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Designing Classroom Management Training for Basic Course Instructors

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Many graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) arrive on campus eager to facilitate learning experiences for their students. Unfortunately, as the term begins, these high expectations can easily be transformed into disappointment and frustration if GTAs face student misbehaviors in the classroom (Golish, 1999). Student misbehaviors are those actions that GTAs perceive as interfering with learning (Richmond & Andriate, 1982) or disrupting the climate of the classroom. Research indicates that college students engage in more frequent and severe misbehaviors with GTAs than with faculty members (Golish, 1999; Luo, Bellows, & Grady, 2000; Roach, 1991). Moreover, the nature of the basic course itself poses unique challenges for GTAs, since student presentations and group projects create potential areas for additional classroom management problems. Classroom management includes actions taken by instructors to establish order, engage students, or elicit cooperation (Emmer & Strough, 2001). Lack of teaching experience, coupled with limited classroom management training (CMT),

may set many GTAs up for a troubled initiation to teaching.

What training GTAs receive often ignores, or only addresses briefly, classroom management issues. Training programs to prepare GTAs for what are often their first teaching experience vary greatly across university campuses (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Gray, 1990; Roach, 1991, 2002). Thus, it stands to reason that CMT is often inadequate or, worse yet, lacking altogether. If GTAs are not properly prepared for situations that arise in the classroom, their reaction may be counterproductive and may inadvertently increase the likelihood of future student misbehaviors. Since one of the primary goals of classroom management is to establish a climate that is conducive to student learning (Luo et al., 2000), CMT for GTAs is critical (Hunt, Novak, Semlak, & Meyer, 2005). In fact, deficiencies in training present a potential danger to both GTAs and students, since the quality of instruction as well as student learning may suffer. Previous studies have failed to investigate what student misbehaviors GTAs face in the basic course. Thus, the purpose of this investigation is to assess student misbehaviors specific to the basic course and to develop a training program that will assist GTAs in dealing with such behaviors.

It stands to reason that student misbehaviors are likely to be more evident in the basic course when GTAs have limited classroom management experience. The following review of literature will examine student misbehaviors in college, the basic communication course, and GTA classrooms. Furthermore, what is known about current GTA training, classroom management,

and instructional communication will be examined to help design a CMT program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Misbehaviors in the College Classroom

Student misbehaviors occur in college classrooms. Although classroom management in college is perceived to be easy, it is actually difficult because students use new and sophisticated resistance strategies that they did not use in high school (Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989). Students may refuse to concede to teachers the right to assume power, be openly reluctant, or even openly defiant (Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991). For example, students may use a variety of problematic persuasive strategies, such as active resistance, passive resistance, blame, avoidance, reluctant compliance, deception, disruption, refusal to comply with instructor requests, challenges to instructor power, hostile defensive reactions, and revenge (Burroughs et al., 1989), and may even use retaliatory persuasive strategies (Golish, 1999). Common misbehaviors that occur frequently or occasionally, across all grade levels, include talking out-of-turn, overactivity, inattention, and apathy (Kearney, Plax, Sorenson, & Smith, 1988). Some college students see the classroom as a place to express their anger and frustration (Downs, 1992). While some problems may occur in isolated incidents, others may persist throughout the semester. Thus, a variety of student misbehaviors occur in college classrooms.

Student Misbehaviors in the Basic Course

Beyond misbehaviors exhibited by college students in general, the basic course makes demands of students that may invite further incidents. Since student interaction is stressed in the basic course, requiring students to listen to others' ideas and defend their own, a variety of ethical concerns may arise in basic course classrooms. The performance nature of the basic course presents a host of other concerns. Problems could range from relatively minor disruptions, like a student walking in tardy during another student's speech, to more severe disturbances, such as a student challenging the instructor's authority in front of other students. Since the evaluation of speeches and writing assignments is by nature somewhat subjective, students may also contest grades in the basic course. Thus, the nature of the basic course presents several classroom management concerns.

Plagiarism is one known form of misbehavior that poses a particular problem for basic course instructors. Since a plagiarized speech impedes the instructor's assessment of the student's abilities, it disrupts learning and undermines the educational process (Holm, 2002). Hence, plagiarism falls within the realm of student misbehavior and is a classroom management concern. Holm (2002) explains that performance-based assignments, such as speeches in the basic course, "are just as susceptible to instances of academic dishonesty" as cheating on homework assignments or tests (p. 66). Instructors in public speaking classes may falsely assume that students who deliver speeches also researched and wrote those speeches; likewise, students may find it easy to rationalize that speech plagiarism is not cheating, since they deliver the speech in person (Holm, 2002). Alarm-

ingly, Holm found that more than half of public speaking students reported engaging in one or more acts of cheating. Thus, in addition to facing common student misbehaviors in college, basic course instructors may face misbehaviors that are unique to the performance nature of the basic course.

Student Misbehaviors in GTA Classrooms

There is also evidence to suggest that general student misbehaviors are likely to be more evident when GTAs have limited classroom management experience. GTAs are particularly vulnerable and face many obstacles in the college classroom that regular faculty members do not. GTAs tend to be closer to the age of the students enrolled in the basic course than faculty, thus leading to "substantial problems in classroom management" (Roach, 1991, p. 179). One explanation for these problems is that students often perceive GTAs as having less authority and control over their classes than full-time faculty (Golish, 1999; Roach, 1991). In fact, students perceive themselves as capable of exerting more power with GTAs than with professors (Golish, 1999). Lou et al. (2000) found the years of teaching experience are significantly related to the number of classroom management problems and concerns reported by GTAs. Another explanation for this, according to Plax, Kearney, and Tucker (1986), is that beginning instructors "may be limited in their understanding of available control techniques" (p. 34). Yet another explanation is that the age of GTAs may influence their perceptions of students. Sprague and Nyquist (1989) posit that beginning GTAs may think students will take advant-

age of their age and view the smaller age gap as a threat to their authority. As a result, the frequency and severity of misbehavior is likely to be more prevalent and intense in a GTA's classroom, due to their age, experience, and lack of CMT. Because GTAs in the basic communication course are bound to encounter mis-behaviors common to all college classrooms, as well as the misbehaviors unique to the basic course and to their roles as GTAs, training programs should prepare them for these experiences.

Shortfalls in Current Training

The most practical place to prepare GTAs for the student misbehaviors they are likely to encounter is during the basic course training program. Such preparation, however, is often lacking. While classroom management has been studied extensively in educational psychology and in teacher education programs for primary and secondary teachers, higher education has largely ignored the importance of preparation, instruction, and CMT for its own instructors. At the university level, little classroom management information is provided to GTAs.

Unfortunately, the manner in which training occurs is neither uniform nor effective, ranging from comprehensive and lengthy programs that attempt to prepare GTAs to teach course content to ones that promote a trial-by-fire approach. Much of the concern and criticism about the use of GTAs can be traced to their lack of experience and formal training (Roach, 1991). Basic course training programs neglect, or do not allow sufficient time, to introduce GTAs to classroom management con-

cepts and practices (Roach, 1991), more often than not concentrating on curriculum content, rather than focusing on preparing GTAs to become competent classroom instructors. Additionally, GTA training programs are not uniform and vary in length, with most lasting less than one week (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Gray, 1990). Training programs vary significantly from university to university, and even between departments within a university. Thus, shortfalls in current training programs leave GTAs unprepared for events that may occur in the basic course.

Given the shortfalls in current training programs, more could be done to incorporate instructional principles along with content knowledge. Roach (2002) notes that GTAs "do not have to learn in a hit-or-miss fashion" (p. 209). Improved training programs that devote attention to issues of classroom management, rather than solely concentrating on subject matter content, offer hope. Luo et al. (2000) argue that it is essential to provide GTAs "with comprehensive training before they begin their classroom duties" (p. 374). The solution, however, is not as simple as telling GTAs to be proactive. Importantly, GTAs may not implement classroom management strategies naturally, unless they are first made aware of the tactics that are available to them. Hunt et al. (2005) argue that training programs should give GTAs the tools to manage their classrooms effectively. However, existing literature has not explored what classroom management information GTAs perceive as potentially useful in training. Consequently, the integration of classroom management into training programs should be explored.

Classroom Management and Student Misbehaviors

Incorporating classroom management information into training could help to prepare GTAs for student misbehaviors. Teacher behaviors and classroom management skills can directly influence student behaviors (Simonds, 1995). Misbehaviors are preventable if instructors incorporate positive questioning techniques, use motivational messages, provide more positive rather than negative feedback, hold students accountable, and increase time on-task (Kearney et al., 1991). If GTAs are properly prepared for what to expect, the likelihood of reacting appropriately to an incident and defusing misbehavior situations is greater; however, if GTAs are not prepared for what to expect, there is a strong possibility that disruptive situations may become inflamed.

There are a variety of methods available to prevent and deal with inappropriate behaviors from students. Effective management practices begin with instructor caring and compassion for the students (Pena & Amrein, 1999). Teachers can help students learn from mistakes by using nonverbal signals to discourage disruptive or unwanted behavior, or by providing messages of acceptance that communicate acceptance of students, mutual respect, and trust (Nakamura, 2000). Effective management involves using proximity and changing locations, remaining objective and professional, stimulating intrinsic motivation in students, and anticipating problems before they occur (Rinne, 1997). Instructors should employ verbal intervention strategies, such as out of class communication, and use nonverbal immediacy and pro-social message strategies (Bruschke & Gartner, 1991). In fact, many experienced teachers learn to use proximity, eye contact, or direct questioning

to re-engage students in the learning process. Use of wait time (Sylwester, 2003), positive reinforcement, and prevention models can also reduce misbehaviors (Wolfgang, 2001). The manner in which instructors confront misbehavior requires careful thought and reflection, as GTAs make continual improvements in classroom management.

Literature leads to several conclusions about classroom management: First, both definitions of student misbehavior and classroom order, as well as how to approach classroom management (Bruschke & Garner, 1991) vary from teacher to teacher. Second, classroom management is a reciprocal process (Gomberg & Gray, 1999), affected by teacher and student behavior (Bruschke & Gartner, 1991), with ultimate responsibility for classroom climate lying with the teacher (Kearney et al., 1991). Third, effective classroom management is proactive, with strategies implemented prior to the occurrence of misbehavior (Cooper & Simonds, 2003). Many GTAs who have not been given CMT prior to their first teaching experience react to misbehaviors after the fact, whereas experienced teachers learn to act before an incident occurs. The question then becomes what information do GTAs think would be helpful during training.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the existence of student misbehaviors in the college classroom, the unique environment of the basic course, and the lack of CMT in existing GTA training programs, two research questions are posed for the pre-

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sent study. The first research question seeks to discover what misbehaviors occur in the basic course:

RQ1:   What student misbehaviors in the basic course do GTAs confront and report a concern with managing?

Existing literature also reveals that not enough time and attention is devoted to classroom management issues during training; thus, the present study examines what classroom management information GTAs perceive to be most valuable.

RQ2:   What classroom management information do GTAs believe should be provided during the basic course training program?

In sum, then, the purpose of the present study is to identify those student misbehaviors that GTAs face in the basic course and to discover what classroom management information GTAs believe should be offered during training programs.

METHODS

Participants

Participants consisted of GTAs who teach the basic course for the communication department of a large Midwestern university. The participants had all been through a basic course training program that did not include a CMT session. Out of the 30 GTAs teaching in the department at the time, 18 completed the survey, for a response rate of 60%. The 14 female and four male GTAs' mean age was 23.78 years (SD = 1.90). At the

time of data collection, the participants had been teaching the basic course for two to four semesters. Fourteen GTAs reported having no teaching experience prior to instructing the basic course, two reported one semester of experience, one reported three semesters of experience, and one reported 11 semesters of experience.

Procedures

All procedures were approved through the university's Institutional Review Board. Participants signed an informed consent form prior to anonymously completing the survey instrument. The GTAs were surveyed for the purpose of collecting baseline data in Spring 2004, during weeks 11 and 12 of a 16-week semester. A research assistant was employed to help unitize and code the qualitative data along with the lead author. The research assistant received training prior to unitizing and coding the data.

Measurement

Participants completed a survey instrument, created specifically for this study, consisting of demographic items, nine open-ended questions, and six closed-ended measures. The demographic items asked GTAs to report their sex, age, and semesters of teaching experience prior to instructing the basic course.

Qualitative survey questions. The nine open-ended survey questions provided an opportunity for GTAs to explain their perceptions of the training program and their experiences in teaching the basic course. Three

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questions, addressing RQ1, inquired about frequently observed misbehaviors of basic course students, misbehaviors GTAs find most difficult to manage, and severe cases that were documented or reported (see Appendix, questions 1-3). Six questions, addressed RQ2, inquired about what information and materials could be provided during training, what could be done differently during training to prepare GTAs for student misbehaviors, what GTAs would do differently, in general and during the first few weeks of the semester, the next time they taught the course, what GTAs had learned through their teaching experience about responding to student misbehaviors, and what advice they would give incoming GTAs (see Appendix, questions 4-9).

Quantitative survey questions. The *Training Measure* consisted of survey items asking if: training preparation was effective, sufficient, and comprehensive. Additionally, items measured if enough time was spent addressing misbehaviors as well as if enough information was given to avoid and handle misbehaviors. The *Frequency of Misbehavior Measure* consisted of survey items asking about the frequency of the following misbehaviors: Inappropriate Behavior, Inappropriate Speech Topics, Sexist Language, Ethnocentric Language, Poor Audience Members, and Poor Classroom Environment. Both the Training and the Frequency of Misbehavior measures were arranged on a 5-point Likert-type scale and asked participants to respond from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The *Learning Loss Measure* sought to determine how the basic course training program compared to an ideal one, and was arranged on a 10-point Likert scale. The first question asked how much GTAs had learned during the basic

course training program, while the other asked how much GTAs could have learned had they had the ideal training program. The *Attention Measure,* arranged on a 7-point Likert semantic differential scale, consisted of two questions, asking if: the current level of attention given to classroom management and student misbehaviors in the basic course training program was good (Level of Attention Good), and if it was valuable (Level of Attention Valuable). The *Extent of Misbehavior Measure* asked GTAs to rate the extent to which certain misbehaviors were a problem in their classroom, while the *Management of Misbehavior Measure* asked GTAs to rate their ability to manage these misbehaviors. The specific misbehaviors included: engaging in acts of plagiarism (Plagiarism), backtalking the instructor (Backtalk), refusing to participate (Refusal to Participate), talking loudly enough that the instructor must talk over the students (Loud Talk), being inattentive audience members (Inattentive Audience), being tardy on speech day (Tardy on Speech Day), and engaging in side conversations (Side Conversation). Both the Extent of Misbehavior and the Management of Misbehavior measures were arranged on a 5-point Likert-type scale and asked participants to respond from 0 (*never occurs*) to 4 (*very often occurs*).

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis and coding. The lead author and a research assistant unitized GTA responses by separating new thoughts or ideas into a total of 284 units of analysis. Each idea within a single answer constituted a unit of analysis, allowing multiple units from

any given response. By examining the number of impressions, instead of the number of participants, the data were coded in a manner more accurately reflecting GTA perceptions of student misbehavior.

Next, the lead author and research assistant analyzed the unitized data to identify emergent themes. Themes were derived inductively, with an attempt to "bracket" prior notions of categories from the literature, so that the themes would provide a framework based on the present data, rather than an *a priori* categorization scheme (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researchers coded the data independently to avoid consensus building (Neuendorf, 2002), and then met to compare units and categories that revealed patterns, frequencies, and themes in the data. Differences were then resolved by clarifying themes. Initial descriptive coding followed survey topics as well as unexpected comments.

Quantitative analysis and tests. GTA responses to the six closed-ended survey measures were subjected to computer analysis, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 12.0. Frequency tests were conducted to calculate means and standard deviations for the closed-ended items. Reliability estimates were not calculated for the six closed-ended measures, since each item in these measures assessed a different variable.

RESULTS

Student Misbehaviors in the Basic Course

The first research question examined the misbehaviors of basic course students that GTAs confront and report a concern managing.

Qualitative results. Responses to three open-ended questions addressed RQ1. The questions queried GTAs about the frequency of various student misbehaviors in the basic course, misbehaviors they find most difficult to manage, and severe cases that were documented or reported. The content analysis for the first two questions addressing RQ1 generated six categories (see Table 1): *Assignments* (which included subcategories of plagiarism, refusal to participate, handing in work late or requesting extensions, avoiding work, and not turning in assignments), *Attendance* (which included subcategories of tardiness on speech or regular class days, and sleeping during class), *Attitude* (which included subcategories of having a bad attitude, expressing hostility toward GTAs or other students, use of sarcasm, use of informal language when addressing GTAs, and lack of respect), *No Problem* (which included comments expressing that misbehaviors have not been a problem) *Speeches* (which included subcategories of group work problems, poor audience skills, and inappropriate speech topics), and *Talk* (which included subcategories of side conversations, talking while GTAs or other students have the floor, over-talkers who dominate discussion, inappropriate topics of conversation, talking at inappropriate times, and sexist or ethnocentric language).

The most frequent student misbehaviors that GTAs observed, reported as a percentage of the 55 units coded

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Table 1
Categories and Subcategories from Content Analysis
of Student Misbehaviors

Category	Subcategory
Assignments	plagiarism or cheating refusal to participate handing in work late or requesting extensions avoiding work not turning in assignments
Attendance	tardiness on speech or regular class days sleeping during class

Attitude	having a bad attitude
	expressing hostility toward GTAs or other
	  students
	use of sarcasm
	use of informal language when addressing
	  GTAs
	lack of respect

No Problem	comments expressing that misbehaviors have not been a problem
Speeches	group work problems poor audience skills inappropriate speech topics
Talk	side conversations talking while GTAs or other students have the floor over-talking that dominates discussion inappropriate topics of conversation talking at inappropriate times sexist or ethnocentric language

for each category, were misbehaviors related to Talk (43.64%), followed by No Problem (20.00%), Attitude (18.18%), Assignments (9.09%), Attendance (7.27%), and Speeches (1.82%). For instance, one GTA noted that "the only kind of behavior I ever had a problem with (only once) was a student that was mad because he came late on a speech day so I did not let him give his. He stormed out of the classroom." Another GTA noted that instances of students "challenging the teacher in an aggressive way" was a common problem. A female GTA explained that backtalking was common and gave an example of students saying "this is dumb!"

The student misbehaviors that GTAs reported a concern managing, reported as a percentage of the 26 units coded for each category, were misbehaviors related to Talk (26.92%), followed by Assignments (23.08%), Attitude (23.08%), No Problem (11.54%), Attendance (7.69%), and Speeches (7.69%). For example, one male GTA reported that hostility toward the instructor is difficult to manage "because the student shuts you out. They can also be distracting to other students." A female GTA reported that aggressive communication, such as "yelling and defensive conversations," are difficult to manage. A different female GTA noted that it is difficult to manage "a student who dominates class discussions." Another female GTA reported problems with "comments toward me which were intended by the student as funny, but were really insulting (i.e. distorting my name)."

Several severe instances of student misbehavior were reported by GTAs. Overall, 11 GTAs (61.11%) responded that they had not experienced student misbehaviors that were severe enough to be documented or reported, while seven GTAs (38.89%) reported eight in-

cidents. Of the severe misbehaviors that were reported, five involved cases of plagiarism. For example, one GTA reported two counts of plagiarism, on a speech and a paper, that were documented with the university office in charge of academic misconduct. The three other cases involved repeated misbehavior problems with a particular student, an incident in the speech lab involving sexual innuendos, and student conflict in which students argued heatedly with each other in class. For example, one GTA reported having a student with repeated behavior problems throughout the semester who was referred to the same university office; the end result was a formal hearing. Another GTA reported that, "two girls began arguing with each other (yelling) during the sitcom presentations. I dealt with the issue and it was documented but not reported."

Quantitative results. Responses to the Frequency of Misbehavior, the Extent of Misbehavior, and the Management of Misbehavior measures addressed RQ1.

On the Frequency of Misbehavior Measure, GTAs reported Inappropriate Speech Topics as the most frequently occurring student misbehavior ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.43$), followed by Poor Classroom Environment ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.38$), Sexist Language ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.15$), Ethnocentric Language ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.20$), Inappropriate Behavior ($M = 1.94$, $SD = .64$), and Poor Audience Members ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .76$).

On the Extent of Misbehavior Measure, GTAs reported Side Conversation as the most problematic ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .73$), followed by Loud Talk ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 1.06$), Inattentive Audience ($M = 1.44$, $SD = .92$), Refusal to Participate ($M = 1.28$, $SD = 1.45$), Backtalk ($M = $

1.17, *SD* = .79), Plagiarism (*M* = 1.06, *SD* = .94), and Tardy on Speech Day (*M* = .28, *SD* = .46).

On the Management of Misbehavior Measure, GTAs reported the greatest ability to manage Tardy on Speech Day (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = .59), followed by Inattentive Audience (*M* = 3.41, *SD* = .80), Backtalk (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = .75), Loud Talk (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = .88), Refusal to Participate (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = .99), Side Conversation (*M* = 3.11, *SD* = .76), and Plagiarism (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = 1.05).

GTA Perceptions of CMT

The second research question examined what classroom management information GTAs believe should be provided during the basic course training program.

Qualitative results. Responses to six open-ended questions addressed RQ2. The questions queried GTAs about what information and materials could be provided during training, what could be done differently during training to prepare GTAs for student misbehaviors, what GTAs would do differently, in general and during the first few weeks of the semester, the next time they taught the course, what GTAs had learned through their teaching experience about responding to student misbehaviors, and what advice they would give incoming GTAs. Since the purpose of RQ2 was to discover what type of information GTAs believe should be covered in training, rather than how often they made these suggestions in response to each survey item, the results are presented in a combined thematic fashion.

Several GTAs indicated dissatisfaction with the training program they received. For instance, a GTA suggested spending "more time discussing student mis-

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behavior, especially because many of the GTAs have never been a classroom instructor before this experience. I feel like student misbehavior was just brushed over." Additionally, GTAs made several comments indicating that training failed to cover student misbehaviors and classroom management effectively.

GTAs provided a variety of suggestions for CMT. The most frequently noted suggestions called for more attention to student misbehavior examples and solutions, role-playing activities during training, videotaped scenarios, testimonials from GTAs who had taught the course, clarification of policies about dismissing disruptive students from class, and a speaker from the campus office that deals with student disputes and academic dishonesty. For example, one GTA suggested that training "show instances of student 'misbehavior.' New teachers should be aware of what to expect (e.g., lateness, copying, non-responsive students)." GTAs also recommended stressing professionalism, being respectful but not dropping down to the student's level, setting rules and standards in the first week, firmly addressing misbehaviors immediately, and seeking help from peer mentors and basic course directors.

GTAs provided a variety of advice for incoming GTAs. Several comments from GTAs suggested that new GTAs be strict in the beginning of the semester, establish authority, carefully construct their syllabus around expectations and misbehavior policies, stop disruptive talk immediately, not allow students to talk while the GTA is, not back down, not take back-talk from students, not appear flustered, approve speech topics in advance, be serious about issues of plagiarism and poor audience behavior, establish lines of power,

engage students in the material quickly, and deal with misbehaviors in a consistent manner. For example, a female GTA reflected that she would "try to communicate a balance of rigidity and flexibility. I need to tell them that I'm not going to tolerate misbehaviors, but at the same time try to have a sense of humor about it." A different GTA commented that students make remarks "that are inappropriate, as easily as anyone could; you just need to correct the behavior the very first time it happens. Let them know that it is supposed to be a relaxed, comfortable environment that everyone can benefit from." Another GTA said, "Set your expectations high, expect them to behave appropriately. After all, they are in college now. Clearly articulate and enforce those expectations."

Quantitative results. Responses to the Training, the Learning Loss, and the Attention measures addressed RQ2.

On the Training Measure, GTAs reported the most favorable impressions of the basic course training program they received for Avoided Misbehaviors ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .86$), followed by Sufficient Instruction ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.00$), Effective Preparation ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.02$), Sufficient Time ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.18$), Handled Misbehaviors ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.25$), and Comprehensive Training ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 1.32$).

On the Learning Loss Measure, GTAs reported that the basic course training program they received compared negatively to an ideal training program ($M = -.17$, $SD = 3.90$).

On the Attention Measure, GTAs reported higher mean scores for Level of Attention Valuable ($M = 4.89$,

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SD = 1.28) compared to Level of Attention Good (M = 3.94, SD = 1.70).

DISCUSSION

Not surprisingly, the qualitative data revealed findings that were not clearly visible in the quantitative data. On the other hand, the quantitative results help to identify student misbehaviors in GTA classrooms by charting the mean scores. Consequently, the research questions posited in this study are best analyzed by considering the qualitative and quantitative data as two halves of the same picture.

Student Misbehaviors in the Basic Course

The findings for RQ1 provide information about misbehaviors that are frequently reported in the basic course, and those GTAs express a concern with managing. The qualitative data addressing RQ1 served to inform the quantitative data by allowing GTAs to explain the types and severity of misbehaviors they encountered. Specifically, the data revealed several misbehaviors in the basic course that occur frequently and GTAs find difficult to manage. Student misbehaviors related to the category of Talk were noted most frequently and reported as the most difficult to manage. Other categories of misbehavior included Assignments, Attendance, Attitude, No Problem, and Speeches. This list of misbehaviors is relevant to the basic course, as it is more comprehensive than a list of misbehaviors linked to persuasion (e.g., Burroughs et al., 1991; Golish, 1999), and

it reiterates prior claims of the importance of issues such as plagiarism (Holm, 2002) and authority challenges (Golish, 1999; Roach, 1991) to GTAs.

The findings do, however, suggest mixed results with regard to GTA perceptions of student misbehaviors. On closed-ended measures, some of the means indicate that misbehaviors do occur occasionally in their classrooms and, when they do, they are a concern. However, responses to the closed-ended items also indicate that the extent of these misbehaviors is not perceived to be great. Furthermore, GTAs indicated that they are confident in their ability to manage these incidents when they do occur. However, qualitative responses tend to contradict these results. While the quantitative measures report GTA perceptions, the qualitative responses offer insights into what misbehaviors were actually documented and reported. It appears that the documentation and reporting of severe misbehaviors does not sway GTAs perceptions of the extent of misbehaviors or affect their perceptions about managing misbehaviors. In sum, the qualitative data are tempered by the quantitative data. Perhaps the explanation for any discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative results lies in the nature of the quantitative survey items. Since the quantitative data from GTAs indicated that misbehaviors in the college classroom do not occur at an alarming rate, they may not have felt compelled to express much concern in response to the quantitative measure items or make such generalizations about student behavior. However, the qualitative results tell a different story.

GTA Perceptions of CMT

The findings for RQ2 provide insight into the information and materials that GTAs perceive to be necessary during the basic course training program. The qualitative data revealed a variety of recommendations that GTAs made for training in classroom management. Importantly, the results of both the qualitative and quantitative data addressing RQ2 indicate that GTAs perceived that more time and attention could be devoted to issues of classroom management during the training program.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data tend to indicate that CMT should be an integral part of basic course training programs. Specifically, responses to open-ended items indicate a need for training programs to more effectively address concerns of misbehaviors. GTAs indicated that more could be done in training to prepare future GTAs for what to expect and anticipate in the way of misbehaviors. As one GTA noted, student misbehaviors "will eventually happen; be prepared for it." Furthermore, responses show a need to train GTAs how to handle and respond to these incidents of misbehavior when they do arise in the classroom. GTAs offered several suggestions for activities and materials that could be integrated into CMT. Thus, the data indicate that the training program could do more to prepare GTAs for the classroom experience. In sum, the results highlight a need to provide CMT to incoming GTAs, prior to their first experience in the classroom.

Additionally, open-ended responses from GTAs suggest the potential effectiveness of CMT in successfully expediting the learning curve (Dinham, 1996) of incoming GTAs. For instance, lack of flexibility on the part of

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GTAs often serves to further inflame the situation. GTAs may feel that being flexible with rules may cause them to lose power or control. Rather than appearing weak, GTAs may prefer to stick to rigid rules. Emmer and Stough (2001) found that "novices had difficulty deviating from scripted lesson plans, which made their instruction vulnerable to student questions and disruptions" (p. 106). To illustrate, a GTA noted, "I have become more firm in how I treat the misbehaviors. I don't like being the 'bad guy,' but I am now comfortable with stepping in and laying down the rules." Another GTA explained:

> I have learned to relax a little and not take all misbehaviors seriously. However, I have also learned I need to be more forceful in stopping misbehaviors when they occur. I have learned that I need to start out being stricter and then become more flexible. Also, I learned that I need to follow through with consequences as well.

As expected, GTAs do learn to adjust their management style over time. For example, a GTA reported, "I've learned patience; it's much easier to deal with students now that I'm patient." Another GTA recommended not letting misbehaviors get out of control "by providing consequences to those who misbehave. Don't start out the semester trying to be their friends; show them that you are the authority by being stern and then relax into the class and be more flexible."

CMT could assuage GTA concerns regarding classroom management, thus creating a less defensive climate. Basic course training programs have the choice of either allowing GTAs to continue to learn these lessons through teaching experience, in what might be de-

scribed as a trial-by-fire approach, or through CMT. The question becomes a matter of which method is preferable. CMT may help GTAs to prevent misbehaviors before they occur and speed the development of effective classroom management skills for GTAs. Thus, if communication departments desire to increase GTA confidence prior to their first teaching experience, it seems that CMT could be a viable option.

Pedagogical Implications for the Design of CMT

Since the nature of the present study was applied, the goal was to conceptualize a practical model of CMT for GTAs that may serve as a guide to the larger academic community. Thus, the resulting themes for both misbehaviors and response strategies could be utilized to develop a CMT program for actual use in basic course preparation for GTAs. Specifically, a CMT session could be designed to target three areas of priority, including: the creation and use of a video showing sample student misbehaviors to prompt discussion during training, the integration of a guest speaker from the official campus office dealing with student disputes into the training program, and the creation and distribution of a training packet handout with information on student misbehaviors in the basic course, classroom management strategies, and instructional communication concepts.

Video. CMT could involve the creation of a video demonstrating example student misbehaviors in the basic course, which would serve as a tool for guided discussion of effective and ineffective reactions to misbehaviors. The impetus for the creation of the video is based upon the survey responses from GTAs and litera-

ture suggesting the effectiveness of a video. For example, Emmer and Stough (2001) argue for the usefulness of videotapes for training and research pertaining to classroom management and speculate that "videotapes of classroom management situations may illustrate varied contexts and provide opportunities for analysis" (p. 110). Specifically, six student misbehaviors are recommended for use in a video: sexist language, ethnocentric statements, inattentive or poor audience members, backtalk, refusal to participate in activities, and side conversations.

Guest speaker. CMT could involve the use of a guest speaker, who is a campus official in the area of student misconduct. The recommendation for involving a campus official in CMT is based on the advice of GTAs suggesting such involvement. Having a campus official present to address GTA questions could help them to feel more comfortable reporting incidents of academic dishonesty and student misbehavior, and could also ensure that the official policies and procedures of the university would be relayed accurately to the trainees.

Training packet handout. CMT could involve the distribution and discussion of a handout on misbehaviors and classroom management practices. The information contained in the handout could be generated from literature on student misbehaviors, classroom management, and instructional communication, and the survey responses from GTAs. Specifically, the training packet handout could include the following information: possible student misbehaviors in the basic course; responses from GTAs about their biggest difficulties in classroom management; a brief summary of teacher misbehavior literature; advice about how to handle the first day and

weeks of class; advice about how to respond to student misbehaviors in the basic course; a brief summary of literature on various communication education concepts, such as immediacy, power, clarity, and credibility; and a brief summary of literature on various classroom management concepts, such as wait time, proactive strategies, individualized approaches to classroom management, invisible classroom management strategies, and effective management procedures. This facet of the training program would involve structured, discussion-oriented lessons on current classroom management practices and theories.

Instructional communication research can serve to inform and guide what materials are included in CMT, since it adds to and informs classroom management literature. In fact, knowledge of important areas in communication education research would provide incoming GTAs with the ingredients to create their own unique mixture of teaching strategies. For example, Roach (1991) argues that it is necessary to teach "GTAs about the power dynamics of a classroom, especially in terms of how power and its use affects not only classroom management but also learning" (p. 179). Ironically, however, basic course training programs have failed to include many of the instructional communication variables, typically studied in basic course classrooms, into training for GTAs.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A limitation of the present study was the timing of the collection of baseline data. Since literature reveals that instructors gain more confidence in classroom management with experience, collecting data after GTAs had completed one to two years of instructional experience likely lead to a more favorable perception of the training program than they might have had immediately following the program, since they likely had learned to manage student behavior by that point. Thus, future research should survey GTAs at the beginning of their college teaching experience, and again after they have had classroom experience.

Another limitation of the present study was the sample size of participants involved in the project. Future research should attempt to gather data from either a larger group of GTAs or achieve a higher response rate from the pool of available GTAs. In addition, future studies should compare the baseline data collected in the present study to data gathered from GTAs who receive CMT. Following the implementation of CMT, future research should assess the frequency and severity of student misbehaviors as reported by GTAs who receive CMT in order to test the effectiveness of such a program. This assessment effort should also address GTA perceptions of the CMT program.

Conclusions

The results of the present study suggest that basic course directors should devote attention to preparing

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GTAs for what to expect in the way of misbehavior and how to respond appropriately. Often, it is not that GTAs do not want to use effective classroom management; they just have not been shown how to be effective classroom managers. CMT may allow GTAs to get past some initial teaching uncertainty and create a more positive classroom climate by using effective management practices from the beginning.

By seeking new ways to prepare GTAs to more effectively address misbehaviors that may arise in the college classroom setting, CMT may facilitate an easier transition to the teaching profession for GTAs. Training programs that do not give adequate attention to classroom management issues set GTAs up for a tumultuous first teaching experience. Classroom management, in large part, determines both the effectiveness of instruction and the learning of students. This study suggests a need for effective methods of training and preparing GTAs to deal with misbehaviors that may arise in the basic course classroom. Thus, training programs should consider incorporating instructional principles along with content knowledge. Basic course training programs can provide more thorough preparation for GTAs, and open a dialogue about classroom management practices.

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APPENDIX

Open-ended Survey Questions

1. What are the most frequent kinds of student misbehaviors you have witnessed from COM 110 students?

2. What student misbehaviors in COM 110 are the most difficult for you to manage?

3. Have you experienced any student misbehaviors that were severe enough to document and report the incident? If so, please describe in a general and brief manner.

4. What kinds of information and material do you think should be added to the Summer Training Program to better prepare COM 110 instructors to deal with student misbehaviors?

5. What could have been done differently in the Summer Training Program to better prepare you for the student misbehaviors that you have encountered in the classroom?

6. What, if anything, would you do differently the next time you teach a class in order to better facilitate appropriate student behavior?

7. What, if anything, would you do differently during the first few weeks of a class the next time you teach a class in order to better facilitate appropriate student behavior?

8. What have you learned, through your teaching experience in the classroom that has made you a

better instructor when having to respond to in-appropriate student behaviors?

9. What advice would you give to new, incoming GTAs that would help them to manage student misbehaviors and better prepare them for the classroom experience?