Summer 8-2012

Efficacy of a Basic Public Speaking Course Delivered via a Virtual Community College

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The University of Southern Mississippi

EFFICACY OF A BASIC PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE DELIVERED VIA

A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Stephen Bradley Bailey

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2012

ABSTRACT

EFFICACY OF A BASIC PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE DELIVERED VIA

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The purposes of this study were to: (a) determine if taking the basic public speaking course in face-to-face, hybrid, and online format statistically significantly reduces public speaking anxiety; (b) determine which course format, if any, reduces public speaking anxiety to the greatest extent; (c) determine if students' satisfaction with learning is statistically significantly different in the three course formats; (d) determine faculty's perceptions of students learning in the basic public speaking in the three course formats.

Pre- and post-data were collected from 263 participants taking the basic public speaking course in a virtual community college in January 2012 and in May 2012. Pre-data were collected using McCroskey's (1982) Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA). A post data survey administration included satisfaction questions about participants' learning experiences in addition to the post-PRPSA. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 53 years, with a mean age of 23.23 years. The majority of the respondents were females, while the two most reported ethnicities were Caucasian and African American. The majority of members reported that they were freshmen. Additionally, 11 of 21participating faculty members (52.4%) completed the faculty perceptions of students learning questionnaire at the end of the Spring 2012 semester.

Results of the current study suggest that all course formats statistically significantly reduced public speaking anxiety and that the online course format lowered public speaking anxiety statistically significantly greater when compared to the face-to-face format, but perhaps this was due to selection bias, where students who were extremely anxious at baseline self-selected the fully-online course. Also, students in the fully-online course indicated that although their anxiety was reduced, their comfort speaking in front of others, their confidence in public speaking, and their public speaking skills did not improve nearly to the extent that students who took the course in the traditional and hybrid formats reported.

The results of the study also indicate that students are significantly more satisfied with the face-to-face course than with the fully-online course and that faculty members deem the face-to-face and hybrid courses to be more efficacious in reaching desired student learning outcomes.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my grandparents, the late Vernal Richman King and Anna Lillian Hill King, whose love, hard work, and sacrifice made it possible for me to attain a college education. They believed in me when no one else did, which gave me the confidence to take on and persevere through this and all other challenges that life has presented me. Though I cannot hear it from their mouths, I can feel in my heart the pride that both of them have for me in this accomplishment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Online education began its ascent to the mainstream in 1995 (Zahran, 2006) as a result of an era of widely accessible technology and a "growing need for alternative (flexible) learning environments for both traditional college students and, in particular, for non-traditional students" (p. 3). Higher education administrators have begun to look to online education as a way to cut costs in instructional delivery (Benoit, Benoit, Milyo, & Hansen, 2006; Jones & Wellman, 2010; Twigg, 2005). Skepticism about the rigor and efficacy of online delivery is slowly dissipating in the minds of faculty (Seaman, 2009). Multiple studies suggest that online learning is equal to or better than traditional face-to-face instruction in producing desirable outcomes, such as student learning and student satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004; Benoit et al., 2006; Twigg, 2005).

Academic institutions, in an effort to stay competitive and attract quality students and faculty, find themselves confronted with competing agendas (e.g., profit vs. employee satisfaction). For traditional 'brick and mortar' colleges and universities, the complexities of the current academic landscape present numerous paradoxes for students, faculty, and administrators. In particular, the rush to provide advances in technology, specifically online and distance-learning, is in sharp contrast to institutional goals of retaining and graduating students.

The turn of the 21st century has brought about a decline in the financial stability of America's state institutions of higher learning. State governments, which allocate funding to state universities, are in a budget crisis due to a bad economy and a lowering tax base. State governments are struggling to fund an ever-increasing financial demand

to fund K-12 education, various social programs, healthcare mandates, and other programs that tend to receive priority over higher education funding due to the ability of post-secondary institutions to bring in revenues through tuition hikes and federal grants (Jones & Wellman, 2010; Meyer, 2008). Also, families' ability to fund tuition hikes is decreasing, with the percent of family income needed to pay for college reaching a national average of 27.8% and as high as 41.1% in some states (NCHEMS, 2008). Higher education institutions, which depend on state budget allocations, have been forced to tighten their belts substantially and seek efficiencies in order to stay afloat. Online education has been identified by higher education administrators as a strategy to become more efficient (Walters, 2006).

The financial strain is only one side of the coin. According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, the financial crisis facing higher education coincides with a time when the number of high school graduates is expected to increase by 11.1% from 2002-2018, an all-time high percentage of which are bound for college. Also, the age cohort containing traditional-aged college students (18-24 year olds) will increase by 3.8 million by 2025 (NCHEMS, 2008). Higher education administrators must meet the increased demand for education beyond high school, while also attending to the financial bottom line, and many consider online delivery of instruction to be part of their strategy (Walters, 2006).

Jones and Wellman (2010) report that "programs are being reduced, furloughs and layoffs are widespread, class sizes are increasing, sections are being cut" as institutions raise tuition at rates "ranging from 10-33%" in response to this "unprecedented level of financial chaos" (p. 8). Also reported is the increased use of lower-cost, part-time

faculty, including graduate teaching assistants. Jones and Wellman (2010) contend that

"higher education can't resolve its funding challenges simply by looking for new

revenues, turning to the federal government, or cutting costs" (p. 9) as these methods

only offer partial relief from the current recession. The authors posit that the "financial

problems facing higher education are not short-term but structural," (p. 9) thus requiring

a more long-term strategy of addressing a financing problem that will not go away, even

with the end of a recession. Suggestions offered include looking to technology as a long-

term solution, as "not all teaching and learning has to be done in the classroom" (p. 9).

Increasingly, state universities, following the lead of for-profit colleges and universities,

have turned to online education as a method to increase cost efficiencies. Numerous

reports have indicated that such financial efficiencies can be reached through increasing

capacity for online instruction, with some studies showing savings averaging 37%

(Twigg, 2005).

Higher education administrators, while responsible for financial considerations,

must keep students at the forefront in driving decisions affecting academic instruction.

The literature contains conflicts regarding students' perceptions of online education.

Benoit et al. (2006) found that students are slightly less satisfied with web-assisted

instruction as compared to traditional instruction, but acknowledge that with time, which

will bring technological improvements, coupled with the assumption that students and

faculty alike will become more comfortable with internet technology, satisfaction with

web-assisted instruction may very well improve in the future. Allen, Bourhis, Burrell,

and Mabry (2002), found that distance education through technology demonstrates "little

decline in student satisfaction with the quality of the educational process" (p. 91) and

concludes that "objections to distance education should not be based on the issues related to student satisfaction" as "students find distance learning as satisfactory as traditional classroom learning formats" (p. 93).

Allen et al. (2002) warned that while students may be just as satisfied with online education as with traditional delivery, it is possible that they may not learn as much. In contrast, Allen et al. (2004) later found no significant difference in outcomes derived from student grades, test scores, and other indicators of student performance, and even noted that "distance education course students slightly outperformed traditional students on exams and course grades" (p. 402). Benoit et al. (2006) found support for the claims of Allen et al (2004), concluding that "web-based learning is not consistently more effective than traditional instructional methods" added that more recent studies may indicate that web-based instruction may even be superior to traditionally delivered instruction. Delivering education online channel may even be the missing link needed to implement what Prensky (2010) calls a partnering pedagogy, a teaching method hailed by the author to be the key to teaching the 21st - century student.

While the literature seems to support higher education administrators' decisions to offer online instruction to meet student demand and to address financial limitations in most cases, studies suggest that online delivery may not be equally appropriate for all subject matter. In addition to other performance oriented courses like lab-based sciences, the Instructional Technology Council (2009) lists the basic public speaking course among the nine most difficult courses to teach in the online format due to faculty resistance and/or pedagogical challenges. The survey indicates that the content and rigor of such performance-based courses is difficult to match to the corresponding rigor of the face-to-

face versions of these same courses. A rigor equivalent to the face-to-face version of online courses is required by regional accrediting agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This study seeks to investigate the online delivery of the basic public speaking course in regard to its efficacy in equaling student outcomes of the traditionally delivered course. Also of interest in this study will be student and faculty perceptions of the efficacy of the course. Results of this study will guide higher education administrators in decisions regarding the integration of online instruction in courses that have been identified as the most difficult to translate to the online medium.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

The working world wants higher education to produce graduates that are communicatively competent. Communicative competency implies "the ability to clearly formulate ideas, effectively communicate to a group of peers, and then persuade others to pursue those ideas" (Pentland, 2008, p. vii). Competency in communication skills are not only needed to succeed in business, but in life in general.

Since the late nineteenth century, this expressed need for post-secondary institutions to graduate increasing numbers of students who were communicatively competent was addressed by providing students formal training in public speaking through the offering of the basic public speaking course. The literature calls clearly for the continued need of students to obtain basic public speaking training as part of the undergraduate curriculum (Hunt, Ekachai, Garard, & Rust, 2001). For over a century, the basic public speaking course has provided students with training which has been shown to improve the success of students in their academic, professional, and social lives (Finn,

Sawyer, & Schrodt, 2009). The basic public speaking course has persisted in the undergraduate curriculum because of the belief that training in communication makes a difference and that public speaking skills can be improved and enhanced through the education and experience that the course provides (Morreale, Hanna, Berko, & Gibson, 1999). Numerous studies have stressed the importance of the basic public speaking course in order to train students in the skills that need to gain employment, succeed in their chosen profession, and be involved and active citizens (Kramer & Hinton, 1996). Stakeholders depend on institutions of higher education to provide students with these skills in order to function and succeed in society.

Basic instruction in public speaking not only gives students the skills base and fundamental knowledge to formulate effective speeches, but also provides exposure to speaking in public, which is reported to help to treat communication apprehension (CA), one of American society's most dreaded phobias. According to McCroskey (2009), "Approximately 70% of people in the United States report experiencing CA when they have to give a public speech" (p. 164). Among the general population in the United States, it is estimated that 20% of people suffer the effects of high CA. McCroskey (1977) found that public speaking anxiety is experienced in varying degrees by all students enrolled in introductory speaking courses and that 20% of those students could be classified as having serious issues with CA. According to McCroskey (2009), 20% of the population is virtually handicapped by their CA, and those individuals who exhibit low CA benefit academically, personally, professionally, and financially.

In early studies by McCroskey and his contemporaries, communication anxiety has been shown to handicap individuals in their education, social lives, and career.

Studies have found that high CA correlates to lower incomes (Daly & McCroskey, 1975); lower job satisfaction (Falcione, McCroskey, & Daly, 1977); decreased chance of being selected in the job application process and less chance of being promoted if hired (McCroskey, Daly, & Sorenson, 1976); rejection in social environments and on the job (Quiggins, 1972); lower grades, less satisfaction with educational experiences, and less overall learning (McCroskey & Anderson, 1976; McCroskey, Daly, & Sorenson, 1976); less likelihood of seeking available tutoring (Scott, Wheeless, Yates, & Randolph 1978); higher rate of loneliness due to not being selected as friends (Hurt, Joseph, & Cook, 1977); less success and satisfaction with dating (McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978); and increased chance of marrying early, resulting in higher divorce rates (McCroskey & Kretzschmar, 1977). These and other debilitating effects are brought about by an individual's tendency to avoid communication (Beatty, 1988) and high CA individuals pay great costs due to this predisposition (Robinson, 1997). Robinson suggests that "with so much at stake in terms of social, professional, and personal growth, finding a way to treat CA in a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere would seem advantageous for both students and instructors" (p. 188).

Many researchers have called for the need for more research before making the decision to place the basic public speaking course online (Allen, 2006). Finn, Sawyer, and Schrodt (2009) state that "repeated exposure to the same audience in presumably a controlled, supportive environment might explain the overall decrease in anxiety that occurs during basic communication courses" (p. 96). In online versions of the basic public speaking course, both the *same audience* and a *controlled, supportive environment* are, due to the nature of the online delivery of the course, lacking. Other studies assert

that "basic course directors need to consider whether the distance experience of the course is consistent with course objectives and skills development addressed in face-to-face sections" and urge decision-makers to "consider the issues particular to moving the basic communication course onto the internet" (Morreale, Worley, & Hugenberg, 2010, p. 424).

It is in the best interest of higher education administrators to thoroughly investigate the effects which their decisions may have on all stakeholders, most importantly students, but also faculty, staff, and public perceptions of the university. One such decision that should not be taken lightly is the delivery of courses and programs in the online format without a thorough investigation of the outcomes effecting students, faculty, and all other stakeholders within and without the institution. The academic, professional, financial, and social ramifications of graduating ill-prepared students are a detriment to institutions, the workforce, and a democratic society in general. Conflicting findings permeate the literature regarding the student learning outcomes of online education (Allen et al., 2002; Allen et al., 2004, Benoit et al., 2006). These conflicts exist regarding student and faculty perceptions of the online course delivery medium as well (Allen et al., 2002; Benoit et al., 2006; Seaman, 2009).

As the trend of placing college instruction online grows larger with each passing year (Allen & Seaman, 2010), it is imperative that decision-makers in higher education consider and initiate further study into the measurable outcomes of online education, which affect students, faculty, and all stakeholders. This study seeks to investigate the aforementioned measurable outcomes of online education, as it pertains to one particular class that is listed among the most difficult to translate through the online delivery

medium, the basic public speaking course. The study will also seek to ascertain student and faculty perceptions of the efficacy of this particular course in reaching educational outcomes. The study will seek to add to the conversation in the literature concerning online educational outcomes as a whole, as well as to studies concerning the online delivery of basic public speaking courses specifically. The outcome of this study will benefit administrators in higher education by providing data to drive decisions regarding the integration of online courses in the curriculum.

While it is possible that the basic public speaking course delivered online is just as effective as traditional delivery, regressing in the effectiveness of attempts to reduce communication apprehension among our students due to the neglect of a thorough investigation of the effects of the course on desired outcomes would be a disservice to students and would decrease the value of degrees from an institution who abdicated that responsibility. Morreale, Hugenberg, and Worley (2006) "anticipate increased use of instructional delivery technology as available budgets continue to decrease" but warn that "we need to carefully consider the most effective delivery systems for use in the basic communication course" and that "we would do well to think about pedagogical impacts in the basic course from a student-learning perspective" (p. 434) and furthermore, they implore further research in the area of the fully online delivery of the basic communication course (p. 435).

The basic public speaking course has remained viable for over a century and has remained as a required course in the majority of college programs of study because of its reported ability to address the common and debilitating handicap of public speaking

anxiety, as "speaking in public is the most prevalent social fear both in individuals with social phobia and in the community at large" (Furmark et al., 1999, p. 416).

Clark and Jones (2001) compared students who took the basic public speaking course in the web-enhanced (hybrid) format with those who took the course in the traditional face-to-face format. This study found no difference in the web-enhanced (hybrid) delivery of the course and the traditional method in addressing students' communication apprehension. Neither did the study find differences in students' self-reported perception of public speaking abilities after the course. Clark and Jones did not test the efficacy of the web-based (fully-online) version of the course, as all speech performances in this study were conducted in the traditional classroom setting. The web-based (fully-online) public speaking course will be tested in the present study. Also, the Clark and Jones study was limited to a single institution and with a limited number of students, where the present study will be broad-based. Additionally, this study measured communication apprehension using the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) scale, which measures communication anxiety in a variety of contexts (McCroskey, 1982). The present study will use the PRPSA scale, which focuses on measuring communication apprehension in the context of public speaking (McCroskey, 1970). The literature supports that the focus of the basic public speaking course is extemporaneous public speaking, justifying the use of the PRPSA scale.

Kemnitz (2005) compared the basic public speaking course delivered in the traditional face-to-face format with the same course delivered in the web-based (fully-online) format. The study focused on demographic and logistical issues regarding students' selection of the web-based public speaking course, and did not specifically

measure course outcomes. The study did address communication apprehension, focusing on trait communication apprehension, which affects an individual in multiple communication contexts and utilizes the PRCA scale, designed to measure various contexts. The present study focuses on state communication apprehension, which affects individuals in specific contexts, in the case of this study, the context of extemporaneous public speaking and utilizes the PRPSA scale, designed specifically for the public speaking context.

There is clearly a need for more study on the efficacy of the basic public speaking course and its desired outcomes, including the reduction of state communication apprehension in the context of public speaking. McCroskey (2009), the father of communication apprehension research, states that "there will never be enough research on communication apprehension until the effects of CA can be prevented for everyone in our society and other cultures" (p. 169).

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

This study will seek to add to the literature concerning online educational outcomes as a whole, as well as to studies concerning the online delivery of basic public speaking courses specifically. The outcome of this study will benefit administrators in higher education by providing data to drive decisions regarding the integration of online courses in the curriculum. This study will specifically investigate one particular course, the online basic public speaking course, in its efficacy in reaching stated course objectives as compared to delivery via the traditional face-to-face format. This researcher seeks to investigate whether one of the most common and debilitating social anxieties, speaking before a crowd of people, can be adequately addressed by hybrid and

online public speaking course offerings as opposed to the same courses offered in the traditional face-to-face format? Also examined in this study will be students' and instructors' perceptions of the efficacy of the online delivery of the basic public speaking course in meeting desired outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the online format through the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC).

Hypothesis 2: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format.

Hypothesis 3: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional hybrid format.

Hypothesis 4: The change between speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between those Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through the MSVCC.

Hypothesis 5: Student satisfaction scores for learning experiences will be

statistically significantly different between those Mississippi community college

students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face

format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through

the MSVCC.

Research Question

What are faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning of Mississippi

community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional

face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format

through the MSVCC, as indicated by the Faculty Perceptions of Student Learning

Questionnaire (Appendix C)?

Definitions of Terms

Anxiety - when a person experiences a situation as personally threatening, either

physically or psychologically, which triggers a physiological response and various coping

strategies…(Anxiety is) not an emotion, (but) rather a combination of negative effects

such as "fear, uncertainty, distress, apprehension, and worry" (Laukka et al., 2008, p.

197).

Asynchoronous Online Learning - in this model of online learning, the learner

works on his or her own time with no restrictions, limitations, or prescriptions of working

on the course. In this mode, there are no scheduled class meeting times.

Communication Apprehension (CA) - the general term that encompasses public speaking anxiety, as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 2009, p. 78).

Digital Native - a name for the age cohort born after 1980 at a time when social digital technologies became readily available for the masses. See also *Millennials* (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

Exposure Therapy (Systematic Desensitization) - "As a treatment intervention, brief repeated exposures to the same stimulus produce greater levels of psychological comfort based on increasing levels of familiarity" (Finn, Sawyer, & Shrodt, 2009, p. 93). In other words, if a subject perceives erroneous negative consequences to follow public speaking, and over time through experience and practice these erroneous negative consequences do not come to fruition, more positive feelings will replace those once-held negative feelings (Finn et al., 2009; Rachman, 1980).

Face-to-face (F2F) Format - a course utilizing the traditional, live delivery of instruction based on the traditional lecture-test format where role of instructors is to "lecture, talk, and explain, and for students to listen, take notes, and read the text, and memorize" (Prensky, 2010, p. 10).

Habituation - a complimentary process enacted by systematic desensitization which "occurs when anxiety decreases with time due to repeated or prolonged exposures to a stimulus" (Gray & McNaughton, 2000, p. 161).

Millennial - a name for those in age cohort born after 1980, immediately following Generation X (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) - a collaborative consortium began in 2000 as a way to leverage the online distance learning capabilities of all 15 members of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (Mississippi Virtual Community College, 2009).

Sensitization - Sensitization "reflects an increase in responsiveness produced by highly potent stimuli" (Gray & McNaughton, 2000, p. 161).

State Communication Apprehension - communication anxiety which is specific to a particular context, such as extemporaneous public speaking (McCroskey, 1977).

Synchronous Online Learning - this mode of online learning is typified by the requirement that the student be online at certain times. Typically, this time is used for interaction with the instructor and other students in the course.

Trait Communication Apprehension - communication apprehension that is not bound to one context of communication, but with "respect to many different types of communication encounters" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 81).

Web-assisted Course - a course in which face-to-face interaction is supplemented with content delivery that utilizes text, audio, video, and other broadcast communication during up to 25% of instructional time (Zahran, 2006, p. 18-20).

Web-based (fully-online) Course - a course which delivers between 75-100% of content online, possibly with occasional live interaction for the purposes of evaluation in some courses (Zahran, 2006, p. 18-20).

Web-enhanced (hybrid) Course - a course which combines the traditional face-to-face course with 25-75% of course content delivered via the World Wide Web (Zahran, 2006, p. 18-20).

Delimitations

This study is limited to the students of faculty teaching the basic undergraduate public speaking course in Mississippi community colleges and the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MVCC) during the Spring 2012 semester.

Assumptions

Participants (both students and faculty) who participated in this study were honest and answered the questions with sincerity, and that they carefully read directions and each question before answering.

Justification

The looming financial crisis in higher education comes at a time when student demand for education beyond high school is on the rise predicted to increase even more in the coming year. Higher education administrators must meet the challenge of an increase in students while meeting the challenges of reductions in funding. One strategy that institutions utilize to increase financial efficiencies is to deliver instruction via online classes.

While the literature is clear that this strategy is wise financially, the ultimate concern facing higher education is achieving the stated outcomes of higher education: well-prepared students. Higher education administrators must consider the effects to student outcomes resultant from decisions to deliver instruction via the online format, and those decisions are more effective when driven by data. This study will seek to provide data relevant to that decision-making process. In addition to data pertaining to student outcomes, the study will also seek to help identify student and faculty perceptions of

online learning, particularly in a course which is identified as one of the most difficult to deliver in the online format: the basic public speaking course.

There has been an ongoing conversation in the literature since the 1950s concerning the state of the basic public speaking course. These studies have documented the slight changes in the course in regard to its delivery, approach, content, instructional methods, and focus. The course remained relatively consistent in its' delivery for a period of over one hundred years and all the while held the confidence of instructors and administrators that it was serving its purpose quite well, as it has remained in the required core curriculum of the majority of all college majors for all of that time. However, recent changes in delivery format placed a time-proven course online without evidence in the literature that rigorous research has been done regarding the course's ability to meet one of its most important purported outcomes, specifically, its ability to reduce communication anxiety via a fully-online delivery format. This study seeks to provide data needed to evaluate the efficacy of the basic public speaking course as delivered online. Without such data, higher education decision-makers will be less likely to make informed decisions regarding integration of online instructional delivery in the communication discipline.

Additionally, in 2010, for the first time since the inception of a series of *status of the basic public speaking course* reports, data is presented separating two and four-year institutions. This data highlights the ever-widening difference in the approaches of the two and four-year colleges' approach methods to delivering the online basic public speaking course, justifying the need for more study of the basic course among two-year institutions (Morreale, Worley, & Hugenberg, 2010). Morreale, Worley, and Hugenberg

(2010) report that two-year institutions are disproportionately leading the charge in delivering the basic public speaking course in a fully-online format, justifying the need for study of the online basic public speaking course specifically focusing on two-year institutions.

Summary

The basic public speaking course has served students for well over a century in providing them with the fundamental skills needed to organize and deliver messages that positively enhance a person's life academically, socially, professionally, and financially. The course has provided the exposure to speaking before people, one of, if not the most anxiety-provoking tasks in society today. This exposure serves a therapeutic function which has proven to reduce communication apprehension, which produces students more prepared for life's pursuits, both social and professional.

As delivery of the course has evolved from the traditional delivery to the online delivery format, the literature lacks studies which suggest that the course does indeed reach one of its most important outcomes, the reduction of communication apprehension. The literature lacks data specifically related to two-year institutions in regard to student and faculty satisfaction and perceptions of efficacy of online courses in reaching desirable outcome objectives, as more attention has been given to four-year institutions regarding online learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

A conversation regarding the rapid growth of the online delivery of instruction within our colleges and universities can lead to a variety of questions. How are the students of the current generation different from those of prior generation, and do they learn in the same fashion as the students who came through just ten years ago? The online delivery format has its advantages, but is it appropriate for our students in bringing about learning? Is it possible that online learning can be equal to or even better than traditional face-to-face instruction? Is the financial bottom line dictating that we deliver courses and entire programs in the online format regardless of learning, or do student learning outcomes still drive pedagogical issues? These issues and more are addressed in the following chapter.

There is little doubt that online education is not a passing fad. Over 33% of faculty report having taught online voluntarily or out of necessity. Faculty perceptions of the efficacy of online education are reportedly increasing, but slowly (Seaman, 2009). There are still many questions to be answered regarding outcomes of online learning. There are many courses which are reported to be extremely difficult to deliver in the online format. Among these are the lab-based sciences and performance courses such as the basic public speaking course.

Multiple studies have been undertaken in the past 15 years measuring outcomes of online learning. Many of the variables measured regarding course outcomes are exam scores and final grades. With the focus of this study being the basic public speaking

course - a course where grades are secondary to meeting stated course objectives - this study wishes to offer an alternative outcome measure to grades: a measure of the basic speaking course's ability, as delivered in the online format, to treat public speaking anxiety.

The chapter begins with an overview of anxiety (specifically public speaking anxiety), its causes, and its debilitating effects on students' lives. A common treatment of public speaking anxiety used in the basic public speaking course will be discussed in detail. The section will close with a discussion of this treatment technique as related to the online delivery of the basic public speaking course.

The chapter continues with an overview of the evolution of the delivery of educational instruction from the lyceum to the laptop. The section discusses pedagogical changes due to online delivery, students' and faculty's perceptions of the online learning format, issues related to online instruction, and learning outcomes associated with online learning. The section includes an overview of the evolution of the basic public speaking course, and concludes with arguments for and against the online delivery of education.

Also discussed in the chapter are characteristics of students in the 21st century, who are often referred to as Millennials and Digital Natives. Some argue that the core traits of this cohort of college students lend them perfectly to online learning. Prensky (2010) implies that students, technology, and pedagogy have intersected at a common point providing educators a great opportunity to match instruction with students' needs.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between the rush to provide online education and a time of financial crisis in higher education. This section

provides fodder for the question: what is driving decision-making in higher education-money or learning?

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Behavioral Theory

Development of Cognitive Behavioral Theory. Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) evolved from two parent theories, cognitive theory, [inspired and developed by Ellis (1975) and Beck (1975) respectively] and behavior theory (Rachman, 1997). CBT led to the development of cognitive behavior therapy. Cognitive behavioral therapy spawned exposure therapy, also known as in vivo exposure (Mowrer, 1960), which has been used successfully to reduce social phobias (Rachman, 1997). According to CBT, exposure therapy "as a treatment intervention," consists of "brief repeated exposures to the same stimulus" which, in turn "produce greater levels of psychological comfort based on increasing levels of familiarity" (Finn et al., 2009, p. 93).

CBT holds that exposure therapy enacts two complimentary processes: habituation and sensitization. Habituation "occurs when anxiety decreases with time due to repeated or prolonged exposures to a stimulus" and "sensitization "reflects an increase in responsiveness produced by highly potent stimuli" (Gray & McNaughton, 2000, p. 161). Finn et al. (2009) summarize habituation and sensitization as part of the systematic desensitization process as follows:

> Whereas the increase of state anxiety following punishment is called sensitization, the progressive waning of state anxiety associated with low levels of negative reinforcement is referred to as habituation. As a general rule, the effects of sensitization decay rapidly while habituation to a previously feared stimulus tends

to dissipate gradually. Apparently, the comparator adapts to changing environmental conditions by favoring behavioral approach once threat levels decrease. (p. 94)

Further, Mineka and Cannon (1999) report that habituation occurs when one is exposed to an anxiety-provoking stimulus, but said stimulus fails to produce the negative effects at levels anticipated. As applied to state communication apprehension in the context of public speaking, if a subject perceives erroneous negative consequences to follow public speaking, and over time through experience and practice these erroneous negative consequences do not come to fruition, more positive feelings will replace those once-held negative feelings (Finn et al., 2009; Rachman, 1980).

McCroskey, Ralph, and Barrick (1970) were the first to utilize systematic desensitization for the purpose of reducing communication apprehension, a study in which they found SD to reduce CA scores significantly. Finn et al. (2009) listed *exposure therapy* and *systematic desensitization* among best practices to deal with public speaking anxiety. These practices are supported by Rachman (1980), who theorized that being exposed to a feared stimulus over time would reduce the amount of anxiety caused by that stimulus, provided that the actual punishment experienced during exposure was less than the levels expected. In other words, if a subject perceives erroneous negative consequences to follow public speaking, and over time through experience and practice these erroneous negative consequences do not come to fruition, more positive feelings will replace those once-held negative feelings (cognitive reappraisal).

Finn et al. (2009) state in their discussion that "repeated exposure to the same audience in presumably a controlled, supportive environment might explain the overall

decrease in anxiety that occurs during basic communication courses" (p. 96). According to Finn et al. (2009), one must maximally activate the anxiety response during exposure therapy in order to reap the greatest treatment benefit.

As the focus of this study is analyzing the efficacy of the basic public speaking course in reaching the specific learning outcome of reducing state communication apprehension in the context of extemporaneous public speaking, and the literature reports that exposure therapy is the preferred method of reducing such apprehension, cognitive behavioral therapy is the obvious choice as the theoretical framework of this study.

Anxiety

Anxiety & Communication Apprehension (CA)

Defining Anxiety. Laukka et al. (2008) describes anxiety as a phenomena that "occurs when a person experiences a situation as personally threatening, either physically or psychologically, which triggers a physiological response and various coping strategies" (p. 197). Anxiety is not an emotion, but rather a combination of negative effects such as "fear, uncertainty, distress, apprehension, and worry" (p. 197). Laukka differentiates anxiety from fear in that it typically occurs more frequently and endures longer. Also, where fear causes one to seek to avoid or escape a situation, anxiety manifests when a threat is unavoidable. Anxiety can be divided into state or trait anxiety. State anxiety "is considered an emotional response to a personally threatening situation" while trait anxiety "reflects the existence of stable individual differences in the tendency to respond with state anxiety in the anticipation of threatening situations" (Laukka et al., 2008, p. 197). The focus in this study will be state anxiety, specifically, state communication anxiety, or state communication apprehension.

Communication Apprehension. McCroskey (2009) began his study of what he first called communication-bound anxiety, and what he later coined communication apprehension (CA) in the late 1960s. According to McCroskey (1977), public speaking anxiety is cited in many surveys as the number one fear of Americans, outranking death. In his early research on the subject, McCroskey (2009) defined communication apprehension (CA), the general term that encompasses public speaking anxiety, as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 78).

Causes of CA. During the early times of study on CA in the 1960s, scholars presumed that CA was a learned disposition. This idea assumed that people come into the world as a blank slate, thus they learn everything. The belief of this time was that anything that could be learned could also be unlearned and/or relearned (McCroskey, 2009), as this was the dominating view of scholars in those days.

Effects of CA. According to McCroskey (2009), "Approximately 70% of people in the U.S. report experiencing CA when they have to give a public speech" (p. 164). Among the general population in the U.S., it is estimated that 20% of people suffer the effects of high CA (McCroskey, 2009, p. 163). McCroskey (1977) found that public speaking anxiety is experienced in varying degrees by all students enrolled in introductory speaking courses and that 20% of those students could be classified as having serious issues with CA. According to McCroskey (2009), this 20% of the population effected by high CA are virtually handicapped by their CA. McCroskey further asserts that those individuals who exhibit low CA benefit academically, personally, professionally, and financially.

In early studies by McCroskey and his contemporaries, communication anxiety has been shown to handicap individuals in their education, social lives, and career. Studies have found that high CA correlates to lower incomes (Daly & McCroskey, 1975); lower job satisfaction (Falcione, McCroskey, & Daly, 1977); lower grades, less satisfaction with educational experiences, and less overall learning (McCroskey, Daly, & Sorenson, 1976;); less likelihood of seeking available tutoring (Scott, Wheeless, Yates, & Randolph, 1978); higher rate of loneliness due to not being selected as friends (Hurt et al., 1977); decreased chance of being selected in the job application process and less chance of being promoted if hired (McCroskey et al., 1976). These and other debilitating effects are brought about by an individual's tendency to avoid communication (Beatty, 1988) and high CA individuals pay great costs due to this predisposition (Robinson, 1997). Robinson suggests that "with so much at stake in terms of social, professional, and personal growth, finding a way to treat CA in a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere would seem advantageous for both students and instructors" (p. 188).

Treatment of CA. Since during the early study of CA it was believed that CA was learned, the first treatment studied dealt with learning, or in this case unlearning. Systematic desensitization was, and still is, a preferred method of treating CA (Freidrich, Goss, Cunconan, & Lane, 1997). McCroskey et al. (1970) were the first to utilize systematic desensitization for the purpose of reducing communication apprehension, a study in which they found SD to reduce CA scores significantly. Finn et al. (2009) listed *exposure therapy* and *systematic desensitization* among best practices to deal with public speaking anxiety. These practices are supported by Rachman (1980), who theorized that being exposed to a feared stimulus over time would reduce the amount of anxiety caused

by that stimulus, provided that the actual punishment experienced during exposure was less than the levels expected. In other words, if a subject perceives erroneous negative consequences to follow public speaking, and over time through experience and practice these erroneous negative consequences do not come to fruition, more positive feelings will replace those once-held negative feelings (cognitive reappraisal). Finn et al. (2009) state in their discussion that "repeated exposure to the same audience in presumably a controlled, supportive environment might explain the overall decrease in anxiety that occurs during basic communication courses" (p. 96).

According to Cognitive Behavioral Theory, exposure therapy enacts two complimentary processes: habituation and sensitization. Habituation "occurs when anxiety decreases with time due to repeated or prolonged exposures to a stimulus" and sensitization "reflects an increase in responsiveness produced by highly potent stimuli" (Gray & McNaughton, 2000, p. 161). Further, Mineka and Cannon (1999) report that habituation occurs when one is exposed to an anxiety-provoking stimulus, but said stimulus fails to produce the negative effects at levels anticipated.

Studies debate the precise elements of the basic public speaking course that are responsible for its ability to reduce students' public speaking anxiety, though there is no controversy that the course is efficacious in reducing said anxiety (Dwyer, Carlson, & Kahre, 2002; Dwyer & Fus, 2002; Rubin, Rubin, & Jordan 1997). This researcher asks if the online delivery of the basic public speaking course, via CBT or any combination of theories, can equal the face-to-face deliveries ability to reach the outcome objective of reducing public speaking anxiety.

Obviously, in order to attempt to replicate the rigor and content of a face-to-face introduction to public speaking class, one must take care to provide experiences for the distance learner that would replicate that of the face-to-face class. As indicated by observing online syllabi posted on the MSVCC website, common attempts to replicate speaking to an audience include videotaped speeches, often delivered to a self-selected audience of five to ten members (Bailey & Townsend, 2009).

This strategy of speech performance is debated by faculty members as well as in the literature in its efficacy in facilitating exposure therapy theory leading to habituation and extinction. According to Jackson and Latane (1981), speaking before a live audience is perceived by individuals to be one of the most anxiety-inducing experiences that one can undertake, lending credence to the idea that methods used in many online assignments such as videotaping speeches delivered before a self-selected audience may not elicit an anxiety response in high enough proportions to produce both a habituation and a sensitization response, without which, treatment of anxiety may not occur at as high a rate as if an unfamiliar audience were present.

Audience familiarity, which is apparent when one self-selects an audience for the purpose of simulating what one may encounter in a face-to-face classroom format, will in theory produce less anxiety than would an unfamiliar audience who may produce more anxiety for the speaker (MacIntryre and Thivierge, 1995), thus further complicating treatment protocol based on systematic desensitization. According to Finn et al. (2009), one must maximally activate the anxiety response during exposure therapy in order to reap the greatest treatment benefit, which may suggest that a familiar, self-selected audience is may not be conducive to producing optimal anxiety response required to

optimally treat CA. However, MacIntyre & Thivierge (1995) argue that "if a speaker anticipates fear or embarrassment, then it may be preferable to speak to an audience of people that she or he will never see again, rather than an audience of friends" (p. 457). This contradiction provides justification for this study, which will compare treatment quality in self-selected as well as random audiences.

<div align="center">Traditional vs. Non-traditional Delivery Methods</div>

Traditional Delivery of Instruction

Prensky (2010) describes that in the traditional "tell and test" method of instruction, so common to education historically and today, the role of instructors is to "lecture, talk, and explain, and for students to listen, take notes, and read the text, and memorize" (p. 10), rarely asking questions, and are recipients of knowledge. This method of instruction has been well-recorded in history and is so familiar that to devote more explanation of traditional instruction would be redundant. More relevant is the growing literature that reports that the traditional lecture-based method of instruction has run its course and is "becoming a less effective tool in the 21st century… as the "method is no longer relevant" as the "students are no longer listening" (Prensky, 2010, p. 10).

Engaging Today's Student. When students are asked about the most engaging experiences they have encountered, aside from field trips, Prensky (2010) reports that "connecting with other (students)… in other places electronically" is the most common answer, followed by in-class activities such as "group work… discussions, sharing their own ideas, and hearing the ideas of their classmates" (p. 10). Interestingly enough, all such endeavors can take place through not only traditional classrooms, but also in the virtual classroom environment, using technologies with which today's students are not

only familiar with from their life outside of the classroom, but crave to use such technologies in the classroom as well. This idea is discussed in the following section on non-traditional delivery formats as well as in a discussion of Digital Natives.

Distance Education

Definition of Distance Learning. According to Allen et al. (2002), distance learning takes a variety of instruction delivery formats, ranging from correspondence courses, where interaction between students and instructors takes place entirely through written correspondence with "no face to face, audio, or video communication" (p. 87), to online education which incorporates synchronous as well as asynchronous interaction, facilitated by online commercial instructional platforms which enable the use of audio, video, and other broadcast communication, as well as multiple written text features such as html documents, e-mail, and discussion boards.

Brief History of Online Learning. According to Zahran (2006), online learning began its ascent to the mainstream in 1995 as a result of an era of widely accessible technology, such as desktop computers, technological improvements, such as increased speed of the internet, as well as a "growing need for alternative (flexible) learning environments for both traditional college students and, in particular, for non-traditional students" (p. 3). Zahran (2006) reports that the number of online learners doubled between 1995 and 2001, when number of online learners reached 3.1 million (p. 3). As of 2010, that number has been increased to 5.6 million students taking at least one course online (Allen & Seaman, 2010).

Online Learning Formats. Online distance learning takes forms ranging from web-assisted delivery of instruction, to web-enhanced or hybrid courses, to web-based or

fully-online courses. In the web-assisted format, face to face interaction is supplemented with content delivery that utilizes text, audio, video, and other broadcast communication during up to 25% of instructional time. Web-enhanced, or hybrid online courses combine the traditional face-to-face course with 25-75% of course content delivered via the World Wide Web. Web-based courses, or fully-online courses, deliver between 75-100% of content online, possibly with occasional live interaction for the purposes of evaluation in some courses (Zahran, 2006).

Online Learning Goals and Instructional Design. Online learning attempts to replicate the goals and rigor of the traditional course. In traditional delivery, the goals of a course is to "learn a body of knowledge," which is facilitated by "reading the textbook and listening to instructor lectures and occasionally asking questions" (Zahran, 2006, p. 22) and student mastery is evaluated by various forms of objective, summative exams. In the online course, individual and small-group activities replace course lecturing for content distribution, formative feedback takes place through instructor and peer evaluation, and student mastery is often gauged through short-answer and essay evaluations rather than objective examinations. Essentially, the goals and instructional design of both online and traditional learning are the same, only the methods of content delivery, student manipulation of information and skills, and evaluation techniques differ. In other words, the *what* of instruction remains the same, only the *how* changes.

Role of the Instructor in Online Learning. Traditional delivery methods, based on lecture, as explained by Zahran (2006), position the role of the instructor to be the holder and distributor of knowledge, or the proverbial *sage on the stage*. In the online environment, power over learning is more equalized between instructor and student, with

the instructor becoming a facilitator of learning which is directed by the student and their

peers, which allows the instructor to become a *guide on the side*. Zahran holds that course

content is the true *teacher* in the online delivery format.

     Interaction with Instructor and Peers in Online Learning. The mode by which

students interact with course content has been discussed, but for students, faculty, and

administrators exploring online learning, the burning question is *how do the students*

interact with the instructor and with each other? Allen (2006) and others have stressed

the importance of social connectedness in reaching desired educational outcomes. While

acknowledging that person-to-person interaction is certainly different in the traditional

classroom, Zahran (2006) contends that it is not inferior, and posits that in some ways,

the interaction made possible through online technology is even better than in traditional,

face-to-face learning. Zahran contends that through synchronous mediums such as online

chat, instant messaging, and whiteboards, as well as asynchronous communication

methods, such as e-mail, discussion boards, and student profiles, coupled with the

instructional methods and assignments that make active and continuous collaboration

between students necessary, students actually interact with one another more in the online

setting than they do as passive absorbers of knowledge in the traditional classroom

setting. While it may be true that extroverts thrive in the face-to-face setting, introverts,

who may by shy in the traditional classroom, get the chance to interact more and may

thrive in the online learning environment.

     Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning. Allen et al. (2002), in a meta-analysis

summarizing research in student satisfaction within distance learning formats, found that,

in general, distance education through technology demonstrates "little decline in student

satisfaction with the quality of the educational process" (p. 91) and concludes that "objections to distance education should not be based on the issues related to student satisfaction" as "students find distance learning as satisfactory as traditional classroom learning formats" (p. 93).   The analysis acknowledges that student satisfaction may vary depending upon the level and quality of interaction between instructors and students and that students' "attitudes toward the use of technology, prior use experience, and skill positively (affect) student satisfaction" (p. 84). Merisotis and Phipps (1999) found that students generally, however, lack experience with using technology, especially in the educational setting. In spite of this, Allen et al. (2002), indicate that arguments against online distance education should be based on issues other than student satisfaction, as students report their online learning experiences to be as satisfactory as the traditional lecture-based delivery format.

Regarding the web-assisted basic public speaking course, Benoit et al. (2006) found that students are slightly less satisfied with web-assisted instruction as compared to traditional instruction, due perhaps to the following reasons: less face-to-face interaction in web-assisted courses may create a perception of increased distance, or "students may simply prefer direct interactions" (p. 15); technological issues may detract from student satisfaction; finally, faculty lack experience and knowledge resulting in inferior translation of content to the online portions of their instruction. In a meta-analysis of student satisfaction regarding the specific context of the basic communication course, Benoit et al. found that students in the traditional format were slightly more satisfied that students in the web-assisted condition, and also gave instructors who delivered the course in the traditional format higher teacher evaluations.

Nevertheless, Benoit et al. acknowledge that with time, which will allow for technological improvements, coupled with the assumption that students and faculty alike will become more comfortable with internet technology, satisfaction with web-assisted instruction may very well improve in the future.

Student Learning Outcomes in Distance Learning. Allen et al. (2002) deemed it important to note the possibility that "students, while equally satisfied with participation in distance learning, do not learn as much as those methods involving traditional face-to-face communication in the traditional classroom" (p. 92). Allen et al. (2004) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the effectiveness of distance learning in regard to more important outcomes, student learning. Allen et al. (2004) found "little distinction between traditional and distance learning classrooms on the basis of performance" (p. 413) when analyzing outcomes derived from student grades, test scores, and other indicators of student performance, and even noted that "distance education course students slightly outperformed traditional students on exams and course grades" (p. 402). The study controlled for variability in course content and noted that even performance in social science courses, including communication courses, distance learning students slightly outperformed traditional learners, while noting that his findings may be misleading in courses such as public speaking, where other performance outcomes (perhaps reduction in communication anxiety) may differ, as this analysis focused only on exam scores and course grades.

A meta-analysis by Benoit et al. (2006) provides support for the findings of Allen et al. (2004) regarding student learning outcomes with web assisted courses in general, and when applied to the specific context of the web-assisted basic communication course.

Benoit et al. found that "web-based learning is not consistently more effective than traditional instructional methods" (p. 15) in general courses and in a separate meta-analysis of student learning outcomes in the basic public speaking course, they found no significant advantage in learning outcomes between traditional and web-assisted instructional formats. The authors add, however, that more recent studies may indicate an "advantage on learning outcomes for web-assisted instruction," due perhaps to the assumption that students and faculty, in time will become "more web-savvy," and that technology is improving, which may increase the quality of instruction, and finally that "teachers may be learning how to better take advantage of the Internet in their instruction" (Benoit et al., 2006, p. 15).

Instructor Perceptions of Distance Learning. Allen et al. (2004) holds that instructors' "preexisting positive attitudes and experiences produced positive impressions of distance teaching, but teachers still perceived distance instruction negatively (even among generally approving teachers)" due to decreased contact with their students and a "loss of control over the classroom environment caused by technological intrusiveness" (p. 404).

Concerns Regarding Distance and Online Learning. Terre Allen (2006) urges college administrators to evaluate decisions regarding placement of courses online and warns that "rushing to provide online instruction as an alternative to on-campus instruction is setting our students up for failure" (p. 125). In this study, the author posits three reasons why student success, retention, and degree completion may suffer due to online instruction, particularly to new students and those in *at risk* populations. Allen posits that student retention, a very hot topic among higher education administrators, may

suffer due to the loss of interaction with faculty and student peers due to the limitations of the online learning environment, and that interaction in the on-campus, traditional learning environment facilitates social connectedness that leads to opportunities to "observe activities that lead to success," facilitate peer relationship development and peer modeling of academic expectations and behaviors, as well as to engage in academic opportunities not accessible in the online learning environment (p. 124). This assertion is supported by Roberts (2009) who found that online students do not feel socially connected with others, making them less likely to persist to degree completion and recommends using technology such as social networking media and virtual classrooms environments in order to increase social connectedness in among online students.

Second, Allen (2006) states that "students who successfully integrate academically are more likely to stay in school and complete their degrees if they experience successful social integration" (p. 124) and notes that this objective is accomplish in the online environment. Interfering with students' ability to integrate socially, according to Allen, "early during a students' university experience deter or undermine appropriate social integration at a time when social integration is most critical to student success" (p. 124). Allen adds that this is particularly pertinent to general education courses, such as the basic communication course, which "provides students with the content knowledge and active learning assignments that foster the skills necessary for social integration" and "stimulate an atmosphere of face-to-face social involvement and self-disclosure" (p. 124).

Finally, Allen (2006) argues that for at-risk students, the development of relationships with "faculty and peers is critical for the academic and social integration of

first generation college students" (p. 125). Allen accentuates the need for such

relationships and states that "the more students spend time on-campus during the

beginning of their program of study, the greater the likelihood that they will complete

their degree" (p. 125).

Traditional Delivery Methods of the Basic Public Speaking Course

Until the latter part of the 19th century, there was no formal class that trained

students in public speaking. Even so, high schools and colleges routinely required

candidates for graduation to deliver speeches before the faculty and their peers in order to

graduate, as the common belief of the time was that the ability to speak well was

connected with intelligence. These speeches were called dissertations. By the end of the

19th century, in order to improve their dissertation presentations, students demanded to be

provided with speech teachers. The number of speech teachers increased throughout the

20th century (McCroskey, 2009, p. 159).

According to McCroskey (2009), when the demographics of colleges and

universities shifted in the late 1940s to the late 1960s due to the G.I. Bill, the needs of the

students changed, which affected the curriculum of the basic public speaking course.

Before this time, only upper-class white males attended college, in order to prepare to be

future leaders, which required public speaking prowess. The new class of students

entering college for the first time in mass did not see the need for public speaking

prowess and demanded training in other forms of communication.

The Basic Speech Course in the 1950s. Gray (1989) reported on the state of the

basic course in a literature review that spanned eight published studies ranging from 1956

until 1985. These articles are representative of the content and instructional methods used for the basic undergraduate public speaking course for these four decades.

The primary literature which discussed the content of and the instructional methods used in the basic undergraduate public speaking course was provided by Hargis (1956) who found that the emphasis of the course was the practice of public speaking, which took up over 74% of the allotted class time, making the typical class of the time primarily a skills-based course.

According to Gray (1989), during the time of Hargis's study, the typical public speaking course was taught in self-contained classes of 20-25 students, taught by one instructor, three hours per week, and garnered three course credits. Of the institutions considered in Hargis's study, 42% required the public speaking course for graduation.

Hostettler (1958) provides a stance on how instruction at the college level, including the instruction of the basic undergraduate public speaking class, should be adapted to meet the bleak economic outlook in higher education. Citing changes in the economic situation which could spur changes that could potentially damage academic integrity of instruction, Hostettler further asserted that changes were needed in order to become more cost-effective in instruction, while maintaining academic standards. Hostettler posited that turning over the duties of instruction to graduate assistants would justifiably warrant criticism of the speech communication discipline. He advocated a plan which would include the use of mass instruction in a large lecture hall by a highly qualified instructor for one hour per week, complimented by performance of speeches in smaller groups of students or even to outside community groups. In other skill-based courses, this approach is known as the lecture-lab format. Even in 1958, Hostettler

advocated the taping of speech performances in order to save valuable instruction time, which would, in turn, save financial and instructional resources.

The Basic Speech Course in the 1960s. Hostettler's call for change apparently fell on deaf ears, as the 1960s saw little change in either the content focus of the basic public speaking course, or the method by which instruction was delivered. Gray (1989) claimed that a "summary of the 1950s would be just as true for the summary of the 1960s" (p. 13). The major content emphasis of the 1960s, according to London (1964), remained extemporaneous speaking, which was reported as the content focus of 93.46% of the schools, and 93.88% of professionals of the day agreed with the performance (skills) focus. McCroskey (2009) adds that classes for high CA students developed around 1965 at Penn State University.

In 1967, the Undergraduate Speech Instruction Interest Group of what was then known as the Speech Association of America (now the National Communication Association) began a series of studies to describe the status of the basic public speaking course in regard to content emphasis and instructional methodology. This *status of the basic course* study was to be updated every five years. The first of these studies conducted by Gibson, Gruner, Brooks, and Petrie (1970) found that even though there began to be a change in name of the course to reflect more of a communication approach rather than a public speaking approach, extemporaneous speaking performances continued to dominate the content of the basic course in the 1960s, regardless of the trend of name changes of the course. Professional opinion questionnaires indicate that institutions of the time were satisfied with the public speaking emphasis of the basic course.

One change noted was an increase in the use of graduate students as instructors at the university level (Gibson et al., 1970, p. 19). Class sizes remained low (17-22 students) even though class sizes in other disciplines swelled to reflect growth in enrollment (p. 17). At the time of this study, 40% of responding institutions required the basic speech course for graduation, and the majority of institutions (85%) offered the basic speech course at the freshman level (p. 16), a decrease from five years earlier. Regardless, Dedmon and Fransden (1964) indicate that overall enrollment in the course was on the rise.

The Basic Speech Course in the 1970s. The 1970s recorded little change in the delivery and instruction of the basic public speaking course (Gray, 1989), as supported by an updated status of the basic course study by Gibson, Kline, and Gruner (1974). This study indicated a small shift from the public speaking emphasis to more of a combination communication approach, but still 71% of courses reported a requirement of 4-10 speech performances during the basic course and that in 82% of cases, the students perform to that same audience. Eighty-five percent of professionals continued to support the public speaking emphasis of the basic course.

Also, 85% of respondents indicated that the same instructor evaluated student performances for the duration of the course. Class size did not reflect a change from the previous decade, however, the survey indicated, as with the 1970 study, that more courses were being taught by lower-ranking instructors (graduate students, 17%; instructors, 40%; assistant professors, 54%, and associate professors, 33%; and full professors, 21%).

Institutions indicated that various percentages of divisions within them required the basic course for degree attainment (arts and sciences, 58%; education, 62%; business, 42%; humanities, 42%). Small (18-22 students), self-contained classes continued to be the instructional format of choice among 76% of institutions and constant or increasing enrollments in the course were indicated by 87% of responding institutions (Gibson et al., 1974, p. 209). A notable finding was that departments relied less on the basic course as a financial base, falling from 50% to 37% since the prior study.

A third status of the basic course survey by Gibson, Gruner, Hanna, Smythe, and Hayes (1980) was launched, by what was by the Speech Association of America (now known as the National Communication Association). The most notable changes found included a content shift back to extemporaneous speeches, with 80% of institutions requiring 4-10 speech performances. Five percent of classes required more than ten performances, a notable rise from the prior study. As further evidence of the basic course being performance (skills) oriented is the weight that instructors gave speech performances in grading with half of respondents indicating performances received over 50% of the grading weight and class sizes remaining low, presumably to facilitate the high number of presentations.

The decade saw a further increase in junior faculty teaching the basic speech course, with only 14% of the basic speech courses being taught by associate professors and 10% full professors. Instruction format remained as self-contained courses with 86% appearing as opposed to the lecture-lab format.

The Basic Speech Course in the 1980s. Gibson, Hanna, and Huddleston (1985) reported little change in the basic public speaking course in the decade. The course

remained performance-oriented with 68% reporting performances as carrying 60% or more of grading weight. Junior faculty still handled the brunt (71%) of the teaching duties. The only noted technological advance in course methods included the limited use of video to capture and replay performances, but only 5% of respondents report using this strategy more than 3 times in a course.

According to Gray (1989), some experimentation in instructional methods took place in the 1980s due to financial crunches where more institutions began attempting to implement a strategy known as the Personalized Theory of Instruction (PSI) where classes met in large groups and placed more responsibility for learning on the student and lectures served as motivation. Even though this method represented a broad departure from traditional delivery methods of instruction, and student learning was not reported to be negatively impacted, PSI never gained acceptance in performance-based classes like the basic public speaking course and did not have an effect on the status quo in content emphasis and instructional delivery in the 1980s (Gray, 1989).

As previously reported, financial support of departments remained a function of the basic course, with 32% of budgets depending on basic course-generated funds, down from 37% from the last reported study. Fifty-six percent of departments generated 26% or more of their credit hours, however, from the basic speech course.

The Basic Speech Course in the 1990s. Traditional lecture delivery, by one instructor, remained the dominant delivery method in the 1990s. Just as in the previous three decades, the basic communication course remained primarily a skills course, with 55% of departments identifying public speaking as the emphasis in the course and 71.5% requiring four - six public speaking performances. These performances were delivered to

the same audience in 93.2 % of cases, but it was suggested by some that the course

should have striven for a more varied audience to replicate real-life situations (Morreale,

Hanna, Berko, & Gibson, 1999).

Listed among administrative concerns in conducting the basic course included the

need for standardization across sections of the course. While institutions varied in this

regard, 93.8% of departments reported that all sections were taught using the same

objectives (Morreale et al., 1999). Indicating a strong reliance of departments on money

generated from teaching the basic course, 55.8% of departments reported that they

depended on the basic course from a moderate to large degree according to the study.

Enrollment in the course held steady or increased during the decade. Maintaining a low

class size remained a priority for departments. Nearly 40% of schools reported class

sizes ranging from 23-30 students, while 46.5% reported 23-30 students per section

(Morreale et al., 1999).

One notable change in course content in the 1990s was the increased focus on

audience analysis, surging as a topic presented in 30% of classes in 1990 to 70.5% of

classes in 1996 (Morreale et al, 1999). Enrollment in the course held steady during the

decade. Nearly 40% of schools reported class sizes ranging from 23-30 students, while

46.5% reported 23-30 students per section. Another topic which began to receive

considerably more attention was communication apprehension, which reported increased

from being a topic in 18% of classes in 1990 to being addressed in 48.3% of courses in

1996. Enrollment in the course held steady during the decade.

The 1990s started to show a bit more use of technology with 47% of departments

reporting videotaping students' speech performances, but mostly for pedagogical, not

evaluative purposes (Morreale et al., 1999). In addition to video technology, technology also utilized in this decade included computer technology including "interactive (smart) classrooms, computer-equipped practice labs, computer-based tutorial packages, CD-ROMs and the Internet for research activities, e-mail listserves, and home pages for the course" (Morreale et al, 1999, p. 20).

The Basic Speech Course in the 21st Century. The 2006 survey of the basic course (Morreale et al., 2006), introduced a new era in instructional delivery, with 20.8% of institutions reporting that they offered the basic course entirely through online distance learning. This shift is notable in that at the time of the previous state of the basic course study (Morreale et al., 1999), this method of delivery was not even mentioned. The online instructional format brought forth a new challenge of "managing mass-mediated channels to enhance personal, pedagogical, and student satisfaction" as well as "achieving sufficient levels of teacher immediacy and student-to-student interaction" (Morreale et al., 2006, p. 430). While the report acknowledges that such problems could be addressed by increased technology, it is also reported in this study that many students may not be comfortable with this medium. Allen et al. (2002) claims that students are unfamiliar with technology utilized in online learning and may avoid courses utilizing unfamiliar technology due to its propensity to malfunction, and also suggests that many students' may feel that "the mediated experience cannot fully replace the live classroom" (p. 85). The results of this study, however, indicate that students' satisfaction in face-to-face courses only slightly outpaces their satisfaction with the online medium.

Other technologies reported by Morreale et al. (2006) included using videotaped speeches as model examples for students and added that others used "websites, software

programs, and e-books" (p. 429). Nearly 80% of institutions reported teaching the use of computer enhanced presentation software such as PowerPoint.

In spite of the new mediums being explored, the overwhelming majority, nearly 80%, continued to deliver the basic communication course in the traditional lecture format. The orientation to the course remained decidedly performance-based, with the highest percentage of departments ever reporting a public speaking emphasis (57.8%), followed by a hybrid orientation which included interpersonal and small group communication in addition to public speaking (35.3%). A slight increase in class sizes has resulted in fewer speech performances (61.3% requiring 4-6 speeches, down from 71.5% in 1999), which could impact the quality and rigor of the course. While some report that speeches videotaped outside of class are being utilized to conserve class time while keeping the number of assignments steady, most instructor evaluation of speeches still occurred live (Morreale et al., 2006).

More than half of institutions required the basic course for graduation. Uniformity in instruction remained a topical issue, with 62.6% of departments reporting that their instructors used the same textbooks and syllabi as guides for the course, and 80% of instructors were striving to meet the same objectives across multiple sections of the course (Morreale et al., 2006).

Also of note in the reporting of the status of the basic communication course in the 1990s was the emphasis of communication instruction by regional academic accrediting bodies (such as SACS) which has resulted in an increase in the number of sections being taught and subsequently, increased enrollment in the basic course.

The Basic Speech Course Today. Morreale et al. (2010) released the most recent report, the eighth of its kind, marking the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the longitudinal series of studies on the status of the basic course. They offer the following in their summary of 40 years of longitudinal research on the basic course:

> (The) basic course has continued to remain healthy over time…enrollment is stable or on the rise and the course is a recognized and viable part of general education, which contributes to students' development of communication competency across disciplines…the orientation of the basic course has remained unchanged in that the majority of institutions continue to teach public speaking. The assignments…in the course are…centered on public speaking…The basic course is changing and evolving in some ways, perhaps in response to globalization, diversity, and the emergence of communicative technologies…changes…likely to require innovative thinking that meets the student needs and budgetary restraints while maintaining academic integrity and respect for the core content of the communication discipline. (T)he use of media and technology is probably one of the most significant changes affecting the basic course over time. (p. 425-26)

For the first time since the inception of these status reports, data is presented separating two and four-year institutions, highlighting the ever-widening difference in their approaches to the basic communication course. At the time of this study, 60.5% of community colleges required the basic public speaking course for graduation.

Still listed among administrative problems of the course is the need for standardization of the course across multiple sections. This stated need for

standardization of textbooks, syllabi, and learning objectives is even more pronounced in the two-year institutions.

Technology, reported as increasing dramatically in the 2006 report, continues to proliferate in the delivery of instruction in the basic course. Among four-year institutions, 16.4% now report that they deliver the basic course fully online; however, among two-year institutions that percentage has increased to a staggering 51.5%. Still listed as challenges to this still-new delivery format are "(a) achieving sufficient levels of immediacy with students, (b) evaluation of speaking assignments, (c) lack of peer interactions, (d) faculty workload, (e) student access to technology, and (f) administrative support" and further, that "more instructor training and support is warranted" (Morreal et al., 2010, p. 422-23).

Morreale et al. (2006) noted the notorious absence of communication apprehension as a topic reported as being addressed in the basic course even though "we have known for decades about (its) prevalence" and "given that it is a debilitating trait, it is surprising how few programs report specialized assistance with this problem" (p. 425).

Online Delivery of Instruction

Arguments Against Online Instruction. Communication takes place in two major forms: verbal, and nonverbal. One argument against the online delivery of instruction hinges on the limitations of the online medium to convey nonverbal messages. Communication scholars estimate that 60% to 70% of the meaning of a message is derived from nonverbal cues utilized by the communicator (Burgoon, 1985). Studies have shown that nonverbal communication, which is difficult to convey in the online medium, can affect students' perceptions of an instructors effectiveness (Ambady &

Rosenthal, 1993); power (Hall, Coats, & LeBeau, 2005); status (Mast & Hall, 2004); and

more importantly, student learning (Witt & Wheeless, 2001; Witt, Wheeless, & Allen,

2004; Frietas, Myers, & Avtgis, 1998).

Possible Effects on Students' Learning. According to Bloom (1956)'s taxonomy,

learning can be classified into three categories: cognitive (reflecting knowledge),

affective (reflecting attitudes), and psychomotor (reflecting skills). Cognitive learning is

identified by Bloom as the ability to recall, comprehend, apply, and synthesize

information. Such learning is traditionally measured through exams and course grades.

Affective learning, on the other hand, is described by Bloom as how a student's

emotional reaction to the instructor, subject-matter, and/or the learning environment.

Affective learning is typically measured through utilizing a likert-type questionnaire

which measures students' attitudes regarding instruction as well as the instructor.

Much has been made about the use of both verbal and nonverbal immediate

behavior of teachers and the relationship of these behaviors to student learning.

Immediate behaviors are said to be those employed by instructors in order to reduce the

perceived psychological distance between teachers and students. These behaviors can be

classified as both verbal and non-verbal. Some examples of nonverbal immediate

behaviors, according to Freitas, Myers, and Avtgis (1998), include "eye contact, body

position, gestures, facial expression, touch, space, and vocal qualities. Vocal behaviors

include: teacher use of student names, questions, feedback, praise, and humor, among

other behaviors" (p. 366). Valencic, McCroskey, and Richmond (2005) state that the

nonverbal behaviors of teachers effect both cognitive and affective learning.

A study by Witt and Wheeless (2001) showed that when instructors employ verbal and nonverbal immediate behavior students show a higher degree of affection for the teacher, they enjoy the class more, and they report that they learn more from the course. Supporting this finding, in a later study, Witt et al. (2004) found a substantial positive relationship between overall instructor immediacy and overall student learning; higher correlations were found when combining verbal and nonverbal immediacy into one construct in correlation to overall student learning; outcomes for affective learning and perceived learning were very similar statistically (p. 200). Although most studies highlight the effect of nonverbal immediate behavior on affective learning, among others, Valencic et al. (2005) were able to positively correlate extroversion of instructors, an undoubtedly nonverbal trait, with cognitive learning.

It is easy to see how instructors' nonverbal communications, which can be lost in the online delivery format, could negatively affect student affective learning, and could have adverse effects on instructors as well.

Potential Consequences for Instructors. In addition to affecting students' perceptions of instructors' effectiveness, power, status, and student learning, other studies have linked instructor nonverbal immediacy with two variables that increase students' perception of credibility, as well as instructors' ability to motivate students to learn. Houser, Cowan, and West (2007) hypothesized that higher levels of nonverbal immediacy and humor exhibited by the instructor, in the context of interactive learning videos, would have a positive effect on perceived credibility of the instructor as well as affect students' motivation to learn. The researchers found that humor and other

nonverbal immediate behaviors were shown to correlate with credibility and motivation, thus supporting prior studies.

The nonverbal behavior of instructors has been linked in previous studies to affective learning. Students' perceptions of affective learning are consequential, as the affective aspects of teaching, influenced by instructor nonverbal behavior, have been found to affect students' evaluations of teachers (Valencic et al., 2005). Along with peer and supervisor ratings, these student evaluations of instructors are often used as tools to gauge teacher effectiveness in the eyes of administrative and supervisory staff (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993), which influence decisions regarding employment actions such as promotion, tenure, and termination. As such, it is important for instructors to find ways to be affective and transfer immediacy in their teaching in the online format. Attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in traditional classroom settings, as well as in the new frontier of distance learning, it is extremely important to understand possible linkages between the presentation of materials, enhanced by instructor immediacy, and the learning outcomes of students.

Arguments in Support of Online Delivery of Instruction. In an attempt to understand the implications of instructor immediacy on distance learning, this author finds many articles of research which purport the ability of instructors to engage in immediate behaviors in the online setting. Among these studies, an article by LaRose and Whitten (2000) introduced terms such as *vicarious immediacy*, and *computer immediacy*, and advanced the idea that a computer could one day supplant the instructor in the minds of students in online classes. Among other assertions in this study, is the idea that web-based courses, through advances in technology, could surpass the

immediacy present in traditional face-to-face courses. Conceivably, new technologies could propel instruction to a state where computers provide mechanical and virtual immediate instruction which will outperform the traditional classroom instructors' capacities. The authors also state that, even within current technological limitations, well-designed online instruction could surpass face-to-face instruction in its ability to reach the affective minds of students who spend most of their time already in a tech-driven world.

Pentland (2008) supports the ideas of LaRose and Whitten (2000) as he asserts that by using high technology, one could "provide continuous signaling channels between all the participants, just as happens in face-to-face groups. Today there are many research laboratories exploring this possibility, using everything from high-end computer graphics avatars to low-end animated computer sprites" (p. 83). The technology to create life-like avatars already exists and is currently used in the private sector in business and in sales where immediacy is paramount, but humans have been replaced by avatars, such as in the casino industry where video blackjack machines use life-like avatars as dealers. These highly-realistic avatars engage casino-goers much like human dealers. There are many more arguments supporting the online delivery of instruction, many of which will be discussed in the following section describing the Digital Generation.

<div align="center">The Digital Generation</div>

Characteristics of the 21st Century Student

Howe and Strauss (2003) inform institutions of higher education that the 21st century, just as in generational shifts past, will bring a new type of student, which will bring with them a new type of challenge. The changing characteristics of students in this

generation will have multiple effects on higher education in areas including recruitment, student services, and classroom pedagogy. Howe and Strauss named this generation the Millennials, a name given to the age cohort born after 1980, immediately following Generation X. The authors describe the core traits that typify Millennials to be: "special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. ii).

Special. Since birth, Millennials have been touted by their parents and by society as special. As a protected generation, their well-being has been placed atop the national debate in regard to family issues (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 28). When asked, over 50% of adults state that "getting kids off to the right start" should take precedent as our nation's highest priority (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 52). The Millennial generation, cognizant that they are a national priority, conclude that "their problems are the nation's problems, that their future is the nation's future" and are very much aware of their specialness (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 52).

Sheltered. Millennials spurned a whole new industry in products that their parents bought to shelter them from all of the danger that they could encounter. Items such as bicycle helmets protect them from physical danger, and technological safeguards such as V-chips, protect their senses from evils in the media. School shootings and the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, make this generation more accepting of security measures, even at the expense of personal freedom and contribute to their stance of harsh punishment for social deviants that commit crimes.

Confident. Opposite the generation before them, Millennials espouse a shiny outlook for the future of our society and "have faith that the American Dream will work

out not only for them but for their own children" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 55). This attitude abounds, despite the poor economy and a growing divide between the rich and the poor in the United States.

Team-oriented. Despite all other problems in the U.S. educational system, when asked what elements would address the problems best, Millennials contend that improving classroom discipline and encouraging students to following the golden rule would spur the biggest improvements. They value good character in their informal and elected leaders. They are more connected to their friends, thanks to technological tools that they carry on their person at all times, which allow them to communicate electronically day and night. They are less selfish than their parents and blame the plagues of society on the selfishness of people. Millennials are not divided by the lines of race, gender, and ethnicity, but are more likely to be divided by classes based on socioeconomic status.

Conventional. As discussed previously by Howe and Strauss (2003), Millennials are loved and placed on a pedestal by their parents, and opposite of the prior generation, they relish in the mutual love and trust that they share with their parents. Millennials love rules and boundaries and believe that restrictions contribute to an increase in quality of life. They share much of their pop culture with their parents and display the traditionalism of their grandparents.

Pressured. Millennials are fixated on the future and cognizant of what it will take to be a success. They are conscious that today's actions can affect tomorrow's opportunities and "things like reputation and credentials matter more than ever before"

(Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 61). Millennials tend to avoid risk, as they fear failure and "desire to fit in to the main stream" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 62).

Achieving. Millennials grew up encouraged to formulate five and ten-year plans, and they took heed. These plans include college and pathways that lead to their desired careers. Millennials separate work and play and prefer to keep a balance between them. They do not gravitate to humanities, such as the arts and philosophy as did their parents, but prefer the hard sciences and math. Millennials are ambitious, and as discussed earlier, confident that they can reach their personal goals as well as the goals of society (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Implications of the Traits of Millennials on the College Classroom. Howe and Strauss (2003) suggest that the core traits of the current generation have an effect on teaching practices within the classroom. Here, those implications will be discussed.

Millennials, as discussed, are special. Their generation experienced their preparatory education in the era of *no child left behind*, which has shaped their expectations of what education should look like. One expectation this generation will hold is that of differentiated instruction, which they grew accustomed to in their K-12 environments. Howe and Strauss recommend including within the college classroom the structure that Millennials prefer as well as the constant feedback that they demand in the form of "constant quizzing and practice, regular instructor review, small projects, and an emphasis on core skills mastery" (p. 73). Suggested strategies to avoid with these students are long-term projects which require creativity, as these students are not prone to taking creative risk, and one-shot, high stakes tests which will trigger anxiety, as these students prefer regular formative assessments.

Millennials have been sheltered and protected by their parents from an early age. Their teachers have been subjected to multiple parent/teacher conferences to protect the fairness of grading practices, as well as to protect students from the disappointments associated with failure. Students have incorporated these experiences into their schema of student rights and justice. The implication of these schemas formed through the students' educational backgrounds is that college instructors should be prepared to field more complaints from this generation of students.

The confidence of Millennials has been bolstered by grade inflation throughout their educational experience. Their tendency to abstain from risk taking due to conformity and lack of creativity, as well as their team-oriented nature, make group projects a preference for millennial students. Team projects provide the teamwork that they seek, as well as team grading which alleviate individual risk. Howe and Strauss (2003) recommend "teaching techniques that combine teamwork and technology" and contend that such assignments, because of their link to millennial characteristics, "may yield spectacular results" (p. 102).

Professors and instructors who came from a more creative and free-spirited generation may describe today's student as conformists. Today's instructors must respect the traits of these students, not degrade them, in order to avoid a perceived generational gap, which will make their teaching less effective, and be careful not to take advantage of millennial student's tendency to conform by attempting to use impressionable students to further their personal and ideological agendas (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

Finally, as discussed, Millennials are the best educated generation yet and feel a high pressure to achieve, but may be "less focused on the spontaneous learning

experience and more on bottom-line test result(s)," thus earning the label of "more knowledgeable, but less creative" (Howe & Strauss, 2003, p. 119).

Digital Natives Defined. In addition to possessing the core traits described by Howe and Strauss, Millennials are also often referred to as digital natives. Digital natives were born after 1980 at a time when social digital technologies became readily available for the masses. Palfrey and Gasser (2008) describe digital natives below:

> These kids are different. They study, work, write, and interact with each other in ways that are very different from the ways that (earlier generations) did growing up. They read blogs rather than newspapers. They often meet each other online before they meet in person. They probably don't even know what a library card looks like, much less have one; and if they do, they probably have never used it…Major aspects of their lives- social interactions, friendships, and civic activities- are mediated by digital technologies. And they have never known any other way of life. (p. 2)

History of Digital Technologies. As early as the 1970s, online bulletin board systems allowed online users to "swap documents, read news online, and send one another messages" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 2). Message boards and later e-mail became popular in the 1980s. The 1990s brought the World Wide Web, along with its complement of "search engines, portals, and e-commerce sites" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008,p. 3). The 21st century brought blogs as well as social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Polaroid gave way to digital photography, the traditional formats of music gave way to electronic files. These technologies became portable with the advent and wide proliferation of Smart Phones which not only "make phone calls;

they also send text messages, surf the Internet, and download music" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 3).

Equipped with these new technologies, digital natives are connected with friends, family, and meaningful others constantly and without obstacle. Palfrey and Gasser (2008) describe how "the digital era has transformed how people live their lives and relate to one another and the world around them" (p. 3). While "digital settlers" and "digital immigrants" have adopted digital technologies, digital natives, "living much of their lives online… didn't have to relearn anything to live lives of digital immersion. They learned in digital the first time around; they only know a world that is digital" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 4).

The New "Great Divide." Palfrey and Gasser (2008) contend that there is a great separation between the haves and the have-nots regarding access as well as the skills to take advantage of digital technologies. In developing countries, "technology is less prevalent, electricity often scarce, and literacy rates low, and the number of teachers who know to instruct (students) in the use of technology are in short supply" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 14). Even among the citizens of nations of prominence, where most have access to digital technologies, there exists a gap between those "who have the skills to use it effectively and those do not" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 14), and this gap parallels gaps in socioeconomic status.

Teaching Digital Natives

In today's college classrooms, filled with digital natives (and digital immigrants), one can observe students "online, reading the news on CNN, sending instant messages, accessing Wikipedia" (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 238) to get a summary of the topics of

required readings that that did not do, and Palfrey and Gasser (2008) contend that there is "no meaningful way to stop them from doing so; while some faculty members stress over such activity and seek ways to put an end to it, others seek to harness the Web for pedagogical purposes" (p. 238).

It seems futile to attempt to stop digital natives from remaining connected, even in the classroom, as this is an extension of who they are and how they interact with the world around them. Palfrey and Gasser (2008) advise educators, instead, to find the "connection between how young people are learning in general in a digital age, in both formal and informal settings, and their own missions" (p. 239). The authors remind educators that students have changed and that instruction must change with them, using one example, they inform instructors that "for digital natives, 'research' is more likely to mean a Google search than a trip to the library" and that today's students are "more likely to check in with the Wikipedia community, or to turn to another online friend, than they are to ask a reference librarian for help" (p. 239).

Many teachers (and parents) report that students today have shrinking attention spans. According to Eubanks (2006), "What previous generations might describe as distractibility, Millennials describe as multitasking; effectively using multiple technologies to work on multiple tasks to complete multiple goals at one time" (p. 3). Palfrey and Gasser (2008) refer to this generation as being a "sound-bite culture" (p. 245) which prefers to read shorter works like blogs on the internet rather than books, and this reading is often done on laptops or even on their Smart Phones. The authors note that "short formats ordinarily work better than long formats, whether text, audio, or video" (p. 245) as evidenced by their proclivity for short communications such as text messaging,

instant messaging, and e-mail. Surely, these penchants for brief exposure to media and information, as evidenced by students' daily lives outside of the classroom, have utility to educators who wish to hold the attention of today's student inside the classroom. Prensky (2010) contends that digital technologies have changed every aspect of life in our culture and implies these technologies will inevitably change the way in which we deliver educational instruction as well.

Palfrey and Gasser (2008) advise educators not to abandon the best of what they have been doing for centuries and turn to technology for its own sake, but rather "figure out, instead, how the use of technologies can support our pedagogical goals" (p. 246). The authors advocate, as curriculum and instruction gurus have for the past few decades, allowing students to learn by doing, and allow them to manipulate the content which instructors seek to teach, and explain that this manipulation can be done in an environment which Millennials are comfortable, a digital one. The authors encourage using technology to aid team-based learning, as already discussed, is preferred by Millennials, and posit that "the school of the future will put students in digitally supported environments where they can work, and learn, in teams" (p. 248).

Pedagogical Implications. The type of instruction recommended by Palfrey and Gasser (2008) are supported by Mark Prensky (2010), who advocates what he calls a pedagogy of partnering in order to effectively teach digital natives. Prensky's method embraces the use of technology, every technology available to students, as tools to reach the desired outcome of every teacher in every classroom: the learning of educational objectives.

Prensky's method is reminiscent of multiple pedagogical methods preached by curriculum and instruction specialists in the last decades, including: student-centered learning, problem-based learning, case-based learning, inquiry-based learning, active learning, constructivism, and learning by doing (p. 15). The angle that makes Prensky's partnering pedagogy stand alone is that his methods, at last, make the formerly mentioned, existing methods practical through the use of digital technology that now exist to support those strategies. The common thread of all of these pedagogical methods, says Prensky, "is that students learn on their own, alone or in groups, by answering questions and solving problems with their teachers help, coaching and guidance" (p. 15), and suggests that students' access to digital technology is the key to making these strategies work.

Summarily put, a pedagogy based on partnering allows teachers to spend the majority of their time and excel at what they do best: "Creating and asking the right questions, giving students guidance, putting material in context, explaining one-on-one, creating rigor, and ensuring quality" (Prensky, 2010, p. 13). In turn, students spend the majority of their time doing what they excel at, as their prime responsibilities include: "finding and following their passion, using whatever technology is available, researching and finding information, answering questions and sharing their thoughts and opinions, practicing when properly motivated, and creating presentations in text and multimedia" (Prensky, 2010, p. 13), i.e., what students, themselves, report as the most engaging ways to be taught, as reported earlier in this review of literature.

An End to the Lecture-test Format of Instruction. Millennials, having grown up in the digital era, who each day process and filter more information than any generation

has before them, experience information in short, efficient, digestible forms such as text messages, emails, Internet blogs, social media newsfeeds, etc. Such communication modes in their daily lives outside the classroom affects the way that they are positioned to engage with information inside the classroom: they no longer wish to be lectured to! Prensky's (2010) solution is to engage students as partners in learning and to replace lecturing by "giving the students (guiding) questions to research, explore, and find answers to" (p. 15) and then, through class discussion, or other feedback, have the students, individually or in groups, present the content back to the instructor.

This method assumes the same elements as instructional preparation as has been practiced historically. When instructing in the traditional tell-test format, the instructor starts with a learning objective in mind, presents content to the students, and assesses whether the goal of student learning has taken place by asking questions to check for understanding. Prensky's partnering pedagogy utilizes the exact same elements and has identical goals, only the order of the elements are changed and the roles of some elements reversed. The instructor, in Socratic fashion, facilitates learning by asking guiding questions, and then allows the students to do what they are so good at—utilizing digital technology—in order to investigate, explore, and manipulate the content implied by the instructor's carefully crafted questions, and then presented as feedback for the instructor, feedback which is analyzed to gauge the level of learning that is taking place within the minds of students. The instructor's role is to plan and facilitate this process, providing mentoring and advice in the learning process, and serving as an assurer and controller of quality in the process, transforming from the proverbial *sage on the stage* to more of a *guide on the side*.

In Prensky's method of instruction, the teacher need not be a master of technology, as that is the role of the student. The instructor is now free to use their time to do what they do best, while students exercise their strongest talents. Utilizing this method of instruction allows for the students to differentiate their own instruction, and as students, or small groups, they will choose their own methods of experiencing and presenting their findings in the form of text, audio, video, graphics, or the spoken word, just to name a few. The beauty of this is that all learning styles are addressed in instruction, because the student, guided by the instructor, is essentially teaching him or herself.

Prensky's methods have been utilized for years, knowingly or not, in the world of online learning, an environment that does not lend itself well to the lecture-test format. For the last 15 years, as online learning has developed, instructors have used guiding questions to replace the lecture, allowing students, individually and in small groups, aided by technology, to investigate, explore, and manipulate the content and then, in a variety of fashions, present their findings back to the class for review and discussion, as well as to the instructor for the purposes of evaluation and feedback. Essentially, online instructors and students have been pioneers for Prensky's pedagogy of partnering, who, in turn, challenge other educators to simply follow their lead and let today's most effective modes of teaching, and the students most preferred ways of learning begin to take over and dominate the classrooms in both the face-to-face and virtual learning environments.

The Intersection of Pedagogy and Finance

Large institutions are often faced with competing agendas (e.g., profit vs. employee satisfaction). Likewise, academic institutions, in an effort to stay competitive and attract quality students and faculty, find themselves confronted with competing agendas. For traditional 'brick and mortar' colleges and universities, the complexities of the current academic landscape present numerous paradoxes for students, faculty, and administrators. In particular, the rush to provide advances in technology, specifically online and distance learning, is in sharp contrast to institutional goals of retaining and graduating students. One paradox pertinent to communication teachers and scholars involves issues associated with decisions to move basic oral communication courses out of the classroom and onto the internet (Allen, 2006).

The Financial Crisis in Higher Education

The Crisis. The turn of the 21st century has brought about a decline in the financial stability of America's state institutions of higher learning. State governments, which allocate funding to state universities, are in a budget crisis due to a bad economy and a lowering tax base. According to projections by Walters (2006), all 50 states will experience a budget deficit by 2013. This exacerbates already bleak outlooks for 2012, a year which states will see federal stimulus dollars, which have been plugging holes in state budgets, to go away. Universities who depend on state budget allocations have been forced to tighten their belts substantially and seek efficiencies in order to keep their heads afloat.

The financial strain is only one side of the coin. According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS, 2008), the financial crisis facing

education coincides with a time when the number of high school graduates is expected to increase by 11.1% from 2002-2018, an all-time high percentage of which are bound for college. This percentage increase disproportionately affects the south and west regions. Couple this with the fact that the age cohort containing traditional-aged college students (18-24 year olds) will increase by 3.8 million by 2025 (NCHEMS, 2008).

Causes of Lowering State and Federal Allocations for Higher Education. State governments are struggling to fund an ever-increasing demand "being made on state resources from K-12 education, transportation, Medicare, prisons, and social services at the same time as citizens express displeasure with level of taxes paid" (Meyer, 2008, p. 59). Institutions of higher learning receive a lower priority than these needs, due to the ability of universities to bring in revenues through tuition hikes and through seeking federal grants. However, the U.S. federal budget is under similar strain, with national priorities of "healthcare, Social Security, the environment, transportation, deficit reduction, and national defense" (Jones and Wellman, 2010, p. 8). Also, families' abilities to fund tuition hikes are decreasing, with the percent of family income needed to pay for college reaching a national average of 27.8% and as high as 41.1% in some states (NCHEMS, 2008).

Responses to the Crisis by Higher Education. Jones and Wellman (2010) report that "programs are being reduced, furloughs and layoffs are widespread, class sizes are increasing, sections are being cut" as institutions raise tuition at rates "ranging from 10-33%" in some states in response to this "unprecedented level of financial chaos" (p. 8). Also reported is the increased use of lower-cost, part-time faculty, including graduate teaching assistants.

Jones and Wellman contend that "higher education can't resolve its funding challenges simply by looking for new revenues, turning to the federal government, or cutting costs" (p. 9) as these methods only offer partial relief from the current recession. The authors posit that the "financial problems facing higher education are not short-term but structural," thus requiring a more long-term strategy of addressing a financing problem that will not go away, even with the end of a recession. Suggestions offered include looking to technology as a long-term solution, as "not all teaching and learning has to be done in the classroom" (p. 9).

Shifting Courses Online as a Financial Measure. Increasingly, state universities, following the lead of for-profits, have turned to online education as a method to increase cost efficiencies. Numerous reports have indicated that such efficiencies can be reached through increasing capacity for online instruction, with some studies showing savings averaging 37% (Twigg, 2005).

How Can Cost Efficiencies be Attained? According to Twigg, higher education has lagged behind other industries in harnessing technology to lower costs and to increase desired outcomes. Twigg (2005) asserts that institutions can save substantially by trading capital spent on labor, facilities, and equipment for capital spent instead to increase online instructional capacity. Twigg contends that the use of cheap labor rather than expensive faculty, only for tasks where appropriate of course, would not only free up money, but also free the time of faculty members to concentrate using their higher level talents rather than spending inordinate amounts of time on mundane tasks like grading (which can be done automatically by online learning platforms), preparing and handling paper documents, and dealing with problems and questions from students that are non-

academic in nature. Further, Twigg adds that space freed up by virtual classrooms, and negating not only physical space costs, but also equipment and supply cost by creating virtual labs, which have been found to be as effective as physical ones, account for the bulk of the savings reported by placing classes online.

Similar studies have found substantial savings through offering web-assisted instruction. In an in-depth longitudinal study by Benoit et al. (2006), it was found that web-assisted courses in the basic communication course, when accounting for teaching, classroom, and technology, cost on average 76% of what traditional instruction costs (p. 50). This 24% savings in overall cost must be measured against potential effects on student performance, student satisfaction, faculty evaluations, faculty satisfaction, and perceptions of the quality of education provided by the institution from stakeholders.

Learning Outcomes

Cost Savings are not the only purported benefits of shifting courses online. Twigg cites several of a growing number of studies that contend that in addition to saving money, online learning can improve learning outcomes as well. While many studies concentrate on course and exam grades, which can be highly subjective, Twigg reports learning outcomes derived from standardized measures such as state licensure exams. Many of these improvements were found among biology and chemistry courses, lab-based sciences which are often reported by instructors to be among the most difficult courses to teach in an online environment (Twigg, 2005). Twigg credits the efficacy of technology-enhanced courses in reaching improved learning outcomes to innovations in pedagogy. Reminiscent of what Prensky (2010) described as a pedagogy of partnering, Twigg (2005) contends that technology aids in "moving from an entirely lecture-based

format to a student engagement approach" which "makes learning less dependent on words uttered by instructors and more depending on active reading, exploring, and problem-solving" by the student (p. 37).

Twigg is not alone in praising the efficacy of online instruction as equal to or greater than traditional instruction. Allen et al. (2004) found "little distinction between traditional and distance learning classrooms on the basis of performance" (p. 413) when analyzing outcomes derived from student grades, test scores, and other indicators of student performance, and even noted that "distance education course students slightly outperformed traditional students on exams and course grades" (p. 402). The study controlled for variability in course content and noted that even performance in social science courses, including communication courses, the distance learning students slightly outperformed traditional learners, while noting that his findings may be misleading in courses such as public speaking, where other performance outcomes (perhaps reduction in communication anxiety) may differ, as this analysis focused only on exam scores and course grades.

A meta-analysis by Benoit et al. (2006) adds to the discussion of Twigg (2005) and of Allen et al. (2004) regarding student learning outcomes with web assisted courses in general, and when applied to the specific context of the web-assisted basic communication course. Benoit et al. found (2006) that "web-based learning is not consistently more effective than traditional instructional methods" (p. 15) in general courses and in a separate meta-analysis of student learning outcomes regarding the specific context of the basic communication course, they found no significant advantage in learning outcomes between traditional and web-assisted instructional formats. The

authors add, however, that more recent studies may indicate an "advantage on learning outcomes for web-assisted instruction" due perhaps to the assumption that students and faculty, in time will become "more web-savvy" that technology is improving, which may increase the quality of instruction, and finally "teachers may be learning how to better take advantage of the internet in their instruction (p. 15).

Administrators' Perceptions of Online Learning

The purported abilities of online learning to reduce the cost of instruction delivery while maintaining, or, as some studies suggest, even improving educational outcomes should entice administrators to lead the effort to implement online instruction as a strategy to achieve a variety of challenging objectives. The following paragraphs summarize perceptions that administrators hold regarding online learning.

Allen and Seaman (2010) report that administrators' perception of the quality of online instruction has improved, with "over three-quarters of academic leaders at public institutions report(ing) that online is as good as or better than face-to-face instruction" (p. 3). This figure drops to 66% overall, when considering the stance of administrators at private non-profits (55.4%) and private for-profits (67%), but still indicates incremental yearly increases in administrators' perceptions over time (p. 3). These figures contradict another finding of the same study which reports that only one-third of institutions are *fully engaged* in online programs. The answer may lie in the fact that faculty members, whose buy-in is so important if online education is to flourish, do not quite share administrators' overall optimism.

Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning

Over 15 years have elapsed since the wide-spread emergence of online education. Despite the growing number of studies which report high efficacy of online instruction in reaching equal or better academic outcomes than face-to-face instruction (discussed earlier in this review of literature), faculty support is mixed. Seaman (2009) reports that 80% of faculty members with no experience in developing or teaching online courses report that they find online learning to be inferior to face-to-face instruction. Even among faculty who have taught an online class, nearly half (48%) perceive online instruction to be inferior.   The same study reports an interesting finding: that even in light of the concern over quality of online instruction, 56% of instructors have recommended online instruction to their students and advisees.

Seaman (2009) reports that one-third of faculty have online teaching experience and one-fourth were currently teaching online at the time of the study (p. 33). The supposition that online teaching is done predominantly by younger instructors is a myth, as it is reported by Seaman that faculty with over 20 years of teaching experience are nearly identical to the number of younger instructors who are teaching online.

The primary barrier reported that keeps faculty from teaching online is the real or perceived additional effort required in teaching online as opposed to the tradition mode of instruction. Styron, Wang, and Styron (2009) report that a lack of recognition by institutions of online course development and teaching efforts in regard to tenure and promotion processes constitutes a significant barrier perceived by faculty to increase online efforts. Styron et al. (2009) also posit institutional bureaucracies which "increase the amount of time and difficulty associated with getting distance education courses and

programs approved" (p. 91) as a major obstacle to the further proliferation of online programs. These and other perceived and/or real barriers must be addressed by administrators if online education is to continue to expand.

Summary

The literature indicates many examples of online education bringing a flurry of changes to higher education institutions and causing us to re-evaluate how we as educators should harness this new technology to improve educational outcomes, meet the needs of students, and become more efficient and effective in providing our services to the community.

In spite of the reported negatives associated with it, online instruction has many wonderful advantages that we have already realized and promises many that we have yet to harness. As of today, however, there are is no conclusive evidence regarding the outcomes of online delivery of education, especially in select courses where personal, hands-on experience has traditionally seemed so vital to learning outcomes for students. Many of these outcomes are measured by more direct indicators than grades and will have effects on students well beyond the week of final exams. With so much at stake, we must evaluate to ensure that our decision-making is driven by data that indicates that our methods are in the best interest of the students. This study seeks to be a small step in that direction.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

During the Spring 2012 semester, students enrolled in the Fundamentals of Public Speaking course in the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) were asked to complete the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) two times during the semester: once at the beginning of the course and then again near the end. Likewise, students from the same institutions taking the same course in a traditional, face-to-face format were asked to complete the PRPSA instrument at the beginning and end of the course. Lastly, students from the same institutions taking the same course in hybrid format (content online, speeches given face-to-face) were asked to complete the PRPSA at the beginning and end of the course. The data collected from students in these three groups (online, face-to-face, and hybrid) were used to determine if students in each group report less speaking anxiety at the end of the course than at the beginning. Also, the three groups' post anxiety scores were compared to see if statistically significant differences exist. Data was also collected from students at the end of the semester from all three groups (online, face-to-face, and hybrid) to measure their satisfaction with their learning experiences in their public speaking courses. Faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning in the different course formats (online, hybrid, face-to-face) were collected as well.

Research Design

For this study, the following independent variable was used: course format by which students took the basic public speaking course (online, face-to-face, hybrid). The

dependent variables were the pre- and post- anxiety speaking scores as measured by the PRPSA and student satisfaction with their public speaking learning experience scores. The pre- anxiety scores were collected at the beginning of the Spring 2012 semester and the post-anxiety and student satisfaction scores were collected near the end of the same semester in all course formats. Faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning in the different course formats (online, hybrid, face-to-face) were collected near the end of the semester via phone, paper, or email responses.

Participants

The participants in this study were students taking the basic public speaking course in the MSVCC or either in the traditional campus-based institutions. Specifically, students who participated in this study were enrolled in one of three course formats: online, face-to-face, and hybrid. These course formats were selected because this study wishes to measure anxiety in public speaking courses, and nearly all students attending Mississippi community colleges are required to complete the basic public speaking course. In the web-based (fully-online) courses, content is delivered online and students video-record speeches before a self-selected audience. The videos are submitted to the instructor for evaluation. In the web-enhanced (hybrid) format, all content is delivered online, while speeches are performed in the traditional format, live before the students' instructor and classmates. The face-to-face speech courses meet in one of three ways: three times a week for 50 minutes, twice a week for 75 minutes, or once a week for 150 minutes. All content and speeches are delivered in the classroom in the face-to-face format. Participation in this study were strictly voluntary, and those students who chose not to complete PRPSA questionnaire and/or student satisfaction questionnaire were not

be penalized in any way. Faculty who participated in this study were instructors who taught the basic public speaking course in online, hybrid, or face-to-face formats. Likewise, faculty participation in this study was voluntary, and those who choose not to participate in the study were not penalized in any way.

Instrumentation

The questions on the PRPSA questionnaire (Appendix A) were created by James C. McCroskey (1970) as a means to measure state bound communication anxiety in the context of public speaking anxiety. This instrument was developed for use by researchers and may be used for instructional purposes with no individualized permission (jamesmccroskey.com/measures). The PRPSA questionnaire contains 34 items about speech anxiety where the respondent indicates his or her level of agreement with each statement. Each of the items are measured on the same 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scoring for the PRPSA questionnaire ranges from 34 to 170, and a student's public speaking anxiety score is calculated by summing positively stated items and then subtracting negatively stated items and then adding that number to a constant. A student is considered to have high speaking anxiety if a score greater than 131 is obtained, a moderate level of speaking anxiety if a score of 98-131 is obtained, and a low speaking anxiety if a score less than 98 is obtained (McCroskey, 1970). The mean score for the PRPSA is 114.6 (McCroskey, 1970).

Since its inception in 1970, the PRPSA questionnaire is reported to have an established reliability of greater than .90 (McCroskey, 1970), so the instrument is considered to produce reliable scores. For the purposes of this study, a data file containing the following information for each participant will be created in SPSS:

Student's institutional ID number, classification variables, course format type, and each student's pre- and post-PRPSA responses. The student's institutional ID number will be collected in order to match the student's pre- and post-PRPSA scores; in no way will the information be used to identify the student.

For the purposes of this study, both online and paper versions of the PRPSA were administered. The researcher will place the PRPSA online through a surveying software tool that has reliable servers where information is safely stored. The online surveys (pre- and post-PRPSA surveys) were used to collect students' pre- and post-public speaking anxiety scores from students. Both electronic and paper PRPSA surveys were used to collect students' pre- and post-public speaking anxiety scores from students in face-to-face sections.

At the end of the semester, the researcher also collected data measuring students' satisfaction with their learning experiences in their public speaking courses. This data was obtained through a self-designed instrument (Appendix B). This instrument was pilot-tested on a group of 20 participants and yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .748, so the instrument is considered to produce reliable scores. The participants in the pilot-study were not included in the actual study. As with the anxiety scores, data for online and hybrid courses was collected through a surveying software tool that has reliable servers where information is safely stored. Electronic and paper versions of the survey instrument were used to collect students' satisfaction scores with their learning experiences in face-to-face sections.

Finally, the researcher used a qualitative instrument (Appendix C) to measure faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning of Mississippi community college

students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format,

hybrid format, and online format through the MSVCC. This instrument was developed

based on the researcher's expertise and familiarity with the literature, and was reviewed

and validated by a panel of three speech communication instructors. These

communication instructors were not used as participants in this study. The researcher

obtained results from eleven faculty members who teach the course in each format

(online, hybrid, and face-to-face) near the end of the semester.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

For this study, the researcher collected data during the Spring 2012 semester from

students taking the basic public speaking course at Mississippi community colleges in

three course formats: online, face-to-face, and hybrid. Before beginning the study,

written permission was obtained from the instructional leaders of the participating

community colleges by consensus of the MACJC (Mississippi Association of Community

and Junior Colleges) Presidents' Association. Approval from the MACJC was indicated

on a single form, signed by the principal investigator, research advisor, department chair,

and by Chair of the MACJC Presidents' Association, indicating that the membership has

reviewed the proposed study, and, by consensus, approved said study. Subsequently, an

application for approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was

submitted (Appendix D). Permission was obtained from the university's IRB and from

the Mississippi Community College Foundation, which granted authority to conduct the

study in all Mississippi community colleges (Appendix E). The researcher provided the

link to the online pre- and post-PRPSA and satisfaction surveys to participating faculty

members. The faculty members disseminated the pre-PRPSA questionnaire link to their

students at the beginning of the semester. The researcher closed the survey window after three weeks. Near the end of the semester, the same faculty disseminated to their students the links to the post-PRPSA and satisfaction questionnaires. Data for the post PRPSA scores were collected during the last three weeks of the semester. For faculty teaching face-to-face sections, by request, the researcher provided enough paper copies of the pre- and post- PRPSA and satisfaction questionnaires. The faculty then administered the pre-PRPSA surveys to their students during the first few weeks of class and the post-PRPSA and satisfaction surveys to their students near the end of the semester. The researcher paid for all postage required for mailing of paper-based surveys. Data collected from students were downloaded from the survey software tool into a SPSS data file. Data collected from students taking the speaking course face-to-face using paper surveys were entered into the existing SPSS data file containing the responses from online and face-to-face students. Since the students indicated their course format within the survey, the researcher was able to code each response type in the data file (online, face-to-face, and hybrid) for the purpose of analysis.

For both survey formats (online and paper), an informed consent statement (Appendixes F, G, & H) was included that explained the purpose of the study and that students' participation was voluntary and they could not be penalized for any reason should they choose not to participate. The statement also explained the confidentiality of the data and how to contact the researcher should they have questions about the study.

Likewise, for the faculty interviews, qualitative data was collected near the end of the semester via email, phone, or paper responses. Faculty who participated did so in one of these three methods. The same questions were asked regardless of which method the

faculty member chose to participate. Faculty was told that they are not forced to participate and that their responses will remain confidential should they choose to participate in the study. The researcher provided his contact information in the case that faculty had any questions about the study.

Data Analysis

A repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the online format through the MSVCC.

Hypothesis 2: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format.

Hypothesis 3: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional hybrid format.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4: The change between speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between those

community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the

traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in

the online format through the MSVCC.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the

following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: Student satisfaction scores for learning experiences will be

statistically significantly different between those Mississippi community college

students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face

format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through

the MSVCC.

Thematically coding responses was used to analyze data collected from faculty to

answer the following research question:

What are faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning of Mississippi

community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the

traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the

online format through the MSVCC?

Limitations

Although all efforts were exhausted to include as many students as possible, there

was a chance that the students surveyed might not be representative of the entire

Mississippi community college student population. Another limitation of this study is

that of attrition. A student might have dropped out of school or the course between the

administration of the pre-PRPSA and the post-PRPSA administration. Since the research

design entailed repeated measures, any student who dropped out before the end of the

study could not be considered because they did not report their post-anxiety scores.

Other limitations included the possibility that students might have had distractions around

them while completing the PRPSA and satisfaction questionnaires, and that these

distractions could have possibly affected the results. As with any questionnaire, there

was always a chance that participants might have misread the directions and/or marked

their answers incorrectly (strongly agree instead of strongly disagree, etc.). Also,

students who took the paper PRPSA survey in face-to-face sections must have been

present on the day the survey was administered in order to complete it. Therefore, not all

students for these face-to-face sections might have had an opportunity to participate in

the study unless their instructors allowed them another opportunity to complete the

questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purposes of this study were to: (a) determine if taking the basic public speaking course in face-to-face, hybrid, and online format statistically significantly reduces public speaking anxiety; (b) determine which course format (face-to-face, hybrid, online), if any, reduces public speaking anxiety to the greatest extent; (c) determine if students' satisfaction with learning is statistically significantly different in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online); (d) determine faculty's perceptions of students learning in the basic public speaking in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online).

Data collected from participants in January 2012 and in May 2012 were entered into a data file for analysis using SPSS. Before completing the McCroskey's (1982) Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), participants were asked a series of questions for the purpose of creating a unique ID that was used to link members' pre and post scores while maintaining anonymity. Post data survey administration also included satisfaction questions about participants' learning experiences in addition to the PRPSA. Pre- and post-data were collected from 263 participants taking the Fundamentals of Public Speaking course in the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC). This was an acceptable sample (22%) of the original population of approximately 1,200 potential participants at the beginning of the Spring 2012 semester. Additionally, 11 of 21participating faculty members (52.4%) completed the faculty perceptions of students learning questionnaire at the end of the Spring 2012 semester.

Reliability analysis was run on both the pre and post survey administrations for the PRPSA. The pre-survey had a Cronbach's Alpha of .962 and the post-survey had a Cronbach's Alpha of .811. Since both alphas were above .70, they instrument was considered to produce reliable scores for this sample.

<div align="center">Sample Characteristics</div>

The student participants in this study covered a wide variety of demographics. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 53 years, with a mean age of 23.23 years. The majority of the respondents were females, while the two most reported ethnicities were Caucasian and African American. The majority of members reported that they were freshmen. Table 1 presents detailed information for these items.

Table 1

Gender, Ethnicity, and Classification

	n	*Percentage*
Gender		
Male	97	37.7%
Female	160	62.3%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	178	70.1%
African American	160	22.4%
Native American	1	0.4%
Hispanic/Latino	12	4.7%
Asian/Pacific	3	1.2%

Table 1 (continued).

	n	*Percentage*
Other	3	1.2%
Student Classification		
Freshman	134	54.5%
Sophomore	107	43.5%
Other	5	2.0%

Overall Pre and Post PRPSA Scores

For the purpose of analysis, the items were grouped according to the pre and post PRPSA administrations, and then an anxiety score for each respondent was calculated. Responses for each question could range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Scores for each participant were calculated by following McCroskey's directions. According to McCroskey, respondents' scores of higher than 131 indicate high public speaking anxiety, 9 –131 indicate moderate public speaking anxiety, and a score less than 98 is indicative of low public speaking anxiety. The average PRPSA score for the pre-survey was 113.4 with a standard deviation of 26.7. The average PRPSA score for the post-survey was 102.1 with a standard deviation of 17.4. According to McCroskey, the average PRPSA score is 114.6 and standard deviation of 17.2. The majority of all participants scored moderate anxiety on the pre and post surveys. One hundred nine participants' speaking anxiety improved while 31 reported more anxiety. Tables for each of the pre and post PRPSA scores are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Pre and Post Anxiety Scores for All Participants

		Post-Test			
		Low	Mod	High	Total
Pre-Test	Low	47	25	1	73
	Mod	42	70	5	117
	High	12	55	6	73
	Total	101	150	12	263

Pre and Post PRPSA Scores By Course Delivery Format

Descriptive analysis was done on PRPSA scores for pre and post survey data by course delivery format. The first group analyzed was face-to-face respondents. The mean for the PRPSA pre score was 109.0 and a standard deviation of 26.3. The mean for the PRPSA post score was 101.7 and a standard deviation of 19.6. The majority of respondents scored moderate anxiety on the pre and post PRPSA survey administrations. Fifty-seven participants' anxiety improved while 22 reported higher public speaking anxiety. Pre and post-test levels are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Pre and Post Anxiety Scores for Face-to-Face Students

		Post-Test			
		Low	Mod	High	Total
Pre-Test	Low	37	17	0	54
	Mod	27	46	5	78
	High	4	26	6	36
	Total	68	89	11	168

The next group analyzed was students who took the basic public speaking course in hybrid format. The mean for the PRPSA pre score was 114.8 and a standard deviation of 23.8. The mean for the PRPSA post score was 98.0 and a standard deviation of 11.8. The majority of respondents scored moderate anxiety on the pre and post PRPSA survey administrations. There were no low anxiety scores for the post-survey. Fifteen hybrid participants' speaking anxiety improved while three reported higher public speaking anxiety. Pre and post-test levels are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Pre and Post Anxiety Scores for Hybrid Students

		Post-Test			
		Low	Mod	High	Total
Pre-Test	Low	4	3	0	7
	Mod	6	8	0	14
	High	4	5	0	9
	Total	14	16	0	30

Finally, data from students who took the basic public speaking course in online format were analyzed. The mean for the PRPSA pre score was 124.1 and a standard deviation of 26.6. The mean for the PRPSA post score was 104.9 and a standard deviation of 12.5. The majority of respondents scored high anxiety on the pre survey and moderate anxiety on the post survey. Thirty-seven online participants' anxiety improved while six reported higher public speaking anxiety. Pre and post-test levels are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Pre and Post Anxiety Scores for Online Students

		Post-Test			
		Low	Mod	High	Total
Pre-Test	Low	6	5	1	12
	Mod	9	15	0	24
	High	4	24	0	28
	Total	19	44	1	64

Items measuring student attitudes regarding their learning experiences in their public speaking course collected during post-survey administration were analyzed. Responses for each question could range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Means for these items ranged from 3.76 to 4.21. Means and standard deviations for these items are provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Items (N = 261)

Items	Mean	SD
I am satisfied with my learning experience	4.21	0.90
My confidence in public speaking has improved	3.94	1.05
I learned a lot about public speaking	4.14	0.86
My public speaking skills have improved	3.97	0.97
I am more comfortable speaking before groups	3.76	0.97
This course met my overall expectations	4.10	0.93

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree…5 = Strongly Agree

Next, items measuring student attitudes regarding their learning experiences in their public speaking course collected during post-survey administration were analyzed by course format. Eighty-two percent (n = 138) of the respondents who took the course in face-to-face format reported that they would take the course in the same format if given the opportunity. Eighty-three percent (n = 25) of the respondents who took the course in hybrid format reported that they would take the course in the same format if given the opportunity. Seventy-two percent (n = 47) of the respondents who took the course online reported that they would take the course in the same format if given the opportunity. For respondents who took the public speaking course face-to-face, means for items ranged from 3.92 to 4.26. For respondents who took the public speaking course in hybrid format, means for items ranged from 3.87 to 4.43. For respondents who took the public speaking course in online format, means for items ranged from 3.30 to 4.02.

Satisfaction means for face-to-face and hybrid participants were all above 4.00 with exception of one item (more comfortable speaking before groups), while the online participants only reported satisfaction levels higher than 4.00 for two items (satisfaction with learning experience and how much they learned). Among fully-online participants, three items received mean responses of less than satisfied (confidence improved, skills improved, and comfort speaking before others). Means and standard deviations for satisfaction items by course format are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Student Satisfaction (N = 166)

	Group					
	Face-to-Face *(n = 166)*		Hybrid *(n = 30)*		Online *(n = 65)*	
Items	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Satisfied w/ learning	4.26	0.89	4.43	0.68	4.00	0.99
Confidence improved	4.10	0.93	4.00	0.95	3.50	1.27
Learned a lot	4.16	0.84	4.30	0.70	4.02	0.97
Skills have improved	4.11	0.86	4.00	0.98	3.61	1.19
Comfortable in groups	3.92	1.01	3.87	1.11	3.30	1.19
Course met expectation	4.13	0.99	4.27	0.91	3.92	0.95

Note. *Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree…5 = Strongly Agree*

Statistical

A repeated measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Public speaking anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format.

Among student in the traditional face-to-face format, the mean pre PRPSA score was 109.00 (SD=26.30) and the post PRPSA mean was 101.73 (SD=19.65). These scores indicate that students in the traditional face-to-face format started the course with below-average public speaking anxiety and that by the end of the course, improvements in public speaking anxiety were realized. The results of a repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-means for respondents who took the basic public speaking course in face-to-face format, $F(1, 167) = 15.43$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 2: Public speaking anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the hybrid format.

Among students who took the course in the hybrid format, the mean pre PRPSA score was 114.77 (SD=23.83) and the post PRPSA mean was 98 (SD=11.79). These scores were indicative that students in the hybrid format started the course with average public speaking anxiety and that by the end of the course; improvement in the reduction

of public speaking anxiety was realized. The results of a repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-means for respondents who took the public speaking course in the hybrid format, *F(1, 29) = 13.18, p = .001*.

> *Hypothesis 3:* Public speaking anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the online format through the MSVCC.

Among students who took the basic public speaking course in the fully-online format, the mean pre PRPSA score was 123.39 (SD=26.17) and the post PRPSA mean was 104.89 (SD=12.54). These scores were indicative that students enrolled in the fully-online format started the course with well above-average public speaking anxiety and that by the end of the course; improvements in the reduction of public speaking anxiety were realized. The results of a repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-means for respondents who took the public speaking course in online format, *F(1, 63) = 38.57, p < .001*.
An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 4:* The change between public speaking anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between those community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through the MSVCC.

The change in mean between pre PRPSA scores to post PRPSA scores among traditional face-to-face students was -7.27. The pre to post change in mean among hybrid students was -16.77. The pre to post change in means among fully-online students was -18.50. These scores seem to indicate that all formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online) reduce students' reported public speaking anxiety. During analysis, Levene's test revealed no homogeneity of variance issues. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the change in PRPSA scores for respondents based on course format, $F(2, 259) = 5.96$, $p = .003$. Tukey's post-hoc analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the face-to-face and online formats ($p = .005$). The results suggest that students in the fully-online treatment group, which had the most room to improve due to well above-average public speaking anxiety at baseline, reduced significantly more than in traditional face-to-face treatment group, which entered and exited the course with below-average public speaking anxiety. The mean pre and post PRPSA scores for each course format are reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Pre and Post PRPSA Score Changes Based on Course Format

Course Format	n	Pre	Post	Change
Face-to-Face	168	109.00	101.73	7.27
Hybrid	30	114.77	98.00	16.77
Online	64	124.11	104.89	18.50

Note. Scale: >131 = high PSA, 98-131= moderate PSA, <98= low PSA, 114.6= average PSA

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used with an alpha level set at .05 to test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Student satisfaction scores for learning experiences will be statistically significantly different between those Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through the MSVCC.

The overall satisfaction mean for students who took the traditional face-to-face course was 4.11 (SD=0.79) on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), indicating that most students were satisfied with the traditional face-to-face course format. Students in the hybrid course reported a similar overall satisfaction mean of 4.14 (SD=0.75) on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), indicating that most students were similarly satisfied with the hybrid course format as with the traditional face-to-face format. Students in the fully-online course format reported overall satisfaction mean scores of 3.72 (SD=0.95), indicating that students, on average, were less satisfied with the fully-online course format than with the face-to-face and hybrid formats. The overall satisfaction means and standard deviations are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

Overall Satisfaction Means and Standard Deviations Based on Course Format

Course Format	n	Mean	SD
Face-to-Face	166	4.11	0.79
Hybrid	30	4.14	0.75

Table 9 (continued).

Online	64	3.72	0.95

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree…5 = Strongly Agree

To test this hypothesis, overall satisfaction means for each participant's responses for the six satisfaction items. During analysis, Levene's test detected no homogeneity of variance issues. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the satisfaction means for respondents based on course format, $F(2, 257) = 5.45$, $p = .005$. Tukey's post-hoc test revealed a statistically significant difference between the face-to-face and online course formats ($p = .005$). These results seem to indicate that students in the traditional face-to-face and hybrid formats are more satisfied than students in the fully-online format.

Descriptive statistics and content analysis using thematic coding of responses were used to analyze data collected from faculty to answer the following research question:

Research Question: What are faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning of Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through the MSVCC?

Eleven of 21 faculty responded to the online questionnaire measuring their perceptions of student learning. Of the 11 respondents, 4 indicated they had 6 – 10 years of teaching experience, 1 reported 11–15 years of teaching experience, and 6 reported 20 or more years of teaching experience. All 11 respondents indicated teaching the public

speaking course in face-to-face format, 5 indicated teaching the course in hybrid format, and 9 indicated teaching the course in online format.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding the efficacy of the basic public speaking course, taught in various formats (face-to-face, hybrid, online) in reaching desired student learning outcomes. Two major themes emerged. The first theme was that the face-to-face and hybrid formats have more favorable student outcomes when compared to the fully online course format. Responses suggested this is possibly due to enhanced accountability fostered in a face-to-face learning environment. This enhanced accountability may assist underprepared and/or poorly motivated students to better reach the desired student learning outcomes. Secondly, some respondents posited that the same learning outcomes can be reached, regardless of format, depending on the quality and/or motivation of the students and the instructors, but that end is not often observed.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding the efficacy of teaching the basic public speaking course in the online format. In the fully-online format, students must often self-select their own audiences (usually 10 or more adult audience members) in order to simulate the classroom environment during the delivery of required speeches. Instructors were asked whether they believed that self-selected audiences were effective in simulating the classroom environment, which has proven over the years to be effective in helping to promote the desired student learning outcome of reducing public speaking anxiety. Two major themes emerged. Six of the 11 of respondents indicated that the face-to-face classroom format is more effective in promoting the reduction of public speaking anxiety. However, a few respondents pointed out that although face-to-

face is effective in reducing public speaking anxiety, this reduction might be due to the sense of community established through regular classroom interaction sustained throughout a semester. Therefore, this reduced anxiety may not transfer to different audiences. Secondly, some of the respondents said that courses using self-selected audiences have the potential to more closely simulate real-world public speaking environments (given the students' abilities to speak before pre-existing, non-contrived groups such as the Rotary Club), but that students do not often exercise this built in advantage, choosing instead to use audiences of close friends and family members.

Next, the respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of teaching the basic public speaking course in the three formats: face-to-face, hybrid, and online. The responses were measured on a 7-point scale with 1 being *not effective at all* and 7 being *extremely effective*. Instructors rated the traditional face-to-face course format as being the most effective in reaching desired student learning outcomes. Instructors rated the online course format to be the least effective of all. These means and standard deviations are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of Faculty Perceptions Based on Course Format

Course Format	n	Mean	SD
Face-to-Face	11	6.36	0.67
Hybrid	10	5.80	1.03
Online	11	4.55	1.44

Note. Scale: 1 = Not Effective at All…7 = Extremely Effective

Lastly, respondents were asked why they rated each course format the way they did. Three major themes emerged. Four of the respondents indicated that face-to-face is the preferred course format, followed closely by hybrid, and that both face-to-face and hybrid are more effective than online. These respondents believed this to be true because of the ability to foster an environment of enhanced accountability by the instructor in the traditional classroom environment. Also, faculty noted that the ability of the student to become more familiar with an audience in the traditional classroom setting helped students to succeed. Next, two of the respondents posited that the hybrid format is the best of all formats because it negates commonly stated disadvantages in other formats, such as the lack of instructor and peer interaction in the online format, while not becoming overly-familiar and comfortable with the audience (which may foster a false sense of confidence) in the face-to-face format. Finally, four respondents indicated that all formats can equally promote effective student learning environments, however, this may not often be the case due to student and instructor abilities and/or motivation.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In summary, four purposes existed for this study: (a) determine if taking the basic public speaking course in traditional, face-to-face, hybrid, and online format statistically significantly reduces public speaking anxiety; (b) determine which course format (face-to-face, hybrid, online), if any, reduces public speaking anxiety to the greatest extent; (c) determine if students' satisfaction with learning is statistically significantly different in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online); (d) determine faculty's perceptions of students learning in the basic public speaking in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online).

Five research hypotheses were tested in this study. All five hypotheses tested had statistically significant results. All course formats statistically significantly reduced public speaking anxiety as measured by pre and post-PRPSA scores. The results indicated that the online course format lowered public speaking anxiety statistically significantly greater when compared to the face-to-face format. The results also indicated that respondents had a statistically significantly higher satisfaction level with the face-to-face format when compared to the online format.

One research question regarding the perceptions of faculty regarding the efficacy of the basic public speaking course taught in various formats in reaching desired student learning outcomes in each of the course formats was answered. The respondents indicated, overall, that the face-to-face format provides the best learning environment for student learning outcomes, but that optimal learning is largely based on student and teacher abilities and/or motivation.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Statistical analyses of the data collected in the study were reported in the previous chapter. This chapter will begin with an overview of the study. Second, the researcher will discuss of the findings of the study. Third, the researcher will discuss how the findings might be used by higher education administrators and faculty. Fourth, the researcher will suggest additional research. Finally, the researcher will close with an overview of the findings and conclusions reached in the study.

Summary of the Study

Many researchers have called for the need for more research before making the decision to place the basic public speaking course online (Allen, 2006). Other researchers assert that "basic course directors need to consider whether the distance experience of the course is consistent with course objectives and skills development addressed in face-to-face sections" and urge decision-makers to "consider the issues particular to moving the basic communication course onto the internet" (Morreale et al., 2010, p. 424).

It is in the best interest of higher education administrators to thoroughly investigate the effects which their decisions may have on all stakeholders, most importantly students, but also faculty, staff, and the public's perceptions of the university. One such decision that should not be taken lightly is the delivery of courses and programs in the online format without a thorough investigation of the outcomes effecting students, faculty, and all other stakeholders inside and outside the institution. The academic,

professional, financial, and social ramifications of graduating ill-prepared students are a detriment to institutions, the workforce, and a democratic society in general. Conflicting findings permeate the literature regarding the outcomes of online education (Allen, 2002; Allen et al., 2004, Benoit et al., 2006). These conflicts exhibit evidence regarding student and faculty perceptions of the online delivery medium as well (Allen, 2002; Benoit et al., 2006; Seaman, 2009).

While the current literature seems to support higher education administrators' decisions to offer online instruction to meet student demand and to address financial limitations, studies suggest that online delivery may not be equally appropriate for all subject matter. For example, the Instructional Technology Council (2009) lists the basic public speaking course among the nine most difficult courses to teach in the online format due to faculty resistance and/or pedagogical challenges.

As the trend of placing college instruction online grows larger with each passing year (Allen & Seaman, 2010), it is imperative that decision-makers in higher education consider and initiate further study into the measurable outcomes of online education, which affect students, faculty, and all stakeholders of our higher education system. The current study sought to investigate the aforementioned measurable outcomes of online education, as it pertains to the basic public speaking course, that is listed among the most difficult to translate through the online delivery medium (ITC, 2009). The study also sought to better understand student and faculty perceptions of the efficacy of this particular course in reaching desired student learning outcomes.

The researcher summarized pertinent literature germane to this study. Four general themes in the literature were explored, including: (1) anxiety; (2) non-traditional

vs. traditional delivery methods; (3) digital natives; (4) The intersection of pedagogy and finance.

Data for this study was collected from students and faculty in various course formats during the Spring semester of 2012. The researcher used three research tools: McCroskey's Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), a questionnaire measuring student attitudes toward course format, and a questionnaire measuring faculty perceptions of student learning in various course formats. Pre and post data were collected from 263 students and 11 faculty members from 12 community colleges in Mississippi. The mixed-method study utilized statistical analysis and thematic coding of the data in order to report findings on the following hypothesis and research questions:

Hypothesis 1: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the online format through the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC).

Hypothesis 2: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format.

Hypothesis 3: Speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between the pre- and post-assessments among Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the hybrid format.

Hypothesis 4: The change between speech anxiety scores, as indicated by the

PRPSA survey, will be statistically significantly different between those

Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking

course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take

the course in the online format through the MSVCC.

Hypothesis 5: Student satisfaction scores for learning experiences will be

statistically significantly different between those Mississippi community college

students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face

format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through

the MSVCC.

Research question: What are faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning

of Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking

course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take

the course in the online format through the MSVCC, as indicated by the Faculty

Perceptions of Student Learning Questionnaire?

<div align="center">Findings and Discussion</div>

In the beginning of this section, hypotheses one through three, which deal with

the ability of the basic public speaking course to facilitate a reduction in public speaking

anxiety in its' various delivery formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online) will be

discussed together. Second, hypothesis four, which compares each of the various course

delivery formats in its' efficacy in diminishing public speaking anxiety, will be reported

and discussed. Third, students' satisfaction with the various course formats will be

reported and discussed. Finally, faculty perceptions of the efficacy of the various course formats in their ability to facilitate desired student learning outcomes will be addressed.

Hypotheses one through thee sought to find differences between pre and post anxiety scores within three course delivery formats: face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online. In all three course delivery formats, students' anxiety scores declined from pre-to post. When the differences in each course delivery format were tested using a repeated measures ANOVA, there was a statistically significant difference in students' pre and post anxiety scores in all three of the course formats. These findings suggest that all three course delivery formats are successful in reducing public speaking anxiety. These results support Dwyer, Carlson, and Kahre (2002), Dwyer and Fus (2002), and Rubin et al. (1997) who posit that the basic public speaking course is an efficacious intervention in reducing public speaking anxiety in the traditional format and the current study extends their assertion to remain true in the hybrid and fully-online formats.

Hypothesis four sought to find differences in the change between pre and post anxiety scores within three course delivery formats: face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online. When the differences in each course delivery format were tested using ANOVA, there was a statistically significant difference in the change in anxiety scores between the face-to-face and fully-online course delivery formats. The results showed that students in the fully-online treatment group, which had the most room to improve due to well above-average public speaking anxiety at baseline, reduced significantly more than in traditional face-to-face treatment group, who entered and exited the course with below-average public speaking anxiety. It is important to reiterate, however, that while the results indicate that public speaking anxiety was reduced the most among students who took the

course fully-online, students who chose to take the course in the fully-online format started the semester with much higher public speaking anxiety, thus had the most room for change. Face-to-face students started the semester with what McCroskey (2009) defined as below average public speaking anxiety, showed a reduction in anxiety scores, but ended the course still in a range indicative of moderate anxiety. Thus, students who chose to take the class had less room for change in anxiety scores.

McCroskey (2009) defined normal population means for high, moderate, and low communication apprehension. In this sample analyzed by the current study, at baseline, among those self-selecting into the face-to-face course, an abnormally low percentage of students exhibited high public speaking anxiety and an extraordinarily high percentage of students reported low public speaking anxiety. In contrast, at baseline, among those who self-selected into the fully-online course, an extraordinary percentage of students reported high public speaking anxiety (more than double McCroskey's reported population norms). These findings suggest that there may have been selection bias at play, as it seems that within this sample, students who were more anxious about public speaking perhaps chose the fully-online course due to perceptions that they might be able to avoid speaking in front of unfamiliar groups.

Further, even though students in the fully-online course reduced public speaking anxiety significantly greater than did the students in the face-to-face group, students in the fully-online group still recorded public speaking anxiety post-scores that were higher than the face-to-face group post-treatment. In fact, post-anxiety scores for the fully-online group were similar to pre-anxiety scores of the face-to-face group. Thus, even though the fully-online treatment yielded statistically a greater change, remember that the

fully-online group had much more room for improvement. In this case, "statistically significant" does not equal "better." Supporting this researcher's assertion, post-course, students who participated in the fully-online course indicated that their confidence in public speaking, their comfort speaking before groups, and their perceived public speaking skills had not improved nearly to the extent reported by students in the face-to-face and hybrid groups.

The researcher will now discuss perhaps why the fully-online course did not yield post-anxiety scores similar to the face-to-face and hybrid courses. Besides the stated difference in baseline anxiety measures, the treatments may have differed as a result of the environment where speech presentations took place. It is important to note that while face-to-face and hybrid students presented required speeches before audiences made up of random peers, fully-online students self-selected their audiences. It is assumed that these audiences were familiar to the student. MacIntyre and Thivierge (1995) suggest that audience familiarity may hamper the reduction of public speaking anxiety by interfering with the process of systematic desensitization (SD). This may be because a self-selected audience may not produce the requisite amount of anxiety needed for treatment to take place (Jackson & Latane, 1981). Further, the literature posits that anxiety must be maximally activated in order for treatment of public speaking anxiety through SD to take place (Finn et al., 2009; Gray & McNaughton, 2000; Mineka & Cannon, 1999). Additionally, the majority of instructors who participated in the current study indicated that they believed that self-selected audiences do not peak anxiety as much as in the traditional setting, where the audiences are made up of a random group of peers, further supporting the above-cited literature.

Hypothesis five sought to find differences in post-course student satisfaction among students who chose to take the basic public speaking course in the face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online course formats. When the differences in satisfaction with each course delivery format were tested using ANOVA, there was a statistically significant difference in the reported satisfaction between face-to-face and online course delivery formats. While findings indicate that students are satisfied with the face-to-face format, they are significantly less satisfied with the fully-online course format. Students express dissatisfaction with the fully-online course format despite experiencing the most reported change in public speaking anxiety. Despite great improvement, these students still report less confidence in public speaking, less comfort speaking before groups, and lesser perceived public speaking skills than students in traditional and hybrid groups. These findings within the population used in the current study contradict the findings of Allen et al. (2002) who reported that there is little decline in student satisfaction between traditional and fully-online course delivery. The current study supports the findings of Benoit et al. (2006) who reported that students were slightly, although not significantly more satisfied with hybrid courses than with face-to-face courses.

In the current study, the research sought answers to the following research question: What are faculty perceptions of the quality of student learning of Mississippi community college students who take the basic public speaking course in the traditional face-to-face format, hybrid format, and those who take the course in the online format through the Mississippi Virtual Community College? A content analysis of qualitative data was utilized to capture major themes of responses to three open-ended questions. The specific questions will be addressed individually in the following paragraphs.

When asked about the efficacy of the basic public speaking course, taught in various formats (face-to-face, hybrid, online) in reaching desired student learning outcomes, responses could be classified in two major themes. The first theme was that face-to-face and hybrid formats have more favorable student outcomes when compared to the fully online course format. Responses suggested this is possibly due to enhanced accountability fostered in a face-to-face learning environment. This enhanced accountability may assist underprepared and/or poorly motivated students to better reach the desired student learning outcomes. These findings support those of Allen et al. (2004) who stated that "teachers still perceived distance instruction negatively (even among generally approving teachers)" due to decreased contact with their students and a "loss of control over the classroom environment caused by technological intrusiveness" (p. 404).

Secondly, some respondents posited that the same learning outcomes can be reached, regardless of format, depending on the quality and/or motivation of the students. Howe and Strauss (2003) in their research on Millennials, contend that today's college students, among other characteristics are confident, achieving, and pressured to succeed regardless of the obstacles. These characteristics may account for some respondents contentions that the same learning outcomes can be reached, regardless of format, however, many noted that end is not often observed. Additionally, faculty indicated that the skill and motivations of the instructor can impact student learning outcomes, reminiscent of assertions by Allen et al. (2002), who suggest that the level and quality of student/instructor interactions can affect course outcomes.

Next instructors were asked about the efficacy of the basic public speaking course, taught in various formats (face-to-face, hybrid, online) in reducing students' public speaking anxiety. Specifically, instructors were asked whether they believed that the practice allowing students to self-select audiences for the purpose of presenting required speeches were effective in simulating the classroom environment, which has proven over the years to be effective in helping to promote the desired student learning outcome of reducing public speaking anxiety. Two major themes emerged. The majority of faculty members indicated that the face-to-face classroom format is more effective in promoting the reduction of public speaking anxiety. Their responses seemed to generally agree with the assertions of MacIntyre and Thivierge (1995) who suggest that audience familiarity may hamper the reduction of public speaking anxiety. The findings of the current study may also support those who posit that anxiety must be maximally activated in order for treatment of public speaking anxiety to take place (Finn et al., 2009; Gray & McNaughton, 2000; Mineka & Cannon, 1999) as well as Jackson and Latane (1981) who contend that self-selected audiences may not produce enough anxiety for treatment to take place. The majority of instructors' responses indicated that they believed that self-selected audiences do not peak anxiety as much as in the traditional setting, where the audiences are made up of a random group of peers. However, a few respondents pointed out that although face-to-face is effective in reducing public speaking anxiety, this reduction might be due to the sense of community established through regular classroom interaction sustained throughout a semester.

Secondly, some of the respondents said that self-selected audiences in the online course format may more closely simulate real-world public speaking environments and

posited that the face-to-face environment may provide an artificial sense of confidence to students. In the latter cases, responses supported the findings of Robinson (1997) who, in contrast to Finn et al. (2009), contends that treatment occurs best in a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere. Faculty respondents indicated, however, that reduced anxiety before nonthreatening, supportive groups may not transfer to different audiences made up of random, strange, or unknown audience members.

When asked to rate the efficacy of the basic public speaking course, taught in various formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and fully-online) in reaching desired student learning outcomes, instructors rated the traditional face-to-face course format as being the most effective in reaching desired student learning outcomes, followed by the hybrid format. Instructors rated the online course format to be the least effective of all. Seaman (2009) indicated that the skepticism of instructors toward online classes in general is slowly diminishing. While this may be true, the results of the current study seem to indicate that instructors of the basic public speaking course find the traditional course delivery method to be the best mode to reach student learning outcomes, followed by hybrid, with the fully-online delivery format rated last in reaching desired student learning outcomes.

In summary, the current study suggests that faculty members perceive that the online delivery of the course, as it is currently delivered, is not equivalent to the traditional and hybrid versions of the course in reaching desired student learning outcomes.

Summary of Findings

The purposes of this study were to: (a) determine if taking the basic public speaking course in face-to-face, hybrid, and online format statistically significantly reduces public speaking anxiety; (b) determine which course format (face-to-face, hybrid, online), if any, reduces public speaking anxiety to the greatest extent; (c) determine if students' satisfaction with learning is statistically significantly different in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online); (d) determine faculty's perceptions of students learning in the basic public speaking in the three course formats (face-to-face, hybrid, and online).

Results of the current study suggest that all course formats statistically significantly reduced public speaking anxiety. Statistics revealed that the online course format lowered public speaking anxiety statistically significantly greater when compared to the face-to-face format, but perhaps this was because the fully-online students had much higher anxiety than did the students who self-selected the face-to-face and hybrid course formats. The current study might suggest that there may have been selection bias at play, where students who were extremely anxious at baseline self-selected the fully-online course. Also, students in the fully-online course indicated that although their anxiety was reduced, their comfort speaking in front of others, their confidence in public speaking, and their public speaking skills did not improve nearly to the extent that students who took the course in the traditional and hybrid formats reported.

The results of the study also indicate that students are significantly more satisfied with the face-to-face course than with the fully-online course. In addition to overall student satisfaction with the face-to-face and hybrid course formats, results of this study

indicate that faculty members deem the face-to-face and hybrid courses to be more efficacious in reaching desired student learning outcomes. Faculty indicated that overall the face-to-face format provides the best learning environment for student learning outcomes, followed by the hybrid course delivery format, but adding that optimal learning is largely based on student and teacher abilities and/or motivation.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Policy and Practice</div>

Recommendations to Faculty Members

The current study suggests that the basic public speaking course, as offered online through the Mississippi Virtual Community College, is not performing as well as the face-to-face and hybrid versions of the course in reducing public speaking anxiety, in meeting the expectations of students, or in producing positive perceptions from faculty. It is suggested, therefore, that faculty members design courses with the online learner in mind. Online students in the community college setting have both high public speaking anxieties, along with the characteristics of community college students that make such students "at risk". It is suggested that faculty members not just re-create your traditional online classes in the online environment, but perhaps follow suggestions by Prensky (2010) who suggests that faculty use the advantages offered by online technology to pioneer new pedagogical practices that engage digital natives and their preferred learning styles instead of simply recreating the "lecture and test" pedagogy rampant in traditional delivery methods.

Additionally, Morreale et al. (2006) noted the notorious absence of communication apprehension as a topic reported as being addressed in the basic public speaking course even though its' prevalence has been known for decades. The current

study suggests, knowing that students with high public speaking anxiety may self-select the online course; faculty should address public speaking anxiety and consider employing systematic desensitization techniques recommended by Finn et al. (2009), that have long been known to significantly reduce public speaking anxiety (McCroskey, Ralph, & Barrick, 1970). At the very least, instructors should consider the measuring public speaking anxiety using the PRPSA survey at the onset of the course in order to anticipate problems and plan interventions accordingly.

Recommendations to College Administrators

Administrators should focus their support on faculty, as they attempt to redesign classes which meet the needs of students as well as the faculty members' own expectations as instructors of the course. Styron et al. (2009) recommend incentives to develop and re-develop online classes in order to meet the needs of students and faculty. However, Styron et al. (2009) also point out that administrators typically do the opposite, in reporting that a lack of recognition by institutions of online course development and teaching efforts in regard to tenure and promotion processes constitutes a significant barrier perceived by faculty to increase online efforts. Like the findings of Styron et al., the current study recommends that these barriers must be addressed by administrators if online education is to continue to improve.

Additionally, the current study supports the suggestions Terre Allen (2006) who urges college administrators to evaluate decisions regarding placement of courses online and warns that "rushing to provide online instruction as an alternative to on-campus instruction is setting our students up for failure" (p. 125) and warns administrators that student success, retention, and degree completion may suffer due to online instruction,

particularly to new students and those in *at risk* populations such as community college students. This researcher contends that community college students who select to take courses in the online environment are even more *at risk* than others in the community college population because they are older, nontraditional students who more removed from the academic environment due to work and family demands. Further support of this assertion is provided by Roberts (2009) who found that online students may not feel socially connected with others, making them less likely to persist to degree completion. The goals of retention, student success, and student completion should ring in the ears administrators and motivate them to take heed of the data presented by the current study as well as others in order to drive future decision-making in relation to the proliferation of online course programs.

The rush to proliferate online learning is in sharp contrast to institutional goals of retaining and graduating students (Allen, 2006). Technology allows us to take teaching and learning outside of the classroom (Jones & Wellman, 2010) and in doing so save resources. Scholars suggests that online education is, on average 37% less expensive due to decreased cost of labor, facilities, and equipment necessary in traditional instruction (Twigg, 2005). Hybrid delivery of education reportedly saves 24% on instructional costs (Benoit et al., 2006). Some researchers even assert that online delivery can improve student learning outcomes (Allen et al., 2004; Twigg, 2005). This assertion is not supported by Benoit et al. (2006), or by the current study. Thus, while it is tempting in this time of financial crisis in higher education to grasp for cost saving through pushing more instruction online, this researcher admonishes higher education administrators to take heed of this and other studies which suggest that cost savings through online

education could possibly be to the peril of other institutional goals such as retention, graduation, and production of competent students. The cliché advice offered by this and other studies reporting unequal student outcomes of the varying course delivery formats, *just because we can doesn't mean we should*.

Administrators must remember that the working world wants higher education to produce graduates that are communicatively competent. Communicative competence implies "the ability to clearly formulate ideas, effectively communicate to a group of peers, and then persuade others to pursue those ideas" (Pentland, 2008, p. viii). This idea is realized by administrators as evidenced by the inclusion of communicative competence as a theme in quality enhancement plans in educational institutions across the country.

The current study and others (Hunt et al., 2001) suggest a continued call for communicative competence to remain central to the desired outcomes of higher education institutions. It is further suggested that administrators use data produced by this and other studies that call into question the popular assumption that online education is right for all subjects. The researcher urges administrators to ask themselves the following question: is online delivery equal to traditional delivery methods in reaching desired student learning outcomes, satisfying students' needs, and meshing with the perceptions held by faculty members in its' ability to reach desired outcomes.

<center>Limitations</center>

Although all efforts were exhausted to include as many students as possible, there is a chance that the students surveyed might not have been representative of the entire Mississippi community college student population. Another limitation of this study was that of attrition. A student might have dropped out of school or the course between the

administration of the pre-PRPSA and the post-PRPSA administration. Since the research design entailed repeated measures, any student who dropped out before the end of the study could not be considered because they were not able to report their post-anxiety scores or their satisfaction with selected course format. Other limitations include students might have had distractions around them while completing the PRPSA and satisfaction questionnaires, and these distractions can possibly affect the responses. As with any questionnaire, there was a chance that participants will misread the directions and/or mark their answers incorrectly (strongly agree instead of strongly disagree, etc.). Also, students taking the paper PRPSA survey in face-to-face sections must have been present on the day the survey was administered in order to complete it. Therefore, not all students for these face-to-face sections might have an opportunity to participate in the study unless their instructors allowed them another opportunity to complete the questionnaire.

Students self-selected course formats and were not randomly assigned to a treatment group. It did appear that selection bias might have played a role in the students' selection of course format based on the means of pre-anxiety scores as indicated by the pre-PRPSA instrument.

Lastly, students willingly participated in pre- and post-surveys and consented to be part of a study, thus Hawthorne Effect might have influenced their responses in the various questionnaires.

<center>Recommendations for Future Research</center>

The researcher recommends that this study be repeated using a larger sample size, as one subset within the study had a lower than desired sample size. Particularly, larger

samples of students in the hybrid course format is desirable, as the smaller sample in this study may have impacted the ability to generalize findings about these students.

It is also recommended that students taking the basic public speaking course in other states be studied. This proposed study should include students taking the public speaking course in all formats: face-to-face, hybrid, and online. In addition, it is recommended that more faculty members who teach the basic public speaking course in its various formats in Mississippi and in other states be surveyed and/or interviewed to better ascertain faculty perceptions of student learning in various course formats.

Following the lead of Morreale et al. (2010) who noted an ever-widening gap in the in two-year and four-year colleges in their approaches to delivering the basic public speaking course, it is recommended to continue research within the two-year college as separate from that in four-year institutions.

Additionally, since this study collected data from only one semester, it may be beneficial to collect data over multiple semesters in order to see if the results remain similar over time. A longitudinal study may be beneficial in order to keep up with student learning outcomes in rapidly changing modes of technology-enhanced course delivery so that higher education administrators may be equipped to make data-driven decisions regarding instruction.

The traditional delivery of the basic public speaking course has been shown for over a century to reduce communication apprehension (Dwyer et al., 2002; Dwyer & Fus, 2002; and Rubin et al., 1997), which in turn improves the quality of the lives of students in numerous ways (McCroskey, 2009). The current study suggests that more research must be done to ensure that online course delivery results in equal outcomes as produced

by traditional instruction. Consequently, this researcher calls for a renewed fervor in studying communication apprehension, as occurred in the 1970's under the direction of Dr. James McCroskey, father of research on communication apprehension. If educators suspect that a change from the traditional mode of delivery to a technology-driven one may result in a change desired outcomes, classic research in education outcomes should be repeated within the context of online education. Dr. McCroskey supports this call in that as late as 2009, he suggests that "there will never be enough research on communication apprehension until the side effects of CA can be prevented for everyone in our society and other cultures" (p. 169). Dr. McCroskey knows how important communication competence is. Quality enhancement plans at institutions across the country seem to suggest that higher education administrators understand this importance. Educators must make sure that no matter the rapidity in changes in technology, and in what modes faculty are enabled to deliver knowledge, the quality of student outcomes must remain top priority.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSRUMENT (PRE & POST)

Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)

Directions: Below are 34 statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5.

_____1. While preparing for giving a speech, I feel tense and nervous.

_____2. I feel tense when I see the words "speech" and "public speech" on a course outline when studying.

_____3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.

_____4. Right after giving a speech I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.

_____5. I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.

_____6. I have no fear of giving a speech.

_____7. Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.

_____8. I look forward to giving a speech.

_____9. When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.

_____10. My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.

_____11. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

_____12. I enjoy preparing for a speech.

_____13. I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.

_____14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I don't know.

_____15. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

_____16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.

_____17. My mind is clear when giving a speech.

_____18. I do not dread giving a speech.

_____19. I perspire just before starting a speech.

_____20. My heart beats very fast just as I start a speech.

_____21. I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my speech starts.

_____22. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.

_____23. Realizing that only a little time remains in a speech makes me very tense.

_____24. While giving a speech, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.

_____25. I breathe faster just before starting a speech.

_____26. I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving a speech.

_____27. I do poorer on speeches because I am anxious.

_____28. I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.

_____29. When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.

_____30. During an important speech I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.

_____31. I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech.

_____32.My heart beats very fast while I present a speech.

_____33. I feel anxious while waiting to give my speech.

_____34. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Scoring: To determine your score on the PRPSA, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34

Step 2. Add the scores for items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, and 26

Step 3. Complete the following formula:

PRPSA = 72 - Total from Step 2 + Total from Step 1

Your score should be between 34 and 170. If your score is below 34 or above 170, you have made a mistake in computing the score.

High = > 131

Low = < 98

Moderate = 98-131

Mean = 114.6; SD = 17.2

Source:

McCroskey, J. C. (1970) . Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs, 37*, 269-277.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT (POST)

STUDENT ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will be used to determine students' satisfaction with their learning experiences in the basic public speaking course taught at all community/junior colleges in Mississippi. Be assured that throughout this process in no way will your identity be obtained and data obtained will remain confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and you may stop your participation at any time.

Please answer the following questions accurately and honestly.

1. What is your Student ID#?_____

2. What is your current age? _____ years

3. Please indicate your ethnicity.
    - □ Asian American/Pacific Islander Indian
    - □ Caucasian
    - □ African American
    - □ Native American/American
    - □ Hispanic/Latino
    - □ Other

4. Please indicate your gender.
    - □ Male
    - □ Female

5. What is your student classification?
    - □ Freshman
    - □ Other _____
    - □ Sophomore

6. Please select your course format:
    - □ Face-to-face (content and speeches delivered live in a traditional classroom setting)
    - □ Hybrid (content delivered online, speeches delivered live in classroom before audience of your instructor and classmates)
    - □ Totally online (content online, speeches recorded outside of classroom before a self-selected audience and submitted to instructor)

Circle whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are neutral (N), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) with the following statements.	
1. I am satisfied with my learning experience in my public speaking course.	SA A N D SD
2. My confidence in public speaking has improved because of this course.	SA A N D SD
3. I learned a lot about public speaking in this course.	SA A N D SD
4. My public speaking skills have improved because of this course.	SA A N D SD
5. I am more comfortable speaking before groups as a result of this course.	SA A N D SD
6. This course met my overall expectations.	SA A N D SD

If given the opportunity, would you take this course in the same format (online, hybrid, face-to-face)?

      □   Yes   □ No

Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Please share any other information about your learning experience in your public speaking course you believe to be important.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT (POST)

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will be used to determine faculty perceptions of students' learning experiences in the basic public speaking course taught at all community/junior colleges in Mississippi. Be assured that throughout this process in no way will your identity be obtained and data obtained will remain confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and you may stop your participation at any time. You may use the back of this questionnaire if more response space is needed.

Please answer the following questions accurately and honestly.

1. Please indicate how many years you have taught the basic public speaking course. _____ years

2. Please indicate the formats in which you have taught the basic public speaking course. Check all that
    apply.
    ☐ Face-to-face (content and speeches delivered live in a traditional classroom setting before an audience of your instructor and classmates)
    ☐ Hybrid (content delivered online, speeches delivered live in classroom before audience of your instructor and classmates)
    ☐ Totally online (content online, speeches recorded outside of classroom before a self-selected audience and submitted to instructor)

3. There has been much debate about the efficacy of teaching the basic public speaking course in an online format. In your professional opinion, how do you compare students' learning outcomes in the traditional, hybrid, and online delivery formats?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Teaching the basic public speaking course in the online format, instructors often have their students make a video recording of their speeches before a self-selected audience. In your professional opinion, is this method as effective in reducing public speaking anxiety as in the traditional delivery format, where speeches are presented before the students' instructor and classmates?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. In your professional opinion, please rate each course format based on its effectiveness to meet the objectives of the public speaking course. Use definitions given in the second question.

<u>Online</u> (content delivered online, speeches delivered live in classroom before audience of your instructor and classmates)

Not effective at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Extremely Effective

<u>Hybrid</u> (content delivered online, speeches delivered live in classroom before audience of your instructor and classmates)

Not effective at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Extremely Effective

<u>Face-to-Face</u> (content and speeches delivered live in a traditional classroom setting before an audience of your instructor and classmates)

Not effective at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Extremely Effective

Discuss why you rated each format the way you did.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:
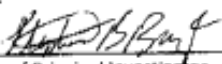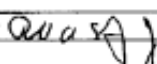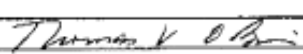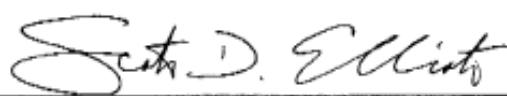
- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **11080904**
PROJECT TITLE: **Efficacy of a Basic Public Speaking Course Delivered via a Virtual Community College**
PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**
RESEARCHER/S: **Stephen Bradley Bailey**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Studies & Research**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approva**
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: **10/17/2011 to 10/16/2012**

Lawrence A. Hosman   10-21-2011
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.   DATE
Institutional Review Board Chair

APPENDIX E

APPROVAL LETTER (MACJC)

Signatures

Principal Investigator - I certify that the information in this application is complete and correct. As Principal Investigator, I have the ultimate responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human participants, secure conduct of the research, and the ethical performance of the project. I will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of participants in human research.

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date   8/21/11

Research Advisor - I certify that the information in this application is complete and correct, and that this proposed research has been approved by the IRB of the sponsoring institution. As Research Advisor, I confirm that the student researcher under my guidance is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects, and has sufficient training and experience to conduct the research outlined in this application.

I further agree to regularly meet with the student researcher to monitor his or her progress; and if problems arise, I will become personally available to help the student researcher resolve those problems. As an advisor on this project, I will assure the protection of the rights and welfare of human participants, secure conduct of the research, and the ethical performance of the project. I will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of participants in human research.

Signature of Research Advisor   Date   8/24/11

Department Chair - I acknowledge that this research is in keeping with the standards set by our department and our institutional IRB or its equivalent. I also certify that the Principal Investigator has met all the departmental and institutional requirements for approval of this research.

Signature of Department Chair   Date   8/26/11

MACJC Chair - I acknowledge on behalf of the MACJC Presidents' Association that this research has been reviewed and has subsequently received the following recommendation by consensus of the Association membership:

☒ Approved   ☐ Tabled for Further Review   ☐ Not Approved
☐ Approved with Stipulations:

Signature of MACJC Chair   Date   9-13-11

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS (PRPSA)

University of Southern Mississippi
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

This researcher is conducting a study to examine the anxiety students experience in their public speaking courses. Students from online, hybrid, and face-to-face sections will be compared so a better understanding of anxiety in the public speaking course can be examined. For the purpose of this study, you are being asked to complete **a thirty-four item questionnaire, known as the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), which measures anxiety in the context of public speaking. Since you will be asked to complete the questionnaire twice (once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end), y**ou will be asked a series of questions at the beginning of the questionnaire to generate a unique ID number so your answers can be linked to your responses at the end of the semester. In no way are you obligated or required to participate in this study. Should you choose to participate, the PRPSA should take approximately ten minutes for you to complete, and your participation is voluntary. You may discontinue your participation at any time and for any reason without consequences. The questionnaires are anonymous, so please **do not** write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Be assured that throughout this process in no way will your identity be obtained. Once again, please understand that you are not obligated in any way to participate and you may quit participating at any time and for any reason without any consequences. If you feel significant anxiety and/or distress attributable to this survey, please contact the investigator, Stephen B. Bailey, via phone at (601) 452-0197 at any time, day or night, or by email at sbradbailey@yahoo.com. You might also contact your institution's Department of Student Services in order to be put in contact with a counselor.

The aggregate findings of this research study will be presented via dissertation defense and publication during Summer of 2012. Should you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact the researcher via phone at (601) 452-0197 between the hours of 9 A.M. and 6 P.M., Monday through Friday and Sunday. You can also email the principal researcher via email at sbradbailey@yahoo.com. Remember, your rights as a participant are of the utmost importance.

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

By returning the attached questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this project.

Thank you,

S. Brad Bailey

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSTENT LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

(STUDENT SATISFACTION)

University of Southern Mississippi
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

      This researcher is conducting a study to examine students' satisfaction with their public speaking courses. Students from online, hybrid, and face-to-face sections will be compared so a better understanding satisfaction can be examined. For the purpose of this study, you are being asked to complete **a brief survey instrument that measures your satisfaction with your learning experience in your public speaking course.** In no way are you obligated or required to participate in this study. Should you choose to participate, the survey should take approximately five minutes for you to complete, and your participation is voluntary. You may discontinue your participation at any time and for any reason without consequences. The questionnaires are anonymous, so please **do not** write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Once again, please understand that you are not obligated in any way to participate and you may quit participating at any time and for any reason without any consequences.

      The aggregate findings of this research study will be presented via dissertation defense and publication during Summer of 2012. Should you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact the researcher via phone at (601) 452-0197 between the hours of 9 A.M. and 6 P.M., Monday through Friday and Sunday. You can also email the principal researcher via email at sbradbailey@yahoo.com. Remember, your rights as a participant are of the utmost importance.

      This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

By returning the attached questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this project.

Thank you,

S. Brad Bailey

APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSTENT LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

(FACULTY PERCEPTIONS)

University of Southern Mississippi
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent

Dear Faculty Member,

   This researcher is conducting a study to better understand faculty's perceptions of learning outcomes in the various formats (online, hybrid, and face-to-face) for the basic public speaking course required for undergraduate students. Also, this research will examine faculty perceptions of students' anxiety in online, hybrid, and face-to-face course formats of the basic public speaking course. For the purpose of this study, you are being asked to complete **a brief survey instrument that should take approximately ten minutes to complete.** In no way are you obligated or required to participate in this study. You may discontinue your participation at any time and for any reason without consequences. The questionnaires are anonymous, so please **do not** write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Once again, please understand that you are not obligated in any way to participate and you may quit participating at any time and for any reason without any consequences.

   The aggregate findings of this research study will be presented via dissertation defense and publication during Summer of 2012. Should you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact the researcher at via phone at (601) 452-0197 between the hours of 9 A.M. and 6 P.M., Monday through Friday and Sunday. You can also email the principal researcher via email at sbradbailey@yahoo.com. Remember, your rights as a participant are of the utmost importance.

   This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

By returning the attached questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this project.

Thank you,

S. Brad Bailey

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