, they vary in some of their specific assertions and have evolved over time. According to Grant (1988), "[o]ne difficulty in discussing critical thinking stems from the lack of a common definition. In part, this difficulty is the result of a plethora of terms describing the cognitive activity. The process is variously referred to as reasoning, higher order thinking, intelligent behavior, creative thinking, and thinking, each with its own meaning" (p. 34). To establish a working definition for this paper, it is necessary to examine and evaluate a few of the well known definitions of critical thinking. McPeck (1981) offered a description to characterize some aspects associated with critical thinking. He explained that skepticism is crucial to critical thinking, and that truth is established through evaluating "alternative hypotheses and possibilities" by learning how and when to question (p. 6). In addition, McPeck felt that logic is useful in critical thinking, but warned against relying too heavily on it. For instance, he believed that testing logic alone is not sufficient for assessing critical thinking. Finally, McPeck did not recognize critical thinking as a distinct subject, and goes so far as to say that one must have "knowledge of, and experience in, a specific field" (p. 8), in order to think critically about it.

Although skepticism is an integral part of critical thinking, and is used by our students in the practice of critical thinking, it may not be sufficient in encompassing all areas of critical thinking. Additionally, having experience in a subject may arm an individual with some of the skills to think critically, but the authors of this study believe that one must first think critically to gain the appropriate knowledge to become experienced in a particular field. McPeck, in seeking truth through alternative perspectives, provided an open-minded approach to evaluating ideas, actions, and beliefs in a critical manner.

Meyers (1986), who examined the teaching of critical thinking across disciplines, agreed with McPeck that logic, although important, is not sufficient for critical thinking. He also agreed that knowledge in a particular topic is instrumental in critical thinking. Although Meyers did not offer an official definition of critical thinking, he does provide some general attitudes towards the concept. He stated, "A specific perspective or framework for analyzing materials and issues in a discipline is an important cognitive element in critical thinking. But affective elements can be equally important. These include general attitudes related to the raising of questions, temporary suspension of one's own judgments, and enjoyment of mysteries and complexities" (Meyers, 1986, p. 8).

Ennis (1993), a leading researcher in the field, defined critical thinking as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (p. 180). Ennis, over the years, also developed numerous characteristics of critical thinking, including dispositions and abilities. One of his more recent articles (1993) offered ten independent critical thinking behaviors, including:

1) judge the credibility of sources;
2) identify conclusions, reasons, and assumptions;
3) judge the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence;
4) develop and defend a position on an issue;
5) ask appropriate clarifying questions;
6) plan experiments and judge experimental designs;
7) define terms in a way appropriate for the context;
8) be open-minded;
9) try to be well informed;
10) draw conclusions when warranted, but with caution. (p. 180)

Much of Ennis' work focuses on assessing critical thinking and will be discussed later in this manuscript. Ennis' list of behaviors successfully relates critical thinking to issues of argumentation. For the purpose of this study, however, the authors feel that a more encompassing definition of critical thinking, including analysis, application, and conceptualization is warranted.

Critical thinking, as defined by some authors, incorporates ideas of transferability and self-evaluation of one's own thinking processes. For example, Elder and Paul (1996) define critical thinking as "the ability and disposition to improve one's thinking by systematically subjecting it to rigorous self-assessment. Persons are critical thinkers, in the fullest sense of the term only if they display this ability and disposition in all, or most, of the dimensions of their lives (e.g. as a parent, citizen, consumer, lover, friend, learner, and professional). We exclude from our concept of the critical thinker one who thinks well in only one dimension" (p. 34). This idea differs from other concepts of critical thinking because it implies that it is not necessary to be experienced in an area to think critically.

Another expert on critical thinking, Richard Paul (1995), cited a definition of critical thinking from the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction that stated, "[c]ritical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (p. 110). Paul (1995) then paraphrased an addition to the Council's definition, stating:

> [Critical thinking] entails larger-scale abilities of integrating elementary skills in such a way as to be able to apply, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate complicated and multidimensional issues. These include such abilities as clarifying issues, transferring insights into new contexts, analyzing arguments, ques-

> tioning deeply, developing criteria for evaluation, assessing solutions, refining generalizations, and evaluating the credibility of sources of information. Among the abilities are included also the central forms of communication: critical reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each of them is a large-scaled mode of thinking which is successful to the extent that it is informed, disciplined, and guided by critical thought and reflection. (pp. 110-111)

Although a lengthy definition, the authors feel that it provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject and an excellent base for discussing critical thinking. Therefore, the above is offered as the working definition for this manuscript.

Higher Order Thinking

In various ways, many authors linked critical thinking to higher order thinking and Bloom's taxonomy. More specifically, Bloom's *Cognitive Domain of the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives,* offers several levels of thinking or learning, which when applied appropriately, can result in different levels of critical thinking. Cooper and Simonds (1999) offered a concise explanation of the levels, which included:

- *Knowledge*: Questions that require simple recall of previously learned material
- *Comprehension*: Questions that require students to restate or reorganize material in a literal manner to show that they understand the essential meaning

- *Application*: Questions that require students to use previously learned material to solve problems in new situations
- *Analysis*: Questions that require students to break an idea into its component parts for logical analysis
- *Synthesis*: Questions that require students to combine their ideas into a statement, plan, product, and so forth, that is new for them
- *Evaluation*: Questions that require students to judge something based on some criteria. (pp. 153-155)

As cited in Grant (1988), Doyle defined higher order processing skills as "those requiring critical thinking, as the cognitive processes of comprehension, interpretation, flexible application of knowledge and skills, and assembly of information and resources. These higher order thinking processes produce new knowledge or knowledge in new forms ..." (p. 35). It is clear that this definition coincides with our accepted definition (that of the National Council) of critical thinking which also focuses on comprehension, interpretation and application.

Although many authors articulate that critical thinking and higher order thinking skills are not one in the same, many of the skills associated with higher order thinking are crucial for thinking critically. For example, Ennis (1987) argued that "critical thinking is not equivalent to the higher order thinking skills, in part because the idea is so vague" (p. 10). However, he recognized that critical thinking does include many higher order thinking skills. He linked higher order thinking skills to the top three levels of Bloom's taxonomy, which include analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Ennis (1987) acknowledged that "some educators might supplement the top three levels with non-routine practice of the next two lower levels, comprehension and application" (p. 10). The implication is that many of the skills used in higher order thinking are also key skills to be used in critical thinking.

The comparison between higher order thinking and critical thinking is important to this study because when a student engages in higher order thinking, the outcome can manifest itself in critical thinking. However, it should be noted that the skills involved in higher order thinking and critical thinking are separate entities although, when combined, they can successfully compliment one another.

Critical Teaching

Now that a working definition of critical thinking has been proffered, and a link between critical thinking and higher order thinking has been established, it makes sense to discuss the concept of teaching critical thinking. A logical question to ask is: Is it possible to teach critical thinking? McPeck (1981) helped answer this question when he states that critical thinking is "teachable in much the same way that other skills are teachable, namely, through drills, exercises or problem solving in an area" (p. 18). We agree that critical thinking can be taught, but McPeck seems to imply that it is the sole responsibility of the teacher to control this process, rather than allowing the students to share in the learning of critical thinking. We believe that students should be responsible for making their own critical connections between real life experiences and course content.

Many authors agree that critical thinking can be taught, although there may be disagreement on how to teach these skills. McPeck believed that critical thinking can be taught through drills, exercises or problem solving. On the other hand, See (1996) cited Chaffee as saying that there are two approaches to teaching critical thinking: "the integrated approach, which involves students' daily and academic experiences, and the interactive approach, which involves readings, group exercises, and reflective writing assignments" (p. 26).

Other scholars suggest that using questioning (or Socratic questioning) is the best method for teaching critical thinking (Paul, 1995; Savage, 1998; Hannel & Hannel, 1998; and Elder & Paul, 1998). For instance, Savage (1998) stated that "it is common knowledge that the strategy that can have the greatest impact on student thinking is teacher questioning" (p. 291). Hannel and Hannel (1988) also support the practice of questioning when they offer their seven steps to critical thinking, which provide a framework for the types of questions to ask students during the learning process. Paul (1995) similarly believed that questioning (specifically Socratic questioning) is crucial to the teaching of critical thinking. He also explainsedthat questioning can be used for three different purposes: 1) to help students organize their thoughts for writing assignments, 2) to help students think more deeply about basic ideas, and 3) to help students think carefully about difficult social issues.

Finally, some authors feel that the transfer of critical thinking skills to other academic areas and to real life experiences is an important way to teach critical thinking. See (1996) stated that "[c]ritical thinking is presented to students as the process of evaluating what they see and hear, then judging what those ideas mean to them" (p. 27). To transfer ideas, students must be able to evaluate and judge what they are experiencing. Ennis (1987) provided good support for the need for students to be capable of transferring their critical thinking skills to other areas when he states, "... there are many areas calling for critical thinking that are not subjects people are likely to have studied in school, thus requiring that we teach for transfer and that our efforts in school not be judged to have succeeded unless critical thinking instruction transfers to areas of practical concern" (p. 17).

Lee (1997) explained that having students relate their personal experiences to the classroom leads to a liberal education, which in turn, "influences behavior less by direct application to experience than by instilling a habit of routinely reflecting critically on our experience within the broader frames of reference acquired through such an education" (p. 1). She follows by explaining that teachers should provide in-class opportunities for students to apply concepts from the subject area to their own personal experiences. We recognize the value in the aforementioned methods of teaching critical thinking, and believe that all of these possible methods of teaching may assist in facilitating the learning of critical thinking. We also recognize that using a combination of these methods in the classroom may be the most effective manner of teaching the concept.

Assessment

If one agrees that it is possible to teach critical thinking, next, it is important to decide whether it is possible to assess it, and if so, how. A major theme of Ennis' (1993) work is that "given our current state of knowledge, critical thinking assessment, albeit difficult to do well, is possible" (p. 179). The authors agree that critical assessment can be done, but also that it should vary with the purpose and the format of the assignment and the topic being taught.

Paul (1995) offered several objectives and criteria for assessing higher order thinking, which is linked to critical thinking. Of the 21 objectives, we selected those that are most appropriately related to this manuscript.

> 1) It should assess students' skills and abilities in analyzing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating information.
> 2) It should make clear the inter-connectedness of our knowledge and abilities, and why expertise in one area cannot be divorced either from findings in other areas or from a sensitivity to the need for interdisciplinary integration.
> 3) It should account for the integration of communication skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking, and it should assess all of them without compromising essential features of any of them.
> 4) It should test for thinking that is empowering and that, when incorporated into instruction, promotes the active involvement of students of students in their own learning process.
> 5) It should be of a kind that will assess valuable skills applied to genuine problems as seen by a large body of the populace, both inside and outside of the educational community.
> 6) It should contain items that, as much as possible, are examples of the real-life problems and issues that people will have to think out and act upon. (pp. 107-109)

These objectives for assessment are extremely important in deciding how to evaluate critical thinking.

When it comes to actual critical thinking tests, there is a surprisingly large number and variety of tests already established. For example, Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking is often used as an assessment of critical thinking. Ennis (1987) noted that "in the elementary and secondary schools we find heavy current emphasis on the upper three levels ... of Bloom's taxonomy" (p. 9). Most tests, however, are more structured and objective than Bloom's taxonomy. Ennis (1993) and Norris and Ennis (1989) described several standardized tests with the following being a few of the more popular.

- *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal*: A multiple choice test, this assessment tool is geared towards high school and college students. It includes "sections on induction, assumption identification, deduction, judging whether a conclusion follows beyond a reasonable doubt, and argument evaluation" (Ennis, 1993, p. 183).
- *Cornell Critical Thinking Tests*: These tests have two levels, X and Z, which are geared towards different age groups. There are multiple-choice questions examining "induction, credibility, prediction and experimental planning, fallacies (especially equivocation), deduction, definition, and assumption identification" (Ennis, 1993, p. 183).
- *Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes*: Containing 105 multiple-choice questions, this test assesses the upper three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, focusing on the "students' ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate" (Norris & Ennis, 1989, p. 68).

- *The Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay Test*: This test is similar to the Cornell test, but is designed in essay format and aimed at high school students, college students, and other adults.

When using such tests, Ennis (1993) warned against "traps for the unwary" one can easily fall into when assessing critical thinking. He felt that "Test results may be compared with norms, and the claim made that the difference, or similarity, is the result of instruction" (p. 181). He also raised the concern that "Most critical thinking tests are not comprehensive, especially those that are easiest to use, the multiple-choice tests" (p. 181), and significant results may be expected in too short a time period" (p. 181). Other traps include pre-testing and posttesting without a control group, differences in background beliefs when using multiple choice tests, using the same test for the pretest and posttest, test validity because of "high-stakes purposes" (p. 181), and scarce resources. We also acknowledge the traps of testing, and these traps which are taken into consideration in the assessment tool presented here.

In contrast to the standardized tests just mentioned, Ennis and Norris suggested that "a combination of a standardized test and open-ended assessment tests should be used to measure critical thinking" (Ennis & Norris as cited in Spicer & Hanks, 1995). They also offered the opinion that "Evaluations of critical thinking are usually artificial in comparison to the life situations in which we hope students will eventually be able and disposed to think critically" (Norris & Ennis, 1989, p. 41). The authors agreed with this statement and with Paul (1995) who said that "A true measure of critical thinking, can be obtained only by including in the assessment *generative* as well as *selective* dimensions"

(p. 144). In reality, however, most assessment comes in the form of standard multiple choice tests, open-ended questions, and an essay section, which asks the student to do something specific. Tests are not provided, however, to assess how a student can critically reflect on an event in her or his life and apply classroom concepts to that event, evaluating how the two (or more) elements fit together and allow them to make sense of what goes on outside the classroom. This manuscript supports the idea that having students generate their own ideas using critical thinking skills is a much more meaningful way to assess critical thinking as compared to circling answers on a multiple choice test. Having said all of this, it is time to introduce an alternative form of critical thinking assessment which the authors feel provides rich descriptions of critical thinking using actual testimonies and descriptions from students as data. It should be noted that this is one of several assessment approaches to measuring critical thinking. However, when viewing students as active agents in the learning process, this assessment tool allows for the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information gathered through observation and experience on the part of the student, in accordance to the author's accepted definition of critical thinking.

METHOD

Participants/Data Collection

This study was conducted using data collected from 51 students participating in one of three sections of a basic communication course at a large Midwestern university. The course uses a hybrid approach to teaching communication, focusing on public speaking, interpersonal and small group communication. One topic, introduced at the beginning of the course, is critical thinking. After a thorough discussion of the concept, students are asked to apply critical thinking skills to various concepts during the term. Some of the topics linked to critical thinking are: ethical communication, cultural diversity, audience analysis, support material, persuasion, logic, and the communication process. To accomplish the goal of application, students are asked to complete several (6-8) “artifact” assignments. The assignments require the students to think critically by relating class concepts to their experiences outside the classroom. The artifact assignment reads as follows:

> *Artifacts may include any phenomenon outside of class that are effective examples of course concepts discussed in class. Artifacts might include television shows, movies, newspaper articles, comics, guest speakers, personal conversations, etc. In a brief (one page) paper, you are to describe the artifact, link it to a communication concept, and analyze how the artifact is related to the communication concept. The first paragraph should discuss and/or describe the artifact in detail (who, what, where, when, how) and the second paragraph should identify (reference class discussions or text material) and analyze the communication concept being discussed. When appropriate, include the artifact with your paper. Each artifact ... will be evaluated based on writing, format, description, link, and analysis.*

These artifacts are included in a working portfolio compiled by the students throughout the term.

At the end of the term, students are asked to complete an assignment reflecting on how their communication skills have changed over the semester and identifying areas in which they improved the most (see "Synthesis Paper" assignment below).

SYNTHESIS PAPER

Description

Your goal in the final portfolio assignment is to evaluate how your communication has changed over the semester. Are you a better public speaker? (Why or why not?) Are you more comfortable and effective in small group settings? Are you better at handling conflict in groups and interpersonally? Are you better at critical thinking, identifying illogical arguments or constructing logical arguments to influence others? Are you more aware of your language choices and better able to select appropriate terms that are not sexist/racist or just stupid?

The items in the portfolio provide the evidence for the claims you are making. For example, if you claim you have improved in public speaking, point to something you did ineffectively in your first speech but improved in your second. You don't need to give exact location on outline, evaluation form, or tape, but you should "situate" the evidence (e.g., "I am now better at organizing my speeches. In my informative speech (see introduction), I did not give any indication of the three points I wanted to make. In my persuasive speech (see introduction), I very clearly stated that I was going to discuss the problem caused by ____________ and offer a three-step solution to solve the problem. Also, my transitions improved. In my informative speech, I had no transition between the body of the speech and the conclusion, but in my persuasive speech, I provided a very clear transition into my conclusion by using repetition (see the last two minutes of the tape)." Other portfolio items should be used in the same way. If you claim to be a better critical thinker you should provide editorial pages, ads, descriptions of commercials, summaries of conversations, etc. that illustrate some fallacy you have now begun to recognize. If you claim to be more aware of sexist or racist language, provide a cartoon, editorial, or summary of a conversation that illustrates this.

Format

Your paper should be 3-5 pages (typed and double spaced with no more than 1.25 inch margins and 12 point font). Your paper will contain 5 paragraphs including an introduction (with attention getter, thesis, and preview), 3 main points (which reflect the 3 improvement claims with evidence to support), and a conclusion (with summary and memorable close).

Evaluation

This paper is worth 20 points and is part of your total portfolio grade. The following is my criteria for evaluation: Format (4 pts), Writing (4 pts), Organization (4 pts), Support (4 pts), and Overall Impression (4 pts).

To collect the data for this study, students of one of the authors voluntarily gave their completed papers to the instructor. Each student was to write six to eight artifact assignments and one synthesis paper. Before using the artifacts and synthesis paper as data for this study, the authors obtained written permission from the students. We used the collected data to show that the artifact assignment is a viable form of assessing critical thinking. In the following analysis section, we use the student's own words to support this claim.

Data Analysis

Two of the researchers independently coded one half of the 273 artifact assignments and one half of the 46 synthesis papers. For the artifact assignments, the coders first indicated the topic of the artifact. To do this, the coders (who have both taught the basic communication course) read the artifact assignment and indicated the topic they thought the artifact covered. The researchers also coded whether the critical thinking used in the artifact was latent, manifest, or non-existent. The coders then added any additional comments that might help in refining categories. To establish intercoder reliability, the coders, using a systematic random sample, pulled 10% of the artifacts and 22% of the synthesis papers and coded them independently. For the artifact assignment, intercoder reliability was 88.9% for topic and 92.6% for latent/manifest. Coding for the synthesis papers involved indicating whether or not critical thinking was referenced. If critical thinking was referenced, the coders indicated whether it was latent or manifest, and added any comments needed for refining categories. For the synthesis papers, intercoder reliability for topic and for latent/manifest was 90%. After differences were discussed, the coders came to 100% agreement for topic and latent/manifest for both the artifact assignment and the synthesis papers.

Based upon the analysis of the artifact assignments several categories emerged (see Table 1). Categories included: persuasion, ethical communication, speaker evaluations, listening, support materials, logic, small groups, the communication process, critical thinking, credibility, language, audience analysis, ethical communication, communication apprehension, organization, conflict, cultural diversity, university resources, public speaking, interpersonal communication, and speech delivery. Occasionally, no topic or no critical thinking was evident, or a concept was incorrectly analyzed. These instances were categorized as no topic/no critical thinking.

RESULTS

This section first presents the results for the artifact assignment, dividing the papers into the categories of latent and manifest critical thinking. The authors will summarize student responses and provide direct quotes from the artifact assignments to show that the artifact assignment helps students to consciously or unconsciously think critically. Part two of this section will contain similar support material for the claim that the artifact assignment is one form of critical thinking assessment. This support will come from the synthesis papers and will be structured under the latent and manifest categories as well.

Table 1
Numbers of Each Category for the Artifact Assignments

Category	Number
Persuasion	33
Logic	24
Communication Process	22
Audience Analysis	20
Ethical Communication	19
Listening	19
No Topic/No Critical Thinking	19
Small Group	16
Language	15
Speaker Evaluation (of self or other)	15
Delivery	13
Critical Thinking	10
Credibility	10
Conflict	9
Cultural Diversity	9
Communication Apprehension	8
Support Material	6
University Resources	5
Organization	4
Public Speaking	4
Interpersonal Communication	2

Examples from the student artifacts and the synthesis papers offer support for the idea that students learn critical thinking skills through the artifact assignment. Most of the students applied their critical thinking skills in completing the assignment. Some of the papers directly address the use of critical thinking during the assignment (manifest critical thinking). Others do not directly address the concept, but based upon the definition of critical thinking adopted for this study, it is clear that the students are engaging in critical thinking (latent critical thinking). Nineteen students did not reflect the process of critical thinking. The topic being analyzed was either not clearly articulated or there was no evidence of critical thinking.

Artifact Assignment

Manifest Critical Thinking. In completing the artifact assignments some students explicitly stated that they were engaging in critical thinking. In several of the examples of manifest critical thinking, students applied their critical thinking skills to analyzing and evaluating advertisements and commercials. They analyzed issues such as fallacies, the use of statistics in advertising, judging evidence or arguments, and distinguishing fact from opinion. For example, while incorporating the concepts of judging evidence and distinguishing fact from opinion, one student applied these concepts to a psychic network commercial. She begins by providing a quote from the textbook and then elaborates by saying, “When something sounds too good to be true (like this commercial) it is necessary to use critical thinking skills.” Another student, in analyzing an add for a razor, stated that "[w]e ... have to be critical in our thinking and be skeptical in our interpretations." In one artifact assignment, a student exposes poor statistical support for claims in an advertisement, stating that "[a]s a critical thinker I was able to identify the flaw in the advertisement."

Other examples of manifest critical thinking included group work, gender roles, and interpersonal interactions. Two students indicated that they used critical thinking while working in groups. One of the students indicated that work on difficult problems can be made easier because having a group think critically together helps solve the problem. While trying to organize a group speech, one student commented on using critical thinking skills during the process. She explained, "To do some critical thinking in this situation, what we did is establish the problem. The problem was: how are we going to get this to work the way we want it to? Critical thinking involves focused and organized thinking where you see the relationships between ideas and the way things are presented .... We used critical thinking to help us work as a group and come to a decision."

Analyzing gender roles was one topic that a student used to show critical thinking skills by explaining that "[h]ad it not been for my developing critical thinking skills, I may have never noticed any of this." As for applying critical thinking to interpersonal interactions, one student indicated that she used critical thinking to choose an apartment and convince her parents to let her move out of the house. She stated that "[b]y using critical thinking, I was able to choose the right apartment and persuade my parents at the same time."

Finally, one student commented on relating critical thinking to listening. She referred to a message in a fortune cookie that read: "By listening, one will learn truths. By hearing, one will only learn half-truths." The student analyzes the statement, saying:

> The connection of *truth* to listening vs. hearing is actually a connection of *critical thinking* to listening vs. hearing. In order to make sense of what is heard, that is, in order to listen, one must *think*. The best way to discover truths is to engage in focused, organized thinking that allows one to see clearly the relationships among ideas, otherwise known as critical thinking. When one thinks critically, one spots weakness in arguments, distinguishes fact from opinion, judges the credibility of statements and assesses the soundness of evidence. This process allows lies to be filtered out of messages that the listener receives.

Latent Critical Thinking. Based upon the definition of critical thinking adopted for this study, the concept involves analyzing, applying, transferring ideas to new contexts, evaluating, etc. and can include critical reading, writing, speaking, and listening. We propose that even if students did not directly address critical thinking in their artifact assignment, much of what they engaged in when applying class concepts to phenomena outside of class is latent critical thinking. In the artifacts, the students clearly transfer ideas to new contexts, apply course concepts to events in their own lives, and evaluate circumstances they encounter.

First, many of the students (N = 33) referenced instances when they applied persuasion to situations outside the classroom or evaluated persuasive tactics. The subcategories of persuasion that were the most prevalent were related to advertising, fallacies, credibility/support, persuasive appeals, organizational patterns, and types of persuasion. Students often chose to use their critical thinking skills to recognize fallacies in advertisements and commercials, and to recognize persuasive appeals. For instance, one student pointed out situations when an advertisement relied on an "appeal to authority, which incorporates the improper reliance on the expert and faulty comparison, which compares two ideas or things which should not be compared." Another student analyzed *Seventeen Magazine*, stating she was "looking for ads that contained persuasion tactics that I should 'watch for' as a critical consumer." She noted that "When advertising products, companies know that teenagers are the most gullible and the least critical consumers in the market. As a result, fallacies are abundant when youth is the target audience."

Other students observed a variety of persuasive techniques in advertisements. These involve the student critically thinking and evaluating the type of persuasive tactic used. Some of these include appealing "to the idea that everyone is doing, thinking, or buying something," making faulty comparisons, and attacking the person instead of the person's argument.

For one of the artifact assignments, students were provided the opportunity to solve a logical exercise. Twenty-four students successfully analyzed the "Four-Car Problem" to come to a well thought-out conclusion by using their critical thinking skills to question and evaluate information.

The communication process (N = 22), audience analysis (N = 20), ethical communication (N = 19), and listening (N = 19) were topics that arose regularly in the artifact assignments. For the communication process, the students applied concepts such as situation/context, message, miscommunication/misunderstanding, feedback, channels, barriers to effective communication, listening, language, and frames of reference to situations in their own lives. Some students evaluated conversations they had with their social networks, while others analyzed newspaper articles or cartoons.

A large portion of the students used critical thinking in audience analysis. Students writing about audience analysis discussed such topics as ethics, appropriate language (including the use of jargon), gender, open-mindedness, and demographic factors of the audience. For students to apply critical thinking to audience analysis, it is necessary for the student to evaluate the audience, to think critically, and to appropriately adapt to a speech situation. According to a student, "... we [the students] have to be aware of what is happening in our society and incorporate our surroundings into our speeches. We have to be open-minded and consider all types of audiences when presenting all topics." A student who just started attending the university explained a situation where she had to analyze her audience [i.e., her father and younger brother] by using critical thinking, and alter her language appropriately. A third student made a connection between audience analysis and situations outside the classroom. She stated "When giving any type of presentation, one must be sensitive toward his or her audience and their feelings .... This is found to be true when giving speeches, when participating in a job interview, or when teaching a class."

Students, when discussing ethical communication in their artifact assignments, chose topics such as racist/ sexist language, biased language, showing respect, name-calling, plagiarism, cultural sensitivity, and stereotyping. In class, the students learn to analyze the use of appropriate/ethical language, such as biased or sexist language. In their artifact assignments, some of the students thought critically about advertisements where inappropriate language was an issue. When examining an article found in *Redbook Magazine* describing "bad teachers who exhibit inappropriate language in the classroom," one student noticed "a clear representation of abusive, foul language, and name calling, diminishing personal dignity." Using critical thinking skills, the student made a clear link between the communication concept of using appropriate language and the article she read.

Another important category that the students identified in their artifacts was listening. The topics the students focused on when discussing listening included empathic listening, listening vs. hearing, the causes of poor listening, distractions/barriers to effective listening, active listening, and ethical listening. One student was clearly thinking critically when he applied what he had learned about barriers to critical thinking to a comic strip. The student noted that "Cathy's husband heard what she was saying but chose not to listen, or comprehend, because he was focusing on other issues. He had a personal agenda ...."

As mentioned earlier, many authors discussed the importance of credibility to the process of critical thinking. For instance, Ennis (1993) listed judging credibility as one of ten independent critical thinking behaviors. In addition, the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction (as paraphrased by Paul, 1995) included "evaluating the credibility of sources of information" (p. 110) as part of critical thinking. Some of the students (N = 10) also made the connection between critical thinking and credibility. One student made the comment that a company who is not credible in their commercial advertisements, may not be credible in their other business practices. Another student claimed that using an invalid analogy in a commercial causes the company to loose credibility. While analyzing an MCI ad, the student stated, "[r]ather than comparing AT&Ts lowest rate plan with their lowest rate plan, MCI chose to create an invalid analogy .... Though, in the beginning they may help you gain support, once the analogy is shown to be invalid, you will lose support and credibility." It is evident that the students are evaluating the credibility of advertisements by utilizing their critical thinking skills.

Another example of students applying their critical thinking skills when analyzing a person's credibility occurred when one student pointed out that public speakers need experience in the topic area to be deemed credible. In another instance, a student referred to a conversation she had with two other students concerning the importance of looks in a relationship. She noted that one of the participants lost credibility when "she did not consider that other people may have different opinions. She did not take her audience into consideration. Also, she gave facts that have no proof to support her claims. Her credibility basically flew out the window within the first couple of sentences that she spoke." In a different situation, a student used her critical thinking skills while judging the credibility of her softball coaches. She stated:

> I evaluate the credibility of coaches, assistants and teammates when facing conflicting perspectives. I find each coach's competence (a speaker's intelligence, expertise and knowledge of the subject--softball) is greater than the assistants or players due to their experience and position on the team .... Character (a speaker's sincerity, trustworthiness, and concern for the well-being of the audience) also plays a part in determining whose swing approach to use or whose footwork to follow.

Synthesis Papers

When writing their final synthesis paper, which asks the students to reflect on what they improved upon most during the course, many students named critical thinking as one of their major areas of improvement, while others showed evidence of critical thinking. Of the 46 synthesis papers, 19 papers referenced critical thinking in some way (see Table 2). Thirteen students commented directly on an improvement in their critical thinking skills (manifest critical thinking) and six others showed evidence of critical thinking (latent critical thinking).

Table 2
Numbers of Each Category for the Synthesis Papers

Category	Number
Critical Thinking (Manifest)	12
Artifacts/Communication Application (Latent)	5
Cultural Diversity (Latent)	1
Listening (Manifest)	1

Manifest Critical Thinking. In their own words, students commented that completing the artifact assignments taught them to become critical thinkers. One example from a student is: "an area in which I noticed improvement was concerning critical thinking.

This improvement I found mostly to be rooted in the artifact assignments." A second student said "I know I have learned about critical thinking from doing my artifacts. In doing an artifact you have to find an idea and analyze it." In addition, another student commented "I learned to apply concepts to everyday life. This is made evident through the artifacts I did." Referring to the artifact assignment, she later stated "I was using critical thinking to apply class topics to situations I encountered. I noticed that when a certain situation would transpire, I would automatically think of some way I could relate it to speech class." Finally, according to one student, "The artifacts were a real challenge to me at first because they made me think critically about the class and how it relates to the world."

Latent Critical Thinking. Some students, although not making direct comments addressing critical thinking, made it clear that the artifacts helped them learn to think more critically by applying course concepts to personal experiences. This is evident from comments from the synthesis papers. One comment that links critical thinking to experiences outside the classroom says "another exciting development was my recognition of communication applications in everyday life. The artifacts contributed greatly to this new ability." Similarly, another student showed how she was able to transfer insights into new contexts commenting that "through having to write the artifacts I am more aware of communication outside of the class. I am able to attribute the material I learned in class to situations other than those that are in the classroom." Finally, one student stated: "I think that my artifacts are good evidence that I understand the issues that were presented in the textbook."

DISCUSSION

Based upon the working definition of this paper, which comes from the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction, critical thinking focuses on actively gathering information through observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, then using the information to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate. These processes should lead to intellectually supported belief or action. The assessment tool provided here supports these criteria, and provides evidence that critical thinking is taking place. The artifact assignment requires that students engage in application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of real-life events which is consistent with the objectives and criteria for assessment proposed by Paul (1995). This paper used students' own words as evidence of the link that exists between the aspects of critical thinking and the application of class concepts to students' experiences outside the classroom, which is consistent with the notion that students are active agents in the learning process.

Higher Order Thinking

As discussed earlier, there is a distinct connection between critical thinking and higher order thinking. There is agreement among authors that the top three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (analysis, synthesis and evaluation), and possibly the next two levels (comprehension and application) are skills that assist in the process of the critical thinking. The above definition of critical thinking includes many of Bloom's objectives, and it is clear through the students' words that they are engaging in many of these activities.

Critical Teaching

Although this paper does not speak directly to critical teaching, it is related because the methods used to teach critical thinking influence the assessment of critical thinking. For instance, teaching critical thinking through drills or exercises might assess critical thinking with a multiple choice test. On the other hand, teachers who emphasize the transfer of critical thinking skills to other disciplines and to real life may assess critical thinking using more generative methods. The assessment tool provided in this study meets Paul's previously mentioned objectives by assessing "students' skills and abilities in analyzing, synthesizing, applying, and evaluating information" (1995, p. 107). In addition, the assignment provided here allows students to be actively engaged in their own learning. Finally, as Chaffee stated in See (1996), there are two approaches to teaching critical thinking: "the integrated approach, which involves students' daily and academic experiences, and the interactive approach, which involves readings, group exercises, and reflective writing assignments" (p. 26). The artifact assignment presented here uses both approaches in one assignment. First, the assignment uses the integrated approach by allowing students to relate what they have learned in class to their lived experiences. Second, the interactive approach is used because the artifact assignment is a writing assignment asking students to reflect on these lived experiences, using their critical thinking skills. In addition, students often incorporated content from the textbook and group exercises into their writing.

This evidence supports See (1996), Ennis (1987), and Lee's (1997) feelings that the transfer of critical thinking skills to other academic areas and to real life experiences is an important way to teach critical thinking. As stated earlier by Lee (1997), having students relate their personal experiences to the classroom leads to a liberal education, which in turn, "influences behavior less by direct application to experience by instilling as habit of routinely reflecting critically on our experience within the broader frames of reference acquired through such an education" (p. 1).

Assessment

One goal of this study has been to provide an assignment that can successfully assess critical thinking and student's understanding of the concept. Based upon the purpose and the format of the artifact assignment, and the subject area being taught, the authors believe the assessment tool presented here successfully accomplishes this goal. Using the student's own words, evidence of critical thinking is provided in the results. Once again, some of the papers directly address the use of critical thinking during the assignment (manifest critical thinking), and others do not directly address the concept, but based upon the definition of critical thinking adopted for this study, it is clear that the students are engaging in critical thinking (latent critical thinking). For example, one student displayed manifest critical thinking when stating "we have to be critical in our thinking and be skeptical in our interpretations." Another student exposed poor statistical support for claims in an advertisement, stating that "as a critical thinker, I was able to identify the flaw in the advertisement." When analyzing an MCI advertisement, one student showed latent critical thinking by saying "rather than comparing AT&Ts lowest plan with their lowest rate plan, MCI chose to create an invalid analogy .... Though, in the beginning they may help you gain support, once the analogy is shown to be invalid, you will lose support and credibility."

These quotes from the artifact assignments, as well as the other quotes presented in the results section, provide evidence that the assignment is a viable tool for assessing critical thinking. In addition, however, quotes from the synthesis papers provide even further support for this new assessment tool. For example, one student displayed manifest critical thinking by stating: "The artifacts were a real challenge to me at first because they made me think critically about class and how it relates to the world." Another student showed latent critical thinking in the synthesis assignment by saying: "another exciting development was my recognition of communication applications in everyday life. The artifacts contributed greatly to this new ability."

In addition to providing support for the artifact assignment as a successful critical thinking assessment tool, several standardized assessment tests have been described including: the *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal*, the *Cornell Critical Thinking Tests*, the *Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes*, and *The Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay Test*. As authors of some of these tests, Norris and Ennis (1989) stated, "Evaluations of critical thinking are usually artificial in comparison to the life situations in which we hope students will eventually be able and disposed to think critically" (p. 41). Agreeing with this statement, the we feel the three multiple-choice tests are limited because they prohibit students from taking an active role in learning and applying critical thinking. In addition, they fail to allow students to generate their own ideas, which is part of the process of critical thinking. The Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay does allow students to use their own words, however, it forces them to respond to an established scenario that leaves little room for true application through observation, experience and reflection.

In response to Paul's (1995) request for a more generative and creative way of assessing critical thinking, the authors offer the artifact assignment as a tool for allowing students to take an active role in learning to think critically. As supported by the students' own words, it is clear that these assignments allow students to apply critical thinking to their own experiences. In addition, the assignment allows teachers to assess each student's level of critical thinking by judging the description of the artifact, the link to the specified concept, and the analysis of each communication concept.

Again, even as an author of some of the standard critical thinking assessment tests, Ennis (1993) expressed a need for "general-content based tests to check for transfer of critical thinking instruction to everyday life" (p. 182). Unfortunately, he does not provide an assessment tool that allows for the transfer to real-life practices. The assessment tool presented in this paper is an excellent qualitative measure of this transferring process.

Limitations

Although the authors have made no attempt to generalize this concept to a larger audience, some may see this as a limitation. We are aware that the data collected was from a limited sample (three sections of one basic communication course). This was an attempt to qualitatively provide a rich description of student experiences. This is an exploratory, preliminary study of assessing critical thinking through the artifact assignment. Future studies should take a representative sample of student papers and conduct a more thorough and rigorous content analysis to determine the usefulness of the artifact assignment as an authentic form of assessment. This assessment tool could also be effective if applied to other courses in other disciplines.

In addition, the wording of the synthesis assignment may also serve as a limitation as it asks questions of the students to help them analyze what they have learned throughout the term. One of these questions asks if the student has improved in the process of critical thinking. This may lead the student to reflect on the critical thinking process when they might not have otherwise. Also, when students claim that they have improved critical thinking skills, they must provide support for those claims, which is itself an exercise in critical thinking. Finally, as stated earlier, scholars define critical thinking in a variety of ways, which makes it a difficult concept to study. The assessment tool presented above follows the definition from the National Council, but would not be a good measure for a definition focusing mostly on logic or on developing arguments.

CONCLUSION

In sum, we believe that having students actively participate in their learning is imperative in the teaching and learning of critical thinking. This participation entails applying concepts learned in the classroom to the students' personal experiences. The evidence provided in this study supports the idea that students are using the artifact assignment to engage in this participation and are learning to think critically. As Lee

(1997-1998) stated, "By creating explicit opportunities for students to draw connections between their experience and course materials and then providing them with tools for reflection, instructors can help students internalize a habit of critical reflection" (p. 1).

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Assessment of the Repeated Speech Performance as a Pedagogical Tool: A Pilot Study

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"Good writing is rewriting."
–William K. Zinsser

"Revising is a part of writing. Few writers are so expert that they can produce what they are after on the first try."
–William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White

In 1993, two clarion calls appeared in *Communication Education* to communication instructors. These two calls included a revitalized commitment to the teaching of communication (Hart, 1993) and to the research of communication education (Sprague, 1993). With those challenges in mind, as well as the interests of our students, we designed this research to add current thought to the public speaking pedagogy.

This project is not concerned with an overhaul of the traditional public speaking instruction. Rather, it hypothesizes that the fundamental assumption about revision, derived from writing pedagogy, would improve the performance and morale of students in public speaking classes. The typical classroom process asks the student to give a speech, review the instructor's comments, and give a new speech, often with a new topic and a new purpose. To improve delivery, students are told, “Practice, practice, practice,” normally in private. Contrast this with other performing arts, such as music or theatre, where the instructor is regularly present to refine the practice. Public speaking students seldom have this advantage. However, by revising and repeating an assignment, students gain the opportunity to learn from the combination of their previous performance, the instructor’s specific evaluations, and additional practice.

The repeated speech performance is reportedly used at some institutions yet there has been no published research on such an assignment. The contrast between the emphasis on revision within writing classrooms and revision and public speaking is glaring. Writing scholarship argues that revision is necessary to the writing process. Public speaking scholarship, on the other hand, rarely mentions revision as part of the pedagogical process and does not research its pedagogical impact.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Public Speaking Pedagogy

Research concerning public speaking pedagogy in the last 25 years has covered limited topics. Published research for public speaking over this period focussed on assessment (Hufman, 1985; Littlefield, 1975, Moreale, *et al.*, 1993), speech anxiety (Ady, 1987; Allen, 1989; Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989; Ayers, *et al.*, 1993; Ayers & Raftis, 1992; Beatty, 1988a; Beatty, 1998b; Beatty & Andriate, 1985; Beatty & Behnke, 1991; Beatty, Forst, & Stewart, 1986; Beatty & Friedland, 1990; Behnke, Carlile, & Lamb, 1974; Behnke, Sawyer, & King, 1987;

Carlile, Behnke, & Kitchens, 1977; Daly, *et al.*, 1989; Hopf & Ayers, 1992; Kondo, 1994; Martini, Behnke, & King, 1992; Motley & Molloy, 1994; Pelias, 1989; Porhola, Istotalus, & Ovaskainen, 1993; Ralston, Ambler, & Scudder, 1991; Rose, Rancer, & Crannell, 1993; Sawyer & Behnke, 1990; Stanga & Ladd, 1990), the use of video or media to enhance teaching, gender and cultural bias (Mulac, Lundell, & Bradac, 1986; Powell & Cullier, 1990), and teaching different types of students (Vigliano & Sage, 1973). These studies looked at issues and difficulties that teachers and students face in attempting to deal with the symptoms of poor speechmaking. The research reported suggestions and connections to improve teaching and student learning. Articles that contend for paradigm changes in the approach to teaching public speaking are limited to feminist perspectives (Foss, 1992; Pederson, 1981; Thomas, 1991) or an emphasis on argumentation (Rowan, 1995).

This survey of the literature does not necessarily include research on the "hybrid course" that emphasizes a combination of skills and communication contexts, nor on public speaking training for business communication (the business and professional speaking course). Instead, the emphasis in this review has been on the public speaking course and the specific skills involved in preparing and presenting public speeches.

Revision and Writing Pedagogy

The research on revision and writing is extensive. Recent research reiterated the necessity of revision as one of the most important components in helping students to perceive themselves as writers (Stetson, 1994); the use of revision in teaching good writing

(Bauer, 1993; Beach & Eaton, 1984; Faigley & Witte, 1984; Fulwiler, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graham, 1995; Hodges, 1994; Lehr, 1995; Lindeman, 1982; Murray, 1985a, Murray, 1985b; Peterson, 1993; Wong, 1994); revision as collaborative effort (Irby, 1995); and revision as an ethical act.

METHODOLOGY

In public speaking courses, it is expected that instructors grade and critique speeches and offer suggestions for improving student performances. New material is usually given as the course moves on; students continue to select topics and do research for their next round of speeches. However, the speech-specific suggestions noted in the previous evaluations may or may not appear in the succeeding speeches, because students rarely have the opportunity to revise and present again.

Although most educators realize the value of repetition as a learning tool, this practice is largely overlooked in communication pedagogy due to time constraints, fear of boredom for listeners, and lack of effort from the students. In designing this study, we considered these drawbacks.

Two questions dominated our concerns as we began. (1) What are the perceived and realized advantages students gain from repeating a speech? and (2) Is the repeated speech performance a viable pedagogical tool?

Participants

Participants were college first-year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in the public speaking course at a Southeastern university. Ten class sections were used for the study. After omitting students who were unable or unwilling to complete the speeches required, 158 cases were used for analyses. Students from a variety of disciplines, academic levels, gender, ethnic origins, and age groups were represented in the sample.

Procedure

Participants were asked to present a three-minute informative speech citing three sources. The speaking assignment was part of the graded course. Students were told that their speech performance would be videotaped, and their consent to do so was secured. After listening to the speech, instructors returned written critiques that detailed the difficulties observed and their recommendations for revising it. Then the students were asked to repeat their speech with changes and improvements for their next grade. For this second assignment, students were told to lengthen the speech from three to five minutes, add one source (a total of four sources), and include a visual aid. They were encouraged to change or modify their attention-getting techniques to ensure a vital impact on their audience. These changes were included to address some of the possible disadvantages that could occur regarding listener boredom and lack of challenge for the presenter. Again, students were informed that they would be videotaped.

Upon completion of both assignments, the videotaped speeches were divided among the researchers. In order to avoid bias, researchers only evaluated the speeches of students who were not enrolled in their courses. To assess the student speeches, the researchers used *The Competent Speaker* instrument (Morreale, *et al.*, 1993). This critique form was used for two reasons: (1) to give the researchers a recognized assessment tool to evaluate participant speeches and (2) to consider this instrument for our own departmental use.[1]

The Competent Speaker assessment instrument employs eight competencies for evaluation:

1. Chooses and Narrows a Topic Appropriately for the Audience and Occasion,
2. Communicates the Thesis/Specific Purpose in a Manner Appropriate for the Audience and Occasion,
3. Provides Appropriate Supporting Material Based on the Audience and Occasion,
4. Uses an Organizational Pattern Appropriate to the Topic, Audience, Occasion and Purpose,
5. Uses Language that is Appropriate to the Audience, Occasion, and Purpose,
6. Uses Vocal Variety in Rate, Pitch, and Intensity to Heighten and Maintain Interest,
7. Uses Pronunciation, Grammar and Articulation Appropriate to the Designated Audience, and
8. Uses Physical Behaviors that Support the Verbal Message.

[1] Note that current research has noted that the type of assessment instrument did no have a significant change on how evaluators assessed student performance (Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995).

Each competency was rated on a scale of 1-9, with a rating of 1 as the lowest and a 9 as the highest level of the competency.[2]

Interrater reliability (.9274 + .8578 for two sets of raters) was achieved by using a training tape provided by the Communication Assessment Commission before the research data were evaluated. Four researchers viewed and assessed these student speeches using *The Competent Speaker* assessment instrument to ensure that all evaluators were measuring the speech performances within the same standards. Once consistency was achieved, researchers split the data. Two researchers evaluated each initial speech and its repeated performance.

Each of the eight sections of the evaluation form was scored (1-9) for each student presentation. The eight scores were totaled, revealing how many of the possible 72 points (9 x 8) were awarded. Both the first speech and the repeat speech were evaluated in the same manner. Toward the end of the term, students were given a survey where they provided demographic information. In addition, they gave answers to four questions, requesting their reactions to the assignments and their perception of the value of the repeated speech (see Appendix, "Repeated Speech Performance Survey").

[2] The evaluators marked each competency as Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, or Excellent. Then, within each category, the evaluator assessed a Low, Medium, or High level of the competency. Thus, a Low-Unsatisfactory was given a 1, a Medium-Unsatisfactory was given a 2, a High-Unsatisfactory was given an 3, up to a High-Excellent rating of 9.

RESULTS

Demographics

Age range in the test sample was 18-39 with 91% between the ages of 18 and 23. Males comprised 56.4%, females 43.6%. First year students made up 35.8% of the sample, sophomores 27.9%, juniors 18.2% and seniors 17.6%. Cumulative grade point averages, reported within given ranges, were based on a 4-point scale. Approximately 5% reported grades above 3.5; 19.8% stated grades of 3.0 to 3.49; 35% between 2.5 and 2.99; 31.5% between 2.0 and 2.49; and 8.6% below 2.0.

Competency Scores

To assess the outcome of the changes in competency scores, means were calculated and subjected to 2-tailed t-tests. The mean value of each of the eight competencies from the first and revised speeches and the overall scores are given in Table 1. The scores increased significantly (p=.000) on all competencies. On the average, students' scores increased 4 points or 11.8%. However, in reviewing the total data set, a number of cases were observed where the increase was as much as 13 points or a 38.3% increase.

In terms of the competencies that improved the most, the mean increase in Competency 2 (use of specific purpose) was 0.87 and Competency 4 (uses an appropriate organizational pattern) was 0.81 as shown in Table 1. Although these two competencies showed the greatest change, note that all of the competencies improved.

Table 1
Changes in Overall Competencies: Pre and Post Scores

Competencies	First Speech	Revised Speech
Competency 1: Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion	4.55	5.14
Competency 2: Communicates thesis/specific purpose in manner appropriate for audience and occasion	4.08	4.95
Competency 3: Provides appropriate supporting material for audience and occasion	3.66	4.38
Competency 4: Uses an appropriate organizational pattern for topic, audience, occasion, and purpose	4.25	5.06
Competency 5: Uses language appropriate to the audience, occasion, and purpose	4.71	4.93
Competency 6: Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity to heighten and maintain interest	4.21	4.67
Competency 7: Uses pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate to the designated audience	4.72	4.86
Competency 8: Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message	3.81	4.15
SUM	33.97	37.96

Figure 1
Mean of Competency Data for Group I:
Comparison of Pre and Post Scores

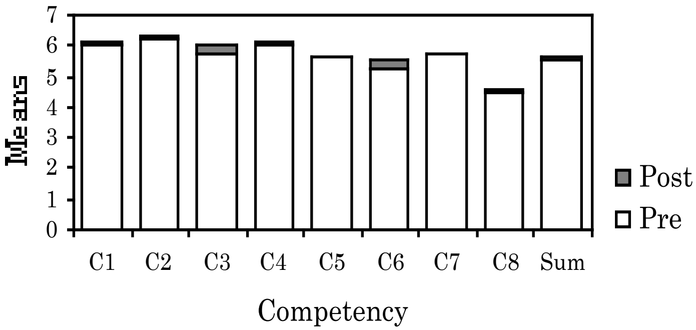


Figure 2
Mean of Competency Data for Group II:
Comparison of Pre and Post Scores

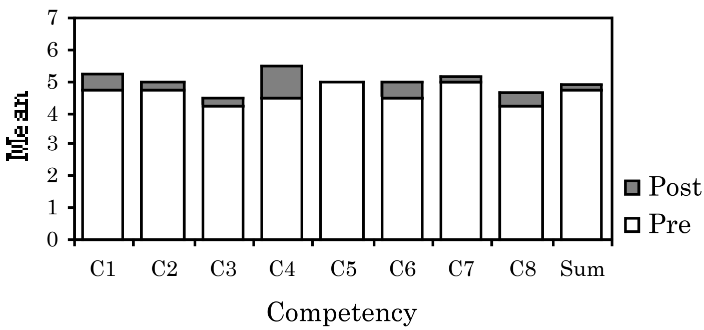


Figure 3
Mean of Competency Data for Group III:
Comparison of Pre and Post Scores

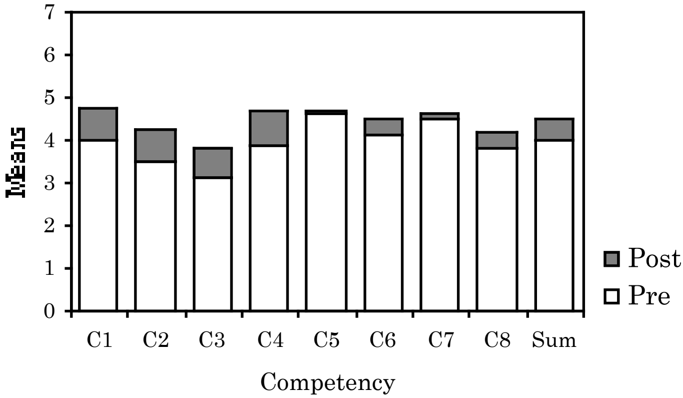
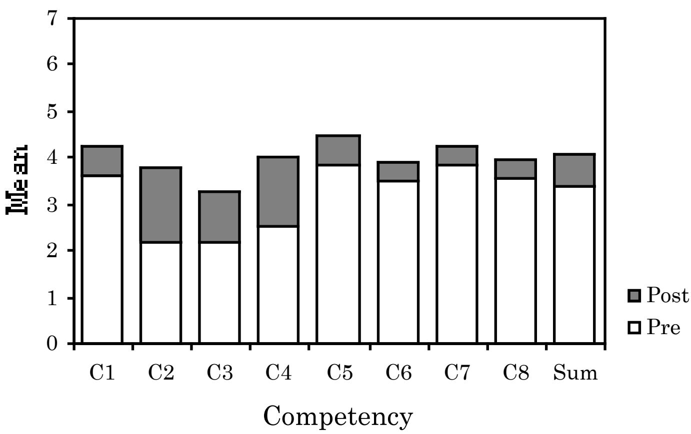


Figure 4
Mean of Competency Data for Group IV:
Comparison of Pre and Post Scores



Data also were ranked from the best to worst scores. These data then were separated into quartiles so that changes in competence could be observed for each level of initial evaluation. Figure 1 shows the changes for the best students. The greatest improvements occurred in Competency 3 (uses appropriate supporting material) and Competency 6 (uses vocal variety). For those students scoring in the high-middle range, Figure 2, Competency 1 (chooses and narrows topic), Competency 4, and Competency 6 were the most improved. Figure 3 illustrates the changes in those receiving low-middle scores. Competencies 1, 2, 3, and 4 were increased noticeably. Students who were rated least favorably on the first speech, Figure 4, demonstrated most improvements in Competencies 2, 3, and 4. One exception to the overall improvements should be noted, however. The average of the students in the top quartile actually went down slightly (from 5.77 to 5.73) for Competency 7 (uses pronunciation, grammar appropriately).

Perceived Value of the Repeated Speech Performance

Students also were asked to report their estimation of the value of the repeat performance opportunity. The reactions to the four statements answered on a 5-point Likert-type scales where 1 represented “strongly disagree,” 2 “disagree,” 3 “neutral,” 4 “agree,” and 5 “strongly agree,” are shown in Table 2. In Statements 1, 3, and 4 students indicated their agreement that this learning tool was helpful, valuable, and recommended. Statement 2 asked about the assignment presenting difficulties and students gave an average of 2.67, indicating that whatever problems may have been associ-

Table 2
Student Responses to Qualitative Questions

Statement	Mean Response	Std. Dev.
1. "I believe the repeated speech assignment was helpful."	3.96	0.89
2. "I believe the repeated speech assignment presented some difficulties."	2.67	1.14
3. "I believe the repeated speech assignment is a valuable learning tool."	3.87	0.85
4. "I would recommend that instructors use the repeated speech assignment in public speaking classrooms."	3.93	0.95

ated with this assignment were not particularly distracting.

Qualitative responses were solicited as well to the above statements. Most comments were favorable. However, there were those who expressed some objections. Samplings of the comments are below.

Statement 1. "I believe the repeated speech assignment was helpful."

- It helped me to evaluate my performance and correct mistakes the instructor may have noticed and myself as well.
- Since it was the first speech, and everyone was nervous, the second (repeat) speech was something of a redemption speech which allowed speakers to focus more on improvement.
- I felt much more comfortable giving the speech a second time.
- I made sure I corrected my obvious mistakes from the first speech.
- I felt that repeating the speech gave me a chance to find out how the professor graded and to get used to the situation.
- It helps one understand what they did wrong and it gives an individual the opportunity to fix the problems by the next speech.

Negative comments:

- I would have rather done a new topic.
- I did not feel motivated.
- It helps you in some ways, but it is hard to get enough information for the second and not make it sound exactly the same.

Statement 2: “I believe the repeated speech assignment presented some difficulties.”

- Most of the difficulties were before the speech was given – the research, choosing the topic and polishing; the second speech just needed slight changes and more polish.
- That’s just it, I don't think it presented difficulties. It improved the second time around.
- Other than originality, there were no problems for me.
- I don’t think there was ANYTHING negative about repeating the speeches.
- The second speech was less difficult.

Negative Comments:

- Repeating the "same speech" was a little nerve racking. I kept thinking, "They've already heard this part!"
- Had to come up with new things to make it interesting.
- Was difficult to cover topic twice/making it different the second time-I guess this is a challenge.

Statement 3: "I believe the repeated speech assignment is a valuable learning tool."

- It helped us see where we messed up and gave us a chance to do better the second time around.
- It's difficult to know what is "expected of you" on your first attempt. The critique showed in "green [color of instructor's ink] and black and white" what was wrong and what was right.
- If students try to learn from the repeated speech, it is a valuable learning tool.
- You see what you did wrong, and you can fix it, or work on it.
- I did much better on the 2nd speech because I got a feel for the room and the grading system.
- There was not a huge point value for the 1st speech, so it gave me plenty of leeway.

Negative Comments:

- It was helpful. It would have been a little more complementary if the visual aid was used in the first speech.
- I'm not sure that I learned more giving the second speech.
- It was helpful but I easily could have done what I learned on a different topic.

Statement 4: "I would recommend that instructors use the repeated speech assignment in public speaking classrooms."

- To give the students a chance to work extra hard after making mistakes in the first speech, it really gave someone a chance of knowing what is expected during the speech.
- It helps the students' grades, and speech is not an easy class and the students need as much help as possible.
- It was a good thing.
- In the case of first time speech givers, the repeated speech assignment gives people more confidence in their performance.
- In my opinion, the best way to learn is from your mistakes. This allows the student to do that without counting against them.
- It's good to give people a second chance on a speech.

Negative Comments:

- I'm not sure about this idea -- Yes, I was challenged -- but, I just don't know how effective this was overall.
- It would not hurt to use it maybe once.
- Speech teachers will do what they want, as most teachers do.

DISCUSSION

After studying the raw data, the statistical analysis, and the qualitative remarks made by students, the global impression was positive concerning the use of the repeated speech assignment. Overall grades improved for 81.6% (n=129) of the students. With this size effect, this tool appears to be worthy of class time and students' efforts. Many of those whose grades did not improve gave positive comments on being allowed to refine their processes and on gaining a greater self-confidence.

In reviewing Figures 1 through 4, all of the students whose scores did not change or fell slightly were in the highest scoring group (Group 1, Figure 1). Very little change was noted in Competencies 2, 5, 7, and 8. This indicates that the better performing students have a grasp of conveying specific purpose, use of appropriate language, proper use of pronunciation, grammar, and articulation, and the effects of physical behaviors on their speech. Other explanations for the minimal change in the Group 1 may be that the addition of a visual aid may have hampered their efforts in some way.

It is interesting to note the increasing differences in pre- and post-scores in Groups 2, 3, and 4. Group 4, those with the lowest initial scores, improved the most across all competencies as well as the overall average. Their largest area of improvement was in Competency 2, conveying specific purpose. Competency 3, providing supporting materials, and Competency 4, appropriate organizational pattern, also increased notably. The instructor-specific comments given after the first presentation evidently helped these students understand these requirements better and were able to apply them directly in their follow-up efforts. With this evidence of improvement, it is reasonable to think that the repeated speech performance would profit the majority of students but most especially those who begin the course with the fewest public speaking skills.

The answer to our second question regarding pedagogy is positive, yet preliminary. Educators and researchers must test the repeated speech performance further to affirm its worth. As with revising techniques in writing, the manner of teaching, coaching, and practicing must be examined and refined to produce the best presentations.

Implications for Future Studies

Although this study reveals a positive response toward the assignment and a statistically significant improvement in the scores, additional research needs to compare the students who do the repeated speech assignment with a control group that does not. A common, follow-up speech performance given by both groups should be compared.

Other research questions might include: Do students in the repeated speech group improve significantly in their overall understanding of the speech-making process? How does their overall performance compare with the performance of students who do not repeat any assignments? How would scores change if no additional requirements were demanded? Would learning be more permanent if only specific instructor comments were evaluated in the repeated speech?

However tentative these findings, the repeated speech gives researchers and educators encouragement that the reiterated speech, like revising an essay, promotes learning and successful outcomes.

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APPENDIX
REPEATED SPEECH PERFORMANCE SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Please consider each of the following questions carefully and answer honestly. Use the back of the sheet for responses if necessary. Do not put your name anywhere on the survey.

Age: ________

Gender (Please Circle): M F

Classification (Please Circle): FR SO JR SR

Major: ______________________________

GPA (Please Circle):
below 2.0
2.0-2.49
2.5-2.99
3.0-3.49
3.5-4.0

Race: _____________________

Home State or Country: _________________________

Have you previously taken a public speaking course?
YES NO
If yes, where? ______________________

1. I believe the repeated informative speech assignment was helpful. (Please Circle):

   Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Neutral* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

   Please explain your response:

2. I believe the repeated informative speech assignment presented some difficulties. (Please Circle):

   Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Neutral* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

   Please explain your response:

3. I believe the repeated informative speech assignment is a valuable learning tool. (Please Circle):

   Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Neutral* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

   Please explain your response:

4. I would recommend that instructors use the repeated speech assignment in public speaking classrooms. (Please Circle):

   Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Neutral* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

   Please explain your response:

An Examination of Male and Female Students' Perceptions of Relational Closeness: Does the Basic Course Have an Influence?[1]

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Current research on gender-role socialization suggests that males and females learn at a young age the "appropriate" behaviors for their sex. Furthermore, Social Learning Theory suggests these appropriate behaviors are reinforced verbally and nonverbally (Bandura, 1977; Hildum & Brown, 1956; Insko, 1965; Insko & Butzine, 1967; Insko & Melson, 1969; Krasner, Knowles, & Ullmann, 1965; Singer, 1961; Verplanck, 1955) by parents (Jackson & Henriksen, 1997; Lauer & Lauer, 1994; Witt, 1997), peer groups (Garner, Robertson, Smith, 1997; Hibbard & Buhrmester, 1998; Elkin, 1960), and even teachers (Martin, 1998; Rong, 1996; Serbin, Zelkowitz, Doyle, Gold, & Wheaton, 1990) while inappropriate displays are sanctioned. As a result of the reinforcement, the individual increasingly performs the appropriate gendered behaviors for his/her sex while avoiding the behaviors that invite disapproval and sanction. As instructors in the basic communication course, we may be unwittingly participating in the socialization process. Or, perhaps we may be engaging in an unreal-

[1] This paper was presented during the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, November 1997, Chicago.

istic fight against the firmly established socialized behaviors of our students.

A primary goal of beginning communication courses is to help students communicate competently in their personal relationships with friends, family, and dating partners. However, ambiguity governs current conceptualizations of the term "competence." For this reason at least two functional definitions of communication competence exist: the rhetorical perspective and the relational model (McCroskey, 1984). While the rhetorical perspective pervades public speaking classes, it is the relational model that tends to underlie hybrid and interpersonal basic courses (Bissett-Zerilli & Heisler, 1997; Carrel, 1997; Heisler, 1996). This relational model of communication competence is closely related to traditional "feminine" relational closeness that emphasizes listening, empathy, self-disclosure and interdependence.

The literature indicates that most of our female students are familiar with and prefer these feminine behaviors (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Barth & Kinder, 1988; Fox, Gibbs, & Auerbach, 1985; Sherrod, 1989; Statham, 1987). Our male students, however, are socialized to value other behaviors (Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Crawford, 1977; Seidler, 1992; Sollie & Leslie, 1994) that are not typically accentuated in basic communication courses (Bissett-Zerilli & Heisler, 1997; Carrell, 1997; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wisemann, 1977; Willmington, Neal, & Steinbrecher, 1994). Although men and women are socialized to establish and maintain relational closeness differently, there has been little discussion regarding the emphasis on feminine relational skills in the basic communication course. Furthermore, there has been no discussion on how these different "masculine" and "feminine" perspectives on relational closeness might affect the students in our basic communication classes. Therefore, this study sought to examine the effects of the basic course advocating a traditionally feminine perspective of communication competency on male and female university students. In particular, the authors were interested in whether the male students' perceptions of relational closeness would reflect traditional gender roles after sixteen weeks of instruction in the basic communication course.

RELATIONAL CLOSENESS SOCIALIZATION: MASCULINE AND FEMININE

Men and women are socialized to perform and value gender specific behaviors throughout their childhood (Maccoby, 1992). In fact, the socialization process can begin just hours after birth. As a result, men and women often establish and maintain their interpersonal relationships, such as friendships, differently. In addition, societal norms may reinforce the correlational nature of an individuals' biological sex and the gender role he/she will adopt later in life. For this reason, biological sex categories (male/female) will be used to facilitate discussion of those behaviors typically associated with masculine and feminine gender roles. It is important to note that several researchers have argued against significant sex differences, most notably Canary and Hause (1993). While Canary and Hause (1993) criticized researchers utilizing stereotypes to interpret and analyze data, they acknowledged stereotypes can be useful in some instances: "Hypothesizing that sex role stereotypes affect communication behavior should be reserved for those rare episodes where there is little other information available to the communicator…" (p. 136). Given that in the instructional setting a majority of the information forces students to rely on the hypothetical interpersonal interaction, examining the potential for gender role stereotypes in the basic course seems plausible and relevant. Therefore, the following section will highlight those behaviors typical of men and women when establishing and maintaining their interpersonal relationships[2] according to traditional gender roles.

Feminine Relational Closeness

Since the 1970s, women have been considered to be "better" communicators. In fact, communication research once emphasized the feminine perspective to the point of labeling men as incompetent (Griffen, 1981; Lewis, 1978; MacInnis, 1991; Wellman, 1992). This feminine perspective of relational closeness can be characterized by self-disclosure, empathy, active listening, and interdependence.

For women, self-disclosure builds relationships and relational closeness (Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Rubin, 1983). When women disclose to one another, their topics are most likely sensitive and/or personal information (Sherrod, 1989). For instance, women often share information about their fears and feelings (Sollie & Leslie, 1994), family matters (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986), and problems (Fox, Gibbs, & Auerbach, 1985). In addition, these disclosures may include verbal declarations of affection. Women seek to give (and receive) specific verbal messages conveying feelings about the receiver(s) and their relationship. Messages such as "I

[2] Our conceptualization of "interpersonal relationship" is borrowed from Miller and Steinberg (1975), including those relationships in which psychological information is known and shared between individuals.

love you," "I care about you," and "this relationship is important to me" may serve to strengthen the relationship (Parks & Floyd, 1996; Wills, Weiss, & Patterson, 1974). These disclosures, congruent with women's desire to self-disclose about feelings and emotions, allow senders and receivers to intensify relationships. Self-disclosure provides the opportunity for emotional closeness, showing caring and concern through listening and empathy, a critical component for relationships (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Wellman & Wortley, 1989). Therefore, self-disclosure not only becomes a characteristic of relational closeness, it also leads to other communication behaviors such as validation, trust, and caring that are typically associated with the female model (Clark & Reis, 1988; Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Furthermore, disclosure and sharing among women is typically reciprocal. Reciprocal disclosure and listening among friends builds trust and creates a network of support for women (Behk, 1993). This network extends to feelings of interdependence (Barth & Kinder, 1988) which may extend into the workplace. In contrast to male supervisors, who stress autonomy for themselves and their subordinates, Statham (1987) found that female supervisors use management styles that emphasize mentor-mentee relationships which include "role-modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling and friendship" (p. 155).

Since communication research indicates that women look for relationships with others characterized by high levels of reciprocal self-disclosure, emotional closeness (including empathy and listening), and interdependence, a female or feminine model of communication (or communication competence) must include such skills. However, this is not the case for men. While women spend time talking, men are likely to develop relationships and establish relational closeness utilizing different skills.

When asked about their relationships, most men describe behaviors that include playing sports, watching television, and perhaps fixing the car. Thus, the communication represented by more masculine behaviors include nonpersonal self-disclosure (Aries & Johnson, 1983; Marks, 1994; Sollie & Leslie, 1994; Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986), shared activity and reciprocal helping behaviors (Aukett, Ritchie, & Mill, 1988; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Nardi, 1882; Seidler, 1992; Sherrod, 1989), and problem-solving and advice-giving (Farrell, 1991; Seidler, 1992; Wellman, 1992).

Men do engage in some self-disclosure. However, these masculine disclosures lack the expressive and personal nature of their female counterparts (Aries & Johnson, 1983; Aukett, Ritchie, & Mill, 1988; Crawford, 1977; Haas & Sherman, 1982). The content of male disclosure centers around politics, sports, and business (Fox, Gibbs, & Auerbach, 1985). Men are most comfortable conversing about current events, sports, money, and music (Sherman & Haas, 1982). Different purposes for disclosure may influence the ways men use this skill. If men view sharing information as task-related, they will disclose about "task or goal oriented topics for the purpose of serving instrumental needs" (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 114). The topics which will attract men "reflect images of power, competition, and status" (Stewart, Cooper, & Friedley, 1986, p. 100).

Overall, however, men are more comfortable "doing things" to show caring than expressing that same emotion verbally (Bahk, 1993; Farrell, 1991). Often, simply spending time in the same place creates closeness among men (Reid & Fine, 1992). However, spending time together requires some type of interaction. Since talking about personal topics creates discomfort

(Bell, 1981; Levison, 1978; McGill, 1985; Stein, 1986) and discussing topics on only nonpersonal levels would drastically shorten the interactions, joint activities present an ideal way for men to spend time together without personal disclosure. These side-by-side encounters allow participants proxemic closeness without demanding emotional closeness (Aukett, Ritchie, & Mill, 1988; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Crawford, 1977; Nardi, 1992; Rubin, 1985; Sherrod, 1987; Wright, 1982). In addition, these activities often involve competition among friends as a means of "cementing" relational closeness (Reid & Fine, 1992). On the occasions when men do share their problems and concerns with others, the responses from other men will resemble advice and problem-solving (Blieszner, 1994; Farrell, 1991; Seidler, 1992). When men are asked to comment on friends' problems, rarely do they offer the emotional support and empathy given by women. Instead, sharing a problem is an invitation to problem-solve or give advice (Farrell, 1991; Seidler, 1992).

There are many socialized differences between the sexes that manifest in the development of close, interpersonal relationships. As a result, it may not be enough to have one, widely-used definition or single set of communication behaviors used to evaluate competency across all interactions. In the past, explanations of communication competence were rooted rhetoric (Clark & Delia, 1979; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Individuals who were knowledgeable of persuasive rhetorical techniques and strategies and able to form effective persuasive arguments were considered "competent communicators" (Branham & Pearce, 1996; Fleming, 1998). However, within the last twenty years, a distinction between public speaking and communication in relationships opened the gateway to new research on communication competence within relationships

(McCroskey, 1984). This new "relational" model of competence was redefined to include knowledge and demonstration of empathy, self-disclosure, encouraging the expressing of feelings, active listening, collaboration, and interdependence (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Carrell, 1997; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wisemann, 1977; Willmington, Neal, & Steinbrecher, 1994). It is this relational model of communication competence that is taught in both the interpersonal and hybrid basic communication courses as a means to encourage students to practice effective communication (Bissett-Zerilli & Heisler, 1997; Heisler, 1996; Wood & Inman, 1993). However, perhaps this current communication competency conceptualization should be challenged.

By using the traditional relational model of communication competence in the basic course we may be teaching students only those skills that are linked to the feminine model of relational closeness. Furthermore, a one-sided perspective of closeness may ignore values and behaviors male students have been socialized to advocate in relationships. Gender roles are often enacted unconsciously (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Zvonkovic, Greaver, Schmiege, & Hall, 1996) and are presumed difficult to alter within the constraints of a sixteen week communication course. Therefore, a disregard for masculine closeness by presenting only feminine closeness behaviors may disconfirm those who value masculine skills. And, while skill acquisition is an essential element in any communication course, perhaps the standard by which these skills are measured deserves closer examination. If a bias against the masculine closeness skills men are socialized to value exists in current interpersonal competency literature, instructors may be no longer teaching communication competency but a series of behaviors that may be left behind at the end of the course.

Social Learning Theory approaches to socialization would suggest that engrained gender roles are difficult to change during a brief encounter, even with direct communication (Bandura, 1977; Maccoby, 1992; Santrock, 1994). Although male students are "reinforced" through better grades and/or instructor approval, it remains to be seen whether this reinforcement (during a single semester) would influence men's perceptions of relational closeness. With this in mind, the authors sought to determine if, after having completed a basic communication course that focuses on feminine communication skills, male students would prefer traditionally masculine relational closeness skills. In addition, the researchers sought to determine whether males would indicate dissatisfaction with sections of the course that advocated feminine skills and/or if they would object to the material presented as running counter to what they believe.

METHOD

Sample

Participants were 373 undergraduate students (127 males and 243 females) enrolled in a required beginning communication course at a mid-sized Midwestern university. Students participating in the research study were compensated for their time through extra credit in their communication class. The average age of participants was 18 years and most were in their first term of college. Recognizing that the nature of this study required students to evaluate a course in which they had not received their final grade, the researchers assured all participants of their anonymity. Because this course is the one most frequently chosen by students to achieve the "Oral English Competency" requirement mandated by the university, it was believed that the sample contained a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The Course Format. The participants for this study were drawn from the university-wide beginning communication course. The format of this basic course required students to complete three speeches, six exams, as well as several in-class activities focusing on interpersonal skills. While this basic course had several sections with different instructors (typically graduate teaching assistants), the syllabus, exams, and many of the activities in the course are standardized to ensure equity. In addition, instructors of this basic course are required to attend a term-long training session designed to promote consistency in instructor style and presentation. For these reasons, it was assumed that participants in the study had received the same course material in a similar format across sections and instructors.

Instruments

Each participant completed a course evaluation form designed to measure participant perceptions of relational closeness as demonstrated through masculine and feminine behaviors. Because no current measure exists for this purpose, the utilized scale was created expressly for this study. To develop the Relational Behavior Scale (RBS), a detailed review of relevant gender literature was performed. Scale validity was created by compiling numerous interpersonal behaviors identified in the previous gender and relationship closeness literature. To ensure content validity (Ghiselli, Campbell, & Zedeck, 1981), special care was given to include a wide variety of behaviors representing traditionally masculine, feminine, and neutral behaviors. These behaviors were then used as individual scale items, each representing a potential means for creating relational closeness. For purposes of clarity, identified behaviors were grouped according to topic area on the RBS questionnaire. However, these item-groupings were not utilized to facilitate statistical analysis. As a result, individual item reliabilities were assumed to be perfect.

The final RBS questionnaire was utilized to collect students' perceptions of relational closeness. The RBS consists of 39 items divided into four sections:

1) good listening,
2) good relationships,
3) good interpersonal relationships, and
4) good intimate relationships.

Directions included the following statements: "This is not a test. Please give us your own opinion not those in the book. There are no wrong answers." These items were designed to assess the extent to which students, particularly males, have integrated the feminine interpersonal behaviors taught in basic courses into their socialized gender roles.

The first section of the RBS consisted of eight items describing various characteristics of good listeners. Those items containing behaviors that would be typical of the masculine model of communicating relational closeness included "good listeners should give advice," and "good listeners should try to solve the speaker's problem(s) for him or her." Items from a feminine model of relational closeness included "good listeners should share his or her feelings with the speaker," "good listeners need to paraphrase what the speakers says," and "good listeners should reflect the speaker's feelings." Those items considered 'neutral,' or not typical of either the male or female model, included "good listeners tend to be women not men," and "good listeners probably are just waiting for their turn to 'talk' and be heard." Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed that each behavior described their perceptions of a good listener using a 5-point Likert-type scale (5 = strongly agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = strongly agree).

The second section of the RBS consisted of 22 items identifying student perceptions of good relationships. Participants were instructed to think about their "own close, personal relationships (either with friends or spouses/significant others)" while evaluating the items on the same Likert-type scale used for the previous section. This section contained seven items that described feminine behaviors: "good relationships require disclosure of personal information (fears and feelings)," "good relationships require verbal statements of caring and commitment (I love you, I miss you)," "good relationships require cooperation rather than competition," "good relationships require empathy and emotional closeness, good relationships require nonverbal signs of affection (e.g., hugging, kissing)," and "good relationships require time spent talking about the relationship." Those items that described masculine behaviors included "good relationships require competition," "good relationships require solving each other's problems," "good relationships require spending time doing things together," and "good relationships require helping each other with tasks or chores." Neutral items were also included, such as "good relationships require time spent helping each other communicate better," "good relationships are easier for women to develop than men," "good relationships are more important for men than women," "good relationships are easier to establish with one's father," and "good relationships are easier to establish with one's mother."

The third section of the RBS asked participants to identity characteristics of a good interpersonal relationship. Again respondents were told to agree or disagree (using the same Likert-type scale) based upon their experiences with friends and significant others. Of the seven items in this section, four of the items described feminine closeness behaviors. These items included "good interpersonal relationships require honest, personal self- disclosure from both parties," "a good interpersonal relationship is based on the amount of time two people spend together talking," "a good interpersonal relationship requires empathy and emotional closeness," and "a good interpersonal relationship requires active listening." Those items using masculine behaviors as characteristic of relationships included "a good interpersonal relationship is based on the amount of time two people spend doing tasks/chores together," and "a good interpersonal relationship is based on the amount of time two people spend doing activities together (playing golf, bowling)." A final masculine item ("a good interpersonal relationship can be harmed if partners compete with each other") was reverse coded during statistical analyses (i.e., 5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, 1=5) to reflect agreement with previous items.

The final section of the RBS contained three items related to intimate relationships. These items attempted to identity participants' perceptions and definitions of intimate relationships. The same Likert-type scale was used for participant responses. The first item, while not identified as a masculine behavior in the review of literature, was expected to be consistent with a masculine definition of intimacy ("a good intimate relationship must involve sexual activity"). The remaining items were designed to help researchers understand if traditional perceptions of female-female relationships as "better" or more intimate than male-male relationships existed in this sample ("a good intimate relationship is rarely achieved between two heterosexual men," "a good intimate relationship is rarely achieved between two heterosexual women").

Procedures

Data were collected at the end of the term in the basic communication course. Potential subjects from these basic courses attended any one of the three nights scheduled for data collection, in a classroom of an academic building on campus. As they arrived, participants were given the questionnaire with a reminder to keep all responses confidential. After participants had completed the questionnaire, they deposited it in a box inside the classroom and then proceeded to a separate classroom to receive extra credit.

RESULTS

Current research reflects the continued segregation of men and women into distinct gender roles. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not male students, socialized to value more masculine interpersonal behaviors, would acknowledge more feminine behaviors as essential for "good" relationships after the basic communication course. T-tests were run for each questionnaire item to determine if men and women had different perceptions about the behaviors used to communicate relational closeness. Table 1 presents these results.

Table 1
Results of T-tests for Communication Competence and Beliefs about Interpersonal and Intimate Relationships

Good Listening	XM(en)	XW(omen)	t	p
advice-giving	3.71	3.64	.57	ns
paraphrase	3.21	3.45	-2.05	.02*
share feelings	3.43	3.45	-1.25	ns
reflect feelings	3.38	3.59	-1.86	.03*
solve problems	2.50	2.25	2.17	.02*
share information	3.51	3.66	-1.22	ns
turn-taking	2.15	2.08	.59	ns
good listeners ~W	2.33	2.73	-2.75	.003*
Good Relationship				
self-disclosure	3.81	3.83	-.14	ns
time together	4.02	4.08	-.45	ns
tasks and chores	3.66	3.84	-1.51	ns
verbal commitment	3.71	3.98	-2.03	.02*
cooperation	3.88	4.06	-1.44	ns
empathy	3.66	4.03	-2.86	.002*
advice	3.85	4.02	-1.40	ns
solving problems	3.07	2.85	1.97	.02*
shared activity	3.48	3.49	-.06	ns
competition	2.66	2.43	1.95	.03*
nonverbal affection	3.60	3.81	-1.66	.05*
criticism	3.50	3.58	-.77	ns
lying	2.79	2.58	1.17	ns

relationship talk	3.65	3.91	-2.12	.002*
comm. comp.	3.59	3.75	-1.40	ns
sharing personal info.	3.51	3.77	-2.16	.02*
easier for women	2.65	2.91	-2.13	.03
more important for (M)	2.50	2.34	1.43	ns
rarely achieved	2.39	2.21	1.47	ns
easy with dad	3.24	3.22	1.17	ns
easy with mom	3.32	3.42	-.84	ns
requires self-disclosure	3.55	3.70	-1.26	ns
time talking	3.35	3.43	-.64	ns
Good Interpersonal Relationship				
time with chores	3.31	3.18	1.20	ns
time with activity	3.53	3.36	1.48	.05*
empathy	3.53	3.61	.75	ns
active listening	3.80	3.90	-.90	ns
harmful if competitive	3.31	3.47	-1.36	ns
Good Intimate Relationship				
heterosexual men	2.83	2.51	2.41	.02*
heterosexual women	2.80	2.26	4.15	.000*
sexual activity	2.77	2.23	3.75	.000*

The first section of the questionnaire addressed the characteristics of a good listener. The items showing significance included the skills paraphrasing ($t = -2.05$; $p < .02$), reflecting feelings ($t = -1.86$; $p < .03$), and solving problems ($t = 2.17$; $p < .02$). For those items, the behaviors associated with the female model of relational closeness (paraphrasing and reflecting feelings) had higher agreement from the females in the sample. Solving problems, a behavior which builds relational closeness in the male model, was viewed more positively by male participants (XM = 2.50; XW = 2.25). The last significant item in the first section of the questionnaire was "good listeners tend to be women not men." While neither group indicated strong agreement with this item, women indicated significantly higher agreement than men ($t = -2.75$; $p < .003$).

The second section of the questionnaire asked participants to indicate their degree of agreement with descriptors of "good" relationships. Of those behaviors previously identified as feminine, verbal commitment ($t = -2.03$; $p < .02$), empathy and emotional closeness ($t = -2.86$; $p < .002$), nonverbal affection ($t = -1.66$; $p < .05$), relationship talk ($t = -2.12$; $p < .02$), and sharing personal information ($t = -2.16$; $p < .02$) were all significant. Women found these skills more important for a good relationship than their male counterparts. Conversely, solving each other's problems ($t = 1.97$; $p < .02$) and competition ($t = 1.95$; $p < .03$), both skills from the male model, were perceived as being significantly more important by men than women. The only other significant result was a neutral item asking participants to agree/disagree with the statement "good relationships are easier for women to develop than for men" ($t = -2.13$; $p < .03$). While neither group strongly agreed with the statement, women (XM = 2.91) were more likely to agree than men (XM =2.65).

For those items addressing good interpersonal relationships, only a single masculine behavior item was significant: "a good interpersonal relationship is based on the amount of time two people spend doing tasks and chores together" ($t = 1.48$; $p < .05$). As predicted, men's perceptions of a good interpersonal relationships included this masculine behavior more often than women ($X_M = 3.53$; $X_W = 3.36$).

The last section of the questionnaire included those behaviors characteristic of good intimate relationships. All three items in this section was significant, with male mean scores exceeding those of female mean scores. The first item in this section asked if sexual activity was essential for an intimate relationship. Neither males nor females strongly agreed with this statement. However, men were significantly more likely to see sexual activity as important for any intimate relationship ($t = 2.41$; $p < .000$). This result was consistent with those preferences predicted by the researchers for the male model. The final two items on the questionnaire asked about the likelihood intimate relationships could be established between two heterosexual men or two heterosexual women. While neither men nor women strongly agreed that intimate relationships were impossible between two same-sex heterosexual individuals, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of men and women ($t = 2.41$; $p < .02$, $t = 2.26$; $p < .000$). Women indicated that men are capable of developing intimate relationships ($X_W = 2.51$), but the results suggest that they believe women more capable of relational closeness ($t = 2.26$).

DISCUSSION

From an early age, individuals are socialized to embrace masculine or feminine gender roles. These gendered roles are ubiquitous; they can influence the establishment and development of interpersonal relationships. While one's biological sex does not mandate one's gender role, often there is a strong relationship between sex and gender. According to communication scholars studying relational closeness, men and women acquire gender roles which, in turn, influence their relationship behaviors. Men, it seems, prefer more instrumental behaviors. When building their relationships, many males prefer doing things together and participating in shared activities. In addition, competition may be valued among male friendships. Women, however, prefer talking to activity and emotional closeness to competition. These gendered differences in the communication of relational closeness may pose a potential problem for individuals involved in the basic communication course.

Typically, the basic communication course provides a method of measuring and teaching university/college students' communication competence. While individual classes may have majority of one sex, many classes contain students of both sex and gender. Most instructors of these communication courses share goals of helping students achieve communication competence. However, policy, time, and resource constraints require instructors to label students' ability or competency level with grades. The competency standards used to assign these grades may be an unfair measure for some students, especially if feminine relational skills are emphasized in the course. And, if feminine skills like empathy and active listening are used to evaluate communication competence, individuals who prefer (or are socialized to value) more masculine behaviors may fall short. This shortfall may not reflect desire or ability on the student's part, but a potential "feminine" bias in the content of the basic communication course.

This potential inequity attracts our attention when the results from this research study are considered. After experiencing approximately 16 weeks of class emphasizing feminine relational skills, the men in this study perceived masculine relational closeness skills to be more effective communication for close interpersonal relationships. While a quick dismissal may blame poor instructors for limited change, this explanation may overlook a potential problem in the basic communication course. If the "socialized" masculine model for relational closeness is stronger than feminine competency requirements in some classes, there are potential difficulties for all students, both male and female.

Men/Masculinity and the Basic Course

There are two interesting conclusions about the men in these classes and their experiences with communication competence. First, the results of this study indicated that men and women do have different perceptions about relational closeness. These differences in perceptions seem to mirror gender role research that suggests men and women are socialized to value different relational maintenance behaviors (Allan, 1989; Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Barth & Kinder, 1988; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Hammond & Jablow, 1987; Sollie & Leslie, 1994). For those items with significant differences between males and females, female means were higher for all items listing traditional feminine behaviors. Likewise, male means were higher than female means for all those items reflecting traditionally masculine gender roles. Even items without significant differences followed this pattern with masculine behaviors indicating a higher (albeit nonsignificant) mean. Likewise, feminine behaviors resulted in higher feminine means.

These findings, consistent with other socialization literature, have several implications for basic course instructors. First, we must recognize that students may be entering our classrooms with a set of values and preferences that influence communication behaviors. Some of these preferences are the result of social learning and reinforcement and could be difficult (if not impossible) to alter in a typical semester. Secondly, it may be necessary for instructors to understand, if not appreciate, these gendered communication differences. Those individuals who advocate masculine relational closeness in place of the more traditional feminine competence still experience healthy, rewarding interpersonal relationships. For instance, men, typically socialized to value these masculine beliefs, report that they feel closeness and satisfaction in their relationships (Parks & Floyd, 1996; Sherrod, 1989) in spite of preferences for other, more masculine behaviors.

Yet, if instructors evaluate and grade students based on their level of competence are using a strongly feminine-based definition of relational closeness, the feminine competency bias could be disadvantaging more masculine students. Feminine students may find empathy and paraphrasing a more natural response, but masculine students, who may see advice-giving or problem-solving as the more natural response, may respond differently. As a result, students' grades may be affected by a clash between the socialized masculine perceptions of relational closeness and unexamined use of a feminine-biased conceptualization of competency.

Secondly, even if male students receive high or above average grades, the results of this study suggest these they may be "playing the game" in order to pass this required class. Since the perceptions of male students at the end of the term indicated they preferred more masculine behaviors, male students in feminine competency courses may be merely memorizing the necessary feminine competency behaviors, not integrating these skills into their lives. If our male students are simply memorizing a set of skills they do not see as valuable, these students may become frustrated with both instructor and course. Imagine a business course with an instructor who demanded students to be ruthless and cut-throat. Perhaps this instructor tells students that they will never succeed if they do not use manipulative tactics. Maybe he or she tells the class that anyone who refuses to use these skills will fail the class. While this example is extreme, it may not be much different from the experience some masculine students have in the basic communication course. Many of us in this business class would take one of two options: 1) drop the class (and perhaps never enroll in another business class), or 2) act as the instructor expects in class while silently perceiving the instructor and the class to be wrong, foolish, and a waste of time. As instructors in a beginning communication course advocating only feminine competency skills, we could see more masculine students take these two options in our classes. Some students may withdraw or drop our course. Those who choose to "play the game," may just memorize the necessary responses for quizzes, activities, and tests in order to appear "competent" while internally valuing the more masculine, socialized behaviors. Neither option appears particularly desirable for students or instructors.

Women/Femininity in the Basic Course

While there are two potential disadvantages for the masculine communicators in some classes, there is perhaps another disadvantage. This time however, the students who embrace more feminine closeness, typically females, may be disadvantaged by feminine competency classes. Of those variables asking students for their perceptions on which sex is better at relationships, all four of the items were significant. Item 8 asked for perceptions about good listeners. Women overwhelmingly indicated that females are better listeners than males ($t = -2.75$, $p < .003$, XM = 2.33, XW = 2.75). And, while neither group strongly agreed that women are better at interpersonal relationships, the significant difference between the two groups indicated that women believe interpersonal relationships are easier for females ($t = -2.13$, $p < .03$; XM = 2.65; XW = 2.91). Additionally, both males and females believed that intimate relationships were possible between heterosexual individuals. However, the differing means between male and female groups are interesting. Women were more likely to believe that heterosexual same-sex individuals could be intimate. However, women were more likely to believe that two women (XW = 2.26) could be intimate than two men (XW = 2.51)[3].

These results suggest that females in the course perceive themselves as better listeners, better at relationships, and more capable of developing close relationships than men. Perhaps these responses are the result

[3] Low scores indicate disagreement with the statements a good intimate relationship is rarely achieved between two heterosexual men and a good intimate relationship is rarely achieved between two heterosexual women.

of class content and socialization toward feminine skills. Although this perception mirrors beliefs of earlier relationship research in the 1970s, current research trends indicate males are also capable of developing close relationships. The ability of males to achieve close, interpersonal relationships is echoed in male participants' responses to several items on the questionnaire. In particular, the low mean score of males for items 38 (XM = 2.83) and 39 (XW= 2.80) indicated males believe intimate relationships can be established between two males. Below average mean scores for item 25 also suggest that males believe good interpersonal relationships are important. And, while item 26 was not significant, the mean scores (XM = 2.50, XW = 2.34) show greater agreement among males that good relationships are important. Thus, it appears the males in this sample both desire and participate in close relationships. The perceptions of female participants, however, differ greatly. Females in this sample view females as inherently better at relationships than their male counterparts.

Unfortunately, basic courses that emphasize solely a feminine model of relational closeness may be encouraging female students to discount equally valid, yet different, masculine relational closeness behaviors. For instance, most females in our "feminine standard" courses are affirmed and encouraged to continue to communicate in ways that come naturally to them. These females may be encouraged to view feminine relational closeness behaviors as the right way to communicate in order to have close and healthy relationships (demonstrated through the competency skills taught in the courses). Perhaps we have done these females a disservice. If the males in our female students' lives are similar to the males in this sample, and thus prefer the masculine model even when offered the feminine model of relational closeness, we may be causing communication problems for our female students. A female, affirmed that using empathy and self-disclosure is the best or right way to establish a close relationship, may not understand why her father, brother, boyfriend, and/or husband chooses to solve her problems when she discloses. She may try to change his behaviors, instructing him in the competency skills she has learned in her communication class. He may reject this, viewing her help as insulting or disconfirming. His rejection of her supposedly competent communication only confirms her thoughts that men are incapable of close relationships.

Suggestions for the Basic Course

After examining the findings of this and other, similar studies, it appears that instructors of the basic communication course should give attention to the potential impact of socialized gender differences in their classrooms. We offer three practical steps concerned instructors could initiate.

First, examine the current text and course requirements for any evidence of feminine relational closeness bias. Identify what masculine/feminine skills are necessary for communication competency and determine the extent that both the masculine and feminine relational skills are represented.

Second, as an instructor, ask the following questions: "Am I willing to believe that the masculine model of relational closeness offers as much to students as the traditional feminine model? If not, what about this masculine model seems incompetent?" Understanding that our students enter our classrooms with a history of socialized and reinforced behaviors can be beneficial for both student and instructor. Since many of the beliefs acquired during the socialization process endure throughout an individual's lifetime we, as instructors, should be sensitive about altering a student's socialized value system, including communication preferences. This warning does not imply the basic course must embrace an "its all relative" or "everyone is a good communicator" philosophy. Rather, this warning is an encouragement for instructors to become more sensitized to these socialized differences.

This awareness leads to the third suggestion for course instructors: altering course material. Instructors interested in presenting both masculine and feminine relational closeness must include a variety of skills and behaviors. Since many of the current communication and interpersonal textbooks utilize only the feminine relational closeness (Bissett-Zerilli & Heisler, 1997), this may require extra time and effort to search out and add readings to already established syllabi. Once an instructor has included both masculine and feminine relational closeness skills, he or she may be implicitly advocating the final suggestion: Instructors should consider replacing current conceptualizations of competence with a more "adaptation-based" competency. Instead of providing our feminine students with implicit permission to disapprove of the closeness masculine individuals value, perhaps instructors need to provide feminine students with adaptation skills. If we require our masculine students to learn separate, feminine methods of relational closeness, perhaps we need to begin to require our feminine students to not only enhance their own feminine behaviors but understand those behaviors typical of masculine closeness as well. This dual model approach in our classrooms may benefit all students. A classroom where gender differences are discussed openly without assigning values (or evaluation through feminine competency requirements) may serve as the outlet our masculine students need to express themselves in the classroom.

Limitations

Although the implications of these data and results are interesting, there are several limitations to this study. First, it would have been helpful to have identified the sex of instructor on the questionnaire. Assuming male and female instructors have the same gender influenced biases in relational closeness, one can assume these preferences for a particular model surfaced in daily class activities and discussions. Although the textbook, syllabus, and several in-class activities were standardized for the basic course, the lack of information regarding students' perceptions of their instructors limits the internal validity of this study. Future research may avoid this complication by indicating instructors' sex as well as students' perceptions of the instructor.

Other limitations include the lack of a pretest to accompany the end of the semester study. Future studies should include a pretest of the same sample taken in the first week of classes. Without this pretest, the true effect of the communication course cannot be assessed. In addition, several statistical assumptions were made about the reliabilities of the current study's measures of students' perceptions of relational closeness. Future studies are encouraged to use more stringent tests of validity and reliability.

CONCLUSION

The basic course is required by many universities to introduce students to oral communication competence. Our job as instructors is to provide those students with a model of communication competence to be used not only in public speaking but interpersonal contexts as well. However, by mandating one model of relational closeness and virtually ignoring all others, we are perhaps limiting the education of our students. By asking only masculine students to learn the rules to the feminine 'game' of relational closeness we invalidate masculine behaviors. In turn, feminine students are validated for their skills, but may be limited when they take these communication standards into their other relationships.

In light of this research, it seems a more comprehensive approach may be necessary. By teaching both masculine and feminine models of relational closeness, we are not only leveling the playing field, but we are providing our students with the skills necessary to communicate in an increasingly diverse world. Thus, we strongly urge the instructors of basic communication courses to incorporate both models of relational closeness/communication competence into their classrooms to promote cross-gender understanding and to remind both sexes that communication is a process of receiver adaptation. Additionally, we believe it would be valuable for textbook authors to examine their treatment of communication competence and the gender biases inherent therein. A utopian goal for communication might be to achieve androgyny. In the real world however, it might be more realistic to settle for true understanding and tolerance between men and women.

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Peer Mentoring for Graduate Teaching Assistants: Training and Utilizing a Valuable Resource

Katherine G. Hendrix

It is well-documented that the transition from undergraduate to graduate student is filled with high levels of stress and anxiety (Caple, 1995; Jones, 1974; Malaney, 1987; Stewart, 1995). This is particularly true for students who must learn the responsibilities associated with becoming an advanced learner in conjunction with their first experience in the classroom in the role of teacher. A review of some of the literature on graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) indicates that GTAs are typically faced with a lack of training, insecurity regarding their teaching capability, time/role conflicts, and uncertainty regarding their department status (Allen & Rueter, 1990; Darling, 1987; Epstein, 1974; Haggerty, 1927; Koen & Ericksen, 1967).

In a survey of second semester GTAs at a large Midwestern university, the GTAs indicated that the questions they asked most frequently pertained to academia and teaching and that they primarily sought out professors and peers to serve as mentors (Myers, 1995-1996). Whether the graduate students are interested in a career in teaching or simply view the GTA assignment as a means to meet their financial obligations while pursuing their graduate studies, departments should provide training in order to:

(a) protect the quality of education received by undergraduates,

(b) enhance the teaching ability of the GTAs,

(c) reduce the anxiety associated with the first teaching experiences, and

(d) assist GTAs in balancing their dual roles as advanced learner and novice teacher.

Wulff (1992) discussed two basic categories of GTA training: group-based and individual-based interaction. Training which promotes group-based interaction is exemplified by activities such as workshops, microteaching, seminars, and coursework. Individual-based interaction includes activities such as dyadic counseling with a basic course director, instructional observation, and videotape critiques. Wulff noted advantages and disadvantages associated with each of the training methods and, ultimately, advocates that basic course directors combine several methods when creating training programs.

Another training option is mentoring. Bas-Isaac (1989) describes mentoring as “a professional life-preserver for the beginning teacher” (p. 5). Mentoring in academia can serve several different functions:

(a) initial orientation to campus and community;

(b) social introductions to faculty, staff, and other graduate students and GTAs;

(c) graduate academic advising;

(d) training for classroom teaching; and/or

(e) providing expertise in one’s specialized area of study (Gray & Murray, 1994).

The benefits of mentoring include promoting professional development, increasing retention, receiving support and information, and familiarity with policies, procedures, and resources (Christensen & Conway, 1991; Myers, 1995-1996; Odell, 1986, 1990). And, consistent with Darling (1987), Avery and Gray (1995-1996) believed that, "GTAs might find useful mentor relationships with superiors (basic course directors, department chairs, advisors), with experienced people (faculty, returning GTAs) and with peers (GTAs in their immediate group)" (p. 11).

Unfortunately, not all campuses can afford to provide extensive faculty and GTA training resources. In such instances, basic communication course directors must draw upon their own resources to develop a training program suitable for meeting department teaching needs while maintaining the integrity of the basic course. This task can be a particular challenge in departments conferring a terminal M.A., due to the continuous change in graduate students. This paper describes the creation of a peer mentoring program in a two-year M.A. program offering multiple sections of the basic course (approximately 45 each semester) at a mid-sized Southern university. The major topics are:

(a) the roles of peer versus traditional mentors,

(b) peer mentoring as the first of three GTA training stages,

(c) benefits for the mentor and mentee, and

(d) a retrospective view of the program's development.

The author's goal is to remind the readers that every campus does not have extensive training resources and to offer peer mentoring as one viable part of a comprehensive GTA training program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Campus GTA Training

This Southern university is an urban, commuter college with an enrollment approximating 20,000. Graduate students at this university are not allowed to teach independently in the classroom until they have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credits.[1] In the past, the Center for Instructional Service and Research (CISR) provided audiovisual programs and equipment, graphic design and production services, and summarized students' evaluations of their professors.[2] The Center conducts a one-day campus workshop for GTAs at the beginning of each semester and several half-day workshops periodically throughout the academic year. Lambert and Tice (1993) described these centralized services available to classroom faculty (including GTAs) as limited. During the past two years, these functions have been shifted to the Center for Academic Excellence with more emphasis being placed on formally addressing the needs of faculty and promoting the scholarship of teaching. However, despite the initiation of the Center for Academic Excellence, at this point, the primary responsibility for training graduate students to teach rests with each department.

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[1] The department now offers a Ph.D. Thus, the mentoring program includes second semester doctoral students serving as mentors as well as second year M.A. students.

[2] During the past two years, the campus has begun to offer counseling to faculty and other instructors, such as GTAs, in the Center for Academic Excellence.

Department of Communication Training

The department awards eight to ten assistantships to M.A. students each year. First year recipients are employed as research assistants (RAs) and normally assigned to one faculty member. During the second semester of their M.A. studies (spring term), these graduate assistants continue to execute their RA tasks while simultaneously being trained to teach two sections of the basic course each term the following academic year.

The basic communication course is a hybrid course required of every undergraduate student. The course uses the concept of ethical responsibility as its underlying theme and students are guided by the precepts of Plato's *Gorgias*. The notion of civic responsibility (speaker and listener) is explored through public speaking and media criticism assignments. In view of its eclectic content, the course is difficult to teach and numerous issues arise regarding how best to train the "interns" to enter the classroom the following academic year. As a result, a three-stage training program has been developed.

The peer mentoring stage occurs during the second semester of a graduate student's first year. During the second year of the students' program, when they have actually been assigned to teach two independent sections of the basic course, they are required to attend a weekly teaching seminar taught by the basic course director in the fall. This seminar is the second stage of their GTA training and it provides an opportunity to discuss course content, appropriate class exercises, grading, discipline issues, etc.

During the spring semester of their second year, GTAs continue their communication education regarding how to teach this particular course, however, the director broadens the discussion to discuss teaching issues in general (e.g., the development of a personal teaching philosophy, attitudes towards multiculturalism, teaching strategies for assisting students with English as a Second Language, increasing one's repertoire of teaching strategies). The teaching seminars represent the second and third stages of GTA training, however, the purpose of this paper is to describe the first stage of training – peer mentoring.

The three-stage training process can be readily adopted by course directors who do not allow first year graduate students to teach independently in the classroom. In the case of departments which immediately place M.A. (and Ph.D. students) into the classroom, this peer mentoring process can be modified to meet your needs. For instance, the peer mentoring dyads and small group meetings with the course director can be implemented as a support system which occurs simultaneously while their novice GTAs are in the classroom teaching.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS PEER MENTORING

Given that the course is required for graduation and that the student population exceeds 20,000 at this university, we offer 45 sections of the course each fall and spring term. Although a few full-time faculty teach the basic course, the sections are primarily taught by part-time faculty and GTAs.

Prior to 1994-1995, RAs were mainly placed with part-time faculty for their teaching internship. Part-time faculty agreed to serve as mentors on a volunteer basis even though they received no additional compensation. Research assistants had never been assigned to intern with a peer as the former director was concerned about difficulties associated with a clear role delineation between the two partners and the limited classroom experience of the GTA who would serve as mentor. These concerns are understandable and are documented in overviews of other mentoring programs. For instance, Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, and Amaro (1994) noted that some GTAs are not:

(a) qualified to help others,

(b) effective teachers,

(c) willing to follow rules associated with teaching, and

(d) able to handle the dual role of GTA and graduate student.

And, as a result, GTAs with these characteristics are not ideal candidates for mentoring.

According to Kram and Isabella (1985), mentors in the business world provide young adults with career-enhancing functions and psycho-social support. Career enhancement entails coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, offering challenging work, and even protection in order to "learn the ropes, and prepare for advancement" (p. 111). Psycho-social support entails counseling, confirmation, role modeling, and friendship directed toward "develop[ing] a sense of professional identity and competence" (p. 111). In education, faculty members are known to provide graduate students with professional socialization, emotional support, advocacy, and role modeling (Aguilar-Gaxiola, 1984 as cited in Valadez & Duran, 1991). And Boyer (1997) stated, “a close and continuing relationship between a graduate teaching assistant and a gifted teacher can be an enriching experience for both” (1997, p. 72).

However, Kram and Isabella (1985) suggested that peer relationships offer an "important alternative" to traditional senior/junior mentoring patterns. These scholars noted that individuals may have a limited number of superiors with whom to form mentoring relationships and there is a greater likelihood of establishing some type of relationship with peers on the job. According to Kram and Isabella, although peers may not have the status of a supervisor or manager, peer relationships (also referred to as “peer pals” by Shapiro, Haseltine, & Rowe, 1978) can function in a similar fashion. Peer mentors share information and strategies, give advice, and serve as helpful listeners to their less experienced colleagues. The primary distinction between the two being the presence of mutuality within the peer relationship where both parties are givers and receivers of information rather than one person specializing in the role of "guide or sponsor." “Mutability” is another term used to describe the relationship where both parties give and receive helpful information and provide emotional support (Chitgopekar, 1995; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Chitgopekar (1995) also noted that “peer relationships may be far more enduring mentoring relationships” (p. 11).

A variation of traditional mentoring (subordinate/superior) and peer relationships — peer mentoring — was selected as a viable part of the first stage of training instead of peer relationships. Peer mentoring, in essence, acknowledges the advanced expertise (albeit limited) of the GTA who is already in the classroom and strives to reduce the "friend" or "buddy" aspect of the teaching team in order to acknowledge the formal responsibilities of the experienced GTA. According to Bas-Isaac (1989):

> Mentoring, as an interactive relationship, could be defined by the arena of activities in which it is placed. It could be perceived as a structure in terms of the rite of induction or initiation--the transfer of knowledge. In the educational milieu, a mentor is the transmitter of the culture of the community as called 'school'. (p. 7)

Given the second year M.A. student's familiarity with the culture of the campus, department, and basic course class, they are an excellent source of information. In the case of the author's department, the peer mentor has successfully completed a one semester internship, one semester of independent classroom teaching, the first semester of a weekly teaching techniques seminar, and is currently teaching his/her second semester while being concurrently enrolled in a monthly teaching techniques seminar. As noted earlier, course directors who immediately place GTAs into the classroom can modify this system. Adaptations could include designing a week long orientation which engages mentors and their mentees in course lesson planning, encouraging mentors and mentees to observe each other's teaching throughout the term, suggesting team-teaching for some lessons, and increasing the frequency of the small group meetings with the novice GTAs.

The young peer mentor (an experienced GTA) can draw upon similarities (age, limited teaching experience, similar departmental obligations, etc.) between himself or herself and the mentee and can speak of recent experiences in the classroom. Experienced GTAs can be effective as "interpretive guides" (Myers, 1995-1996, p. 28) and resources regarding appropriate behavior and skills for new GTAs (Darling, 1987; Darling & Staton, 1989). Gray and Murray (1994) also noted the emotional support and less threatening environment for discussion and questions in the peer mentoring relationship. When describing her peer mentoring experience, Bollis-Pecci (1995) noted:

> Though there are potential problems with peer mentoring programs, with careful planning and consideration of the possible roadblocks, the benefits far outweigh the costs. The mentee [has] the opportunity to learn from someone who is not far removed from their realm of experience. In some ways, both are experiencing the same things simultaneously. Who better to mentor a teaching assistant than a colleague who has effectively learned how to balance graduate studies, research, personal life, and teaching? (p. 27)

Yet a key question is whether to allow mentees a choice in selecting their mentors.

The Matter of Choice

Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron (1981) described the mentor-protegee relationship as a symbiotic partnership. Liebert (1989) mentioned the need for a "chemistry" to develop between the mentor and mentee. It would appear then that mentors who are asked to serve in that capacity by a potential mentee would be more likely to develop a natural chemistry with their mentee. Another viable possibility leading to "chemistry" would be assigning dyads based on what mentees have designated as desirable mentor traits. The GTAs in Myers' (1995-1996) study, selected mentors based on:

(a) similarities in interests, background, and demographics;

(b) knowledge of the mentor (e.g., former teacher, reputation, friend);

(c) matches created by other people; and

(d) mentor communication skills (e.g., ability to communicate approachability).

Avery and Gray (1995-1996) recommended that participants be given a choice in the mentoring process. These scholars say informed choices can be made when opportunities are provided for interaction before the selection process occurs. Another means of contributing to informed choice is by providing information about the mentors and sample criteria for the selection of a mentor. For instance, based on Bandura and Walter's (1963) social learning theory regarding how children begin to pattern themselves after adults, Avery and Gray (1995-1996) identified two conditions for modeling and six corresponding behaviors/characteristics. Ideally, mentors are highly regarded and share similar world views with their mentees. Behaviorally, mentors should command a level of respect, demonstrate competence, availability, empathy, a positive approach, and willingly and actively work on behalf of their mentees.

Yet, realistically, given the limited number of viable peer mentor candidates among a pool of experienced GTAs, allowing the mentees to express the traits they desired in a mentor was not viewed as feasible for this department's one semester internship. In addition, one question which can be posed is whether mentees can reasonably be expected to designate what traits they would desire in mentors. Having never taught before, how do they know what they need in mentors? Thus, choice is minimized in the program as it is currently structured. Students who will be teaching the basic course are required to participate in the one semester mentoring internship. They also have no choice (unless a problem arises) in the selection of their mentor. However, in recognition of the resentment which can be expressed by individuals who are forced to serve as mentors (Kram, 1985), GTAs are given the choice of whether to volunteer for consideration as a mentor. After the list of potential mentors has been compiled, the course director matches peer mentors with mentees based on a combination of professional knowledge and subjective judgment.

During each spring term, GTAs in their second semester of teaching the basic course receive a memo which asks if they are interested in serving as a mentor. The students are familiar with the responsibilities associated with being a mentor having been a mentee themselves during the previous spring. However, a formal list of expectations is outlined in the memo which queries their interest. The memo emphasizes that the expectations have been designed to benefit mentees while simultaneously minimizing the time involved for all mentors – particularly, the graduate students, given their busy schedules.[3] From the group of willing volunteers, GTAs are invited to serve as peer mentors based on their:

[3] Participation is requested from full- and part-time faculty in case there are not enough interested or able GTAs to serve as mentors. However, GTAs are given priority for mentor assignments as the empathetic and reciprocal nature of the relationship is viewed as highly beneficial for both the experienced GTA mentor and his or her mentee.

(a) enthusiasm for teaching,
(b) willingness to acknowledge that they are novice teachers who themselves need supervision and support,
(c) history of preparedness for classroom teaching,
(d) level of participation in a weekly teaching techniques seminar, and
(e) demonstrated use of good judgment in addressing problematic student interactions in and outside of class.

Two final criteria involve the director's perception that the GTA can successfully negotiate her or his authority status with her or his mentee while in their role of mentor and how they manage graduate studies, teaching, mentoring, and life in general. Thus, mentees are matched with experienced GTAs who possess a stronger sense of authority and confidence than their assigned mentees. The author's overall goal in making the match is to avoid negative linkages where the mentee would be inclined to "tell" his or her peer mentor what to do, or reduce the “peer mentor” dyad to a “peer relationship.”

The possibility of mismatched dyads was reduced by selecting GTAs who had a history of open and frequent communication with the course director. Graduate Teaching Assistants, possessing the five characteristics mentioned earlier, typically were individuals who also interacted with the director often. Being mindful of Kram’s (1985) concern that mentors who are not selected can harbor negative feelings (and to reduce the likelihood of hurt feelings), an alternate list is created and GTAs are informed that some viable candidates are not selected as mentors due to schedule conflicts and/or the presence of more volunteers than necessary. Creating an alternate list is not simply a ploy to abate hurt feelings. It is possible that a dyad may require rearrangement or an unexpected assistantship position may be awarded.

Cross-Sex and Cross-Race Dyads

The aforementioned criteria simultaneously take into consideration the race and gender of the GTAs being linked as mentor and mentee. Some mentoring research indicated that most senior level executives are white males who are reluctant to serve as mentors to women and people of color (Matczynski & Comer, 1991; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). This mentoring literature suggested that cross-sex and cross-race matches are harder to manage and typically avoided within corporate settings (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). For example, cross gender mentees are not likely to participate in after-work social activities in order to avoid angry spouses, sexual concerns, innuendoes, and/or gossip (Fitt & Newton, 1981). Yet some researchers and members of cross-race mentoring dyads (Matczynski & Comer, 1991; Ragins, 1989; Valadez & Duran, 1991; Zey 1985) believed formal mentoring programs are of critical importance to minorities because they have more trouble finding mentors under informal (or nonexistent) systems. However, it is not atypical for graduate students to form study groups which are cross-sexual and/or cross-racial as a means for successfully completing their graduate studies.[4] After four years, there have been no complaints or negative incidents. One must

[4] Cross-racial and cross-gender linkages do, however, require careful consideration of the students to be matched – in particular, personality and attitudes. While all linkages should be monitored these may require additional time to ensure both parties find the match gratifying.

define the nature of the mentor by considering the context. In the context of GTAs in graduate schools, the author has found that gender (and, to a lesser degree, race) is of less concern to GTAs who are accustomed to working together on assignments as part of their survival as graduate students.

To reduce the presence of innuendoes, group activities are informally encouraged yet no formal activities are created by the director. As noted earlier, a key aspect of the matching process is selecting mentors who have a history of open communication with the director. The freedom to discuss areas of disagreement and levels of discomfort is also reviewed with both the mentors and mentees in their separate orientation meetings. The orientation meetings provide an opportunity to review the relative responsibilities of each member of the dyad.

PEER MENTORING AS THE FIRST STAGE IN A THREE-STAGE TRAINING PROGRAM

The peer status of the GTA serving as mentor also requires the acknowledgement that guidelines are necessary to facilitate the "senior" status of the mentor especially considering that the mentor and mentee might be enrolled in the same master's coursework.

Mentor Expectations

All mentors are expected to:

(1) attend an orientation meeting for mentors before the beginning of the spring semester,

(2) allow the graduate mentee to observe them teaching two class periods per week,

(3) discuss how lessons plans are prepared, speeches are graded, exams are graded, etc. with the mentee at least once monthly,

(4) allow the mentee to grade some student speeches, essays, and exams and discuss the grades which were assigned by the mentee and the mentor,

(5) allow the mentee to teach 1-2 class periods during the semester,

(6) provide the basic course director with a monthly assessment of the mentee and a brief summary of the nature of their interactions in their teaching journals, and

(7) at the end of the semester, provide the basic course director with a recommendation regarding the appropriateness of moving the mentee to graduate teaching assistant status.

Considering the GTAs' other course studies and family obligations, the commitment is not to exceed five hours per week unless both parties agree to devote more time.

Mentee Expectations

The one-semester internship for mentees has the following set of expectations:

(1) understand and comply with the five aforenoted expectations their mentors would have of them teaching 1-2 classes, etc.,

(2) be prepared for the class,

(3) be on time to their assigned section of the class,

(4) complete classroom observation sheets (see Appendix 1) and submit to the basic course director,

(5) attend monthly meetings with their assigned mentor prepared to ask questions and make comments regarding their classroom observations in order to maximize the meeting time,

(6) respect the fact that the "peer mentors" are not "chums" but, rather, mentors with knowledge and authority, and

(7) attend and participate in monthly mentee meetings with the basic course director.

Mentees also are informed that graduate assistants are evaluated on an annual basis. Thus, movement from RA/Mentee to GTA is dependent upon both the quality of their academic performance and their level of involvement and commitment to the first stage of their preparation for classroom teaching.

Evaluation

Liebert (1989) and Smith (1993) believed that experienced teacher mentors should not be placed in the role of supervision and evaluation of new teachers. Both educators believe that evaluation "stands in opposition" to the support and advocacy characteristics inherent within the term "mentor." Although this position is understandable, is it realistic? For instance, Smith (1993) and Liebert (1989) do not articulate who then should be responsible for the evaluation of new teachers.

To reduce the potential relational strain associated with the assessment of a peer, several mechanisms are built into the mentoring program to assist all mentors and mentees. The mechanisms include: weekly classroom observation sheets completed by each mentee (see Appendix 1), monthly assessments of each mentee by her or his respective mentor, and a combination of mentor's assessments with each mentee's academic performance, responsiveness when working with the course director, and participation in the monthly group meeting for interns. This system of frequent contact between the course director and mentor allows the director to remove a good deal of the onus of not recommending a mentee from the mentor.

Early information from mentors allows the director to intervene to assist the mentee in properly preparing themselves for teaching the basic course and for viewing the course director, not the mentor, as the primary source of any negative recommendation against a teaching assignment.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

Benefits for the Mentors

There are benefits associated with mentoring for both the mentee as well as the mentor. Turkel and Abramson (1986) found that being placed in the role of peer tutor (for high-risk high school students) communicated three encouraging messages to the peer tutors:

(1) you are knowledgeable,

(2) you can help someone, and

(3) you can be trusted in a responsible position. Zey (1985) indicated "by selecting a woman as a protegee, a senior manager bestows de facto legitimacy of her" presence within the organization (Ragins, 1989, p. 3).

Perhaps legitimacy is a residual benefit of being selected as an individual to mentor one's peer. When the second semester GTAs, invited to serve as mentors, are viewed by the course director as knowledgeable, trustworthy, responsible, mature, etc., it is reasonable to expect that public pronouncements of that trust can serve to legitimize the GTAs' ability in the eyes of their peers, department faculty and staff, and the undergraduate students enrolled in his or her classes. When surveyed regarding what it meant to be GTAs in this particular department, former GTAs responded with comments such as: "I think it meant being someone who could both benefit from as much help and training as possible, and bring their own ideas and creativity into the classroom with encouragement from others. Real world teaching experience. A little bit of prestige in the department. A big bit of learning."; "The thing that meant the most was that I felt valued by the faculty and most students. My ideas and contribution to the department was acknowledged which I found extremely motivating ... I took my short time with those [terrified] students very seriously."; "I believe being a GTA meant that the faculty had confidence in us to teach the undergrads. I thought of it as an honor and [felt] lucky I was given the opportunity. It meant being honored and entrusted with the responsibility of preparing students to communication. It meant more responsibility. It meant greater visibility in the department (to faculty and students). It also meant more demands on time and energy.[5]

"Senior" and peer mentors alike can benefit from the experience of consciously articulating why they have adopted a particular teaching style, organized lessons in certain ways, and adopted a certain teaching philosophy (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, & Amaro, 1994). Whitman (1988) found enhanced knowledge in peer teaching. Smith (1993) found that experienced mentor teachers training first year teachers "became more aware of their own development as teachers, and the rationale for their teaching strategies" (p. 9).

Finally, when reviewing graduate teaching assistant strategies, researchers (Allen and Rueter, 1990; Ryan and Martens, 1989) mentioned the need for GTAs to take time for self-reflection, learn how to teach, and adjust their teaching. Mentor/mentee dyads, in particular peer mentoring dyads, serve as one possible means for mentors to self-reflect on their teaching, incorporate the suggestions of their mentees and, thereby, promote professional growth. Survey responses from past GTAs generated comments such as: "I believe this experience was one of the most influential experiences I've had in grad school."; "... it gave me a wonderful opportunity to articulate the struggles I had and I was able to see how things might work as I bounced them off my mentee. We were able to engage in some very productive dialogue about teaching methods, etc. I was able to give some advice but was surprised at how much I learned from them ... The support network generated was very

[5] Out of 28 GTAs from in the program from 1994/1995 through 1996/1997, surveys were mailed to 20 former GTAs with up-to-date addresses on file. Ten of the 20 surveys were returned for a 50% return rate.

helpful."; "As a mentor, I almost felt too green to be showing someone the ropes. But at the same time, I felt my intern was able to take something from my teaching style."; "Very good (for me, at least). Gave me a chance to share what I have learned, but also to compare my ideas with someone elses [sic]. Forced me to closely consider what I was doing in class and *why* I was doing it."[5]

Benefits for the Mentee

> *"I am a graduate student. I am overwhelmed. I am told I will teach a college class. I am a mentee. I am now scared" (Burchfield & Walker, 1995, p. 13).*

When training GTAs, scholars mention the importance of communicating professionalism and appropriate authority in the undergraduate classroom (Willer, 1993) especially given the inexperience of GTAs and the age similarity with their students. Cultivating a professional image entails being well-prepared, demonstrating one's knowledge, wearing appropriate dress, and establishing prior experience. Peer mentors have some experience developing an image of professionalism and can help their mentees develop a more realistic perspective regarding how students will respond to their presence in the classroom as "teacher." Although "senior" mentors can provide valuable information, it would not be unusual to find "senior" mentors attempting to recall their first experience in the classroom from 10 (or 20) years earlier. GTAs can speak at a level more connected to the direct experience of their mentees. And, drawing upon similarities in age, departmental status, etc., young peer mentors can provide emotional support (Gray & Murray, 1984).

According to mentees in this program, having peer mentors has benefited them as illustrated in the following comments:

(a) "Michelle has a different teaching style than I have now. But the differences between us made our relationship even more prosperous. Michelle encouraged me to explore my own innovations and ideas and took a genuine interest in my success and growth." (Burchfield & Walker, 1995, p. 14);

(b) "The mentee realized that she was not a prisoner to any one style and was certainly not obligated to adopt the style of the mentor, but she was encouraged to always seek new ways of teaching that belonged to her and would make her classroom unique." (Lee & Skidmore, 1995, p. 21);

(c) "It was helpful but I felt kind of awkward in the classroom among the students. I wasn't sure what role I should take."; and

(d) "As an intern, I was given the classroom as second in command. My participation was light, because it was very new to me. The best part about it was being a fly on the wall, observing the dynamic of a college level introductory communication class."

REFLECTIONS

As I reflect over the past four years, the program has evolved from the initial year of inception in two ways: mentor training and mentor selection process. In addition, the GTAs have provided insight into how, in my role as course director, I serve as a role model for both teaching and mentoring.

When I decided to pilot a peer mentoring program, I invited a particular group of individuals to serve as mentors. Each GTA was addressed in person, the duties and time commitment explained, and my availability expressed as well as the voluntary, rather than mandated, nature of the role. Consistent with the previous director, I also used part-time faculty in the role of mentor. All three of the GTAs I approached accepted my invitation and each met with me privately, as they perceived the need, to discuss how to handle the mentoring role and the progress of their assigned mentee.

Being available informally was important (as opposed to regularly scheduled meetings with the director) to provide a support network for all mentors (but especially peer mentors) while minimizing the burden of their busy schedules. At the end of the term, the student peer mentors indicated that group meetings would have been desirable. Such meetings would have familiarized them with activities and the type of relationship the other mentors were cultivating. As a result, while maintaining the informal availability policy, in subsequent years, a group orientation meeting was established not only for the mentees but mentors as well. In addition, time was established for the mentors to discuss issues of particular interest to them at the regularly scheduled GTA meetings and in their teaching journals. Each academic year is ended with a special luncheon for the mentors.

Originally, the peer mentoring experience was conceived as a natural extension of the GTAs' classroom teaching and participation in the teaching techniques seminars. Although there are connections, there is also the additional dimension of successfully maneuvering the changing roles (mentor, colleague, friend, etc.) which can all occur within the same day. As a result, a course director should take a proactive stance to assist GTAs in the management of these multiple roles. Therefore, being available to the GTAs and written expectations should be paired with some formal training articulating the varying types of mentoring and what it means to be a mentor in a particular department.

The second year of the program, the number of part-time faculty participating in the program was purposely decreased as the number of experienced GTA mentors increased. Due to the increase in the number of GTA mentors and to reduce the likelihood of hurt feelings, anger, etc., a memorandum was sent to all experienced GTAs. The correspondence explained the duties of a mentor and asked for volunteers. Criteria were developed to select the mentors and a group of alternates. Of course, favoritism is always an issue. While none of the three peer mentors, in the first year, approached the director with this problem yet it is plausible that such a problem could manifest itself.

Specifically, is the GTA who accepts the personal invitation (or is selected from a group of candidates) to serve as peer mentor given "grief" by her or his colleagues to whom the invitation was not extended? For instance, all five experienced mentor teachers in Smith's (1993) study indicated negative feelings were expressed towards them by other faculty members – in particular, others who applied to be mentors but were not accepted.

Is it favoritism? Of course, selecting some and not others constitutes relative degrees of both favoritism and realism. The selection process acknowledges that some individuals are better equipped to meet the demands associated with transferring their knowledge to others. Yet, in the case of this Southern university, it is unglamorized favoritism as the mentors receive no extra pay nor any reduction in their teaching load. The position of peer mentor does, however, afford an opportunity for self-improvement, developing the teaching skills of other person, assisting in departmental training, being publicly recognized as capable, and noting one's skills and departmental contributions on a vita.

Finally, I will share a blindspot. While spending the past few years diligently anticipating the needs of our GTAs and providing a "safety net" as they entered the classroom as novice teachers, I have often somewhat subconsciously considered the importance of serving as a role model of an effective teacher. However, recently one of my students heightened the my awareness of the expansive nature of my responsibility by indicating: "... this TA program is representative, to me, of what all of the literature on the socialization of mentoring should be. I have been included; I have been helped in many ways; I have been counseled, etc. How much more pointed could socialization become than this?" In other words, ideally, course directors are not only models of effective teaching but of the mentoring process.

CONCLUSION

Peer mentoring is a viable means of maximizing resources on campuses with limited (or non-existent) centralized teaching resource services. Care must be taken, however, to structure the mentoring program in a way which clearly identifies the responsibility and authority of the GTA who is assigned to a colleague as a peer mentor. Written expectations for both parties, careful screening of GTAs capable of managing the increased responsibility, and an "open door" policy combined with, at the very least, preliminary training regarding what it means to be a peer mentor are critical to the success of such a program.

Success incorporates the following:

(a) a mentee's increased awareness of effective classroom teaching preparation and strategies,

(b) a learning experience leading to enhanced teaching on the part of the GTA serving as peer mentor, and

(c) the addition of a useful resource serving as the first stage of a comprehensive program for properly training graduate students to enter the classroom as instructors.

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APPENDIX 1

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

Name:	Mentor:
Date:	Class Time:

1. One thing which went well today in class was:

   My perception was based on:

2. One thing which could have been improved today was:

   _____ Everything went well.

   My perception was based on:

3. If I were teaching this lesson, I would have:

   Because:

4. My mentor and I met on _______ for approximately ____ minutes and discussed:

   This was beneficial/unbeneficial because:

An Acrostic Approach to Teaching Public Speaking in the Basic Hybrid Communication Course

David W. Worley

The basic hybrid communication course introduces students to a variety of emphases in communication, ranging from communication theory to mass media. While units in basic hybrid courses differ, most introduce students to human communication theory, public speaking, group communication and interpersonal communication. Given this number of broad topic areas, as instructors we often need to reorganize course content in view of the time constraints we face. Moreover, given that many of the popular texts for the basic hybrid communication course incorporate a considerable amount of material, we must often choose to emphasize particular concepts or skills and repeatedly face the need to briefly summarize important principles while also facilitating student learning.

Such is the case with public speaking instruction in the hybrid course. In a relatively short time, students are expected to read up to 150 pages of text explaining the principles of preparing and delivering a public speech and then understand and apply these principles to complete assignments which often heavily impact their grades. Additionally, as instructors we need to summarize a considerable amount of information in order to adequately prepare students for the graded public speaking assignments. The pressure of time and the demands of effective communication pedagogy combine to create an instructional challenge for all of us and especially for the beginning teacher.

Therefore, an instructional approach which clearly summarizes the fundamentals of competent public speaking provides an important contribution to communication pedagogy for the hybrid course. In particular, an acrostic approach offers one way to teach the essentials of public speaking. This approach appeals to both students and instructors and may be easily adapted to the needs of individual instructors and classes. Furthermore, the acrostic approach to teaching public speaking I offer here has been classroom tested over a two-year period in a multi-section, basic hybrid communication course. Both instructors and students alike, express appreciation for this approach which integrates important public speaking principles while making the principles more easily remembered.

What follows is an outline summary of this acrostic approach organized around the acronym S-P-E-A-K which permits instructors to provide the emphasis, explanations and examples they wish to include when teaching public speaking skills. Therefore, I have purposefully omitted these aspects to allow for individualization of this approach. Rather than provide a prose description of these principles, a full-sentence preparation outline format works well for explaining the principles.

OUTLINE

I. **S** in S-P-E-A-K stands for the ***subject and topic*** of the speech.

   A. Subject refers to a large area of knowledge while a topic refers to a specific portion of that area of knowledge.

   B. Speakers select a subject or topic adhering to two general guidelines.

      1. Speakers may be assigned the subject or topic.

      2. Speakers may be able to choose any topic they deem appropriate to the audience and the occasion.

   C. There are several perspectives to consider as speakers decide upon a topic. Andrews and Baird (1995) identified several perspectives to consider.

      1. The *personal* perspective allows speakers to inventory their own knowledge, attitudes, interests, experiences and beliefs to help generate speech topics.

2. The *audience* perspective calls upon speakers to analyze their audiences' demographics, attitudes, expectations, needs and motivations.

    a) Ayers and Miller (1990) suggested considering the following in choosing a topic with the audience in mind:

D. Brainstorming can provide a good way to generate potential topics. Applying each of the perspectives discussed earlier can help narrow the number and identify the most suitable topic.

II. **P** in S-P-E-A-K stands for the ***purpose*** of the speech.

A. There are three general purposes for speaking.

1. One purpose is to entertain, inspire, and/or celebrate seen in a valedictory address, a Memorial Day address, a eulogy or a toast.

2. A second purpose is to inform or instruct with the goal of audience understanding. Lectures, training seminars, or demonstrations of a process illustrate an informative purpose.

a) Informative speeches may explain abstract ideas or policies such as affirmative action, gun control, or tax reform.

b) Informative speeches may demonstrate a process by showing how to accomplish a particular task or explaining how something works.

3. A third purpose is to persuade in order to influence audience members' attitudes, beliefs or behavior.

a) Persuasive speeches may stimulate and thereby reinforce audience beliefs or behaviors.

b) Persuasive speeches may seek to convince to alter audience attitudes, beliefs, or values.

(1) Attitudes are the predispositions people have toward a particular topic, speaker or purpose which may be favorable, apathetic, interested, hostile or a blend of attitudes.

(2) Beliefs refer to what people hold to be true or false based upon facts, opinions and experience.

(3) Values refer to the orientations people hold as a way to organize their views of life and often provide a basis for their attitudes and beliefs.

c) Persuasive speeches may seek to actuate or influence audience behaviors.

B. The specific purpose of the speech is equally important.

1. The specific purpose is defined by a desired audience response. A sentence which begins with "I want my audience to ..." helps focus the specific purpose.

2. The specific purpose is summarized in the thesis or central idea of the speech which is variously described as:

   a) the proposition or claim to be proven in the speech

   b) the theme to be developed in the speech

III. **A** in S-P-E-A-K stands for the ***arrangement*** or organization of the speech.

   A. The introduction of the speech should accomplish certain goals.

      1. Begin the introduction with a device to gain the attention of the audience, such as:

         a) establishing common ground with the audience

         b) giving the audience an authentic compliment

         c) posing a rhetorical question

         d) using appropriate humor

         e) telling a story or providing an illustration

         f) using a combination of these techniques

      2. Orient the audience to the topic.

         a) State the purpose clearly.

         b) Offer the audience a reason to listen.

         c) Establish credibility by answering this question: Why should they listen to you?

d) Offer a preview which enumerates the main points.

B. The body of the speech also requires arrangement.

1. Speakers need to employ a clear organizational pattern.

a) Typical patterns include:

(1) A *chronological pattern* which organizes a speech according to time.

(2) A *spatial pattern* which organizes a speech according to space.

(3) A *topical pattern* which organizes a speech according to various ideas linked to the thesis.

(4) A cause-effect pattern which organizes a speech according to reasons for a phenomenon.

(5) A *problem-solution pattern* which organizes a speech by demonstrating the problem and then providing a solution, several solutions,

or a composite of solutions.

b) Additional specific patterns include:

(1) *The State-the-Case-and-Prove-It* pattern which provides a clearly stated thesis that is then systematically supported with arguments and evidence.

(2) *Monroe's Motivated Sequence* which arouses attention, demonstrates the need, presents satisfaction that meets the need, visualizes the results, and concludes with a call for action.

(3) The Sales Presentation Model pattern which establishes the speaker's identity and credibility, purpose and sets the climate in the introduction. In the body of the speech, the speaker identifies the needs of potential customers and presents an overview of a product or service that

meets these needs. In the conclusion, the speaker summarizes the benefits of the proposed product or service, offers reasons for choosing the product or service and opens for questions (Andrews & Baird, 1995, p. 443).

(4) *The Refutative Design* identifies opposing arguments and then attacks faulty reasoning, insufficient evidence, or other weaknesses in the reasoning or motives of opponents (Osborn & Osborn, 1994).

2. Main points should meet certain criteria.

    a) Main points should be clear, simple sentences.

    b) Main points should act as the skeleton of the speech.

    c) Main points should present one significant idea.

    d) Main points should support the thesis and organizational pattern of the speech.

3. To assist audiences in following the organization, the speaker uses transitions between the main points.

   a) Transitions are bridges, connecting ideas.

   b) Methods for transitions include:

      (1) internal summaries which review ideas already discussed in the speech and preview ideas to come.

      (2) an ordinal approach which numerically identifies main points (e.g., first, second, third).

      (3) posing questions which provide steps to the next main point (e.g., "But, how does ...?).

      (4) using the organizational pattern to develop transitions between the main points (e.g., if using a problem-solution pattern one could say, "Now that we've considered the problem,

let's turn to look at possible solutions.")

C. The conclusion should also accomplish specific purposes.

1. The conclusions review and summarize the main points.

2. The conclusions provide a "clincher" for the audience which brings the speech to a close and emphasizes the thesis. This can be done by offering a challenge, a reinforcing story, a quotation, visualizing the future or referring back to the introduction.

IV. The phonetic **"K"** in S-P-E-A-K stands for ***crafting*** the speech.

A. First the speaker's outline needs to be crafted.

1. Two kinds of outlines are important.

a) The preparation outline is a working outline which represents the content of the speech.

b) The presentation or speaking outline is a key word and/or phrase outline used by the speaker while speaking extemporaneously.

2. Outlines can be formal or conceptual.
    a) Formal outlines use Roman numerals, letters and numbers
    b) Conceptual outlines may use a flow chart, mind mapping or conceptual clustering.
3. Effective outlines demonstrate several qualities.
    a) *They are simple*. Each portion of the outline contains a single idea phrased in accessible language.
    b) *They are coordinated*. Ideas at each level of the outline are equally emphasized.
    c) *They are subordinated*. The ideas at each level of the outline are logically related.
    d) *They are parallel*. The main points are similarly phrased.
    e) *They are balanced*. The main points receive equal emphasis.

B. Second, the speaker's delivery needs to be crafted.

1. There are three main types of delivery.

    a) In manuscript delivery the speaker reads from the text of the speech.

    b) Impromptu delivery requires speakers to speak with only minimal preparation.

    c) Extemporaneous delivery combines preparation and practice before the actual presentation, but employs a conversational approach.

2. There are two important elements of delivery.

    a) The verbal component considers the use of language and voice.

        (1) Concrete, clear, concise and considerate language works best.

        (2) Varying pitch, volume, rate and emphasis helps the impact of the speech.

b) The nonverbal component focuses on the use of posture, gestures, eye contact and facial expressions.

(1) Speakers should usually stand erect and straight.

(2) Speakers should use spontaneous gestures which fit the words that are spoken.

(3) Speakers should usually make direct and comprehensive eye contact with all audience members.

(4) Speakers should employ facial expressions appropriate to the occasion and the main ideas in the speech.

C. Third, the speaker's appeals need to be crafted.

1. Speakers should make their personal credibility clear to their audiences (ethos).

2. Speakers should offer sound reasoning backed with credible evidence (logos).

3. Speakers should appreciate and employ emotion appropriate to the speech (pathos).

4. Speakers may relate to the values, rituals, and heroes of the audience or employ mythos (Osborn & Osborn, 1994).

CONCLUSION

Although these principles of public speaking are not new, teaching them with an acrostic approach offers beginning instructors and students alike in the hybrid basic course a way to enhance learning without sacrificing thoroughness. Furthermore, even though I have offered this approach as a way to teach the public speaking section in a basic hybrid communication course, it may also be applied in other settings. These include short seminars or workshops, continuing education classes, and short academic terms.

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The Editor and the Basic Course Commission of the National Communication Association invite submissions to the considered for publication in the *Basic Communication Course Annual*. The Annual is published by American Press (Boston, MA) and is distributed nationally to scholars and educators in the basic communication course. Manuscripts are accepted for review throughout the year for publication consideration. However, the deadline for *Basic Communication Course Annual 13* is April 1, 2000. Manuscripts received after this date will be considered for the next volume of the Annual.

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