New Jersey Communication Association's Adjunct/Contingent Faculty Certification Program: What Makes a Communication Classroom?

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The New Jersey Communication Association's Adjunct/ Contingent Faculty Certification program provides a place of reflection for potential adjunct or contingent faculty and prepares them for teaching in a communication classroom. New Jersey state law requires an oral communication course for every college student. Disciplinary departments who may not have a direct connection with the field of communication often sponsor and teach these classes. Recruiting potential candidates to teach a communication class raises challenges for administrators and department chairs especially when many sections of the course are needed. The perception of non-communication administrators is sometimes that anyone can teach this core course. The danger is that our disciplinary focus is lost in the process. This article describes need and implementation of this two year certification program and some issues that potential communication faculty might reflect on. While not required it provides one more credential to potential candidates. It concludes with a discussion of how a communication classroom differs from other academic classrooms.

The Objective

What is the scope of the communication discipline? Who should teach it? Early rhetoricians from the Sophists to Plato and Aristotle have grappled these questions (Billig, 1987). We continue to struggle with it in an age when on different campuses in departments across the spectrum from Communication to English to Theatre to Business teach our core communication classes. Some outside our disciple claim to be experts in our field, while others wonder what the relevance of a discipline such as ours is since every person already knows how to talk. Creating a territorial war is not the aim of this article, but rather to try to carve out a niche for the communication discipline and provide ideas for those who administer communication programs. The issues hit home for Communication department chairs and administrators in the weeks before classes begin and there is a need to find instructors to teach our communication classes that were added at the last minute. Applicants to teach our classes come from diverse backgrounds and the danger is there is no time to train them in discussions about the mission of our discipline. We send them armed with a generic textbook into communication core courses (National Communication Association, Basic Course).

This paper is the result of a practical discussion at the first training for communication professionals as adjuncts or contingent faculty that was held at the New Jersey Communication Association's Annual Meeting in April 2015. Contingent faculty are any faculty member on a limited contract that does not offer tenure. From now on, those who teach one or more communication classes, not on a tenure track will be called contingent faculty. We came up with a plan to certify these faculty members to teach in communication classes. This does not guarantee a person a job, but it does try to create dialogue on how a communication class

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differs from classes and pedagogies used within other disciplines. The program is open to anyone with a M.A. in communication who aspires to teach within our discipline or anyone in a communication related field. It becomes an additional tool for them to use in their professional life. At this point not every state institution has committed to the program, but it has potential to focus our core courses across institutions within the state. It is our understanding that New Jersey's Communication Professor Certification program is the first of its kind. The 20 initial participants and department chairs around the state claimed it was long overdue because we often reflect on what communication does but do we reflect on how it is taught.

According to the National Association of University Professors in 1975, over 30 percent of faculty were employed part time; by 2005, that number had grown to approximately 48 percent of all faculty members in the United States (Monks, 2015). Other sources say that in 2011, 70 percent were contingent faculty (Edmonds, 2015). One of the authors of this article is part of a department that at one point had over 60 contingent faculty (most teaching one or two courses) and 10 resident faculty.

This number of contingent faculty will only increase as universities and community colleges adapt to corporate models. These faculty members come from diverse backgrounds and academic disciplines. It becomes easy to pay them lower wages and send them into classes armed with a book that teaches how to give a speech that could be used in a Theatre or English version of the class. They are not included in shaping the vision of higher education because they are still outsiders. They feel like strangers in institutions of higher education eventually becoming demoralized (Moser, 2014). In the end our students and our discipline suffers. An example is when a theatre professional is hired to teach a core communication class but does not understand our focus on critical thinking and argumentation, but merely focuses the course on delivery style.

Socialization of new faculty members into higher education system focuses on professionalism, classroom conduct and environment, as well as, creating syllabi. These are important issues and in our experience, many institutions train new hires in these areas and is not the direct scope of our certification.

We hope our paper presents arguments for department leaders and hiring committees for contingent faculty to share some ideas on the qualities to look for and the goals in hiring. It is for departments who face administrators threatening to enlarge the size of the communication classroom. Our hope endeavors to provide some arguments for even adding communication to the curriculum. The focus discusses the aims of the New Jersey Communication Association Certification process.

Now that we have laid out the objective, we will move on and discuss the details of the certification process and a representative anecdote that makes one reflect on the place of communication as a discipline in the academy. We then turn to some myths about our field and some theoretical foundations that help to ground our discipline. Finally, we raise some questions for reflection and practical classroom applications for communicators and conclude with how this program can shape a community among contingent faculty.

Now that we have discussed the objectives and rationale for the certification, we move on to discuss how the certificate is earned, a representative anecdote that opens a conversation so we can reflect on the myths and theoretical foundations of our field. We will then move on to raise questions for reflection as well as practical applications. We conclude by suggesting that this certification provides the possibility of building a community among contingent faculty.

Earning a Certification

So how does the New Jersey Communication Teaching Certification work? We expect that a candidate attend two annual conferences and learn from the sessions about innovative issues in our field. The individual attends two sessions at each conference directly related to the Certification. Tenured communication faculty from different universities and community colleges lead the sessions. The first session is more theoretical and grapples with issues of our mission; the second session is more hands on and providing teaching ideas. All sessions are interactive. The candidate then goes to the New Jersey Communication Association's website (http//njca.rutgers.edu) and views some short videos under the organization's certification link. The candidate writes a short reaction paper after learning about how to analyze a speech or film from a communication perspective or how to enhance dialogue in a classroom. The final step is to teach two communication classes and have a tenured faculty member write a teaching evaluation after a discussion of pedagogy with the candidate. The certificate does not guarantee theoretical competence but adds credibility to one's resume with the claim that one knows the expectation of a Communication classroom. Our hope is that a non-Communication M.A. contingent faculty member will learn about communication's theoretical material by attending sessions, interacting with others in the field and by a strong textbook.

Since our initial training in 2015, we have since had four other trainings at annual state conferences. We now have fifteen people who have received this certification. We have a certification coordinator who sits on the organization's board and facilitates the process. Candidates who complete the certification can have a brief resume listed on the organizations home page. This then becomes a resource for departments across the state. We do not claim to solve all the challenges of the communication classroom, but have made an initial start and are trying to grow the program. To date there is no fee for the certification other than the standard fees for attending the conferences.

The National Communication Association in 1996 proposed that departments prepare future faculty to form partnerships with "local or regional departments" to help train colleagues in the demands of our discipline (Sprague, 1996). The scope of the New Jersey project is to deal with the issue raised above as to how a communication class looks, sounds and has pedagogies that are unique to our field. The goal is to create a seamless thread within the diversity of our communication classes so faculty and students have a common focus.

This is not to imply that 'one size fits all' programs, but raises questions about who communication professionals are in the classroom. At the same time it cannot accomplish all that needs to be done, but hopefully is a step in the right direction that can evolve over time.

The program is coordinated by a director (elected for a three year term) with a constant core group of four faculty as direct advisors. After each session the program is discussed and evaluated. At least once a year the board of the New Jersey Communication Association reviews the program. The need currently is to ensure that more chairpersons get involved. One step toward this is promoting what the program has accomplished in the first four years.

A Representative Anecdote

The section that follows examines a way of focusing on who we are as a discipline using a representative anecdote. First, we look at the representative anecdote to try to understand how our scope is different from other disciplines.

A *Family Circus* cartoon shows two children looking out the same window. The little brother says. "I see sun and rainbows and red birds in the trees." The big sister looks and say

"Huh! I see dirt and fingerprints and dead bugs." The little brother responds, "Silly, windows are for looking through, not at." Communication looks to the bigger picture. That does not mean we do not see what is right in front of us, but we are willing to explore the whole picture and go beyond just the obvious to discover newer perspectives and possibilities.

The psychologist might look at the inner motivation of each child. The biologist or chemist would look at how to make the windows clearer and what time of day it is. The English professional would examine the sentence structure of each child's words. The best way to stage the scene might be the focus of the theatre academic. The communicator would ask why the children are not outside on such a beautiful day and then proceed to open the window. Our discipline has an impact on how people live their lives and looks at the bigger picture.

The outcome is a change in perspective and a new way of seeing and understanding. Ours is a practical science that is always open to new possibility by reducing bias and bringing theoretical perspectives to what is before us. It involves looking at the total picture.

Misunderstandings about the contribution of the communication discipline, often, occur within the academic world. Even though we were one of the four key disciplines in the Greek academy, through the years, myths have evolved that distorted the true mission of our discipline. The implication is that our core courses taught in every institution of higher education do not live up to their mission within the communication field. Unfortunately, most students only have exposure to our basic course or a public speaking class or an oral performance class (McCroskey, 1998). Our disciplinary role becomes distorted in the academy.

So now, we examine some of the myths that have evolved through our training sessions.

Myths and Theoretical Foundations

These myths have existed back to the time of Socrates and the Sophists (Billig, 1987). They became locked into a group's mindset over time and can lead to misperceptions. Some have been labeled over time, but others are so implicit that even those who are impeded by them have not always been mindful of the implications. The discussion that follows is an outcome of the authors' reflections after our joint one hundred years of teaching experience. We have shared these with faculty focus groups to reach consensus. As we debunk these myths, we will lay out some theoretical foundations from communication pedagogy.

The first myth of communication is that anyone can teach it. Administrators have placed our courses in English, Business and Theatre departments through the years. The sense is that anyone who can speak can teach communication.

One of our mentor's once said that communication is the most difficult class to teach in the academy because not only are you sharing content, but also you are teaching critical abilities that challenge students to see themselves in new ways. We not only teach content but we teach regarding issues of self-image, body language, finding a voice. All these issues are critical for the traditional young adult college students.

A communication classroom becomes a vulnerable environment for the instructor and the students. We critique how students see themselves and challenge them to reach for new potentials. This can be challenging to a twenty-something that is very body conscious and feels on top of the world. These students do not like challenges especially when they stress facing issues like "can I pay my college tuition" and "will I get a job?" The communication professional walks a tightrope between affirming students and helping them to grow as learners. One communication educator claims that this demands the communication instructor to be "an almost heroic breed" (Sprague, 2004).

Many communication administrators in the last minute rush to add new courses or to fill empty teaching positions will hire anyone who can stand in front of our students and teach from a book. Textbooks, often, written generically to be adopted by many diverse departments have lost the essence of communication. Lack of proper training only compounds the issues (National Communication Association, Basic Course).

This leads to the second myth that communication is easy. We need to be honest with ourselves, many majors turn to our discipline because they can avoid math in their careers. Our classes can be fun because we are dealing with real life issues. We use icebreakers and are concerned with comfort zones. This has appeal for the outgoing student who likes working with people and can present oneself as an expert on anything. However, we cannot stop there. The test becomes can you back your claims up with argument and evidence. Our discipline must be grounded in research and that research should be evaluated to discover where claims are strongest. There are many levels to research. In a core course it might include newspapers and articles or even interviews (Gamble & Gamble, 2013, 323-334). In more advanced courses students can use communication scholarly resources by using their library's communication data bases. The important thing here is that communication is not always about opinion, but needs to build credibility through legitimate sources (Keyton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2010)).

We want students to be comfortable in our classes. An old Seinfeld joke says that there are two roles at a funeral. The person speaking the eulogy and the dead person. Seinfeld concludes, "Most people would rather be in the role of the dead person." While it is true many people fear death more than giving a presentation, we need to be mindful that our classes cannot be just about creating a comfort zone for students. This is a first step but as we will discuss later in many ways we want to take them beyond their comfort zone so they see life from new perspectives and become empowered to bring about change.

Connected to this is the third myth that ours is a "how to" discipline--- How to give a speech, how to operate a camera, how to run a meeting, how to write a press release. Communication education specialist, McCroskey (1998) notes that this places us in a third tier in the higher education system today implying low in intellectual content (p. 204). What people with this understanding forget is that our discipline is not about giving a formula for an exercise such as a speech but teaching critical reflection so a student can learn to adapt to changing circumstances and audiences. Schon (1984) wrote about the reflective practitioner. He claimed that professionals need to develop the ability to problem solve, adapt to changing situations, become creative. He was concerned that higher education was focusing too much on teaching one way of doing things. This is certainly true two decades later when we are in the heart of a communication revolution, when audiences, technologies and values are in constant flux. Anyone who teaches in the field of communication needs to encourage students to become reflective practitioners so that they can think critically and adapt to the needs of the audience.

The fourth myth of communication is that it is 'just' speaking (National Communication's Learning Outcomes). Many academics, students and parents think of communication as the speech class when someone gets up with sweat on her brow, knees shaking and a dry mouth to deliver the required speech. While this is part of our discipline, they do not realize that many communication professionals never give speeches but are involved in careers that involve one-on-one communication, working in small groups or interacting with others using technology. The unfortunate outcome is that many students steer away from our discipline because they fear speaking.

The talk show phenomenon has certainly embraced the notion that just talking about problems will solve them. The reality is that the communication scholar must approach issues

with a certain humility. Communication does not always work, but it provides alternatives. It also teaches the learner that not every idea has to be expressed.

Stanley Deetz (2017) giving the keynote address at the 21st New Jersey Communication Conference noted that we have taught our students how to shape the elements of a speech to argue their points, but challenged listeners to examine how we encourage interaction and dialogue in our classrooms. We have done well in teaching the rubrics of a traditional speech but in our contemporary social environment, many students and communication faculty admit they cannot enter into a dialogue with family members without the discussions becoming defensive and angry. How do our classes teach that communication is not about 'me and my speech' but how can we connect lives (Sprague, 2004)? The danger is students listen passively to each other's speeches and there is no discussion of the issues or the creation of models of dialogue.

Arnett (1992) raised the notion of dialogic education in communication. His focus was on creating a conversation in our classrooms that instills values within students. Building on the work of thinkers like Thomas Dewey, Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire, Arnett talks about dialogical education. This involves walking what Martin Buber described as walking 'a narrow ridge' or finding a balanced commitment to a value system but not being controlled by our academic specializations or ideologies. It is the difference between authoritarianism versus shared democracy in the classroom. It is a commitment to a conversation with our students rather than propaganda. This involves a realistic hope, yet the recognition that educators can fail at their tasks. Education becomes a lifelong conversation and making our students feel at home in that conversation. At times it involves giving voice to our enemies and appreciating difference. We have moved far from 'just speaking' but teaching a way of life that promises no easy answers. It is a process of dialogue versus monologue as we walk the narrow ridge (Arnett, 1986).

Yet another, fifth myth about our discipline that needs to be debunked is that communication is manipulative or seductive (Billig, 1987). The original name for communication was rhetoric. Unfortunately, over time society has labeled "rhetoric" as pure jargon or subjectivity. We joke about the rhetoric of politicians as lacking in credibility or the stereotype of the used car salesperson who will tell us anything so we will buy the car. Unfortunately, the line becomes blurred between yellow journalism and true news reporting. Many people view the media skeptically and focus on the biases of journalists or the sensationalism of journalists like Brian Williams that feel the pressure of ratings and telling an exciting story. However, we miss that true journalism and communication is rooted in evidence and research just as a biologist or chemist does research. Have we as communication instructors bought into the degradation of rhetoric and positioned themselves in secondary roles to scientists in our universities?

Socrates, one of the early communication teachers, was executed, by his government, with the charge that he was "a corruptor of youth." Through a process of questioning, he taught his students to think for themselves (Plato, 1969). This involved asking questions about their perspectives and how those perspectives endorse the hegemonic system. Another school of communication from ancient Greece, the Sophists, taught that truth was fleeting and we often put labels of truth on ideas to seduce and teach conformity.

The schools of thought differed and ignored their own biases, falling into the danger that contemporary educator, Freire (2000) spoke about when he labeled his banking model. Are we teaching students how to pass the test or are we teaching students to question their worlds? Perhaps good communication pedagogy means asking good questions rather than focusing on learned answers that get students through exams, but are quickly forgotten.

Wagner (2008, 2012) claims that critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, adaptability, initiative, curiosity and imagination, analysis of information, oral and written skills are what matter most in our future world. He claims that our schools have failed in these areas. A study (Casner-Lotto, Barrington, Land Partnership for 21st Century, 2006) conducted by The Society for Human Resource Management interviewed human resource personnel and found that most claimed that college graduates entering the workforce for the 21st century lacked abilities in these same areas: critical thinking/problem solving, creativity, ethics, diversity teamwork, oral and written communication, creativity. They perceived these to be the top qualities needed in future professionals. Communication professes to teach all these life skills. Communication can have a central place in shaping the contemporary workforce.

Hart and Burks (1972) talked about the ideal communicator as possessing rhetorical sensitivity. These communicators recognize that there are diverse roles one can take on in an interaction, as well as diverse mediums of communicating that message. The communicator never says the first thing that comes to her mind but also reflects on the audience. This does not mean the communicator is wishy-washy, but rather strategic. This can be manipulative, but the rhetorically sensitive individual also thinks of the needs of the other. The communicator is not a chameleon. Communication is effortful because there is always a risk that we may not be accepted.

Foss and Griffin (1995) went on to say that, whenever we try to persuade another it is always invitational because the other has his or her own perspective and needs to be respected for that. Speaker and audience must be equals for genuine communication. We do not know if the other will accept the message. The ideal communicator is also open to a new perspective. This moves beyond force or conquest and beyond mere tolerance to a genuine listening to the other. They go on to claim that ultimately the persuader persuades oneself. In this way, rhetoric can be transformative because individuals ultimately persuade themselves and may see the world or at least the situation from a new perspective. Traditional communication viewed the communication process as something the speaker did to an audience through persuasion. Contemporary communication builds on Kenneth Burke (1969) and sees communication as an interaction that starts with identification among audience members with the communicator (Foss and Foss, 2003). People not from our discipline need to be aware of the difference between a traditional and invitation perspective of communication. The second approach calls for a communicator to build a relationship.

Darnell and Brockriede (1976) contrasted the noble self and the rhetorical reflector with rhetorical sensitivity. The noble self is the communicator whose goal is compliance. That individual holds to a rigid perspective. At the same time, the rhetorical reflector is that chameleon type person who changes to fit the needs of others. The ideal is the rhetorically sensitive person who can not only change others but also be willing to change and adapt while walking Buber's "narrow ridge" (Arnett, 1986).

Messages we send and receive create a process of change that makes communication a transformational discipline. The communicator has a humility to be changed by the message itself. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator (2000), might be the exemplar of the goal of the communicator. Ultimately, it is about transformation. We meet individuals or audiences where they are and try to move them. Not in a manipulative way but as equals. The communicator learns from the interaction as well. This is where teaching communication becomes a dangerous profession because we might be an authority because of our degrees but we must recognize the authority students bring to the classroom that we might not have. The communication professor enters a process with students and hopefully change occurs in the communication classroom through open dialogue.

Students move through stages of thinking (Perry, 1990). The first is that there are clear-cut answers, often from learned by rote. The second stage, develops after an introduction to liberal arts education, students view everything as subjective and opinion. Often going to the opposite extreme of the first stage. Sometimes the student stops the process and becomes a procedural learner, one who can memorize and pass the game of exams but still by rote. Others move to the final stage where they become committed thinkers who can bring spontaneity and creativity to the thinking process. For some students this can be a painful process of going out of their comfort zones (Perry in Chickering, 1990).

Many have bought into the sixth myth that communication is apolitical. It is easy to become comfortable in our classrooms and avoid risks and anything that suggests confrontation, but a communication classroom is the place where students and professors learn to navigate through uncomfortable or difficult conversations. We know that silence can be a rhetorical space just as much as argument. Classrooms are not neutral places, especially the communication classroom. Our classes deal with issues of identity, hegemony, power and privilege. Our classrooms are sites of social influence (Sprague, 2002) because we know that our words and symbols accept and reify information, maintain it or change it. The communication classroom can never be a place of just passing along information learned (Arnett, 1992). It is a place to deconstruct and questions our rhetorical visions or ideologies that impact on our lives. This means that communication professors always takes the risk of even debunking their favorite theories and ideologies.

We need to realize that even our teaching is political because the professor has power in a classroom. Do we reproduce the status quo or do we offer fresh perspectives so we can empower our students to look beyond the systems that are around us like the air we breathe and like that air often become taken for granted. The communication professor tries to change students, not that they are a reflection of who he or she is, but so students can discover whom they are and in their own ways bring transformation to the world they inhabit day in and day out. In our core courses, we often give feedback to our students that mirrors back or reflects what the quality of work done on an assignment, however we cannot stop there we need to realize that communication feedback must become reflexive rather than reflective. Reflexive action is moving beyond mirroring to showing new perspectives and new possibilities (Fassett & Warren, 2007; Allen in Mumby, 2011).

Here is where we return to our roots with Socrates and the Sophists. This puts ourselves at risk because we become corruptors of youth, just a bit so students can learn to question traditional ways of seeing things. This does not mean we create rebels against traditions, but we give alternate perspectives so students can learn what steps can lead to change in their lives. We need students to be realistic and change what they can change, but they need we need to make a start in our classes.

Frey and Palmer (2014) take it a step further claiming that we cannot stop with just perspective shaping. We need to create ways that our students can become change agents in their communities. They claim that too often we stop with theoretical concepts. Communication pedagogy needs to teach citizenship by showing how theory can be applied in our communities for social change. They note that charitable fundraising is a start but it only reinforces structures that lead to oppression and contributing to the marginalization of people and groups. A Communication Activist Pedagogy (CAP) challenges the very systems and teaches students to become civic change agents. Dr. Lawrence Frey (2012) as keynote speaker at the New Jersey Communication Association claimed that few cite communication journals, which is where the focus of our research has been. He challenged the group to find ways to make our discipline more alive by motivating students toward action.

Questions for Reflection between Contingent Faculty and Administrators

As a follow-up to the previous section, we have created some possible questions during contingent faculty interviews or trainings. For that matter, these questions might be used by resident faculty, to reflect on their unique role in the academy. They questions cut to the heart of communication as a discipline. We have focused our annual training sessions around such questions.

1). How does the uniqueness of the communication discipline inform your teaching?
2). What are the values that bind communicators together in the midst of areas of specialization in our discipline?
3). How do you challenge your students to see their worlds differently in a communication class?
4). How can you teach your students to be more creative and curious?
5). How will your class guide students in a search for the "truth?"
6). How does your class create an environment that encourages dialogue?
7). How do you teach your students to be open to diverse ways of seeing?
8). How do students engage in dialogue, rather than passivity, after hearing a speech?
9). Does a focus on public speaking create a dialogue or monologue?

Practicalities

We can turn around the myths of communication by teaching our students to look at their worlds in new ways. However, we cannot stop there or we just turn in on ourselves. In this section we raise some specific ideas for participating in a communication class. Our list is far from complete or definitive, but it hopes to raise some thoughts on how a communication classroom differs from others in the academy from the class environment to providing feedback to grading.

We must begin to teach genuine dialogue. A communication classroom is interactive (Arnett, 1992). It starts by helping students to find their voices in our basic communication classes. We need to build safe environments where students build relationships with an instructor and classmates. It involves finding ways to encourage curiosity and a playfulness about learning. Getting to know each other's names, icebreakers that promote learning, breakout sessions in groups or dyads, encouraging questions after a lecture are just a few ways to help students overcome fears of speaking out and begin to find their voices.

However, dialogue is more than just hearing one's own voice (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Peters claims that "listening to others is a profound democratic act" (cited in Macnamara, p. 30). Most of our daily communication involves listening; how can we build dialogue by teaching listening? (Adler, Maresh-Fuehrer, Elmhorst, & Lucas, 2013) One way might include students summing up in a few sentences what a classmate said in a speech. Work on role-plays where students have to paraphrase what they hear another say. Have students listen to news stories or sum up a film or the class reading assignments.

Providing evidence and proof brings credibility to a student's verbal and visual claims. Build evidence based discussions asking students, "Where is the evidence?" Discussions of controversial issues provide opportunities to explore significant issues while learning the practice of dialogue and evaluation of evidence (National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes).

As leader of class the instructor needs to ask "courageous questions" (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2003). Courageous questions move us beyond taking issues for granted. For example, if students do not like to listen to the news, ask them what they do not like about the news and at the appropriate moment gently ask them what would happen if we all stopped reading print or listening to electronic media. Ask students why they are always on their smart phones can open the class to discussion about the role of communication technology in their lives.

Instructors must remember that they do not have all the answers (Arnett, 1992). Admit it to the class. In this way, we become models to our students that we do not have to know it all. Sometimes just sitting with the questions is enough. Yet according to Schein (2013), we live in a society where we expect each other to know all the answers. A communication classroom is the ideal place to call into question what we reify and build as expectations in our society.

We have potential to be models of good communication speaking skills. We do this by defining key terms and being aware of information overload in our classes. We need to know our audience and how much material a class can absorb at a time. At the same time, we want to reinforce abstractions with solid examples. Persuasion class teaches us that we learn best through our own active engagement with the material, so it becomes important that students identify and relate to ideas. Students need to be encouraged to share their ideas giving them an opportunity to test their presentation skills by learning to get to the point while making the message clear. Do not forget to invite the quiet students into the discussion, even if it involves just asking for clarification or a question.

Encouraging students to see differing perspectives is at the root of our discipline (National Communication Association Core Competences). Why not have a class debate over some central issue. You might even want to divide the class into different personas on an issue. Each group represents a different perspective. Doing this encourages students to listen to voices beyond their own interest groups on issues from race and gender to the environment.

One tension for many new instructors is how to preserve theory while allowing for differences in application. The speech class is a prime example. Do we just assess students based on eye contact or organization or speech with a clear-cut thesis statement? We live in an age when hip-hop lyrics have created one of the most innovative shows on Broadway. Can the same happen in our classes? We need to applaud student innovation and creativity. There must be room for alternatives (Arnett, 1992). At the same time, all students need to recognize traditional organization and the importance of issues such as proper eye contact (Adler et al., 2013).

One way to deal with this dilemma, early on, means pointing out that even our traditional speech structures are flawed because they follow the confines of Western education (Bailey, 2019). We must be willing to criticize our own structures if we expect students to change their own systems of thinking.

The elephant in the room for any discussion on the communication classroom is the question of criticism. We live in an era when nobody want to hear bad news about an assignment. Yet this is the heart of communication. We work through it in our classes by breaking students into small groups to provide feedback on what worked and what needs improvement. The security of a group, sometimes, makes it easier for students to provide feedback. We spend time talking about the importance of feedback and criticism in the professional world. Provide creative ideas for improvement; this makes the criticism more positive. Create a game by putting some positive ideas on the board, such as good examples, fine organization, developed research, positive eye contact, etc. Then students are asked to

identify which speaker did best. You can also use the inverse idea after stating some positives, discussing areas for improvement.

Another option is for the instructor to teach reflective pedagogy, where students analyze their own work. The University of Surrey (2018) raises some fine questions that can be adapted to a communication class where students can learn to be more reflective by asking themselves questions that attempt to move them to a deeper level of critique of their own work.

Small group discussions are a common element of any classroom (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999) and the reality of any office. Other disciplines use discussions to help reinforce learning content. Communication professionals move discussions a step further to encourage students to reflect on the process of group discussion. We need to examine how each member engages in the group dialogue. Hopefully over time the communication student has learned to take a leadership role and bring diverse people together (Adler et al., 2013). More and more learning is interdisciplinary and the classroom bridges interaction between disciplines. The communication student learns how to bridge the diversity while bringing his or her perspective to the topic.

Group presentations in the communication classroom involve all members of the group focused on the topic and each other. Instead of speaking as isolated individuals, members of the group work together to present a tightly organized, goal driven and unified presentation. In the core class in speaking communication students learn that listening is just as important as talking. We realize that each member of a group serves as a role model for the audience so the other members should not be looking at notes during a presentation. Neither should they be huddled in a dark corner of the room near the computer console.

Writing papers can never be relegated to English programs (Fisher, 1987; Hantzis & Park-Fuller, 1988). The Internet has brought new forms and styles of writing and speaking. Our discipline often encompasses filmmakers, public relations professionals, radio announcers, journalists and bloggers. Communication teaches that there are different genres of writing from scriptwriting to a journalistic style to a public service announcement. The communication professional does not always teach basic rules of grammar but serves to reinforce good rules of composition. Often students end up in a communication class after having mastered a composition course and presumes that there is only one way of writing. The communication student needs to realize that the medium used to shape a message is also a communication and different ways of writing depend on the situation and the audience.

In addition, the communication writer thinks in terms of argument and evidence (National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes). Audiences that are more specialized might need writing that is succinct whereas laypersons need examples and illustrations to engage them and draw them into a discussion and critical thought. The communication writer is aware of the importance of citing sources as a way to bring depth to any message but as a means of credibility. The communication writer makes claims and does not forget to provide evidence (Keyton, 2015).

PowerPoint has become a key tool in the classroom and in the office (Adler et al., 2013. The communication professional is aware that the amount of words should be limited on a PowerPoint slide. We view a billboard on a highway while driving by. These billboards need no more than eight words. Billboard advertising models PowerPoint slides because students are psychologically passing by. A PowerPoint slide should, generally, have no more than six to eight words and supporting images to enliven the presentation. The communication professional realizes that the PowerPoint slides are a support for a presentation. (Hetz, Kerhof, & Voerkum, 2016.)

When creating poster assignments students in a communication class are sure to cite sources and bring depth to their poster project by making sure that the poster tells a story that can be understood without needing an explanation. The International Forum of Visual Practitioners (IFVP) is an organization that works to enliven PowerPoint slides and class or facilitation sessions by creating imagery rather that linear designs that focus on words (www.ifvp.org).

Often we fall into the trap of the movie theatre as soon as a speaker begins all the lights are turned off and the speaker and audience sit-in darkness. The communication professional shuts off one or two lights in the room, only as needed, but in a dynamic presentation, the focus is not on the support material but on the presenter and the audience. The presenter speaks all the words on the slides to engage an audience rather than making audience members as passive participants.

Technology can have power over our lives and in itself can be a message that shapes and controls us as human beings (McLuhan,1964; Ong, 1982; Rushkoff, 2016). Communication involves looking at questions of power and asking how that power shapes our interactions with each other whether related to advertising images or hegemonic mindsets related to gender of hate.

Reading seems to be a dying skill in parts of the academy (Johnson, 2019). Our students learn that reading is different from the medium of speaking or watching a film (McLuhan, 1964; Ong, 1982). They learn that the first activity involves interacting with a text to uncover the logical argument while a film or a speaker can engage the emotions because of the appeal of the visual. Students need to learn that by googling readings they might get only a superficial explanation; reading and interpreting an article often invites the reader into the deeper structure of the article's meaning (Rushkoff, 2016).

Critical thinking is taught in every classroom but the communication professor encourages students to go beyond phrases like "that's the way it always was." Probing deeper and asking the question 'why' helps students see diverse perspectives. The communication faculty member is always using the phrase "prove it." Pointing out that good evidence builds a credible case (National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes). This is true across our discipline from creating visual images to writing a press release. The communication professor always attempts to get students to look at issues from multiple perspectives so that as listeners students can develop an understanding that will help them to engage in dialogue and see the bigger picture (Levitin, 2017; Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999).

Grading is an element of any discipline. The communication professor encourages students to engage in dialogue so that they can understand grades and reflect on ways to deepen their research and creativity. Sometimes students come to our field because they perceive communication will be an easy route to graduation. We build pride in our students by challenging them to reach their potential and being aware of our own grading patterns. We need to reflect on how the grade fits the needs of the students without compromising values of our field. This is always a delicate balance.

One myth not discussed earlier suggests that grading is subjective in the communication field. Clearly laying out grading expectations becomes a way for professors to model good communication and by example teach that this is a scientific process. Creating and sharing rubrics with students as part of giving an assignment could help in the process. Even the professor learns and grows through the communication classroom because it is ultimately a dialogue between professor and a diverse audience of students. Displaying examples of work well done or examples of work from other semesters that needs improvement becomes a learning experience.

The communication must move beyond time spent in class (Frey, 2014). How are we leading our students to action? This might involve reading the news and learning how to take an objective stance. It might involve students getting involved in civil actions to know that they do have a voice and that each voice matters and can make a difference.

Remember the ultimate goal of the communication classroom is not just to train professionals who have learned a good skill. We reach towards our disciplinary mission when we encourage our students to see the whole picture and look beyond taking ideas for granted and move toward awareness and action. When this happens, windows open and our own lives enriched. The fresh air we breathe connects all people. This is communication always remembering to create communities of dialogue among students and faculty.

We have now come full circle from the representative anecdote cited earlier. Communication looks out through the academic window and tries to find the bigger picture. This is becomes a process where we walk the "narrow ridge" not only challenging our students but challenging our ways of looking at the world.

Community

We have found that contingent faculty, remember these are faculty not on a tenure track, are seeking places within the academic world where they can be at home. The communication discipline is the perfect place to be at home because we are all about dialogue and community. Those with the teaching certification have become an integral part of the New Jersey Communication Association. They keep coming back year after year because they have found a place to share ideas and to learn. Departments can provide the same service by inviting these faculty to departmental events and meetings. Allow opportunities where they can get together with each other and share ideas. Communication is at its best when we build communities in dialogue amid difference.

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